

	<h2>Planning Committee</h2> <h3>15 December 2016</h3>
<p style="text-align: right;">Title</p>	<p>Strategic Pre-Application Planning Briefing– Charges</p>
<p>Report of</p>	<p>Chief Planning Officer</p>
<p>Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p>Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Key</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Enclosures</p>	<p>None</p>
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<h2>Summary</h2>
<p>At its meeting on 9 May 2016, Constitution, Ethics and Probity Committee (CEP) recommended that full Council approve the introduction of a Strategic Pre-application briefing process as a pilot for a one year period and that the process was to be reviewed after October to determine how the arrangements are to be delivered for the remainder of the pilot period (i.e. up until May 2017). At paragraph 5.2.3 of the CEP report, officers advised members that any additional costs associated with providing this discretionary service should be recovered from applicant(s) / developers. The recommendation was considered and approved at Annual Council on 24 May 2016.</p>
<p>The Chief Planning Officer is therefore required to seek agreement from Policy & Resources Committee to the additional fee / charge required to cover the Council’s cost of implementing this arrangement. Prior to reporting to Policy & Resources Committee, Planning Committee is requested to consider and recommend that Policy & Resources Committee approve charges set out in this report..</p>

Recommendations

- 1. That the Committee recommend approval of the charges for Strategic Pre-Application Briefings to Policy & Resources Committee as set out in this report.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 In response to a review of necessary constitutional and procedural changes required to assist the involvement of Members of the Council's Planning Committee in the pre-application process, it was agreed by the Constitution, Ethics and Probity Committee on 9 May 2016 that a pre-application process for briefing Members of the Planning Committee on strategic planning applications be introduced as a pilot for a period of one year.
- 1.2 The CEP report also stated where demand is likely to lead to a requirement for additional Strategic Pre-Application Briefing meetings (over and above Planning Committee meetings), the additional / fee charge required to cover the Council's cost of implementing this arrangement would be sought and recovered from the applicant / developer. At Annual Council on 24 May 2016, members approved the CEP recommendation for the introduction of the process.
- 1.3 Since May 2016, constitutional changes have been agreed by the Council to support a Strategic Pre-Application Briefing process, Member training has taken place and the members of the Planning Committee have met twice to consider pre-application proposals.
- 1.4 Initially, pre-applications and applications were both considered at the same meeting. However, in discussion with Members it was agreed that it would be more effective to hold separate meetings for applications and pre-applications. The second meeting of the Strategic Pre-Application Briefing included only pre-applications and allowed Members, Officers and the Applicants time to focus on the design and detail of the proposed development schemes.
- 1.5 Demand for pre-application advice remains high and it is proposed that five additional Strategic Pre-Application Briefings will be established to consider proposals which are of strategic significance and would benefit from Member involvement at an early stage through the Strategic Pre-Application Briefing process. Before these meetings can be scheduled, a charging schedule needs to be agreed.
- 1.6 London Borough of Barnet has agreed the charge-rate of Planning Officers in the RE Major Applications Team. Based on these hourly rates, it is proposed that a charge of £1,505.02 would cover the cost of a proposal being considered at a Strategic Pre-Application Briefing. This charge includes Officer preparation time and attendance at the meeting as well as agenda printing charges.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Following a recommendation from the Constitution, Ethics and Probity Committee, Annual Council at its meeting on 24 May 2016, approved the recommendation to introduce Strategic Pre-Application Briefings for a one year pilot. To meet the costs of the to the Council in providing this additional service, the Planning Committee is asked to recommend the approval of the charging set out in Paragraph 1.6 to the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 Do nothing. The Strategic Pre-Application Planning Briefing process could not be delivered by Officers if the cost of the process is not covered by the applicant.
- 3.2 Different Officer charge rates were considered, however, any changes to these charges would require approval by London Borough of Barnet. It is considered that the current charge-rates are appropriate.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Introduction of a charging system will allow future meetings of the Strategic Pre-Application Briefings to be diarised as required by Constitution, Ethics and Probity Committee. All future schemes presented to the Strategic Pre-Application Briefing will be subject to the charges outlined in para 1.6 , although as a discretionary service, it is the applicant / developer's choice on whether to take advantage of this service.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 Barnet London Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. By ensuring the cost of Strategic Pre-Application Briefings are covered by developers / applicants, the direct cost to the Council taxpayers is likely to be neutral. The cost of this service will be recovered through Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs).

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 Pre-application consideration of major / strategic planning applications is not a statutory service and is therefore a discretionary service which the Council is able to offer and charge for. Legislation requires that any charges are limited to cost recovery. London Borough of Barnet has agreed charge-rates for Officers in the RE Major Applications Team and these are consistent with

those proposed for Strategic Pre-Application Briefings.

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 Not applicable for this report.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 The Council's constitution outlines within the responsibility for functions, annex A that the Planning Committee has the ability to receive and comment on any Strategic Planning Pre-Application Briefing. Therefore it is appropriate that the Planning Committee receive this report and consider its recommendations for approval.

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 If charges are not agreed, it will not be possible to offer the Strategic Pre-Application Briefing process.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 Approval of the charging schedule will be applied to all future schemes presented to the Strategic Pre-Application Briefing meetings. Given that the majority of schemes will be of strategic significance and size and presented by developers, it is not expected that individuals will be discriminated against. However, the outcome and impact of the charging schedule will be monitored to ensure that no potential discrimination arises.

5.7 Consultation and Engagement

Consultation has taken place with the Chairman of the Planning Committee who has no objections in principle to the introduction of a charging schedule for Strategic Pre-Application Briefings.

5.8 Insight

5.8.1 None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Special Constitution, Ethics and Probity Committee (9 May 2016) – Agenda Item 7 'Strategic Planning Pre-Application Process and Amendments to the Council's Constitution'

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g8852/Public%20reports%20pack%2009th-May-2016%2019.00%20Constitution%20Ethics%20and%20Probity%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

6.2 Annual Council (24 May 2016_ - Agenda Item 11 'Strategic Planning Pre-Application Process and Amendments to the Council's Constitution'

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g8338/Public%20reports%20pack%2024th-May-2016%2019.00%20Annual%20Council.pdf?T=10>

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/b27712/Supplement%20-%20Strategic%20Planning%20Pre-Application%20Process%20Members%20Comments%2024th-May-2016%2019.00%20Ann.pdf?T=9>