

Pre- App Fee review – Small scale/Householder/Listed Building

Introduction

In order to provide more clear, simple and customer focused services, these services will be grouped together and marketed separately to the major & minor pre-app services (which will be promoted in the planned developer protocol document.)

Analysis of Income (18/19)

The number of cases and value of income received (inc VAT) in 2018/19 for each category is shown below with the current (19/20) fee rate for information:

Category	Type	19/20 Fee	18/19 Volume	18/19 Total Value	18/19 % Share Volume	18/19 % Share Value
Householders	Written response	£102.00	56	£5,600.00	14%	2.6%
	Meeting & written response	£153.00	45	£6,750.00	11%	3.0%
Listed Buildings	Written response	£220.00	7	£1,512.00	1.8%	0.7%
	Meeting & written response	£440.00	24	£9,504.00	6%	4.4%
Small Scale	Written response	£153.00	11	£1,625.00	2.8%	0.75%
	Meeting & written response	£306.00	7	£2,772.00	1.8%	1.3%
All Categories	TOTAL		150	£27,763.00	38%	13%

Although they only represent 13% of the total pre-app income generated in 18/19, they make up nearly 40% of the total number of requests and are seen by the public as a valuable way of getting advice on potential planning issues, which we are unable to provide free of charge. It also should help improve the quality of final planning applications submitted if the advice is followed.

Benchmarking

The current fee levels charged has been compared against other unitary authorities in the south:

Category	Type	BHCC Fee	Portsmouth	Southampton	Bristol	Medway	Southend	Bournemouth
Householders	Written response	£102.00	£40.00	£42.00		£109.00	£82.00	£100.00
	Meeting & written response	£153.00				£164.00		£150.00
Listed Buildings	Written response	£220.00	£40.00	£42.00	£120.00	£105.50		£100.00
	Meeting & written response	£440.00			£204.00			£150.00
Small Scale	Written response	£153.00	£40.00	£42.00		£380.00	£218.32	£180.00
	Meeting & written response	£306.00				£435.00	£651.90	£360.00
Notes			Only provide written advice	Provide 30 mins written/verbal advice & no site visits	Only provide advice for listed buildings	LB fee is for either site meeting or written advice	Still provide free duty officer "drop in" service	Subject to minimum charge of 10% of estimated planning fee

The benchmarking indicates that the previous review increased BHCC fees for householder and listed buildings to the higher end of the market, where they have remained. There is however scope to increase further the charges for small scale developments (adverts, air conditioning units, small changes to commercial space.)

Proposed Changes 1st April 2020

Category / Type	Proposed Change	Rationale	Pros	Cons
Householder				
Written response (householder)	Discontinue & replace with up to 30 min telephone/Skype call Phone call booked to take place within 5 working days of completed application & fee No option for site meetings or follow up advice Not available for HMO's Fee set at £82.00	Reduces report writing burden on case officers Quicker more responsive service for householders which is cheaper than a written report High volume of customers	Appointment booked by Admin & scheduled for case officer (Enterprise task) Simplified enquiry form not necessarily requiring plans Faster to turn around for officers PR opportunity to promote new cheaper service	Need to record & scan hand written record of advice provided for subsequent application if made No scrutiny of advice from principals May become too popular and criteria need to be considered to restrict
Meeting & Written response (householder/their agent)	Maximum 30 minute meeting on site/in office & follow up report Increase fee to £164.00 Meeting scheduled within 5 working days of receipt of completed application form and fee Written response within 10 working days of our meeting with you	High volume of customers but slow service delivery. Simplify to have meeting either in office or on site	Appointment booked by Admin & scheduled for case officer (Enterprise task) Increase partially offsets income reduction from the new cheaper telephone response	1 week reduction in delivery target
Listed Buildings				
Written response	Discontinue service	Low volume of customers.		Some may just submit application
Meeting & Written response (householder or their agent)	Heritage is special and benefits from meeting/site visit or office (max 60 mins) Fee levels held at 19/20 rates	Explore options to allocated cases direct to Heritage team on receipt to accelerate response	Some may take up this service if written not available	No real scope to lengthen target

	Meeting scheduled within 5 working days of receipt of completed application form and fee Written response within 10 working days of our meeting with you	times. Simplify to have meeting either in office or on site		
Small Scale				
Written response (business or their agent)	Written response within 10 working days of receipt of application form and fee Scope to increase fee from benchmarking to £215.00	Low volume of customers Capacity provided by channel shift in householder verbal and improved caseloads	Shifts impact of householder change & zero fee increase on listed buildings to small commercial applications Improved turn round times committed to	Increasing rates may discourage applicants from taking advice. Level of requests will be monitored to establish likely impact.
Meeting & Written response (business or their agent)	Maximum 60 minute meeting on site & follow up report Increase fee to £375.00 Meeting scheduled within 5 working days of receipt of completed application form and fee Written response within 10 working days of our meeting with you	Low volume of customers Capacity provided by channel shift in householder verbal and improved caseloads	Shifts impact of householder change & zero fee increase on listed buildings to small scale applications Improved turn round times committed to	Increasing rates may discourage applicants from taking advice. Level of requests will be monitored to establish likely impact.

This model would see the assumed workload model generate the same overall volume of fees in 2020/21 (including the 2% inflationary increase.)

New Fee Schedule

If agreed, the new fee schedule would be as follows:

Category	Service	Current Rate	2020/21 Proposed Rate	% Increase
Householder				
	Written response (Discontinued)	£102.00	Nil	N/A
	Telephone/Skype advice (30 minute call) – (New)	Nil	£82.00	N/A
	Site Meeting (30 mins) plus written report	£153.00	£164.00	7.19%
Listed Buildings				
	Written response	£220.00	Nil	N/A
	Site/Meeting (60 mins) plus written report	£440.00	£440.00	Nil
Small Scale				
	Written response	£153.00	£215.00	40.52%
	Site/Meeting (60 mins max) plus written report	£306.00	£375.00	22.55%

