

**25 November 2014****Agenda Item: 7****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR ACCESS AND PUBLIC  
PROTECTION****REGISTRATION SERVICE FEES FOR 2015/2016 AND 2016/2017****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide information about Registration Service fees and to seek approval of the fees proposed for 2015/2016 and for 2016/2017.

**Information and Advice**Introduction

2. The fees for statutory registration services are set nationally, and were reviewed by the committee in September following changes made after a review scrutinised by HM Treasury. These include the fees for giving notice of the intention to marry or form a civil partnership, and fees for the related ceremonies when taking place at a Register Office. It is possible that during the year the Registrar General or Home Office may make changes to these fees, and it is proposed that, should this occur, local fees be re-set to a new figure directly commensurate with the change.
3. The level of the statutory fees does not cover the full cost of service delivery, and this places a financial pressure on the service. However, fees for non-statutory services can be set on a cost recovery basis and thereby off-set the cost of providing the service overall. The non-statutory registration services are offered by the County Council under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Localism Act 2011. Services include conducting civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies at premises other than the Register Office, plus a range of celebratory ceremonies including naming ceremonies, celebration of vows, civil funerals and individual citizenship ceremonies. The proposed structure for these fees is set out at Appendix A to this report. In some cases, the fees proposed cover the next two financial years, as customers may request bookings up to two years in advance.
4. The current fees and those for the financial year 2015/2016 were approved previously by the committee. This report updates these in line with inflation, modifications are outlined below. The report also advises on fees for the following year, plus changes that can be introduced with immediate effect.

### Modifications to existing fees

5. This report shows a £25 increase is proposed for standard marriage and civil partnership ceremonies taking place on a Friday or Saturday at registration offices from April 2015, and increases in line with current rate of inflation.
6. This report paves the way towards harmonisation of the fee for naming ceremonies and celebration of vows, with those for enhanced marriage and civil partnership ceremonies at registration offices. It is proposed that these fees will become the same in 2016 – 2017.
7. Amongst the fees that can be altered with immediate effect, it is proposed that the fee for general administrative tasks (such as amendments to ceremony bookings) is increased from £20 to £25.

### **Other Options Considered**

8. The County Council has discretion over the type and level of non-statutory registration fees.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

9. The recommendation is made to gain approval for fees that will enable the Registration Service to off-set the cost of statutory services and provide the public with a range of service options at fees they are content to pay.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Financial Implications**

11. The proposed fees will enable the County Council to off-set the costs associated with providing registration services. Depending on the take-up of services by the public, it is possible that the service will be cost-neutral overall.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) It is recommended that approval be given for the proposed Registration Service fees, subject to any subsequent amendments, in line with imposed changes to national fees.

**PAUL MCKAY**

**Service Director, Access and Public Protection**

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**Constitutional Comments (LM 13/11/14)**

12. The recommendations in the report fall within the Terms of Reference of the Community Safety Committee.

**Financial Comments (KAS 17/11/14)**

13. The financial implications are contained within paragraph 11 of the report.

**Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- The Registrar General's Guidance to Authorities for the approval of premises as venues for civil marriage and civil partnerships' (Fifth Edition, Revised May 2014).

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- 'All'.