

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**REGENERATION CABINET MEMBER**

**CHARGING FOR PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE FOR WIND TURBINE PROPOSALS**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.2 To introduce charging locally for pre application planning advice for wind turbine proposals.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Communicating with developers about potential planning applications is essential to successful engagement with developers. This includes; members of the public wanting to undertake minor projects to specialist teams wanting advice on major strategic developments.
- 2.2 A submission fee covering most applications was introduced by legislation in 1981. The fee regime has gradually evolved since then.
- 2.3 The Local Government Act 2003 allows the council to charge for the offering pre-application advice.
- 2.4 The budget approved by the council in February assumes raising £5,000 of income from pre application advice. We therefore need to consider how we might achieve this target.
- 2.5 Engagement is encouraged through contact with agents, the council's website and other publications. A duty officer is available daily to deal with enquiries at the Civic Centre on an appointment and casual call in basis. Professional agents attending the last Agents Forum were complimentary of this service.
- 2.6 There is a case for considering charging for advice relating to the construction of wind turbines and wind farms. These types of applications are often controversial and inevitably very demanding of staff resources.

**3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 The proposal presented for consideration is to introduce a fee charging regime for pre-application advice for wind turbine development proposals.

#### **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 We could quickly put in place charges for providing pre-application advice for wind turbine developments if the proposal was adopted. In doing so, we would seek to cover the costs associated with informal meetings and discussions.
- 4.2 Officers have looked at charges introduced by other local authorities in considering a suitable scheme for North Lincolnshire. It is suggested that a charging regime similar to that currently operated by the neighbouring Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council is adopted. This would see charges vary from £800 for a single meeting up to £3,500 for five or more meetings.

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

- 5.1 The budget approved by the council in February assumes raising £5,000 of income. Introducing a scheme linked to wind turbine projects would help towards achieving this target for cost recovery and pre-application advice.
- 5.2 There are no further resource implications to consider.

#### **6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 – CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

- 6.1 Decisions on development proposals are statutory. They inevitably impact on the environment. Designing out crime is a material consideration in giving advice and determining applications. No impacts on diversity are anticipated.

#### **7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Consultation with the Agents Forum suggests that they value the availability of a free pre-application planning advice service and would support its continuation. However currently contributions from the local taxpayer fund these applications.

#### **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the introduction of fee charging for pre-application planning advice on wind turbines based upon the following charges:
- £800 for a single meeting rising to up to £3500 for five or more meetings.

## **DIRECTOR OF PLACES**

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Date: 22 July 2014

**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None**