

East Lothian Council

Schedule of Fees for Information Requests

1.0 What we charge for:

1.1 In some cases, we may choose to apply charges to make information available. These charges will never exceed the costs to us to produce the information requested.

Charges may include:

- Staff time associated with locating and retrieving information;
- Staff time associated with preparing and redacting documents;
- Scanning;
- Photocopying;
- Postage;
- Transport/retrieval fees (where relevant for access to paper files).

1.2 If you request environmental information, charges may be applied in line with the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004. While there is no upper fee limit, we may decline to provide environmental information if the request is deemed to be manifestly unreasonable.

1.3 If you request any other kind of (non-personal) information, charges may be applied in line with the Freedom of Information (Fees for Required Disclosure) (Scotland) Regulations 2004. We may decline to provide this information if the total costs to us exceed £600.

1.4 We will never charge for access to personal data.

2.0 Calculation of charges:

2.1 Staff costs will be charged on the basis of the actual cost of employing the staff in question for the time spent retrieving the information requested.

2.2 The information will be located and retrieved by the lowest-graded member of staff available who holds the required skills and knowledge to provide the information requested. Salary scales will apply.

2.3 For Freedom of Information requests, the rate applied to staffing costs will not exceed £15 per hour.

2.4 For Environmental Information requests, we will only charge in relation to staffing costs where the total costs to us exceed the EIR charging threshold in Section 6.0 below, provided that the overall fee is proportionate to the volume and type of data requested. We may charge in relation to scanning, photocopying, postage and/or transport and retrieval fees even if the total fees are less than the EIR charging threshold.

For example: if you wish to view a Planning file, and the file only exists in paper format, we may offer you the opportunity to view the file on-site in Council offices. We may apply a modest charge to recoup the costs of retrieval and transport of the file.

2.5 The Council will offer the most cost-efficient method of providing the information.

3.0 Timescales:

3.1 We will not normally require payment of fees in advance. If we do need to request payment in advance, we will do so in limited circumstances only.

3.2 If we assess that a fee is payable in relation to your request, we will give you written notice of this before the statutory deadline for response and provide you with a Fees Notice setting out the amount to be paid.

3.3 You will have 60 working days to pay the full amount. If we do not receive payment within this timescale, we will conclude that you no longer require the information and we will close the request.

3.4 During the period of payment notice, the compliance timescale will pause and will only start again once the fees have been paid in full.

3.5 In the event that we find that it has cost less to provide the information than advised in the Fees Notice, we will arrange a refund of your overpayment.

4.0 Free inspection:

4.1 We will make available our public registers of environmental information free of charge in accordance with the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004. This provision only applies where registers or lists are publicly accessible (for example online).

4.2 You may also examine these public registers within Council offices free of charge, although you will need to provide prior notice.

4.3 We may also offer you the opportunity to view information on-site that is not in public registers, for example where the information would be costly to reproduce. In these instances we may still charge for the location and retrieval of the information, as well as any costs associated with scanning and/or photocopying.

5.0 Unhappy with fee charges?

5.1 If you are unhappy with a Fees Notice, you may ask us to review our decision about how much we are charging you for the information. Your Fees Notice will tell you how to do this.

- 5.2 A request for review must be received within 40 working days of the date that you receive our Fees Notice. The review request must be in writing (e-mail accepted) or another permanent format and should be addressed to:

Customer Feedback and FOI Team
 People and Governance
 East Lothian Council John Muir House Haddington
 EH41 3HA
foi@eastlothian.gov.uk

- 5.3 Once we receive your request we have 20 working days from the date of receipt in order to complete our review of the fee amount and give you our decision.
- 5.4 If you remain unsatisfied with the Council's response, you may ask the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) to investigate the matter. You must appeal to the Commissioner within six months of receiving the review decision.

6.0 Fees

Year:	2026-27
Date effective:	01 April 2026
EIR threshold for staffing costs:	£250.00
Staff grade:	Hourly rate:
Grade 3 - Administration	See Charges Book
Grade 4 - Administration	See Charges Book
Grade 5 - Administration	See Charges Book
Grade 6 – Administration	See Charges Book
Grade 7 – Senior Administration	See Charges Book
Grade 8 - Officer	See Charges Book
Grade 9 – Officer	See Charges Book
Grade 10 – Officer	See Charges Book
Grade 11 - Officer/Manager	See Charges Book
Grade 12 - Officer/Manager	See Charges Book
Grade 13 - Service Manager	See Charges Book
Photocopying costs:	Rate:
Black and White copy	See Charges Book
Colour Copy	See Charges Book
Large scale black and white documents	See Charges Book
Copies of Planning/Building Standards drawings	See Charges Book
Copies of Decision Notices/Completion Certificates	See Charges Book
Access to paper files:	Rate:
Planning and Building Standards file retrieval	See Charges Book
Postage:	
Charged at full cost recovery to the Council of sending the information via Royal Mail or Courier.	