

LEVIES AND TAXES

The following property taxes are paid annually to the municipality, split into 10 monthly payments from February to November. The charges are based on a valuation of the property, which is in turn based on its market value. The charge rate is decided by the municipal council on preparation of the budget each year:

- Property tax is 0.35% of the total value of the property (land and buildings).
- The water charge is 0.17% of the total value of the property.
- Ground rent is 1% of the value of the land.
- The waste collection and waste disposal charge is ISK 24,000 per annum for a residential property. Commercial operators negotiate directly with the industrial/commercial waste collection and disposal company.

The following one-off charges relate to new buildings:

- A one-off planning permission charge of ISK 323 is made for each square metre of the building.
- The national government charges a development fee (one-off charge) amounting to 0.3% of the fire insurance valuation.
- Water connection charges are based on the diameter and length of the supply pipeline. As an example, the charge for a 32 mm pipeline up to 30 m long would be ISK 150,000, while the charge for a 50 mm pipeline of the same length would be ISK 230,000.

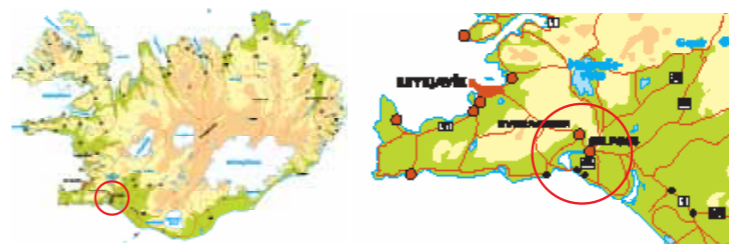
● Electricity connection charges for supplies from Iceland State Electricity (Rarik), valid from 1 February 2010, are as follows:

Basic charge:
Current rating/type

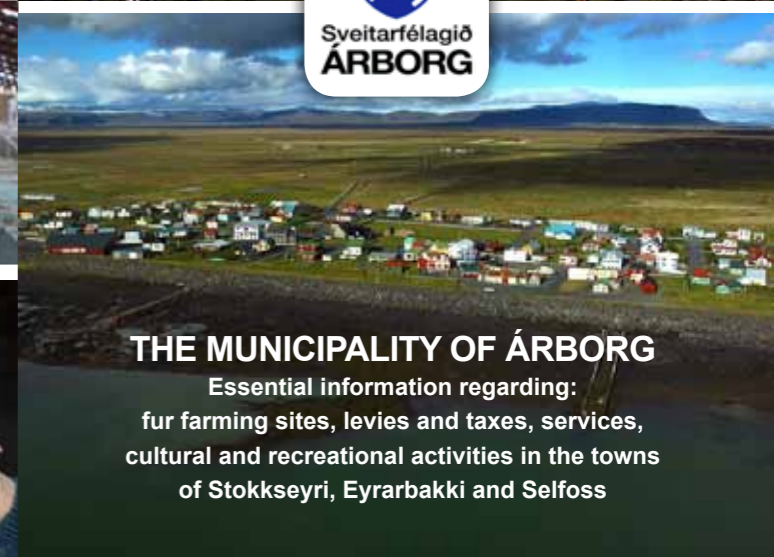
50 A single-phase	ISK 315,400
50 A 3-phase	ISK 348,800
100 A 3-phase	ISK 474,900

The unit price of electricity is determined through negotiation with the electricity supply company. Electricity prices in Iceland are very low compared with those in other parts of the world.

- The Selfoss water utility supplies hot water in towns and in some rural areas. Hot water is not currently available in the area to the north of Stokkseyri that is designated as being a suitable location for fur farming in Árborg. In other rural areas where hot water is available, the Selfoss water utility applies a one-off charge of ISK 390,000 for laying a new hot water supply. Regular charges are then applied for each cubic metre of water purchased. Please note that the Selfoss water utility charges some of the lowest prices in Iceland. Consumers pay a flat annual fee of ISK 8,837 plus ISK 67.30 per cubic metre.



MINK FARM SITES UNDER CONSIDERATION
Stokkseyrarmýri, ca. 1.5 km from Stokkseyri.



THE MUNICIPALITY OF ÁRBORG
Essential information regarding:
fur farming sites, levies and taxes, services,
cultural and recreational activities in the towns
of Stokkseyri, Eyrarbakki and Selfoss

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE MUNICIPALITY OF ÁRBORG AND ITS POPULATION CENTRES, SELFLOSS – STOKKSEYRI – EYRARBAKKI – TJARNARBYGGD

The municipality of Árborg came into existence with the merger of four smaller local authorities after local voters agreed this course of action in February 1998. The four authorities were Eyrarbakki, Sandvík, Selfoss and Stokkseyri. The merger was formalised in June the same year.

