



SURREY HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING SERVICES

FEE CHARGES 2024/25



Section I: Pre-application Charges

In April 2023 the service published revised pre-application fees. This followed a benchmarking exercise with other Surrey authorities. This new service introduced additional categories for charging, (for example, heritage advice and concept only meetings); widened the choice for the applicant with optional extras; and, created more fee categories by type and size of proposal.

Since the introduction of this service, it has operated well and up to reporting period 7 of 2023/24, generated a total income of approximately £106,000 (against the base budget of £15,000).

On the 6 December 2023, the government's new fee regulations [The Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2023] come into force. These replace the fee regulations from 2018 (as amended) increasing non-major application fees by 25% and major application fees by 35%.

For example, from December 2023 the cost of a householder planning application will rise from £206 to £258 and the cost of an application for dwellings from £462 to £578 per dwelling. The maximum chargeable fee under the current regulations is £300,000 and this will rise to £405,000.

Moreover, regulation 18A is introduced whereby from 1 April 2025 there will be annual increases of fees increased by the lower of (a) the percentage increase in the consumer prices index, and (b) 10%, rounded up or down to the nearest £1.

On the basis of these national statutory fee increases, it is therefore considered reasonable to align our pre-application fees to this. The following tables summarise the current pre-application fees and the resultant fees with a 25% and 35% uplift, respectively (Pre-application fees are inclusive of VAT and for ease of summarising the tables only highlight what the differences in fees would be by increasing the basic or standard fee i.e. calculations are not included for the optional extras). By way of a crude assessment a conservative 25% increase on our current total pre-application income to date for this financial year equates to a rise from £106,000 (up to period 7) to £132,500.



Householder Advice, Heritage Advice and Concept Advice for Majors (i.e. policy matters)

Type	Fee	Level of Response	Extra Optional Fees	Bespoke Fees	25% or 35% (majors) increase
Householder	£150	Written only	N/A	N/A	£188
Heritage (Conservation Area/ Listed Building)	£200	Written only	N/A	N/A	£250
Concept Advice for Majors Level 1 (Team Leader)	£350	Meeting on request	N/A	N/A	£473
Concept Advice for Majors Level 2 (Policy Manager or Development Manager)	£500	Meeting on request	N/A	N/A	£675
Concept Advice for Majors Level 3 (Head of Planning)	£750	Meeting on request	N/A	N/A	£1,013
Concept Advice for Majors Level 4 (Director or CEO)	£1,000	Meeting on request	N/A	N/A	£1,350



New Dwellings (including Changes of Use) Advice

Type	Fee	Level of Response	Extra Optional Fees	Bespoke Fees	25% increase
1 Dwelling/ Replacement	£500	Written only	N/A	N/A	£625
2 – 4 Dwellings	£1,000	Written only	Meeting £500 Follow up Written response £500 Specialist advice on request: Drainage Advice £1,000 Tree Advice £1,000 Environmental Health Advice £65 per hour	N/A	£1,250
5 – 9 Dwellings	£1,500	Written only	Meeting £500 Follow up Written response £750 Specialist advice on request: Drainage Advice £1,000 Tree Advice £1,000 Environmental Health Advice £65 per hour	N/A	£1,875



Type	Fee	Level of Response	Extra Optional Fees	Bespoke Fees	35% increase
10 – 20 Dwellings	£2,500	1 Meeting and Minutes	Site Visit £500 Follow up Meeting £1,250 Specialist advice on request: Tree Advice £1,000 Environmental Health Advice £65 per hour	N/A	£3,375
21 – 40 Dwellings	£3,500	1 Meeting and Minutes	Site Visit £500 Follow up Meeting £1,750 Specialist Environmental Health Advice £65 per hour	Design Review and Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) on request. Other specialist advice on request.	£4,725
41 – 60 Dwellings	£5,000	1 Meeting and Minutes	Site Visit £750 Follow up Meeting £2,500 Specialist Environmental Health Advice £65 per hour	Design Review and PPA advisable. Other specialist advice on request.	£6,750



