

This appendix details the approach undertaken to complete the comprehensive review of fees and charges. The review adopted two methods – process mapping and benchmarking.

Approach to process mapping

The review of Planning & Building Control fees and charges was broken down into five distinct areas:

- Building Control
- Pre-application advice
- Planning Performance Agreements
- Specialist fees
- Administration

Data was gathered at the start of the review, including:

- Current fees and charges for the services listed above
- 2017/18 staffing budget including cost centres and detail codes for all income
- General Ledger costs centres and detail codes for all income
- Background information on the introduction of Pre-application advice and Planning Performance Agreements

Work was completed to understand and map the existing process used to deliver each particular service. This was broken down into the specific steps taken. The following were populated on a spreadsheet, detailing the total cost of delivering each service:

- The time taken to deliver each step
- The grades of the employees involved in delivering each step
- The hourly employee costs to determine the cost of providing each step
- The average support service charges per hour for the overall service per step

Approach to benchmarking

A directive for setting 2018/19 fees and charges is: *all charges and fees should be benchmarked with “nearest neighbours” (or other relevant comparator groups including the private sector where appropriate). Outlier authorities or providers (i.e. high charges) should also be examined and consideration given as to whether or not Brighton & Hove City Council could increase charges to such levels.*

Prior to commencing work on the benchmarking of fees, the criterion for selection of local authorities to benchmark was agreed by the Planning & Building Control Management Team as:

- Building Control Fee and Charges – compared with authorities as recommended by the Head of Service
- Pre-application advice – CIPFA nearest neighbours and a selection of London Boroughs
- Administration – a cross section of different local authorities

For Planning Performance Agreements and the provision of specialist advice, it was difficult to obtain any comparative data. Therefore, no benchmarking information was used to propose fees for these services.

To complete the benchmarking review:

- The fees and charges of the other identified local authorities were obtained and noted in a benchmarking spreadsheet
- An average fee was calculated using others' fees
- This was compared to the equivalent BHCC fee and was used as part of the criteria to determine the proposed fees

The benchmarking authorities used for the review were:

Building Control	Pre-application advice	Administration
Adur and Worthing	Bristol	Lewes
Arun	Croydon	Newark and Sherwood
Bristol	Herefordshire	Tameside
Chichester	Horsham	Tower Hamlets
Eastbourne and Wealden	Islington	
Horsham	Oxford	
Mid Sussex	Portsmouth	
Portsmouth	Southampton	
Southampton	Westminster	
Winchester		

Determining proposed fees

The total process cost was presented alongside the average benchmarked fee (where available), the current fee and a 3.5% increase on the current fee. The Planning & Building Control Management Team reviewed all this information and agreed on the proposed charges which are detailed in appendices 1 to 5.