

Subject:	Raising of pre-application advice fees (<i>Planning application fees</i>)	Status:	For Publication	
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	27 th May 2020	
Report of:	Planning Manager	Portfolio Holder:	Operations and Development Control	
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Forward Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>
				Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached:	No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached:	No
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1.	RECOMMENDATION
1.1	To approve the proposed increase in pre-application fees.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To make Members aware of the current fees for pre-application advice and the justification behind the proposed increase. It is important to note that whilst such an issue would usually be dealt with as part of a financial review, it is considered important to bring the report to Cabinet at this time because it has been established that we are charging less than neighbouring authorities.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The report links to the corporate priority of, '*a connected and successful Rossendale that welcomes sustainable growth*,' as the pre-application advice service provides guidance on the most sustainable locations for a range of developments.

3.2 The Development Management Team provides pre-application advice in respect of a range of different types of planning applications. This is considered a benefit in terms of identifying issues prior to the submission of an application which can help in reducing the amount of time it takes to determine a planning application. This is a discretionary service, therefore, it is not mandatory for an Applicant to submit a request at pre-application stage. The Applicant has to pay a fee for this service and the charging schedule is outlined in the table below.

Small scale, e.g. householders	Listed Building Consent & Conservation Area works	Medium scale, 1-9 houses	Majors	Significant Majors
£72	£216	£360	£432	£864

3.3 Most other Local Planning Authorities operate a similar service and the charges from a number of other Lancashire/Greater Manchester authorities are shown in the table below.

	Small scale, e.g. householders	Listed Building Consent & Conservation Area works	Medium scale, 1-9 houses	Majors	Significant Majors
Rochdale	£125	£125	£400-550	£1000-1500	£1500-2000
Burnley	£68	£92	£139	£417	£695
Blackburn	£391.40	£391.40	£554	£1108	£2772
Hyndburn	£90	£90	£213-300	£530	£850
South Ribble	£50	£50	£200-500	£2000	£3000
Preston	£60	£60	£150-300	£450	£650

3.4 Consequently, compared to the majority of other Local Planning Authorities, Rossendale is charging a lower figure for its pre-application service, with the exception of advice on small scale applications such as householders and change of use applications.

3.5 During 2019, the Planning Department received 57 of these types of pre-application advice requests. The breakdown by type of application and the revenue they generated is shown in the table below.

	Small scale, e.g. householders	Listed Building Consent & Conservation Area works	Medium scale, 1-9 houses	Majors	Significant Majors	Total
Number received	14	5	24	11	3	57
Income	£1008	£1080	£8640	£4752	£2160	£17,640

3.6 As a consequence, it is proposed to raise the pre-application fees to the level shown in the table below. The anticipated income this would generate, if the same number of applications were received is also shown.

	Small scale, e.g. householder	Listed Building Consent & Conservation Area works	Medium scale, 1-9 houses	Majors	Significant Majors	Total
New fee (Old fee)	£90 (£72)	£216 (£216)	£450 (£360)	£2000 (£432)	£3000 (£864)	
Income	£1260	£1080	£10,800	£22,000	£9,000	£44,140

Therefore, if the same number of pre-application advice requests were received following the increase in fees, the annual income would be £44,140. This is a surplus of £26,500 above the existing situation.

3.7 Only a moderate increase in fees are proposed at the lower end of the scale, such as the Householder applications. This is unlikely to be considered a deterrent to those Applicants who wish to pursue this service. The greater fee increase would be in terms of the major applications and the significant majors, in order to bring Rossendale up to the level charged by many other Authorities. These applications are usually submitted by the larger

Developers/Landowners and volume house builders, therefore, the fee increase is likely to be subsumed within multi-million pound development projects. Consequently, it is not anticipated that significantly increasing the fees on the larger developments will have an impact on the number of applications received.

4. RISK

4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

The main financial burden of the fee raising proposal would fall on the bigger Developers, as part of large development projects, therefore, there is considered to be limited risk. Only moderate increases are proposed for small developments such as householder extensions. By not progressing with the proposed fee increase, the Planning Department would miss out on raising a valuable source of funding.

5. FINANCE

5.1 The Council continues to face a funding gap between its expenditure and available resources, therefore the Council must actively seek opportunities to either reduce expenditure or increase income wherever possible.

It is estimated that increasing the pre application planning fees as proposed in 3.6 above, will generate an additional £26,500 per annum in revenue income. This additional income will contribute towards the Councils ongoing MTFS savings requirement.

6. LEGAL

6.1 This benchmarking exercise and the proposed fee increase will see us fall in line with our neighbouring authorities. The fees and charges will continue to be reviewed as part of the annual budget setting process. No other legal implications arise as a result of this report.

7. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This report is not considered to impact on any Council policies but there will be an impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 To maintain the status quo is not a favourable option as it would result in less income being received than is possible to achieve. The preferred option would be to secure authorisation to increase the fees in line with the recommendation of the report, in order to increase the income generated by the Planning Department.

Background Papers

Document	Place of Inspection
Pre – application advice fees and information.	https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/