The Council encourages and welcomes the opportunity to provide advice before a planning application is submitted. Our aim is to encourage and promote high quality development and to improve the efficiency of our service. We have undertaken a review of the pre application service and a decision has been made to introduce a charge for this service in some cases. This will enable the Council to provide a more responsive and professional service which will reduce uncertainty and be highly cost effective for people preparing a planning application. These fees are in addition to the fees payable for the submission of applications. If you make an application having received advice for which you have paid, the full application submission fee remains applicable.

With effect from 4th April 2011, all requests for pre-application advice on ‘major’ and ‘minor’ proposals (defined in Appendix 1) will incur a charge. Charges will also be made for compliance checks and researching planning histories for permitted development restrictions.

This guidance is intended to help you understand the most appropriate way to go about seeking permission. It should not be confused with the question of whether planning permission is needed for a particular proposal which is handled through a different process, and is not currently subject to a fee.

There are considerable benefits in seeking pre application advice as:-

- It gives you an opportunity to understand how our policies and other material planning considerations will be applied to your development.
- It can identify at an early stage where there is a need for specialist input, for example in relation to listed buildings, trees, landscape, noise, flooding, transport, contaminated land, ecology or archaeology.
- It will assist you in preparing proposals for formal submission which, providing you have taken our advice fully into account, should be handled more quickly.
- It may lead to a reduction in time spent by your own professional advisors in working up proposals.
- It may indicate that a proposal is completely unacceptable, saving you the cost of pursuing a formal application.

In addition to the pre-application advice guidance outlined in this note, general advice and information, including the Council’s Unitary Development Plan and Supplementary planning Guidance, is available on the planning pages of our website at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/planning or on the Planning Portal's website www.planningportal.gov.uk.
HOUSEHOLDER GUIDANCE

Development Services offers advice for householder applications. We can advise that any application would be considered against the policies within the Vale of Glamorgan Adopted Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011, details of which are available on the Council’s website by visiting www.valeof glamorgan.gov.uk/udp

The relevant policies for household extensions would include:
- ENV27 – design of new developments
- HOUS7 – Replacement and extension of Dwellings in the Countryside

And where your property is in a Conservation Area, policies;
- ENV17 – Protection of Historic and Built Environment
- ENV20 – development in Conservation Areas

You should consider the advice contained in these policies and in the Supplementary Planning Guidance ‘Amenity Standards’ and ‘A Guide to Planning in the Vale of Glamorgan’ which contains advice on design of extensions, which are also available on our website, in designing your scheme. Once you have considered the above you may submit details for pre-application advice. There is no charge for household development enquiries.

WHAT MATTERS WILL BE COVERED WHEN DEALING WITH PRE APPLICATION REQUESTS?

The matters which could be the subject of pre application advice include:-

- Planning History of the site.
- Statutory designations of the site, such as conservation areas, listed buildings, protected trees and nature conservation status.
- Relevant planning policies and other material factors applying to the site/development.
- Advice on completing the necessary forms, plans and establishing the correct fee.
- A consideration of the necessary supporting information and documents including Design and Access Statements and Energy Efficiency requirements.
- Advice regarding the procedure, consultation arrangements and estimated time scale for processing the application.
- Any requirements for developer contributions to the infrastructure necessary to support the proposed development, for example affordable housing, open space, sustainable transport.
- Informal, and without prejudice, comments on the content, preparation and presentation of an application likely to satisfy the Council's planning policies.
- The merits of draft proposals (e.g. appropriateness of design), and
- The provision of copies of any relevant documents, subject to the Council's standard charges for documents.
INFORMATION WE WILL NEED FROM YOU

All requests for pre-application advice must be made in writing and include the information detailed below. Should you prefer, a standard form is available for use on the planning page of the Council's website.

