



MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE SERVICE

**MAKING AN ENQUIRY
WHAT HAPPENS TO MY ENQUIRY?
FURTHER INFORMATION
PRE-APPLICATION ENQUIRY FORM GUIDANCE NOTES
PRE-APPLICATION ENQUIRY FORM**

IMPORTANT: PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO READ THIS ADVICE NOTE CAREFULLY PRIOR TO REQUESTING PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

The Development Management section of the Planning Service manages the process of applying for planning permission, and offers an advice service to anyone considering making an application.

The submission of a pre-application enquiry will help you to gain clear, impartial and professional advice at an early stage regarding any key issues that you need to address prior to submitting a formal development proposal. Advice can be provided for developments requiring planning permission, advertisement consent, conservation area consent or listed building consent.

You do not have to request pre-application advice prior to submitting a planning application, and you can submit a planning application at anytime. However, pre-application advice can help to identify schemes that are unlikely to gain approval from entering the process, and as a result can save you time and money. Applications submitted without pre-application advice will generally be determined as submitted, without prolonged negotiation.

Making an Enquiry

Enquiries for pre-application advice should be made in writing using the Pre-Application Enquiry Form. The form is available via the Planning pages (Planning Guidance) on the Council's website www.midlothian.gov.uk or if you wish a paper copy to be sent to you please contact the duty planning officer on dutyplanningofficer@midlothian.gov.uk or 0131 2713302. The pre-application enquiry service is now a charged for service and the fees charter can be found on the Planning fees page of the Council website. If you are unsure whether planning permission is required for your proposed development please contact the duty planning officer who can advise you accordingly.

Prior to making an enquiry the Council recommends that you discuss your proposal with your neighbours and resolve any boundary or land ownership issues.

In addition to the need for planning permission you should also contact the Council's Building Standards team on BuildingStandards@midlothian.gov.uk or 0131 2713320 to ascertain whether a building warrant is also required for your proposed development.

What happens to my enquiry?

The Council will record your enquiry on its back office database, allocate your enquiry to a case officer, acknowledge receipt of your enquiry and then endeavour to provide a full written response within the timescales identified in the fees charter.

Prior to responding to your enquiry the case officer may contact you to discuss your enquiry or to arrange a meeting if further information or clarification is required. In the majority of enquiries the case officer will also carry out an unaccompanied site visit and in some cases informally consult with other specialists such as the Council's Transportation Team.

In the full written response to your enquiry the Council will provide advice on the following points:

- Which development plan policies are considered to be the most appropriate to the determination of a subsequent planning application;
- Whether the principal of the proposed development is considered to be in compliance with development plan policies*;

- What material considerations, if any, shall be given weight if the proposed development is contrary to development plan policies*;
- Suggested improvements to the proposed layout, form and design with the view to improving the content of any subsequent application, turning a potentially unacceptable scheme into a quality development;
- What information will be required to be submitted along with the application;
- Which external agencies may have to be consulted as part of the formal application process; and
- Whether the proposed development, if supported by the Council, would be subject to developer contributions (generally only applicable to larger developments).

**The development plan for Midlothian comprises the Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) and the Midlothian Local Development Plan; in most cases prospective applicants for planning permission would be advised to check the policies in the NPF4 and the Local Plan.*

Any pre-application advice will be recorded and considered in the determination of any subsequent application. The pre-application enquiry and the response given by the Council will not be made available to third parties. However, it is worth noting that the Council may receive requests for information in terms of Freedom of Information legislation and the Environmental Information Regulations. You should clearly mark where the submitted information is confidential.

Further information

Further information on the planning system and how to apply for planning permission is available on the Council's website www.midlothian.gov.uk or via the Scottish Government's website www.gov.scot.

The following documents can also be viewed on the Council's website:

- Midlothian Local Development Plan
- Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Adopted Development Briefs

Pre-Application Enquiry Form Guidance Notes

In requesting pre-application advice it is important to remember that the more information you can provide at the start of the process and the better the quality of submission, the quicker and more comprehensive the advice given by the Council will be.

