

MERSEYSIDE ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY SERVICE CHARGING POLICY



Merseyside
Environmental
Advisory Service

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Section 1 - Principles for MEAS Charging Policy

1. Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) is a specialist unit which provides advice on specific environmental matters to the six District Councils making up the Liverpool City Region, West Lancashire Borough Council and the LCR Combined Authority. First formed in 1986, our role and remit have developed substantially in recent years and continue to evolve. Find out more here: www.meas.org.uk
2. MEAS is a Local Government “not-for-profit” technical advisory service and from 2016 we provide services and data products to commercial and non-commercial customers. We operate a cost-recovery model and income from fees charged does not exceed the cost of provision. All MEAS staff are employees of Local Authority (Sefton Council). MEAS charges for providing discretionary services, including pre-application advice, are made under [section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003](#).
3. MEAS provide advice using the information before us on a case-by-case basis and we access verified sources of information to provide evidence-based advice.
4. In charging for advisory services and data services MEAS is seeking to ensure that our Local Authorities have access to high-quality, professional, technical environmental advice to inform policy making and decision-taking for the benefit of the environment, places, communities and businesses of the Liverpool City Region. The MEAS team comply with professional standards and codes of practice alongside regulatory requirements, guidance and good practice relevant to the scope of services provided.
5. It is entirely at the discretion of the person or organisations making a request (**requester**) whether they choose to use and/or act upon the advisory services and data services provided by MEAS. As specialist technical advisors the advisory services and data services that we provide should be weighed alongside other considerations for a project, policy or proposal. MEAS, Sefton Council or any of the Local Authorities to whom MEAS provides core services accept no liability whatsoever from the advisory services and data services that we provide through this charging policy. Should the requester / recipient of MEAS advisory services choose to not take account or accept the advice provided, MEAS holds no responsibility or liability for subsequent risk. It is entirely borne by the requester / recipient.
6. MEAS will seek to identify significant procedural, legal and policy risks on the basis of the information available and technical expertise to inform the planning and decision processes of the requester. In line with our technical remit, we will seek to improve the quality and environmental sustainability of any plan or project that we provide advisory services and data services through this policy. We will apply, on a case-by-case basis, a hierarchy to seek to avoid impact and significant harm in the first instance through alternatives and then, minimise, mitigate and compensate for adverse effects as appropriate. Limitations in the scope of the MEAS advice provided shall be stated.



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7. The procedures that MEAS will follow in providing its pre-application advice, discretionary services and data products are set out in a series of flow diagrams which can be found in Appendix 1.
8. **MEAS do not charge for environmental data and information. We charge for advisory services and data products only.** This Charging Policy is effective from 01 April 2026.


Section 2 - Merseyside EAS Data Product Policy

9. MEAS curates, assembles, manages and maintains a range of databases which contain environmental information using public funding and are for evidential purposes. We do this primarily for the Local Authorities that comprise the Liverpool City Region namely: **Halton; Knowsley; Liverpool; Sefton; St. Helens and Wirral**. These databases have been curated, assembled, maintained and managed.
10. These databases are also available more generally to the public, not-for-profit organisations, educational establishments, Liverpool City Region partners and the private sector through a range of products and services, subject to agreements and licencing for use.
11. Bespoke and unique information products and services can be provided by MEAS in response to enquiries from commercial customers such as private companies and consultancy. Our policy and fee schedule for the provision of these products and services is set out in this policy document.
12. Our charges contribute to the cost of database curation, assembly, maintenance and management and are re-invested in efficient service delivery. This is essential to ensure an up-to-date evidence base to inform policy making and decision-taking.

MEAS Databases

13. MEAS actively maintains, manages and operates **four principal databases** as follows:

1.	Merseyside Biobank – the Local Environment Record Centre for North Merseyside (Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and St. Helens).	
2.	The Merseyside Historic Environment Record – the HER for Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens and Wirral.	
3.	The Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan evidence base – the adopted Waste Local Plan for Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens and Wirral.	

4.	The Liverpool City Region Ecological Network – the ecological evidence base for Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens and Wirral to draw upon for Local Plan and other purposes.	 <p>LIVERPOOL CITY REGION ECOLOGICAL NETWORK</p>
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14. A wide range of public, private, voluntary and academic sources of data have been incorporated into these databases. **Intellectual copyright of those data remains with the data originator and is not in the ownership of MEAS or the Local Authorities that comprise the Liverpool City Region. MEAS has permission to use the databases to provide the products and services as set out in this policy document and according to data licence and other individual agreements.**

Personal Data – MEAS Privacy Notice

15. MEAS uses personal data in accordance the [General Data Protection Regulations 2018](#). A privacy notice setting out how we use personal data is available on our website here: <https://eas.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/meas-privacy-notice/>

MEAS Charging policy – Scope and Fees

16. The scope of the MEAS Charging Policy, effective from 01 April 2026, is set out in the following list. The geographical coverage of our data products and advisory services varies depending on technical scope. Clicking on the link will take you to the appropriate section of this policy:

- [I want Discretionary Advisory Services](#)
- [I want Pre-Application advice](#)
- [I want a Merseyside BioBank LERC data product \(search\)](#)
- [I want a Historic Environment Record data product \(search\)](#)
- [I want a Waste Local Plan data product](#)
- [I want other MEAS Technical Advisory Services](#)
- [I want Nature Recovery Services](#)

Section 3 - MEAS Discretionary Services for prospective development prior to formal engagement in the planning application process with the Local Planning Authority

17. Discretionary services for prospective development prior to formal engagement in the planning application process with the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The charging policy is not based on site area. Table 1 sets out full details of what is included in this service and chargeable fee rates based on the scale of the development proposal. Appendix 1.1 provides detail of the procedure we follow for this service.
18. Front loading of the planning process is encouraged, and applicants are welcome to engage with MEAS prior to starting the formal planning process. The aim is to flag issues to enable appropriate action and advice to be sought in a timely fashion. Exchange of correspondence with the requester is necessary prior to MEAS undertaking the work and a purchase order number or other undertaking is necessary.
19. The charges set out below are for a single piece of written advice. Further advice will be chargeable. For complex cases, a fee estimate may be provided for agreement through written correspondence, with potential to enter into a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for multi-year requirements and / or for complex requests which fall outside of the scope of the charging structure specified. Timescales are to be agreed between the parties. If additional information is submitted which affects the time taken to review, this may affect the final fee. MEAS will advise if this is likely to be the case.

Table 1 – MEAS Discretionary Services and Fixed Charges (single piece of written advice)

Discretionary Services	Description	Standard of Service	Charges
Discretionary services for prospective development prior to formal engagement in the planning application process with the Local Planning Authority	<p>Normally at a very early stage of option appraisal / site or scheme planning.</p> <p>Scope of discretionary services are those planning matters within the technical remit of MEAS – archaeology, contaminated land, ecology and biodiversity, EIA scoping, historic environment, low carbon energy, minerals, nature conservation, sustainable waste management and waste matters.</p> <p>MEAS does not charge for EIA screening and/or an EIA scoping opinion where this forms part of the statutory duty of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) under the EIA Regulations. MEAS will charge for informal EIA scoping where a request has been made for discretionary services that <u>does not</u> form part of an application to the LPA for a scoping opinion under the EIA Regulations.</p>	15 working days from written acceptance of quotation by requester.	<p>Householder - single dwelling - extension / alteration (within existing curtilage): £80.00 excl. VAT.</p> <p>Minor single dwelling – single new build demolition and rebuild 1 dwelling £165.00 excl. VAT.</p> <p>Minor developments 2 to 9 dwellings and up to 1000m² of commercial development £335.00 excl. VAT.</p>

	<p>MEAS has 7 fixed charge rates that apply as set out in the right-hand column for a single piece of written, integrated advice.</p> <p>For more complex cases (including larger and linear sites) where discretionary services are sought and / or where additional advice is required beyond the single piece of written, integrated advice, MEAS may enter into a bespoke agreement with the requester (see Section 6 below).</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt the scope of discretionary services excludes the fees for Merseyside BioBank Local Environmental Record Centre Data Product Service, Historic Environment Record Standard Data Product and Waste Local Plan Standard Data Product as these are all separate services and charged accordingly.</p> <p>Advice will be provided without the benefit of a site visit. Advice is confidential between requester and MEAS.</p>		<p>Major developments 10 – 24 dwellings and 1001 to 3000m² of commercial development £520.00 excl. VAT.</p> <p>Major applications 25 – 50 Dwellings and 3001 to 4999m² of commercial development £775.00 excl. VAT.</p> <p>Major applications >50 dwellings and 0.5-1.0 ha or 5000m² –10000m² of floorspace £1,035.00 excl. VAT.</p> <p>100+ Dwellings & Commercial Development 1ha or 10000m² & above & EIA Development £1,300.00 excl. VAT.</p> <p>Charges are for a single piece of written advice.</p> <p>For complex cases, a fee estimate may be provided for agreement through written correspondence, with potential to enter into an SLA for multi-year requirements. Timescales are to be agreed between the parties. (see Section 6 below).</p>
	<p>Review of Technical reports prior to submission with planning application. Minimum fee payable plus £60 per hour after first hour.</p>		<p>£140.00</p>

Note: The local planning authority may require consultation with MEAS at pre-application stage. Any prospective applicant that has already received Discretionary Services for the prospective application, from

MEAS, should provide a copy to the local planning authority at commencement of pre-application discussions.