For all enquiries you will need to send us the following as a minimum:

- Written details of the address and proposal.
- Description of the nature and scale of the development proposed and the uses to which land and buildings are to be put.
- Site location plan with the site clearly marked (to a recognised scale and within a north point).
- Sketch drawings providing details of the proposal (to a recognised scale).
- Contact details including phone number and email address.
- The appropriate fee (see the list of charges at Appendix 1) - No advice or site visits if deemed appropriate by us will be undertaken until the full fee has been paid.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY HELP ENQUIRIES

- Photographs of the site and surrounding area, with particular regard to any nearby houses or other development which might be affected by your proposal.
- Access and parking arrangements.
- It may also be in your interest to submit additional information relating to ecological, landscape, contamination, flood and transport assessments depending upon the location, nature and complexity of the development. We also recommend the submission of an initial design and access statement for comments.

WHAT WE WILL DO

On receipt of your initial enquiry, we will decide whether it requires pre-application advice and what type of advice is most suitable. We will then check that the appropriate fee has been paid and if it has not, we will write to you confirming that we will not progress your enquiry until the appropriate fee has been paid.

Once the fee has been paid, your enquiry will be allocated to an officer.

An acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days of a valid enquiry being received and it will include a receipt for the fee and confirmation of the officer handling the request. We will do our best to reply within 28 days. In particularly complex cases, more time may be needed and we will advise you when you may expect a reply.
The written reply setting out our advice will comprise the service for the standard charge. Further enquiries will be charged another fee.

If we do not have enough information to answer your enquiry then we will write to you by letter or email, setting out what information we need. If the enquiry relates to a major proposal then you will be contacted by the officer allocated to your enquiry, who will confirm whether there is sufficient information to provide advice and, if not, will ask for additional information, in which case the time period for dealing with your enquiry will need to be extended.

Where a meeting is sought, we will arrange a suitable date depending on the complexity of the scheme and the amount of work that will be needed beforehand. This may include any time necessary to obtain initial views of other interested parties such as the Highways Engineer, Conservation Officer Etc. However, no meetings will take place without prior sight of the requested information.

Attendance of other officers at the meeting, including specialist advisors, will be at our discretion and through discussion with you but will not require the payment of additional fees.

Following the meeting, we will confirm the advice in a letter or email. Again, this will usually be within 28 days unless the proposal is particularly complex, when an alternative timescale will be agreed at the end of the meeting.

Should a further meeting be required, the scope for such a meeting will be established beforehand together with the relevant fee which must be received together with any relevant document before the subsequent meeting.

Any meeting will normally take place at the Dock Office, Barry. The Manager may exceptionally vary this to allow a request for a meeting on site or outside the Civic Offices. If so, the fee will be adjusted to reflect time and cost spent travelling.

The Council has the right to decline a request for pre application advice where it is not considered either appropriate or necessary.

**Site Visits**

A site visit or meeting is not normally considered necessary. However in those cases where the officer decides it is required, an additional charge may be incurred.

**WHAT THE COSTS COVER**

These fees cover administration costs and the time spent in research, assessment, a meeting as necessary, and in making a written response, the costs also now include a VAT element following a clarification from HM Revenue & Customs.
Any requests for written advice must be accompanied by the relevant fee otherwise advice cannot be provided. Each project or separate site referred to in an enquiry will be charged at the appropriate rate. Multiple requests for advice in respect of different sites will attract the appropriate multiple fees. The Council has the right to determine the fee. In the event of any disputes, the issue will be referred to the Council’s Head of Planning and Transportation who will arbitrate. Where the appropriate fee is not paid within 15 whole days after a reminder, no response will be given.

DEVELOPMENT TEAM APPROACH – BUILDING CONTROL

Please note if you decide to employ the Council’s Building Control team in respect of the proposed development for which you have sought advice, any fees you have paid in respect of this guidance will be taken into account in assessing the relevant Building Regulations fee.

All Building Regulations fees are now based on a standard hourly rate with the final fee payable worked out on a risk assessed basis. Accordingly as the Councils officers will have been involved in the project from the earliest stages this will be considered in the final risk assessment based fee for Building Regulations.

