

Spelthorne Borough Council
Knowle Green
Staines-upon-Thames
TW18 1XB

11/12/2013

Dear Colleague

Charging for planning advice to developers and consultants

From the 2 January 2014 the South East Region of the Environment Agency will begin charging for advice we provide on planning enquiries that we receive from developers and their consultants. This will affect proposed developments in your local authority area.

We support sustainable growth and want to continue giving advice to developers and their consultants. We will be constrained by proposed cuts to Grant in Aid funding that currently allows us to give this advice for free, and we must start charging for this advice to ensure we cover costs. Our statutory timescales will not be affected.

We will continue to provide a free service to developers and their consultants in the form of a Preliminary Opinion. This Preliminary Opinion will outline our position and highlight any environmental issues we may be concerned about as a statutory consultee. We can then provide developers with further bespoke advice, if required, at a chargeable rate. This could include, for example, Flood Risk Assessment reviews, meetings and site visits.

Our charges will be £84 per hour and we do not charge VAT.

We will not be charging for advice on Strategic Plans or Strategic advice to Local Enterprise Partnerships, City Deals and Enterprise zones. In line with treasury guidance we will be charging for advice on schemes where the Local Authority is the applicant. We are communicating these changes to key developers and consultants that cover your Borough. To ensure we are prepared, we are already looking developing this approach with major/ongoing sites.

We are also contacting the Chief Executive of your Council to alert them to these changes.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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