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**Democratic Services Section
Chief Executive's Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast
City Council**

9th December, 2016

MEETING OF PLANNING COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Banqueting Hall - City Hall on Tuesday, 13th December, 2016 at 5.00 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

13. **Miscellaneous Items**

- (b) Developer Contribution Framework (Pages 1 - 6)
- (c) Charging Framework for Pre Application Discussions (Pages 7 - 12)
- (d) Supporting Community Engagement on Larger Planning Applications (Pages 13 - 16)

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6
of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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Subject:	Pre-Application Discussions – Scale of Charging
Date:	13 th December 2016
Reporting Officer:	Phil Williams, Director of Planning and Place
Contact Officer:	Ed Baker, Development Engagement Manager

Is this report restricted?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of report or summary of main issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee’s agreement to the draft Scale of Charging for Pre-Application Discussions.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to agree the draft Scale of Charging for Pre-Application Discussions found at Appendix 1 with a view to informal consultation with stakeholders, including agents, developers and landowners.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>At its meeting of 18th October, the Committee agreed that the Director of Planning & Place should investigate a Scale of Charging for Pre-Application Discussions (“PADS”).</p> <p>The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (“SPPS”), adopted September 2015, recognises that PADS are ‘...<i>fundamental to ‘front loading’ the new development management system. This front loading will help all parties, both to prepare an application to a high standard and to establish an agreed course and timetable for determining a development proposal</i>’.</p>

	<p>Development Management Practice Note 10 - Pre-Application Community Consultation recognises that the pre-application process is not a statutory requirement and is optional. However, by facilitating effective and meaningful pre-application discussions, a Council can ensure that opportunities to work collaboratively with applicants and to improve the quality of developments are maximised.</p> <p>Many local planning authorities, including UK Core Cities, utilise this approach for strategic, major, and other forms of development, and charge for this service. Example charging rates by other Cities is provided in the table at Appendix 1.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Belfast is facing an unprecedented level of growth where the development pipeline includes very significant commercial and employment generating developments. The Council is committed to encouraging quality developments in the capital city of Northern Ireland.</p> <p>To support applicants investing in such developments the Council needs to provide certainty and sufficient resources to ensure that planning applications for large scale, complex and other types of proposal are dealt with in a timely manner. It is therefore necessary to introduce a charging for the PAD service.</p> <p>The recommended charging rate is set out at Appendix 1. The charging rate has been set to recover staff and administrative costs associated with servicing a PAD. Based on the number of PADS received over the last 12 months, the Council would have received around £80,000 (excluding payments for additional meetings) had charging for PADS already been in place.</p> <p>Given that this is a new and developing service, it is recommended that the Council does not charge for PADS in relation to householder developments, Listed Buildings (unless associated with a change of use), Conservation Area Consents and Advertisements. It is further recommended that there is no charge for PADS in relation to community proposals. The Duty Planner service will remain available for members of the public who wish to discuss proposals such as domestic extensions and alterations. This is a free service.</p> <p>In introducing charges for PADS, the planning service will need to provide clarity around the role of pre-application advice, how the process works and what minimum level of information required from applicants to ensure meaningful discussions.</p>

3.3	<p><u>Next stage</u></p> <p>The next stage will be to informally consult on the Scale of Charging with customers, including agents, developers and landowners. It is expected that this will be done by way of a stakeholder workshop, which will discuss the Scale of Charging and Pre-Application Discussion process generally. Feedback from the workshop will be reported to the Committee, alongside draft guidance on the PAD process, so that the Committee can make a final decision on the Scale of Charging for the PAD process.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Charging for Pre-Application Discussions is an important income stream that will support the delivery of this vital part of the planning service.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	Appendix 1 – Proposed Charging Schedule for Pre-Application Discussions