Type	Fee	Level of Response	Extra Optional Fees	Bespoke Fees	35% increase
61 – 80 Dwellings	£7,000	1 Meeting, Site Visit and Minutes	Follow up Meeting £3,500 Specialist Environmental Health Advice £65 per hour	Design Review and PPA expected. Other specialist advice on request.	£9,450
81 – 99 Dwellings	£8,000	1 Meeting, Site Visit and Minutes	Follow up Meeting £4,000 Specialist Environmental Health Advice £65 per hour	Design Review and PPA expected. Other specialist advice on request.	£10,800
100 + Dwellings	£10,000	1 Meeting, Site Visit and Minutes	Follow up Meeting £5,000 Specialist Environmental Health Advice £65 per hour	Design Review and PPA expected. Other specialist advice on request.	£13,500



Commercial and Mixed-Use (including Change of Use) Advice

Type	Fee	Level of Response	Extra Optional Fees	Bespoke Fees	25% or above 1,000 sq.m. 35% increase
0 – 999 sq. m. Commercial	£1,000	Written only	Follow up Written response £500 Specialist Environmental Health Advice £65 per hour	N/A	£1,250
1,000 – 4,999 sq. m. Commercial	£3,000	1 Meeting and Minutes	Site Visit £500 Follow up Meeting £1,500 Specialist Environmental Health Advice £65 per hour	N/A	£4,050
5,000 – 9,999 sq. m. Commercial	£5,000	1 Meeting and Minutes	Site Visit £750 Follow up Meeting £2,500 Specialist Environmental Health Advice £65 per hour	Design Review and PPA advisable. Other specialist advice on request.	£6,750
10,000 + sq. m. Commercial	£8,000	1 Meeting, Site Visit and Minutes	Follow up Meeting £4,000 Specialist Environmental Health Advice £65 per hour	Design Review and PPA expected. Other specialist advice on request.	£10,800
Mixed- Use	Commercial fee + relevant dwelling fee.	As above or dwelling category	As above or dwelling category	As above or dwelling category	



Section 2: Fast Track and other discretionary charges

Fast Track Service

Since April 2023 the fast track planning application service for householder submissions and applications for lawful development certificates has been operating. Substantive income from these relatively small scale application types requires high take-up which to date has not been forthcoming. To date (up to 24 November 2023) 17 fast track applications have been received. The total income generated is £5,700. The most popular fee has been £600 for a householder submission. Nevertheless, the planning service remains fully staffed and has not had resource issues to date with processing these applications and officers meeting the accelerated deadline dates. For the rest of this financial year and given the low take-up it is therefore proposed to continue to monitor this service at the current fee rate.

The fast track service was promoted to planning agents at developer forums and the opinion from agents was that there would likely be a higher take-up for fast track for small and medium scale development projects i.e. minor applications. This service was not originally introduced because with minor applications there is a greater risk of failure and reputational damage because of, for example, greater reliance on external consultees outside of our control.

The eligibility criteria for being able to use this service will therefore need to be carefully considered. For example, we know that responses from the Environment Agency are extremely slow and on average taking months and so any floodplain proposal where the EA needs to be consulted would not qualify for this service. We would also ensure that no applicant could use this fast track service unless they had first used the pre-application service, in order to protect this income source. Other criteria will include, for example, excluding items that need to be reported to Planning Applications Committee or proposals affecting heritage assets.

For internal purposes only, we aim to undertake a dummy run or a pilot of a minor application received as soon as possible and no later than the beginning of quarter 3. This will help determine potential bottlenecks and overall achievability.



If this pilot is successful, then the following draft fee structure is proposed for 2024/25. This table compares the charges against the new statutory planning application fees, that would still need to be paid in addition to the fast track fee:

Minor Applications Fast Track Draft Charging Schedule

Fast-Track Service	Validation review option	Fee	Early site visit option	Fee	Early decision option	Fee	Fee if all options chosen	+ Statutory app. fee (new regs)
1 dwelling (commercial up to 75m²)	1 working day	£150	5 working days from registration	£150	6 weeks from registration	£600	£900	+£578
2 dwellings (commercial up to 150m²)	1 working day	£160	5 working days from registration	£160	6 weeks from registration	£700	£1,120	+£1,156
3 dwellings (commercial up to 225m²)	1 working day	£170	5 working days from registration	£170	6 weeks from registration	£800	£1,140	+£1,734
4 dwellings (commercial up to 300m²)	1 working day	£180	5 working days from registration	£180	6 weeks from registration	£900	£1,260	+£2,312
5 dwellings (commercial up to 375m²)	1 working day	£200	5 working days from registration	£200	6 weeks from registration	£1,000	£1,500	+£2,890
6 dwellings (commercial up to 525m²)	1 working day	£220	5 working days from registration	£220	6 weeks from registration	£1,200	£1,640	+£3,468



