

Agenda Item 58.

TITLE	Charging for Technical Approval of Highway Structures
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 24 September 2015
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Heather Thwaites, Director of Environment
LEAD MEMBER	John Kaiser, Executive Member for Planning and Highways

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Reducing the cost of service delivery. Making the process of charging for technical approval of highway structures clear and transparent.

RECOMMENDATION

To approve the proposal for charges for technical approval of highway structures and for those charges to come into effect immediately following the Executive decision.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

When third parties (primarily developers) come forward with plans for highway structures these need to be checked to ensure they comply with standards and are safe. At present the cost of this is borne by the Council. These charges will allow the authority to recover the full cost of this process.

Background

Developers who propose to build a new structure or undertake work that could affect the highway or an existing highway structure have to ensure that the statutory duties are followed. Highway structures include bridges, retaining walls and gantries amongst others.

Technical Approval is a nationally recognised approach to determining suitability of structures and the process is set out in some detail in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges BD2/12.

The charge for the Technical Approval is justifiable and covers the costs incurred by the Council for these services.

Analysis of Issues

At present the fee is not included in the planning or adoption process. The service is currently provided by WSP (the Council's term highways consultant). The fee has been calculated based upon the rates charged by WSP and will change in line with any changes in these rates. Charging will vary according to the category of the structure being proposed. Structure categories are set out in BD2/12.

Many local authorities have introduced a charge to cover the total cost of this service.

The proposed schedule of fees is attached as Appendix A.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	(£3,000)	N/A	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	(£6,000)	N/A	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	(£6,000)	N/A	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

Cross-Council Implications

None

List of Background Papers

Procedures for the technical approval of highway structures guidance document – available on request

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Date 15 September 2015	Version No. 1

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