

Planning Aid England's advice and support services

Planning Aid England (PAE) is part of the Royal Town Planning Institute. We offer independent and professional planning advice.

Online advice

Our Planning Aid Direct web resource www.planningaid.co.uk is free to use and provides:

- Answers to questions people often ask about planning
- Clear, simple explanations of how the planning system works
- Signposting on where to go next

Advice line service

We also operate an email advice service and offer up to 15 minutes free, professional, general planning advice, contact advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk.

Further support

In some circumstances we may be able to offer further support to people on low incomes, and to groups or individuals who have traditionally not been involved in the planning system. The criteria we use to decide if you're eligible for this are set out below.

Please note that we don't provide free planning advice to other professionals or to organisations who can afford to employ professionals. We reserve the right to decline to give advice, or limit the advice or support we offer.

A] **Criteria for individuals**

We will take the following issues into account when considering whether it is possible for us to offer additional support:

- Can you afford professional fees?
- Have you already received professional advice or employed a professional for example solicitors, lawyers and consultants?
- Will you gain financially from our assistance? Here are some examples of times when we would be unlikely to offer further support:
 - Developing new properties
 - Developing business premises
 - Extending or enhancing your own home
- Personal circumstances including:
 - Whether you are a home-owner
 - Where you live
 - Whether you are in employment

B] **Criteria for Community Organisations**

Further support may be provided to those who cannot afford professional planning advice including:

- Local (as opposed to national) charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations or groups who represent tenants or residents. These organisations or community groups must be constituted and have less than six months free reserves (or undesignated funds) or an annual income of less than £10,000.
- Those traditionally not engaged in the planning system e.g. Gypsy and Travellers, Youth groups
- Community groups and organisations located in areas of multiple deprivation, for example, where they are located within a Lower Super Output Area identified as being in the top 30% most deprived in England. This can be determined using this tool <http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/idmap.html>.

Parish Councils don't qualify for further assistance on specific applications or proposals.

C] Criteria for supporting Local Planning Authorities

We are looking to expand our services and offer mediation and wider community engagement support with a particular focus on assisting deprived communities to engage in the planning system. Planning Aid England may be able to offer the following to support Local Planning Authorities:

- Training on the planning process for Councillors, Parish Councillors and community groups (with a particular focus on deprived areas). Training may be offered on a range of topics including an overview of the planning system, Local Plan process and development management processes and procedures.
- Independent advice and assistance at Local Plan and planning application consultation events. This support will be high level and we will not be able to comment on specific proposals and policies.

The provision of these services is reliant on charitable [donations](#).

D] Other sources of advice / support

If you are not eligible for further support you can still use our [Planning Aid Direct web resource](#). You may also find it helpful to use the [RTPI's Directory of Planning Consultants](#) to find a professional planner in your area.