

**BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL ON 30<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2025**

**INTRODUCTION OF A CHARGING SCHEDULE FOR PRE-APPLICATION  
(PLANNING) ADVICE**

**REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR GROWTH**

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Sarah Kay Interim Director Planning, Devolution & Corporate Policy

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

For Council to consider the recommendation from the meeting of Planning Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2025 for the adoption and introduction of a charging schedule for pre-application (planning) advice.

Council's role is to adopt the introduction of the charging schedule, following scrutiny of the reports and recommendations presented to Planning Committee.

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**REPORT DETAILS**

**1. Context**

- 1.1 Under the Council's Constitution the Planning Committee is responsible for exercising a number of powers and duties of the Council. Under the usual terms of that delegation and as a Local Planning Authority function the approval of operational service matters would ordinarily be captured under Planning Committee delegation (9) *The operation of any function of the Council as a Local Planning Authority not otherwise covered, including commenting on development plan documents prepared by adjoining authorities, and government consultations on the planning legislation.*
- 1.2 However, given that this proposal includes the introduction of a fee for the proposed service the subsequent approval of the Council is necessary to add this fee / charge category to the Budget and Policy Framework.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The development industry widely accepts that a charge to access to pre-application (planning) advice is necessary, and many rely on access to professional officer advice to inform and support their planning application submissions. Currently all users of this service at Bolsover access it for free.

- 2.2 The provision of pre-application (planning) advice contributes to officer workload across the Planning Service, which is under pressure from rising costs associated with the administration of the whole Planning Service (inc. planning application publication, consultation, officer time, and access to professional expertise such as ecology, urban design, and conservation).
- 2.3 Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 gives authorities the power to charge for discretionary services, including the provision of pre-application (planning) advice, subject to the income from the charge levied not exceeding the cost of the service provision.

### **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 On the [16<sup>th</sup> April 2025](#) and the [11<sup>th</sup> June 2025](#) the Planning Committee considered subsequent reports from the Assistant Director of Planning & Planning Policy concerning the proposed introduction of a charging schedule for pre-application (planning) advice. Those reports outlined (based on market research and service data analysis) the necessity arising to formalise the discretionary service of offering pre-application (planning) advice and introduce a cost recovery fee for the provision of that service.
- 3.2 Based upon the initial charging schedule / service drafting, the period of public consultation, and the subsequent revised charging schedule / service being prepared it is proposed that the Council endorse the recommendation of the Planning Committee to introduce a cost recovery fee connected with the ongoing delivery of a pre-application (planning) advice service by the Planning Services department. The final charging schedule is set out in the Pre-Application (Planning) Note attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

### **4. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 4.1 The Council could decide not to progress the introduction of charges for access to pre-application (planning) advice and continue to offer the service free of charge at a continued cost to the Council. This could disadvantage the Council as it continues to subsidise the service, without recovering the service cost provision.

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### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Council approve the introduction of a pre-application (planning) advice charging schedule / service, commencing on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2025.

Approved by Councillor Tom Munro, Portfolio Holder for Growth

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## **IMPLICATIONS:**

<b><u>Finance and Risk</u></b>	<b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Details:</b> The provision of a structured discretionary service will ensure that the demands placed upon the Planning Service by service users can be adequately resourced, and the costs of providing the service are recovered through individual service users rather than by the Council as a whole.</p> <p>On behalf of the Section 151 Officer</p>		
<b><u>Legal (including Data Protection)</u></b>	<b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Details:</b> There are no specific legal implications arising from this report; however the Planning Service will need to have regard to service standards / customer expectations when receiving payment for a discretionary service. The draft Pre-Application (Planning) Charging Schedule / Service will set out targeted response times for specific enquiries. Service users will also be made aware that any planning advice accessed through this service will be offered on a without prejudice basis.</p> <p>On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council</p>		
<b><u>Staffing</u></b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Details:</b> There are no specific staffing matters arising from this report. The current provision of the discretionary service free of charge is absorbed by existing staff within the Planning Service and there are no staffing changes proposed as a result of these recommendations. Additional income generated from the proposed charging Schedule may allow for additional resource to be appointed in the future to meet arising demands.</p> <p>On behalf of the Head of Paid Service</p>		
<b><u>Equality and Diversity Impact and Consultation</u></b>	<b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Details:</b> The public consultation and draft Schedule will be subject to an associated Equality Impact Assessment.</p> <p>On behalf of the Information, Engagement and Performance Manager</p>		
<b><u>Environment</u></b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.</p> <p><b>Details:</b> There are no environmental implications.</p>		

## DECISION INFORMATION:

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Please indicate which threshold applies:</b></p> <p><b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p><b>Revenue (a)</b> Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.</p> <p><b>Capital (a)</b> Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.</p> <p><b>District Wards Significantly Affected:</b> <i>(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</i></p> <p><b>Is the decision subject to Call-In?</b> <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p> <p>If No, is the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report? <b><i>(decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer)</i></b></p> <p><b>Consultation carried out:</b> <i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i></p> <p><b>Leader</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Deputy Leader</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Executive</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>SLT</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Relevant Service Manager</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Members</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Public</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>(a)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>(b)</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>(a)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>(b)</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>All</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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### Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing

#### Customers, Economy, Environment, and Housing:

The provision of a structured and resourced discretionary service which is reactionary to arising demands of the service user whilst supporting our economy, environment, and housing.

**DOCUMENT INFORMATION:**

<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	Pre-Application (Planning) Advice Note inc. draft Charging Schedule 2025/26 – REVISED DRAFT

<b>Background Papers</b>
N/A