- The municipality of Árborg is demographically diverse. The population is a little under 8,000. The largest population centre is Selfoss, with 6,500 residents. The historically important village of Eyrarbakki is home to 600 people, while 500 live in the village of Stokkseyri and 200 live in the the Tjarnarbyggd/Sandvík district.

- The district of Árborg is often referred to as the hub of southern Iceland. Selfoss, the largest town, is one of the busiest in the region. It is home to a range of industries, including farm product processing. Services for visitors and people passing through match those in the Reykjavík area.

- The Selfoss Hotel, situated on the banks of the River Ölfusá, is a 4-star hotel with a gymnasium, spa, beauty salon and first-class banqueting and conference facilities. A small airport serves the town, which has a retail centre and a large number of smaller shops, restaurants, art and design studios, hi-tech and computer service companies, industrial units (including pipe laying and motor vehicle workshops) and an art gallery.

- Selfoss has a busy hospital and a hot water supply utility. Some of Iceland’s most popular tourist attractions lie in the immediate vicinity, including Thingvellir National Park, Gullfoss waterfall and Geysir hot springs. Recreational activities include a cinema and entertainment centres.

- Árborg is a family-oriented community which endeavours to provide the best possible services for residents, domestic visitors and tourists from other countries.

- The main Árborg public library is in Selfoss, with branches in the villages of Eyrarbakki and Stokkseyri. The library has a vast collection of informative publications. All the branches have sitting and reading rooms, and they provide special services for migrant workers. The Árborg Information Centre is based in the library in Selfoss. It is open from May to September. The Regional Archive and the local authority services are also based in the town.

- Selfoss has been recognised for many years as a historic transport centre. A classic car society and a unique motorcycle club hold sporting events in the area, while an increasing number of equestrian sports facilities and riding centres are bringing the region into prominence among horse lovers.

- Helliskógur, a forested area on the eastern banks of the River Ölfusá, is a wonderful setting for outdoor activities.

- A large network of hiking, cycling and riding trails has been developed around Selfoss, which is one of the best places in Iceland for cycling.

- Selfoss Dramatics Society is one of the country’s leading theatre groups. There is also a drama group attached to the regional further education college. Choirs to suit all ages and tastes rehearse in many parts of the region.

- The Church plays an active role in the community, and religious tolerance is exemplary.

- Many residents have their origins in other countries. They work in a diverse selection of trades, and most of them have assimilated rapidly into the local community.

- Buses serve all the towns and villages in the region, and there is a daily service to Reykjavík, which calls at the nearby town of Hveragerdi.

Cultural life in the region is flourishing, with several festivals each year. Spring in Árborg is one such festival that brings the whole district together. This four-day event focuses on providing entertainment and activities for the whole family, young and old. Music, drama, visual arts, motor shows and children’s shows are all part of the programme. The festival has gained deserved national renown. Over 20 other cultural events are on offer at all times of year. They include the Midsummer Festival in Eyrarbakki, Stokkseyri’s Harbour Fete, the Millenium gathering in Eyrarbakki, Summer in Selfoss, the Bridge Run, sports and recreation days, and of special interest for children is the coming of the Yuletide Lads, who descend from Mt Ingolfsfjall in the month of December. The municipality of Árborg was the guest region at Reykjavík’s Culture Night 2009. Numerous entertainers and musical groups perform and hold balls and dances for both residents and visitors.

The municipality is a patron of the Árnesingar Art Gallery, which is based in the nearby town of Hveragerdi. Eyrarbakki is home to several museums. Among them are the House Museum and the Maritime Museum. The Grónhóll Gallery and other exhibition spaces are located in the village, as are apartments for artists. A fresh vegetable and handicrafts market operates during the summer months, selling products from local farms and craftsmen. Many artists live in the village and in Stokkseyri, and summer art exhibitions are frequent. The Red House is a well-known local restaurant.

- Eyrarbakki Primary School is the oldest operating school in Iceland. Many nationally renowned artists have their origins in and around Eyrarbakki. The village was southern Iceland’s principal trading centre in bygone centuries, and many of its unique buildings date from early in the 20th century.

- The seashore, the estuary of the River Ölfusá and the surrounding countryside offer plenty of opportunities for outdoor activities and fishing.
- One of Europe’s largest bird reserves lies to the north of Eyrarbakki. Its large and varied bird population attracts visitors from far and wide.

