

Public
Key Decision – Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Discretionary Charges in Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection
Meeting/Date:	Overview and Scrutiny – 10 th June 2025 Cabinet – 17 th June 2025 Council – 16 th July 2025
Executive Portfolio:	Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources – Cllr Brett Mickelburgh
Report by:	Head of Planning, Infrastructure & Public Protection- Clara Kerr
Ward(s) affected:	All

Executive Summary:

This report outlines a strategic proposal to review and enhance discretionary Charges in Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection, focusing on enhancing service delivery, covering rising operational costs, reacting to national government changes and ensuring the sustainability of the services.

Under the Local Government Act 2003, councils may charge for discretionary services such as pre-application planning advice, provided fees reflect actual service costs. These charges must be transparent and publicly accessible. Statutory planning fees remain set by national government.

Following the Corporate Peer Challenge (June 2024) and a Planning Services Peer Review (November 2024), the Council received a final report in March 2025 recommending a three-year Planning Service Improvement Programme. One of the recommendations focused on income generation (Recommendation R7f) and the need to explore further opportunities for discretionary charging. The review also highlighted the need to improve the pre-application service (R8) and review the 'no amendments' policy (R9b).

New legislation requires all developments to deliver a 10% biodiversity net gain, monitored over 30 years. This introduces significant long-term responsibilities for the Council. Charging monitoring fees is essential to ensure this work is cost-neutral and accounted for. There is an urgent need to set up Habitat Banks within the Huntingdonshire to prevent biodiversity units from being directed outside the district.

The Council must continue to **minimise costs and maximise income** to maintain a balanced budget. A full review of discretionary charges is proposed to ensure full cost recovery and alignment with customer needs.

Two options were considered:

- **Option 1:** Review and update discretionary fees in line with peer review recommendations – *recommended*.
- **Option 2:** Maintain current fees – *not recommended*, as it risks financial shortfalls and missed opportunities for local biodiversity investment.

This proposal supports the Council's goals of financial resilience, service modernisation, and inclusive growth. Councillors are asked to endorse the recommended approach to ensure the Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection Service remains responsive, efficient, and capable of delivering high-quality outcomes for the district.

Recommendation(s):

The Council is

RECOMMENDED

- a) **To endorse the review of Discretionary Charges within Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection, and to delegate authority to the Head of Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources to implement changes for the current financial year (25/26).**
- b) **To delegate the following to the Head of Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection in consultation with the Section 151 officer and Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources for the current financial year (25/26):**
 - i. **Introduction of new fees**
 - ii. **Modification of existing fees**
 - iii. **Updating/adjusting of fees**
 - iv. **Waiving of fees**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The report explains the reasons for reviewing and implementing changes to discretionary Charges in Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection, focusing on enhancing service delivery, covering rising operational costs, reacting to national government changes and ensuring the sustainability of the services.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2003 allows local authorities to charge for discretionary services. Specifically, councils may charge for pre-application planning advice and other advisory services, as long as these services are not statutory or part of the core functions that the council is obligated to provide.
- 2.2 The charges for discretionary planning advice are also governed by principles of cost recovery, meaning that the fees should reflect the actual costs incurred by the council in providing the service. The council must ensure that any fees charged are transparent, reasonable, and aligned with the service provided.
- 2.3 Additionally, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the government encourages transparency in planning services, and as such Councils are encouraged to publish their fees for discretionary services, including planning advice, on their websites.
- 2.4 Statutory planning application fees are set by national government. Whilst the income from applications is projected on annual basis, this income can vary due to national economic shifts as well as changes brought in by national government. This may change as the Government looks to bring in a new Planning and Infrastructure Bill 2025 which will allow Local Authorities to vary nationally set fees where they consider the nationally set fee does not meet their actual costs.
- 2.5 Following on from the Corporate Peer Challenge in June 2024 planning services undertook a Peer Review in November 2024. The Planning Services Peer review final report was received in March 2025. Planning services is the key delivery vehicle to ensure the Council delivers on its growth ambitions. The subject of planning is undergoing significant change at a national level including the Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill (LURB) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) revised in December 2024. The NPPF is clear that planning policies and decisions should help create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt, and that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth. Alongside, the government is clear we have a need for additional housing and Huntingdonshire District Councils now has an annual housing need of 1213 dwellings pa. It is anticipated that there will be further national changes to the system in the near future, including the proposed national scheme of delegation and removal of Extension of Time agreements. The peer review of planning services is a health check to ensure that the service is agile to respond to national changes in the planning system and

can better deliver corporate priorities, including inclusive growth. It reviews the journey the department has been on and makes recommendations for service improvements to modernise and deliver an efficient service.

