



Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: WFD-C2-47

Údar: Richard Hanrahan

Stádas: Submitted

Submission:

Contribution Fee deductions based on Green Building approaches and materials

Comhairliúchán:

Draft Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

Chapter 9: Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment

Caibidil: Volume 1 » Part 3: City and County Policy Objectives » Chapter 9: Climate Action, Biodiversity and Envir...

The negative affects of climate change are becoming all too apparent to us and its clear that action needs to be taken (if its not too late already, see recent UN report: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>). Married with the issue of chronic shortage of housing supply in Waterford (and nationwide) at the moment, I believe there might be a way to help kill two birds with one stone.

So I would like to propose a way for new buildings (residential or otherwise) to be eligible for a discount to the contribution fee normally owed to the council before construction starts on said buildings that is based on the extent to which the new buildings use green approaches and materials as part of their construction. Contribution fees are relatively high in Waterford; up to three or four times greater than neighbouring county Wexford, depending on the type of building.

This relatively straightforward incentive scheme would help nudge builders in the right direction by encouraging them to build properties that are super energy efficient (max a couple hundred euros a year in energy bills), healthier for the occupants in terms of air quality, and require significantly less energy in terms of materials to build in the first place. This is all very do-able, its really just about educating property owners and the construction industry.

One way to do it could be based on BER ratings like Wexford council does (from 2018), where there's a 50% reduction in contribution fees for Net Zero Energy Buildings, 30% for A1 BER rated buildings, 20% for A2 and 10% for A3. Granted recent changes to the Irish building regulations that came into effect in 2021 require new buildings to be built in line with NZEB standards and be A rated at a minimum, but these regs still don't go far enough in terms of efficiencies. For example, the new building regs require a max of 5 air changes per hour where as the super efficient Passive House standard of building requires a max of 0.6 air changes per hour, which is almost 10 times better than the new building regs.

The extra construction costs associated with building to super efficient standards like Passive House versus current building regs are dropping all the time as people inside and outside the construction industry become more educated about these types of approaches, but a incentive like this would help move the needle that bit further and quicker and help promote more awareness of the effects of buildings on the environment and what can be done to dramatically improve them.

Documents Attached: Níl