

Planning application administration fees for dealing with invalid applications

When charges are applied

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Background

The Local Planning Authority (LPA) deal with a very high number of invalid applications, approximately 70% of all applications submitted. The LPA have published guidance on information required to be submitted with applications which has been available on our website [Planning application forms and validation guidance \(luton.gov.uk\)](https://www.luton.gov.uk/planning-application-forms-and-validation-guidance) for a number of years. Dealing with such a high percentage of invalid applications uses a significant amount of time and resources which affects the timescales for processing applications, results in delays for the customer and puts pressure on existing staff.

Administration charges are being introduced for the process of dealing with invalid applications and this is aimed at improving the quality of applications submitted to us and significantly increasing the number of applications valid at first submission, which will enable the planning support team to focus resources on the processing of applications rather than managing invalid applications. This new process, together with the LPAs 'in-app' advice service, is expected to improve the overall customer experience for our clients.

At the 27 January 2021 Development Control (now Development Management) Committee meeting considered a new range of administration charges for the Development Management

invalid application process. The administration charges were agreed by members but not implemented at that time due to the resources used to manage the planning process during the pandemic.

Administration charges currently agreed:

- for major applications - £200.00
- for non-major commercial/new residential unit(s) applications - £120.00
- for all other applications - £75.00

The administration charges can be applied for the following reasons:

1. if an application is made invalid;
2. if a satisfactory response to an invalid letter is not received within the 28-day expiry period (the expiry date will be stated on the invalid letter);
3. if a statutory application fee is requested to be transferred from a previous closed invalid application to a new submission; or
4. if an invalid application is withdrawn after notification that it is invalid (this charge will be deducted from any refund)

Timeframe

The new administration charges will be publicised from 6 February for a period of eight weeks. Individual letters will be sent to regular agents and the updated information will be displayed on the website at [Planning application forms and validation guidance \(luton.gov.uk\)](https://www.luton.gov.uk/planning-application-forms-and-validation-guidance).

The new fees will then come into force on 1 April 2023 and will be applied to all applications received after 5pm on Friday 31 March.

How to avoid submitting an invalid application

The Councils Planning Applications Requirement document (PAR) has been updated and is available on our website at [Planning application forms and validation guidance \(luton.gov.uk\)](https://www.luton.gov.uk/planning-application-forms-and-validation-guidance). This document sets out the general requirements for planning applications and if further advice is required, you will be able to utilise the councils existing pre-application advice service to establish the complete range of documentation required.

Common validation problems

To assist you ensuring your application is valid, the most common validation problems we come across are listed below which may help you focus your attention on these matters.

Description of development: we often find that parts of the proposed development have not been included in your description. Please check carefully as if your description is materially different from the proposal on the submitted plans, you will incur a fee for amending it.

Flood zones: for sites that are located in a flood zone, you may need to submit a Flood Risk Assessment. This information is available by checking on the Environment Agency website, as a charge will be applied if we have to request one.

Dimensions on plans: luton require a full set of dimensions to be shown on the plans in order that interested parties can make a proper assessment of how development affects

them and to ensure that case officers are able to establish the relationship of the proposal with the existing and surrounding properties.

Streetscene plan: required for all new building/developments; or where the proposal involves raising the roof height of an existing building. The details should show the relationship of the application property with the closest adjoining properties (which may not always be within the same street or it may be a backland development), in order to enable the case officer to make a proper assessment of the proposal.

Outstanding fees: applications will be held for 5 days before we make a request for the fee. If we need to do so, a charge will be applied.

Plans submitted individually: as there is a requirement for plan numbers to be listed on a planning application decision notice, we require all plans to be submitted individually in order for an application to be valid. A charge will be applied if we have to request this.

Site boundary(s): the boundaries of the site should be shown in order to show the relationship of the development with the site.

Plans and documents in PDF format: to ensure an appropriate display that can be seen online, all documents should be submitted in this format.

Labelling: care should be taken when labelling drawings as we often see proposed plans labelled as existing and vice versa, or the incorrect address used. A charge will be applied if we have to request amendments.

Missing reports/documents: please check the council's PAR for the documents required as the common missing documents include, noise, SUDS, transportation, D&S, waste management plan, heritage statement, sketch plan for TPOs.

Incorrect certificate: please read the [guidance available as a fee will be charged if we have to seek an amended certificate](#).

Exemptions

Prior notifications for household development are exempt from these fees.

If you have any comments to make in respect of this matter, please email developmentcontrol@luton.gov.uk.