

	National Park	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Which forms of planning pre app advice do you provide?								
	Surgery/Advice Centres		Yes		Yes		Yes		
	Paid pre app advice serv						For a small number of more significant proposals via a refined version of PPA approach. Approx 12-15 pa.	Yes	
	Informal advice via telephone		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
	Informal advice via email		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
	Planning front desk/callers to the office			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes via duty officer		Yes
	Other	Yes	Yes						
		Formal pre app protocol	Informal advice by letter			We can give basic info over the phone or to people who call in at reception but for a written response to a pre app enquiry/background work/site visit we insist upon a written request from the applicant. This should include info setting out location, proposals & photos perhaps with sketch plans as well. For basic info where the request is not in written form we do not carry out any checks or look at policies in detail & we don't supply a written response. We have a standard householder pre app enquiry form available from our web site. We will not carry out site visits for house holder pre app requests as we do not have the staff resources to do so. These are all done as a desk top exercise using computer aids such as Google street view, constraint mapping and aerial photos when necessary.	A very broad enquiry and pre app enquiry service which is currently not charged.	We introduced a consistent pre-app service across this NPA on 7 January 2013 which is free for householders and requires a fee for other development.	In addition to email, we respond in writing to all written requests. For all pre-application enquiries where it is necessary we will undertake a site visit/meeting with the enquirer.
2.	What is the estimated % proportions of each means of advice delivery?								
	Surgery/Advice Centres		20%		10%		10%	8%	
	Paid pre app advice serv				45%		<5%	90%	
	Informal advice via telephone		10%		20%	5%	15%	1%	30%
	Informal advice via email		50%		20%	5%	50%	1%	40%
	Planning front desk				5%	5%	10%		15%
	Other	90%	20%			85%	>10%		15%
						The vast majority of advice now given is in written form as set out above. Last year we dealt with over 800 written requests for advice spread over pre app and pd type enquiries. Any pd enquiries are answered informally bearing in mind CLEUD route for formal determination but we tend to answer the question as to whether or not pp is required and then give informal advice on the likelihood of pp being granted. All our pre app requests are logged on PACS and mapped spatially. At the moment they are not scanned but kept in paper form for four years and then disposed of.			
3.	Please give details of planning advice centres/surgeries	N/A	We hold 2 planning surgeries per week, one in the north of the Park on alternate weeks and one in the south. The surgeries are covered by a Planning Officer and last 2-2.5 hours with each appt assigned 30 mins.	We provide a duty officer at our reception from 8:45am until 1:00pm from Mon-Fri.	Planning surgeries are held once a month for 2 hours at 3 different locations within the park. There is no requirement to make an appointment and they are usually conducted by the area officer for the particular area.	Planning surgeries have been considered in other areas of the Park for example at our visitor centres but are not as cost effective. We will be using those centres instead as information points for anyone who lives in the area.	Daily duty officer at HQ 9:30-1230 - no appointment. We offer a range of weekly and monthly drop in surgeries at major towns. Other as above - formal appointments arranged meetings, on site or office at least 10%.	We have other districts within the NP boundaries who operate the planning service on our behalf (essentially outsourced). We require them to operate our pre app service but if they wish to also offer duty officer service - perhaps inline with their part of their District outside the NP we are happy for them to do so.	We used to hold quarterly parish surgeries, covering a group of parishes, where the public could come in for free planning advice or to discuss planning matters. These were not very well attended, so have been discontinued but to be replaced by a wider fora with an emphasis on more corporate engagement.

