

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET1 December 2022Director of Business Operations and PartnershipsCHARGING FOR SERVICES 2023-24 – BUSINESS OPERATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the outcomes of the charging for services exercise carried out within the Business Operations and Partnerships Department and to submit the fees and charges for 2023-24 for non-statutory Registration Fees and Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme for the academic year 2022-23.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet: -

- (a) Note that the statutory fees are set by National Records of Scotland (NRS) in November each year;
- (b) Increase all non-statutory fees and charges by 12.3% in line with the projected rate of inflation reflecting a combination of the Retail Prices Index (RPI) and Consumer Prices Index (CPI); and
- (c) Increase the existing administration charges for Bronze, Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award administration services. The increase falls below the projected rate of inflation.

**IMPACT OF CHARGES FOR 2021/22**

3. The charges set in previous years have allowed the registration service to provide a comparable service to other local authorities and to attract marriages which generate income.

4. Income from Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award administration charges did not reach the 2021/22 target due to a fall in the numbers of young people participating in DofE during the Covid recovery period. The increases proposed this year are intended to help achieve the existing target. Further increases in future years may be required as part of how the Council meets its budget challenges.

**DEPARTMENTAL OBJECTIVES FOR CHARGING**

5. Most charges for the Registration Service are nationally prescribed by NRS, although the Council has discretion over the non-statutory elements (see Appendix 1).

6. Continuation and increase of Duke of Edinburgh administration charges will generate additional income to meet the existing target and help maintain current service provision.

7. The statutory fees in relation to marriages and civil partnerships were increased in May 2022, for the first time in over a decade by the NRS (see Appendix 1).

## SERVICE REVIEWED AND PROPOSED CHARGES

### Registration

8. There have continued to be increased demands on the Registration service. There has been an upturn in wedding registrations, due to the covid backlog; an increase in death registration and steady demand for birth registration and copy certificates. The service has continued to operate on a remote basis for death registrations, although legislation changed on 24 September, allowing for choice of remote or face to face registrations for birth and death registration.

9. Improvements are being developed to provide customers with an online booking service, improving information on our website in relation to registration, introducing remote registration for births and offering face to face registrations for deaths as an option.

10. We have benchmarked with other Local Authorities and so far, Glasgow City Council, Renfrewshire Council and North Lanarkshire have confirmed they have no plans as yet to increase their non statutory registration fees for 2023-24.

11. The service needs to balance the need to be competitive with other councils and also other registered wedding options like humanists. The increase in NRS statutory fees in relation to marriages, will also be felt by our customers.

12. There is some risk that an inflationary uplift of 12.3% may drive customers to other providers, however, given the budgetary pressures for 2023/24, and the fact that these non-statutory charges relate to the wedding market, rather than death or birth registrations, it is recommended that Cabinet considers the full increase to non-statutory charges in line with inflation.

### Duke of Edinburgh

13. The Community Learning and Development Service are the Operating Authority for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme in East Renfrewshire and were appointed to this role by DofE Scotland. The service has responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the award across the authority ensuring that the guidelines set by the National DofE Programme are met and adhered to. As the operating authority, we hold the licence to support the delivery of DofE in all seven secondary schools and the East Renfrewshire Open Award Group. Duke of Edinburgh administration charges were introduced in academic year 2021/22. The administration fees reflect the administrative tasks associated with the delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, which includes the approval of Bronze, Silver & Gold completed awards. This involves officer time to approve each section (4 in total for Bronze/Silver and 5 for Gold) of the award for every young person registered to participate; this could be up to 700 young people per year. Staff are also responsible of producing certification for all completed sections and full awards. We will target a £10,000 income from these charges. (appendix 2)

14. An increase in DofE Administration charges may have implications, including: Potentially negatively affecting participation rates and increase financial barriers for families who are able to afford current costings.

15. We have an established system in place where young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and key groups (Care Experienced, ASN and SIMD 1 – 4) are supported to participate in the programme. This is agreed on a person-by-person basis and we can support families who are unable to pay, unable to pay in a one off payment, unable to pay the full costs involved in completing the award or have multiple children participating in the award programme at any one time. This system will continue with the introduction of new charges.

## IMPLICATION OF THE PROPOSALS

16. Based on the recommendations, it is estimated that the proposed changes in non-statutory registration charges will generate approximately £6,052 additional income for a 12.3% rise. This estimate is based on data from previous years and the information we have to date. Given the risk that we may lose business to other providers, if they do not increase their non-statutory charges, it is suggested that it would be prudent to assume £5K additional income in budgets for 2023/4 instead of the full amount.

17. Non statutory Registration fees in East Renfrewshire have historically been very competitive with other local authorities. The increase in fees will allow us the recovery of partial costs of this service.

18. There are no equalities implications arising from these proposals for non-statutory registration fees.

19. There are no current implications to service delivery. The projected £10,000 of income to be generated by this administration charge will allow the service to maintain the associated costs in delivering the wider DofE programme across the authority.

## CONSULTATION

20. The Registration Service will continue to benchmark with other Local Authorities and will monitor feedback from potential customers to assess impact.

21. Consultation in relation to Duke of Edinburgh financial income has taken place with Accountancy.

## CONCLUSIONS

22. The Registration Service operates to statutory charges and endeavours to recover partial cost of the service. It should be noted that customers will face the dual impact of increased statutory and non-statutory charges for 2023/24 as a result of budgetary pressures on public services – this may affect levels of demand for our marriage services.

23. It is considered that the continuation of charges for administration Duke of Edinburgh costs, as explained in this report, are justified and will bring additional income to the Council to help maintain service provision.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

24. It is recommended that Cabinet: -

- (a) Note that the statutory fees are set by National Records of Scotland (NRS) in November each year;
- (b) Increase all non-statutory fees and charges by 12.3% in line with the projected rate of inflation reflecting a combination of the Retail Prices Index (RPI) and Consumer Prices Index (CPI); and
- (c) Increase the existing administration charges for Bronze, Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award administration services. The increase falls below the projected rate of inflation.

Director of Business Operations and Partnerships

November 2022

Report Authors: Sarah Jane Hayes, Customer Service Manager & Susan Craynor, CLD  
Manager

## Appendix 1 – Non-Statutory Registration Fees

TYPE OF FEE (NON-STATUTORY)	2022-23	Proposed 23-24 12.3% increase
Marriage/Civil Partnership Accommodation Fee	£99.50	£111.74
Saturday Supplement	£131.00	£147.11
Sunday/Public Holiday Supplement	£189.00	£212.25
Administration Fee (Marriage)	£24.00	£26.95
Marriage/Civil Partnership fees for outside Venues (Mon-Fri during office hours)	£148.00	£166.20
Marriage/Civil Partnership fees for Licensed Premises (Saturday/Sunday/Public Holiday between 12.00 midday - 4.00 pm)	£181.50	£203.82

- Statutory Registration increase in May 2022 - Marriage and civil partnership Notice Forms increased by Registrar General from £30 to £45.00, payable by each person being married – this fee is paid for all ceremonies and includes religious weddings and ceremonies that are not performed by East Renfrewshire Registration staff.

**APPENDIX 2**

Table 1 – Duke of Edinburgh Administration Charges

Level	Academic year 21/22	Academic year 22/23
Bronze	£20 per academic year	£22 per academic year
Silver	£20 per academic year	£22 per academic year
Gold	£25 per academic year	£27 per academic year