

Climate, Planning and Public Transport



Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

Department for

Infrastructure

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Council Chief Executives

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Your Reference:

Our Reference:

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Dear Chief Executives

Planning Fees

I am writing to advise you that the Department for Infrastructure has made a Statutory Rule entitled "The Planning (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023" (S.R. 2023 No. 37), which comes into operation on 06 April 2023. The planning portal is being updated accordingly and this uplift is being publicly announced today. Your Head of Planning is aware of these plans.

The purpose of this Statutory Rule is to amend the Planning (Fees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (S.R. 2015 No. 73) to apply a one-year inflationary uplift of approximately 12.3% (based on RPI as at August 2022) across all fee categories. This will mean that, for example, the fee for:

- an extension, improvement or alteration of a dwellinghouse will increase from £291 to £327;
- the erection of single dwelling house will rise from £868 to £975; and
- the erection of 50 dwelling houses will increase from £18,492 to £20,777.

This uplift in planning fees is part of the Planning Improvement Programme, arising from the recommendations in the NIAO and PAC reports on Planning and will assist councils and the Department in resourcing the delivery of their development management functions.

Copies of the Rule may be purchased from the Stationery Office at www.tsoshop.co.uk or by contacting TSO Customer Services on 0333 202 5070 or viewed online at www.legislation.gov.uk.

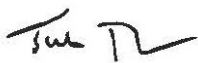
The Department is also currently updating the Development Management Practice Note 11 (Planning Fees) and this will be available to view as soon as possible following commencement of the Regulations, and by the end of April 2023.

I also want to take this opportunity to provide you with an update on the new Planning Portal. Like many large-scale system implementations, with multiple organisations and stakeholders involved, there have been some initial problems and these are taking longer than we would have wanted to resolve. The Project Team and the Intelligent Client Function- ICF (Belfast City Council) have been working closely with the IT supplier to resolve these problems as quickly as possible. As part of that work a series of system updates by the supplier commenced on 9 February and these are continuing every two weeks into April to resolve any issues on a priority basis. Much progress has been made and the remaining issues are being worked through urgently. The Department and the ICF will continue to closely work with the supplier to resolve any outstanding issues to further improve system performance and will keep the Planning Portal Governance Board updated on progress.

In terms of external engagement, the FAQ's for the Planning Portal have been updated on the Department's and councils' websites and shared with a wide range of stakeholders. Going forward, the FAQ's will be updated in line with the planned software upgrades being carried out by the IT supplier. The Department is also engaging directly with other stakeholders to address any issues they may have with the new Portal. In addition, I can also advise that the Department is organising a workshop with some key stakeholders, including agents and architects, later this month to seek their views on what is working well and what areas could be improved.

I trust you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely



Julie Thompson
Deputy Secretary