7 dwellings (commercial up to 675m²)	1 working day	£240	5 working days from registration	£240	6 weeks from registration	£1,400	£1,880	+£4,046
8 dwellings (commercial up to 825m²)	1 working day	£260	5 working days from registration	£260	6 weeks from registration	£1,600	£2,120	+£4,624
9 dwellings (commercial up to 1000m²)	1 working day	£280	5 working days from registration	£280	6 weeks from registration	£1,800	£2,360	+£5,202

So, for example, the total fee for a new or replacement dwelling using this service would be £1,478 (i.e. fast track fee of £900 + statutory fee of £578).

Informal Enquiries

The planning pages on the website acts as a self-serve whereby applicants and the general public are directed to external sources for information, for example guidance on whether planning permission is required. For many years, and consistent with many authorities, we have not given an informal opinion as to whether a proposal is permitted development but instead directed applicants down a certificate route by the submission of a formal application. This has been an income generator.

However, we still receive informal enquiries that carry no fee, yet take up officer time and resource. This includes, for example, dropped kerb enquiries or planning use class enquiries. Between April 2023 – October 2023 we received 150 or an average of 21 per month.

It is therefore considered that such enquiries ought to be chargeable. Some councils already charge for these services. Below is a draft charging schedule for informal enquiries that we propose to introduce:



Type of informal enquiry	Fee	Written response time	Important notes for applicants
Confirmation that planning permission is not required for a vehicle crossover (dropped kerb)	See Planning Fees	N/A (decision can take up to 8 weeks)	No informal opinion is given as to whether a proposal is permitted development. You'll need to apply for a Lawful Development Certificate for a determination. Surrey County Council requires confirmation that permission is not required. On receipt of the Lawful Development Certificate you must then apply to the County Council for a site licence. https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/permits-and-licences/vehicle-crossovers-or-dropped-kerbs
Permitted Development Rights history check as to whether they remain intact	£75	7 days	No informal opinion is given as to whether a proposal is permitted development. You'll need to apply for a Lawful Development Certificate for a determination.
Use Class planning history check	£75	7 days	No informal opinion is given as to whether a proposed use requires permission. You'll need to apply for a Lawful Development Certificate for a determination.
Planning land use designations constraints check	£75	7 days	
Tree protection check (TPO, conservation area, restrictive conditions)	£75	7 days	
Archive document request	£150 (aligns with BC charges) or by the hour (TBC)	7 days	
Any other general enquiries	£75 or by the hour (TBC)	Case by case	



Validation of Planning Applications

The majority of planning applications received by Surrey Heath are via the Planning Portal, an online platform. Details from the Planning Portal are auto-populated into Uniform and the DMS that significantly reduces manual inputting, scanning of paper and man-hours. However, some paper copies submissions and emailed submissions are received and need to be processed.

The scrutiny of planning applications under the validation process can be time consuming, particularly when an application is invalid. This can sometimes result in repeated correspondence with the applicant or agent, lengthy delays with registration and a back office and back log of submissions that cannot be processed. This can unnecessarily impact upon future work allocations and the overall service capacity.

The Council's Local Validation List 2023 (LVL) is a comprehensive and up to date guide to national and local planning application requirements and so there is no justifiable reason why planning professionals and agents continue to submit invalid applications. This LVL also has clear jargon free guidance for residents.

The London Borough of Redbridge currently charges applicants £100 for submitting a postal planning application because of the additional scanning and resourcing this entails. Additionally, Redbridge has administrative charges for invalid applications: £200 per application for a major application; £120 per application for a non-majors commercial/new dwellings application; and, £60 per application for all other applications. This charge is per application and not per every time the application is made invalid.

