

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION

Decision Made: 26 March 2010

BUILDING CONTROL CHARGES

Issue for Decision

To review Building Control Charges from 1 April 2010.

Decision Made

1. That Tables 1 & 2 of the Building Control Charges relating to new houses and domestic extensions (as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services) be increased by 1%.
2. That Table 3 of the Building Control charges (as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services) be changed to more closely reflect actual costs and the current market conditions.
3. That the charge for using the Council's consultants to sign off Part P (Domestic Electrics) be increased to reflect the cost of this service to the Council.

Reasons for Decision

An increase of 1% has been made to the departmental recharges and overheads for 2010/11. The increase in the charges in Tables 1 & 2 of the Building Control Building Regulations Charges Model (set out at Appendix A of the report of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services) reflects this and is necessary to ensure that income expectation is met.

Table 3 of the Building Control Building Regulations Charges Model (set out at Appendix A of the report of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services) covers charges for large domestic extensions, alterations and all commercial work. The charges are set according to the estimated cost of work, any changes to construction costs are reflected with a corresponding increase or decrease in the Council charges.

Adjustments are required to Table 3 as a result of lessons learnt during competitive tendering; comparisons to the private sector and to more accurately reflect the cost of providing the service.

Charges to estimates under £43,000 have increased up to 15%, to more accurately reflect the true cost of the service. Fees for estimates in excess of £43,000 have decreased by up to 28%, to be more competitive when submitting tenders, particularly when considering large projects such as the Springfield development.

The Part P charge is increased to reflect an anticipated increase in charges from our consulting electrical engineers. Although, the majority of customers choose to use a Part P registered electrician and avoid this charge.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

The alternative action of doing nothing will result in reduced income and a possible deficit in the building control trading account.

Building Control income has dropped due to the recession and although this has largely been matched with reduction in expenditure through for example the removal of the market supplements and diversification, charges need to be reviewed to remain competitive. The alternative action of raising fees more than 1% is not recommended due to the high risk of attracting an adverse reaction from customers who may then use our competitors and lose income.

The alternative action of not raising Part P charges is not thought appropriate as this would result in not recovering the cost of providing the service. This is contrary to the fees regulations, a statutory instrument.

The alternative action of raising Part P more than the increase in our consultant charges is not appropriate as this would result in recovering more than necessary to pay for the cost of that service. This is contrary to the fee regulations, a statutory instrument.

The alternative action dismissing the consultant is not recommended as the expertise to sign off part P does not exist in the council. This would increase the risk of faulty electrical work not being detected and risk of injury or fatality on site.

An electrical consultant is necessary to ensure the statutory function is fulfilled and to reduce the risk of legal action that would damage reputation and the need to pay compensation.

Background Papers

None

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Change and Scrutiny by: **6 April 2010**