

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 20th APRIL 2010**

Question

“Does the Minister maintain a comparison of planning charges in Jersey against those charged in Guernsey, the Isle of Man, local authorities in England and Scotland and also Rennes, France, in view of the recent visit to that city and, if so, would he provide details for Members?”

Can the Minister advise members when charges first came into being and the purpose of raising the charges?”

Answer

No regular comparison of planning charges is made with other jurisdictions, as it has little relevance to the local situation. Government policy in Jersey regarding the proportion of the costs of delivering planning services that should be paid by the users, as opposed to the State or local authority, is different to the other jurisdictions and is generally a much higher proportion. However, it is understood that some local planning authorities in the UK achieve 100% cost recovery. In Jersey, applicants meet approximately 63% of the costs of the service.

Furthermore, the way the fee-scales are constructed differs in each jurisdiction, and direct comparison is difficult. For example, where in Jersey the planning fee for commercial developments is calculated on a square metre basis, other jurisdictions tend to ‘band’ the calculation. For instance, the user pays £x for a building up to 20m², £y between 20m² and 50m² up to £z for a building over 250 m², and for each additional 250 m² or part thereof.

Comparison of fees for certain types of development, in the jurisdictions referred to in the question, are shown in the table below. There are no fees for submitting planning applications in France, where the total costs of the service are met by the local authority.

	Jersey 2010 fees	Guernsey 2009 fees	Isle of Man 2009 fees	England 2010 fees	Scotland 2007 fees
Construct a new dwelling	610	475	188	335	290
Extend a dwelling (over 20 m ²)	203	160	149	150	145
Change of use of land or building	306	265	58	335	290
Glasshouses over 465 m ²	203	320	109	1,870	1,645

In April 1994 the, then, Island Development Committee(IDC) lodged P.54/1994 regarding the introduction of charges for planning and building control purposes. On 24th May 1994 the States agreed:

- a) “to approve in principle the introduction of charges for planning and building control purposes and charge the IDC to promote the necessary legislation;
- b) to agree in principle that additional revenue expenditure in an amount to be agreed with the Finance and Economics Committee should be used by the IDC for environmental purposes, to be funded from income derived from planning charges.”

The report accompanying P.54/1994 described in more detail the type of environmental purposes for which the funds would be used. They were:

Architectural conservation – listed buildings
Urban Improvement Areas – EPIAs
Conservation Areas

Sites of Special Interest – grants
Roadside walls and banques
Countryside management and interpretation
Nature conservation
Environmental interpretation
Policies and standards
Environmental Impact assessments.

In October 1995, the Planning and Environment Committee lodged the *projet de loi* to amend the Island Planning Law and the Public Health (Control of Buildings Law), which the States adopted, and when the amended law came into force, the Committee made the necessary Orders.

Charges for planning and building applications came into force on 1st January 1997, and were linked to a formal Code of Practice relating to performance.

There was a fundamental change in how fee income would be used from 2003. On 21st November 2002, the States adopted the Planning and Environment Committee's proposition (P.203/2002) and approved, with effect from January 2003, a "user-pays" strategy so that income from fees should be used to fund the cost of services provided by the Committee. The States had shared the Committees' concern that the major increase in application numbers (54%) over seven years, with no commensurate increase in staff, had reduced performance to unacceptable levels. The fee income was to be used to employ additional professional and administrative staff in both development control and building control. As a result, significant increases in fees were introduced in February 2003.

Further fee increases (over and above cost of living increases) were introduced in 2009 and 2010 to meet the cost of providing the planning and building control services and to achieve further service improvements, notably in application turn-around times.