

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 1st JUNE 2023
title: PRE-APPLICATION SERVICE
submitted by: NICOLA HOPKINS, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING
principal author: LYNDSEY HAYES, HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT & BUILDING CONTROL

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Members on the Local Planning Authority's recently published Pre-Application guidance note (included at Appendix 1).
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:-
- To be a well-managed Council providing efficient services based on identified customer needs
 - To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework encourages pre-application engagement between local planning authorities and applicants prior to formal planning applications being submitted. As well as early engagement helping to shape better quality, more accepted schemes and avoiding wasted effort it also presents the opportunity for the planning department to outline what information requirements it considers are necessary, potentially speeding up the validation and decision processes.
- 2.2 Ribble Valley BC has offered a paid pre-application service on a wide range of development types for many years. Certain development types also have the option of a fast track service whereby an increased fee is paid in order to accelerate the pre-application response time. Pre-application fees are set annually within the Council Budget. The current fees for 2023/24 were approved by Full Council on 7th March 2023.
- 2.3 How the pre-application service is delivered is down to the Head of Service and Director, in consultation with the Planning and Development Committee as appropriate, having regard to demand for the service and resources within the team to deliver it.

3. PROPOSED SERVICE

- 3.1 The recently published guidance note includes information on:-
- Fees (as approved by Full Council)
 - A description of what type of proposals fall within each of the development categories
 - Timescales for when customers can expect to receive responses
- 3.2 The inclusion of timescales in this year's guidance note is something in particular that members may wish to take note of. Last year timescales were not expressed because of a significant shortage of staff resources within the team which led to uncertainty as to what pre-application service could be delivered, given that planning applications are typically given priority. For the same reason, the fast-track service was suspended.
- 3.3 Now that the Development Management service is up to a full complement of staff, it is now considered appropriate to include timescales of when we will aim to provide a response by. As customers are paying for a service, it is reasonable for them to have some expectation as to what service they can expect, and it gives something for officers to work towards to try and achieve consistency. However, as planning

applications will continue to take priority, there is a caveat stipulating that whilst the Planning Department will endeavour to provide a response within the target time period occasionally it may take longer owing to staff commitments and/or resources.

- 3.4 Timescales vary depending on the development category. Householders are six weeks (four weeks for fast-track). For minor and intermediate development (e.g. 1-9 new dwellings) and for alterations to listed buildings requiring Listed Building Consent the response rate is 6-8 weeks. For major and largescale major development (e.g. 10-100+ units) the response rate is 8 weeks. For tree works (high hedges or trees with Tree Preservation Orders or trees within conservation areas prior to formal application) the response time is four weeks and for advertisements and prior notifications the response time is six weeks.
- 3.5. This year the fast-track service is being re-introduced for those development types where fast track fees were set within the budget. For householder development this fast track service is available now. For major and largescale development this fast track service is expected to resume on 1st July 2023 once the Principal Planning Officers have cleared their backlog of planning applications.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 There will be:
- Continued monitoring of the pre-application service to see if timescales are being achieved or require further review.
 - Continued monitoring of backlog of planning applications to see if fast track service for majors and largescale majors can be resumed on 1st July 2023.
 - Consideration of including a fast-track service for other development types in next year's budget.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 That Members note the content of this report.

LYNDSEY HAYES
HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND BUILDING CONTROL

APPENDIX 1 – PRE-APPLICATION GUIDANCE NOTES

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR PRE-APPLICATION ENQUIRY FEES from 1st April 2023

PLEASE NOTE

Whilst the planners are working to clear their backlog of planning applications, our FAST TRACK pre-application service for major and largescale major developments will remain suspended however it is hoped this will resume on 1st July 2023.

FAST TRACK SERVICE

- The Planning Department offers a FAST TRACK pre-application advice service on request for certain development types (householder, major and largescale major) - see fee details below. This service will accelerate the processing of your enquiry – see timescales below.

Householder Development £66.00 with no meeting. £132.00 for one meeting. £66.00 for each additional meeting. (Fast Track Householder service £200.00 includes one meeting)

Advice relating to development within one domestic curtilage including:-

- domestic extensions and/or alterations to an existing dwelling
- domestic sheds/garages/structures within existing gardens
- solar panels
- decking
- new or replacement driveways
- new domestic access (dropping the kerb)
- new or replacement windows

Timescale – aim to respond within 6 weeks (4 weeks for fast-track). Aim to have a meeting within 4 weeks (3 weeks for Fast Track).

