

<b>Report of:</b>	Executive Director Growth and Place, Kevin Parkes Executive Member for Regeneration, Councillor Ashley Waters
-------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<b>Submitted to:</b>	Executive - 18 February 2020
----------------------	------------------------------

<b>Subject:</b>	Revised Fee Structure for Building Control and Development Control
-----------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------

**Summary**

<b>Proposed decision(s)</b>
That Executive approves the increase in, and additional, fees and charges identified for Building Control and Development Control, and agrees to an annual increase to the identified fees by CPI + 1%.

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Key decision:</b>	<b>Confidential:</b>	<b>Is the report urgent?<sup>1</sup></b>
Decision	Yes	No	No

<b>Contribution to delivery of the 2018-22 Strategic Plan</b>		
<b>Business Imperatives</b>	<b>Physical Regeneration</b>	<b>Social Regeneration</b>
Increasing fees will enable the Service to deliver the Council's business imperatives through ensuring that it works effectively as possible, improves the financial performance of the service, and will support increases in income.	The Planning Service plays an important role in the Council delivering its physical regeneration priorities. The increase in fees will ensure that the Service can continue to offer the high level of service quality that it does in support of bringing forward development opportunities.	The Planning Service plays an important role in the Council delivering its social regeneration priorities. The increase in fees will ensure that the Service can continue to offer the high level of service quality that it does in support of bringing forward development opportunities that support the delivery of social regeneration objectives.

<b>Ward(s) affected</b>
NA

---

## **What is the purpose of this report?**

1. To seek approval to increase existing, and introduce additional, fees and charges identified for Building Control and Development Control.

## **Why does this report require a Member decision?**

2. The consideration of fees and financial implications is not an officer decision. As a consequence it requires a member decision.

## **Report Background**

3. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for amendments to fees and charges, which have been in place since 2007. Services within the Regeneration Department have a wide range of fees and charges applicable to those using the services. The charges made within Planning are detailed below along with additional services which are provided and which should be considered for being chargeable in order to offset the cost in providing these services to individuals and businesses.
4. Development Control and Building Control have traditionally made a charge for copies of Decision Notices, Completion Certificates and other similar documents and charges are also levied for planning history checks. The charges all relate to time associated with officers carrying out research, retrieving information/documents (which may include visiting the archives), and the cost to copy / scan the information.
5. As the significant proportion of requests for information relate to a relatively consistent cost and in order to simplify the charging regime, rather than determining the cost of every request individually, charges need to be made on an average basis.
6. Appendix 1 contains details of the existing and proposed charges. Importantly, people are able to view some files and obtain copies online, meaning these are being provided free of charge and the Council is working to increase online access where appropriate and achievable. Notwithstanding this, the Planning Service has significant archived material which is not scheduled for digitisation at this stage and an appropriate charging regime needs to be in place.
7. As it has been 12 years since these charges were last considered and/or amended it is considered that they no longer reflect the true cost of providing this service. The revised charging schedule will bring the Council in line with that which neighbouring Tees Valley authorities are charging.

## **What decision(s) are being asked for?**

8. That Executive approves the increase in, and additional, fees and charges identified for Building Control and Development Control (Appendix 1), and agrees to an annual increase to the identified fees in line by CPI + 1%..

## **Why is this being recommended?**

9. The fees and charges the subject of this report have not been amended for 12 years and are in need of review. The level of charges being recommended reflect the costs of delivering the service and bring them into line with those being charged by other Planning authorities within the Tees valley.

## **Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended**

10. Two options have been considered, not to increase existing or introduce new fees, or to set the increase at a higher level. Both options have been discounted. As stated in the body of the report fees have remained static for 12 years and do not reflect the costs of providing the service and would not contribute towards delivering the Council's business imperatives. Equally setting the fees too high would go beyond recouping the costs of delivering the service, would be out of synchronisation with what other authorities in Tees Valley are charging.

## **Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)**

11. The principal impact of the decision will be to increase fee income levels within the Planning Services budget.

## **Legal**

12. There are no legal implications associated with this decision.

## **Financial**

13. Introduction of the fees will provide a modest increase in fee income to the Council and will help increase the robustness of the Planning Service in meeting its identified income targets.

## **Policy Framework**

14. There are no implications.

## **Equality and Diversity**

15. This report has been subject to an initial Impact Assessment (IA), which accompanies this report (see Appendix 2). This identifies that a full IA is not necessary.

## **Risk**

16. The following high level risk identified in the Strategic and Directorate Risk Registers, will be reduced as a consequence of increasing fees:

O1-012 If Regeneration services (e.g. Planning, Design) do not achieve income targets in line with budget plans, then this will then this will bring financial pressures, divert resources from other agreed priorities, and threaten achieving a balanced year-end budget.

By continuing to rely upon the existing fee structure the Council is not covering the cost of providing the service putting pressure on the achievement of income targets.

## **Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)**

17. On approval the revised fee structure is introduced and implemented.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Existing and proposed fee structure

Appendix 2: IA

## **Background papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

.

**Contact:** Paul Clarke, Head of Planning

**Email:** Paul\_clarke@middlesbrough.gov.uk