- 2.6 A number of recommendations of the Planning Peer Review are directly relevant to this proposal. Most importantly is Recommendation R7f which requires the Planning Service to 'Develop and implement a long-term (3-year) Planning Service Improvement Programme: Income Generation.'
- 2.7 There is also a requirement for all services within the Council to minimise costs and maximise income to secure a balanced budget for the Council. A full review of our discretionary charges is therefore needed to ensure we are securing full cost recovery. In addition, we need to review the level of service that is available to ensure we are meeting the needs of our customers.
- 2.8 In addition to the above, and following the introduction of new legislation at the beginning of last year, there is a mandatory requirement for new developments to demonstrate a 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) through the creation or enhancement of habitats on development sites (Onsite BNG) or elsewhere (Offsite BNG). From February 2024, all major developments have been required to secure 10% BNG. From April 2024 it became mandatory for minor developments too. All offsite and significant onsite BNG must be managed and monitored for a minimum of 30 years. Mechanisms to secure the long-term management obligations, include Section 106 agreements, Unilateral Undertakings and Conservation Covenants.
- 2.9 The developer will be required to provide the LPA with a copy of its site monitoring reports at intervals (based on the size of the biodiversity gain site and technical difficulty of the habitats to be created) throughout the 30-year period. The LPA must review and sign-off these ecological monitoring reports, which will require officer time and expertise. These activities will carry a significant cost to the LPA which will grow over time. The authority is permitted to levy a fee for this purpose to ensure that monitoring is cost-neutral to the council. If the LPA does not levy a fee this work will be at a cost for the Council.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

Review and revise pre-app fees (including PPAs)

- 3.1 Pre-application advice allows the local authority to provide an initial view on a development proposal before a planning application is submitted. Requesting pre-application advice does not guarantee that planning permission will be granted, but it can provide advice on what would be required to ensure certain issues are addressed. The NPPF encourages pre-application engagement with the LPA but, importantly, the LPA can charge for that engagement.
- 3.2 The Council has provided pre-application for many years, but the hard decision was taken to pause it due to COVID-19 and limited resourcing. It

was successfully relaunched in October 2022. One of the key elements of the new service was the introduction of an electronic process which meant pre-application enquiries are submitted and paid for using an online form.

- 3.3 Since the relaunch of the new electronic pre-application advice service, the following income has been generated:
- 2022/23: £112,254
 - 2023//24: £154,770
 - 2024/25: £327,453.60 (includes PPA income as there is a cross over)
- 3.4 It should be noted that both the pre-application and PPA income also varies year to year due to national economic factors that influence market demand.
- 3.5 Within the Planning Peer Review, recommendation R8 is to 'Improve the Pre-application Service' which is also linked to Recommendation R6f (Income Generation Project). Recommendation R8 includes: 'Review charging , quality and length of advice and monitor speed and performance. We suggest reviewing in consultation with a planning agent/developer working group – to broaden range of options/types of pre-app advice.'
- 3.6 In addition to pre-application advice, the Local Authority also offers Planning Performance Agreement's (PPAs).
- 3.7 A Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) sets the project's tasks and timetable and provides an anticipated cost for expected work. In terms of resource within the Planning Service, this is predominantly planning and other specialist officers' time albeit with the ability to outsource discrete workflow elements or indeed the entirety of the PPA's scope of works to qualified external specialists as required by internal capacity constraints. PPA fee quotes are broadly aligned with a Service Level Agreement the Council has in place with Essex Place Services, so that in the worst-case scenario of the entire scope of a PPA's works being outsourced the Council does not find itself in a net loss position. Consequently, the estimated fee for entering a PPA varies according to negotiation of scope between all parties and will be dependent on the project tasks and meetings agreed at the initial inception meeting. The formation of PPA costs must also take into consideration the degree of complexity and include full cost recovery of all officers/ consultants required to met the obligations of the PPA. Failure to meet agreed timescales may require a refund of costs. A PPA can include a range of discretionary services such as pre-application advice as well as all non-statutory functions during the planning application process and post-decision stage.
- 3.8 The Council already successfully engages in PPA's with developers on larger strategic sites.

