

## **The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010**

### **Report on the review of Building Regulations Charges**

#### **Introduction and summary**

The introduction of the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 came into effect in April 2010. They had the impact of requiring Local Authority Building Control services to produce a scheme of charges for work in connection with the Building Regulations. The first scheme of charges introduced under these Regulations came into force in October 2010.

Following a review of the Charges applicable and actual time spent undertaking the Building Regulations function, the decision has been taken to increase the level of Charge on certain types of application. The main change has been to applications for new dwellings formed by conversion and Regularisation fees will now be based on an individual charge rather than a standard fee.

#### **Background and reason for change**

The Building Regulations are legal minimum standards applicable to the majority of building work undertaken to virtually every building type. The Building Control team perform a monitoring and enforcement service to ensure these standards are met through assessing, commenting on and approving building plans and then inspecting these works as they progress on-site.

There are two types of Building Regulations applications: the 'Full Plans submission' and the 'Building Notice'. The Full Plans submission route requires plans and specifications of the proposed works to be submitted to the council for approval. If all the building work is undertaken in accordance with the approved plans, compliance with the Regulations is assured. Site visits are undertaken to verify the work is in accordance with these approved plans. The Full Plans route is available on all types of building and is the recommended route. The Building Notice route is only available on domestic projects of any type. The route is a more informal method of gaining Building Regulations compliance whereby no plans are required and compliance is verified only through inspection of the works in progress.

Where unauthorised works has been carried out after 11 November 1985 there is an option to submit an application for a regularisation certificate. This option is normally undertaken to assist in the sale of a property when no proof of building regulation approval can be provided.

In general terms, dwellings formed by conversion works invariably require more involved site inspections mainly due to the constraints of the existing building layout and how this affects obtaining compliance with, for example, fire safety and means of escape. Regularisations will require more in-depth investigation to verify compliance than a similar Full Plans or Building Notice submission, mainly due to the work having been completed some time ago and works covered over. This necessitates a more involved inspection service by Building Control and takes up more Surveyor time therefore costs the service more.

The current financial climate and widespread budget cuts have also influenced the decision to raise Charges in this instance. It should also be borne in mind that these Charges subject to increase have remained generally constant since 2011 with only limited changes made.

## Comparison of Charges between the current and proposed schemes and other proposed changes

As mentioned earlier, the main proposed change is to increase fees for dwellings formed by conversion contained within table A below. The other change is to withdraw the standard fee for regularisation contained within tables A, B and C and an individual charge be introduced.

Current Blackpool Building Control Charges;

Table A

### New Dwellings – formed by conversion

Number of dwellings	Submission Charge	Inspection Charge (IC)	Building Notice Charge (BN)	Regularisation Charge (RG)	Part P * Additional
	£	£	£	£	£
1	150	250	440	440	120
2	250	350	660	660	120
3	250	550	880	880	240
4	350	650	1100	1100	240
5	350	850	1320	1320	360

Proposed Blackpool Building Control Charges;

Table A

Number of dwellings	Submission Charge	Inspection Charge (IC)	Building Notice Charge (BN)	Part P * Additional
	£	£	£	£
1	200	350	600	120
2	250	550	880	120
3	350	650	1100	240
4	450	750	1320	240
5	450	945	1550	360

## Comparison of Charges with other Authorities

The overall existing Charges in place at Blackpool closely mirror those in place at Fylde and Wyre with exception to new dwellings as both Fylde and Wyre do not differentiate between new build and conversion.

The proposed changes are still amongst the lowest in Lancashire when compared to East Lancashire.