

North Tyneside Council

Report to Director of Housing and Property Services

8 December 2023

Proposals to Increase Building Control Fees

Portfolio(s): Housing	Cabinet Member(s): Cllr John Harrison
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Report from Service Area: Housing and Property Services

Responsible Officer: Mark Barber, Service Delivery Manager Tel: 07828736381

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

To provide information to the relevant authorising officers on proposals to increase Building Control application fees to reflect market rates, following a benchmarking exercise with several neighbouring local authorities.

The proposals recommend an increase in our Building Control fees, that have not been changed/increased since 2018. This will keep the newly proposed fees competitive in comparison with other Local Authorities and other private sector Approved Inspectors.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

To increase our Building Control fees as proposed during 2024/25 and 2025/26 to reflect market rates following a benchmarking exercise.

1.3 Forward Plan:

This item is to be submitted on the forward plan as it is classed as a key decision and will affect all wards within North Tyneside.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This work supports the "Our North Tyneside Plan" by still maintaining a value for money service for North Tyneside Council in keeping our rates as one of the lowest across the North East region.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

In April 2022 we agreed to transfer the Building Control Service back into the Authority following agreement with Capita. The service subsequently transferred back to the council in July 2022. The main function of the Building Control Service is to ensure that the Council can meet their statutory and regulatory duties in respect of building control matters in a timely manner. It is a statutory service, which administers legislation relating to the built environment.

For some years, the local Authority Building Control sector has been facing significant challenges from increased competition from private sector 'Approved Inspectors'.

We have identified that our Building Control Fees have not been reviewed or increased since 2018. This is having a direct impact on our ability to cover the cost of delivering the statutory service and leading to a gap in what our fees are compared to other Local Authorities and Approved Inspectors.

The service has taken on a range of new responsibilities because of the recent implementation of the Building Safety Act 2022, along with the Fire Safety Act 2021 in the wake of government reviews following the Grenfell disaster. This has introduced a requirement for additional training and licence requirement for all Building Control Surveyors to demonstrate their level of competency which must be evidenced to the building safety regulator.

In order that the Council ensures it remains competitive in the local market whilst covering the cost for the service we will need to increase our fees.

This will help us to market and grow our services and ensure that in future we are best placed to maximise the benefits of a larger building control offer across North Tyneside, and to potentially support other local authorities.

Reviewing our Building Control Fees that reflect market rates will help us cover the cost of the service and whilst remaining competitive in comparison with other Local Authorities and other private sector Approved Inspectors.

1.6 Decision option:

The following decision options are available for consideration by the Director of Housing and Property Services:

Option 1

To introduce an increase in the Building Control Fees incrementally over a two-year period covering 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Option 2

Not to agree the proposed incremental price increase as proposed in Option 1 and ask officers to develop other proposals and timelines to increase our Building Control Fees.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.6a Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended as the Authority's Building Control Fees have not been increased since 2018. This will allow the Authority to cover the costs of this statutory service and help meet the additional requirements the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Fire Safety Act 2021.

Following a comprehensive benchmarking exercise with other Local Authorities and other private sector Approved Inspectors, this recommended incremental increase will still make us very competitive.

It is recommended that we implement an incremental/staged increase in fees across our various fees over the next two financial years (2024/25 and 2025/26), as set below:

Description	Existing Building Notice Fees 2023/24	Proposed Building Notice Fee 2024/25		Proposed Building Notice Fee 2025/26	
		% increase	New cost	% increase	New cost
Single storey extension with an internal floor area up to 10m2	£432	7%	£462.24	5%	£485.35
Single storey extension with an internal floor area between 10m2 and 40m2	£600	7%	£642	5%	£674.10
Single storey extension with an internal floor area between 40m2 and 100m2	£799.20	7%	£855.14	5%	£897.89
Two storey extension with an internal floor area up to 40m2	£799.20	7%	£855.14	5%	£897.89
Two storey extension with an internal floor area between 40m2 and 200m2	£842.40	7%	£901.37	5%	£946.44
Loft conversion	£708	7%	£757.56	5%	£795.44
Erection or extension of non exempt detached or attached domestic garage or carport up to 100m2	£368.40	7%	£394.18	5%	£413.89
Garage conversion	£282	7%	£301.74	5%	£316.83
Creation or extension to a basement up to 100m2	£708	7%	£757.56	5%	£795.44

1.7 Appendices:

Not applicable as no appendices attached.

1.8 Contact officers:

Mark Barber – Service Delivery Manager
Alison Whitfield – Building Control Manager
Paula Macardle – Contracts Officer

1.9 Background information:

Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010
Online link [here](#)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

Increasing the Building Control Fees over the next two financial years will help to increase our income by around £38k. This will allow the Authority to help cover the cost of the service whilst still remaining competitive in comparison with other Local Authorities and other private sector Approved Inspectors.

2.2 Legal

The Director of Housing and Property Services has authority to make the decision in line with General Delegation 16 of the Officers Scheme of Delegation, which allows Directors to set fees and charges for the delivery of services in accordance with the Authority's policy.

The proposed changes if approved will be carried out in compliance with the Local Authority Building Control (LABC) charges document 2010. Arrangements will be made for the Authority to publish the revised charges for a minimum period of 2 weeks, no less than 7 calendar days before implementation.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

Internal consultation has been carried out with Head of Property Services, Director of Housing and Property Services and Cabinet Member for Housing.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

The Building Control application rate changes will require publication as listed in section 2.3.1.

Discussion with neighbouring Local Authorities has taken place while collating the benchmarking information.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights issues directly arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

The team is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and will continue to work with service users to ensure its obligations are met.

2.6 Risk management

Any risk management issues are included within the Authority's risk register and will be managed by this process.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder issues directly arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

No environmental or sustainability issues arise as a result of this report.

PART 3 – SIGN OFF (as required)

Director of Service
Peter Mennell

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