

## WG50622

### Promoting a resilient and high performing planning service Consultation response form

Your name: Max Hampton

Organisation Name (if applicable): Design Commission for Wales

Organisation type:

- Business/Consultant
- Local Planning Authority
- Government Agency/Other Public Sector x
- Professional Bodies/Interest Groups
- Voluntary Sector/Community Groups
- Other Group or Individual (not listed above)

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Responses should be returned by **17 January** to:

[planconsultations-a@gov.wales](mailto:planconsultations-a@gov.wales)

Or sent by post to:

Welsh Government  
Planning Directorate  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to be anonymous, please tick here

**Question 1:** Do you agree with our proposals to change planning applications fees from a percentage uplift approach to FCR?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 2:** Do you agree that the 'FCR Pathway', ensuring most applications reach FCR in 3 to 5 years, is an appropriate approach?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 3:** Do you agree that for those fee categories not considered by the ARUP Study, they should be increased to the 2024 baseline only and uplifted for inflation annually?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 4:** Do you agree with our proposals to increase fees for Pre-Application Services to the 2024 baseline, taking account of inflation only?

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 5:** Do you agree with the proposals for planning fees to be adjusted annually in line with inflation?

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 6:** Do you agree that the Bank of England CPI is the most appropriate index measure to use?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 7:** Do you agree that publishing fees three months in advance of any fee increase coming into force is enough time for notification and publication arrangements by LPAs?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 8:** Do you agree with our proposals to reduce the variable fee thresholds for residential outline, full and change of change of use planning applications?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 9:** Do you agree with our proposals to increase householder application fees to meet cost recovery?

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 10:** Do you agree with our proposals to introduce a lower fee of £85 for those householder application types covered by Part 2 (Schedule 1) Paragraph 7a.

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 11:** Do you think householders will be encouraged to build habitable garden rooms rather than build an extension to their homes because of the lower fee?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know x

**Please give your reasons**

Consideration should be given to this potential unintended consequence.

**Question 12:** Do you agree with our proposals to double the fee for retrospective planning applications?

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 13:** Do you consider that our proposed fees for reserved matters applications is an appropriate reflection of the resources/costs of processing these applications? If not, what fee structure should be used instead?

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 14:** Do you consider that our proposed fee for Renewal Applications in Annex A is a robust reflection of the costs of processing these applications?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please provide evidence**

**Question 15:** Would it be more appropriate for a renewal application to have the same fee as the original application for planning permission being renewed (either the full or outline permission fee)?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please provide evidence**

**Question 16:** Do you consider that a fee should be charged for applications relating to LBCs or CACs?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know x

**Please give your reasons and submit data/evidence**

**Question 17:** Do you consider that a fee should be charged for applications relating to TPOs?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know x

**Please give your reasons and submit data/evidence**

**Question 18:** Are there any application types for which fees are not currently charged but which should require a fee?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know x



**Please give your reasons and submit data/evidence**

**Question 19:** Do you consider that the additional income arising from proposed fee increases should be ringfenced for spending within LPA planning departments?

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

Local planning authorities should use the additional income to support their planning service.

**Question 20:** What are the current challenges/barriers to the ringfencing of planning fees in planning departments?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know x

**Please explain and give your reasons**

**Question 21:** Do you consider that to support LPAs in ringfencing planning fees, Welsh Government should only implement fee increases where there has been a written commitment from an LPA to do so?

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 22:** Do you agree that appellants should pay a fee to submit an appeal?

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 23:** Do you agree that the 'costs' system provides a suitable mechanism to recover costs, which may include the appeal fee, following unreasonable behaviour by any party?

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 24:** Do you agree that a percentage of the planning application fee is the best way to set fees for planning appeals?

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 25:** Do you agree that 50% of the original planning application fee is fair and proportionate charge for planning appeals?

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 26:** Do you agree with the proposed exceptions to a Planning Appeal fee?  
Are there any other appeal types that could be included as exceptions?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 27:** Do you have any other comments in relation to Planning Appeal Fees?

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 28:** Do you agree that fee categories should be simplified in the future?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 29:** What are your views on the options proposed?

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 30:** What is the current 'gap' in monetary/percentage terms between revenue received from current fee levels to the costs of running the development management service in your LPA area?

**Please provide data**

**Question 31:** What impact, positive or negative, will our proposals have on the income received in monetary and percentage terms, and the relationship to the costs of running a development management service both now and in the next 3-5 years until FCR is achieved?

**Please provide data and explain your reasons.**

**Question 32:** In relation to householder applications, what are the current costs associated with a “typical” householder application vs fee income (including officer time, admin time (registration, validation, comms), statutory notices etc)?

**Please provide data**

**Question 33:** For applicants using planning services, do you consider that our proposals will improve service delivery?

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 34:** For applicants using planning services, what are your general views on the impacts, either positive or negative, of our proposals?

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 35:** Do you agree with that the Planning Performance Framework should be re-introduced?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 36:** Do you think that future planning application fee increases should be specifically linked to performance?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- 

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 37:** Do you have any comments on the proposed content of APRs?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

The APRs should take into account measures LPAs take to improve the design quality of new development. This may need to be a more qualitative measure.

**Question 38:** What are the key indicators which you think the performance of authorities should be measured against?

**Please explain and give your reasons**

See response to question 37.

**Question 39:** What are your views on the current performance bands - Improve (red), Fair (yellow) and Good (green)? Do you think they should be changed?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**If yes, please give your reasons**



**Question 40:** Are there any quantitative metrics not included which should be?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please indicate what additional quantitative metrics you consider should be included and explain why**

**Question 41:** Are there any qualitative metrics not included which should be?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please indicate what additional quantitative metrics you consider should be included and explain why.**

See response to question 37.

