

SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Decisions

ROGER REED

Cabinet Member - Sustainable Development

Having considered the reports contained in the agenda of a meeting of the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) held on 19 September 2008 and the views of the PAG expressed at the meeting, the Cabinet Member has made the following decisions:

1. **BUILDING CONTROL - BUCKINGHAMSHIRE DISTRICTS BUILDING CONTROL - SHARED SERVICE FEASIBILITY STUDY**

The Cabinet Member has considered a report on the final report on the study to explore the possibility of implementing a shared Building Control (BC) Service across Bucks.

The study, carried out by RSe-consulting, had revealed that the four District BC teams varied considerably in overall scale, level of income generated, level of expenditure and the level of Council funding required. The South Bucks service was shown to be of a high quality, providing value for money services which met customers' needs. Whilst a shared service may bring some benefits, these were felt to be outweighed by the risks of entering into such a venture which could result in the loss of staff, less pride in working in a specific District area and loss of co-operation and day to day contact between BC and Development Control staff.

As a result, the Cabinet Member has decided not to consider recommending that the Council should enter into a shared Building Control service at this time.

2. **REVIEW OF CHARGING FOR PRE-APPLICATION AND POST APPLICATION ADVICE**

The Cabinet Member has considered a report of the Director of Services reviewing the existing system of charging applicants, developers and their agents for advice given by experienced and professional planning officers regarding proposals for development.

The review has demonstrated that there is no evidence for altering the basic premise of charging certain groups and not others, differentiating fairly as it does between local residents/small businesses etc on the one hand from developers and others wishing to carry out a greater scale of works or investigate potential relating to sites on the other. The level of fees charged has warranted further consideration following an assessment of the hourly cost of officer time.

The Cabinet Member has agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet and Council that the scheme for pre and post-application advice and minor amendments continue, subject to introduction of the following increased charges with effect from 1 November 2008:

- Area Team Manager - £140 plus VAT per hour or part thereof
- All other planning officers or equivalent service posts - £100 plus VAT per hour or part thereof
- Assistant Planning Officer or equivalent service posts - £60 plus VAT per hour or part thereof

- For a site visit related to informal advice (other than for householders and small businesses) there will be a flat rate additional charge of £100 plus VAT per officer per hour or part thereof
- For a request for a minor amendment there is a charge of £100

He has further agreed that the annual review of the charges should continue to be delegated to the Director of Services / Director of Resources, but it be subject to report to him and the Policy Advisory Group at the next meeting.

3. VALIDATING OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Cabinet Member has considered a report of the Director of Services on a draft document entitled "Validation of Planning Applications: Requirements of South Bucks District Council".

The Government has introduced new, compulsory standard electronic forms for applications for planning permission and listed building consent as part of a drive towards a quicker and more efficient planning service. This enabled local authorities to specify in detail the type and extent of information required to be submitted for each type of application before it would be validated and registered.

The Cabinet Member has decided that, subject to a number of additions and corrections to the document, the draft Validation of Planning Applications: Requirements of South Bucks District Council be published for consultation with statutory consultees, stakeholders etc, on the basis that Members of the PAG are informed of:

- The date of publication and consultation period that is proposed; and
- The list of consultees to be consulted.

4. SOUTH EAST PLAN - SECRETARY OF STATE'S PROPOSED CHANGES

The Cabinet Member has considered a report summarising the Secretary of State's proposed changes to the South East Plan, following the Examination held and the report of the Panel appointed to conduct the Examination.

The Changes document extended to over 500 pages and the report concentrated on the fundamental points, those which may have implications for the Council's own LDF, and points where the Council may wish to make representations/objections.

The Cabinet Member has decided to **RECOMMEND** the Cabinet and the Council to agree representations being made to the Secretary of State in line with the points set out in the report, with the approval of the actual text of the objections to be submitted to delegated to him to agree in consultation with the Head of Sustainable Development.

Date Published: 23 September 2008 Date to be Implemented: 1 October 2008.