Other councils have introduced similar administration charges for invalid applications. Southampton City Council, for example, keep 25% of the fee, when an application is never made valid and is returned to the application and closed down. Luton Borough Council introduced charges in 2023 and their supporting explanation is attached to this paper. This included an 8 week consultation period. Charges can be applied for the following reasons:

1. If an application is made invalid;
2. If a satisfactory response to an invalid letter is not received within the 28-day expiry period (the expiry date will be stated on the invalid letter);
3. If a statutory application fee is requested to be transferred from a previous closed invalid application to a new submission;



4. If an invalid application is withdrawn after notification that it is invalid (this charge will be deducted from any refund)

There is no reason why Surrey Heath cannot introduce a similar charging schedule to other councils. This has to be qualified insofar as there may be a very minor reason why an application is invalid. The service would consult the main agents on these changes as part of the developer forum process and publicise for a consultation period. Below is a draft charging schedule proposal:

Type	Fee	Notes
Postal application charge	£100	Required due to the additional scanning and manual inputting.
Email received application charge	£50	Required as there is more manual inputting than a portal application.
Administrative charge for invalid major application	£225 one-off charge	A charge will be applied when the application is first made invalid. This charge will also apply if an invalid application is withdrawn after notification that it is invalid (this charge will be deducted from any fee refund)
Administrative charge for invalid minor application - non- majors commercial/ new dwelling (s)	£150 one-off charge	A charge will be applied when the application is first made invalid. This charge will also apply if an invalid application is withdrawn after notification that it is invalid (this charge will be deducted from any fee refund)
Administrative charge for invalid householder and others submissions (excludes priors and certificates)	£75 one-off charge	A charge will be applied when the application is first made invalid. This charge will also apply if an invalid application is withdrawn after notification that it is invalid (this charge will be deducted from any fee refund)



Administrative charge for returned and closed invalid application	25% of planning application fee	Triggered after 6 weeks of inactivity (the Council's Local Validation List states that an application may be returned if it not made valid within 6 weeks)
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Planning Performance Agreements

As part of the current pre-application service, a PPA is encouraged for major developments above 20 dwellings and expected for strategic sized developments (i.e. 61+ dwellings or 10,000 sq.+ commercial). However, the current Explanatory Notes state that each PPA is bespoke and agreement of a PPA should be an agenda item as part of the first pre-application meeting. There is therefore no template agreement provided to developers and no list of indicative fees. In practice this often results in protracted negotiations over the fees and the content of the agreements (for example, the number of meetings it covers), and consequent delays with signing the agreements and then securing the income. Furthermore, the use of a PPA is currently not promoted as well as it could be on our website by being embedded within the pre-application advice document rather than having its own dedicated page.

It is therefore considered necessary to provide a list of standardised fees and a template standard agreement on a dedicated PPA webpage. Such an approach has already been undertaken by many other councils. For example, Epsom and Ewell states the fee, dependent on the size of the development and the number of meetings this proves. They also have a standard agreement template made available on the website. Similarly, the City of London Council also provides a suite of options and fees on their website. Once this work has been completed it is hoped that these improvements and promotion will result in greater interest and increased income.



Section 3: Building Control Charges

Building Control Fee Proposal

Summary and Purpose

This proposal relates only to the fee earning account for Building Control (120)

The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 requires that the income generated from the fee earning account should recover all charges to the service. So as to not place undue burden on the residents of the Borough.

In order to facilitate this, it is proposed that the Building Control fees are increase by 53%

Recommendation

To approve the proposed increase of Building Control fees from 1st April 2024

Background and Supporting Information

Following a review of the Building Control fee earning account, taking into consideration the last 3 years, it is apparent that the income generated is not meeting the budget for the support services of the council.

Using the average last 3 years levels of income generated was approximately £300,000, that is a short fall of 53%

A comparison of the fees charged by other local authorities' building control departments in Surrey was completed.

It was evidenced that our current level of fees is significantly lower than most of the other Authorities, with the exception of Woking and Guildford.

An uplift of 53% would bring us in line with and therefore would be deemed acceptable in the market place.

The fee benchmarking data is annexed.



Additional Income Streams

Following the Council objective to seek new methods of income, further research was undertaken to review our current services and possible opportunities.

Having reviewed the type of requests that we currently provide that utilises officer time with no reimbursement the following areas were identified:

- Opening, reviewing and providing copies of plans, calculations and decisions for historical and archived applications.
- Processing of Demolition Notices. Includes inputting of information into our system, response to the applicant and notification by post to all adjacent neighbouring property owners and site inspections were necessary.