Fee for amendments to planning applications

- 3.9 To assist with tackling the backlog of planning application, a 'no amendments' policy was introduced in October 2022. This involves not allowing amendments to planning applications (excluding strategic cases) once validated, therefore increasing reliance of applicants/developers on the pre-application advice (which was relaunched at the same time). This enables them to get their applications right the first time.
- 3.10 Recommendation R9b of the Planning Peer Review is to 'Review 'No-amendments policy'.
- 3.11 Once an application has been submitted, the Local Authority is not legally obliged to accept any amendments to the application. Amendments require the Local Authority to carry out additional work that an applicant has not paid for – from re-validating plans, through to reconsulting with neighbours and stakeholders on amended plans including additional assessment time.
- 3.12 Within the Planning Peer Review, it sets out that charging for amendments to planning applications, like other Councils, could contribute to income generation. It would also be covering the cost of carrying out the required work each time an amendment is accepted. For the avoidance of doubt amendments also includes the submission of additional information for consultation and consideration.
- 3.13 The following fees principles are proposed (but will be subject to change):
- £100 for Householders (including Householder Listed Building Consents) and 1 amendment in total.
 - £200 for minors (including minor Listed Building Consents) and 2 amendments in total.
 - £500 for majors between 10-50 dwellings and 2 amendments in total.
 - For any major applications of 50+ dwellings to be agreed via a planning performance agreement.
 - A charge will be levied against each issue to be amended.
- 3.14 The Chief Planning Officer will have discretion to consider if certain development should exempt or benefit from a reduced rate. including but not limited to:
- Schemes proposed by Charities for charitable purposes in Huntingdonshire.
 - Schemes for 100% affordable housing
 - Rural Exception Sites.
 - Proposals by Town/Parish Councils for community use.
- 3.15 This has been benchmarked against other local authorities.

Charges for searches

- 3.16 Solicitors often request confirmation of compliance with planning conditions. Similar requests for confirmation or modification can be received relating to Section 106 legal agreements, Tree Preservation Order's and Enforcement Enquiries (including notices etc). Fulfilling these

requests requires officer time, and in some cases consultation with the Council's Legal Team including modification of registers. The costs should therefore be recovered.

- 3.17 Further work will be undertaken to establish appropriate charges for the requests including bench marking against other authorities.

Fees for the discharge and modification of a Section 106 agreement

- 3.18 In addition to the above, applicants can apply to discharge obligations within Section 106 agreements or seek to modify its terms. This requires officer time, and in some cases consultation with officers.
- 3.19 Further work will be undertaken to establish appropriate charges for this. One option could be to reflect the corresponding fees to discharge or vary a planning condition, which could increase in tandem with any national changes to these fees. This will be benchmarked against other authorities.

Fees for Public Protection Services

- 3.20 The request for pre-application advice is not limited to Planning Services. Public Protection works closely with Planning Services. Having regard to the thrust of the Planning Peer Review and recognising that the Council needs to minimise costs and maximise income to retain a balanced budget, there is scope to extend this service in future to include all services within the Planning & Public Protection service area. This will include (but not limited to) Environmental Health (who work closely with planning services) and licencing. This approach will ensure that the Council can deliver an agile, proactive service to meet the needs of residents and businesses within the district.

BNG Monitoring fees

- 3.21 As outlined above, due to the recent introduction of legislation requiring a mandatory 10% BNG, responsibilities has been placed on the Council to monitor all offsite and significant onsite BNG. This will have to be secured by a legal agreement, specifying an agreed Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan. The developer or third parties (such as a Habitat Bank provider) acting on their behalf will provide the LPA with monitoring reports at specified intervals. These activities by the LPA carry a significant cost, given that the burden of ongoing agreements will grow over time as new developments, tied to 30-year commitments are granted planning permission.
- 3.22 Developers must use BNG units to demonstrate how they will achieve a net gain in biodiversity as a condition of planning permission, as outlined by the Environment Act. A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) unit is a standardized measurement of biodiversity value used to quantify the impact of development projects on the environment. It's a key component of the BNG scheme, which aims to ensure that developments leave a net positive impact on biodiversity compared to the pre-development state.

