

NFNPA 544/18

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING - 22 MARCH 2018

REVIEW OF CHARGES FOR WRITTEN PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

Report by: Steve Avery, Executive Director

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Authority introduced a charging regime for providing formal pre-application advice on 1 October 2016. The scheme was evaluated and reviewed by Members at the Authority meeting on 23 March 2017 whereupon Members noted that the scheme was working well, generating additional income for re-investment in the planning service.
- 1.2 Our current pre-application charges are largely based on 25% of the nationally prescribed planning application fee. The planning application fees were increased last month by 20%. The purpose of this report is to seek the Authority's approval to increase the pre-application charges by a similar amount (20%) which would take effect from 1 April 2018. This proposal has already been reported to and supported by the Planning Committee at its meeting on 20 February 2018.

2. Charges for pre-application advice

- 2.1 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 (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.
- 2.2 The table below records the number of formal written pre-application enquiries received between 1 October 2016 to 31 March 2017 and 1 April 2017 to date (2 February 2018).

	Number of planning applications received	Number of pre-apps received	Pre-apps as % of all applications received	Amount of pre-app fees paid	Number of planning applications refused
1/10/16 – 31/3/17	365	147	44%	£14,652	34 (9%)
1/4/17 – 02/2/18	646	381	59%	£19,300	105 (16%)

2.3 Pre-application fees generated to 20 February 2018 amounted to £33,952. The figures suggest that the charges have not deterred applicants from seeking formal pre-application advice, with proportionally more applicants seeking advice in the second year of operation. However, this has yet to translate into a higher approval rate, one reason being that a negative pre-application response does not always seem to deter applicants from subsequently submitting a planning application.

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 2018.

Type of Enquiry	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Householder	£45	£55
Single or replacement dwelling	£95	£115
2 - 5 dwellings	£175	£210
6 -10 dwellings	£495	£595
Non-residential or commercial (up to 500 sq. metres)	£175	£210
Non-residential or commercial (500 – 1000 sq. metres)	£350	£420
Changes of use	£95	£115
Listed buildings and advertisements	£25	£30
Major development Minerals and waste	25% of application fee	
Other building operations	£45	£55

3.2 As noted above, the proposed increase in pre-application advice fees is proportionate to the recent increase in the nationally prescribed planning application fees.

3.3 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

3.4 The Planning Committee, having considered the proposal at its meeting on 20 February 2018, recommend that the Authority approve the proposed increase in fees for pre-application advice as set out above, to take effect from 1 April 2018.

4. Recommendation

That the Authority approve the proposed increase in fees for written pre-application advice, to take effect on 1 April 2018.

Contact: Steve Avery, Executive Director - 01590 646659
steve.avery@newforestnpa.gov.uk

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