



## South Hams District Council

### Planning and Building Control Pre application advice

Before contacting South Hams District Council Planning Service for pre-application advice on draft development proposals, we ask you to first:

1. Fully investigate the planning history of the site. Does this tell you anything, which may be relevant to your proposals?
2. Familiarise yourself with the relevant development and local plans and other supplementary planning documents the Council may have adopted which may be of relevance.
3. Visit the site and make a detailed analysis to establish site characteristics, constraints opportunities and the surroundings. Accurate site survey plans and tree condition surveys and wildlife surveys (where applicable) will be required if a planning application is to be submitted. Therefore, these survey plans are likely to be useful in the process of designing a scheme too.

Once you have gone through the above checklist, you should be in a much better position to begin to design your scheme.

You may then wish to approach the council to seek advice from a planning officer. We ask that you put your request in writing and that you include any plans/drawings and photographs that adequately describe your proposal. This will enable the most appropriate officer to be selected to handle the matter.

If you are a householder and wish to carry out works or alterations to an existing residential dwelling including extensions, garages, satellite dishes, garden structures etc, please see section **B – Householder Schemes** below.

#### **A: Charging for Pre Application Advice**

The Council charges for pre-application advice unless you wish to seek advice for works or alterations to an existing residential dwelling (see Class E below). The charges apply as follows:

- **Class A.** All large scale major schemes, including residential developments of more than 200 houses, or non-residential floor space of 10,000 sq.m. or site areas of more than 4 ha. Here the charge will be negotiated once a realistic assessment is made of the extent of pre-application involvement needed.
- **Class B.** All other developments defined as "major", i.e. residential schemes of between 10-199 houses, or sites of 0.5-4ha, or non-residential floor space of 1,000-9,999 sq.m. or 1-2 ha. Fee will be £2,000 +VAT (assuming up to 4 round table meetings from a range of disciplines are required).



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- **Class C.** All "minor" residential proposals (including holiday units), that involve the erection of, or change of use to, 1-9 dwellings. Fee will be £1,500 + VAT (assuming up to 3 meetings).
- **Class D.** All minor non-residential proposals for new buildings and changes of use. Fee will be £1,000 + VAT (assuming up to two meetings).
- **Class E.** All householder schemes - works or alterations to an existing residential dwelling, including extensions, garages, satellite dishes, garden structures, etc. No fee will be charged.

First and foremost, the service to be offered is for the provision of advice, it is not an approval service. It will aim to give applicants and developers very clear advice about whether the Council will recommend approval for a scheme, and how it may need to change to be supported by a recommendation. It would be known as the Development Advisory Service (**DAS**). The DAS form is available from Planning Reception, Follaton House, Totnes (01803 861122) or on the Council's website [www.southhams.gov.uk](http://www.southhams.gov.uk).

With the exception of proposals falling within Class E above, the process would commence with a preliminary meeting or other discussion when officers would explain the charges, process and timescale. The Government funded Advisory Team for Large Applications (**ATLAS**) recommend that a Charter be produced, which would formalise the pre-application process, and "which might form part of an overall Planning Performance Agreement" (**PPA**) which would cover the whole of the decision making process as well. Such Agreements are encouraged by Government for large developments, and, indeed, the speed of decision targets which are set by Government are due to be changed in April to permit longer timescales to resolve large-scale schemes where there is a PPA.

Proposed users of the DAS would be told that the advice would:-

- Be based on a "development team" approach, where a range of disciplines from all relevant Council Departments would be involved, so that a comprehensive and corporate response would be provided. Officers would endeavour to include representatives from other bodies, such as:- GOSW, the Highway Authority, Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, etc. subject to their availability;
- Be provided in writing, and be reviewed by senior officers;
- Include references to all relevant planning policies and planning history;
- Be provided on a without prejudice basis because it cannot constrain the Development Control Committee which is entitled to not accept the officer recommendation if there are good and justifiable planning reasons not to do so;



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- Set out clearly the issues which would be raised by the development, and either what sort of changes would be needed to make it supportable, or, in the event of insufficient changes being likely, what the grounds for refusal would be;
- Identify what level of community consultation would be expected in order to comply with the Council's Statement on Community Involvement;
- Include an input from the Design and Conservation Panel where this was warranted;
- Set out the nature and quality of information which would need to accompany any subsequent application in order for it to be validated;
- Establish the sort of Heads of Terms that are needed to be included in any Section 106 Agreement;
- Be based on site visit information made by officers of the Council;
- Provide the guidance of the case officer who would deal with any subsequent application and any other useful contact details.

With the exception of proposals falling within Class E above, the Charter would establish a mutually agreeable timetable to conclude the pre-application process and provide the written response and this is likely to take between 2-6 months depending upon the complexity of the issues raised. The users of the service may seek to impose a refund of some of the charges if the Council is unable to meet the agreed timescales. The contract would also need to establish the obligations of the user on the quality of information that would be needed to enable an informed opinion on the scheme to be reached.

#### **B: Householder Schemes**

**... works or alterations to an existing residential dwelling, including: extensions, garages, satellite dishes, garden structures, etc.**

For proposals falling within Class E above (all householder schemes - works or alterations to an existing residential dwelling including extensions, garages, satellite dishes, garden structures, etc) advice would:-

- Be provided in writing;
- Include references to all relevant planning policies and planning history;
- Be provided on a without prejudice basis because it cannot constrain the Development Control Committee which is entitled to not accept the officer recommendation if there are good and justifiable planning reasons not to do so;



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- Set out the nature and quality of information which would need to accompany any subsequent application in order for it to be validated;
- Provide the guidance of the case officer who would deal with any subsequent application and any other useful contact details.

Every effort will be made to deal with your enquiry within 6 weeks. If for any reason officers have to ask you to agree to extend the period for response, then your co-operation will be appreciated.