Minor Developments £300.00 for one meeting. Additional meetings £150.00 each

- Creation of less than 3 (i.e. 1 or 2) new dwellings
- Offices/research/business and light industry < 500m²
- General industry/manufacturing/storage and warehousing < 500m²
- Retail proposals < 500m²
- All other developments covering less than half a hectare (if outline enquiry i.e. advice on principle of development only)

Timescale – aim to respond within 6-8 weeks. Aim to have a meeting within 5 weeks.

Intermediate Developments £562.00 for one meeting. Additional meetings £275.00 each

- Creation of 3 to 9 new dwellings (i.e. 3,4,5,6,7,8 or 9)
- Offices/research/business and light industry 500m²–1000m²
- General industry/manufacturing/storage and warehousing 500m²–1000m²
- Retail proposal 500m² –1000m²
- All other developments covering less than one hectare (if outline enquiry i.e. advice on principle of development only)

Timescale – aim to respond within 6-8 weeks. Aim to have a meeting within 5 weeks.

Major Developments £1700.00 for up to two meetings. Additional meetings £850.00 each (Fast Track £2600.00 includes up to two meetings)

- Residential schemes involving the creation of more than 9 dwellings but less than 100 dwellings, or where the number of dwellings is not specified, a site area measuring between 1 Ha – 3.5 Ha (if outline enquiry i.e. advice on principle of development only);
- Retail, commercial or industrial schemes that involve development in between 1000m² – 2,500m², or sites measuring between 1ha – 2.5ha;
- Educational, hospital, leisure and recreational schemes on sites between 1ha – 2.5ha (if outline enquiry i.e. advice on principle of development only).

Timescale – aim to respond within 8 weeks (6 weeks for Fast Track). Aim to have first meeting within 4 weeks (3 weeks for Fast Track).

Largescale Major Developments £2300.00 for up to two meetings. Additional meetings £1150.00 each (Fast Track £3500.00 includes up to two meetings)

- Residential schemes of over 100 units or, where the number of dwellings is not specified, a site area of over 3.5ha;
- Retail, commercial and industrial schemes with a floor space of 2,500² or more or on sites of 2.5ha or more;
- Educational, hospital, leisure and recreational schemes on sites of 2.5 hectares or more;
- Schemes with 2 or more land uses on sites of 2 hectares or more;
- Changes of use of building(s) with a gross floor area of 2,500 sq. m. or more;
- Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Development

Timescale – aim to respond within 8 weeks (6 weeks for Fast Track). Aim to have a meeting within 4 weeks (3 weeks for Fast Track).

Listed Buildings or work in Conservation Areas Free of Charge or £125.00 – see below

- Advice for development in a Conservation Area or work to a Listed Building that consists **only of like for like repairs and maintenance** to the existing fabric (not replacement) will be free of charge. Beyond this threshold, advice for **internal alterations only** to Listed Buildings will require a fee of £125.00. **All other advice** is covered by the other categories.

Timescale – aim to respond within 4 weeks if like for like repairs and maintenance to the existing fabric. Aim to respond within 6-8 weeks if beyond this threshold .

Tree Work £88.00

- Services relating to high hedges or tree issues prior to a formal application.

Timescale – aim to respond within 4 weeks.

Advertisements £88.00

- Advice on signs, banners, notices etc.

Timescale – aim to respond within 6 weeks.

Prior Notification £150.00

- Advice on applications involving telecommunications equipment and on all other prior notification such as agricultural, changes of use, Class Q etc...

Timescale – aim to respond within 6 weeks.

All fees are inclusive of VAT (VAT rate of 20.00%) VAT No. 175 3401 74

- Please note whilst the Planning Department will endeavour to provide a response within the target time period occasionally it may take longer owing to staff commitments and/or resources.
- Whilst we are dealing with a backlog of planning applications, we have reduced our FAST TRACK pre-application service as described at the top of this form until further notice.
- For non-major development involving a meeting, in most cases this will be a phone or Teams meeting after the planning officer has conducted a site visit. A face to face meeting in the office or on site will only take place where the planning officer considers this necessary.
- In some cases, there may be a reduced charge for certain groups, i.e., Parish Councils or Community Councils.