

6.3 Marine licensing advice

We propose to recover the costs of our marine licencing advice in the same way we already recover our costs for other planning advice.

Marine licensing advice

We give advice about some activities that require a marine licence. For example, construction, dredging and disposal activities in our estuaries and along our coasts.

We offer advice about things such as:

- flood and coastal risk management
- pollution prevention
- impacts on water bodies, including water quality
- impacts on biodiversity and fisheries

Our advice can be given before or after a marine licence application is submitted. It can also be given after a marine licence has been granted.

This is the same as our planning advice. We advise about the same topics, at the same time and in the same way. We are required by government to recover the costs of this service just like we already do for planning advice.

Proposal

Our Charging for Planning Advice offers a free preliminary opinion and then offers the option of discretionary technical advice with a charge. We propose to take the same approach for marine licensing advice, charging the same hourly rate of £100 for the service.

Preliminary opinion

This would outline issues for the project to consider and is a free service for all developments irrespective of scale and complexity. It would also identify the information we would need to see when consulted by the Marine Management Organisation about the marine licence application.

Discretionary service for more detailed advice

This detailed technical advice could include meetings and reviews of technical documentation and is a voluntary service - where we can provide more detailed technical advice about the proposal. This charged advice is provided through a formal agreement made up of an offer letter, a programme of advice and standard terms and conditions.

This two stage approach would allow us to recover our costs in a proportionate way. Many smaller projects and lower risk activities would get all the advice they need in the preliminary opinion. Larger, more complicated projects would be able to pay for more detailed technical advice.

All our advice would remain discretionary. There would be no obligation for people to seek our advice before submitting a marine licence application.

We propose to introduce a new hourly charge of £100 based on our charge modelling. This charge will recover our costs of providing advice to developers looking to take forward developments in the marine area. The charge is designed to ensure that we fully recover our costs.

We are also working with other Defra bodies to review other aspects of our marine advice and additional proposals may be brought forward in future.