



March 27th, 2025

**Chairperson:** Councillor P Catney

**Vice-Chairperson:** Councillor G Hynds

**Aldermen:** J Baird, O Gawith, A McIntyre, S Skillen, J Tinsley

**Councillors:** J Bamford, S Burns, A Gowan, G McCleave, C McCready, M McKeever,  
R McLernon, N Parker

**Ex Officio:**

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson

Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin

**Notice Of Meeting**

A meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee will be held  
on **Wednesday, 2nd April 2025 at 6:00 pm** for the transaction of the undernoted  
Agenda.

Hot Buffet will be available in Members Suite from 5.15pm for Committee Members.

**David Burns**  
**Chief Executive**

# Agenda

## 1.0 Apologies

## 2.0 Declaration of Interests

- (i) conflict of interest on any matter before the meeting (Members to confirm the specific item)
- (ii) pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest (Member to complete disclosure of interest form)

📄 *Disclosure of Interests form Sept 24.pdf*

*Not included*

## 3.0 Report by the Head of Service (Building Control and Sustainability)

### 3.1 Department for the Economy consultation on the Increased Socialisation of Connection Costs in the Electricity Distribution Network

*For Decision*

📄 *Item 3.1 BC - DoF Consultation on Socialisation of Connection Charges (2).pdf*

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📄 *Item 3.1 - Appendix 1BC - LCCC Consultation Response to Department for the Economy.pdf*

*Page 3*

## 4.0 Report by the Acting Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning)

### 4.1 Appointment of a Public Analyst

*For Noting*

📄 *Item 4.1 EH - Report - Appointment of a Public Analyst (3).pdf*

*Page 5*

### 4.2 Contracts in connection with Landlord Registration Scheme NI

*For Noting*

📄 *Item 4.2 EH - Report Contracts Landlord Registration Scheme NI(002).pdf*

*Page 6*

### 4.3 Consultation response on Proposed Amendments to the Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Guidance (NI) - Delegated Authority

*For Decision*

📄 *Item 4.3 EH - Report Consultation on the Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Guidance Delegated Authority.pdf*

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## 5.0 Any Other Business

<b>Committee:</b>	Environment & Sustainability
<b>Date:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2025
<b>Report from:</b>	Head of Service – Building Control & Sustainability

<b>Item for:</b>	Decision
<b>Subject:</b>	Consultation – Department for the Economy, Consultation on the Increased Socialisation of Connection Costs in the Electricity Distribution Network.

1.0	<b><u>Background and Description</u></b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to bring to Elected Members attention the Councils proposed response to the Department for the Economy, (DfE), Consultation on the Increased Socialisation of Connection Costs in the Electricity Distribution Network.
1.2	The Department (DfE) consultation closes on 24 <sup>th</sup> April 2025, however this closing date does not allow ratification of the submission at Council, which is 29 <sup>th</sup> April 2025.
1.3	This report is presented at this Committee to allow Elected Members the opportunity to consider the response and any additional comments they may wish to make. The consultation will be submitted on the 24 <sup>th</sup> April 2025 with Officers making DfE aware that should Council on 29 <sup>th</sup> April 2025, make any comment on the submitted response, then that will be forwarded to the DfE as part of our submission.
1.4	Should any changes to the response be made after the agreement of this committee, a retrospective report will be brought back to this committee for approval.
1.5	The DfE consultation description and comment is detailed below:
1.6	<i>This current connection charging policy for the distribution network here, is to charge customers seeking a new connection to the distribution network for the cost of any reinforcement to the network triggered by their connection request, as well as the cost of the lines and plant directly needed to make the connection.</i>
1.7	<i>Changes in our electricity networks and the way we use them have made the current policy unfair to some users and restrictive to our path forward. For example.....Some customers connecting to the network in areas which the RP7 upgrade has not yet reached, face potentially higher charges than those in other areas. In these areas the first customer to request a connection will be required to pay for the upgrades, which can then be used by subsequent customers seeking a connection, but who will not contribute to the cost of the upgrade. This is known as the 'first mover' disadvantage.</i>
1.8	<i>Stakeholders say that charging for the reinforcement works is a barrier to connecting more renewable generation and to customers installing Low Carbon Technologies such as heat pumps and EVs.</i>
1.9	<i>This consultation puts forward a number of options for increasing the level of distribution reinforcement which is charged at general network costs.</i>
1.10	The Consultation documents are available on the Department's website: <a href="#">Increased Socialisation of Connection Costs in the Electricity Distribution Network   Department for the Economy</a>

