
BUILDING CONTROL FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW

Committee: Operational Services Committee

Date: 12 September 2022

Author: Building Control Team Leader

[X54]

1.0 ISSUE

- 1.1 To consider the review of the Building Control Fees and Charges and the proposed Building Control Fees and Charges.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 Members are requested to:

- i) Approve the Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix 1 to take effect from 1 January 2023; and
- ii) Note the future review to be undertaken during the year 2025.

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Council's Building Control Service has a long and proud standing within the local community and provides a first class service to all of its customers.
- 3.2 Building Control Fees and Charges were last reviewed in 2018. During 2021/22 the Building Control Team Leader commenced a review of the fees and charges and this review has now concluded.
- 3.3 Since the last review the complexities of the work that is undertaken by the Service has increased significantly.
- 3.4 In conducting the review three main aims and objectives were identified:
- 1. Establish whether the existent fees and charges accurately reflect the work being carried out;
 - 2. Identify any shortfall; and
 - 3. Ensure that the income sufficiently covers the cost of the service.

4.0 REVIEW

Existing Fees and Charges

- 4.1 The most recent approved fees and charges were approved by Council in February 2022, the only increase from 2021 was a small inflation increase. The

Council's published budget stated that the fees and charges were being reviewed and the Operational Services will consider the outcome of the review.

There are two 2 main ways an application can be submitted to the Council; Full Plans and Building Notice.

4.1.1 Full Plans

A full plans application is a 2 stage application process whereby the plan fee is paid upon submission of the application and a check of all of the submitted plans and specification is carried out by Officers to determine the project's compliance with Building Regulations. Amendments are then received from the project Agent/Architect until Officers are satisfied that the plans meet the requirements of Building Regulations. Subsequently the inspection fee is invoiced to the customer once the project commences and the first site visit is undertaken. The inspection fee covers all site visits through to completion.

4.1.2 Building Notice

A Building Notice application differs in that there is no obligation for the customer to submit drawings and documents to be checked. Instead there is more of a reliance on the building and/or customer having a working knowledge of the Building Regulations. All Officer checks are carried out via site visits. The fees are comparable with a full plans application as even though no plan checking takes place there is normally a need for more site visits to be undertaken during the course of a build because the plans would not have been checked in advance. For this type of application all fees are payable upon submission of the notice and the fee covers all necessary inspections in relation to the work described.

A Building Notice should primarily be used for work deemed to be 'minor', for example extensions and/or alterations. The Building Notice can be used for new dwellings, however, Officer encourage applicants to use the full plans route wherever possible.

- 4.2 The following four areas make up around 90% of the applications received and all prices shown are inclusive of VAT (20%):

4.2.1 New Dwellings

Single new dwellings are a consistent application thread for the department. The charges for a one-off dwelling in East Cambridgeshire are as set out below (depending on the type of application made). Any applications made for more than 1 dwelling are dealt with via a bespoke quote and as such are not part of the published fees and charges.

Application Type	Plan Charge	Inspection Fee	Total
Full Plans	£226.00	£548.00	£774.00
Building Notice	-	-	£727.00

4.2.2 Extensions

Extensions to residential properties are the largest application type and made up around 45% of applications received. There are four different extension fees and charges that customers can choose from, depending on the type and size of the extension being built.

Extension	Application Type	Plan Charge	Inspection Fee	Total
Up to 10m2	Full Plans	£189.00	£340.00	£529.00
	Building Notice	-	-	£609
Between 10m2 and 40m2	Full Plans	£189.00	£454.00	£643.00
	Building Notice	-	-	£732.00
Between 40m2 and 100m2	Full Plans	£189.00	£596.00	£785.00
	Building Notice	-	-	£888.00
Garage, car port or store	Full Plans	£189.00	£284.00	£473.00
	Building Notice	-	-	£546.00

4.2.3 Conversions

Over the last few years there has been an increase in customers who are either converting their garage to habitable accommodation or going utilising the loft space and creating additional habitable rooms in this space. With an increase in home working and people more time in the home it is likely that these applications will become more frequent.

