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| <b>Subject:</b>          | <b>FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25</b>   |
| <b>Meeting and Date:</b> | <b>Planning Committee (for information) – 9 November 2023<br/>Cabinet – 15 January 2024 (part of larger report)</b> |
| <b>Report of:</b>        | <b>Sarah Platts, Head of Planning and Development</b>   |
| <b>Portfolio Holder:</b> | <b>Councillor Edward Biggs, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Built Environment</b>                                 |
| <b>Decision Type:</b>    | <b>Key Decision</b>   |
| <b>Classification:</b>   | <b>Unrestricted</b>   |

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**Purpose of the report:** This report has been prepared to bring the levels of fees and charges (F&Cs) for the financial year 2024/25 to Members' attention. These revised F&Cs will be included in the budget estimates for 2024/25.

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**Recommendation:** Planning Committee

That Members note the Council's fees and charges set out in Appendices 5.1 and 5.3 and note the national planning fees set out in Appendix 5.2.

Cabinet

That Members approve the Council's fees and charges set out in Appendices 5.1 and 5.3 and note the national planning fees set out in Appendix 5.2

Minor adjustments to the local fees and charges to be delegated to the Head of Planning and Development, in consultation with the Head of Finance and Investment.

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## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The Constitution specifies that the Council's F&Cs shall be reviewed annually. To meet this requirement, all Directors have been asked to review the F&Cs within their areas of responsibility and to produce recommended levels for 2024/25. The fees and charges for planning are included in Appendices 5.1 and 5.3 for members to note. Members will also note the national fees for planning included in Appendix 5.2.

## 2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Council's constitution specifies that F&Cs shall be reviewed annually.
- 2.2 The level of Member approval required is dependent upon the types of F&Cs raised and therefore reports must be submitted to:
- Licensing Committee
  - Regulatory Committee
  - Planning Committee
  - Cabinet

2.3 To meet this requirement, the following reports are produced for setting the Planning fees:

- Planning Committee – Report to the meeting on 9 November 2023 of all F&Cs relevant to the Planning Committee.
- Cabinet – Report to the meeting on 15 January 2024 of all F&Cs, but seeking specific approval of those F&Cs set by Cabinet.

2.4 Members are reminded that there is a framework of broad guidelines to be considered in formulating proposals for F&Cs is in place. This includes a checklist, which has been circulated to all Service Directors and to all officers considering F&Cs so that a rigorous and consistent approach is taken. A copy is attached at Appendix 1.

2.5 As in previous years, to assist Members, the data on F&Cs has been tabulated into a standard format that has been used for Appendix 5.1. Appendix 5.1 sets out the following information and the columns titles in the appendix provide the following details:

Detail and Narrative - A summary of the type of service being provided.

Set by Government - This indicates whether a charge is statutory or not. If a charge is statutory, then it is effectively set by Government and although formal Member approval is still sought, there is no scope to make changes.

2023/24 Charge inc VAT - The charge has been provided inclusive of VAT for two reasons. Firstly, it shows what the customer will pay. Secondly, charges for some services, (car parking, for example) which are not simply a direct recovery of costs, are set at a level, inclusive of VAT, having regard to relevant considerations including market level, where appropriate. The VAT is therefore a deduction from the amount of charge retained by DDC and is not a key factor in determining the appropriate charge. Members are asked to approve this approach.

2024/25 Proposed Charge inc VAT - This is the recommended charge for 2024/25 and will, subject to Members' approval, be included in the 2024/25 budget.

2024/25 Total Expected Income excluding VAT - This gives a broad indication as to how much income DDC is expected to receive and has been included to provide Members with a sense of the relative importance of individual charges or group of similar charges. The more significant income streams (generating over £3k) have been highlighted in **bold** type.

*(In some cases, where the level of use is very low, or infrequent, or the service has only recently been introduced, no level of income has been included).*

### 3. **Basis for Setting of Fees**

3.1 Members should consider the following matters when noting the fees and charges proposed:

- The statutory basis for levying the charges.
- All relevant legal requirements and government guidance.
- The cost of providing the service.
- The need to maximise income at a time of grant cuts and council tax capping to ensure that in so far as possible, and taken year on year, the fees and charges are sufficient to meet the costs of providing the services.
- Comparable charges at neighbouring authorities.
- What the market can bear.
- The matters referred to in the checklist of issues to consider (at Appendix 1).

3.2 The following paragraphs provide Members with a brief explanation for the changes proposed in the attached appendices. This will often be due to inflation or “catch up” inflation if the increase has been previously deferred until it can be made to a sensible rounded figure.

3.3 Planning application fees are nationally set, as set out in Appendix 5.2. The target forecast for 2024/25 is proposed at £700,000 (the 2023/24 target is £700,000, revised down from £850,000).

3.4 Government has, for many months, been progressing a proposal to raise planning fees and the current proposal would look to raise planning application fees by between 25% and 35%. If this were to be implemented, Planning Application Fees would continue to be nationally set and the income could potentially then exceed the forecast for 2024/25, however, this cannot currently be relied upon.

3.5 The pre-application fees were quite significantly increased a couple of years ago. They are proposed to be raised by inflation (6.8% - Consumer Price Index (CPI), rounded up to the nearest £5 (see Appendix 5.3).

3.6 For monitoring costs associated with Unilateral Undertakings and Section 106 Agreements, the current fees are £236 per trigger or negotiated for more complex cases, which evidence suggests is set very low compared to other authorities. The proposal is to introduce a £250 flat rate for Unilateral Undertakings/S106s for SPA mitigation and a £500 fee per trigger event on all other S106s for financial obligations and non-financial obligations.

3.7 Remaining fees and charges generate very small sums (for instance, copying charges are reducing significantly due to the availability of increased online information).

#### 4. **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

4.1 There are no climate change implications.

#### 5. **Resource Implications**

5.1 See Appendices.

#### 6. **Corporate Implications**

6.1 Comment from the Head of Finance & Investment (linked to the MTFP): Accountancy has been consulted on the report and have no further comments to add.

6.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: “The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make”.

6.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report seeking approval for the proposed planning fees and charges for 2024/25 does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with

the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

7. **Appendices**

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|--------------|---|
| Appendix 1   | Fees and Charges checklist                                    |
| Appendix 5.1 | Schedule of recommended F&Cs                                  |
| Appendix 5.2 | A Guide to National Fees for Planning Applications in England |
| Appendix 5.3 | Pre-application Planning Fees                                 |

Contact Officers

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