

SPECIAL ANGUS COUNCIL

27 FEBRUARY 2025

REVIEW OF CHARGES WITHIN LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND CHANGE DIRECTORATE

REPORT BY ALISON WATSON, ACTING DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND CHANGE AND IAN LORIMER, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

1. ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for the charges to be levied by service areas within the Legal, Governance and Change Directorate for the financial year 2025/26. This applies to charges by the Registration Service and charges relating to Property/Conveyancing transactions. The report also puts forward proposals to increase certain Registration fees by a greater percentage than the proposed standard increase and explains the rationale for this proposal.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

- 2.1 This report contributes as a whole to the delivery of the Council Plan.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- (i) approves the re-charge of all Angus Alive room hire fees to customers of the Registration Service where applicable;
- (ii) approves the reduction in the numbers of attendees at a basic civil wedding/civil partnership ceremony, naming ceremony and renewal of marriage vows ceremony within the marriage rooms, for which basic fees are charged (as required by the National Records for Scotland), from “up to 10 attendees” to “up to 4 attendees” as detailed in paragraph 4.2;
- (iii) approves the removal of “over 10” attendees as it currently applies to the Accommodation Fee charged for civil wedding/civil partnership ceremonies, naming ceremonies and renewal of marriage vows ceremonies within the marriage rooms;
- (iv) approves the percentage increases for Registration charges in lines 50-54 of Appendix 1, at the rate of 17.5%;
- (v) notes the proposal that the remainder of charges covered by this report, including the remaining Registration fees and all Property/Conveyancing fees, are increased by 5%;
- (vi) approves the pricing structures as contained within Appendix 1; and
- (vii) agrees that the charges are effective from 1 April 2025.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 This report applies to charges made by the Registration Service and charges made relating to Property/Conveyancing transactions. The Registration of Births, Deaths and Ceremonies sits with the Legal, Governance and Change Directorate. Recommendations i) to iv) of this report pertain specifically to the Registration Service. Currently, the Registration Service is absorbing the costs paid to Angus Alive for the hire of marriage rooms in Montrose and Arbroath as these are not passed on to customers. This is unsustainable and Members are asked to agree to the re-charging of said fees to customers where applicable. Current fees charged by Angus Alive are £45 per hour, with a minimum of two hours being charged per booking.
- 4.2 Currently a reduced “basic” fee of £155 is applied to civil wedding, civil partnership, naming ceremonies and renewal of marriage vows conducted within the marriage rooms. Members are being asked to reduce the number of attendees for which basic fees are charged (as required by the National Records for Scotland) from up to 10 attendees to up to 4 attendees. No matter the number of attendees, the cost of time for Registrar attendance is the same. Members are also asked to remove the caveat of “over 10” from the charge applied to civil wedding, civil partnership, naming ceremonies and renewal of marriage vows conducted within the marriage rooms. The effect will be the basic fee of £155 will be charged for a ceremony attended by up to 4 people. A higher fee will be charged for all ceremonies attended by over 4 people.
- 4.3 Many fees charged by the Registration Service are set by statute. In relation to the fees that are non-statutory, a benchmarking exercise has been undertaken by the Registration Service looking at fees charged by other Registration Services across Scotland. The exercise assisted in drawing the conclusion that Angus Council’s ceremony fees are at the lower end of the fees scale compared to the fees charged in other local authority areas. The proposal for Members is, as per lines 50-54 of Appendix 1, some fees charged currently are increased by 17.5%. These are the fees for a Registrar to conduct a civil marriage ceremony, civil partnership or citizenship ceremony on a Saturday, Sunday, public holiday, and at an Approved Place within normal hours, as well as an Accommodation Fee for the use of the ceremony rooms within Registration Offices.
- 4.4 The remaining charges covered by this report are reviewed annually by the Legal, Governance and Change Directorate and all amendments to charges are reported to Members on an annual basis as part of the budget setting process. The last annual review of charges was reported to Angus Council on 29 February 2024 (Report No. 55/24 refers). Members are asked to note that Registrars and Assistant Registrars are paid a supplementary fee for attending to conduct out of hours ceremonies in addition to an annual clothing allowance. As a result of the proposal for the incoming fee to increase, it is intended that we would make a corresponding 5% increase in the supplementary fees paid. The increase has been considered as part of the preparation of Appendix 1.
- 4.5 The review of charges for 2025/26 has been carried out as part of the budget setting process and it is proposed that the percentage increase be standardised in the main across the council to 5%, before accounting for VAT, where applicable. The charging structure attached in the Appendix 1, has been prepared on the basis of this percentage increase, rounded up to the nearest 5p.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The proposals summarised in the tables in the attached Appendix 1 would come into force on 1 April 2025.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 It is estimated that the increased charges for the Legal, Governance and Change Directorate, as detailed in Appendix 1, will generate additional income of approximately £10,000.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Corporate Risk Register

- Financial Sustainability
- Transforming for the Future

7.2 Directorate Risk Register

- Delivery of directorate priorities

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and can be found at this [link](#).

10. CHILDRENS RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1 The “General Principles” do not apply to this proposal.

11. CONSULTATION

11.1 The Chief Executive has been consulted on this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report are:

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Review of Charges - Legal, Governance & Change