- Stokkseyri is a historical fisheries centre on the south coast of Iceland. The incomparable shoreline here is watched over by a lighthouse known as Knarrarósvíti.

- Hólmarastarhús houses a restaurant and museums – it is the home of the Ghost Museum. The Hunter’s Museum contains a world-class display of animals from around the world, all of which are the proprietor’s own trophies.

- Equestrian, kayak and cycling sports events are all held in Stokkseyri, where there is also a small swimming pool with a hot tub and facilities for the disabled.

- Fjörubordid is a busy restaurant with a national reputation for its sumptuous Arctic lobster dishes.

- Several small vegetable and flower producers operate in the area. Rod and line fishing is available, in a local lake or from the seashore.

- Stokkseyri’s Magic Garden family park is a place to see Icelandic animals such as sheep, foxes, horses and others.

SCHOOLS

- Six nursery schools operate in the municipality of Árborg – four in Selfoss and one each in Stokkseyri and Eyrarbakki.

- There are three combined primary/secondary schools. Two of them are in Selfoss. Infants Schools are located in Eyrarbakki and Stokkseyri for children in years 1 to 5. Pupils in years 6 to 10 all continue their schooling in Eyrarbakki.

- The regional college of further education is in Selfoss. It provides a wide range of academic and vocational courses. The college has a sports academy which allows talented young sportsmen and women the opportunity to achieve the best possible results in their studies and their chosen sports, integrating both in a supportive environment with top-class facilities. The academy currently accommodates students in handball, basketball, football and gymnastics.

- Árnesingar Music School is based in Selfoss. It offers instrumental instruction for the residents of all nine municipalities in the Árnessýsla region. Teaching takes place in most schools in towns and villages throughout the region.

- The South Iceland University Centre opened in 2009. The Centre’s main area of study is expected to broadly cover land use, and southern Iceland, where it has been identified there is a need for a better basic understanding of land use issues, is a prime region for research of this type.

- The Educational Network for Life-Long Learning in South Iceland is based in Selfoss. The institute’s principal goal is to give residents of the region improved access to many types of courses and continuing education, thus improving the quality of life of those living in southern Iceland.

SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

- Two youth activity centres operate in the municipality of Árborg – one for children aged 14–16 years, and a second for young people aged 16 and over. They are open at fixed times during daytime and in the evenings, Monday to Friday. Young people meet to play board games and computer games, pool and darts, or simply relax and chat together. Pop group rehearsal facilities have been installed in both centres, as well as in the Ungmennahús, where there is also a recording studio with music production and video editing equipment.

- Sports and recreation clubs are active across the region, and everyone should be able to find a group that suits their needs. Sports clubs, mountain rescue teams, scouts, choirs, motorcycle clubs and many other groups meet in the Árborg district, helping to create a rich and varied community.

- Sports facilities in Árborg are first class. A sports complex is currently under construction in Selfoss, and the new stadium will host football matches for the first time in summer 2010. It will have a 700-seat stand for spectators alongside an athletics track and a football training area. Two full-size practice pitches with artificial grass and underground heating are used for football. There is also a small training area for athletics, a storage building and facilities for the local sports clubs. The Icelandic Football Association has laid small football pitches on four school sites in Árborg. There are also practice areas with artificial surfaces for football and basketball beside Sunnilækjaskóli School.

- Five sports halls have been built in Árborg. Three of them are located in Selfoss, one in Stokkseyri and one in Eyrarbakki. They are all used for teaching and training. One of them is specially equipped for gymnastics.

- Árborg has two swimming pools. They are located in Selfoss and in Stokkseyri. The Selfoss swimming pool is in the centre of town. It has a 20 m indoor pool, a 25 m outdoor pool, a children’s pool, a paddling pool, three hot tubs and a water slide. The Nautilus fitness centre is also located in the swimming complex. Stokkseyri swimming pool is a friendly rural facility with a 20 m outdoor pool, a paddling pool and two hot tubs.

- Several fitness centres operate in Árborg.

- The municipality has a 9-hole golf course run by Selfoss Golf Club. Skeidvöllur Sleipnis – Brávellir is an equestrian sports arena where a new riding hall will open in summer 2010.

- Four sports academies with links to local sports clubs form part of the curriculum in the South Iceland College of Further Education. The basketball academy opened in 2005, followed a year later by the handball and football establishments. The gymnastics department was added in 2008. These academies are the flagship of the local sports movement, and young sportsmen and women from the municipality train at the academies with the aim of progressing as far as possible in their chosen sports.