

# Planning Service Pre-Application Discussion Guide

How to apply for a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD).

A guide for anyone who wants advice before submitting a planning application.



**Belfast**  
City Council

## What is a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD)?

A PAD is an opportunity for you to discuss your proposal with a Planning Officer before you make a planning application. We can advise you on how to make your application and what the issues will be when it is considered.

## Why do we offer a PAD?

We offer this service so you have a better chance of getting permission when applying for planning permission.

We are committed to providing a quality planning service, both in terms of the quality of new developments and the timescale in which we make our decisions. Good quality decisions, made in a timely manner need commitment and input from both our officers and applicants.

A PAD should improve the quality of your application, reduce the time it takes to determine your application, and give you peace of mind that you are on the right lines before paying a planning fee.

### What if I just want to know if I need planning permission?

**Do not** use the PAD service to find out if you need planning permission.

Please visit

[www.belfastcity.gov.uk/planning](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/planning) or email [planning@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:planning@belfastcity.gov.uk)

## How should I apply for my PAD?

You must submit a **PAD request form** by email, post or hand deliver to our office. You can download this at [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/pad](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/pad)

## How much does my PAD cost?

We now charge for a PAD for certain types of proposal. Costs are as follows:

Category and Fee	Cost includes
<b>Large scale major</b> <b>£2,000+VAT</b> 100 residential units or more 10,000 sq. m. or more	A full response from a Planning Officer. A meeting will be arranged. Additional meetings over and above this at £1000 +VAT.
<b>Major scale</b> <b>£1,500+VAT</b> 50-99 houses Other major development less than 10,000 sq. m.	A full response from a Planning Officer. A meeting and follow-up meeting will be arranged, where required. Additional meetings over and above this at £500 +VAT.
<b>Large scale local</b> <b>£1,000+VAT</b> 10-49 houses 2,000 to 4,999 sq. m.	A full response from a Planning Officer. A meeting and follow-up meeting will be arranged, where required. Additional meetings over and above this at £500 +VAT.
<b>Local scale</b> <b>£500+VAT</b> 1-9 houses 200 – 1,999 sq. m.	A full response from a Planning Officer. A meeting and follow-up meeting will be arranged, where required. Additional meetings over and above this at £500 +VAT.
<b>Other</b> <b>£0</b> Floor space < 200 sq. m. Householder, commercial, community or non-profit organisations	A full response from a Planning Officer. A meeting will be arranged, where required.

If your enquiry relates to a domestic residential PAD you should contact a Duty Planning Officer in the first instance.

You can contact the Duty Planner Officer by phone on 028 9050 0510. Or visit our office at the Cecil Ward Building, Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm.



## What can I expect?

We want to help you through the planning application process.

We will provide advice based on the information you give us so the more information you provide, the more detailed the response will be.

- 1 Once you submit your PAD request form by email, post or hand deliver you will receive an acknowledgment within five days. This will confirm who will deal with your enquiry.
- 2 If we need to clarify any details a meeting will be arranged within six weeks.
- 3 From the date we receive all information required we will aim to provide a full response within eight weeks.

If we have all the information required at the start of the process this will help us move through these stages as quickly as possible.

To avoid delays, tick off the information checklist on your PAD request form to make sure everything is included for your submission.

## Who will respond to my Pre-Application?

A Planning Officer gives pre-application advice. All advice given is impartial and will not affect any decision the council takes on a subsequent application. While we make every effort to give comprehensive professional advice, all the issues might not be known at the PAD stage.

If, following PAD, the application you submit does not follow the pre-application advice given, we reserve the right not to engage in any more negotiations or discussions and to refuse the application.

## What supporting information is needed with my PAD request Form?

Please note: The more information you provide, the more detailed the response will be.

### Essential information:

- Fee.
- Location plan to 1:1250 or 1:2500 scale.
- The site to be outlined in red with a north point shown.
- Any neighbouring land in the applicant's ownership in blue.

### Optional requirements:

- Description of the site – including the existing use, adjacent buildings and uses, and any particular site characteristics such as changes in levels, trees and landscaping.
- Photographs of the site and surroundings.
- Site layout – showing the location of existing and proposed building(s), site levels and the means of access.
- Elevations and floor plans – both existing and proposed (if applicable).
- Planning history – details of any known planning history (if applicable).
- Pre-application consultation – the results of any preliminary consultation with neighbours, other authorities or statutory consultees (if applicable).
- Technical studies – eg Design and Access Statement, transport, flood risk, drainage, contamination and ecology.



## Process

**Submit a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) request form**

**Acknowledgement of your PAD request**

**Request more information if required**

Site visit (if required)

Meetings with applicant or agent (if required)

**Response issued**

## Timescale

**Five working days**

**Within six weeks**

**Within six - eight weeks from all information is received**

## Confidentiality

We do not publish requests for pre-application advice but we may be obligated to disclose this information in response to any relevant freedom of information request received.

You must give your agreement for this to be disclosed or provide reasons why it should not on your PAD request form.

## Getting in touch

The quickest way of getting in touch:  
To submit a PAD request form go to  
[www.belfastcity.gov.uk/pad](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/pad)

Belfast Planning Service, Ground Floor, Cecil Ward Building,  
4-10 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BP

### Do I need planning permission?

[www.belfastcity.gov.uk/planning](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/planning)  
Tel: 028 9050 0510  
Email: [planning@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:planning@belfastcity.gov.uk)