4.	How do you deal with ad hoc enquiries?	Each pre app enquiry is logged on the system and allocated a dedicated officer - it is dealt with in a similar manner to an application.	Ad hoc enquiries are generally dealt with by the Planning Assistant (both the North & the South teams have a FT planning asst). Most enquiries where planning permission is required are generally discussed at each team's weekly meeting.	As above.	We have a dedicated duty officer on duty every day, usually planning technicians. They deal with enquiries from the public & general email and letter enquiries.	We have 2 planning technicians who specialise in being first point of contact and will themselves deal with householder advice and pd enquiries. All requests above householder level are distributed to planning officers in the team.	Duty officer and surgeries as per above.	We only give written responses if the question relates to a site as opposed to just, eg details of a policy. We require a proforma to be completed and our response is then completed via a template on a Uniform system which provides a consistency response and stores all the responses.	Duty officer system in office hours. Deals with telephone enquiries and personal callers.
5.	If 'charged for' pre app advice provided how does this operate?	N/A		N/A	The Authority does not charge for pre app advice.	We don't charge for pre app work but we are looking at Planning Performance Agreements on the more complex proposals and may use this as a vehicle to lever in small charges to cover officer time at pre app and any unusual charge items such as housing viability assessment work from a specialist. Report going to our June 7 Authority meeting on PPAs.	More significant schemes only on time basis of persons involved plus flat rate fee of £1000 plus VAT.	Householder and 'do I need planning permission?' enquiries are free with an escalating scale for other developments.	Do not charge currently.
6.	How long have you been providing the paid pre-app advice service?	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	18 months for limited PPA scheme. We are currently considering other service products for pre app advice.	We had a mix of pre app services prior to this year (some charges some not) as when the NP was founded we adopted existing services operated by the Districts we outsource to. We have had a consistent charging regime since 7 January 2013.	N/A
7.	Have the fees been reviewed in that period?	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes - once after trial period.	Fees are due to be reviewed in late summer 2013, six months after their implementation.	N/A
8.	What has been the general response to the charging regime? Do applicants/agents value the service?	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	Greatly welcomed by our customers and their agents. In partic, the agreed joint approach to timing, assembly of information, progress reports and communications.	Largely positive with recognition that the fee results in a professional & informed response. There has not been a recognisable drop in enquiries.	N/A
9.	Do you consider that the planning pre app advice service you provide has had an impact on the % of successful/refused applications?	The service is essential to enable dialogue to take place outside the formal application procedure and certainly impacts on the speed and success rate of the application once submitted in a positive way.	We issued approx 570 decisions last year, of which 336 were given pre app advice. Of those 336 applications only 16 were refused (23 withdrawn).	N/A	The pre app advice provided by the Authority does have an impact on the percentage of successful applications. Of the applications registered in 2012-13 306 applications were subject to pre app advice and of these 96% were approved.	Yes - we definitely get less difficult applications if we have carried out pre application work. Our current refusal rate is about 8%pa and that has declined since 2007 when it was at 14%.	Yes - assisted with clear progress for significant proposals with member and public interest.	It is hard to quantify but it has resulted in increased opportunities to add value to a number of developments. In addition, quicker decisions are possible as Officers are aware of sites and issues prior to applications being submitted.	Undoubtedly so, as well as improving the quality of applications.
10.	How do you ensure consistency of response from the pre application planning service?	All responses are given with regard to the adopted development plan and regular team meetings are held to discuss enquiries and the response to these.	Complicated and or controversial enquiries being dealt with by a planning officer and most enquiries dealt with by the planning assistant are discussed at the weekly team meeting & if necessary with the HoD to ensure a consistent approach.	N/A	Regular discussions and meetings between planning officers and policy officers and advice is given in accordance with the adopted Guidance Note on Pre App Discussion and Advice to potential developers. (Guidance Note attached)	Officers are experienced and used to dealing with policy and design issues. If there are occasions when they need a second opinion they will share this with the team at a shaping session, which includes potentially other officers such as trees, landscape and policy. The more complex pre apps are dealt with at team leader or even Director of Planning level (we have no DM Manager in our streamlined management structure). The Team Manager sees all pre app requests & distributes them and gives advice as and when needed. The Director sees all daily post and can advise on the more difficult enquiries and ask to see the response prior to sending.	Through team leader liaison and regular 1:1s on casework.	Firstly, all responses go via a template response - with some hard wired elements i.e. NP purposes and duty - ensuring that comprehensive responses are given. Secondly, all responses are agreed by a line manager prior to issue.	

Planning Advice in National Park Authorities

Planning Surgeries	3
Telephone/Email	6
Helpdesk	5
Paid Pre App	2