Section 4 - MEAS Pre-Application Advice

20. The purpose of providing pre-application planning advice is to enable the applicant and their representatives make informed choice regarding development location, design and type and gather the necessary environmental information, including survey, prior to submitting a planning application. Environmental surveys and desk-based assessments can take time to undertake, and some surveys are tied to the ecology survey calendar and other seasonal or site constraints (waterlogging). Upfront planning and communication is beneficial for an applicant to avoid delays in the planning process because insufficient environmental information has been submitted.
21. It is important to note that whilst MEAS can provide discretionary services for prospective development prior to formal engagement in the planning application process, as set out in [Section 3](#), the local planning authority will often consult MEAS as part of the formal planning process. We encourage requesters, should they proceed to the formal planning process, to inform the LPA of prior-engagement with MEAS.

Pre-application consultations from Districts:

22. Pre-application fee charges apply when the planning department consults MEAS as part of its pre-application process alongside other advisors. MEAS and Halton, Knowsley, St. Helens, Sefton and Wirral Councils operate a cost-recovery policy from applicants and the planning department is responsible for invoicing and recovery the cost of MEAS pre-application charges. The charging policy is not based on site area. The procedure we follow is set out at Appendix 1.2
23. Liverpool City Council will direct the requester to MEAS for advice via the Discretionary Advice Service process (see [Section 3](#) above).
24. A consistent set of pre-application charges are used for all MEAS LPA customers. MEAS provides focussed pre-application advice at an agreed timescale according to each District's policy.
25. The charges set out in [Table 2](#) below are for a single piece of written advice. Further advice will be chargeable on a cost-recovery basis. For complex and urgent cases, a request-specific fee estimate, drawing on the principles set out in this policy, may be provided for agreement through written correspondence e.g. express service or advice on other Regulatory requirements such as Habitats Regulations Assessments and Protected Habitats and Species. If meetings are required as part of the pre-application process, then time for these will be charged separately, on a cost-recovery basis, through our discretionary advice service.
26. MEAS records pre-application advice separately and invoices for the cost on a recovery basis at agreed invoicing periods with the Districts. The pre-application fees set out below are guideline rates and are charged by MEAS to the local authority which in turn recovers these costs from the applicant as part of the pre-application process.

27. The scope of pre-application advice from MEAS is those planning matters within the technical remit of MEAS – aggregates, archaeology, contaminated land, ecology, historic environment, low carbon energy, minerals, nature conservation, sustainable waste management and waste (topics included varies by District). Advice on EIA will be provided where appropriate. More detail on the scope of MEAS technical services can be found at: <https://eas.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/>.

Table 2 – MEAS Pre-Application Advice charges to be incorporated into the Local Planning Authority pre-application charging schedule (single piece of written advice).

Pre-Application Advice	Description	Standard of Service	Charges
Pre-Application advice once a request has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority for pre-application advice.	<p>Scope of pre-application advice are those planning matters within the technical remit of MEAS – archaeology, contaminated land, ecology and biodiversity, historic environment, low carbon energy, minerals, nature conservation, sustainable waste management and waste matters.</p> <p>MEAS does not charge for EIA screening and/or an EIA scoping opinion where this forms part of the statutory duty of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) under the EIA Regulations.</p> <p>Chargeable when pre-application advice is sought from the Local Planning Authority and MEAS advice is included. Advice will include information that would be expected to be included in a planning application including: scope of evidence / data required; type of surveys including duration of baseline survey required / seasonality; desk-based assessments required; options to avoid impact.</p> <p>MEAS has 7 fixed charge rates that apply as set out in the right-hand column for a single piece of written, integrated advice.</p> <p>For more complex cases (including large sites and linear sites) where discretionary services are sought and / or where additional advice is required beyond the single piece of written, integrated advice, MEAS may enter into a bespoke agreement with the requester (see Section 6 below).</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt the scope of discretionary advice excludes the fees for Merseyside BioBank Local Environmental Record Centre Data Product Service, Historic Environment Record Standard Data Product and Waste Local Plan</p>	15 working days from written acceptance of quotation by requester.	<p>Householder - single dwelling - extension / alteration (within existing curtilage): £80.00 excl. VAT.</p> <p>Minor single dwelling – single new build demolition and rebuild 1 dwelling £165.00 excl. VAT.</p> <p>Minor developments 2 to 9 dwellings and up to 1000m2 of commercial development £335.00 excl. VAT.</p> <p>Major developments 10 – 24 dwellings and 1001 to 3000m2 of commercial development £520.00 excl. VAT.</p> <p>Major applications 25 – 50 Dwellings and 3001 to 4999m2 of commercial development £775.00 excl. VAT.</p> <p>Major applications >50 dwellings and 0.5-1.0 ha or 5000m2 –10000m2 of floorspace</p>

Pre-Application Advice	Description	Standard of Service	Charges
	<p>Standard Data Product as these are all separate services and charged accordingly.</p> <p>Advice will be provided without the benefit of a site visit. MEAS pre-application advice is provided to both requester and Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>If meetings are requested as part of the pre-application process, then these will be charged separately through MEAS Discretionary Advice Service, on a cost-recovery basis.</p>		<p>£1,035.00 excl. VAT.</p> <p>100+ Dwellings & Commercial Development 1ha or 10000m2 & above & EIA Development £1,300.00excl. VAT.</p> <p>Charges are for a single piece of written advice.</p> <p>For complex cases, a fee estimate may be provided for agreement through written correspondence, with potential to enter into an SLA for multi-year requirements. Timescales are to be agreed between the parties. (see Section 6 below).</p>

Section 5 - Other MEAS Fees and Charges

Merseyside BioBank LERC

28. [Merseyside BioBank](#) is the Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC), an environmental information service, for North Merseyside. We cover the authority districts of Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley and St Helens. As a member of the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC) and part of the National Biodiversity Network (NBN), we collect and collate information on wildlife within our region, on a not-for-profit basis, and encourage and support the recording of wildlife.
29. The Merseyside BioBank database holds electronic copies of wildlife records and local site information provided from a wide range of sources, including local naturalists, volunteer recorders, local natural history groups, professional consultants and national recording schemes and societies.
30. The wildlife records we hold are available to help others better understand the biodiversity of North Merseyside.
31. Records shared with us are held alongside thousands of others which together form an evidence base that underpins conservation, decision making, forward planning and development throughout Merseyside so helping to conserve and protect biodiversity in our rapidly developing region and beyond.
32. There is a charge for our services to consultancies, developers, other commercial bodies, medium to large not-for-profit organisations and funded work. We may use our discretion to reduce or waive charges to non-commercial users as set out in [Appendix 2.1](#).
33. If you require one or more of our services or are unsure about whether we can help you, please do not hesitate to get in contact with us. We are expanding on our services in response to the needs of our customers and welcome any feedback that you are able to provide.
34. If you would like to know about the distribution of a species or be provided with a list of species/habitats for a particular site, let us know and we will search through our database for the relevant records and provided them to you in a variety of forms such as our Biodiversity Information Reports (picture right).
35. Table 3 below sets out details of the scope of Merseyside BioBank data, products, services and charging.

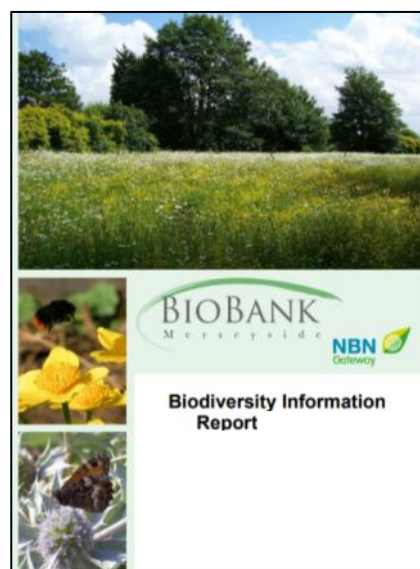


Table 3 – Merseyside BioBank Local Environmental Record Centre data product (search)

BioBank Local Environmental Record Centre data product (search)	Description	Standard of Service	Charges
Desk Based Data products: Merseyside BioBank Local Environment Record Centre	Data products and services as per Appendix 2.1 and are restricted to Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and St. Helens. The procedure that we follow is set out in Appendix 1.4	Standard service – up to 10 working days from written acceptance of quotation by requester. Express Service – up to 5 working days from written acceptance of quotation by requester	As per MBB published charging policy (Appendix 2.1)
Local Sites.	Local Wildlife and Geological site information including designations, monitoring reports and site plans. Note MEAS manages the Local Site process on behalf of Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and St. Helens Council.	Standard service – up to 10 working days from written acceptance of quotation by requester.	As per MBB published charging policy (Appendix 2.1)

Merseyside Historic Environment Record

36. MEAS adopted the Historic Environment Record (HER) in April 2014. A three-year process of digitising, validating and enhancing the HER, working with the paper Sites and Monuments Record files dating back to the 1970s and with the grey literature of archaeological reports for Merseyside, means it is now usable as a digital source of sound planning evidence.



37. From June 2016 a full service for archaeological advice relating to planning and development management is available to the local authorities of Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens and Wirral. Archaeological advice is integrated into our wider development management and planning policy advisory services.

Table 4 – Merseyside Historic Environment Record data product (search)

Historic Environment Record data product (search)	Description	Standard of Service	Charges
Desk Based Data products: Merseyside Historic Environment Record	Data products and services as per Appendix 2.2 and are restricted to Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens and Wirral. The procedure that we follow is set out in Appendix 1.5 .	7 working days from written acceptance of quotation by requester.	As per MHER published charging policy (Appendix 2.2)

Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan

38. The [Waste Local Plan](#) (WLP) was adopted in July 2013 by all the Merseyside and Halton districts. Upon adoption the WLP policies and allocations became part of the individual districts Local Plans and, must be taken into account for relevant planning applications. MEAS has a key role in ensuring that the WLP policies are implemented for relevant applications, and that the site allocations are also monitored. MEAS monitors use of the WLP and waste planning applications each year and prepares an [annual report](#) that is integrated into the Local Authority Monitoring Reports. The WLP is currently going through a partial-review process.



39. Table 5 provides details of data products and services associated with the WLP.

Table 5 – Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan services

Waste Local Plan data product	Description	Standard of Service	Charges
Waste Local Plan Standard Data Product	Data products as per Appendix 2.3 . All LCR Councils Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens and Wirral. The procedure that we follow is set out in Appendix 1.6 .	10 working days from written acceptance of quotation by requester.	As per WLP published charging policy (Appendix 2.3)

Nature Recovery Services

40. MEAS has an experienced team of ecologists, nature recovery advisors and environmental project officers with a proven track record of successful project management and delivery. Services are provided on a competency basis.

What MEAS Offers

41. MEAS can lead and support Nature Recovery projects through the following services provided by the team:
- Project management of nature recovery and biodiversity projects
 - Bat and Great Crested Newt licensed ecologists
 - Modular River Survey (MoRPh) trained ecologists
 - Ornithological expertise
 - Phase 1 and UKHab habitat surveys
 - Habitat Suitability Assessments
 - Biodiversity net gain
 - GIS mapping and modelling
 - Habitat and species conservation management
 - Practical habitat creation, enhancement and restoration
 - Ecological Clerk of Works
 - Monitoring and evaluation, with direct access to Local Environmental Record Centre data

Examples of Nature Recovery Services

- Farmland Species Recovery projects
 - Local or regional State of Nature reporting
 - Pink footed goose monitoring
 - Waxcap grassland assessments
 - Site specific habitat management plans
 - Habitat design and creation
42. Work undertaken is chargeable according to MEAS daily and hourly fee rates (see [Section 6](#)). Full procedural detail is provided in [Appendix 1.7](#) – I want Nature Recovery Services.

Section 6 – Daily and Hourly Fee Rates

43. MEAS comprises a team of environmental technical specialists covering a wide range of [expertise](#). Requesters should seek a quotation for technical services which are not covered within the scope of the earlier Sections or those set out in **Appendices 2.1 to 2.3**. The procedure that we follow in agreeing to provide Other Technical Services is set out at [Appendix 1.3](#).
44. The scope and delivery targets of works, products and services will be agreed with the individual requester but will be dependent on available capacity within MEAS.
45. A written estimate will be provided inclusive of a ceiling figure to complete the task. The actual charge will be on the basis of time taken and evidenced by time recording to 15-minute periods. A minimum charge is applicable as per the Other Data Products and Services published charging policy ([Appendix 2.4](#)).
46. Core principles underlying the applicable charges, which apply to our discretionary services, pre-application advice services, data products and other technical services as set out in this policy document, are:
 - (i) Urgency;
 - (ii) Staff level necessary to undertake the work;
 - (iii) Nature of the work, for example public, private, not-for-profit; and
 - (iv) Chargeable time.
47. MEAS Fee Rates (provided within a quotation) are effective from 01 April 2026, reviewed annually.
48. MEAS fee rates may be amended at any time during the financial year at the discretion of MEAS. Should any fee rate change during the year, fee rates for existing contracts and Discretionary Services will be honoured unless a variation is agreed otherwise in writing. MEAS will also publish charging policy changes on its [website](#). MEAS also reserves the right to vary the fee rates from those in the published charging policy based on the technical demands, capacity and timescale pressure but only with prior the written agreement of the requester.

Section 7 – MEAS Standards of Service

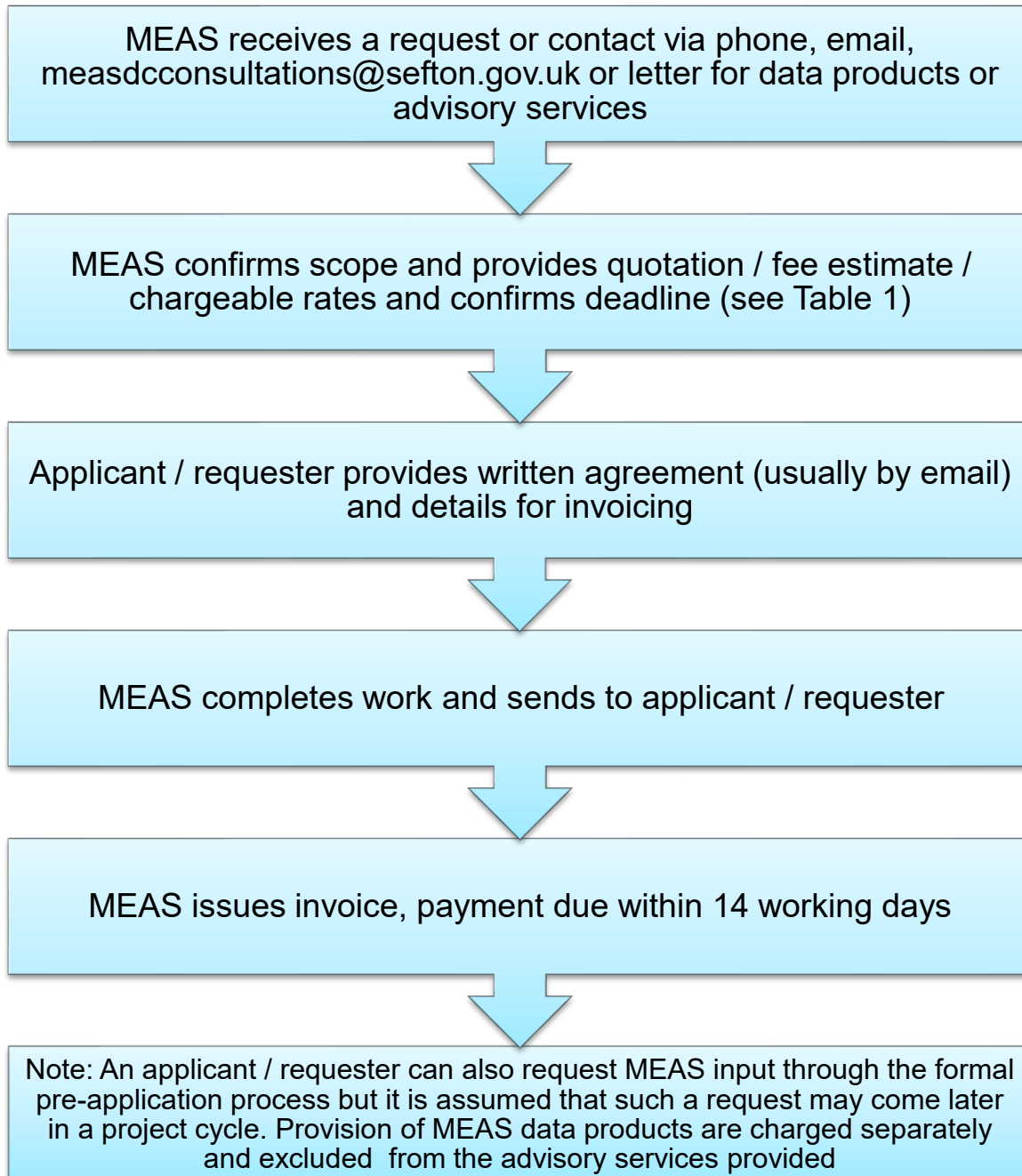
49. MEAS will provide a quotation, for agreement in writing with the requester, for completion of the work. The quotation will be based on our understanding of the needs of the requester on the basis of information supplied by the requester. For services provided on a chargeable time basis MEAS will, in its quotation provide information in writing and for agreement in writing with the requester, which may include:
- Our understanding of the scope of services / advice to be provided and our technical ability to provide those advisory services and data products;
 - Fee rates and payment schedule and this will usually be through our published charging policy at <http://www.meas.org.uk/1282>. With the exception of our fixed charges, this will include a non-binding, estimate of a charge ceiling. We operate a time recording cost-recovery system and the charge will be calculated on the basis of the time taken (to the nearest 15 minutes) to provide the requested advisory services and data products and not the estimated charge;
 - Identify a lead officer undertaking the work;
 - List of deliverables such as reports, recommendations, mapped outputs, brief or scope of work and format for those deliverables;
 - Timescale for delivery, taking into account other work demands on MEAS;
 - List of assumptions and information to be provided by the requester;
 - Format of required outputs e.g. paper, electronic, Microsoft Office format, GIS data etc;
 - Information on copyright, intellectual property rights and user restrictions for the services and data provided; and
 - Description of advisory services and data limitations.
50. The procedure that MEAS follows in the provision of discretionary services and data products is set out [in a series of flow diagrams \(Appendix 1\)](#).
51. No work will be undertaken until such time as written acceptance (normally email, occasionally letter) has been received from the requester on the basis of the quotation or published charging policy provided by MEAS. Payment terms - payment is due immediately upon commencement of work and should be paid within 14 days from completion unless otherwise agreed in writing e.g. for work that may be undertaken over a longer period.
52. **Confidentiality** - MEAS data products, advisory services and planning application advice are subject to public disclosure unless agreed otherwise:
- Pre-application advice provided by MEAS through the Local Planning Authority will be kept confidential to the Local Planning Authority and the requester. A copy of MEAS pre-application advice will be provided to both the requester and Local Planning Authority. That advice may be publicly disclosed according to the requirements of Environmental Information Regulations, Freedom of Information and the Information Commissioner because MEAS is acting on behalf of the Local Planning Authority and not the requester in the provision of that advice;

- Discretionary advice not directly associated with a planning application or an application to the Local Planning Authority for pre-application advice will remain confidential to the requester.
53. **Conflict of Interest** - MEAS will seek to avoid any potential conflict of interest and fully disclose any such matters. MEAS has an existing system in place to ensure that there is clear separation of responsibilities and roles between discretionary advice services and the formal, fully disclosed, planning process. For the avoidance of doubt, MEAS can decide at any time to cease the provision of data services and advisory services.
 54. As a Local Government service MEAS carries appropriate employer liability and third-party insurances which can be provided to requesters.
 55. **Professional Standards of Practice** – the MEAS technical advisory team are qualified technical specialists on a topic-basis. The services provided comply with professional standards and codes of practice such as those for appropriate Professional Institutes including individual membership e.g. Ecology, Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. MEAS also complies with relevant guidance, legislation and good practices in the provision of Services.
 56. **Quality Assurance and Verification** – MEAS has internal processes of Quality Assurance and Verification that are used in the provision of Services.
 57. **Limitations of Advice provided** – MEAS, in the provision of services, shall state relevant limitations to the advice provided.
 58. **Payment Terms** - The requester will, in the exchange of correspondence, be required to provide necessary financial information to enable payment to be made. This will usually be through provision of a Purchase Order Number or Purchase Requisition to enable MEAS to invoice. VAT will be chargeable on all discretionary advice and data services provided and for more complex requests an invoicing schedule will be agreed with the requester. Payment of invoices will be required within 14 working days of completion unless agreed otherwise between MEAS and the requester.

Appendix 1: Procedures for Merseyside EAS Pre-Application Advice, Discretionary Services and Data Products

Appendix 1.1 - I want MEAS Discretionary Services

Request for Discretionary services that is not part of the Formal Pre-Application process with a Council. In this instance, the applicant or requester chooses to consult MEAS before any formal request has been made to the Local Planning Authority for pre-application advice and/or an EIA scoping opinion under the EIA Regulations. It is also assumed that the applicant / requester will have access to the MEAS website. There could be many reasons why such a request could be made but it is potentially a very important tool for risk reduction e.g. planning, procurement, timescale, costs and investment risk management.



Appendix 1.2 - I want MEAS Pre-Application Advice

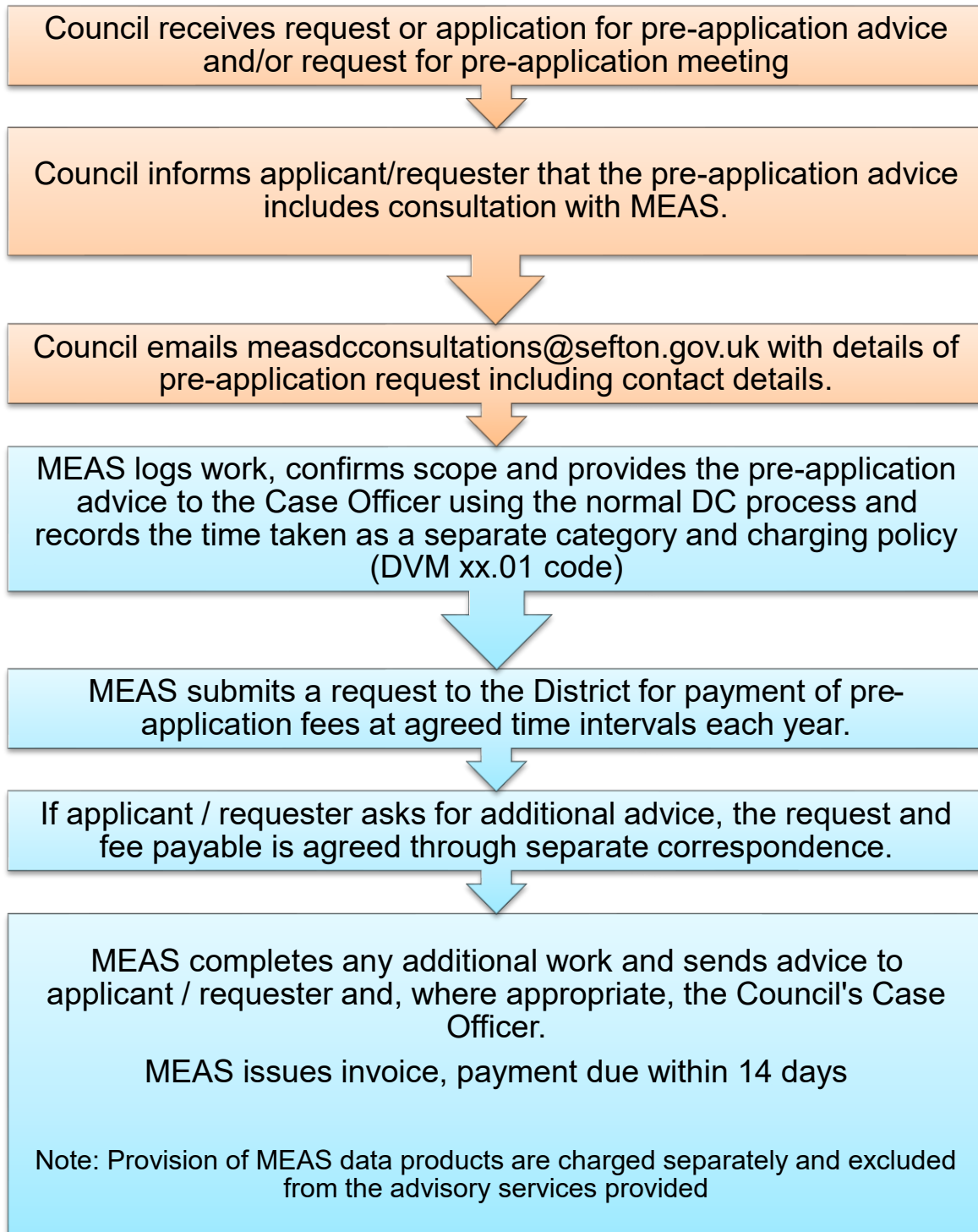
The applicant or requester has already made a formal request to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for pre-application advice and that this is being dealt with according to the Council's published policy and fees. The Council will already have included the MEAS charges within their fees and it is a matter for that authority to recover those costs via pre-application fees charged. In the case of Liverpool Council, discretionary services procedures apply.

In the fees and charges documentation (paper and online) it is the Council's responsibility to state that it is normal practice to include MEAS advice within the Council's pre-application response and incorporated into the fees charged for that case. For the avoidance of doubt, the Council is strongly advocating to an applicant that the scope of pre-application advice includes MEAS as part of the Council's team as it is an important opportunity for the applicant to identify and reduce risks at an early stage of the development process.

Early consultation with MEAS will assist applicants in planning for required information and assessments, including environmental surveys that are likely to be needed before you submit a planning application or other application for consent. This will help reduce the risk in working up your proposal and may lead to a faster decision.

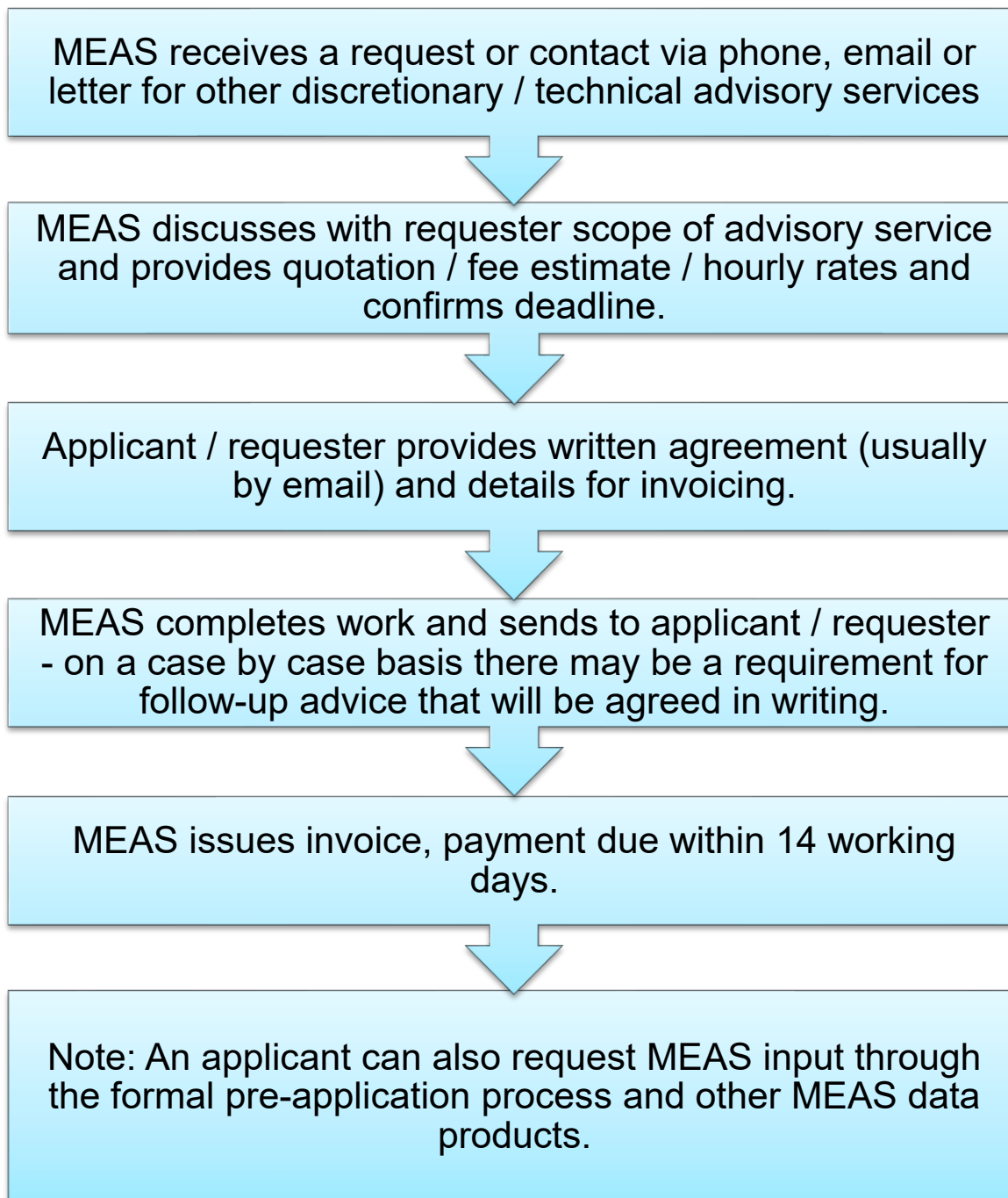
The scope of pre-application advice from MEAS is those planning matters within the technical remit of MEAS – aggregates, archaeology, contaminated land, ecology, historic environment, low carbon energy, minerals, nature conservation, sustainable waste management and waste, and is limited to a single piece of written advice. MEAS may be contacted directly by emailing measdconsultations@sefton.gov.uk or calling 0151 934 4951.

More detail on the scope of MEAS technical services can be found on the MEAS [website](#).



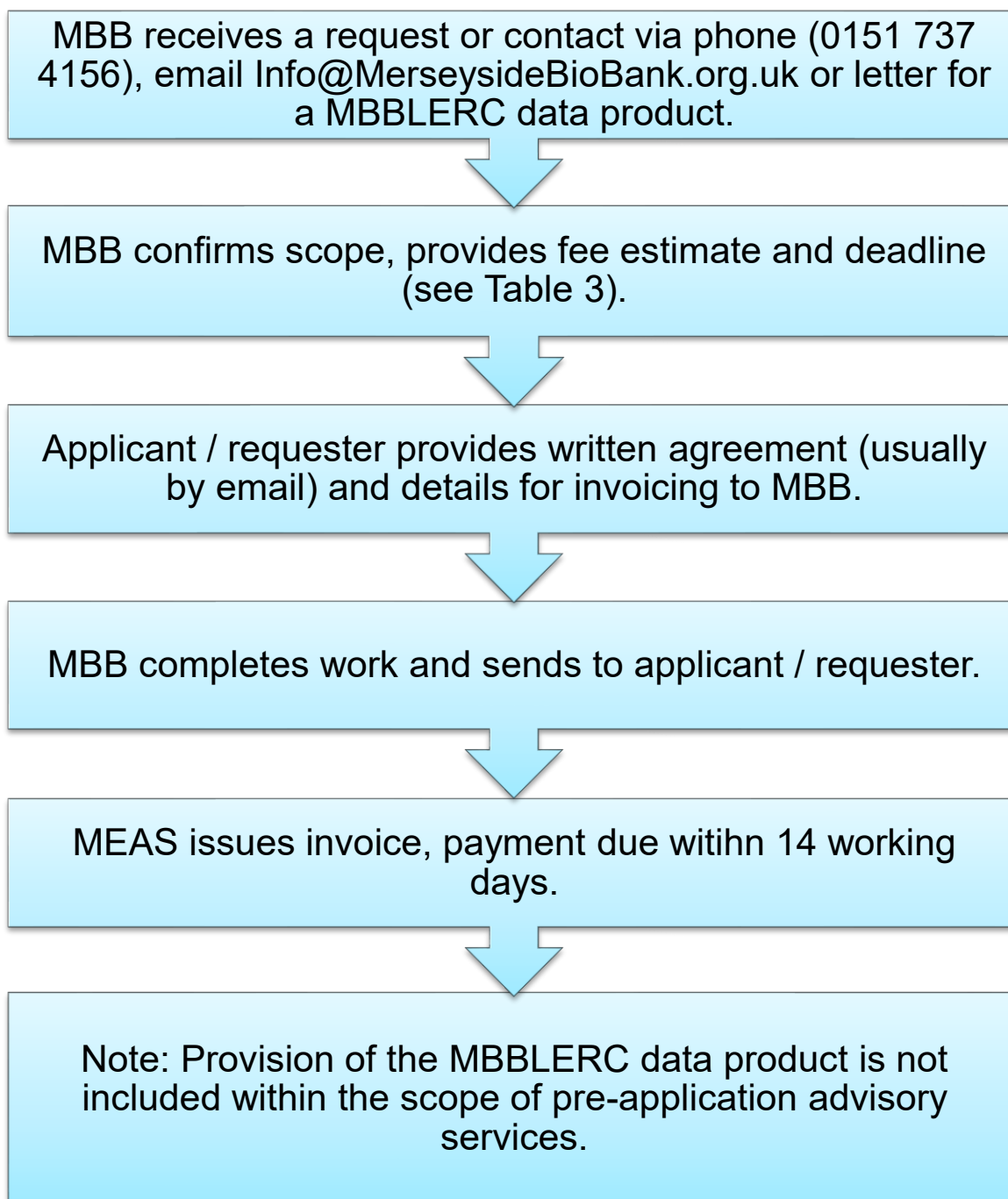
Appendix 1.3 - I Want Other MEAS Technical Advisory Services

This could include all other discretionary and technical advisory services provided by MEAS and that are within the technical scope of MEAS. The key part of the process is agreement of scope of the advice. MEAS will use its best endeavours to provide the advisory services through a swift and efficient process and according to the timescales of the applicant / requester.



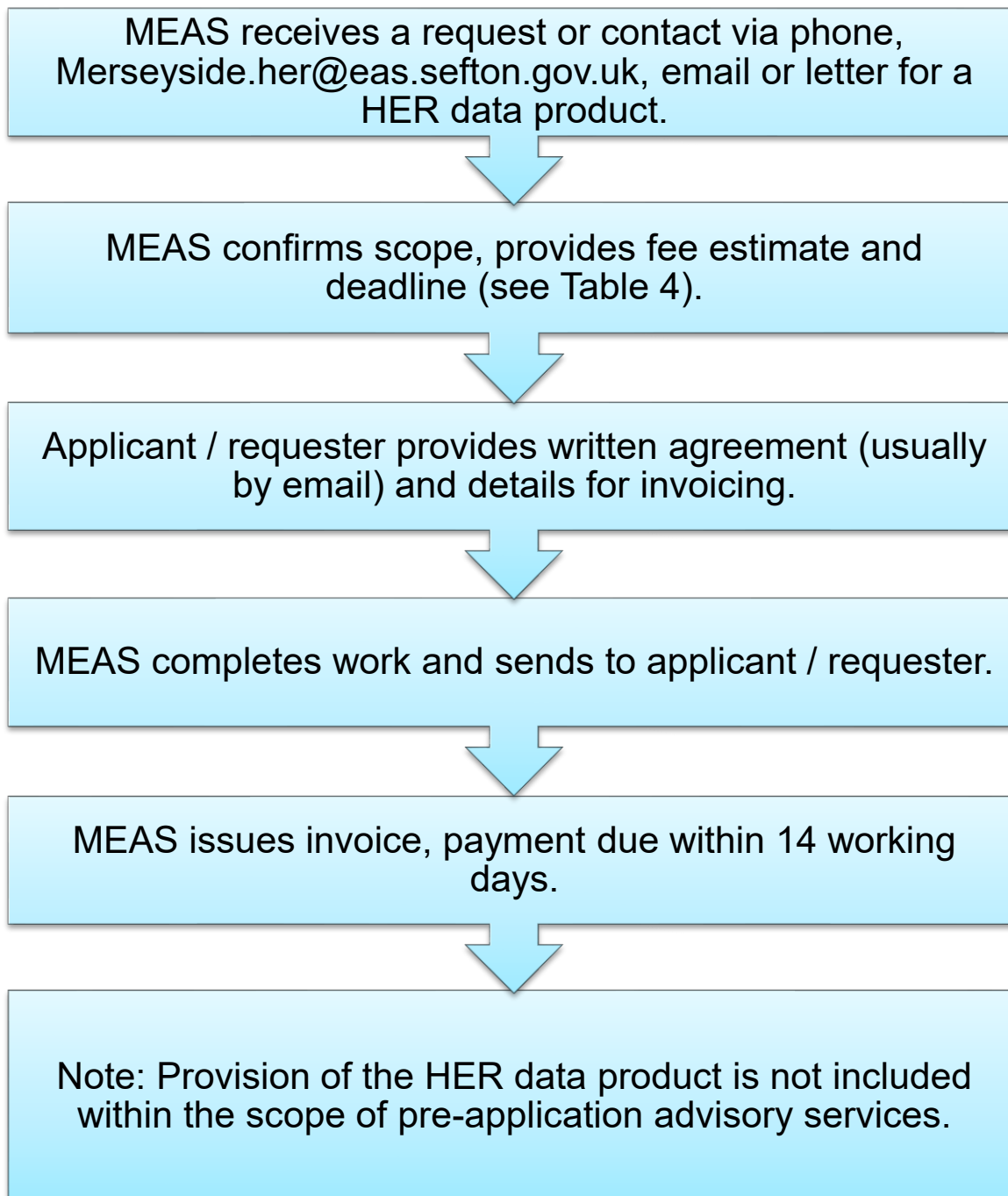
Appendix 1.4 - I Want a Merseyside BioBank Local Environmental Record Centre (LERC) Data Product / Search

When the applicant or requester contacts MEAS this may or may not be in conjunction with a planning case. This data product is excluded from the scope of pre-application advice.



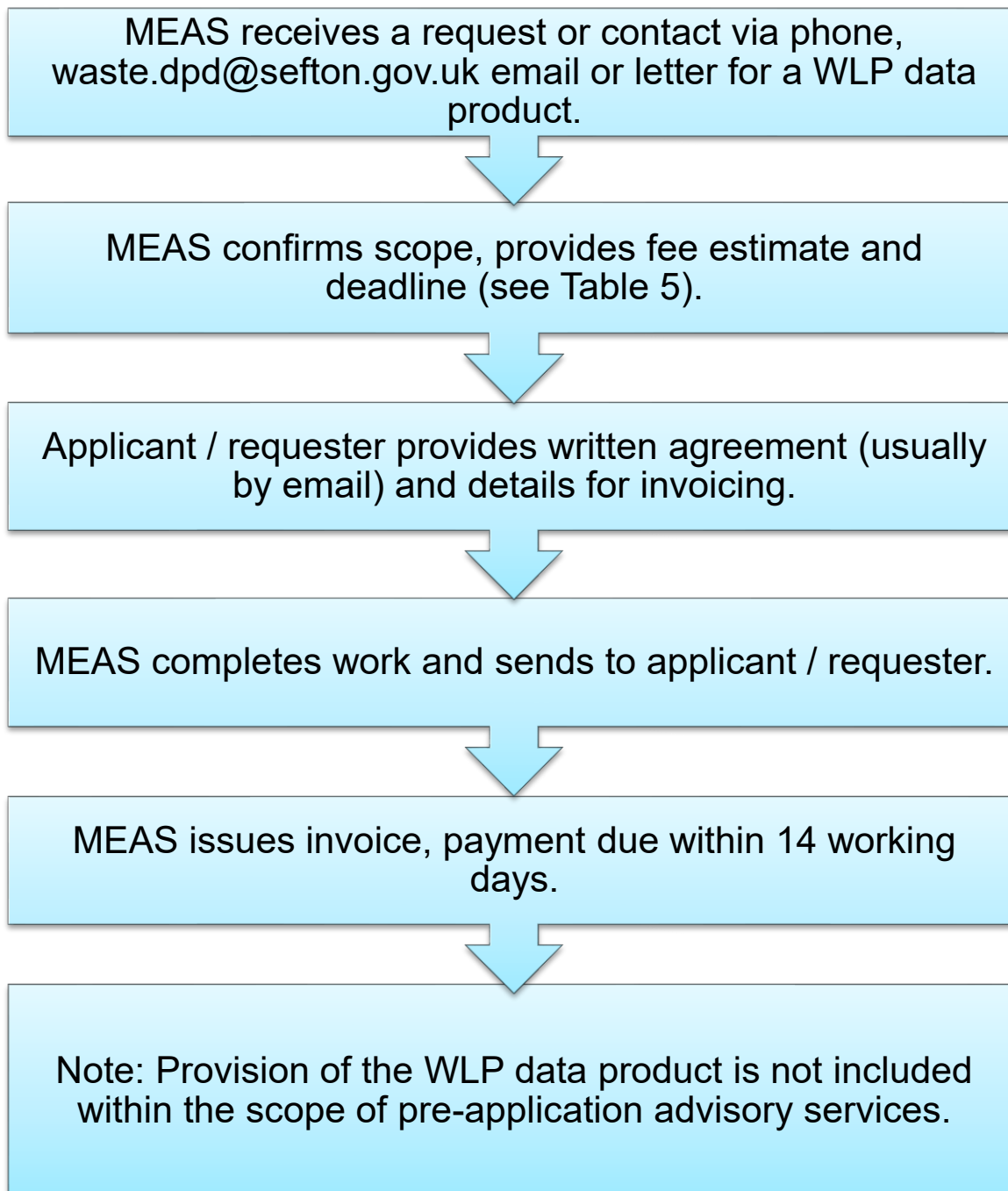
Appendix 1.5 - I Want a Historic Environment Record (HER) Data Product / Search

When the applicant or requester contacts MEAS this may or may not be in conjunction with a planning case. This data product is excluded from the scope of pre-application advice.



Appendix 1.6 - I Want a Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (WLP) Data Product

When the applicant or requester contacts MEAS this may or may not be in conjunction with a planning case. This data product is excluded from the scope of pre-application advice.



Appendix 1.7 - I Want Nature Recovery Services

MEAS has an experienced team of ecologists, nature recovery advisors and environmental project officers with a proven track record of successful project management and delivery based on the competencies within the team.

What MEAS Offers

MEAS can lead and support Nature Recovery projects through the following services provided by the team:

- Project management of nature recovery and biodiversity projects
- Bat and Great Crested Newt licensed ecologists
- Modular River Survey (MoRPh) trained ecologists
- Ornithological expertise
- Phase 1 and UKHab habitat surveys
- Habitat Suitability Assessments
- Biodiversity net gain
- GIS mapping and modelling
- Habitat and species conservation management
- Practical habitat creation, enhancement and restoration
- Ecological Clerk of Works
- Monitoring and evaluation, with direct access to Local Environmental Record Centre data
- Habitat design and creation

Examples of Nature Recovery Services

- Farmland Species Recovery projects
- Local or regional State of Nature reporting
- Pink footed goose monitoring
- Waxcap grassland assessments
- Site specific habitat management plans



Submit a request to MEAS at: info.eas@sefton.gov.uk



MEAS liaises with customer on scope of deliverables and provides a quote, deadline and project ref



Customer provides written agreement and details for invoicing



MEAS undertakes nature recovery service and provides deliverables



MEAS issues invoice, payment due within 14 working days.



