



Planning Pre-Application Advice – Major Schemes & Design

Guidance
Note

July 2014

Introduction

To help deliver the sustainable development sought by the NPPF, the District Council encourages full pre-application discussions. There is a charge for such advice and the full details of the advice format and relevant charges can be found at:

<http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/8842/Pre-application-Advice-and-Fees>

Any pre-application meeting(s) is at the discretion of the Council. For significant schemes or strategic scale development the Council would encourage the use of a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). The terms of any formal agreement including its scope and a relevant fee can be negotiated after an initial pre-application meeting.

This note advises developers on the Council's expectations regarding the design process at pre-application stage for major schemes, to ensure that early and proactive engagement and meaningful discussions can help lead to the high quality design solutions required by the NPPF.

Information for pre-application meetings

To be able to give meaningful advice, the Council will need to receive clear plans and supporting information of the intended proposal, in advance of any meeting(s). Prior sight of the proposal will allow council officers time to assess the submitted information; considering national and local policies and any other material considerations.

Although plans are likely to form the basis for a pre-application dialogue it will not be possible for council officers to comment effectively on layouts and designs without some understanding of the design process that has preceded the layout and the initial decisions. This should normally take the form of a draft Design & Access Statement, which should:

- **demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that account into context, and**
- **explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development proposal**

Before submitting schemes for pre-application advice, applicants will be expected to have had regard to the **Policy EN3** of the Rother Local Plan – Core Strategy submission version, or any subsequent version. See <http://www.rother.gov.uk/corestrategy>

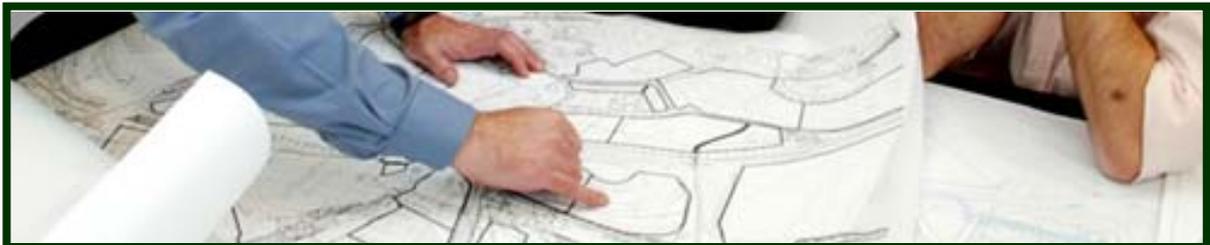
The list of **Key Design Principles** related to this policy might also provide a useful structure and framework for a draft design and access statement.

Pre-application Design Considerations

Although at the pre-application stage the Design and Access Statement will not be finalised, many of the required elements, should already be clear, for example:

- The constraints and opportunities of the site, and context appraisal.
- The rationale behind the design decisions taken on matters such as
 - **character for the development,**
 - **place-making principles,**
 - **landscape impact,**
 - **layout and disposition of development on the site,**
 - **access and circulation,**
 - **the public realm strategy,**
 - **definition of private and public space,**
 - **scale, mass and street scene**
 - **building appearance,**

With **larger or more significant schemes**, we would expect the initial pre-application submission to concentrate on the earlier items of the list, i.e. basic layout principles with regard to context analysis and place-making intentions, and subsequent pre-application discussions to focus on design development of the later items of a more detailed nature.



Design & Access Statements

On submission of any subsequent application for planning permission, the final Design and Access Statement will need to accompany the application, and the pre-application work will inform the final statement explaining the evolution of the proposal, particularly with any significant scheme.

Guidance on Design & Access Statements can be found at –

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/applications/howtoapply/whattosubmit/designaccess>

http://www.rother.gov.uk/media/pdf/p/I/Guidance_Notes_Design_Access_Statements_for_Planning_Applications_2013.pdf

http://www.historictownsforum.org/files/documents/free_download_publications/54_mbpa.pdf

Design Panel

For significant development schemes the council can use the services of the **local Design Review Panel**. Ordinarily, unless part of a design process agreed in a Planning Performance Agreement, there is currently no charge for this service. The panel comprises practitioners, predominantly from the Royal Institute of British Architects' (RIBA) approved list, though other related professional disciplines are also represented. Panel members are, in the main, Brighton or East Sussex based, and have high credentials, many being involved in architectural education, lecturing, critiquing etc. They are also heavily involved in regional RIBA associations, judging panels for local and national architectural awards, and are often RIBA prize winners themselves. The panel members see their role as a 'critical friend' to both the Council and the developer, offering a desk top assessment of schemes at pre-application stage, or occasionally during the application stage.

For significant major schemes the **South East Regional Design Panel** may be used and the developer will be expected to pay for this service.



Pre-application advice from other relevant bodies

At the planning application stage major schemes are likely to involve external consultations with a number of parties.

In particular, the **County Highway Authority** and the **Environment Agency** are likely to be significant parties to the planning process. Both organisations offer chargeable pre-application advice. Prospective applicants may wish to contact these parties separately, but it will generally be more beneficial for officers from these bodies to be party to any meeting with the council's planning officers so that any pre-application discussions can be as comprehensive as possible. We will, if possible, be happy to coordinate such liaison.

National and Local List of Planning Application Requirements (Validation List)

The Council's Validation adopted list can be found at

<http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/9951/Download-a-paper-planning-application-form-with-guidance-notes>

Reference should be made to this document in advance of any pre-application meeting to identify the specific information requirements relating to the proposal.

Assessment of Significance

Applications relating to heritage assets (designated and non-designated) will require an assessment of the significance of such asset(s). As with the Design Access Statement, work relating to the Assessment of Significance should be undertaken at the earliest stage, as this initial work is likely to inform any detailed plans, or any preliminary layouts.

Guidance on the Assessment of Significance can be found at

[http://www.rother.gov.uk/media/pdf/7/p/Assessment_of_Significance - Guidance Notes.pdf](http://www.rother.gov.uk/media/pdf/7/p/Assessment_of_Significance_-_Guidance_Notes.pdf)