

**PRE-APPLICATION SERVICE**

**GUIDANCE AND FEE SCHEDULE**

April 2025

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Introduction Duty planner service

Obtaining pre-application advice can help to improve the quality of planning applications and their likelihood of success. This can be achieved by:

* Providing an understanding of the relevant planning policies and other material considerations associated with a proposed development;
* Identifying and resolving potential planning and design issues associated with a proposed development;
* Discussing the possible mitigation of the impact of a proposed development, including any planning conditions or obligations;
* Identifying the information required to accompany a formal planning application, thus reducing the likelihood of delays at the validation stage;
* Setting up a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) where this would help with managing the process and agreeing the resources for progressing the application including programming in a Quality Review Panel session where appropriate

Tower Hamlets offers a pre-application planning advice service suitable for all projects – large or small. This guide explains how to use the service, what we offer and what you can expect.

The council also provides a free Duty Planner Service for general enquiries and questions relating to scale A development. In many cases this can provide you guidance required before making a formal application and the officer will be able to guide you if you still require a formal pre application.

Contact can be made using the Planning free advice form located on the planning pre-application advice page on the council’s website. This is the preferred method, we will respond to your enquiry within two working days.

However, if you cannot use the online form then you can also make contact by phoning 020 7364 5009. A duty planning officer will be available from 9am to 1pm—Monday to Friday.

How to get started

Providing information to support your

request

1. Please complete the request using the pre=application advice request form located on the [planning pre-application advice page on the council’s website](https://towerhamlets-self.achieveservice.com/service/Planning_Pre_application_advice).
2. Select the appropriate scale of Pre Application. There are 5 Scales. [Pages 10-15]

If you experience any problems or issues completing the form, contact can be made with the customer advice service via an e-mail to [pre.applications@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Following receipt of your completed form we will aim to contact you to arrange payment of the correct fee within two working days. The fee request will detail the methods of payment but usually fees will be paid by BACS.

Please note currently there is no way of making the fee on sub- mission of the pre application request form.

The basic requirement to use the pre-application advice service is a completed pre- application form and an Ordnance Survey site location plan, usually to a scale of 1:1250, or similar.

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 development proposals such as shop fronts or changes of use.

More information will be needed to provide advice on larger scale development proposals or those which may affect more sensitive locations or heritage assets, such as development in conservation areas or listed buildings. A good starting point is to include the first draft of a Design and Access Statement as this is likely to be a requirement if you apply.

The advice we provide can only be proportionate to the level of information you are able to provide.

As a minimum we would require:

1. Site Location Plan
2. Covering Statement/Planning or design and access statement
3. Outline existing and proposed plans

Paying the correct fee

The following pages list our services and the associated fees. The fees are based on the scale of development as calculated by floor space or number of new homes for larger housing developments. 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 on 020 7364 5009 or email [pre.applications@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:pre.applications@towerhamlets.gov.uk.). The council reserves the right to determine the correct fee.

A discounted fee is charged for follow up meetings. To arrange a follow up meeting, please use the Pre-application form on the planning pre-application page of our website requesting a follow up and the reference number of the initial [pre-application](https://towerhamlets-self.achieveservice.com/service/Planning_Pre_application_advice)

In the event that you are not able to use the online form then an e- mail can be sent to [pre.applications@towerhamlets.gov.uk,](mailto:pre.applications@towerhamlets.gov.uk,) quoting the pre-application advice reference number, address and “Follow-up meeting” in the subject header. You will be con- tacted within two working days to make payment.

For major development, you may wish to consider a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) for an agreed programme of meetings.

Timescales

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 or other timescale if agreed

We will then aim to contact you to arrange payment of the

correct fee within 2 working days or request further

documentation.

*Please note until the correct fee has been received no further progress will be made on your pre-application submission.*

Pre-application form submitted with correct documentation

When we have received your completed form, we will begin the validation stage, checking the correct documentation has been submitted within 2 working days

*If you have not submitted the correct documentation this will delay the validation.*

Once the correct fee has been paid we will validate the

application within 2 working days.

