

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
**REPORT TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS &
COMMUNITIES**

9th February 2023

Review of the Registration Service Fees and Charges

**Report of the General Manager
Registration, Archives and Coroners Services**

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To consult the Assistant Director and seek approval of the implementation of the review of fees and charges for the Registration Service.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The report sets out proposals to implement changes to the range of fees and charges for the Registration Service from 1 April 2024 for the financial year 2024-25
- 2.2. Fees are reviewed each year and usually set two years ahead. Most fees for 2023-24 have therefore already been considered and agreed and will take effect from 1 April 2023.
- 2.3 Income from fees and charges is the source of funding for the Registration Service, which is required to contribute to efficiencies by increasing income.
- 2.4 Statutory fees are set by the General Registration Office (GRO) and the fees list (Appendix A) has been amended to take statutory charges into account
- 2.5 For the charges and fees proposed for 2024-25 an increase of 6% has been used as a starting point. However, this figure would mean a small increase if evenly applied across all the fees. Therefore, it is proposed to make greater changes in selected fees, and these are outlined at Appendix A.

3.0 ISSUES AND DISCUSSIONS

- 3.1 It is difficult to estimate provisional ceremony numbers for 2023-24 and beyond. This is due to the continuing effort to clear the backlog of ceremonies that built up during Covid and the effect on the type of ceremony (particularly the venue and thus the fee) chosen by couples as a result of the current economic climate.

- 3.2 The existing statutory wedding ceremony or civil partnership formation fee, available only in registration offices, is still only £46.00 plus £11.00 for a certificate. This has not changed since 2019
- 3.3 The fees for ceremonies may only be increased to reflect the true cost of the provision.
- 3.4 It is proposed that the fee for a ceremony at a Registration Office be increased by £25.00. The fee for Sundays and Bank Holiday ceremony will, however, remain unchanged and this will bring about the harmonisation of fees for Saturday and Sunday/Bank Holidays for office ceremonies. It is also proposed that the fee for a ceremony at one of the approved venues be increased by £25.

A very rough estimate of approximately 2500 ceremonies at a licensed venue and 700 at a registration office means an approximate increase in income of £80000 (gross).

- 3.5 It is further proposed to make a change in the licensing fees for the licenced venues that hold weddings and civil partnerships. It is proposed that the existing fee of £1,350 be increased to £1,430 for licences issued after the 1 April 2024. With an average of approximately 65 licences a year, this would be an increase income in the region of £4550.

4.0 BENCHMARKING

- 4.1 Benchmarking neighbouring authorities continues and both formal and informal consultation of the service takes place on a regular basis. For ceremonies in the office the fees charged by other authorities are usually less than North Yorkshire for a comparative room whilst the fees for venue ceremonies are broadly similar. Caution must be exercised as a number of regional authorities have yet to set their fees. Based on this, the charges proposed reflect the Registration Services response to the currently economic climate, corporate requirement and client demand when assuring the services contribution to efficiency targets.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That the introduction of the proposed increases and changes as set out in Appendix A be approved.

Robin Mair, General Manager
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