

Officer Decision Notice

Classification:

Unrestricted



Report of: Strategic Director of Place

Subject / Title: Increase in Planning Pre-Application (and other) Fees

Date of Decision: 18 December 2023

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Fees for statutory planning services are set by central government. However, the council may set its own scale of charges for discretionary planning services, such as pre-application advice.
- 1.2 Staff in Development Management have reviewed their discretionary charges over the autumn. For many years, discretionary charges have risen with inflation. This year a wider review was undertaken which considered not only the fee itself but also the categories of advice offered.
- 1.3 Prior to the introduction of the revised fee schedule, there was little differentiation on the scale of development. To address this, additional categories have been introduced which reflect the likely complexity of the proposal. New fees have been introduced for new or revised services, such as biodiversity net gain or planning enforcement advice.
- 1.4 The categories proposed have been benchmarked against neighbouring and other local planning authorities. Officers consider the revised schedule to relate well to services offered by other authorities.

2 DECISION TAKEN

- 2.1 Table 1 shows the former charging schedule:

Table 1	
Service request	Fee
<i>Is planning permission required for a dropped kerb</i>	£28
<i>Is planning permission required for a householder project</i>	£69
<i>Is planning permission required for a non-householder project</i>	£90.50
<i>Householder pre-app advice</i>	£69
<i>Non-householder pre-app advice</i>	£90.50
<i>Up to 30 minute meeting with officer</i>	£82
<i>Up to 60 minute meeting with officer</i>	£163
<i>Major housing or commercial advice</i>	£352.50
<i>Planning research (householder) p/hr</i>	£74.50
<i>Planning research (non-householder) p/hr</i>	£113
<i>Advice on works to protected trees p/30mins</i>	£34.50
<i>Ecological advice p/30 mins</i>	£54
<i>Administration charges p/30 mins</i>	£23.50

- 2.2 Table 2 shows the revised charging schedule.
- 2.3 The revised charging schedule would apply to relevant requests for discretionary services received on and after 1 January 2024.

Table 2							
Planning pre-application advice – charges below are for one office/virtual meeting with a written response unless otherwise stated							
	All Residential	Non-residential gross floor area	Development site area	Fee for officer written response	Fee for additional meeting	Additional specialist input (per specialist)	BNG pre-app advice (Biodiversity Net Gain)
	Householder	N/A	N/A	£75 for written response only	£100	N/A	N/A
	Householder listed building	N/A	N/A	£150 for written response only	£100 per officer	N/A	N/A
A	1-2 dwellings	Up to 200 sqm	Less than 0.25 ha	£450*	£200	N/A	£500
B	3-9 dwellings	201 – 1000 sqm	0.25 – 1 ha	£800*	£250	N/A	£500
C	10-49 dwellings	1000 – 9999 sqm	1 – 1.5 ha	£1200	£500	£200	£1000
D	50-199 dwellings	10000 – 20000 sqm	1.5 – 2.5 ha	£3000	£900	£200	£1000
E	200-1000 dwellings	20000 or more sqm	More than 2.5 ha	£4000/PPA	£1000	£300	£1000
F	1000+ dwellings	N/A	N/A	Bespoke/PPA			Bespoke*
*Specialist advice included (except for BNG advice)							
PPA – Planning performance agreement							
Note: Where fees between dwelling nos. or floor area conflict with site area, the larger fee will apply.							
Enforcement			Other advice related charges			Administrative charges	
Confirmation of compliance with an enforcement notice		£50	Permitted Development Enquiry Requests beyond PD to be directed to submit a formal certificate application		Returning an invalid application		£80
Post enforcement notice advice:			Householder	£75	Administration fee for processing email or paper application submission		£25
Householder development		£75	Other PD	£120	Site/Case search		£80
Minor development		£300			S106 compliance		£80
Major development		£500	High Hedges	£550 per case	Discharge of condition confirmation		£80
Listed Building		£300					

3 REASONS FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1 Statutory planning fees do not cover the cost of determining planning applications. The development management service is therefore partly funded by the council's general income and reserves.
- 3.2 The proposed increases in fees are designed to cover the cost of providing discretionary planning services. This would reduce the proportion of the service's budget provided by the council and result in the cost of the advice being met by the recipient.
- 3.3 While much of the service's budget is out of its control, as it relies on planning applications and requests for planning advice being received, the increase in fees for discretionary services would help the service in meeting its running costs.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The alternative courses of action are set out below:
- (a) **Do nothing:** fees would increase only by inflation. This would fail to realign the pre-application advice services offered to better reflect the complexity of the request. It would also fail to provide any greater resilience or income generation for the service:
- (b) **Increase fees and retain schedule:** while the increase in fees would bring some financial benefits, this would not recognise the improvements which could be made to staff and customers in introducing categories which better reflect the complexity of development or recognise the opportunities to introduce new fees on activities where officers are spending considerable time.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 In reaching this decision, the decision maker has consulted with and has the agreement of the following:
- Chief Executive
 - Section 151 Officer
 - Monitoring Officer
 - Staff in Development Management
 - The Development Management Advisory Panel (officers and members)

6 Conflicts of Interest Declaration

- 6.1 None.



Signed:

Brendan Cleere – Strategic Director of Place