

Introduction

The Registration and Citizenship Service offers a range of services from marriages and civil partnerships, nationality and citizenship through to the registration of births and deaths. The service also maintains historical records from which members of the public can request copies.

A range of fees both statutory and non statutory are charged and overall the proposed new fees and increased marketing of the service will ensure that the costs of the non-statutory services are fully recovered.

The current and proposed charges and fees are attached as Appendix 14.1

The Registration and Citizenship Service has a perishability factor. Once a Ceremony Room slot has past it cannot be resold. Whilst the service is not operated to make a profit there is an emphasis on maximising demand. This emphasis will grow going forward as the department is marketed more proactively which is anticipated to result in more ceremonies taking place and increased revenue. Revenue generated will be reinvested to enhance the customer experience to boost The Civic Suites profile. A deposit scheme is being looked into to ensure that 'no shows' are minimised both in financial terms and also ensuring that the facilities are maximised.

The statutory £43.50 wedding / CP service ensures that the service is accessible to all residents. The non statutory wedding / CP service combined with approved premises services enable an enhanced service to be offered to those that desire it.

Analysis of Cost and Income

A full review of current costs has been undertaken based on estimated staff time spent on the statutory and non statutory functions provided by the service. This has been used along with benchmarking data from neighbouring boroughs to set the proposed charges from January as set out in Appendix 14.1.

These revised charges along with plans to better market and develop services thus increasing volumes should enable an increase in income of circa £57k without increasing resources. Assuming forecast volumes are achieved, the non-statutory services should break even and the net cost of the service overall should be reduced to circa £50k.

Fees and Charges Proposals

The service is proposing to raise fees for marriages and civil partnerships by an average of 20% and to keep fees for the Nationality Checking Service at current levels. This will generate an additional £20k in revenue in 2011-12 based on existing volumes. If services are marketed more proactively as outlined above, demand should increase which should lead to further income generation which is estimated to achieve a further £37k.

Raising the fees for ceremonies by around 20% allows the service to continue to be competitive but will allow it to move closer towards full cost recovery overall. Full cost recovery for each service is not felt realistic at this time as this would require a substantial increase in fees, which would in all probability, be counter productive, reduce demand and make Haringey uncompetitive.

The Council's current fees for the Nationality Checking Service are already higher than many of the neighbouring boroughs. The impact of the VAT increase coupled with a rise in fees would only serve to reduce demand for the NCS service in Haringey; this is a service the business hopes to grow.

Concessions and Discounts

Many of the Registration and Citizenship Services fees are statutory and cannot be raised or reduced by the Council. Statutory fees are set at modest levels that are affordable to all sections of the community.

Methods of Payment

Customers can pay by credit or debit card, cash or personal cheque. Payment by card (credit or debit) incurs a £3.00 administration fee.

B – Local Land Charges Service

Introduction

The service currently charges for access to property records and is now proposing a new charge for the naming and numbering of buildings, a function also carried out by this service.

Access to Property Records

Charges for this service are subject to the Local Authorities (England) (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008. These state that the charge for access to property records made during a financial year must be calculated by dividing a reasonable estimate of the likely total costs to the local authority in granting access to property records (and performing internal transactions) during the financial year; by a reasonable estimate of the number of requests for access to property records likely to be received (from another person or different departments of the authority) over that same financial year.

A local authority must take all reasonable steps to ensure that over the course of any period of three consecutive financial years, the total income (including notional income from internal transactions) from such charges and recharges does not exceed the total costs of granting access to property records.

Where under paragraph a local authority makes an overestimate or underestimate of the unit charge for a financial year, it must take this into account in determining the unit charge for the following financial year.

The current charges are shown in Appendix 14.1 and any revisions to charges for 2011/12 will not be calculated until year end to allow for any over or under recovery to be factored in.

The budgeted income for 2010/11 is £362k.