

Planning Policy Advice Service

Background

The Spatial Policy and Delivery team of Lichfield District Council is responsible for preparing the Lichfield Local Plan. A document which helps to make sure our district provides the homes, jobs, community facilities and services to meet the needs of our population in a sustainable way, while protecting and enhancing the district's environment and heritage.

Preparing the Local Plan is a statutory requirement, and legislation and advice from the government in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Local plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise.

The Spatial Policy and Delivery team recognises that discussions with developers and landowners seeking to promote site allocations in the Local Plan and, or proposals more generally and the interpretation of wider policies contained in the local plan and national guidance can be beneficial. The approach is helpful in discussing the various aspects of the proposed development in relation to existing and emerging local plan policies. Discussions on policy matters at the earliest possible opportunity promotes an efficient Local Plan review process benefitting all parties in seeking to ultimately gain planning permission to develop land. Engagement can also avoid lengthy, costly and potentially abortive work on promoting allocations and or preparing and submitting proposals that would not be acceptable to the Local authority or requires amendment. Whilst not mandatory, government advice through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the benefits of the approach and encourages early discussions to promote efficient decision making on planning applications.

Service

The Spatial Policy and Delivery team service follows the same procedure as for pre-planning application advice and includes a meeting followed by written advice. The service will address the complexity that can arise in respect of pre-allocation site proposals, the relevance of wider policies on proposals and that developers or landowners may be seeking policy only advice due to the nature of their interest in the land or the stage reached in the progression of proposals.

The fee for this service is £450 per hour or part thereof for each meeting held. This will include travelling time if you want to have the meeting on site. The fee will be agreed prior to the meeting and an invoice will be sent to you subsequently.

This charge also includes where possible the cost of obtaining advice from other council services, e.g. drainage, environmental protection etc, together with external consultees such as the Environment Agency if necessary.

Each separate site referred to in an enquiry will be charged at the appropriate rate

What you need to do

If you want us to comment on a particular site you will need to provide the following information:

- Full site address and location plan with the site outlined in red
- An explanation/description of what you want to do
- Any relevant information about previous uses

What we will do

1. Acknowledge receipt of your enquiry, within 5 working days, giving you a reference number and the name of the policy officer who will be dealing with your request
2. The policy officer will contact you to confirm whether we have all the information we need and to arrange a date for a meeting and ask for any necessary additional information
The timing of the meeting will depend upon the complexity of the scheme and the amount of work that will be needed prior to a meeting including any time necessary to obtain initial views of other interested parties.
3. Attendance of other officers at the meeting, including specialist advisors, will be at the policy officer's discretion. The fee will be agreed prior to the meeting and an invoice will be sent to you
4. After the meeting, we will write to you confirming the advice given. This will usually be within 21 working days unless the proposal is particularly complex. The written response will outline the planning policy issues, matters raised at the meeting, and other constraints and requirements. You may also take notes at the meeting and if you wish, we will check and amend these as necessary.

Advice without Prejudice

It is to be appreciated that the advice is given without prejudice and given on the basis of the information provided by you/the developer. The advice given cannot provide an undertaking that a site will be allocated in the local plan or that planning permission will be granted. This is because the policy advice is given prior to the carrying out of formal consultation, and formal decisions taken by the Council on planning applications or as part of the Local Plan review process and a likely independent Examination in Public (EIP) by the Planning Inspectorate into any emerging Local Plan. Accordingly, the advice is officer opinion only, and so cannot constitute a formal response or decision from us.

It is also to be appreciated that some planning applications will be determined by planning committee, and members of the committee although expected to determine applications on planning grounds, are not obliged to adopt or follow the advice given by their officers.

Contact us

developmentplans@lichfielddc.gov.uk or write to us at:

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