- 3.23 It will not always be possible for developers to achieve a 10% uplift in biodiversity value on-site, so there will be a demand for off-site solutions. This could come to fruition in two different ways. The developer could find a piece of land themselves to provide the off-site BNG or more likely will look to purchase biodiversity units from a habitat bank is one such off-site solution, particularly where the developer has no additional land themselves.
- 3.24 BNG has created new opportunities for landowners to contribute to nature's recovery, diversify income streams, and safeguard businesses. Land which currently is unused, unproductive, or generally unsuitable for other purposes could be turned into a habitat bank to yield new income for landowners. Habitat banks/Provider sites are areas of land where habitat creation or enhancement has achieved an uplift in biodiversity value. This uplift can be sold to developers and allocated to their proposal, to meet BNG requirements through units.
- 3.25 The Council has recently procured specialist Biodiversity Net Gain software to assist officers in the validation, assessment and monitoring of BNG within the district.
- 3.26 The Planning Advisory Service has provided helpful guidance and information for Local Authorities on dealing with BNG. This best practice has been reviewed and will provide the foundation for the charging schedule for the monitoring.
- 3.27 For benchmarking, the charging structures for BNG monitoring in several other English LPAs have been reviewed, namely Leeds City Council ^[2], Buckinghamshire County Council ^[3], North Yorkshire Council ^[4] who reviewed and summarised the work of Leeds City, Buckinghamshire County, New Forest District, Bracknell Forest, Calderdale Councils, and South Cambridgeshire District Councils as a case study within their report.
- 3.28 In summary, most of the case study LPAs charge a one-off fee payable at the signing of the legal agreement to cover the costs over the 30 years and most include an index-linked element to account for inflation. Most also have charges tiered by size of the BNG site and some also by technical difficulty of creating or enhancing the habitats therein.
- 3.29 Of the benchmarked councils the lower end examples start their scale of charges at around £2000 - £5000. The upper end ranges are more variable, some open ended for large complex sites:
- Leeds City Council have a simple two-tier scale, charging £2.5k or £5k with the threshold for the higher fee being sites yielding more than 10 Biodiversity Units. It is not clear how they have arrived at those figures.
 - Buckinghamshire developed the most comprehensive staff-time calculator spreadsheet: the smallest and simplest sites are charged £8,618.24 ranging to the largest and most complex sites charged at £50,315.53, for greater than 20ha. Buckinghamshire specified the most monitoring intervals (10) and used a staff day rate of £700.

- One benchmarked council, Bracknell Forest, charges pro-rata by hectares, e.g. a 25ha site (large in BNG terms) would be £90k (versus £50k in the Buckinghamshire calculator) for the 30-year monitoring costs.
- North Yorkshire Calculator yields one-off fees ranging from £2,522 (small site up to 5ha, low technical difficulty) through a mid-range of £3,982 (Medium site up to 20ha, moderate difficulty) to a top end of £9,289 (Large site up to 40ha, high difficulty).

- 3.30 A range of charging structures were considered based on a review of other planning authority approaches. Some LPAs have taken a simplified approach, without differentiation of sites by technical difficulty it was felt that by including this variable in our calculator it better reflects estimated staff costs. The more difficult a habitat type is to create, the more likely it is to need closer scrutiny and officers engagement with the sites manager to agree remedial action.
- 3.31 Some LPAs have used the number of Biodiversity Units rather than a site area in hectares. It was felt that site area is easier to equate to officer time for conducting site visits, given also that habitat complexity is accounted for in our calculator. Some LPAs have used just two site size category thresholds rather than three. Buckinghamshire – the other LPA to use a detailed calculator spreadsheet, has also used three size categories. The North Yorkshire calculator differs slightly in that the medium category starts at 5ha rather than 10ha.
- 3.32 We considered charging a fee at each monitoring event over the 30 years, determined at the time in relation to actual salaries /inflation etc at that point in time. This creates a disproportionate burden of administration charges (invoicing, processing etc). A single lump sum payment up-front was considered better, with a forward projection of inflationary increase.
- 3.33 The levying of monitoring fees will place an additional cost on developers, but this cost will be small in comparison to the cost of their offsite Biodiversity Units themselves. For example, prices of Biodiversity Units in the present market range from around £25k - £165k per unit (depending on habitat type).
- 3.34 In the case of habitat banks, the monitoring fee will be applied to the whole habitat bank site and the provider will take responsibility for the management and monitoring obligations. This becomes part of the overall cost of running the habitat bank and will be reflected in the pricing of Biodiversity Units sold to developers.
- 3.35 For particularly small developments and very small amounts of habitat, such as fractions of a Biodiversity Unit the costs of monitoring could be a more significant proportion of overall BNG cost. We expect developers are likely to approach a habitat bank provider for small transactions. This would apply to small developments with vegetated gardens which have a fixed BU value per Ha regardless of the habitats proposed within them.

