

## Pre-application Enquiries

The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) have provided useful workshops for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) across the country in relation to pre-application enquiries, which has culminated in the provision of soon to be published advice on best practice for Local Planning Authorities guidance. Taking this into account Sefton Council have re-visited the pre-application advice service that it offers, which has been running for over 7 years, and have updated it accordingly.

### Benefits of Pre-application Engagement

- Identify opportunities for scheme improvements at a stage when a proposal can still be modified, which result in higher quality developments.
- Reduce delays through early engagement with internal consultees and other key parties.
- Establish timescale and agree the information required up front to reduce the time it takes to validate and process applications.
- Identify the schemes which will be supported as well as those that are unlikely to be supported, so reducing the time and fees with submitting unnecessary applications.

The Council provides a comprehensive pre-application advice service, where you can choose the level of service that you require and whether you wish to have a site meeting or MS Teams meeting accordingly.

The fees for the service have been updated and are provided below.

The fees are based on time spent by the consultees and officers, who support the whole process from validation to the decision making. Where ecology advice is required the additional fee in the right hand column will also be needed as this service is provided by the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS). For major applications this will form part of the pre-application service and is already built into the main fee (except where a bespoke fee will need to be confirmed), for all other applications it will be at the discretion of officers as to whether this is necessary. An additional fee is likely to be required:

- For proposals which would be subject to Biodiversity Net Gain
- Where protected species are known to be present
- If the proposal is likely to have a significant direct or indirect effect on an international important site (e.g. Ramsar, SPAs, SACs).
- If the proposal is within or adjacent to a designated site of nature and/or geological conservation importance (e.g. SSSI, NNR, LNR, LWS and LGS)
- If the development is proposed in a Nature Improvement Area

The Council also provides the opportunity to enter into **Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs)**, to enable collaborative working between the applicant and planning teams. This can entail a programme of pre-application meetings and workshops tailored to the scale and complexity of the proposal within an agreed programme plan with the aim of achieving the best outcomes for the site.

The following information is required to enter into a pre-application enquiry:

- Site location plan at an appropriate scale 1:1250 or 1:2500
- Details of the current use, photographs can be helpful
- Details of the nature and scale of development proposed.
- Drawings of the proposed development, layout, floor plans, elevations and any additional information to enable appropriate advice to be provided.

If you don't think that your proposal fits clearly into one of the categories, then please contact [planning.department@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:planning.department@sefton.gov.uk) to seek clarification.

## Planning Services Pre-Application Advice Charges 2025-26

All charges inclusive of VAT at 20%

Pre-application Enquiry Type	What development is included in this category	What service is provided	Fees	MEAS fee
<b>Householder Development</b>	Extensions to existing dwellings or any other development within the property boundary, which requires planning permission	Written response provided in 28 days also including: Site history check List of documents/information required	£255 Further £88 if a MS Teams meeting is required & a further £180 for a site meeting	£75
<b>Advertisements</b>	Where seeking advice on the display of advertisements, which requires advertisement consent	Written response provided in 28 days with: Site history check List of documents/information required	£102 (single site) or £427 (multiple sites, up to 5 sites) Further £88 if a MS Teams meeting is required & a further £180 for a site meeting	N/A
<b>Changes of Use</b>	Where no floorspace created	Written response provided in 28 days with: Site history check List of documents/information required	£452 Further £88 if a MS Teams meeting is required & a further £180 for a site meeting	£160
<b>Minor Development</b>				
<b>One Dwelling</b>	One new residential unit e.g one house or converting an existing house into two flats	Written response provided in 28 days with: Site history check List of documents/information required	£442 Further £88 if a MS Teams meeting is required & a further £180 for a site meeting	£160

Pre-application Enquiry Type	What development is included in this category	What service is provided	Fees	MEAS fee
<b>2-4 Dwellings</b>	2-4 new residential units, including conversion to flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)	Written response provided in 28 days with: Site history check List of documents/information required	£506 Further £88 if a MS Teams meeting is required & a further £180 for a site meeting	£325
<b>5-9 Dwellings</b>	5-9 new residential units, including conversion to flats and HMOs	Written response provided in 28 days also including: Site history check List of documents/information required Meeting with planning officer (MS Teams)	£694 Further £180 for a site meeting  Additional MS Teams meetings £88 each	£325
<b>Commercial Development less than 0.5 ha or less than 5000m<sup>2</sup> in floorspace</b>	Retail, hotels, care homes and industrial uses	Written response provided in 28 days also including: Site history check List of documents/information required Meeting with planning officer (MS Teams)	£694  Further £180 for a site meeting  Additional MS Teams meetings £88 each	£325
<b>Intermediate Development (Option of Planning Performance Agreement*)</b>				
<b>10-24 Dwellings</b>	10-24 new residential units including conversion to flats and HMOs	Written response provided in 28 days also including: Site history check List of documents/information required Meeting with planning officer (MS Teams)	£1733  Further £180 for a site meeting  Additional MS Teams meetings £88 each	Included

