

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT PRE-APPLICATION ARRANGEMENTS	
PAS Criteria	Assessment
1. Accessibility and clarity of the service offer	The Councils pre-application service is accessed online through a Development Management front page. Currently this page links to 18 other pages relating to different types of proposal or levels of service. This is unnecessarily complicated and needs simplification.
2. Differing levels of service should be offered.	The prospective applicants are offered different levels of service but how these interrelate is not clear. For other types of development proposals it is not readily apparent that two levels of service are being offered i.e. whether in principle a development could be acceptable and where it is given on such details as design, site layout etc. Published information needs to be clearer regarding situations where the enquirer would like a meeting or where the LPA consider a meeting would be appropriate.
3. Does the published information guide the prospective applicant on what is appropriate to meet their requirements?	It is not evident for the prospective applicant as to the information that they need to supply e.g. a small business wanting to find out whether in principle what they wanted to do was acceptable in a specific location could go to the page headed 'SMALL SCALE RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL PRE APPLICATION ADVICE ENQUIRY FORM' and find they are required to provide plans on what they want to build putting them to possibly unnecessary expense.
4. Published timescales for Issuing Pre-app responses	The timescales for responses do not differentiate between enquiries of different complexities e.g., responses on simple householder enquiry for an extension and development of 9 houses are both as being provided within 20 working days of receipt. There additionally is no consideration of adjusting timescales for responses where a meeting may be required. See table Y below which provides a comparison of response targets for several LPAs.
5. LPA should use the process in guiding development by solving problems with the proposal and suggesting alternatives as appropriate	Current quality of the responses provided has not been assessed as part of this exercise.
6. Is there clarity in the advice given	Currently the details of the pre-application service published online sets out for each of the categories the information that will be provided in the response letter. Feedback from regular users suggested that some of the information provided is of little benefit for the enquirer. A more proportionate form of response could provide more focused information needed by the prospective applicant and this could avoid unnecessary work for the planning officer.
7. A record should be kept of all pre-application advice	This is undertaken.

<p>8. Responses should be clear that:</p> <p>9. circumstances and policy considerations can change over time, and</p> <p>10. the response is an officer opinion which is not binding on the consideration of any planning application.</p>	<p>This will be covered in the pre-application templates.</p>
<p>11. There should be arrangements in their pre-application offer for informing ward councillors and cabinet members of pre-application discussions happening in the area.</p>	<p>This will be covered in a review of the Protocol</p>
<p>12. LPAs should be clear about their practice regarding the disclosure of pre-application discussions and explain this in their service offer. Once a planning application is submitted the best practice is that the advice given is published.</p>	<p>Most authorities treat pre-application enquiries confidentially unless the enquirer has agreed that they can be publicised. Need to confirm that pre-application will be confidential.</p>
<p>13. The charges should be clear in the service offer and should relate directly to the services provided within each tier of the offer.</p>	<p>Charging arrangement are not clearly set out.</p>