NI Planning Permission

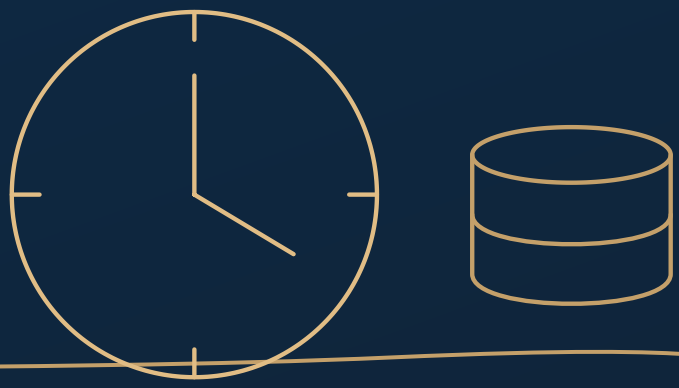
PLANNING CONSULTANTS · BELFAST · ALL 11 NORTHERN IRELAND COUNCILS

FREE GUIDE · NORTHERN IRELAND

Planning Application Fees & Timescales

Statutory council fees and how long decisions take in practice

The statutory planning application fees set by the Planning (Fees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, as amended from 1 April 2025, the statutory processing targets for councils, and the latest official figures on how long applications are taking.



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INTRODUCTION

Budgeting for a planning application

Two questions come up at the start of almost every project: **what will the council charge**, and **how long will it take**? This guide sets out the statutory position, from official sources, as of November 2026.

Statutory fees

Set by the Department for Infrastructure in the Planning (Fees) Regulations (NI) 2015. The latest increase, about 2.1% overall, came into operation on **1 April 2025** (S.R. 2025 No. 49). No later amending regulations were listed on legislation.gov.uk when this guide was checked in November 2026.

Timescales

Councils have statutory targets to process **local** applications within an average of **15 weeks** and **major** applications within an average of **30 weeks**, from the date an application is valid to the decision or withdrawal (DfI planning statistics).

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THESE ARE COUNCIL FEES ONLY

The fees in this guide are the statutory charges paid to the council with an application. They do not include professional fees for drawings, surveys, reports or consultancy, which vary with each project and are not covered here.

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KEY RULES · FEE SCALES

Statutory fees for common applications

Planning (Fees) Regulations (NI) 2015, Schedule 1, Part 2, as substituted by the Planning (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2025, **in operation from 1 April 2025**. Summary only; **check the current fee** before applying.

Category of development	Fee
Householder: extension, improvement or alteration of a house, buildings or works in its curtilage, or boundary walls and fences (cat. 4)	£347 per dwelling
Single dwelling, outline (cat. 2) or reserved matters (cat. 3(a))	£515
Single dwelling, full (cat. 3(b))	£1,035
2 to 50 dwellings, full or reserved matters (cat. 3(c)(i))	£1,215 for two, plus £434 for each additional dwelling
Over 50 dwellings (cat. 3(c)(ii))	£22,047 plus £129 per dwelling over 50, max £323,133
Outline, other buildings (cat. 1)	£307 per 0.1 ha, max £12,280
Non-residential buildings, full or reserved matters (cat. 5)	£220 where no floor space is created or it does not exceed 40 m²; £434 where it exceeds 40 m² but does not exceed 75 m²; £434 per 75 m² up to 3,750 m²; above that £21,700 plus £129 per 75 m², max £322,915
Agricultural buildings and glasshouses (cat. 7)	£1,153 per 500 m², max £15,287
Material change of use (cat. 12)	To dwellings: £842 for the first, £307 each additional; other: £307 per 75 m²; each max £15,350
Vary or remove a condition, or continue a use or retain works without compliance with a condition (cat. 11)	£307
Car parks, service roads, accesses for an existing single undertaking (cat. 10)	£307
Any other application (cat. 13)	£1,010

Other fees (regulations 8 to 12)	Fee
Advertisement consent	£231
Certificate of Lawfulness, existing (s.169(1)(a)/(b))	As for the equivalent planning application; £307 per dwelling for dwellinghouse uses, max £15,350
Certificate of Lawfulness, breach of condition (s.169(1)(c))	£307
Certificate of Lawfulness, proposed (s.170)	Half the equivalent planning application fee
EIA development	£12,924 in addition to the normal fee, subject to the category maximum

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KEY RULES · EXEMPTIONS AND REDUCTIONS

Exemptions, reductions and refunds

Provision	Effect in summary
Disabled access (reg. 4)	No fee for works to an existing house, or in its curtilage, solely to provide access or facilities for a resident disabled person; and for works solely to provide disabled access to buildings open to the public.
Same use class (reg. 5)	No fee where an application is needed only because a condition restricts a change within the same use class.
Community and sports (reg. 6)	No fee for qualifying applications by non-profit clubs, societies and similar bodies for community facilities, sports grounds and playing fields on land they occupy.
Permitted development removed (regs. 7 and 8)	A reduced fee of **£78** where works would be permitted development but for an Article 4 direction or a planning condition.
Renewal (Sch. 1, para. 3)	One quarter of the normal fee if the renewal application is made before the existing permission expires.
Retrospective applications (Sch. 1, para. 2)	Calculated as if the application were for permission to carry out the development; there is no surcharge in the regulations.
Invalid applications (reg. 3(3))	The fee is refunded if the application is rejected as invalidly made.
Listed building and conservation area consent	DfI states that no application fee is required for some consents, for example listed building consent and demolition in a conservation area.

