

Charging for planning advice

Dear Sir/Madam

The Environment Agency has begun charging for the advice we provide on planning enquiries. In the South East we will begin charging from 2 January 2014. This is due to cuts in our funding that mean we can no longer provide this advice for free. Our statutory work with local planning authorities will remain free of charge and our statutory timescales will not be affected.

For new development, please send us a red line boundary and description of your proposal and we will provide you with a free preliminary opinion. In this we will outline our position and highlight any environmental issues we may be concerned about as a statutory consultee. You must contact us directly for this preliminary opinion. Our advice will no longer be available via the local planning authority.

If you require further advice following the preliminary opinion, we can provide this at a chargeable rate. This would include reviews of technical documents, meetings and site visits.

As part of this chargeable service, a project manager from our Sustainable Places team will act as a single point of contact to co-ordinate the charging agreement and a response to your enquiry. The charging agreement will set out the costs and timescales for a response to your enquiry. Our charges will be £84 per hour and we do not charge VAT. Our finance service centre will invoice you directly every quarter.

For ongoing development proposals please get in touch with your Sustainable Places contact to discuss setting up an agreement for further advice.

We support sustainable growth and want to continue giving advice to developers and their consultants. As such we must start charging to ensure we cover costs. In doing this we can continue to work with you to meet the requirements of the planning process.

If you have any questions about these changes please do not hesitate to contact me or a member of my team.

Yours faithfully

Rachel Keen

Sustainable Places Team Leader

SPHatfield@environment-agency.gov.uk

01707 632406

