

## **WHY SEEK PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE?**

We are able to provide you with advice and information if you are considering a development proposal and welcome and encourage discussions before you submit an application.

It can be very helpful for you to seek our advice about your planning proposals before submitting your actual application. This can help to overcome potential difficulties and make sure your application addresses all the important planning considerations. It is an opportunity to better understand the way in which an application will be judged against the policies in the development plan and other material considerations.

You may also find it helpful to obtain advice from an independent planning specialist when drawing up your scheme. People who regularly prepare planning applications have the experience and expertise that can help make sure your scheme has the best chance of being granted permission. Spending time and effort in preparing your scheme is more likely to result in a good quality and acceptable development and also help us process your application quickly. We will tell you what plans and supporting information we will require with any planning application.

As a result of the time and resources involved in giving pre-application advice, we have introduced pre-application charges based on the type of proposal. This means that the service does not fall as a general cost to the council tax payer. Please see the charges in our document on the website Application Fees from 01 April 2019.

## **HOW THE SCHEME WORKS**

Requests for pre application advice, need to be in writing using the form on the website and need to be accompanied by the appropriate fee. You will need to provide us with information about the site and details about your scheme. This will normally include:

- a) a site location plan;
- b) a description and summary of your proposals, and preferably sketch plans;
- c) if possible, photographs of the site.

The more information you can provide, the more complete the advice from us can be.

If a meeting is required, we will arrange the date as soon as possible after receipt. Clearly the more information and detail you can provide about your proposed development, the more comprehensive and constructive our advice will be. Where necessary that advice will include changes required to make a scheme acceptable.

## **OUR ADVICE**

Our advice will set out the issues which would be raised by the development proposed and outline what would be needed to make it supportable, or in the event that it cannot be made acceptable, what the grounds of refusal would be. Advice will be given on what information would need to accompany a planning application.

Payment can be made by cheque (made payable to Somerset West and Taunton Council ) submitted with the request. Alternatively if you wish to pay by credit or debit card, please include a contact phone number or email address on the application form and we will contact you to make payment.

Our advice will be provided based on the available information but will not be any guarantee that any subsequent planning application will result in a particular decision and will not be binding on the Council in any way. Our opinion may change during the formal application process as a result of views of consultees and other interested parties. Furthermore, the final decision may be made by the Planning Committee, rather than by officers, and it is possible that the Committee may reach a different view.

Whether or not you decide to seek and accept pre-application advice does not affect your right to submit a planning application or appeal against a refusal of permission. Please note that if you choose not to make use of the pre-application advice service, or choose to ignore any advice given, we cannot guarantee to negotiate amendments to a scheme following submission of an application.