



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 20 January 2021

FEES AND CHARGES SCHEDULE – PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report confirms the details of the proposed fees and charges schedule to be applied to planning and building control matters from 2021 in terms of statutory and discretionary fees that have been agreed by Cabinet. In particular It is to be noted that it is proposed to update and replace the existing pre-application charging schedule and also outline additional services that are to be offered to customers engaging with the service.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Member:	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
Supporting Officer:	Liz Beighton Planning Manager (Development Management) 07775 406370 Liz.beighton@eastssuffolk.gov.uk

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 East Suffolk Council operates a paid for pre-application service which enables the Council to proactively provide customers with feedback on development proposals. This is a discretionary service but is widely regarded as a positive tool to assist customers and provide certainty and clarity on proposals in terms of their likely acceptability and also detailed matters such as design and appearance as well as providing guidance on what information will be required to support any application. Whilst the fees and charges are formally agreed by Cabinet it is important for members of this Committee to understand the fees being charged for discretionary services as well as the costs of formal submissions.
- 1.2 It is appropriate that charging schedules are reviewed and updated periodically to ensure that they are robust and cover the officer costs of providing the guidance.
- 1.3 Officers have appraised the current schedule, undertaken consultation with agents and developers and reviewed other local authority examples. The proposed document before Members sets out all fees and charges applied service wide to improve the customer experience and offer a one-stop shop. The documents will be a 'live' document so it can be maintained and updated where appropriate.
- 1.4 The document also includes a list of the statutory fees so that there is a clear appreciation of all the planning application and associated costs. The main document is also supported by a simpler version aimed at householder applications
- 1.5 Some key elements and benefits associated with the document include:
 - Introduces a 'Do I Need Permission' (DINP) form for simple requests to clarify whether planning permission is required. These are based on a check of planning history and permitted development rights and responded to within five working days. This is a reduction from the current 28 day response time.
 - Provides an opportunity for meetings to be held if requested by the applicant to positively respond to requests from agents to have meetings on certain potential proposals. This does not negate the need for an officer to request a meeting if they feel beneficial or necessary to provide a response on the proposal.
 - Sets out clear pre-application charging schedule which is consistent and easily understood in terms of scale and nature of development. The schedule has removed the current discrepancy between minor and major applications and removed the bespoke fee for developments in excess of 50. This ensures that requests can be more quickly validated and processed to ensure a speedier response to customers.
 - Amends the response time for pre-application guidance to ensure that more straightforward requests are issued in a timely manner
 - Offers a range of additional services and facilities which can be provided should the customer request such as clarification of use class and permitted development rights, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charge and compliance with S106 agreements. There is also an opportunity to help resolve conveyancing issues to assist customers with purchasers or sellers of land and/or buildings.

- Promotes both the Planning and Building Control services offered by East Suffolk Council in a seamless 'one authority' way.

1.6 Discussions will continue with Suffolk County Council with a view to reflecting the services that the provide (including Highways, drainage and archaeology) into the document so that customers also have feedback on technical matters which are outside the jurisdiction of East Suffolk Council. Until such time that this is embedded, applicants are reminded that separate discussions should take place to clarify such matters in advance of any formal submission.

2 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

2.1 Providing pre-application advice is a discretionary service which generates essential funding to cover the cost of providing this service at a cost recovery level. Other fees are statutory set by government legislation

3 OTHER KEY ISSUES

3.1 The setting of discretionary fees enables the Council to resource the planning department to provide quality advice to applicants and help meet the Council's strategic objectives.

4 CONSULTATION

4.1 The proposed changes have arisen following discussion with agents and developers through forums and has positively responded to the issues and concerns raised.

5 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Retain the existing fees but that contains a number of deficiencies in the system and has not been reviewed or updated since it came into force.

6 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

6.1 To agree the discretionary charges for the Planning and Building Control functions for 2021

RECOMMENDATION

That members of the Strategic Planning Committee note and endorse the Fees and Charges document for services offered by the Planning and Building Control service.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Fees and Charges Document

Appendix B

Householder Enquiries and Applications – Fees and Guidance Notes

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None