



DECISION OF DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

DECISION NO. 16/17 DE 190

SUBJECT: Technical Approval (TA) Fee for the Highway Structures and Council adoptable structures.

Background:

In the early 1970s, failure at Yarra (Australia), Milford Haven (Pembrokeshire, wales), Koblenz (Germany) and over the Danube (Austria) occurred during erection. Resulting from these failure and the subsequent report of the Merrison Committee, the following important changes were made by the then Ministry of Transport:

- I. The Department would continue to examine design criteria and methods but not computations.
- II. The requirement by the Department for a certificate of independent check of the design and computations.
- III. The application of Approval in Principle (AIP) stage to all but minor structures, which would cover the selection of bridge type, the materials for its construction and methods of analysis and design to be adopted.

Following above changes, Ministry of Transport with other relevant departments, such as The Highways Agency (Now named Highways England), Transport Scotland, Welsh Government and The Department for regional Development Northern Ireland developed a Highway Standard BD 2/12 (Technical Approval of Highway Structures). This standard specifies the procedures for Technical Approval (TA) for Highway Structures.

The TA procedures in BD 2/12 generally require the proposer to submit an AIP to the Overseeing Organisation (North Somerset Council) and to receive endorsement of the AIP before proceeding with any design or assessment. The completed design or assessment cannot be implemented until the overseeing organisation is in receipt of certified confirmation that the implementation documents are accurate and fully in compliance with the requirement of the AIP.

Currently Highway Structures team in Asset Management Section acting as Overseeing Organisation on behalf of North Somerset Council for TA authority for third party structures approval. And also, performing the duties as specified in BD2/12. However, there was no formal approval procedure from the Council member to reclaim the working hour's rates, and any extra charges that occurred during Engineers TA process.

DECISION:

To charge a Technical Approval (TA) fee for third party structures proposing to build, demolish, widen or refurbishment adjacent to the North Somerset Council Highway boundaries. The proposed fee will be based on Technical officer's working hour's rates as specified in NSC pay scale

Reasons:

The fundamental objectives of the TA procedures are to give increased assurance for the execution, refurbishment or demolition of highway structures or Council adoptable structures to NSC. This will help to ensure that the proposals are safe to implement, that any new structures or council adoptable structures are serviceable in use, economic to build and maintain, comply with the national construction & environmental standards, and that they satisfactorily perform their intended function and duties.

The TA procedures also ensure that highway users, the public and any other who may be affected are protected from adverse effects resulting from any work carried out to any highway structure.

In the long term, the TA process will allow the Council's to fulfil one of its obligation to the highway user and the public within the district boundaries. This check will also guarantee that the council will not be burdened with any substandard structure or material that are very difficult and more expensive to maintain, widen, refurbish or demolish in future on their road network.

Other Alternatives Considered:

1. Not to Charge any Fee for TA.

This Option will put more pressure on already constrained Council's Highway Management budget.

For Medium to Large project's TA procedures, council need to procure an external resources or specialist consultant for an expert advice and/or recommendations, in this case, the cost of procurement and fees for the external consultant will run to thousands of pounds. In that case, there is a risk for Council's Highway Management team to pay resources/consultants fees from their own budget.

In the long term, this option will not be feasible there will be a risk for the Council to abandon the TA obligation completely because of the unavoidable extra cost and unaffordability.

2. Charging a nominal set Fee for TA.

Agree and set up a standard fee, for example £100/application regardless of the size of structure and project.

This option looks unfair for small jobs or structures (Retaining walls or concrete drainage pipes) proposers paying same amount of fee as bigger jobs or structures (Bridges or Culverts) proposers.

There are no technical or scientific rules and guidance to finalise a standard set fee. So it will be difficult for the Council to defend any feature challenges from developers or private organisations.

3. Charge a Fee based on Technical Officer's working hour's rate.

Reclaim Technical Officer's working hour's rates while processing the TA procedure by issuing a council invoice to the proposer of the structure.

The final fee will be calculated based on number of working hours of Technical Officer on that particular TA.

There is no ambiguity while calculating the TA fee for the proposer of the structure.

This option is completely transparent and fair to all, whether it is small or big structures.

Risk Assessment:

Possibility of policy challenges from private developers and organisations

Financial Implications:

This fee proposal will help the council to generate a modest extra revenue to support and maintain the NSC highway structures more effectively

Implications for Future Years:

NA

Signed.....



Director of Development and Environment

Dated.....

20/9/16

