Aberdeenshire COUNCIL

Planning Briefing Note – May 2025

Planning Fees

On the 28th of April three sets of regulations were laid before the Scottish Parliament to bring about the second phase of changes to planning fees. The Regulations are, subject to Parliamentary procedure, due to come into force on the 9th June 2025. The regulations provide for a further inflation-linked increase to the cost of planning fees of 3.3% for 2024; the introduction of fees for appeals to Scottish Ministers, and; the introduction of fees for local reviews. The draft regulations can be found on the Scottish Parliament's website.

The Planning fees are due to come into force on the 9th of June 2025 therefore to be legally competent, this means that the current planning fees will only be applied to applications that are valid by midnight on the 8th of June 2025 and not to applications that have been submitted by the 8th of June 2025. This also means that applications that are already in the system and are invalid for any reason before midnight on the 8th of June 2025 will also require to be the subject of the increased fee unless they are made valid by midnight of that date.

Reviews to the Local Review Body or appeals to the DPEA that are received on or after 9th June 2025 will be subject to the relevant fee, except in the limited circumstances where fees are to be waived or reduced.

Please also note that the Planning Service needs to be given adequate time to undertake the normal validation checks. This can be several working days but there is no set timescale. Please bear this in mind when submitting applications and notices of reviews or appeals.

Biodiversity enhancement – volunteers required

Following our last Agent Forum in Nov 2024 the Natural Environment Team have developed a draft biodiversity enhancement scheme for smaller sites which aims to create to an easy-to-use system for planning, recording and assessing the proposed enhancement. This would sit alongside our current Planning Advice on Positive Effects for Biodiversity which covers all scales of development.

It was discussed at the forum that it would be beneficial to trial this draft proposal with a few Agents / Architects and ask for your feedback. We have a few volunteers already that have expressed an interest to help, but we would like a few more. The trial would involve a Teams call to discuss the draft proposal and an agreement to participate and feedback to the Environment Planning Team. If you are willing to take part in the trial for Biodiversity Enhancement, please email: pandeadmin@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Aberdeenshire Council National Planning Improvement Framework

Aberdeenshire Council Planning Authority has been delighted to volunteer to take part in the first cohort of 10 Planning Authorities to pilot the new continuous improvement reporting framework developed by the National Planning Improvement Service. Based on a self-assessment approach, involving staff, stakeholder peer review and a collaborate deep dive with our partner Local Authority, Scottish Borders Council.

The self-assessment framework consists of **5 themes: People; Culture; Tools; Engage and Place**; developed nationally by stakeholders from a range of perspectives and interests in planning. The themes have been identified as key to achieving a high performing planning authority. Within each of the five themes there are **12 attributes** which require a detailed narrative to update on performance, statutory indicators, continuous improvement, collaboration and stakeholder engagement.

Completing the self-assessment, developing an action plan and recognising areas of good practice as well as evaluating where further improvements can be made will ensure that Aberdeenshire Council Planning Authority has the right framework in place to continue to be a high-performing Planning Authority. Please follow the links to view the Action Plan: Aberdeenshire-Improvement-Action-Plan-2024.pdf and the Performance Assessment Framework: Aberdeenshire-Performance-Assessment-2024-25.pdf

Summary of the NPIF Self-Assessment and Action Plan

Theme	No	Attribute	Score*
People	1	The planning authority has sufficient resources and skills to maximise productivity	3
People	2	The planning authority has a valued and supported workforce	2
Culture	3	This Planning Authority has embedded continuous improvement	2
Culture	4	This Planning Authority has sound governance	4
Culture	5	This Planning Authority has effective leadership	3
Tools	6	The planning authority has a robust policy and evidence base	3
Tools	7	The planning authority makes best use of data and digital technology	4
Tools	8	The planning authority has effective and efficient decision-making processes	3

Theme	No	Attribute	Score*
Engage	9	This planning authority has good customer care	2
Engage	10	The planning authority has effective engagement and collaboration with stakeholders and communities.	2
Place	11	The planning authority supports the delivery of sustainable, liveable and productive places	3
Place	12	This planning authority supports the delivery of appropriate development	3

*(1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)

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