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The application will be sent to a planning case officer for allocation who will then 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 aim to contact you within 10 working days to make the arrangements for an initial meeting (if applicable) and advise of a target date for the advice to be issued

What to expect

A dedicated planning case officer will be allocated. They will aim to contact you within 10 working days of your request being accepted, to arrange an initial meeting. They will normally visit the site before the meeting takes place (except for scale A services).

At the initial pre-application meeting there will be an opportunity to present your proposed development ideas to a planning officer and discuss with other members of our team, for example a design or conservation specialist or transport and environmental health officers. We will discuss the principles of the development and provide advice on the Local Plan, other planning policies and material considerations that will have to be considered.

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, neighbours amenity and other environmental effects.

For major or more complex proposals we can discuss 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 and planning obligations and an

estimate of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liability.

For major development proposals, we will advise on whether a presentation to the council’s Quality Review Panel, the Isle of Dogs Community Development Forum or one of the Planning Committees would be appropriate.

Pre-application planning advice will be reviewed by a team leader or area manager to ensure we have covered all the issues and the advice is consistent with that offered for similar proposals.

You may wish to amend your proposals to deal with any 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 in principle. If we conclude that the proposals conflict with adopted planning policies and 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.

The council must meet certain national targets for the speed of decisions on planning applications and we need to use our resources appropriately. We may decline to accept amendments to applications after submission if you have not previously sought pre- application advice or if our advice has not been followed.

**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.**

Community engagement

Introductory meetings for larger scale major

developments

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 with the local community. It encourages developers to consider new or innovative ways of involving residents, interest groups and businesses. We will provide advice on community engagement as part of the

pre-application advice

Quality Review Panel (QRP)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires plan- ning authorities to have a design review process in place. This is to ensure high standards of design.

The purpose of the Tower Hamlets Quality Review Panel (formerly CADAP) is to provide independent, expert design ad- vice. It also guides planning officers, applicants and members of the Planning Committees.

More information can be found on the [Tower Hamlets Quality review panel](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/planning_and_building_control/conservation_and_urban_design/Tower-Hamlets-Quality-Review-Panel.aspx)

\*\*The fees for this service are charged outside of this and will be service and will be confirmed by the officer during the pre application as it depends on the nature of the development.

We now offer introductory meetings with senior managers for larger scale, major developments, where the principles of a proposal can be discussed prior to arranging more detailed pre-application meetings. This service can be beneficial for developers who are considering acquiring a site and want to explore initial ideas and understand how policies.

will be applied or are new to development in Tower Hamlets. It will also be suitable for major regeneration proposals and we can help identify other key council services and partners who may need to be involved, beyond the planning authority. We do not normally appoint a case officer at this stage and the service is not suitable for discussing detailed or technical issues. Please see scale D7 and E7 in the fee schedule.

Pre-application advice charges

With effect from 1 April 2025

There are 5 Pre application scales:

Scale A - covers the duty planner, householder, and small business service.

Scale B - covers minor development.

Scale C - covers small scale major development. Scale D - covers large scale major development. Scale E - covers strategic development proposals.

Important Notes and Conditions:

* Any follow up meeting must be made within 6 months from the date of the pre-application advice given. If the follow up request is not within the timescale, a new pre-application request must be made.
* All fees listed are inclusive of VAT unless otherwise stated
* There are no exemptions for charity organisations
* An in principle meeting (Scale D7 or E7) can only be used once for a proposed development. There are no follow up meetings to this service.
* Refunds to services are at the discretion of management
* Upon submission if the planning officer finds the proposals is actually larger than that of the scale initially submitted then we reserve the right to charge the difference for the correct scale
* Fees need to be paid in full before validation
* For an in principle meeting (Scale D7 or E7), documentation must be sent to Planning at least 5 working days before the meeting otherwise the meeting will be cancelled. No meeting will be held without appropriate information submitted—as a minimum a covering letter/planning statement should be submitted for this pre-application scale,

Pre-application advice charges

With effect from 1 April 2025

SCALE A

Covers the duty planner, householder, and small business service.