	<p>Council Officers have been consulting with our partners in Sustainable NI, to compile a balanced response. Elected Members will find the proposed response to be submitted on behalf of the Council attached at <b>Appendix 1BC</b>.</p>	
2.0	<p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>It is recommended that the Environment &amp; Sustainability Committee approves the response in <b>Appendix 1BC</b> to be submitted to Department for the Economy, (DfE) on the Increased Socialisation of Connection Costs in the Electricity Distribution Network, subject to any further agreed comments at this Committee.</p>	
3.0	<p><b><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None for Council at this time.</p>	
4.0	<p><b><u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u></b></p>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <b><u>or</u></b> rationale why the screening was not carried out</p> <p>Third party/ Central Government Legislation</p>	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <b><u>or</u></b> rationale why the screening was not carried out.</p> <p>Third party/ Central Government Legislation</p>	

<b>Appendices:</b>	APPENDIX 1BC – Council Response to Consultation on the Increased Socialisation of Connection Costs in the Electricity Distribution Network.
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## APPENDIX 1BC – LCCC CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO DfE CONSULTATION

**LCCC Consultation Response to Department for the Economy: Consultation on the Increased Socialisation of Connection Costs in the Electricity Distribution Network.**

Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland

Closing Date: 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Name: Colin Duff

Email: [colin.duff@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:colin.duff@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

Organisation: Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

**Summary**

The Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department for the Economy's consultation on increasing the socialisation of connection costs in the electricity distribution network. We believe that a fully socialised approach (Option 4) is the most equitable, fair and effective policy that will also aid and accelerate the transition to a low-carbon energy system.

**Response**

Our response is framed around the principles as outlined within 'Section 4: Benefits of Socialisation', contained within your consultation documents. These 4 principles are Fairness, Vulnerable Customers, Climate Change and net zero and Regional Balance.

- Fairness

The current connection charging policy places an unfair burden on individuals or businesses that are the first to require reinforcement of the network, otherwise known as the first-mover disadvantage. Under the existing system (Option 1), those seeking to connect, including, low-carbon technologies such as heat pumps or EV chargers often bear the full cost of the necessary network upgrades, even though subsequent users benefit without contributing. This discourages early adoption and disproportionately impacts those in rural areas where reinforcement costs tend to be higher.

Option 4 removes this inequity by ensuring that reinforcement costs are fairly distributed among all electricity consumers through network charges. This approach acknowledges that all consumers benefit from a stronger, more resilient electricity network that enables transition, growth and aids the drive to net-zero.

- Protection of Vulnerable Customers

Vulnerable customers, particularly those in fuel poverty, often have the least capacity to afford the upfront costs of reinforcing the network. These households are also less likely to have the financial means to install low-carbon technologies without support. By fully socialising reinforcement costs, Option 4 ensures that vulnerable customers are not excluded from participating in the low-carbon transition due to financial barriers. This also can apply to small business trying to establish themselves and business premises growth.

Additionally, a socialised cost model prevents wealthier individuals or businesses from having an unfair advantage in accessing clean energy solutions, helping to close the energy affordability gap.

## APPENDIX 1BC – LCCC CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO DfE CONSULTATION

- Investment in a Future-Proofed Network

A fully socialised model encourages strategic, long-term investment in the electricity distribution network. Instead of reinforcing the grid in a piecemeal manner - driven by individual connection requests - Option 4 would enable proactive network planning by NIE Networks in conjunction with RP7. This approach is more efficient, reducing overall infrastructure costs over time and ensuring that the network can support increased demand from new business/ domestic connections including new heat pumps, EVs, renewable energy sources and generators.

Investment is also crucial for attracting businesses and industries that require sustainable and affordable energy connections. A well-planned, robust network lowers operational risks for businesses, fostering economic growth and job creation including the renewable energy sector.

