

6th Nov 18

Councillor Tim Warren
Council Leader
Bath and North East Somerset Council
The Guildhall
Bath BA1 5AW

Dear Councillor Tim,

FEES FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

FoBRA welcomes the Council's bid for new powers to invest in local services (Press Statement dated 1st Nov 18 and Council meeting 8th Nov 18 - Item 9) and generally supports the thrust of its proposals, especially the imposition of taxes on tourism and short-term accommodation which we believe are well overdue.

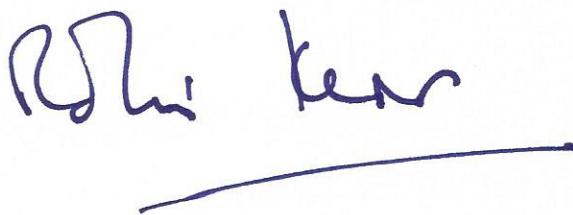
However, we object in the strongest possible terms to the proposals to levy fees for listed building applications. The principle behind the non-charging of fees for these is well established and is in recognition of the withdrawal of normal rights to alter one's private property. After all, the owners of the c.5,000 listed buildings in Bath's World Heritage Site are mostly residents, with the buildings largely continuing in their original function, providing homes for people leading modern lives within the historic buildings for which the site was inscribed. It is residents and owners who perform an unremunerated public service as custodians of this heritage and conservation of it. The current system correctly incentivises local planning authorities to make the process easy for them, for example by publishing policies and information to help people to get their applications right first time, and by not charging for this. Nor should one fall into the trap of thinking that Bath's Listed Buildings are owned only by the rich who can well afford the fee: many are divided into small flats, owned by people of limited means.

We of course appreciate that Council Officers have to devote time and resources to processing these applications, but it is worth noting that the 800 to 900 of these per year represent fewer than 10% of all planning applications. That said, there could be a case made for central government to provide some financial support to Local Authorities which have a significant number of Listed Buildings and properties in Conservation Areas; and therefore an additional burden on their planning resources.

3 Lansdown Place East, Bath, BA1 5ET; robin.kerrconsulting@uwclub.net
01225 311549, 07767 788366

FoBRA urges the Council not to pursue this unwelcome and unfair proposal.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robin Kerr". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is a long, horizontal blue line that extends to the right.

Robin Kerr, Chairman

Copy to:

Cllrs Gerrish and Goodman

Chief Executive, Bath Preservation Trust