

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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meeting date: 7 JANUARY 2021  
title: REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES  
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES  
principal author: VALERIE TAYLOR

### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek member approval on proposals to increase this committee's fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2021.

### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council's fees and charges are reviewed on an annual basis as part of the budget setting process.
- 2.2 This report requests that members consider proposals for the increase in fees and charges for this committee's services. Such charges would be implemented with effect from the 1 April 2021 and would operate for the duration of the 2021/22 financial year.
- 2.3 The council's latest budget forecast allows for a 2% inflationary increase in the level of income raised from fees and charges. The review aims to increase budgeted income for 2021/22 by this amount when compared with this year's original budget estimate.
- 2.4 After applying this percentage increase, proposed charges have generally been rounded up or down to minimise any problems with small change. This inevitably impacts on the individual percentage rise for each separate charge, particularly when the current charge is low.
- 2.5 Planning application fees are set by Central Government and at this time there are no increases anticipated for the 2021/22 financial year.
- 2.6 Pre-application fees are however set by ourselves as the relevant Local Planning Authority and have therefore been included in the annual review.
- 2.7 The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 state that Building Control fee earning activities should be charged on the basis of achieving a full cost recovery. A separate report will be submitted to Committee at a future date by the building control section for any proposed changes to the 2021/22 charging structure.
- 2.8 This report requests that members consider the proposals for increases to the fees and charges for which this committee is responsible for reviewing at a local level as set out in Annex 1.

### 3 FEES AND CHARGES BUDGET PREPARATION

- 3.1 There are extremely high levels uncertainty around income levels from the council's fees and charges in light of Covid-19 and the impact this is having on use of the council's services and facilities. In the current financial year the government is partly compensating the council for lost income at 75% of lost sales, fees and charges income – after first adjusting for 5% of total budgeted income. It is on the continuation of this, or alternatively the recovery of income levels, that the fees and charges have been set.

- 3.2 A budget working group meeting was held on 28 September which amongst other things considered the setting of next year's budget. At the meeting of Policy and Finance Committee on 17 November 2020, it was agreed that the approach as discussed at Budget Working Group should be taken.
- 3.3 In respect of the council's income budgets for 2021/22 budgets should therefore be prepared on the base budget plus inflation of 2%. Service committees are therefore requested to review their fees and charges in order to achieve this targeted increase to income.
- 3.4 The base budgeted income to be received from fees and charges which are set by this committee as set out at Annex 1 is £56,100. A 2% increase would therefore generate an additional £1,120.

#### 4 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

- 4.1 The review of fees and charges is coordinated by financial services, working together with heads of service and budget holders.
- 4.2 The following process is undertaken:
- Budget holders are provided with an indication of the fees and charges factoring in a 2% increase on the base budget.
  - A discussion meeting is then held between the budget holder and financial services to enable the budget holder to propose a set of fees and charges for their services. This may depend on where there is a national requirement or service specific reason for setting a fee or charge different from a 2% increase.
- 4.3 Following discussions a **proposed** set of fees and charges for implementation from 1 April 2021 has been produced for this committee and is shown at Annex 1. This annex provides details of:
- the current charge for 2020/21
  - the current year base budgeted income estimated to be raised by each charge (Net of VAT)
  - the proposed charges for implementation from 1 April 2021
  - an indication of the potential income that may be achieved in 2021/22, should the proposals be agreed (removing the impact of Covid-19) (Net of VAT)
  - the resulting percentage increase in the charge from 2020/21 to 2021/22
  - Date that each charge was last increased (They are all reviewed annually, but may not necessarily be increased)
- 4.4 The indication of potential income which is shown throughout Annex 1 is provided for guidance purposes only and is based on past activity levels. No account is taken of any change in service use which may be influenced by a change in charge levels or reductions in income that may result from the impact of Covid-19.
- 4.5 If you agree the recommended charges shown in Annex 1, the estimated extra income raised based on **current budgeted demand levels** is £4,510, an overall increase of 8%.

## 5 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE FAST TRACK

- 5.1 At your meeting in November 2018 a new fast track pre-application advice service was approved as part of the 2019/20 fees and charges review.
- 5.2 The fast track service charges a premium of 50% on the standard pre-application advice service and has a commitment to return a decision two weeks quicker than the normal service.
- 5.3 The revised structure was introduced to offset some of the costs of an increase in the hours of the pre-application advice officer post from 22.5hrs per week to 37hrs per week.
- 5.4 The pre-application advice officer post has been vacant for over a year with no immediate plans to recruit to allow an assessment of the economic impact as a result of COVID 19. Due to the limited resources the existing Planning staff have carried out the Pre-application advice role in addition to their normal duties which has had an impact on the faster turnaround commitment guaranteed under the fast track option with targets not being met on many occasions.
- 5.5 This year's review has therefore requested a removal of the fast track service for minor and intermediate developments from next year, ensuring that resources can be directed at maintaining an efficient service for householders, major and large-scale major developments in 2021/22.
- 5.6 Reductions in anticipated income from the withdrawal of part of the fast track service have been offset by increases in other areas, mainly within the fee structure for major and large-scale major developments.

## 6 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:
  - Resources – Fees and Charges provide a key income source for the Council. Fees and charges also provide a mechanism to target concessions, and also to charge service users directly rather than allowing the financial burden of certain service provision to fall on the council tax.
  - Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Local Government Acts of 2000 and 2003 extended authorities' powers to charge for discretionary services.
  - Political – none
  - Reputation – Substantial increases to charges can generate adverse publicity.
  - Equality and Diversity – One of the aims of the fees and charges mechanism on many services is to pass on service concession in order to increase inclusivity.