	Application Type	Plan Charge	Inspection Fee	Total
Garage Conversion	Full Plans	£125.00	£291.00	£416.00
	Building Notice	-	-	£396.00
Loft Conversion	Full Plans	£189.00	£355.00	£544.00
	Building Notice	-	-	£694.00

4.2.4 Alterations

Building Control receive a high volume of applications for internal alterations to an existing dwelling. This can be for either a single alteration or a multitude of alternations. The fee is based on an estimated cost of works.

	Application Type	Plan Charge	Inspection Fee	Total
Value between £5,001 and £10,000	Full Plans	£188.00	£198.00	£386.00
	Building Notice	-	-	£411.00
Value between £10,001 and £20,000	Full Plans	£188.00	£325.00	£513.00
	Building Notice	-	-	£538.00
Value between £20,001 and £50,000	Full Plans	£188.00	£411.00	£599.00
	Building Notice	-	-	£686.00

4.2.5 Commercial

As commercial work can differ significantly depending on the proposal, all commercial work is quoted on an individual job-by-job basis and as such is not part of the fees and charges review.

Review of Fees and Charges

- 4.3 The Building Control Service consists; 1 Building Control Manager (FT), 2 Senior Building Control Surveyors (FT), 1 Building Control Surveyor (PT), 1 Building Control Surveyor (FT), 1 Apprentice Building Control Surveyor (FT) and 1 Administrative Officer (FT).
- 4.3.1 Staff salaries are the main cost of the Service. Other costs include mileage, publications, subscriptions and printing.
- 4.3.2 The total income required for the Service to cover its own costs is an estimated £355,000.
- 4.3.3 The review has identified that there is no direct correlation between the cost of the service and the income generated from fees and charges.
- 4.3.4 As part of the review an exercise was carried out to compare the hours of work carried out by the post holder annually against the hourly rate of the post holder. This reviewed showed that the hourly rate is not sufficient to recover the cost of the service.
- 4.3.5 The review tested a fee structure which applies an increased hourly rate to the expected level of work to be undertaken by the service.
- 4.3.6 Historic data has demonstrated that over the last three years the Service has not recovered its core costs, particularly on inspections. For example, the

current fees allow for 8 inspections on a new dwelling, however, the average new dwelling inspection is 10 or 11.

- 4.3.7 The proposed fees and charges still compares favourably with competitors in the local area. Three neighbouring Local Authority areas charge £750.00 + VAT and these prices are linked to 7 inspections. Other Local Authorities will apply additional charges for more inspections.
- 4.3.8 Approved Inspectors (private Building Control Companies) charge between £825.00 and £850.00 + VAT. This is based on 2 companies that operate in the East Cambridgeshire area.
- 4.3.9 If the proposed fee increase is approved the Council will still be offering good value for money for its customers.
- 4.3.10 The existing Building Control Fees and Charges are set out in Appendix 2 and the Proposed Building Control Fees and Charges are set out in Appendix 1.
- 4.4 It is proposed that, if approved, the new Building Control Charges will come in to effect from 1 January 2023. This will allow sufficient time for Agents and Applicants to prepare for the increased charge.
- 4.5 It is intended that a review of Building Control Fees and Charges will be undertaken during 2025 to ensure that the Fees and Charges reflect the work and costs associated with the Service.
- 4.6 Members are recommended to approve the Building Control Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix 1.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT/CARBON IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The proposed fees and charges will have a positive impact as set out in this report.
- 5.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required.
- 5.3 Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) not required.

6.0 APPENDICES

- 6.1 Appendix 1- Proposed Building Control Fees and Charges
Appendix 2- Existing Building Control Fees and Charges

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer</u>
None	The Grange, Ely	Craig Smith Building Control Team Leader (01353) 665555 E-mail: craigsmith@eastcambs.gov.uk