

**26 April 2016****Agenda Item: 12****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR SOUTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE  
AND PUBLIC PROTECTION  
PROPOSAL TO INCLUDE BRITISH PASSPORT APPLICATION CHECKING  
AS PART OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S NATIONALITY CHECKING  
SERVICE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to introduce a new fee for delivering the Home Office 'Joint Citizenship Application and Passport' service as part of the County Council's Nationality Checking Service.

**Information and Advice**Background

2. Customers use the existing Nationality Checking Service (NCS) to help ensure that their application form for British Citizenship has been completed correctly. Although this does not automatically make the process quicker, applications that are submitted to the Home Office with no errors are able to be processed without delay. This makes NCS a popular service.
3. The Joint Citizenship Application and Passport (JCAP) service enables individuals to have their passport form checked during their nationality checking appointment. Both forms are then sent by secure delivery to the Home Office for processing. Alternatively, individuals must wait until completion of their citizenship application process before they can begin their application for a new passport.

Experience of other local authorities

4. A number of other local authorities have participated in a Home Office 'pathfinder' exercise, which has informed revisions to the process for authorities wishing to introduce the service in spring 2016. It is anticipated that the service will be expanded to include all Nationality Checking Services within the next 12-18 months. The experience of those local authorities already offering this service is that approximately two thirds of applicants choose to apply for passports at the same time as naturalisation.

Proposal for Nottinghamshire

5. Customers making a joint application will complete a citizenship and a separate passport application form, both of which will be checked during their Nationality Checking Service appointment. Staff training has commenced to ensure that all staff who book and carry out the Nationality Checking Service are familiar with the changes to processes, and initial piloting (at no fee to customers) has been piloted in Nottinghamshire. All new training will cover the passport application checking as business as usual. It will not be necessary to change the length of appointments offered as the change has been accommodated in the time currently allowed.
6. The Home Office have confirmed that passport application checking can only be offered for those who are applying for British citizenship and cannot be done in connection with a passport application document (PD2) service (which customers can use in advance of a wedding to support their application for a new passport in their married name) or for any other citizens applying for passports, as they may at the Post Office currently. It may be possible to do this in the future should the national policy change to enable passport checking to be offered more widely.

### Proposed Fee

7. As this is an extra service for the customer it is recommended by the Home Office and other local authorities that have already developed their NCS offer to include an extra charge to the customer, between £10 -25 to cover their costs, with £10 being the average. It is proposed that the Nottinghamshire fee would be £10, and that this would be added to the existing NCS fee, for those choosing the joint service, bringing the new total to £75 for an adult applicant and £50 for a child.

### **Other Options Considered**

8. Consideration has been given to having a separate fee for passport application checking, however this option is not recommended due to the modest size of the fee and that the service must be offered as part of the Nationality Checking Service. Also, this approach was not taken by the pathfinder authorities.

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

9. The proposal offers the opportunity to introduce a positive development for the Nationality Checking Service. Customers will be able to apply for a British passport at the same time as applying to become a British Citizen.

### **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 proposal is an opportunity to generate additional income to offset the overall running costs of registration services.
12. In 2015/16 the NCS service in Nottinghamshire served 514 customers in 464 appointments. The gross income from the service was £28,395.00 in fees. Assuming similar public demand in 2016/17, and a two-thirds take-up of JCAP, it is expected that gross income will be increased by approximately £3.5k.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) It is recommended that approval is given for a new fee of an additional £10 for joint citizenship and passport applications as part of the County Council's Nationality Checking Service.

**PAUL MCKAY**

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## **Constitutional Comments (EP 04/04/2016)**

13. The recommendation falls within the remit of the Community Safety Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

## **Financial Comments (KAS 12/04/2016)**

14. The financial implications are contained within paragraphs 11 and 12 of the report.

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

- None

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

- All