



PART B:	RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL
REPORT TO:	POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
DATE:	10 FEBRUARY 2011
REPORT OF THE:	HEAD OF PLANNING GARY HOUSDEN
TITLE OF REPORT:	FEES AND CHARGES - PRE APPLICATION ADVICE
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for 2011/12 for pre-application advice which are under the remit of this Committee. The proposals introduce an alternate fee structure.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Council is recommended to approve the Development Management Pre-Application Advice Fees and Charges (Annex B).

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Fees and charges are an important part of the Council's Budget Strategy. Officers have reviewed potential areas for further income generation to assist in the preparation of the Council's budget. Other neighbouring Authorities already charge for this service and others within North Yorkshire are planning to do so for 2011/12.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

4.1 There are no significant risks associated with the charges proposed. The proposed fees will be monitored over the year in order to assess their impact on demand for the service and the need for further adjustment.

4.2 The risk matrix is attached at Annex A.

REPORT

5.0 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

5.1 The Council currently charges for pre-application advice, albeit at a flat rate which is

applicable at the same rate to all types of development proposals. These were approved by Council in January 2010 for 2010/2011 and set at a rate of £50 or £70 including site inspection. Officers are aware, however, that other Councils charge on a differential basis dependant upon the scale of the development proposed. It is considered that there is merit in applying a fee scale that better reflects the extent and complexity of advice being sought. The Council also charges £25 for Development Enquiry forms in respect of householder developments.

5.2 Members are advised that the discretionary fees for charging for Development Enquiry forms and pre-application advice to householders are recommended not to exceed those set in 2010/11. This is to encourage potential applicants to continue to engage with the Council and to mitigate the risk of householders proceeding with alterations to their properties without obtaining the appropriate written advice.

5.3 The fee income projected in respect of pre-application advice for 2010/2011 is estimated to be below estimated income target at approximately £5k. Officers consider that the graded charging scheme proposed will assist in meeting the budget targets for 2011/2012.

6.0 POLICY CONTEXT

6.1 Council policy is currently to operate a flat rate charge for all types of pre-application advice. This report proposes the introduction of a variable fee scale dependant upon the nature of the development.

7.0 REPORT DETAILS

7.1 It is noted that two adjacent authorities, Scarborough and Selby, operate an alternative system of differential charges which vary dependant upon the nature and scale of the development proposed. This approach reflects the general levels of increased complexity associated with larger developments and it is an approach that is recommended by officers. The thresholds of each different fee category are recommended below in Table 1.

	No. of dwellings	Floor Area (non-residential or mixed)	Site Area
Category 1	1 – 9	100 - 999 sq. m	Below 0.5 hectare
Category 2	10 – 49	1,000 - 1,999 sq. m	0.5 - 1.0 hectare
Category 3	50+	2,000 sq. m +	1 hectare +

7.2 The level of charges recommended are based on a choice of two options. These are offered as written advice only or additionally as written advice with a package of up to 3 meetings. The charges all include VAT at 20% and are recommended below.

Category 1		Category 2		Category 3	
Written Advice Only					
£100 + £20 VAT = £120 total		£200 + £40 VAT = £240 total		£400 + £80 VAT = £480	
Package of Meetings and Written Advice					
Package of 1 meeting, plus written advice	£200 + VAT = £240 total	Package of up to 3 meetings, plus written advice	£400 + £80 VAT = £480 total	Package of up to 3 meetings, plus written advice	£800 + £160 VAT = £960 total

7.3 The proposed fees are not envisaged to impact on the developments being brought forward for development. In the scale of the developments shown in Table 1 above, the proposed charges set out in Table 2 are considered to be an incidental cost.

7.4 There are no additional costs from the revised charging proposals.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The following implications have been identified:

a) Financial

The proposals will assist in meeting the income targets in the 2011/2012 budget.

b) Legal

There are no legal implications regarding this report.

c) Other (Equalities, Staffing, Planning, Health & Safety, Environmental, Crime & Disorder)

There are no significant additional implications of the proposals.

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Background Papers:

None