1. **Contact Details:**
You can seek pre-application advice yourself, or you can employ an agent. Please note that if you employ an agent all correspondence and communication will be through them to avoid duplication of responses and to improve efficiency of the process. If you are using an agent please provide their contact details.
2. **Location of Proposed Development:**
Please give the full postal address of the site or building subject to the enquiry. If the site does not have a postal address please describe the site's location making reference to a minimum of one classified public road or street name.

3. **Current Use, Occupation and Buildings:**
Please describe the current use of the site or the last known use (with cessation date) if the site is vacant or in disuse. In describing the use of the site please describe the activities taking place. For example if the use is retail please state what goods (i.e. grocery store, bakers, florists) are being sold, if the use is industrial, please state the industrial processes taking place (i.e. metal fabrication, car repairs).

Also provide a brief description of the buildings on site in terms of their size and form. For example, a residential unit can be described as a traditional two storey dwellinghouse, comprising slate roof tiles, stone and render walling and timber window frames.

4. **Description of Proposal:**
Please provide a detailed description of your proposed development including its intended use and scale of building/engineering works. Proposals for buildings should include a description of the intended size, form, design and materials. Plans and drawings (provisionally these can be sketched plans) should be submitted with your enquiry to support your description of proposed development.

5. **Background:**
Please provide, as far as you may be aware, details of any previous planning applications, pre-application enquiries or enquiries with other Council departments or external agencies, such as Historic Scotland.

6. **Supporting Documents:**
In the majority of cases plans and drawings (these can be sketched plans at this stage) should accompany your enquiry. The Council recommends that you submit a location/site plan which shows the location of the site, the siting of existing buildings, landscape features, site access and other site constraints and elevation drawings showing the scale, form and design of any proposed buildings or extensions to buildings. It is also recommended that you submit supporting photographs of the site, existing buildings and street scene, especially when new building works are proposed.

It is important to remember that the more information you can provide about a proposal the more accurate and in-depth our feedback will be.

7. **Interest in the Site:**
Please state whether you are owner, occupier, interested party or agent acting on behalf of another.

8. **Declaration**
Please note that you are submitting a pre-application enquiry on the understanding that any written advice provided is based on the information submitted and that the advice is not binding on Midlothian Council. Any advice given by Council officers for pre-application enquiries does not constitute a formal response or decision of the Council with regards to any applications.

9. **Application fee**
Please refer to the online Fee Charter to establish the fee required to be submitted along with the pre-application enquiry. There are some exemptions identified in the charter. A pre-application enquiry submitted without the necessary fee will not be validated.

Pre-Application Enquiry Form

This form is for requesting pre-application advice when you know planning permission will be required and you want an informal pre application assessment of the acceptability of the scheme. Prior to filling in the form please read the accompanying guidance notes carefully.

		For Office Use Reference:
1	Please provide your contact details: Name: Address: Email: Phone:	
2	Location of the proposed development:	
3	Please provide a description of the sites current use, state of occupation and identify any buildings situated within the site:	
4	Description of the proposal, including the intended use and a description of any proposed building or engineering works: .	
5	Background – please provide details of any previous contact with the Council with regard the development site, including reference numbers or planning officer's name if known:	

6	<p>Please identify what plans and supporting information you have submitted with your enquiry:</p>	
7	<p>Please state what your interest in the site is:</p>	
8	<p>Declaration:</p> <p>Please confirm that as far as you are aware the information provided is accurate and that in submitting a pre-application enquiry you have read the accompanying guidance and understand that the advice offered by officers is informal and will be based on the information provided and is provided entirely without prejudice to any ultimate planning application decision:</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p>	
9	<p>Fee submitted:</p> <p>Amount –</p> <p>Date –</p> <p>Reference –</p>	