

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Bob Goodman, Cabinet Member for Development	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	On or after 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2017	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3002
TITLE:	Pre Application Advice Charging Schedule Changes	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1 - Revised charging schedule.		

## **1 THE ISSUE**

- 1.1 The existing pre application advice charging process is not in all cases fully recovering the cost of provision of this discretionary service. In addition some of the development was falling within a category that was requiring a fee either exceeding reasonable costs or not covering costs. There was also a disproportionate difference in fee between the upper service levels and this was raised as a concern by service users.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

The Cabinet Member is asked to;

- 2.1 Agree changes to the pre-application charging schedule to revise categorisation, increase fees and introduce a new fee service level.

## **3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 3.1 Proposed fee changes will recover the cost of delivering the non-statutory service. Officer time to analyse costs of this service have been absorbed within the current budget

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 These changes are proposed to an existing service which is already well used. Pre-application services are non-statutory. However pre-application advice is

encouraged within the National Planning Policy Framework paras 188-190 as a means to speed up decision making and improve development quality.

## **5 THE REPORT**

- 5.1 The pre-application service was subject to redesign in 2016 and a new improved service was launched in May 2016. The current proposed revisions to that process follow a review in consultation with users of the service. Whilst the service is generally highly regarded and well used customer feedback has made suggestions that have led to some re-categorisation of the development types / charges and the introduction of a new fee category. The new charges are unlikely to significantly increase income however should better cover the cost of delivering the service. It will also enable users of the service to more efficiently determine themselves which fee category a particular development falls within.

## **6 RATIONALE**

- 6.1 The purpose of making these changes is to introduce fairer charging schedules that are based upon the nature and scale of development and which realistically cover the costs associated with delivering the service.

## **7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 7.1 Leave the charges as they stand however this does not cover all costs of delivery. There is also too great a fee difference between the upper service levels based upon the feedback received from service users.

## **8 CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Cabinet colleagues; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Stakeholders/Partners; Section 151 Finance Officer;

## **9 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

<b>Contact person</b>	Sarah James 01225 477577
<b>Background papers</b>	
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	