

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board

20th April 2018

Report of the Head of Planning and Public Protection

Nicola Pearce

Matter for Decision

Ward Affected: All

Planning Pre-Application Advice: Amended Service Protocol and Proposed Increase to Charges 2018/19

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval of minor changes to the Planning Pre-Application Service Protocol, including increases to proposed fees and charges for 2018/19 in respect of the provision of Non-Statutory Pre-Application Planning Advice.

Executive Summary

2. Since the 1st March 2012, the setting of Non-Executive fees and charges has been delegated by Cabinet to the appropriate Corporate Director in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, Scrutiny Chair and the Leader. These delegated powers were re-confirmed by Council on the 21 February 2018. This report details the proposed increase in charges for the financial year 2018/19 for the non-statutory pre-application service which the Council intends to continue to deliver. The fees associated with the statutory pre-application service are prescribed by the Welsh Government.
3. The report also seeks approval for minor changes to the approved protocol, which includes additional emphasis on the ability for developers to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the Authority.

Background

4. The Council has operated a chargeable pre-application service since 2014, with revisions last made to the Policy / charges in March 2016 following the introduction by Welsh Government of a statutory pre-

application service which prescribes both the fees and the level of service applicants should expect from all Local Planning Authorities in Wales. At that time, changes were made to this Council's chargeable pre-application service protocol to incorporate both 'statutory' and 'non-statutory' options.

5. The fees associated with the statutory pre-application service are prescribed by the Welsh Government, and have not been increased since 2016.
6. In light of current financial pressures and the need to focus on income generation to meet the costs of delivering such non-statutory services, it is proposed that the fees associated with the non-statutory service for 2018/19 onwards are increased to move towards securing full cost recovery.
7. The fee increases are predominantly focussed on major / large major development proposals, which take up the majority of officer time, with fees for the smaller developments nominally increased and those for householder development retained at their current levels. This is intended to ensure that the non-statutory service still remains 'competitive' compared to the statutory service, and ensure that the charges do not discourage small-scale developers / applicants from liaising with the Council in advance of their submissions, thus improving quality of development and efficiency of outcomes.
8. The amended protocol and charges are attached at Appendices 1 and 2, but in summary the increase in fees are as follows: -

- Minor Development

Charges for additional non-statutory advice following receipt of statutory response increased from £100+VAT (£120) to £125 +VAT (£150)

Non-Statutory Advice increased from £400 + VAT (£480) to £450 + VAT (£540)

- Major Development (including Minerals & Waste)

Charges for additional non-statutory advice following receipt of statutory response increased from £200+VAT (£250) to £250 +VAT (£300)

Non-Statutory Advice increased from £800 + VAT (£960) to £900 + VAT (£1080)

- Large Major Development

Charges for additional non-statutory advice following receipt of statutory response increased from £400+VAT (£500) to £500 +VAT (£600)

Non-Statutory Advice increased from £1500 + VAT (£1800) to £1800 + VAT (£2160)

9. In addition to the increased charges above, additional emphasis has also been added in the Council's protocol to the option for developers to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the Authority.
10. PPAs have been successfully used recently by developers in NPT, and add to the range and choice of options available to developers to engage with the Council in seeking to deliver high quality development quickly, while meeting the costs of providing this valuable service.
11. The amended protocol is attached at Appendix 1 of this report, with the proposed fees for the non-statutory service set out within Appendix 2.

Financial Implications

12. The increased charges should assist in recovery of costs of providing the service, other than which there are no financial impacts associated with this report

Equality Impact Assessment

13. A Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment it has been determined that this proposal does not require an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Workforce Impact

14. The Charter does not introduce any additional workforce impacts.

Legal Impact

15. There are no legal impact issues associated with this report.

Risk Management

16. There are no risk management issues associated with this report accepting that increases in fees and charges are never welcome by service users.

Consultation Outcome

17. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

18. It is recommended that the amended protocol, and proposed increases in the non-statutory pre-application fees associated with the Development Management Service as set out within Appendices 1 and 2 be approved and implemented with effect from 23rd April 2018.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

19. To determine the standard of service offered and level of charges for the non-statutory pre-application service within Development Management.

Implementation of Decision

20. The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

Appendices

21. Appendix One – Planning Pre-Application Service Protocol (April 2018)

22. Appendix Two - List of new fees and charges for the statutory and non-statutory pre-application planning service within Development Management for 2018/19

List of Background Papers

23. Screening Assessment under the Equalities Act

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