

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**CUSTOMER SERVICES, SPORT AND LEISURE
CABINET MEMBER**

REGISTRATION SERVICE FEES & CHARGES

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To approve a three year programme of fees for statutory ceremonies in Approved Premises and other non-statutory services.
- 1.2 The key points in this report are:
- Some registration service fees are statutory
 - The council has discretion over fees for ceremonies in Approved venues and non-statutory services
 - The new Civic Suite is proving popular with customers
 - There are discrepancies in fees for the Civic Suite and non-statutory services in the Register Office
 - Customers often wish to book rooms well in advance
 - We are proposing a schedule of fees and charges to cover the next three years.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The government sets statutory fees for some registration services. These are set using a complex formula that is based on returns to the Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG). The fees are not designed to cover the full cost of providing registration services. The last increase in statutory fees was in April 2012.
- 2.2 Each local authority is responsible for setting their own fees for:
- Statutory ceremonies in Approved Venues
 - Non-statutory ceremonies and services.

Appendix 1 shows current fees and charges.

- 2.3 The Registration Service relocated to the Civic Centre in April 2012. This allows the service to offer two separate ceremony rooms – the Register Office and the Civic Suite. The Register Office holds up to 20 guests. Customers can book the Register Office for the statutory fee of £40. The Civic Suite is an 'Approved Venue' and can hold up to 60 guests. The fee for booking the Civic Suite varies depending on the day of the week.

- 2.4 The Civic Suite has proved popular with customers. We have held 105 weddings in the Civic Suite between 1 April 2012 and 31 December 2012. Customers often want to book and pay for these rooms more than a year in advance.
- 2.5 Fees for non-statutory ceremonies in the Register Office were set some years ago. They were set to match fees for statutory ceremonies in Approved Venues. These fees are expensive when compared against those of the Civic Suite. This may deter customers from using the service. We therefore propose to reduce the fees and align them with those for marriages and civil partnerships.
- 2.6 In setting proposed changes to fees and charges we have taken into account:
- The Corporate Charging Framework
 - The need to exercise commercial judgment in setting prices
 - Comparison with other registration districts
 - The need to make the most income we can.
- 2.7 We have reviewed all our current fees. Customers often wish to book services well in advance. For this reason, we are proposing a schedule of fees to cover the next three years. The schedule would be subject to ongoing review during this time. Further changes may be proposed in response to levels of take up or new services. The proposed fees and charges are set out in Appendix 1.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The options available for consideration are either to approve the proposed fees and charges (Option 1) or reject the proposals (Option 2).

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 is the preferred option for the following reasons:
- Setting fees for three years gives customers a clear indication of costs even when booking far in advance
 - It will also allow the correct fee to be charged regardless of when it is paid
 - The proposed fees compare favourably with other local authorities
 - Reducing the cost of non-statutory services may increase take up.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial

Reducing fees for non-statutory services may increase take up and income.

The proposed changes to fees should help to increase income and meet budget targets.

5.2 There are no further resource implications to consider.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 Not applicable.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED

7.1 The service surveys customer satisfaction each year. We will carry out a survey in 2013, to identify and act on any issues arising from changes to fees.

7.2 We have consulted finance staff on the proposed changes. There are no issues arising.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the changes to Registration Service fees and charges.

8.2 That the new fees are implemented with effect from 1 April 2013.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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Date: 27 February 2013

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None

**APPENDIX 1
REGISTRATION SERVICE FEE PROPOSALS February 2013**

CIVIC SUITE WEDDINGS AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

Day	Current Fee	Proposed Fee 2013/14	Proposed Fee 2014/15	Proposed Fee 2015/16
Monday-Thursday	£85	£85	£85	£85
Friday	£110	£110	£110	£110
Saturday	£125	£125	£125	£125

APPROVED PREMISE WEDDINGS AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

Day	Current Fee	Proposed Fee 2013/14	Proposed Fee 2014/15	Proposed Fee 2015/16
Monday-Thursday	£290	£290	£290	£290
Friday	£295	£295	£295	£295
Saturday	£330	£330	£330	£330
Sunday/Bank Holiday	£400	£400	£400	£400

PRIVATE CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES

Day	Current Fee	Proposed Fee 2013/14	Proposed Fee 2014/15	Proposed Fee 2015/16
Monday-Thursday	£75	£75	£75	£75
Friday	£95	£80	£80	£80

The reduction in the Friday fee brings the charges into line with others for the Register Office ceremony room

NATIONALITY CHECKING SERVICE

	Current Fee	Proposed Fee 2013/14	Proposed Fee 2014/15	Proposed Fee 2015/16
Adult	£48	£48	£48	£48
Child	£40	£40	£40	£40

ADMIN FEES (CERTIFICATE ADMIN, PRIORITY CERTIFICATES AND ADVANCE CEREMONY BOOKINGS)

Service	Current Fee	Proposed Fee 2013/14	Proposed Fee 2014/15	Proposed Fee 2015/16
Certificate Admin (UK)	£3	£3	£3	£3
Certificate Admin(overseas)	£3.5	£3.5	£3.5	£3.5
Priority certificate fee	£13	£13	£13	£13
Advance booking fee	£15	£15	£15	£15

The General Register Office has a national standard for certificates to be issued within 5 working days. The local registration service can, if it wishes, offer a service which exceeds this expectation and charge accordingly. In North Lincolnshire there are three levels of service available:

Certificates issued within 5 days and posted second class –statutory fee £10

Certificates issued next day and posted first class –current fee £13

Certificates issued same day (usually within one hour)-current fee £23

NON STATUTORY CEREMONIES (NAMINGS AND RENEWAL OF VOWS)

The fees for non statutory ceremonies were originally set some years ago and do not currently represent the true cost of providing this service. Ceremonies are currently available in the Register Office, Civic Suite or Approved Premises. The numbers held are very low (5 Naming and 1 Renewal of Vows between April 2012 and January 2013) and it is proposed to reduce these fees in an attempt to make them more attractive.

REGISTER OFFICE NAMING/RENEWAL OF VOWS

Day	Current Fee	Proposed Fee 2013/14	Proposed Fee 2014/15	Proposed Fee 2015/16
Monday-Thursday	£114	£75	£75	£75
Friday	£132	£80	£80	£80
Saturday	£198	£85	£85	£85

CIVIC SUITE NAMING/RENEWAL OF VOWS

Day	Current Fee	Proposed Fee 2013/14	Proposed Fee 2014/15	Proposed Fee 2015/16
Monday-Thursday	£228	£85	£85	£85
Friday	£240	£110	£110	£110
Saturday	£252	£125	£125	£125

APPROVED PREMISES NAMING/RENEWAL OF VOWS

Day	Current Fee	Proposed Fee 2013/14	Proposed Fee 2014/15	Proposed Fee 2015/16
Monday-Thursday	£228	£175	£175	£175
Friday	£240	£180	£180	£180
Saturday	£252	£200	£200	£200
Sunday/Bank Hol	£300	£200	£200	£200