Pre-application Enquiry Type	What development is included in this category	What service is provided	Fees	MEAS fee
<b>25-49 Dwellings</b>	25-49 new residential units including conversions	Written response provided in 28 days also including: Site history check List of documents/information required Meeting with planning officer (MS Teams)	£2330  Further £180 for a site meeting  Additional MS Teams meetings £88 each	Included
<b>Commercial Development 0.5-1.0 ha or 5000m<sup>2</sup> – 10000m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace</b>	Retail, hotels, care homes and industrial uses	Written response provided in 28 days also including: Site history check List of documents/information required Meeting with planning officer (MS Teams)	£2693  Further £180 for a site meeting  Additional MS Teams meetings £88 each	Included
<b>Major &amp; Strategic Development (Option of Planning Performance Agreement*)</b>				
<b>50-100 Dwellings</b>	50-100 new residential units	Written response provided in 28 days also including: Site history check List of documents/information required Meeting with planning officer (MS Teams)	£3760  Additional MS Teams meetings £88 each	Included
<b>100+ Dwellings &amp; Commercial Development 1ha or 10000m<sup>2</sup> &amp; above &amp; EIA Development</b>	100+ new residential units	Written response provided in 28 days also including: Site history check List of documents/information required Meeting with planning officer (MS Teams)	£4104 and a further £400 for each 10 dwellings above 100  For commercial £4104 and a further £500 for each 0.25ha	Required: More complex cases agreed on a case by case basis, chargeable

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			above 1ha or 2500sqm above 10000sqm.  Further £180 for a site meeting Additional MS Teams meetings £88 each	time as per fee rates 3 and 4, in Table 7, exclusive of VAT
<b>Other Categories</b>				
<b>S73 Variation of conditions (Plan numbers)</b>	Discussions on the material variation of a permissions.	Written response provided in 28 days.	Half of the relevant pre-app fee  Further £88 if a MS Teams meeting is required	
<b>Removal, discharge or variation of conditions (except plan numbers) or non-material amendments</b>	Discussions on the removal, variation or discharge of conditions on permissions & Non-Material Amendments.	Written response provided in 28 days.	£206 per condition  Further £88 if a MS Teams meeting is required	<b>S73 Conditions</b>
<b>S106 Heads of Terms (HoTs)</b>	Discussions in relation to appropriate HoTs	Written response provided in 28 days	£206 Further £88 if a MS Teams meeting is required	
<b>Single Issue Pre-application enquiry</b>	For one key issue within a proposal	Written response provided in 28 days  Meeting with planning officer (MS Teams) if included in the relevant full pre-app	Half the relevant pre-application enquiry fee	

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<b>Feasibility/In principle Pre-application enquiry</b>	Scoping meeting, to determine feasibility and principle	Written response provided in 28 days.  Meeting with planning officer (MS Teams) if included in the relevant full pre-app	Half the relevant pre-application enquiry fee	
<b>Duty planner phone call for householders</b>	For householders making initial enquiries about extensions, permitted development and guidance on how to use SPDs (Sign posting)	30 minute phone call	£52 No plans required and no written comments provided.	
<b>Heritage Advice</b>	For listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas & non-designated heritage assets	Phone call	One off fee £88 Further £88 if a MS Teams meeting is required & a further £180 for a site meeting Written advice would be chargeable as per the pre-app schedule	
<b>Trees</b>	For trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) or trees in a conservation area	Phone call	One off fee £88 Further £88 if a MS Teams meeting is required & a further £180 for a site meeting	
<b>Follow up to Pre-application Responses</b>	For review of amendments on a scheme substantially similar to the original pre-app proposal	Written response provided in 28 days.  Meeting with planning officer (MS Teams) if included in the relevant full pre-app	Half of the relevant pre-application fee  Further £88 if a MS Teams meeting is required	