Getting the fee right

DfI advises that the Planning Portal includes an online fee calculator, that Mid Ulster District Council runs its own online service, and that an **underpayment will delay** an application until the balance is paid, or could make it invalid. If you are unsure, check with the council's planning office before you submit.

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KEY RULES · TIMESCALES

Targets and current performance

Statutory target	Measure
Local applications	Processed from the date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of **15 weeks**.
Major applications	Processed from the date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of **30 weeks**.
Enforcement cases	**70%** of cases progressed to target conclusion within **39 weeks** of receipt of the complaint.

What the latest figures show

According to DfI's Northern Ireland planning statistics for **April to June 2026** (published 22 October 2026), DfI's published average processing time (a median) across all councils was:

20.0
weeks for **local** applications, above the 15-week target (19.8 weeks a year earlier).

26.1
weeks for **major** applications, within the 30-week target.

76.2%
of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks, meeting the 70% target.

Performance varies widely between councils: in the same quarter, average local processing times ranged from **8.4 weeks** (Fermanagh and Omagh) to **45.8 weeks** (Newry, Mourne and Down). Our guide to the 11 councils lists each council's figure.

What affects how long your application takes

- **Validation.** The clock for these statistics starts when the application is valid. Missing drawings, forms, certificates or the wrong fee cause delay.
- **Consultations.** Responses from consultees such as DfI Roads, NI Water and environmental bodies can take time, particularly where more information is requested.
- **Amendments.** Changes during the application, and further neighbour notification, add time.
- **Committee.** Applications referred to the council's planning committee follow its meeting cycle.

The targets and figures are averages for all applications in a category. They are not a deadline or a promise for any individual application.

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PRACTICAL CHECKLIST

Avoiding avoidable delay

- [ ] Correct application type chosen (full or outline; ‘householder’ is the portal form and fee category for works to an existing house, not a separate statutory consent)
- [ ] Fee category identified and current fee checked
- [ ] Exemption or reduction considered where relevant
- [ ] Location plan and site boundary drawn accurately
- [ ] All drawings, forms and ownership certificates complete
- [ ] Council validation checklist followed
- [ ] Supporting reports identified early (roads, drainage, ecology, heritage)
- [ ] Access and sightlines shown where required
- [ ] Programme allows for the council's current processing times
- [ ] Building Control and other consents planned in parallel
- [ ] Renewal applied for before an existing permission expires
- [ ] One point of contact for the case officer

Common pitfalls

- ✕ **Using an out-of-date fee.** Fees change by regulation; an underpayment holds up the application.
- ✕ **Choosing the wrong category.** A change of use, a householder extension and a new dwelling are charged differently.
- ✕ **Treating 15 weeks as a deadline.** It is an average target; current averages in several councils are longer.
- ✕ **Letting a permission lapse.** Renewing before expiry is cheaper than a fresh application.
- ✕ **Thin applications.** Applications without the information consultees need are often delayed by requests for more detail.

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HOW WE HELP

A complete application from day one

The quickest applications are usually the most complete. We help you get the paperwork, the fee and the supporting information right before submission.

1. **Application strategy.** We advise on the right application type and the information the council and consultees will need.
2. **Fee and validation check.** We confirm the statutory fee category and check the submission against the council's validation requirements.
3. **Submission and case management.** We submit through the Planning Portal (or Mid Ulster's own portal) and keep in contact with the case officer and consultees.
4. **Realistic programme.** We give you a realistic expectation of timescales for your council area, based on current published figures.

PO

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Planning an application?

Tell us what you want to build or change and where, and we will advise on the application type, the statutory fee and the information needed for a smooth validation.

Request a site-specific assessment → niplanningpermission.co.uk/contact-us

Or call 028 9591 6888 · info@niplanningpermission.co.uk · Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

CONTACT NI PLANNING PERMISSION

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Important: This guide is general guidance on the planning system in Northern Ireland. It is not legal advice and does not replace advice on your own site. Planning law, policy and fees change; the content is believed correct at the date of publication (November 2026), and you should check the current position with the relevant council before relying on it. No outcome can be guaranteed: every application is decided by the council on its own merits.

SOURCES

Official sources used

All sources were checked in November 2026. Fees: Planning (Fees) Regulations (NI) 2015 as amended, in operation from 1 April 2025. Statistics: DfI Northern Ireland planning statistics, April to June 2026 (bulletin and tables).

- **Planning (Fees) Regulations (NI) 2015 (as amended)**
  https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2015/73/body
- **Planning (Fees) Regulations (NI) 2015, Schedule 1 (fee scales)**
  https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2015/73/schedule/1
- **Planning (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2025, S.R. 2025 No. 49 (in operation 1 April 2025)**
  https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2025/49/pdfs/nisr_20250049_en.pdf
- **DfI: Planning fees**
  https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/planning-fees
- **DfI: Planning fees explanatory note for applicants (updated 1 April 2025)**
  https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/planning-fees-explanatory-note-applicants
- **DfI: Northern Ireland planning statistics, April to June 2026 (published 22 October 2026)**
  https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-april-june-2026
- **Planning Act (NI) 2011, s.55 (permission for development already carried out)**
  https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2011/25/section/55
- **Planning Act (NI) 2011, s.169 (certificate of lawfulness of existing use or development)**
  https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2011/25/section/169
- **Planning Act (NI) 2011, s.170 (certificate of lawfulness of proposed use or development)**
  https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2011/25/section/170
- **NI Planning Portal: public planning register**
  https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/
- **Mid Ulster District Council: Planning (own online portal, property certificates)**
  https://www.midulstercouncil.org/planning

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