- 3.36 Once actual costs are better known a future review of the monitoring and reporting fees calculator could consider a de minimis threshold for very small numbers of units, such as less than 1 BU.
- 3.37 It therefore falls to the Local Authority to establish appropriate charging for the monitoring of BNG. However as outlined above, BNG could be either delivered on-site or off-site, and off-site could be either through land also owned by a developer or a habitat bank.
- 3.38 Habitat Banks are in theory the most straightforward given that they are their own entity the sense that they are set up solely to create habitats, units are sold and therefore are not directly part of a planning application.
- 3.39 On-site or off-site land also owned by developers present more of a challenge as the Local Authority must be mindful of the impact of BNG monitoring on the viability of a development especially affordable housing. This means that they may be different fee calculators for the different types of monitoring.
- 3.40 The urgency for implementing BNG monitoring fees is due to the Council having a long waiting list of potential Habitat Banks. Sadly, one of these habitat banks had decided to pursue a conservation covenant instead (which sits outside of the Council). There is a risk that further sites may follow suit or decide to look elsewhere outside of the district if S106 agreements to secure the habitat banks aren't progressed urgently.

Further opportunities for charging services

- 3.41 As part of the ongoing programme of improvements within Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection and in reaction to further changes brought about by national government, there may be further opportunities for discretionary charging may arise that do not fit within the above categories. This will be following the Planning Peer Review Recommendation R7f which requires the Planning Service to 'Develop and implement a long-term (3-year) Planning Service Improvement Programme: Income Generation.'

Options considered

- 3.42 The following options are considered:
- Option 1 – Review the approach to discretionary fees as outlined above.
 - Option 2 – Do not change the Council's existing fees.
- 3.43 The first option represents the best use of resources and supports the delivery of an efficient and effective service, which does in turn support the Council's priorities. The first option follows the Planning Peer Review Recommendations. It is therefore recommended to Council.
- 3.44 The second option would not represent good practice. Furthermore, it represents a failure to facilitate the establishment of habitat banks within

Huntingdonshire, which may result in the biodiversity net gain units from planning applications within Huntingdonshire being directed outside of the district. Not imposing monitoring fees would be detrimental to the council's finances. Costs will rise significantly over 30 years and the total caseload of agreements to be monitored will increase.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.1 A report was taken to Overview and Scrutiny – 10th June 2025. This forms Appendix 1.

4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel requested the following change to the recommendation:

To be delegated to officers identified above for the current financial year only. Discretionary charges to be developed in consultation with relative Executive councillors as set out above but also include and Shadow Executive Councillors for planning and finance.

4.2 The recommendation has been amended in line with the above.

4.3 Officers met with the Executive councillors for Planning and Finance, as well as the Shadow Executive Councillors for planning and finance, on the 18th of June to develop the fees shown within appendix 2.

4.4 The fees within appendix 2 have been developed on the following principles:

- Planning Advisory Service (PAS) guidance has been followed, and benchmarking has also been undertaken against other local authorities.
- Fee ranges are provided to cover both internal costs and the costs of external contractors. It also reflects the different complexities and scale of work. The lower end of the range covers internal costs whilst the upper end of the range covers external costs. However, the upper range may be exceeded as it is market dependent and subject to supply and demand. These ranges are therefore not fixed.
- Each hourly/day rate has been based upon:
 - the relevant HDC pay grade (different size and complexity of planning application requires a different level of officer experience)
 - corporate overheads which include the specialist costs associated with running a planning department
 - input from management (oversight and sign off)
 - input from our admin team in terms of registering of the advice enquiry, handling of documents/plans consultations, issuing responses etc.
- Bespoke costs for management as the real value of management time far exceeds hourly rate. It will be an officer decision on what level of management is appropriate to be involved.

