

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet Member for Localism and Enforcement

Date of Meeting: 14 July 2014
Report of: Head of Governance and Democratic Services
Subject/Title: Review of Ceremony Fees for the Financial Years 2014/15; 2015/16 and 2016/17

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This Report seeks authority to revise ceremony fees for 2014/15 and to agree ceremony fees for the Registration Service for 2015/16 and 2016/17.

2.0 Recommendation

- (a) To amend the published fee for a 2pm Saturday Ceremony for 2014/15 at Approved Premises from £660 to £550 and to offer customers who have already paid a refund of the difference.
- (b) To amend the published fee for a Sunday Ceremony for 2014/15 at Approved Premises from £560 to £550 and to offer customers who have already paid a refund of the difference.
- (c) To amend the published fee for Christmas Day and Boxing Day for 2014/15 for Approved Premises from £900 to £800.
- (d) To set and publish the following fees for Ceremonies for 2015/16 and 2016/17:

	2015/16	2016/17 (2.0 % increase)
Weekday	£445	£455
Sat and Sun	£550	£560
Bank Holiday	£660	£675
Christmas Day and Boxing Day	£800	£815

- (e) That the fee for Ceremonies held in the Mayor's Reception Room (Municipal Buildings) and the Silk Room, Macclesfield be set and published at £220 for 2015/16 and at £230 for 2016/17.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 A review of the Registration Service charging structure for Ceremonies held at Approved Premises has been undertaken. Following this review, revised fees are proposed. As couples book their ceremonies up to three years in advance, Ceremony fees are proposed for 2015/16 and for 2016/17. Some adjustments to be current year's published fees are also proposed as a result of the review.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 None identified

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 Financial advice has been sought on the proposed fees taking into account the calculated average cost to the authority of providing a Ceremony at Approved Premises. The proposed fees will cover the overall costs relating to Ceremonies during the year without generating excess fee income.
- 7.2 The overall effect on income generation as a result of the proposed changes to the fee structure would be an approximate reduction of £34,500 for the current year and £15,200 in 2015/16.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The majority of fees collected by the Registration Service are set by central government. The Council has legal authority under legislation to set fees for non statutory services including Ceremonies at Approved Premises.
- 8.2 The specific power to levy fees for Approved Premises is set out in the Marriages (Approved Premises) Regulations 2011. These state that local authorities may charge an amount determined by the authority as reasonably representing all the costs incurred by it of providing a registrar and superintendent registrar to attend at a solemnization.
- 8.3 It is therefore incumbent on the Council to ensure that an assessment of all the costs incurred in providing a registrar and superintendent registrar at a solemnization are made and that the charges levied do not exceed this amount in order to comply with the Regulations.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 By proposing and implementing adjustments to the current year's fees, in addition to 2015/16 and 2016/17, this effectively manages the risk of customer dissatisfaction with the changes.
- 9.2 By proposing and implementing the new fee structure, the Council can be confident that fees are set in an open and transparent way that meets the financial and legal requirements.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 The background to the recommendations is set out in Appendix A.
Appendix B provides a financial summary of the existing and proposed fees for 2014/15; 2015/16; and 2016/17.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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