PLEASE NOTE
Our pre application advice service is offered to both developers and individual applicants. In either case there are some general points which you should take into account before you contact us:

- Try to contact us at the earliest reasonable opportunity in your project.
- Undertake some initial research, including looking at our notes on how to submit a valid application.
- Sound out the views of those who may be affected by your proposals.
- Remember the more information you can give us, the more accurate and helpful our response can be - vague proposals can receive only vague advice. A key to the success of this service will be you providing us with adequate information in advance - this is set out in more detail in the documents mentioned above; and
- On complex issues be prepared to seek private professional help – our service is not intended to be an alternative to employing professional consultants.

We will always do our best to give you the best advice we can on the information which is to hand. However, you need to be aware that any advice given by Council Officers for pre application enquiries does not constitute a formal decision by the Council as Local Planning Authority. Any views or opinions are given in good faith, and to the best of our ability but without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application.

The final decision on any application that you may then make can only be taken after we have consulted local people, statutory consultees and any other interested parties. It will be made by the Planning Committee or under powers delegated to the Head of Planning and Transportation and be based on all of the information available at that time.
You should therefore be aware that officers cannot guarantee the final formal decision that will be made on your application(s). However, any pre-application advice that has been provided will be carefully considered in reaching a decision or recommendation on an application; subject to the proviso that circumstances and information may change or come to light that could alter that position.

Please note that in cases where the submission of planning applications are delayed following the receipt of advice, the weight given to pre-application advice will decline over time, and can be superseded by new government advice or new planning policies.

Fees are non-refundable.
Appendix 1

WHAT ARE THE CHARGES?

Major Developments

- New residential development of 10 or more new dwellings or on 0.5ha of land or more.
- Change of use of buildings or and where the gross floorspace or site area is 1,000m² or more.
- New non-residential buildings and extensions to non-residential buildings of 1,000m² or more of gross floorspace.
- Mixed use developments where the combined gross floorspace is of 1,000m² or more.
- Other large scale or complex/specialist applications that require significant officer input (e.g. to cover cases such as a Wind Farm which might otherwise fall as a 'minor development' based on these criteria)

Fee

- £414 or 1% of the appropriate fee under the Application Fees Regulations, whichever is the greater, for written advice only. Additional advice may be required and will be charged at the same rate.
- £828 or 1.5% of the appropriate fee under the Application Fees Regulations, whichever is the greater for a meeting which should not normally exceed an hour and a half, plus written confirmation, additional meetings may be required and these will be charged at the same rate. The Council will agree the need for additional meetings and may recommend the involvement of third parties if it is felt necessary.

The above charges will also apply to any IPC application (or subsequent replacement authority).

The Council does have the ability to be flexible when setting fees in respect of a major proposal when a series of meetings are required leading up to the submission of an application. In such cases ability to set fees at the outset will be considered and if appropriate a level of service offered for that set fee.

Minor Developments

- New residential developments of 1 to 9 dwellings.
- Residential conversions involving change of use to more than one dwelling.
- Change of use of buildings or land where the gross floorspace or site area is less than 1,000m².
- New non-residential buildings and extensions to non-residential buildings from 100m² to less than 1,000 m² of gross floorspace.
- Mixed use developments where the combined gross floorspace from 100m² to less than 1,000 m².
- Advertisements

**Fee**

- **£276** for written advice only. Additional advice may be required and will be charged at the same rate.
- **£414** for up to an hour long meeting plus written confirmation, additional meetings may be required and these will be charged at the same rate. The Council will agree the need for additional meetings and may recommend the involvement of third parties if it is felt necessary.

(All the above charges now include VAT at 20%)

**General Planning Enquiries Relating to Planning History**

A standard fee of **£58.00** per hour or part thereof, will apply to any requests for information relating to planning histories of a particular site or site and details of conditions, their discharging and any other related information.

Copies of documents will be charged at set rates as advertised separately.

**OTHER DEVELOPMENTS (EXEMPTIONS)**

There will generally be no charge for the following:-

Householder development, heritage proposals (Listed Buildings, Conservation Area Consent), Council, Town/Community Council proposals, developments where permitted development rights removed, tree advice, small scale development for a non profit making community facility or scheme by a registered charity or Voluntary Sector Organisation.

The only exception to the above will be if at the discretion of the officer a meeting is held or site visit is necessary for a proposed development in which case a **£58** fee will be charged for either.