

7 February 2024



Department for Infrastructure

12-18 Adelaide Street

BELFAST

BT2 8GB

Email: waterchargesconsultation@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Reference: DFI Water and Sewerage Charges - Options for Revenue Raising Consultation

To whom it may concern:

Mid Ulster District Council would like to take this opportunity to provide comments on DFI Water and Sewerage Charges - Options for Revenue Raising Consultation.

Mid Ulster District Council would argue strongly against the introduction of the proposed charges. The Council understands why revenue raising options are currently being examined. However, in relation to these proposed charges, the Council maintains its stance that regional rate charges already include charges for water services.

This issue has been raised previously with NI Water. During NI Water's last presentation to the Council, the representatives were informed that water and sewerage charges are already funded by the revenues raised via the regional rate. Therefore, it is the opinion of the Council that members of the public are already paying water charges, and as such this area of public service provision should not be considered in relation to revenue raising.

Furthermore, the Council would argue strongly that these charges should not be introduced during a time when the public is attempting to recover from the recent cost of living crises and additional inflationary pressures that have had such a negative impact on household finances. While it is clear that vulnerable households absolutely need to be protected from revenue raising, it should also be recognised that it's not only vulnerable households in receipt of state benefits, who need to be shielded from these additional cost burdens.

Cookstown Office

Burn Road
Cookstown
BT80 8DT

Dungannon Office

Circular Road
Dungannon
BT71 6DT

Magherafelt Office

Ballyronan Road
Magherafelt
BT45 6EN

Telephone 03000 132 132

info@midulstercouncil.org
www.midulstercouncil.org

It is the opinion of Mid Ulster District Council, that revenue raising should be focused upon the members of society who can afford to pay extra, not struggling households who are already finding it impossible to make ends meet. The Council look towards the impending UK Budget announcements in March, which will hopefully alleviate some of the financial pressures on both households and public services in Northern Ireland and allow time for any potential future revenue raising mechanisms to be considered fully and carefully over the longterm.

Finally, as stated previously, the Council want to highlight these proposed costs are already accounted for as an aspect of regional charges. Therefore, ratepayers should not be asked to cover the costs of access to water and sewerage provision twice.

Mid Ulster District Council looks forward to being informed of the outcome of this consultation.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Dominic Molloy
Chairperson, Mid Ulster District Council