

NFNPA 572/19

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING - 28 MARCH 2019

REVIEW OF CHARGES FOR WRITTEN PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

Report by: Steve Avery, Executive Director

1. Introduction

1.1 The Authority introduced a charging regime for providing formal pre-application advice in October 2016. There have since been two reviews of the scheme, the last being at the Authority meeting on 22 March 2018, when it was agreed to increase pre-application charges in line with the 20% increase in planning applications fees introduced by the Government last year.

2. Charges for pre-application advice

2.1 Members may recall that charges for pre-application advice only apply to written enquiries received by the Authority. More general planning advice continues to be freely offered through the 'duty officer' service. This involves a planning officer being available each day at reception (currently 8.45 am – 1.00 pm) to answer general planning queries, either in person or on the telephone. The duty officer service is primarily aimed at the public but agents and architects also use it as an opportunity to discuss proposals informally. This service continues to work well and is appreciated by those who use it. There are no plans to change this arrangement other than to operate it within the slightly revised hours of 9.00 am – 12 noon from 1 April 2019.

2.2 The table below records the number of formal written pre-application enquiries received between 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 and 1 April 2018 to date (15 March 2019).

	Number of planning applications received	Number of pre-apps received	Pre-apps as % of all applications received	Amount of pre-app fees paid	% of planning applications approved
1/4/17 – 31/3/18	819	353	43%	£22,685	84%
1/4/18 – 15/3/19	765	322	43%	£27,297 *	84%

* this figure does not include the bespoke pre-application fees paid by Fawley Waterside

2.3 The figures above suggest that the increase in charges last year have not deterred applicants from seeking formal pre-application advice.

3. Proposed new charges for written pre-application advice

3.1 The table below sets out the current schedule of pre-application fees and the corresponding proposed fee that would take effect from 1 April 2019.

Type of Enquiry	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Householder	£55	£60
Single or replacement dwelling	£115	£125
2 - 5 dwellings	£210	£250
6 -10 dwellings	£595	£650
Non-residential or commercial (up to 500 sq. metres)	£210	£225
Non-residential or commercial (500 – 1000 sq. metres)	£420	£450
Changes of use	£115	£125
Listed buildings and advertisements	£30	£50
Major development Minerals and waste	25% of application fee	
Other building operations	£55	£60
Formal Tree enquiries	£55	£60
Legal enquiries	£55	£60

3.2 Certain types of development would continue to be exempt from pre-application charges and these include:

- Affordable housing
- Commoners dwellings
- Agricultural buildings (including field shelters) and new agricultural workers' dwellings
- Proposals made by, or on behalf of, a Parish or Town Council, Local Authority or County Council
- All other types of development which are exempt from paying a planning application fee

3.3 The Planning Committee, having considered the proposal at its meeting on 19 March 2019, recommend that the Authority approve the proposed increase in fees for pre-application advice as set out above, to take effect from 1 April 2019.

4. Recommendation

That the Authority approve the proposed increase in fees for written pre-application advice, to take effect on 1 April 2019, as recommended by the Planning Committee.

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Papers: NFNPA/509/16, NFNPA/522/17, NFNPA/PDCC 255/18 & NFNPA 544/18