It will also support the drive to improve standards and renewable energy generation as part of future Building Regulation amendments.

- Tackling Climate Change

Decarbonisation of heat and transport is essential to achieving Northern Ireland's climate targets. The electrification of heat and transport is a fundamental component of this transition, yet the current policy disincentivises individuals and businesses from adopting low-carbon solutions where making connections can be prohibitively expensive.

By adopting Option 4, Northern Ireland can remove financial barriers and accelerate the uptake of EVs, heat pumps, and local renewable generation. This will lead to lower carbon emissions, improved air quality, and reduced reliance on fossil fuels, ultimately helping to meet our net-zero commitments.

- Regional Balance and Rural Development

The current system disproportionately affects rural areas, where network reinforcement costs are typically higher due to lower population densities and longer distances between connections. This exacerbates regional inequalities, making it harder for rural communities to benefit from the low-carbon transition.

Option 4 promotes a more balanced and equitable energy transition, ensuring that rural businesses, farms, and households can access clean energy technologies without facing prohibitive costs. A socialised approach supports regional economic development and prevents rural areas from being left behind in the transition to a sustainable energy system.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

The Council supports Option 4: Full Socialisation of Distribution Reinforcement Costs as the most effective, fair, and sustainable approach to electricity network connection charges. This policy will:

- Ensure fairness by removing the first-mover disadvantage.
- Protect vulnerable customers from prohibitive upfront costs.
- Encourage strategic investment in the grid, reducing long-term costs.
- Accelerate decarbonisation of heat and transport.
- Promote regional balance and ensure rural communities are not disadvantaged.

<b>Committee:</b>	Environment and Sustainability
<b>Date:</b>	2 April 2025
<b>Report from:</b>	Head of Service (Acting) - Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

<b>Item for:</b>	<b>Noting</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	Appointment of a Public Analyst

1.0	<b><u>Background and Key Issues</u></b>	
1.1	Article 27(1) of the Food Safety (NI) Order 1991 requires that the Council appoint one or more persons (Public Analyst(s)) to act as Analyst(s) within the district of the Council.	
1.2	Furthermore, the Framework Agreement (Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities Amendment 5 April 2010) (Chapter 2, para 12.8), states that all local authorities shall ensure that a Food Analyst is appointed to carry out examinations and analyses of food samples.	
1.3	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council on behalf of the 11 NI Councils provided procurement services for the awarding of a new contract for a Public Analyst. Eurofins Food Testing Ireland Ltd were awarded the 2 years contract up to 31st March 2027 with the option to renew for a further 2 years.	
1.4	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Procurement Unit have reviewed all necessary documentation provided by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and are satisfied with the Tender process and Contract awarded.	
2.0	<b><u>Recommendation</u></b>	
	Members are asked to note the appointment of Eurofins Food Testing Ireland Ltd as Public Analysts to the Council under Article 27 (1) of the Food Safety (NI) Order 1991.	
3.0	<b><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></b>	
	The cost of the Public Analysts services is included within the Service Unit approved budget, of £36k	
4.0	<b><u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u></b>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <b><u>or</u></b> rationale why the screening was not carried out	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <b><u>or</u></b> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	

<b>Appendices:</b>	
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<b>Committee:</b>	Environment and Sustainability Committee
<b>Date:</b>	2 April 2025
<b>Report from:</b>	Head of Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning (Acting)

<b>Item for:</b>	Noting
<b>Subject:</b>	Contracts in connection with Landlord Registration Scheme NI

