# **Tower Hamlets Pre-application Advice Service**

**Tower Hamlets offers a pre-application planning advice service. This guide explains how to use the service, what we offer and what you can expect.**

## **How to get started**

For any of the pre-application services listed in scale A1 – A4 and scales B to E, please complete and submit a pre-application request form. The form can be e-mailed to [planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk) or can be completed as part of your duty planner meeting, if you are requesting follow up advice for a scale A service.

Following receipt of your completed form we will contact you to arrange payment of the correct fee within 2 working days. Fees can be paid by Bacs or by card over the phone.

We have previously had the facility for a duty planner drop-in service at the Town Hall, Mulberry Place between 9.00am and 1.00pm on Mondays to Fridays. Please do check in advance from our website that this service is operational.

Alternatively, you can e-mail your enquiry or call 020 7364 5009. We will respond to your enquiry within two working days.

## **Paying the correct fee**

The table at the end of this document below lists our services and the likely associated fees. The fees are based on the scale of development as calculated by floor space or number of new homes. Fees are inclusive of VAT. Any alterations to existing floor space that would be affected by the proposals should be included alongside new floor space to establish the correct fee.

If in doubt, contact our customer service team via phone on 020 7364 5009 or [planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk). The Council reserves the right to determine the correct fee.

## **Follow up fees**

A discounted fee is charged for follow up meetings. To arrange a follow up meeting, please send an e-mail to [planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk), quoting the pre-application advice reference number, address and “Follow-up meeting” in the subject header. You will be contacted within two working days in order to make payment.

For major development, you may wish to consider agreeing a Planning Performance Agreement and paying the appropriate fees in advance for an agreed programme of meetings.

## **Timescales**

When we have received your pre-application request and the correct fee, a planning case officer will be allocated and will begin to review the information you have provided, coordinate the input from colleagues in other services and scheduling an initial meeting.

The planning case officer will contact you to make within five working days the arrangements for an initial meeting.

Following the initial meeting, we will provide you with written advice in the form of a pre-application report or letter. This will be issued within 10 working days of the date of the meeting.

## **What information should I provide?**

The basic requirement to use the pre-application advice service is a completed pre-application form and a plan, usually to a scale of 1:1250, which identifies the site.

The information you provide should be proportionate to the scale and complexity of the development proposed and the level of advice you would like to receive. For example, basic floor plans and elevations, along with photographs of the current site should be sufficient for advice on household extensions or small commercial proposals such as shop fronts or changes of use.

More information will be needed to provide advice on larger scale proposals or those which might affect more sensitive locations or heritage assets - or buildings, such as conservation areas or listed buildings. A good starting point is to include the first draft of a Design and Access Statement as this will be a requirement when you submit your application.

As a general rule, our advice can only be proportionate to the level of information you are able to provide.

Keep in mind that you may need to amend your proposals to deal with planning issues we identify. We want to work collaboratively so at the end of the process you have a good understanding as to whether the proposals would comply with relevant planning policies and a planning application could be supported. If we conclude that the proposals are unlikely to be supported, we will tell you at the earliest opportunity and provide clear reasons to help you decide whether to proceed with a planning application.

Our pre-application advice is based on the information provided. It is provided in good faith, but it cannot be binding on the Council as a Local Planning Authority when assessing and determining a formal planning application.

## **What to expect**

At the initial pre-application meeting there will be an opportunity to present your proposed development ideas to a planning officer and other members of our team, for example a design or conservation specialist or transport officer0

We will discuss the principles of the development and provide advice on the Local Plan and other planning policies that must be taken into account. We will look at how local context and constraints will influence the scale and design of the proposals. We will also provide specialist advice on technical issues such as transport, access, servicing, parking, noise and other environmental effects.

For major or more complex proposals we will agree a programme of follow up meetings which may be structured within a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA).

As part of the service, we will provide advice on the submission requirements for a planning application, confirm the likely planning conditions or planning obligations and an estimate of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liability (if appropriate).

