

Press Release

House Builders Association opposes hike in planning application fees

The House Builders Association (HBA) is strongly opposing proposals that would add to the cost of planning applications for housebuilders and offers three recommendations.

The HBA is surprised, in a climate in which cost reduction is a priority, that local authorities are not being encouraged to reduce costs before increasing fees. Indeed, the HBA proposes that, regardless of the spirit of localism, local authorities should not be allowed to use this freedom to featherbed ongoing inefficiency. If some local authorities can already make a profit on their planning service, allowing others to charge for inefficiency fosters a culture of laziness and complacency that is perceived by the private sector to pervade planning departments. This culture has no place in today's climate and does not reflect well on localism.

The HBA recommends that these proposals be radically reconsidered and that:

1. the first priority should be cost reduction by local authorities and without that, no local authority should be allowed to increase their fees;
2. that any remaining gap be filled by imposing fees on "free riders" only, and
3. there should, explicitly, be no increase in fees for housebuilding applications for two or more homes.

The cumulative regulatory burden on housebuilders, including the cost of planning, is now a matter of record and is acknowledged by the government as a problem.

Given that the government is committed to reducing the costs of regulation and has introduced the local standards framework as a mechanism to achieve that, it would be utterly perverse to now introduce upward fee movements.

For further information on the House Builders Association please contact 08450 578160 or visit www.builders.org.uk