

Report To: EXECUTIVE CABINET

Date: 22 MARCH 2017

Executive Reporting Officer: **Member/** Councillor John Taylor, Deputy Executive Leader
Damien Bourke, Assistant Executive Director – Development, Growth and Investment

Subject: INCREASE IN NATIONALLY SET PLANNING FEES

Report Summary: The Government’s Housing White Paper “Fixing our broken housing market” included proposals to boost local authority capacity and capability to deliver

The Government recognises the views of the development industry that the lack of capacity and capability in planning departments is restricting their ability to get on site and build. The Government also recognises the difficulties reported by local authorities in recruiting and retaining planners and others with specialist skills. The White Paper commits the government to take steps to secure the financial sustainability of planning departments; ensure that the planning system has the skilled professionals it needs to assess and make the tough decisions expected; and provide targeted support to address areas of specialist weakness.

The Government has confirmed that:

- (i) Local authorities will be able to increase the nationally set planning fees by 20% from July 2017 **on the condition that** they commit to invest the additional fee income in their planning department. On 21 February 2017, the DCLG contacted all local planning authorities in England to seek their confirmation that they would wish to take up this opportunity, with an initial response requested by 13 March 2017. The letter sent by the s151 officer is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- (ii) To allow an increase of a further 20% for those authorities who are delivering the homes their communities need subject to further consultation on the detail.
- (iii) To keep the resourcing of local authority planning departments, and where fees can be charged, under review.

Recommendations: That Executive Cabinet endorses adopting the approach set out in (ii) above to increase planning fees by 20% and commits to invest the additional fee income in the planning service.

Links to Community Strategy: The investment of additional planning fees will boost the capacity and capability of the planning service in Tameside thus supporting the aims and vision of a prosperous Tameside.

Policy Implications: Acceptance of the Government’s offer to invest additional planning fees in the planning service supports the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to boost the delivery of housing nationally and locally.

Financial Implications: DCLG will need to provide confirmation of how it intends to

(Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)

proceed with the detail of implementing the increased planning fees regime, and the timescale of operation. At present it is indicated that the regime will last for the current parliamentary period to 2020, but there is no certainty of it continuing after that

Based on 2016/17 fee income levels the 20% increase in nationally set planning fees from July 2017 is estimated to deliver an additional £75,000 during the 2017/18 financial year and circa £100,000 per annum thereafter. This additional income will be ring-fenced to the planning service and will be a welcome increase in resources.

Legal Implications:

(Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

The use of the additional resources will need to properly evidenced.

Risk Management:

A clear strategy and set of proposals for investment of the additional planning fees will be developed demonstrating how the resources will be invested in the planning department and how the impact of the additional resources on planning performance will be monitored and measured.

Access to Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer: Paul Moore



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