## 7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Work has been undertaken by financial services, heads of service and budget holders in reviewing the fees and charges operated by this committee. This review has now been completed as part of the budget process, for implementation from 1 April, should the proposals be approved.

7.2 The Budget Working Group recommends that all service committees seek to increase their fees and charges overall by 2.0%. If you agree with the increase in charges, this committee will meet the target required.

8 RECOMMENDATION THAT COMMITTEE

8.1 Approve the proposed fees and charges as set out in Annex 1.

SENIOR ACCOUNTANT

DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

PD2-21/VT/AC  
21 DECEMBER 2020

For further information please ask for Valerie Taylor extension 4433

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES FOR IMPLEMENTATION FROM 1 APRIL 2021**

BUILDING CONTROL – BLDGC	Ledger Code	VAT	Date of last change	Charge from 1st April 2019	Current Charge 2020/21	Budgeted Income Net of VAT for 2020/21	Proposed Charges for 2021/22	Indication of Potential Income Net of VAT for 2021/22	Percentage Increase in Charge
				£	£	£	£	£	%
<b>Building Control Decision Notices</b>	BCNON/8231m	Non Vatable	01-Apr-20	21.50	22.00	1,080	23.00	1,130.00	4.55%

PLANNING - PLANG	Ledger Code	VAT	Date of last change	Charge from 1st April 2019	Current Charge 2020/21	Budgeted Income Net of VAT for 2020/21	Proposed Charges for 2021/22	Indication of Potential Income Net of VAT for 2021/22	Percentage Increase in Charge
				£	£	£	£	£	%
<b>Planning Decision Notices</b>	PLANG/8231m	Non Vatable	01-Apr-20	21.50	22.00	3,090	23.00	3,230.00	4.55%

<b>Pre-Application Advice</b>	<b>Minor Developments*</b>	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-19	250.00	250.00	13,130	255.00	18,420.00	2.00%
	- additional meeting	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-19	125.00	125.00	140	127.50	140.00	2.00%
	- fast track service	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-19	375.00	375.00	7,390	0.00	0.00	-100.00%
	<b>Intermediate Developments</b>	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-19	475.00	475.00	3,850	490.00	3,970.00	3.16%
	- additional meeting	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-19	237.00	237.00	540	245.00	560.00	3.38%

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PLANNING - PLANG		Ledger Code	VAT	Date of last change	Charge from 1st April 2019	Current Charge 2020/21	Budgeted Income Net of VAT for 2020/21	Proposed Charges for 2021/22	Indication of Potential Income Net of VAT for 2021/22	Percentage Increase in Charge
					£	£	£	£	£	%
Pre-Application Advice	- fast track service	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-19	712.50	712.50	0	0.00	0.00	-100.00%
	<b>Major Developments - up to two meetings</b>	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-20	1,000.00	1,100.00	9,270	1,500.00	12,640.00	36.36%
	- additional meeting	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-20	500.00	550.00	0	750.00	0.00	36.36%
	- fast track service	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-20	1,500.00	1,650.00	0	2,250.00	0.00	36.36%
	<b>Large Scale Major Developments - up to two meetings</b>	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-20	1,500.00	1,600.00	6,950	2,000.00	8,690.00	25.00%
	- additional meeting	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-20	750.00	800.00	870	1,000.00	1,090.00	25.00%
	- fast track service	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-20	2,250.00	2,400.00	2,610	3,000.00	3,260.00	25.00%
	<b>Discharge of Conditions Meeting</b>	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-19	105.00	105.00	0	108.00	0.00	2.86%
	<b>Householders - Without Meeting</b>	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-19	55.00	55.00	1,210	57.00	1,250.00	3.64%
	- With Meeting	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-19	110.00	110.00	3,560	114.00	3,690.00	3.64%
	- additional meeting	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-19	55.00	55.00	0	57.00	0.00	3.64%
	- fast track service	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-19	165.00	165.00	1,720	171.00	1,780.00	3.64%

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES FOR IMPLEMENTATION FROM 1 APRIL 2021**

PLANNING - PLANG		Ledger Code	VAT	Date of last change	Charge from 1st April 2019	Current Charge 2020/21	Budgeted Income Net of VAT for 2020/21	Proposed Charges for 2021/22	Indication of Potential Income Net of VAT for 2021/22	Percentage Increase in Charge
					£	£	£	£	£	%
Pre-Application Advice	High Hedge or Tree Issues	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-20	65.00	70.00	0	75.00	0.00	7.14%
	Listed Building or work In Conservation	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-16	100.00	100.00	580	110.00	640.00	10.00%
	Advertisement Advice	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-20	65.00	70.00	110	75.00	120.00	7.14%
	Prior Notification	PLANG/8495n	VAT Inclusive	01-Apr-20	115.00	120.00	0	125.00	0.00	4.17%

HIGH HEDGES - HIGHH		Ledger Code	VAT	Date of last change	Charge from 1st April 2019	Charge from 1st April 2020	Budgeted Income Net of VAT for 2020/21	Proposed Charges for 2021/22 2% Inflation	Indication of Potential Income Net of VAT for 2021/22	Percentage Increase in Charge
					£	£	£	£	£	%
Submission of High Hedges Complaint		HIGHH/8460u	Non Vatable	01-Apr-19	590.00	590.00	0	610.00	0.00	3.39%

<b>Total Income from fees and charges set by this committee</b>							<b>56,100.00</b>		<b>60,610.00</b>	<b>8.04%</b>	
<b>Overall extra income generated compared to base budget</b>									<b>4,510.00</b>		

\* projections for potential income net of VAT for 2021/22 in respect of Minor Developments assume that the standard service will be selected if the fast track option is no longer available