**Question 42:** Do you think the current targets and indicators are the correct ones in relation to the performance of the development management service?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 43:** Do you think the current targets and indicators are the correct ones in relation to the performance of the development plan service?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know x

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 44:** Do you agree that the performance of local planning authorities for speed of decision-making should be assessed on the percentage of applications that are determined within the statutory determination period i.e. excluding extension of times and Planning Performance Agreements?

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 45:** Do you think that introducing resilience measures into APRs is a useful addition to performance reporting?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

We agree that APRs should include information on specialist skills availability and gaps. This should include urban design and placemaking skills.

**Question 46:** Do you agree with the broad measures proposed? If not, why and what others should be included?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 47:** What do you consider to be the greatest skills and expertise gaps in local planning authorities and what impact is this currently having on service delivery?

**Please provide examples/evidence**

There is a lack of urban design and placemaking skills within local planning authorities along with accompanying high quality development economics skills. The skills gap in these areas is significant and must be addressed. The creation of interdisciplinary teams carrying these skills should be possible and expected if income generation is used to assist skill development. The team need not be large – but appropriately skilled.

**Question 48:** What do you consider to be the main barriers faced by LPAs in recruiting and retaining staff?

**Please provide examples/evidence**

We encourage creating and promoting jobs, as well as role specifications, in ways that will be attractive to people with high quality design and placemaking expertise and track records. Organisations should communicate appetite for positive change and promote interesting roles where candidates are attracted because they feel they can make a difference and innovate. This approach will help attract and retain talent to a far greater extent. A local authority with a reputation for expecting and ensuring the delivery of well-designed, well-connected high quality places is also one that will be more attractive to prospective skilled candidates.

**Question 49:** Are current salaries and career structures sufficient to retain planning staff?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know x

**Please provides examples/evidence.**

**Question 50:** Does your LPA currently offer opportunities for early career planners? Have you had success in retaining staff?

**Please provide examples/evidence**

N/A

**Question 51:** In addition to increasing planning fees, in what other ways could Welsh Government support greater capacity and capability within local planning departments and pathways into the profession?

**Please provide examples of existing good practice or initiatives if possible**

The Design Commission for Wales can support the Welsh Government with the development of design expertise and capacity within local planning authorities. Our client support and training programmes aim to build design skill and capability within organisations across sectors and particularly the public sector. The composition and size of interdisciplinary teams is also something we have experience of and could bring to the skills and capacity building piece.

**Question 52:** Do you have any other ideas to help resource the planning system?

**Please explain how you think the proposal could help resources**

Working to build skilled interdisciplinary planning, place and regeneration teams is critical to address objectives of quality and delivery. The quality of internal teams directly affects quality and delivery externally and for the people of Wales.

**Question 53:** Is there demand for undergraduate/post graduate bursary schemes in Wales? If responding on behalf of an LPA how many individuals would you wish to put forward and how often?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know x

**Please give your reasons**

**Question 54:** Is there demand for undergraduate/post graduate apprenticeship schemes in Wales? If responding on behalf of an LPA how many individuals would you wish to put forward and how often?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know x

**Please gives your reasons**

**Question 55:** Where do you consider additional staffing resources secured via bursary/apprenticeship schemes should be directed to have the most impact? For example, within LPA planning services and or the delivery of CJC strategic and specialist planning functions.

**Please provide evidence and explain your reasons**

This measure could help address the lack of placemaking and urban design expertise within planning authorities.

**Question 56:** What are your views on merits and challenges of establishing regional/larger than local shared services?

**Please provide evidence and give your reasons**

We agree with the principle of exploring alternative measures to provide specialist skills at a regional or national level.

**Question 57:** Do you agree that planning skills hubs should be located within CJsCs

- Yes x
- No
- Don't know

**Please gives your reasons**

We agree in principle, but the development of planning skills hubs must build skills and capacity and not stretch an already scant resource within LPAs. Consideration will need to be given as to the suitability of CJsCs being the home of skills hubs, as their role is more strategic, as design and placemaking input will also need to be detailed at the local level as well as strategic. The Design Commission can support the development of design expertise and capacity within CJsCs.

**Question 58:** How do you think a planning skills hub(s) could be resourced considering governance, financial and staffing requirements?

**Please provide evidence and give your reasons**

**Question 59:** Do you agree that planning skills hubs could potentially be funded by a proportion of fee income from each LPA be used to resource the hub?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know x

**Please gives your reasons**

**Question 60:** Do you agree with our proposal to change the statutory review period for LDPs from 4 to 6 years?

- Yes
- No x
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

We agree that extending the review period would help enable LPAs to direct resources to SDPs, but the review process provides the opportunity to build on the existing LDPs and integrate placemaking more within the process. There needs to be key milestones and accelerated timescales for quality plans to be put in place.

**Question 61:** Do you think that a shorter or longer review period would be more appropriate?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please give your reasons**

See response to question 60.

**Question 62:** What would be the resource implications, both staffing and financial, if the statutory review period was changed to 6-year review period?

**Please provide data and evidence**

**Question 63:** To what extent would a six-year review period assist LPAs in moving towards the regional delivery agenda?

**Please give your reasons**



**Question 64:** What, in your opinion, would the likely effects of our proposals have on the Welsh Language? We are particularly interested in any likely effects on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?

Do you think there are opportunities to promote any positive effects?

Do you think there are opportunities to mitigate any adverse effects?

**Please explain and give your reasons**

**Question 65:** In your opinion, could any of our proposals be formulated or changed so as to:

- have positive effects of more positive effects on using the Welsh language and not on treating the Welsh language less favourably than English; or
- mitigate any negative effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?

**Please explain and give your reasons**

**Question 66:** We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them: