

Building Regulation Service Pricing Policy

Approved Date	22 November 2016
Review Date	November 2016
Related Legislation/Applicable Section of Legislation	Building (Prescribed Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013
Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks	Corporate Pricing Policy Framework Property Certificate process/procedure
Replaces	Predecessor Council Policies
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Sponsor Directorate	Operations
Version	V1

Revision record

Date	Version	Revision Description

1. Title and summary

- 1.1. The Building Regulation Service (formerly Building Control) Pricing Policy sets out the framework of pricing structures and concessions for Building Regulation within the context of the overarching corporate principles set out in the Corporate Pricing Policy Framework.

2. Purpose and Aims

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide an appropriate pricing framework for the Building Regulation Service that will ensure services are accessible and affordable to all our citizens. The aims of the Policy are:

- to ensure charges are fair and equitable and support the Council's objective to promote equality of opportunity;
- to operate a tariff of charges for the provision of Building Regulation Services so as to recoup a reasonable proportion of Council's expenditure in order to avoid an undue burden on ratepayers;
- to ensure that such charges, where relevant, are competitive within the context of existing market conditions;
- to recognise Council's social responsibility through the provision of certain low-cost programmes or campaigns to benefit specific sectors of the community or to encourage usage by specific sectors of the community;
- to establish an annual pricing review process.

3. Context

- 3.1. In addition to the overarching principles set out in the Corporate Pricing Policy Framework, this policy is reflective of relevant legislation, regional initiatives and strategies and Council strategies specific to the Building Regulation Service as set out below:

- Building (Prescribed Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

4. Scope

- 4.1. This policy applies to all charges for the Building Regulation Service and will replace policies of predecessor Councils which continued to operate while this policy was being developed. The Service Pricing Schedule (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) will become operational on 1 April 2017.
- 4.2. The ability of the Council to charge for services it provides falls into two categories:
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- Statutory charges - Charges are set nationally and regionally and local authorities have little or no opportunity to control such charges. (For example inspection fees).
- Discretionary charges - Local authorities can make their own decisions on setting such charges. (For example administrative charges).

4.3. A table of current discretionary prices is attached at Appendix 1.

4.4. A table of all current statutory charges is included at Appendix 2.

5. Harmonisation of the Building Control/Regulation Service across the Borough

5.1. A Mid and East Antrim Building Control task and finish group was established in the run-up to local government reform. The group was made up of representatives from Ballymena, Larne and Carrickfergus Building Control Departments and representatives from North Eastern Building Control. The aim of this group was to undertake a series of scoping exercises in order to ensure a smooth transition on 1 April 2015. One of the exercises undertaken at this time was to examine discretionary and non-discretionary Building Control fees for the area.

5.2. In respect of statutory charges, the Department of Finance (formerly Department of Finance and Personnel) is responsible for preparing the scale of fees. The fees are not subject to annual increase but are revised periodically by the Department. The last review by the Department resulted in the fees listed in Appendix 2, applicable to applications made after 8 April 2013.

Discretionary fees were reviewed prior to April 2015 and resulted in agreed fees for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. Further to this review, only minor amendments have been proposed (see Appendix 1).

6. Annual Pricing Review

6.1. An Annual Review of pricing will be conducted by 30 September each year as part of the budget setting process. Where appropriate, annual reviews will take into account:

- (a) Changes in Building Regulation prescribed fees;
 - (b) Inflationary pressures;
 - (c) Benchmarking exercises examining fees charged elsewhere;
 - (d) Actual or potential impact of competition in terms of price and quality;
 - (e) Trends in user demand and the forecast effect of price variations;
 - (f) The results of customer feedback and surveys;
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- (g) Council and Service budget targets;
- (h) Cost structure implications arising from developments such as investments in the service or changes in legislation affecting payroll costs;
- (i) The collective impact of price variations on other service areas;
- (j) The potential for more effective alternative charging structures;
- (k) Proposals for targeted promotions and the results of evaluations of previous promotions;
- (l) Consider the impact of concessionary rates in accordance with Council's corporate objectives and the review of any potential adverse impact.

7. Appendices

- Discretionary Pricing Schedule for Building Regulation Service
- Statutory Pricing Schedule for Building Regulation Service

8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

As this is a new policy impacting across the range of Council services the Council will include close monitoring of implementation on a service basis through the relevant Council Committee i.e. Operations Committee for Leisure Services, Community Planning Committee for Community Services etc. Service Managers will consider customer feedback surveys as part of this process to assist with tracking the demographics of users, impact of policies, satisfaction levels etcetera.

9. Equality Screening

This policy has been equality screened with no adverse impact identified and therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is not required.