Types of Scale A development

This service is suitable for the following types of development:

* 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 150sqm of floorspace
* Changes to shopfronts including signs and adverts attached to shops or business premises
* Plant or machinery on commercial premises
* Improvements or alterations to community facilities
* Advice on whether planning permission will be required to replace

external cladding materials

Scale A Service Standards

* Telephone conversation with a planning officer
* Optional written confirmation letter or e-mail. Please see our fees table - charges A1 and A2)
* Optional site visit. This is subject to availability and falls under charge A3

on our fees table

* Optional full pre-application meeting - falls under charge A4

Table of Scale A service level fees

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A0 | Service  Duty Planner—General planning advice (Refer to Duty Planner section in guide) | Fee (INC VAT) FREE |
| A1 | Confirmation of advice letter (Planning Only)\* | £114 |
| A2 | Confirmation of advice letter (Planning Only)\* for properties within a conservation area or works affecting a listed building | £125 |
| A3 | Officer site visit *(in addition to A1, A2 and A4a only)* | £230 |
| A4a | Pre-application meeting \*  - Householder, small business or community facility | £345 |
| A4b | Advice on replacement or alterations to external cladding | £345 |

Notes:

* A1 and A2 services can be either a stand alone advice letter or used in addition to services A3, A4a or A4b.
* A4a Pre-application meeting will not have any written advice issued as part of this scale. If this is required please confirm A1 in addition to A4a

For example:

A1+A4a = Meeting with written advice issued following the meeting

A1+A2+A4a = Site visit, with meeting and written advice issued following the meeting

Pre-application advice charges

With effect from 1 April 2025

SCALE B

Covers minor development.

Types of Scale B development

This service is suitable for the following types of development:

* Development involving 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;
* Free standing advertisements, signs and hoardings.

Scale B Service Standards

* Meeting with a planning officer and other specialist officers.
* Optional follow up design and technical meetings.
* Site visit
* Formal advice letter
* Confirmation of likely CIL and planning obligations
* Confirmation of application submission requirements.

Table of Scale B service level fees

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| B1 | Service  Initial meeting and written advice | Fee (INC VAT)  £2,075 |
| B2 | Additional follow-up meeting (s) with written advice | £1,230 |
| B3 | Advice on discharge of conditions or amendments to a permission | £1,230 |
| B4 | Advice EIA Screening/Scoping | £1,230 |
| B5 | Miscellaneous developments:  Examples: Replacement of windows to multiple  blocks of flats in conservation area | TBA |



Pre-application advice charges

With effect from 1 April 2025

SCALE C

Covers small scale major development.

Types of Scale C development

This service is suitable for the following types of development:

* This service is suitable for the following types of development:
* Proposals involving the creation of 10-34 dwellings;
* New buildings, extensions or changes of use 1000-4,999 sq. metres (any use)

Scale C Service Standards

* Meeting with a planning officer and other specialist officers.
* Optional follow up design and technical meetings.
* Site visits
* Formal advice letter(s)
* Confirmation of likely CIL and planning obligations
* Confirmation of application submission requirements
* Advice on pre-application community engagement.
* QRP - Fee not included—See Page 8 Note\*\*

Table of Scale C service level fees

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| C1 | Service  Initial meeting and written advice | Fee (INC VAT)  £8,200 |
| C2 | Additional follow-up meeting (s) with written advice | £4,910 |
| C3 | Advice on discharge of conditions or amendments to a permission | £4,910 |
| C4 | Miscellaneous developments:  Examples: Replacement of windows to multiple blocks of flats in conservation area | TBA |

Pre-application advice charges

With effect from 1 April 2025

Types of Scale D development

This service is suitable for the following types of development:

* This service is suitable for the following types of development:
* Proposals involving 35-149 dwellings; New buildings, extensions or changes of use 5,000-14,999 sq. metres (any use); Advice on reserved matters.