- The range for specialist officers is large as will be based on the size and complexity of the issue. If external contractors are required, this will be market dependent due to supply and demand.

4.5 Members should note that this report is the same as the report that was discussed at Overview and Scrutiny on the 10th of June 2025 (Appendix 1). The amendments are limited to the recommendation and to this section of the report which address comments of overview and scrutiny.

5. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

5.1 The key impacts are:

- Council's reputation of not following through on the recommendations of the Planning Peer Review.
- Not being cost neutral in the undertaking of tasks.
- Loss of biodiversity net gain units outside the district.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Subject to endorsement of the proposal, the next steps will be:

1. Complete the drafting of the BNG monitoring S106 template which contains the fees to allow habitat banks to be secured.
2. Continue the review of discretionary charges.
3. Hold a Planning Agents and Developers Forum to discuss the review of discretionary charges.
4. Implement any required discretionary charges.

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND / CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

[*\(See Corporate Plan\)*](#)

7.1 Action 54. Continue the Development Management Improvement programme to improve the performance of the planning service.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Given the urgency of needing to set up the BNG monitoring fees, the following of best practice as outlined by PAS and the bench marking against other Local Authorities, it is considered that no consultation is required for this.

8.2 In regard to consultation on other changes to discretionary charges, the vast majority of applicants use a professional planning agent to help them with their application which is the recommended approach. It is noted that Recommendation R15 of the Planning Peer Review is to 'Refresh and relaunch the Planning Agents and Developers Forum'. This would be an appropriate forum to consult with agents and developers on the proposed changes to discretionary charges. A Planning Agents and Developers Forum' will be taking place this summer. Following this forum, the service will advise local agents and architects of the new charges, as well as

advertising them on the website to ensure that all customers are aware of the implications.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Local Government Act 2003 provides the power for local authorities to charge for discretionary services (as defined in the Local Government Act 1999). Discretionary services are those services that an authority has the power but not a duty to provide. An authority may charge where the person who receives the service has agreed to its provision. The power to charge under this provision does not apply where the power to provide the service in question already benefits from a charging power or is subject to an express prohibition from charging.
- 9.2 The Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on authorities to ensure that, taken one year with another, the income from charges for each kind of discretionary service does not exceed the costs of provision. An authority may set charges as it thinks fit, and may charge only certain people for a service or charge different people different amounts.
- 9.3 Local authorities are required to have regard for any guidance that may be issued by the Secretary of State in terms of carrying out their functions under the 2003 Act. Section 93(7) of the Act provides that certain prohibitions in other legislation preventing authorities from raising money are specifically dis-applied in relation to the exercise of the charging power.
- 9.4 Local Planning Authorities therefore have powers to recover the costs of preapplication advice in recognition of the time officers have to spend researching information in order to provide answers to prospective developers or applicants.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no resource implications.

11. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There is no impact on the council's aims regarding carbon neutrality or adverse impacts on the climate or nature emergencies.

12. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no other impacts.

13. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 13.1 The Council is committed to continue the Development Management Improvement programme to improve the performance of the planning service as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2023-2028, and is committed to following through on the recommendations of the Planning Peer Review.

- 13.2 The Council recognises the important responsibilities it must undertake in monitoring BNG within the district but acknowledges this will be a financial burden. Therefore, appropriate monitoring fees must be imposed.

14. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

- 14.1 Appendix 1 – List of fees.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 15.1 Huntingdonshire Corporate Peer Review [Corporate Plan](#)

- 15.1 Huntingdonshire Planning Services Peer Review [Agenda for Development Management Committee on Monday, 19 May 2025, 7:00 pm - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](#)

- 15.2 PAS BNG guidance for Local Authorities [Biodiversity Net Gain \(BNG\) for Local Planning Authorities | Local Government Association](#)

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