Appendix 2: MEAS Charging Policies

Appendix 2.1: Merseyside BioBank Local Environment Record Centre (LERC) Data Products and Charges – Charging Policy

Commercial users

We define commercial users thus: commercial bodies, consultants, non-supporting bodies, those undertaking sponsored research and any other user that does not qualify as a non-commercial user (see below).

The fee is for the provision of a licence to reuse the data returned from the Merseyside BioBank Local Environment Record Centre data products and services (the products and services) as set out in the schedule below. The licence provides permission to reproduce the Merseyside BioBank data for commercial purposes (such as commercial advice, services and/or publications) restricted solely to that specific, unique Merseyside BioBank commercial enquiry. The permission excludes use or interpretation of those data for any other commercial purpose or commercial uses whatsoever.

For the avoidance of doubt, the licence fee, which includes a contribution to the cost of Merseyside BioBank database assembly, data collection, and database maintenance and database management, relates solely to the licence for the re-use and interpretation of those data for unique commercial purposes.

Express data product fee is £465.00 (excl. VAT) – this includes:

- A standard report of all designated species within the search area to 2000 metres from a user defined point;
- Priority Habitat coverage;
- Detailed Phase 1 and NVC information where available to 500m;
- The provision of Local Site citations (Local Wildlife Sites) where available to 2000m;
- Liverpool Ecological Network elements of Core Biodiversity Area, Stepping Stones, Habitat Linkages, and Nature Improvement Areas to 2000 metres.

Priority Bird data from the Lancashire Bird Group

Please note that we only report records of birds that have a breeding status of 'possible', 'probable' or 'confirmed'. For records of designated Birds contact Steve White (Bird VCR) at stevewhite102@btinternet.com

Standard data product fee is £310.00 (excl. VAT) - this includes:

- A standard report of all designated species within the search area to 2000 metres from a user defined point;
- Priority Habitat coverage;
- Detailed Phase 1 and NVC information where available to 500m;



- The provision of Local Site citations (Local Wildlife Sites) where available to 2000m;
- Liverpool Ecological Network elements of Core Biodiversity Area, Stepping Stones, Habitat Linkages, and Nature Improvement Areas to 2000 metres.

Priority Bird data from the Lancashire Bird Group

Please note that we only report records of birds that have a breeding status of 'possible', 'probable' or 'confirmed'. For records of designated Birds contact Steve White (Bird VCR) at stevewhite102@btinternet.com

Data product fee for single householder application is £225.00 (excl. VAT) - this includes:

- A standard report of all designated species within the search area to 1000 metres from a user defined point;
- Priority Habitat coverage;
- Detailed Phase 1 and NVC information where available to 200m;
- The provision of Local Site citations (Local Wildlife Sites) where available to 1000m; and
- Liverpool Ecological Network elements of Core Biodiversity Area, Stepping Stones, Habitat Linkages, and Nature Improvement Areas to 1000 metres.

Single-species Data Product fee is £100.00 (excl.VAT)

Reduced data product fee of £150.00 (excl. VAT) may be applied for searches for up to five species or one taxonomic group specified by the requester within 2km. For more than five species or more than one taxonomic group the standard BioBank Data Product fee applies. Complex searches may attract a bespoke fee.

Data request that return 0 records (most likely for certain species groups)

If a data request returns 0 records, we will still charge for this service.

Examples of data requests that may increase the standard data product fee are:

- A request for information which is not provided as part of our 'standard data product' service. See below for additional service rates.
- A request that effectively includes more than one search area. For example requesting searches on a site at both 500 metre and 1000 metre buffers will be treated by Merseyside BioBank as two separate products for the purposes of quoting a price and servicing the requests.
- A request for a search around a complicated boundary which is not supplied to us in either MapInfo .TAB or ESRI Shapefiles and which, therefore, we have to digitise.
- A request for a search around a boundary encompassing a large area to be agreed with the requester prior to work being undertaken.



Data searches will normally be scheduled, and products supplied within 10 working days (Standard data product) and within 5 working days (Express data product) following confirmation of quotation. If a faster turnaround is required, please contact Merseyside BioBank to discuss your requirements.

Overlapping Data Product Requests - Instances of data requests where a Search Area falls outside the boundary covered by Merseyside BioBank may, at the discretion of Merseyside BioBank staff, be reduced in cost to reflect costs of approaching an alternate LERC. Reduced charges will be proportionate to the area omitted from the search but will not be less than **£160.00 (excl. VAT)**.

Standalone Local Site Data Product - (Local Wildlife Site or Local Geological Site) – citation and boundary:

- Single citation **£100.00 (excl. VAT)**
- Additional citations **£60.00 (excl. VAT) per citation**

Merseyside BioBank provides Local Site information for North Merseyside on behalf of the North Merseyside Local Sites Partnership for both commercial and non-commercial requests.

Note: Charging for Local Site data product services is in line with the national approach for Local Environmental Record Centres and ALERC.

The above fees are for a standalone Local Site Data Product. Please note that provision of Local Site citations within a defined search area is included within the Express Data Product, Standard Data Product and the Data product for single householder application (details above).

Additional Service Rates and Bespoke Products

Merseyside BioBank is able to provide other bespoke and unique data services and products beyond the scope of our standard product. An indication of these products and services are outlined below. Please contact Merseyside BioBank (0151 737 4150 or Info@MerseysideBioBank.org.uk) to detail your requirements and for a quote:

- Data Mapping (Imagery), **£100.00 (excl. VAT)** - Mapping of species or habitat data within a 2km radius from a defined point and the provision of that information in the form of an image file;
- Data Mapping (GIS) attribute layers within a 2km radius from a defined point, **£250.00 (excl VAT)** – optional for 2km buffer (tetrad comprising of 4km squares). Fixed fee for each additional km² of **£25.00**.
- **Service Level Agreements** - please contact Merseyside Biobank to discuss annual rate covering bespoke/strategic level service provision and data access that may include multi-year agreements;
- **Bespoke Products** – Please contact Merseyside Biobank for complex searches and large area searches e.g. for strategic and linear projects. A bespoke rate is to be agreed on a case-by-case basis priced according to scope, complexity, area



and urgency. This may also include a Service Level Agreement. Note: MBB data products and services rates are used for guidance only.

- Searches above a 2km radius are charged at £11 per extra km².

The Liverpool City Region (LCR) Ecological Network Data Products - the Liverpool City Region Ecological Network is included within the Local Environmental Record Centre standard data product fee. Standalone data products are below:

- LCR Ecological Network data GIS layers: **£125.00 (excl. VAT)**.

Access to Non- Digital Material

Access to non-digital Material – maximum free access 1 hour then charged at **£60.00 (excl. VAT)** per hour or part of.

Non-commercial users

We define non-commercial users thus: non-sponsored researchers, teachers, students; members of the public; charitable or voluntary nature conservation organisations and natural history societies and other organisations, including recording groups who have either service level agreements or data exchange agreements with Merseyside BioBank. Enquirers may be asked to provide credentials.

We may reduce or waive charges for information to *bona fide* inquirers, who will use the data for non-commercial purposes except where a significant amount of staff time and/or resources are required for an enquiry.

Guideline fee rates are approximately 50% of commercial rates listed above, subject to data use and type of requester. Minimum fee of £90 charged (equivalent to 1.5 hours).

Payment of Fees

The requester will, in the exchange of correspondence, be required to provide necessary financial information to enable payment to be made. This will usually be through provision of a Purchase Order Number or Purchase Requisition to enable MEAS to invoice. VAT will be chargeable on all discretionary advice; pre-application advice and data services provided and for more complex requests an invoicing schedule will be agreed with the requester. Payment of invoices will be required within 14 working days unless otherwise agreed between MEAS and the requester.

Changes to the Policy

MEAS reserves the right to amend or update this policy at any time within a year and shall normally review the policy annually. Fees for data products may change when a significant enhancement to that product has been implemented and incorporated into the products available.

Whilst this policy provides guidance on the most frequently used database products, we will, from time to time, agree product fees and deadlines for bespoke enquiries that fall



outside the scope of the policy. This is subject to resources being available to provide data products to meet bespoke enquiries.

How can we help you? Please e-mail your questions, queries, and requirements to Merseyside BioBank at: Info@MerseysideBioBank.org.uk



Appendix 2.2 - Merseyside Historic Environment Record Products and Services Charging Policy

Commercial users

We define commercial users thus: commercial bodies, consultants, non-supporting bodies, those undertaking sponsored research and any other user that does not qualify as a non-commercial user (see below).

The fee is for the provision of a licence to reuse the data returned from the Merseyside Historic Environment Record (HER) data products and services (the products and services) as set out in the schedule below. The licence provides permission to reproduce the Merseyside HER data for commercial purposes (such as commercial advice, services and/or publications) restricted solely to that specific, unique Merseyside HER commercial enquiry. The permission excludes use or interpretation of those data for any other commercial purpose or commercial uses whatsoever.