Scale D Service Standards

* Establish a multi-disciplinary development advice team
* Scoping / general principles meeting with a senior planning manager and development team.
* Design principles meeting
* Optional follow up design and technical meetings.
* Pre-application advice report or letter
* Confirmation of likely Planning Obligations, including financial contributions
* Confirmation of likely CIL liability
* Agree application timeframes and draft PPA
* QRP —See Page 8—Agree potential date for presentation to the QRP, if

appropriate

* Presentation to Development or Strategic Development Committee, if appropriate
* Confirmation of application submission requirements.
* Advice on pre-application community engagement.

SCALE D

Covers large scale major development.

Table of Scale D service level fees

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| D1 | Service  Initial meetings (up to two – e.g. design principles and pre-application programme, plus attendance at GLA pre-app. meeting) and written advice | Fee (INC VAT)  £14,400 |
| D2 | Additional follow-up meeting (s) with written advice | £8,090 |
| D2b | Workshop for highways/environmental health/ design & conservation | £8,090 |
| D3 | Advice on discharge of conditions or  amendments to a planning permission | £8,090 |
| D4 | Advice on Environmental Impact Assessment Screening or Scoping | £8,090 |
| D5 | Pre-application viability review or other technical review | £Recover con- sultants’ costs + 10% administra- tion fee |
| D6 | Community Forum set up and facilitation | £2,745 |
| D7.1 | Introductory ”in principle” meeting | £5,175 |
| D7.2 | Introductory “in principle” meeting with Director of Planning and/or Head of Service | £6,480 |
| D8 | Basic Townscape and visual impact review  using 3D model and model supplied by client | £1,350 |
| D9 D10  D11 | Attendance at QRP Follow up session  Chairs Consultation | £7,260  £4,410  £3,390 |

Pre-application advice charges

With effect from 1 April 2025

SCALE E

Covers strategic development proposals.

Types of Scale E development

This service is suitable for the following types of development:

* Proposals involving 150 or more dwellings;
* New buildings, extensions or changes of any use or more than 15,000 sq.m
* 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 and site wide masterplans

Scale E Service Standards

* Establish a multi-disciplinary development advice team
* Scoping principles meeting with a senior planning manager /development team
* Design development meeting
* Attendance at joint GLA pre-app meeting (GLA may apply their own charges)
* Optional follow up design and technical meetings. Pre-application advice letter
* Confirmation of likely Planning Obligations, including financial contributions
* Confirmation of likely CIL liability
* Agree application timeframes and draft Planning Performance Agreement (PPA)
* Agree date for presentation to the QRP where appropriate
* Presentation to Development /Strategic Development Committee, if appropriate
* Confirmation of application submission requirements.
* Advice on pre-application community engagement.

Table of Scale E service level fees

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| E1 | Service  Initial meetings (up to two – e.g. design principles and pre-application programme, plus attendance at GLA pre-app. meeting) and written advice | Fee (INC VAT)  £23,800 |
| E2 | Additional follow-up meeting (s) with written advice | £9,340 |
| E2b | Workshop for highways/environmental health/ design & conservation | £9,340 |
| E3 | Advice on discharge of conditions or amendments to  a planning permission | £9,340 |
| E4 | Advice on Environmental Impact Assessment Screening or Scoping | £9,340 |
| E5 | Pre-application viability review | £Recover |
|  |  | consultants’ |
|  |  | costs + 10% |
|  |  | administration |
|  |  | fee |
| E6 | Community Forum set up and facilitation | £3,180 |
| E7.1 | Introductory ”in principle” meeting | £5,890 |
| E7.2 | Introductory ”in principle” meeting with Director of Planning and/or Head of Service | £7,360 |
| E8 | Full Townscape and visual impact review using 3D model and model supplied by client | £3,890 |
| E9 E10  E11 | Attendance at QRP Follow up session  Chairs Consultation | £7,260  £4,410  £3,390 |

Further information

For more information contact can be made using the Planning free advice form on our pre- application page of website or by emailing us [pre.applications@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:pre.applications@towerhamlets.gov.uk)





V1.6– April 2025

Prepared by Development Management, London Borough of Tower Hamlets