

Agenda Item	11
Report No	PLA 10/17

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Places Committee

**Date:** 15 June 2017

**Report Title:** Planning Fees and Charges

**Report By:** Director of Development & Infrastructure

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides information on the increase in planning fees that have been implemented from 1 June 2017 and seeks approval for an increase to several discretionary charges set by the Council, to be implemented from 1 July 2017.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- note the increase to planning fees; and
- agree the proposed changes to pre-application fees and the introduction of a new fee for Non Material Variations.

### **3. Increases to Existing Charges**

- 3.1 On 27 April 2017 Scottish Government provided details of regulations (SSI 2017/120) bringing into effect a new fee maximum of £125,000 for major applications for most categories of development, and £62,500 for applications for planning permission in principle. This increase came into effect from 1 June 2017, and the schedule of fees has been updated on the Council web-site.
- 3.2 Following a mini-review carried out as part of the Council's Redesign process, the current approaches to pre-application charges were re-assessed. The review recognised that the pre-application service for local and major developments is a discretionary service which has operated well for a number of years, and continues to be well received by developers.
- 3.3 It is proposed to increase the fees for local pre-application advice from 20% of the application fee to 30% of the application fee (to a maximum of £1200). This is based on seeking to recover the costs of delivering the service to the high standards which customers have been accustomed to. During the 2016/17 period, the Service dealt with 598 local pre-application requests.
- 3.4 It is proposed to increase the fees for major pre-application advice from £1250 to £2500. The Major Developments Pre-application Service operates a different model from that for local developments, involving a cross Council and cross agency meeting, a detailed pre-application pack and follow up meetings where appropriate. Whilst it is recognised that this is a significant increase, an assessment has been undertaken of the time involved in preparing such responses and this proposed increase is geared to cost recovery. It is worth noting that the development industry has been very complimentary of the service offered by the Council over many years of operation – around 240 major development pre-application packs have been issued since the service started.
- 3.5 Other fees and charges have been increased subject to the corporate charging policy by 10%.

### **4. Proposed New Charge**

- 4.1 Section 64 of the Planning Act allows planning authorities to vary any planning permission granted by them if it appears that the variation sought is not material. The request can only come from the person granted the planning permission or someone acting with their consent – this includes successors in title to the land in question. In making an assessment as to whether a proposed variation to a planning permission is material or not, the Council use a set criteria in respect of the overall effect of the variation upon the approved scheme. These criteria will be clearly set out on the Council web-site.
- 4.2 There is currently no fee for dealing with such requests for variation, and dealing with these requests is an additional task which staff are expected to deal with as part of the service to the customer. In order to recover the costs of dealing with such requests it is proposed that a new charge of £40 for Householder Permissions and £100 for all other Permissions will be levied. Members are asked to agree to this new charge.

### **5. Implications**

- 5.1 Resource Implications: This increase in charges arises from a recognition that the Council is seeking to recover the costs of delivering individual services.

- 5.2 Climate Change/ Carbon CLEVER Implications: None
- 5.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): None
- 5.4 Gaelic Implications: None
- 5.5 Risk Implications: None
- 5.6 Legal Implications: The legal basis and justification for these charges will be clearly posted on the schedule of fees.

Designation: Director of Development & Infrastructure

Date: 5 June 2017

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