

## THE EXECUTIVE

3 AUGUST 2004

### REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

| PLANNING POST SEARCH AND OTHER ENQUIRY FEES AND CHARGES 2004/05   |                                      | FOR DECISION   |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| <p><i>To this report concerns the setting of Charges, which is the responsibility of the Executive.</i></p>   |                                      |  |
| <p><b>Summary</b><br/>In accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Charging Policy Commission, this report proposes the Planning enquiry charges to be adopted for 2004/2005.</p>   |                                      |  |
| <p><b>Recommendation</b><br/>The Executive is recommended to approve the increased charges for Planning Post Search enquiries and Consultancy Fees for 2004/5 as detailed in this report.</p>   |                                      |  |
| <p><b>Reason</b><br/>To set the Planning Post Search and Other Fees and Charges for the forthcoming year in accordance with the principles of the Charging Policy Commission and to assist with the Council's Community Priority of "Regenerating the Local Economy".</p> |                                      |  |
| <p><b>Wards Affected</b><br/>This will apply to all Wards in the Borough.</p>   |                                      |  |
| <b>Contact</b><br>Tim Lewis   | Group Manager<br>Development Control | (Telephone): 020 – 8227 3706<br>(Fax) 020 – 8227 3916<br>(Minicom) 020 – 8227 3034<br>(E-mail) tim.lewis@lbbd.gov.uk |

#### 1. Post Search Enquiries

- 1.1 Charges are made to solicitors or members of the public following a request for additional information resulting from Land Charges searches. Under the Local Authorities (Charges for Land Searches) Regulations 1994, as well as a charge for the initial search, Local Authorities are empowered to charge for any information requested as a result of the proposed sale of a property. This service was previously provided free of charge. However, as searches do not now include copies of decision notices, these inquiries have increased dramatically since that time. A charge was introduced in April 2001 and last revised to its current level in March 2003 to what was considered a reasonable charge for the service provided. The charge currently levied for this service is £33.00 (inclusive of VAT) where no site visit is required and £49.50 where it is required.

1.2 The projected cost of providing this service in 2004/5 is £35.00 for a non site visit and £55.00 if a site visit is required. This is a flat rate fee and not an hourly rate.

## 2. Consultancy Enquiries

2.1 This service is very similar to the post search enquiry procedure detailed above. This charge occurs when a consultant in preparing a report for private clients will request planning information from the Local Planning Authority. The Council currently charges for this work on an hourly basis at £60.00 per hour based on market rates. This rate has not changed since 2002.

2.2 It is intended to raise this rate to £70.00 per hour to reflect increased officer costs since this time.

## 3 Proposed Charges

3. Below are the current and proposed charges for Planning Post Search enquiries and Consultancy Charges for 2004/5. By implementing these changes the service will be recovering its full costs.

|                                       | <b>Current Charge<br/>2003/04</b> | <b>Proposed Charge<br/>2004/05</b> |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Planning Post Search enquiries</b> |                                   |                                    |
| without site visit                    | £33.00 (inc. VAT)                 | £35.00 (inc VAT)                   |
| with site visit                       | £49.50 (inc VAT)                  | £55.00 (inc VAT)                   |
| <b>Charges to Consultants</b>         | £60.00 per hour                   | £70.00 per hour                    |

## 4. Consultation

The following has seen this report and are happy with the report as it stands.

Councillor H Collins, Lead Member for Developing Rights and Responsibilities with the Local Community and Providing Equal Opportunities and Celebrating Diversity (Income and Charging).

Bob Cooper, Interim Head of Finance, RED

### Background Papers

Local Authorities (Charges for Land Searches) Regulations 1994.

- Executive Report and Minute 330 11 March 2003.  
Re: Planning Post Search and other Enquiry Charges.
- Assembly 4 July 2001  
Report of the Charging Policy Commission

End