

**Officer Decision
Published on 13 March 2017**

Decision: Planning Fees

Decision taker: Director of Strategy and Commissioning

Decision Date: 10 March 2017

Is decision subject to Call-in? No, due to the deadline to respond to the Government the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed to waive call-in

Deadline for Call-in: N/A

Is decision Exempt? No

Is decision urgent? Yes. Reason for urgency: Officer delegated decision to be taken by Director of Strategy and Commissioning, in consultation with the Lead Members for Financial Management and Planning. A decision must be taken due to the deadline for responding to the Government and therefore the 28 day notice cannot be given. The decision is a delegated decision but key due to the extra fee income generated.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been notified. Given the deadline to respond, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also agreed to waive call-in on this issue.

Decision

Resolved

- (1) That the Council accepts the offer from DCLG to agree an increase in its planning fees and gives the necessary commitment to invest the additional fee income generated in the planning service.

Reasons for Decision

The government's white paper on housing, *Fixing our broken housing market* was published on 7 February 2017. It included proposals for boosting local authority capacity and capability to deliver, improving the speed and quality with which planning cases are handled, while deterring unnecessary appeals.

As set out paragraph 2.13 of the White Paper, developers have consistently told government that the lack of capacity and capability in planning departments is restricting their ability to get on site and build. Alongside funding, local authorities also report difficulties in recruiting and retaining planners and others with specialist skills. There may also be wider capacity and skills issues for local authorities. To boost local authority capacity and capability to deliver, paragraph 2.15 explained that the Government will increase nationally set planning fees. Local authorities will be able to increase fees from 20% from July 2017 if they commit to invest the additional fee income in their planning department.

A letter was received from DCLG confirming this offer. It is intended that the additional revenue should be retained by planning departments to make improvements to their resourcing, leading to better services, improved performance, and greater capacity to deliver growth as set out in '*Fixing our broken housing market*'.

This decision therefore is to agree to the 20% planning fee increase at CDC.

Options Considered

The alternative is not to take up the offer from DCLG, which would prevent us from adding capacity to be able to provide improved capability to deliver.

Conflicts of Interest Declared and Dispensations Granted by Head of Paid Service

None

Ian Davies
Interim Head of Paid Service