

Local Development Pre-Application Guidance

Please note that the following guidance relates to local developments. We have separate advice notes for householder development pre-application advice and major development pre-application advice. If in doubt, please refer to [Circular 5/2009 \(Hierarchy of Developments\)](#) or contact your local planning [office](#).

What is a local development?

Local developments cover a broad range of applications, with main examples of pre-application advice sought on new housing (from 1 to 49 homes), commercial and business proposals with a floor space less than 10,000m², sites less than 2ha in size and small scale energy generation projects.

What is pre-application advice?

Pre-application advice is a non-statutory procedure provided by Aberdeenshire Council. It is intended to guide and inform your development proposals before you submit a formal planning application. It provides an opportunity for you to discuss your proposals with a Planning Officer before going to the expense of having detailed drawings and specifications prepared by an architect, (or other design professional).

What are the benefits of undertaking pre-application advice?

- It will give you the opportunity to understand how policies from the 2023 Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan will be applied to your proposal.
- It can identify at an early stage where there is a need for specialist input for example contamination, transport, ecology, etc.
- It can identify information that is likely to be required to accompany a planning application for example a Flood Risk Assessment, tree survey etc.
- It can help to establish the fee and a likely timescale for processing any subsequent application
- It may lead to a reduction in time dealing with a formal application.
- It will flag up whether a proposal is unacceptable which could save you the cost of submitting a formal application.

What do you need to submit as part of your pre-application advice request?

You may wish to undertake the pre-application process with only basic details in mind or you may have a detailed proposal for which you are seeking input. The detail of any response will be informed by the level of details submitted. The following guide outlines what information we would expect as essential and desirable.

Essential:

- A completed local development pre-application form.
- A clear description of the proposed development.
- The address of the application site.
- A location plan to clearly identify the location and dimensions of the site.
- Proposed site layout plan which outlines the application site in red, including a north point and details of any site access such as to the public road (dimensions to be shown or to scale, preferably at 1:500 or 1:200).

The more details submitted the more detailed a response we can provide so there is also a desirable list which would be useful but we would not invalidate an enquiry to obtain these.

Desirable:

- An ordnance survey-based location plan which outlines the application site in red (scale preferable to 1:2500 or 1:1250) and additional land owned in blue.
- Proposed development layout plan and site sections.
- Elevational drawings.
- Photographs of the site.
- A Design Statement.

Delays may occur if essential information is missing from your request. Invalid requests that do not meet the minimum requirements will not be progressed unless all the requested information has been submitted.

Advice the service will provide

Main issues:

Types of information:

Policy	The principle of the development and any planning policy relating to the site.
Site history and constraints	Relevant planning history and specific constraints identified on the site.
Design	Specific comments upon proposed materials, design and scale.
Roads and Transportation	Servicing, access and parking standards, public transport requirements, cycle parking. Requirements for Transport Statement or Assessment.
Natural and Built Heritage	Need for surveys, i.e Tree, Bat or Ecological surveys or consideration of impacts of the development on the built or natural environment.
Amenity	Who may be affected, i.e. Noise Impact Assessment, Daylight / Sunlight Assessment.
Developer Obligations	Developer contributions, including affordable housing
Flooding and Drainage	Need for Flood Risk Assessment and or Drainage Impact Assessments.
List of key documents/info	Information and documents that have been identified to be required to be submitted as part of your application.

Advice the service will not provide

- Advice or input from external stakeholders or agencies e.g. NatureScot, SEPA, Transport Scotland etc.
- Specific architectural or technical advice which falls within the remit of an architect, engineer surveyor etc.
- Suggestions relating to alternative uses of land or buildings.

What communication and advice can you expect?

Any specific information that needs brought to our attention, or issues that you want included in your response should be highlighted as part of your pre-application advice submission. The Planning Service may or may not deem a site visit and/or a meeting necessary depending on the nature of the enquiry. The Planning Officer dealing with your enquiry will be in contact in the event that either are deemed necessary. Any meeting may or may not involve other departments within the Council.

A formal letter will always be issued providing comprehensive pre-application advice. Further communication relating to the proposal may be provided afterwards at the discretion of the Planning Officer who has dealt with the request. Should you seek comments upon an amended proposal it may be necessary to submit a new pre-application request.

Processing timeline for your pre-application enquiry

The Planning Service will endeavour to send a formal response within 25 working days of the request being validated. This is considered to be a realistic timescale and agents are requested to make clients aware this is to be expected. The potential need for further information, a site visit and/or meeting may mean that an extension to these timescales will be needed in order to ensure the best possible response. Should such an extension be necessary, you will be contacted by the Planning Officer.

Disclaimer

All pre-application advice is given strictly without prejudice to the eventual decision of Aberdeenshire Council on any formal planning application. Every effort will be made to provide you with accurate professional advice; however, we cannot guarantee to cover all matters that will be considered in a formal application and the Council is not bound by this advice in the event of submission of a formal application. It should be appreciated that in addition to carrying out technical consultations, neighbours and other members of the public have a right to make representations on formal applications. Such representations and consultation responses will be fully taken into account when Aberdeenshire Council determines a formal planning application.

Freedom of Information

Your details will not be made public unless subject to and in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 or the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004.

Data Protection

The information held with your submission will be managed by the Council in accordance with the principles set out in the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. For further information on how we use your information, who we share this information with and how long we keep information is detailed in our [Privacy Notice](#).

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