



## Belfast City Council

**Report to:** Health and Environmental Services Committee

**Subject:** **Consultation on Proposed Pollution Prevention and Control Charging Scheme**

**Date:** 18th January, 2010

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### Relevant Background Information

The Pollution Prevention and Control (District Councils) Charging Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2010 Consultation Paper was issued by the Department of the Environment (DOE) in November 2009. It invites views on proposals for a revised Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) charging scheme for Part C installations (lower emission levels) and mobile plant. The scheme is made under Regulation 22 of The Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 ("the Regulations").

The revised scheme - The PPC (District Councils) Charging Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2010, replaces The PPC (District Councils) Charging Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2007, and relates to the regulation of emissions into the air from industrial sources. The overall aim of the charging scheme is to provide full cost recovery for the regulation of prescribed installations in keeping with the Government's *polluter pays* policy, thus preventing the burden falling on the taxpayer. Enforcement duties are carried out by Environmental Health Officers employed by district councils and the fees and charges payable to district councils have in effect not increased since 2005.

The charging scheme relates to Part C installations with potentially low emission levels into the air, such as petrol stations, dry cleaners and activities including, for example, ceramic production, coating, printing and textile treatments.

In March 2009 there were 623 council controlled processes in the whole of Northern Ireland, 39% of which were petrol stations, 16% relating to cement and 21% relating to activities using solvents such as dry cleaners. In Belfast there are 88 Council controlled PPC installations.

## **Key Issues**

To summarise, the proposals contained in the new scheme are to:

- Increase existing fees by 7% to account for the increased costs of regulating this sector and also to introduce a fee for service stations operating Petrol Vapour Recovery (PVR) Stage I and Stage II. "Stage II petrol vapour recovery system" means equipment aimed at recovering the petrol vapour displaced from the fuel tank of a motor vehicle during refuelling at a service station. This only applies to large service stations dispensing greater than 3.5 million litres of petrol per annum. This is in line with the charges applied in England and Wales.
- Introduce a new 'fee' where a district council discovers a business operating without a permit. District councils occasionally inspect premises they suspect may need a permit and this fee would allow the council to recoup the costs of carrying out such inspections and also provide an additional financial incentive for businesses to ensure that they have a valid permit. Such a fee has been in place in England and Wales since 2007.
- Move to a risk based charging scheme in 2011/2012. The scheme should generate the same revenue as the existing scheme but the burden of costs will be redistributed, with the greatest burden resting on the processes posing the greatest environmental risk. Again this is in line with the position in England and Wales.

It is intended that the proposed new fees and charges will apply from 1st April 2010, with a view to moving to a risk based scheme from April, 2011.

The consultation closes on 22nd February, 2010. A response has been prepared by the Environmental Protection Unit and is attached.

## **Resource Implications**

None

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee review and agrees the attached response to this consultation document.

## **Decision Tracking**

The Head of Environmental Health will forward the response to the Department of the Environment, following ratification by the full Council.

## **Document Attached**

Response to Planning and Environmental Policy Group, DOE.