For the avoidance of doubt, the licence fee, which includes a contribution to the cost of Merseyside HER database assembly, data collection, and database maintenance or database management relates solely to the licence for the re-use and interpretation of those data for unique commercial purposes.

Standard data product fee is £265.00 (excl. VAT). This includes: a standard report of all designated and non-designated heritage assets along with information on previous archaeological interventions within the specified search area. Also provided are GIS files for these HER entries.

HER Rapid Site of Building Check Service – £100.00 (excl. VAT). This includes a simple check of the HER, to confirm the presence of HER entries within a specified area or the existence of an entry for a given building or site.

Data searches will normally be scheduled, and products supplied within 7 working days following confirmation of quotation acceptance e.g. through email. Current service turnaround is typically same day.

Bespoke Products and Service Level Agreements

- **Bespoke Products** - Please contact us for complex searches and large area searches e.g. for strategic and linear projects. A bespoke rate is to be agreed on a case-by-case basis priced according to scope, complexity, area and urgency. This may also include a Service Level Agreement. Note: MEAS data products and services rates are used for guidance only;
- **Service Level Agreements** - please contact Merseyside HER to discuss annual or multi-year rate covering bespoke/strategic level service provision and data access.

Access to Non-Digital Material

Access to non-digital Material – maximum free access 1 hour then charged at **£60.00 (excl. VAT)** per hour or part of.



Non-commercial users

We define non-commercial users thus: non-sponsored researchers, teachers, students; members of the public; charitable or voluntary heritage conservation or archaeological organisations and local societies and other organisations. Enquirers may be asked to provide credentials.

We may reduce or waive charges for information to *bona fide* inquirers, who will use the data for non-commercial purposes except where a significant amount of staff time and/or resources are required for an enquiry.

Guideline fee rates are approximately 50% of commercial rates listed above, subject to data use and type of requester. Minimum fee of £90 charged (equivalent to 1.5 hours).

Payment of Fees

The requester will, in the exchange of correspondence, be required to provide necessary financial information to enable payment to be made. This will usually be through provision of a Purchase Order Number or Purchase Requisition to enable MEAS to invoice. VAT will be chargeable on all discretionary advice; pre-application advice and data services provided and for more complex requests an invoicing schedule will be agreed with the requester. Payment of invoices will be required within 14 working days unless otherwise agreed between MEAS and the requester.

Changes to the Policy

MEAS reserves the right to amend or update this policy at any time within a year and shall normally review the policy annually. Fees for data products may change when a significant enhancement to that product has been implemented and incorporated into the products available.

Whilst this policy provides guidance on the most frequently used database products, we will, from time to time, agree product fees and deadlines for bespoke enquiries that fall outside the scope of the policy. This is subject to resources being available to provide data products to meet bespoke enquiries.

How can we help you? Please e-mail your questions, queries, and requirements to Merseyside HER at: Merseyside.her@eas.sefton.gov.uk



Appendix 2.3 - The Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan Data Products and Services Charging Policy

Commercial users

We define commercial users thus: commercial bodies, consultants, non-supporting bodies, those undertaking sponsored research and any other user that does not qualify as a non-commercial user (see below).

The fee is for the provision of a licence to reuse the data returned from the joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan data products and services as set out in the schedule below. The licence provides permission to reproduce the Waste Local Plan data for commercial purposes (such as commercial advice, services and/or publications) restricted only to that specific, unique Waste Local Plan commercial enquiry. The permission excludes use or interpretation of those data returned for any other commercial purpose or commercial uses what-so-ever.

In response to a Waste Local Plan search request, the site centre NGR and site boundary (e.g. Red-line) are checked by a MEAS officer to ensure the enquirer has supplied the right information (e.g. comparing site name to actual location of the co-ordinates) and that we have an accurate understanding of what is being requested. MEAS may liaise with the enquirer regarding the search radius (e.g. will not bring in too many irrelevant records or omit important sites outside their specified radius).

Standard data product of £300.00 (excl. VAT) for potential Waste Site Enquiries. An area selected using the site centre NGR and site boundary supplied is carried out in MapInfo and the selected Waste Local Plan entries called up on the database. These are quickly checked to ensure there are no obvious errors (e.g. positional or naming). Standard data product includes the following:

- Digital report with site score results based on the Waste Local Plan site scoring method;
- Standard report identifying significant constraints for the site;
- Whether the site falls within an Area of Search.

Bespoke Products

Please contact us for complex searches and large area searches e.g. for strategic and linear projects. A bespoke rate is to be agreed on a case-by-case basis priced according to scope, complexity, area and urgency. This may also include a Service Level Agreement. Note: MEAS data products and services rates are used for guidance only.

Non-Commercial Users

We define non-commercial users thus: non-sponsored researchers, teachers, students; members of the public; charitable or voluntary organisations and societies and other organisations, who have either service level agreements or data exchange agreements with Merseyside EAS. Enquirers may be asked to provide credentials.



We may reduce or waive charges for information to *bona fide* inquirers, who will use the data for non-commercial purposes except where a significant amount of staff time and/or resources are required for an enquiry.

Guideline fee rates are approximately 50% of commercial rates listed above, subject to data use and type of requester. Minimum fee of £90 (charged equivalent to 1.5 hours).

Payment of Fees

The requester will, in the exchange of correspondence, be required to provide necessary financial information to enable payment to be made. This will usually be through provision of a Purchase Order Number or Purchase Requisition to enable MEAS to invoice. VAT will be chargeable on all discretionary advice; pre-application advice and data services provided and for more complex requests an invoicing schedule will be agreed with the requester. Payment of invoices will be required within 14 working days unless otherwise agreed between MEAS and the requester.

Changes to the Policy

MEAS reserves the right to amend or update this policy at any time within a year and shall normally review the policy annually. Fees for data products may change when a significant enhancement to that product has been implemented and incorporated into the products available.

Whilst this policy provides guidance on the most frequently used database products, we will, from time to time, agree product fees and deadlines for bespoke enquiries that fall outside the scope of the policy. This is subject to resources being available to provide data products to meet bespoke enquiries.

How can we help you? Please e-mail your questions, queries, and requirements to Waste Local Plan at: waste.dpd@sefton.gov.uk



Appendix 2.4 - Other Data Products and Services Charging Policy

Commercial users

We define commercial users thus: commercial bodies, consultants, non-supporting bodies, those undertaking sponsored research and any other user that does not qualify as a non-commercial user (see below).

MEAS comprises a team of environmental technical specialists covering a wide range of [expertise](#). Requesters should seek a quotation for technical services which are not covered within the scope of the earlier Sections or those set out in **Appendices 2.1 to 2.3**. The procedure that we follow in agreeing to provide Other Technical Services is set out at Appendix 1.3.

The scope and delivery targets of works, products and services will be agreed with the individual requester but will be dependent on available capacity within MEAS.

A written estimate will be provided inclusive of a ceiling figure to complete the task. The actual charge will be on the basis of time taken and evidenced by time recording to 15-minute periods.

The minimum charge applicable for Other Data Products and Services is **£140.00 (excl.VAT)**.

Core principles underlying the applicable charges, which apply to our discretionary services, pre-application advice services, data products and other technical services as set out in this policy document, are:

- (v) Urgency;
- (vi) Staff level necessary to undertake the work;
- (vii) Nature of the work, for example public, private, not-for-profit; and
- (viii) Chargeable time.

MEAS Fee Rates (provided within a quotation) are effective from 01 April 2026, reviewed annually.

MEAS fee rates may be amended at any time during the financial year at the discretion of MEAS and shall normally be reviewed annually. Should any fee rate change during the year, fee rates for existing contracts and Discretionary Services will be honoured unless a variation is agreed otherwise in writing. MEAS will also publish charging policy changes on its [website](#). MEAS also reserves the right to vary the fee rates from those in the published charging policy based on the technical demands, capacity and timescale pressure but only with prior the written agreement of the requester.

Non-Commercial Users

We define non-commercial users thus: non-sponsored researchers, teachers, students; members of the public; charitable or voluntary organisations and societies and other organisations, who have either service level agreements or data exchange agreements with Merseyside EAS. Enquirers may be asked to provide credentials.



We may reduce or waive charges for information to *bona fide* inquirers, who will use the data for non-commercial purposes except where a significant amount of staff time and/or resources are required for an enquiry. This will be specific to the nature of the enquiry. Guideline charges in such cases: **first hour free of charge, subsequent rate benchmark £60 per hour or part thereof.**

Payment of Fees

The requester will, in the exchange of correspondence, be required to provide necessary financial information to enable payment to be made. This will usually be through provision of a Purchase Order Number or Purchase Requisition to enable MEAS to invoice. VAT will be chargeable on all discretionary advice; pre-application advice and data services provided and for more complex requests an invoicing schedule will be agreed with the requester. Payment of invoices will be required within 14 working days unless otherwise agreed between MEAS and the requester.

Changes to the Policy

MEAS reserves the right to amend or update this policy at any time in a year and shall normally review the policy annually. Fees for data products may change when a significant enhancement to that product has been implemented and incorporated into the products available.



END