## 1.0 **Background and Key Issues**

1. In March 2023, the Committee agreed that the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council would act as the host Council for the transfer of the Landlord Registration Scheme and an update on this transfer was provided to the Committee in February's meeting.
2. The scheme was transferred from the Department for Communities on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025 with the website and registration portal being live from 3<sup>rd</sup> March.
3. The Department for Communities have transferred the remaining funds collected from the registration fee in March 2025.
4. This funding can only be used in connection with the functions of the Landlord Registration Scheme. To assist with the delivery of these functions, a number of contracts have been novated to the Council from the Department.
5. These contracts are detailed below:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Purpose:</b>	<b>Contract Lifespan</b>
Landlord Advice Helpline	Free, independent advice on a range of issues impacting landlords from issues with tenants, rates discount and understanding rights and responsibilities.	4 Years (due to expire in September 2027)
Housing Mediation Service	Free, independent intervention and mediation service to assist with disputes that arise between landlords/agents and tenants. Also used to help prevent homelessness.	2 Years (due to expire in November 2026)
Call Centre	Service provided by Dept of Finance that assists landlords during the registration process including payment processing. This service is used by many landlords and is included as part of the equality screening.	7-year contract via DoF with option to quit contract with minimum 3 months' notice (due to expire 2029)

6. It should be noted that there may be additional costs associated with these contracts for the first year of the scheme post transfer. All costs will be reviewed for Year 2.
7. These contracts will be subject to the same management and good governance processes as all contracts owned by the Council.



2.0	<p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>It is recommended that Members note that the contracts listed below will now be managed by the Landlord Registration Team within the Council, with all costs being covered from the associated fee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Landlord Advice Helpline</li> <li>2. Housing Mediation Service</li> <li>3. Call Centre</li> </ol> <p>These contracts will be managed using the Council's procedures and good governance processes but there will be no cost to the Council ratepayers.</p>	
3.0	<p><b><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>There is no financial implication to the Council. These contracts are funded through the registration fee.</p>	
4.0	<p><b><u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u></b></p>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	Yes
4.2	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <b><u>or</u></b> rationale why the screening was not carried out</p> <p>A screening will be carried out on the wider project at the appropriate time, however the specification for this product has made mitigations to meet equality screening criteria including Website Content Accessibility Guidelines.</p>	Screened out
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	Yes
4.4	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <b><u>or</u></b> rationale why the screening was not carried out.</p> <p>A screening will be carried out on the wider project at the appropriate time.</p>	Screened out
Appendices:	None.	

<b>Committee:</b>	Environment & Sustainability
<b>Date:</b>	4 April 2025
<b>Report from:</b>	Head of Service (Acting) - Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

<b>Item for:</b>	Decision
<b>Subject:</b>	Consultation response on proposed amendments to the Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Guidance (Northern Ireland) Delegated Authority

1.0	<b><u>Background and Key Issues</u></b>
1.1	The Food Standards Agency has launched a Consultation on the Proposed amendments to the Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland) and Practice Guidance. The Consultation closes on 19 May 2025. To ensure that Members have the opportunity to comment on the draft response, it is proposed that this Committee seeks delegated authority from Council to approve the response at its May Committee meeting, whilst meeting the submission date.
1.2	A draft response will be circulated to Members seeking comments so that the response, presented at the May Environment and Sustainability Committee, captures all comments.
1.3	The Code sets out instructions and criteria to which District Councils in Northern Ireland must have regard when discharging their duties in relation to the delivery of official food control activities. This consultation seeks stakeholders' views on proposed changes to the Northern Ireland Code and Practice Guidance.
1.4	The key proposals include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. an updated risk-based approach to the prioritisation and timescales for undertaking initial food hygiene official controls of new food establishments.</li> <li>2. enabling, in certain circumstances, an establishment's food hygiene intervention risk rating to be amended following a wider range of official control methods and techniques, including those undertaken remotely</li> <li>3. extending the activities that officers who do not hold a specified qualification for food hygiene or standards, can, if competent, undertake</li> <li>4. a clarification in approach to interventions at food hygiene establishments that fall into risk category E for food hygiene.</li> <li>5. removal of a prescriptive number of hours required for continuing professional development.</li> <li>6. other amendments to reflect legislative change, provide clarity, improve consistency, and keep pace with current practices.</li> </ul>
2.0	<b><u>Recommendation</u></b>  It is recommended that Members approve that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the May Environment and Sustainability Committee be granted delegated authority, from Council, to consider and approve a response, thereby enabling the Council to respond to this consultation before the closing date of 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025.</li> </ul>
3.0	<b><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></b>

4.0	<b><u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u></b>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <b><u>or</u></b> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	Not applicable
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <b><u>or</u></b> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	Not applicable

<b>Appendices:</b>	None
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