

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No 7

meeting date: THURSDAY, 6 MARCH 2020  
 title: VALIDATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS  
 submitted by: DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING  
 principal author: JOHN MACHOLC, HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek Member approval in relation to an administrative charge in connection with the validation process of planning applications that are subsequently withdrawn before the applications are made valid. It is requested that Members confirm and adopt the charging regime from 31 March 2020 which shall include all currently invalid applications.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
- Community Objectives – } To be a well-managed Council, providing efficient
  - Corporate Priorities – } services based on identified customer need.
  - Other Considerations – None.

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will be aware that fees and charges are reviewed on an annual basis as part of the budget setting process.
- 2.2 Upon receipt of all applications every application is checked to ensure that all appropriate information has been submitted in accordance with the adopted validation checklist. If sufficient information is contained the application is made valid and registered as a valid application. If the application is incomplete the applicant is contacted and advised what additional information is required to allow the processing of the application.
- 2.3 In most instances additional information is provided efficiently to enable the application to be made valid. However there are instances when there is a significant delay and on occasion the applications are either sent back or removed from the system. There are also cases when following the request for additional information, the applicant asks for the application to be withdrawn and request the fee to be returned.

## 3 ISSUES

- 3.1 It is important that the Council seek ways of improving the service and reviews the cost and time associated with each element of the application process. It is evident that when an application is withdrawn and the fee returned a considerable amount of work has been spent on the application. It is considered that only partial refunds should be given and that an administrative charge should be levied to take account of the work.
- 3.2 It is submitted that a minimum fee of £50 or 10% of the application fee if greater, should be charged. The applicant should also be advised that the files will be disposed of and not retained by the Council or returned to the applicant and that unless a justified reason has been given for the delay of additional information, the file will be disposed of after 2 months and a partial refund awarded.

3.3 Evidence would suggest that over 80% of initial applications when first received are invalid with vast majority made valid within a week. Currently only a small percentage are requested to be withdrawn with a full refund (20 per year) but an operation of a more robust system with invalid applications returned within a shorter period of time could generate a revenue of between £1000-£5000 depending on the application fee submitted with the application.

<b>Total invalid refunds - 2018/19</b>			
<b>Refunded £</b>	<b>Fixed Charge £</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>Total fee £</b>
1540.00	50	154	204
96.00	50	9.6	50
172.00	50	17.2	50
80.00	50	8	50
172.00	50	17.2	50
96.00	50	9.6	50
206.00	50	20.6	50
<b>2362.00</b>	<b>350.00</b>	<b>236.20</b>	<b>504</b>

#### 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – No immediate implications.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None.
- Political – N/A.
- Reputation – No direct implications.
- Equality & Diversity – No implications identified.

#### 5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 Adopt the fee charging schedule as per paragraph 3.2 of the report for invalid applications that are withdrawn.

5.2 Publicise the new fee charge as widely as possible and inform the main users of the planning application service directly.

JOHN MACHOLC  
HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

NICOLA HOPKINS  
DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING

#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

For further information please ask for John Macholc, extension 4502.

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