For major development proposals, we will advise on whether a presentation to the Council’s Conservation and Design Advisory Panel and the Development or Strategic Development Committee would be appropriate.

## **Community engagement**

National Planning Guidance says that engagement with the local community on major development or schemes that can have a significant impact on a local area is good practice. The Council’s Statement of Community Involvement strongly supports pre-application engagement and encourages developers to consider new or innovative ways of involving local residents, interest groups and businesses. We will provide advice on community engagement as part of the pre-application advice.

## **Contact details /further information**

Should you require more information regarding our pre-application advice service, feel free to get in contact:

e-mail: [planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Phone: 020 7364 5009

## **Planning Pre-application Charges**

Please refer to our pre-application advice guidance note for full definitions   
and not all charges are shown inclusive of vat

Scale A Householder and small business service Pre-application fees.   
Householder developments (i.e. affecting a single dwelling); Advice on permitted development rights; Extensions or change of use to non-residential buildings, including small businesses involving up to than 150sqm of floor space; Shop fronts; Signs and adverts attached to a shop or business premises.   
A0. Duty planner drop-in service Free  
A1. Confirmation of advice letter £85.00  
A2. Confirmation of advice letter for properties in £160.00  
 conservation areas or works affecting listed buildings   
A3. Officer site visit £85.00  
(in addition to Scale A1 or A2 confirmation email or letter)  
A4. Householder or small business pre-application meeting £255.00

Scale B Minor development fees.  
Development involving the creation of 1-9 new dwellings; New buildings, extensions or changes of use over 150 and less than 1,000 sq. metres (any use class); Telecoms masts and equipment; Plant and machinery on commercial premises; Free standing adverts.   
B1. Initial Meeting £1,545.00  
B2. Additional meeting(s) with follow up advice letter or email. £930.00  
B3. Advice on discharge of conditions £930.00  
or amendments to a permission

Scale ‘C’ Smaller Scale Major Development fees  
Proposals involving creation of 10-34 dwellings; New buildings, extensions or changes of use 1000-4,999sq. metres (any use class   
C1. Initial Meeting £4,000.00  
C2. Additional meeting(s) with follow up advice letter or email £2,500.00  
C3. Advice on discharge of conditions or amendments £2,500.00  
to a planning permission

Scale ‘D’ Larger Scale Major Development fees  
Proposals involving 35-149 dwellings; New buildings/ extensions or changes of use 5000-14,999sq. metres (any use class); Includes advice on reserved matters\*.  
\* Excludes development that meets any of the other definitions for applications of Potential Strategic Importance (PSI) in the current Mayor of London Order.   
D1. Initial Meetings (up to three including GLA) £7,815.00  
D2. Additional meeting(s) with follow up advice letter £3,130.00  
 or email   
D3. Advice on discharge of conditions, or amendments £3,130.00  
to a planning permission.  
D4. Informal Environmental Impact Screening or Scoping £3,130.00  
D5. Pre-application viability review – Recover consultants Costs + 10% admin  
D6. Community forum set-up and facilitation £2,085.00.

Scale ‘E’ Strategic Development Proposal fees

Proposals involving 150 or more dwellings; Development of new buildings/extension or changes of use involving more than 15,000sq.metres (any use class); Development that meets any of the other definitions for applications of Potential Strategic Importance (PSI) in the current Mayor of London Order; Local Plan Site allocations; Site wide masterplans

E1. Initial Meetings (up to three including GLA) £15,625.00  
E2. Additional follow-up meetings including further £4,170.00  
advice letter.  
E3. Advice on discharge of conditions, or amendments £4,170.00  
to a planning permission.  
E4. EIA Screening or Scoping Opinion £4,170.00  
E5. Review of Draft viability assessment (external consultant) Recover agreed costs + 10% admin Internal viability team review £600.00 - £900.00 tba  
E6. Community Forum Facilitation £2,085.00