

TITLE: Planning Charges

Committee: Finance & Assets Committee

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Issue

1. This report relates to the insertion of an additional charge relating to requests as to whether planning permission is required for works for which no current fee is set.

Recommendations

2. Members are requested to note the report and to authorise the changes in the Fee Structure.

Background/Options

3. Following a review into recent service requests, Planning wish to introduce a further charge into their schedule for pre-application advice in relation to whether or not planning permission is required for a proposed development (This would be an informal confirmation but one that a member of the public or agent could rely on).
4. There is currently no fee level set for such a request and the only way to get a site specific determination at present is to pay for a full pre-application advice, or to apply for a formal certificate of Lawfulness which brings about additional costs for a resident as they will need potentially expensive formal plans and other such documents drawn up (and a higher administration fee from ECDC). It has been noted that a number of requests are made to duty officers or have come via requests to drop a kerb (for example) with the County Council, where confirmation is required from the District Council that formal planning permission is not required. It is therefore proposed in line with a number of other local authorities (including those neighbouring the district) to bring in a charge to do this informally.
5. It is proposed that the charge should be £75 with a limit of one hour of officer time. This is in line with the current charging schedule for such levels of requests in respect of hourly rate and comprises a significant discount on the current options available to our residents. The current cheapest option available to residents is a simple householder pre-app which costs £160.95. All planning-related enquiries that are site-specific are currently a chargeable service, and this will allow customers to avoid the need for a full pre-app or to apply for a certificate when more basic information is required. The website would be updated accordingly. It should be noted that this is likely to marginally reduce income in light of the above

considerations and is being introduced not as a revenue-raising scheme but one to simplify and reduce costs for our residents.

Arguments/Conclusions

6. Officers consider that the additional charge will result in a simpler, more cost-effective service for our residents, allowing them to ask simple questions not covered currently by the existing fee regime.

Additional Implications Assessment

7. In the table below, please put Yes or No in each box:

Financial Implications No	Legal Implications No	Human Resources (HR) Implications No
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) No	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) No	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) No

Appendices

None

Background documents

Current Pre-App Fee Schedule