The following were identified as opportunities for the provision of new services:

- Exempt Building Work Certificates. These are similar to the certificates for lawful development currently provided by Development Control. There are types of building work that are exempt from the requirement to submit a Building Control application as specified under Schedule 2 of the Building Regulations.
- Research of other Local Authority Building Control services through England revealed that these are charges and services provided by others, including many in Surrey.

Having taking into consideration officer expertise, support services and administration, the following fees are proposed:

- Open and reviewing historical and archived files £150.00
- Demolition notices £300.00
- Exempt Building Work Certificates £350.00



ANNEX A

Building Control Benchmarking Data

CATEGORY OF WORK	WOKING	GUILDFORD	WAVERLEY	SPELTHORNE	RUNNYMEDE	SOUTHERN BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP			53% INCREASE
						Tandridge	Reigate and Banstead	Mole Valley	
Number of dwellings									
1	1222.15	1386.00	1470.00	1711.50	1756.50	2221.80	2221.80	2221.80	1913.05
2	1679.57	1848.00	1963.50	2303.70	2418.00	2662.80	2662.80	2662.80	2582.90
3	1986.81	2310.00	2446.50	2702.70	2851.50	3104.85	3104.85	3104.85	3102.44
4	2287.23		2940.00	3100.65	3285.00	3544.80	3544.80	3544.80	3551.42
5	2594.44		3412.50	3616.20	3717.00	3986.85	3986.85	3986.85	3970.77
6				4132.80	4150.50				4492.18
7				4569.60	4591.50				4844.75
8				5008.50	5017.50				5330.87
9				5444.25	5458.50				5833.72
10				5880.00	5890.50				6512.86
Single storey extension									
Extension floor area not exceeding 10m ²	541.20	704.00	756.00	794.85	772.50	852.60	852.60	852.60	879.52



Extension floor area between 10m ² and 40m ²	619.85	979.00	1039.50	1149.75	1102.50	1009.05	1009.05	1009.05	1181.95
Extension floor area between 40m ² and 100m ²	851.97	1265.00	1344.00	1351.35	1530.00	1329.30	1329.30	1329.30	1644.00
Two storey extension									
Extension floor area not exceeding 40m ²	842.96	1100.00	1165.50	1351.35	1200.00	1547.70	1547.70	1547.70	1300.72
Extension floor area between 40m ² and 100m ²	942.96	1496.00	1585.50	1710.45	1657.50	1874.25	1874.25	1874.25	1762.76
Extension floor area between 100m ² and 200m ²	1080.96	1661.00	1764.00	2027.55	2400.00	2221.80	2221.80	2221.80	2582.90
Garage									
Detached	303.49	583.00	619.50	630.00	441.00	1011.15	1011.15	1011.15	669.85
Attached	457.43	748.00	798.00	747.60	660.00	1086.75	1086.75	1086.75	860.96
Loft									
Without dormer windows	613.17	979.00	1039.50	949.20	892.50	949.20	949.20	949.20	1120.74
Including dormer windows	764.68	979.00	1039.50	1125.60	1102.50	1068.90	1068.90	1068.90	1261.76
Garage									
Conversion / part conversion of a garage into habitable room(s) floor area not exceeding 40m ²	457.43	528.00	567.00	885.15	660.00	696.15	696.15	696.15	840.56
Alterations to extend or create a basement up to 100m ²	1027.38			1732.50	1530.00				1658.85



Alterations

Estimated cost less than £5000	307.24	396.00	430.50	514.50	441.00	488.25	488.25	488.25	530.68
Estimated cost between £5,000 and £25,000	457.45	649.00	693.00	809.55	660.00	780.15	780.15	780.15	940.75
Estimated cost between £25,000 and £50,000	764.68	924.00	976.50	1059.45	1102.50	1021.65	1021.65	1021.65	1360.08
Estimated cost between £50,000 and £75,000	914.87	1265.00	1344.00	1646.40	1290.00	1561.35	1561.35	1561.35	1783.17
Replacement Windows Per property up to 40 windows	183.37	297.00	315.00	427.35	441.00	300.30	300.30	300.30	350.70
Any electrical work other than the rewiring of a dwelling	455.16			477.75	525.00	480.90	480.90	480.90	549.21
The re-wiring or new installation in a dwelling	455.16			480.90		480.90	480.90	729.19	729.19
Renovation of a thermal element to a single dwelling.	363.83	396.00	378.00	365.40		365.40	365.40	560.35	560.35

