

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Date of meeting: 22 May 2024

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Proposal for East Sussex County Council to charge new nationally set fees for Registration services.

Purpose: To seek approval to charge new Registration service fees and charges over which the County Council has no discretion. These statutory fees are set nationally by the Registrar General.

RECOMMENDATION: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Approve that East Sussex County Council charges fees for Registration services in line with legislation Regulation 5(1) of The Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Fees and Records) (Amendment) Regulations 2024; and
 - 2) Delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to approve any future changes in fees payable for Registration services in line with legislation.
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1 Background Information

1.1 The Registration Service provides a wide range of statutory and non-statutory services to residents of, and visitors to, the county. Key amongst these services are the registration of births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships, in addition to Citizenship Ceremonies for new British citizens.

1.2 Some of the fees levied by the Registration Service are agreed locally based on a cost recovery calculation, and the specific amounts for each service are proposed by the Communities, Economy and Transport department and approved by full council each year in the annual budget setting process.

1.3 Fees for statutory registration services are set nationally by the Registrar General, and include birth, death and marriage certificates, fees for giving notice of intention to marry or form a civil partnership, and fees for ceremonies when taking place at a statutory Register Office. Many of these fees have not been altered for many years and are now significantly out of line with the cost of providing the services.

1.4 On 7 May 2024 specific fees were detailed in a regulation laid in Parliament; changes to the fees have a commencement date of 28 May 2024.

1.5 This report seeks approval for East Sussex County Council (ESCC) to charge revised fees for Registration services in line with the Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Fees and Records) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. These statutory fees are not subject to VAT.

2 Supporting Information

2.1 The Registration Service currently provides all statutory services across the county and currently levies all of the statutory fees set by the Registrar General, with the exception of Certificates of Still-birth, and Certificates in cases of baby birth-death, which are currently provided at no cost to the customer.

2.2 The Registrar General's Executive Agency, the General Register Office, are clear that local authorities retain the power to waive or reduce these fees on an individual basis, as required, for example, in cases of genuine financial hardship, or Registrar error.

2.3 Many of the fees incorporated within the Regulations have not been updated for many years, and the fees being proposed have been informed and devised by work undertaken by local authorities across England and Wales to evidence the average cost of provision for these services.

Fee Proposals

2.4 Regulation 5(1) of the Regulations 2024 grants the Registrar General with powers to alter the statutory fees to be charged by local authorities for the provision of these Registration services. It is proposed that ESCC charge the new statutory fees from Monday 3 June 2024 and in accordance with the legislation.

2.5 The national statutory fees set by the Registrar General are as follows:

Service	Current Statutory Fee	New Statutory Fee
Statutory Marriage or Civil Partnership (CP)	£46	£56
Standard Certificate of Birth, Stillbirth, Death, Marriage or CP	£11	£12.50
Priority Certificate of Birth, Stillbirth, Death, Marriage or CP	£35	£38.50
Notice of Marriage/CP	£35	£42
Notice of Marriage/CP - Subject to Immigration Control	£47	£57
Consideration of Local Correction	£75	£83
Consideration of Correction by General Register Office (GRO)	£90	£99
Space 17 Name Change	£40	£44
28 Day Waiver Fee for Reduction in Notice Waiting Time	£60	£66
Local Consideration of Foreign Divorce	£50	£55
GRO Consideration of Foreign Divorce	£75	£83
CP Conversion to Marriage (paper-based process)	£45	£50
CP Conversion to Marriage (ceremony-based process)	£27	£30
General Search of Indexes	£18	£20
Housebound Marriage/CP	£165	£199
Housebound Notice of Marriage/CP	£47	£57
Detained Marriage/CP	£182	£219
Detained Notice of Marriage/CP	£68	£82
Registrar General's License	£15	£18
Register at Church Fee	£86	£104
Certification of place of meeting for religious worship	£29	£32
Registration of religious building for marriage/CP, already registered	£64	£71
Registration of religious building for marriage/CP, not yet registered	£123	£136
Certificate of No Impediment for marriage/CP abroad	£35	£38.50

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 The cost to ESCC of providing Registration services increases each year and many of the current statutory fees are now significantly out of line with the cost of providing these services.

3.2 It is proposed, if approved, that for fairness and transparency reasons, customers who have already pre-paid for services, such as Certificates, Statutory Marriage/CPs, and Notice appointments for their upcoming Marriage/CP, will not be asked to pay the difference in fees; so only new customer bookings and orders will be levied at the new statutory fee rates.

3.3 It is recommended that the Lead Member for Transport and Environment approves that ESCC charge the new statutory fees (as determined by the Regulations) for the relevant registration services; and to delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to approve any future changes in fees payable for Registration services in line with legislation.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None