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Type	Category	Description	Price (incl. VAT)	Additional meeting	Bristol	Nottingham	Cardiff	Birmingham	Sheffield
1	Largescale Major	100 residential units or more	£2,000	£1,000	£3,450	POA	£1,000	£5,000	£2,360
		10,000 sq. m. commercial floor space or more							
2	Major	50 - 99 residential units	£1,500	£500	£1,740	£1,200	£1,000	£2,000	£1,430
		Other							
3	Largescale Local	10 - 49 residential units	£1,000	£500	£1,740	£1,200	£1,000	£1,000	£1,430
		1,000 or greater commercial floor space (non-Major)		-					
4	Local	1 - 9 residential units	£500	£500	£348	£300	£250	£1,000	£300
		200 - 999 sq. m. commercial floor space							
5	Householder	Domestic buildings, extensions and alterations	-	-	-	£50	£25	-	£85
6	Other	Listed Building Consent	-	-	£120	£85	-	-	£100
		Conservation Area Consent	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Advertisement Consent	-	-	-	£50	-	-	£85

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Subject:	Support for community engagement in the planning process on major projects
Date:	13 th December 2016
Reporting Officer:	Phil Williams, Director of Planning and Place
Contact Officer:	Ed Baker, Development Engagement Manager

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of report or summary of main issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on their request to the Director of Planning & Place to investigate the availability of support for community organisations and residents to effectively engage in major planning projects in Belfast.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to note the report.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>The Committee at its meeting of 18th October requested that the Director of Planning & Place investigates the availability of support for community organisations and residents to effectively engage in major planning projects. The specific resolution was as follows:</p> <p><i>‘The Committee agreed also that the Director of Planning and Place should explore the potential for the provision of independent technical support and capacity for community organisations and residents, to enable them to effectively engage and input into major physical regeneration and key capital projects in the city.’</i></p>

3.2	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>It is important that the public have the opportunity to effectively engage in the planning process, particularly in relation to significant developments and proposals that affect wider communities. The planning process can be daunting for some and has its own complexities and unique subtleties. In other parts of the UK, communities are able to tap into expert, independent planning advice to support their participation in the planning process.</p> <p>Members are advised that Government or other agencies are based placed to provide or sponsor such support because of the need for councils (as local planning authorities) to remain impartial in the planning process and not favour one stakeholder above another. It is understood that such support was previously provided by DoE but withdrawn.</p> <p>The issues raised by the Committee are not unique to Belfast; investigation of appropriate and independent expert support for communities will be of relevance to all communities across Northern Ireland, with potential to benefit the constituents of all eleven councils. The Director of Planning & Place has therefore written to the Department of Infrastructure (DFI) to raise these issues and ask for the matter to be explored further. A copy of this letter is provided at Appendix 1.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
3.6	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
4.1	<p>Appendix 1 – Copy of letter from Director of Planning & Place to DFI</p>



Your Ref:

Our Ref: PW/12/16
(Please quote at all times)

Mr A Kerr
Director of Plans and Policy
Department for Infrastructure – Planning
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8GB

Belfast Planning Service
Cecil Ward Building
4-10 Linenhall Street
BELFAST
BT2 8BP

Tel: 028 90 502097

Date: 06 December 2016

Dear Angus

Re: Support for community engagement in the planning process on major projects

Members of Belfast City Council wish there to be investigation into the availability of independent and impartial support for community organisations and residents so that they can effectively engage in major physical regeneration and key capital projects in Belfast. I understand that such support was previously provided by DoE but was withdrawn.

It is important that the public have the opportunity to effectively engage in the planning process, particularly in relation to significant developments and proposals that affect wider communities. The planning process can be daunting for some and has its own complexities and unique subtleties. In other parts of the UK, communities are able to tap into expert, independent planning advice to support their participation in the planning process.

I believe that Government is best placed to provide or sponsor such support because of the need for Councils (as local planning authorities) to remain impartial in the planning process and not favour one stakeholder above another. These issues raised by our members are not unique to Belfast; investigation of appropriate and independent expert support for communities will be of relevance to all communities across Northern Ireland, with potential to benefit the constituents of all eleven Councils.

I would be grateful if you would explore this matter further with a view to addressing our members' concerns.

Yours sincerely

PHIL WILLIAMS
Director of Planning & Place



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IN PEOPLE**

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