

ANGUS COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 3 MARCH 2020

NEW PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE PROCEDURES

REPORT BY SERVICE LEADER - PLANNING & COMMUNITIES

Abstract:

At its meeting on 21 February 2019 Council approved [Report 56/19](#). Schedule 4a of that report confirmed the introduction of charges for the provision of pre-application planning advice. This report updates Committee on the introduction of that service.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended Committee notes that a new online pre-application planning advice service will be introduced with effect from 1 April 2020 in accordance with the charging schedule as set out at schedule 4a of Report 56/19 and as updated at Appendix 1 to this report.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

By ensuring an effective and efficient Development Management service, this report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

ECONOMY

- An inclusive and sustainable economy
- Attractive employment opportunities

PEOPLE

- Improved physical, mental and emotional health and well-being

PLACE

- An enhanced, protected and enjoyed natural and built environment
- A reduced carbon footprint
- Safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable communities

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 At its meeting on 21 February 2019 Council approved [Report 56/19](#) along with its accompanying schedule 4a. In approving the report Council agreed: -

- (i) the principle of charging for pre-application advice in the circumstances set out in the report and its Appendix 1;
- (ii) the charging schedule set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (iii) to delegate authority to the Service Lead Planning and Communities to make minor drafting changes to the charging schedule prior to publication; and
- (iv) that the charging schedule be reviewed on a yearly basis.

3.2 Schedule 4a set out amongst other things that: -

- Angus Council should not charge for enquiries relating to whether operations require planning permission.
- The service should operate digitally with an online form submitted to the authority in a way that that supporting documents can be attached. Payments should also be taken electronically.
- The introduction of pre-application charges should be supported by an improvement in self-service channels that could be provided online through the internet.

- The introduction of pre-application charges should also prompt a review of the current planning surgery arrangements.

3.3 In agreeing this approach it was noted that charging for non-statutory pre-application planning advice is likely to become increasingly common throughout Scotland. The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 includes provisions to extend the range of services which authorities can charge for in order to move closer towards full cost recovery of the planning application process. Charging for a pre-application service has already been implemented by Perth & Kinross and Fife Councils.

4. UPDATE

4.1 Officers from the digital development and planning teams have been working on the development of an online platform to allow delivery of the pre-application process in a manner consistent with council's aspirations.

4.2 An online facility has now been created that will allow members of the public to submit enquiries relating to whether operations require planning permission. The system has been designed to allow supporting documents to be attached and submitted online. There will be no charge for access to that service.

4.3 The online facility also allows members of the public to submit pre-application planning enquiries. The system has been designed to allow supporting documents to be attached and submitted online. The system also makes provision for payment of relevant fees to be made electronically.

4.4 In addition, the council's web pages have been altered in order to improve access to online information regarding the need for planning permission, and to direct potential applicants to the council's land use planning policies and guidance that will be used in the assessment of any planning application that is submitted. This will allow interested parties improved access to self-service channels both to establish the need for planning permission and to information that will inform whether permission might be granted.

4.5 Pre-application planning advice is currently provided at regular planning surgeries that are held in Monifieth and Montrose. The introduction of pre-application charging and improved access to self-service channels means that it is no longer appropriate to provide the planning surgeries. The surgeries could be seen as a means of circumventing the charged pre-application service and experience suggests that while the process is resource intensive, it is of limited value as only very general advice can be provided.

4.6 The proposed charges identified in report have been reviewed and are considered to remain appropriate for implementation of the scheme subject to a minor revision to the fee for review of additional plans relating to development falling within the 'local' category. That fee is revised downwards from £150 to £100. The amended charging schedule is reproduced as Appendix 1.

4.7 As set out in Report 56/19 the following enquiries will be exempt from charges:

- Enquiries by charities, Community Councils, constituted not for profit community groups or organisations where it relates directly to their not for profit activities.
- Works or alterations to improve access, safety, health or comfort for a disabled person in their home.

4.8 The revised arrangements will be implemented with effect from 1 April 2020. From that date the online platform will provide the mechanism through which the council will provide pre-application planning advice. This is consistent with the aim of delivering services digitally and is consistent with the move towards electronic submission of planning applications through the government's e-planning system. The vast majority of planning applications are now submitted electronically.

4.9 The new process will be communicated to all planning agents that regularly interact with the council and will be publicised on the council's web site.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The introduction of charges for pre-application advice is included in the Council's Change Programme. While the income generated by the introduction of charges will be dependent on the take up of the service, it is expected to be up to £30,000 per annum.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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APPENDIX 1 : PRE-APPLICATION CHARGING SCHEDULE 2020/21

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Service level	Householder	Local	Major	Other (including advert consent)
Standard	£40	£100	£500	£55
Enhanced	n/a	£200	£1,000	n/a

Extras

Additional plans	£40	£100	£300	£50
Meeting	£40	£150	£300	£50
Site visit	£40	£150	£300	£50