

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

Date 25 November 2021

Report by the Deputy Chief Executive

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

CHARGING FOR SERVICES 2022/23

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 Corporate and Community Services Department and to submit the fees and charges for 2022/23. We also seek formal Cabinet approval to introduce administration charges for all participants of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme as agreed as part of last year's Budget settlement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet:-
- (a) Increase all non-statutory fees and charges by 3.7% for 2022/23 in line with the forecasted rate of inflation.
 - (b) Note that the statutory fees are set by National Records of Scotland (NRS) in November each year.
 - (c) Introduce a charge to provide all administrative duties in order for young people to register for, participate in and complete the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme (DofE), including award verification and certification to take effect in the academic year 2021/22. Background information regarding the Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme in East Renfrewshire can be found in Appendix 2.

IMPACT OF CHARGES FOR 2020/21

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. There has been no charge for Duke of Edinburgh administration costs in 2020/21

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. At this stage there is no confirmed increase for statutory fees but further announcements are usually made around November of each year.

7. To introduce charges for administration costs for the Duke of Edinburgh Programme, as explained in this report, to generate additional income help maintain service provision.

SERVICE REVIEWED AND PROPOSED CHARGES FOR 2022/23

8. There have continued to be increased demands on the Registration service due to the ongoing impact of the Coronavirus (Covid19) pandemic. The service continues to operate on a remote basis for death registrations, also enquires relating to wedding ceremonies continue to be high due to the length of time that restrictions were in place.

9. We have benchmarked with other Local Authorities and to date there is no data available in relation to their non-statutory fees for 2022/23.

10. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the increase of all non-statutory fees and charges by 3.7% in line with inflation for 2022/23.

11. The proposed administration cost for the Duke of Edinburgh Award is £20 per participant per academic year for bronze and silver level and £25 per participant per academic year for gold level. In year one as we recover from the impact that the COVID 19 pandemic has had on services and how restrictions influence how Duke of Edinburgh is delivered we will target a £10000 income from these charges. (See Appendix 3)

IMPLICATION OF THE PROPOSALS

12. Based on the recommendations, it is estimated that the proposed changes in non-statutory registration charges will generate approximately £1,746 additional income in 2022/23. This estimate is based on data from previous years and the information we have to date.

13. Non statutory Registration fees in East Renfrewshire have historically been very competitive with other local authorities. The increase in fees ensures that we remain comparable with other local authorities while, where possible, recovering the full cost of the service.

14. There are no equalities implications of the proposal to increase non statutory registration fees.

15. The introduction of administration charges for the Duke of Edinburgh Award may have equality implications, including:

Potentially negatively affecting participation rates and increase financial barriers for families who are able to afford current costings.

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. Income generated by this administration charge will allow the service to maintain the associated costs in delivering the wider DofE programme across the authority.

CONSULTATION

- 16. The Registration Service will compare fees with other local authorities.
- 17. Consultation in relation to financial income has taken place with the Department's finance partners and with all seven secondary schools within the authority who participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme.

CONCLUSIONS

- 18. The Registration Service operates to statutory charges and endeavours to recover close to the full cost of the service.
- 19. It is considered that the introduction of the charges for administration costs for the Duke of Edinburgh Programme, as explained in this report, are justified and will bring additional income to the Council to help maintain service provision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 20. It is recommended that Cabinet:-
 - (a) Note that the statutory fees are set by National Records of Scotland (NRS) in November each year; and
 - (b) Increase all non-statutory fees and charges by 3.7%, in line with inflation for 2022/23.
 - (c) Approve a charge to provide all administrative duties in order for young people to register, participate and complete the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme (DofE), including award verification and certification.

Deputy Chief Executive

December 2021

Report Author: Sarah Jane Hayes Customer Service Manager/Susan Craynor
Community Learning and Development Manager

Convener Contact Details:

Registration Services - Councillor Buchanan, Leader of the Council Tel: 0141 577 3107

Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme - Councillor Merrick, Convener for Community Services and Community Safety Tel: 0141 577 3143

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Appendix 1 – Non Statutory Registration Fees

TYPE OF FEE (NON STATUTORY)	2021/22	Proposed 2022/23
Marriage/Civil Partnership Accommodation Fee	£96.00	£99.50
Saturday Supplement	£126.50	£131.00
Sunday/Public Holiday Supplement	£182.50	£189.00
Administration Fee (Marriage)	£23.50	£24.00
Marriage/Civil Partnership fees for outside Venues (Mon-Fri during office hours)	£142.50	£148.00
Marriage/Civil Partnership fees for Licensed Premises (Saturday/Sunday/Public Holiday between 12.00 midday - 4.00 pm)	£175.00	£181.50

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Appendix 2

BACKGROUND

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. As the operating authority CLD also provide training and assessment for all staff and volunteers. Young people are required to undertake 4 sections at Bronze and Silver levels (physical, skills, volunteering and expedition) and 5 at Gold (physical, skills, volunteering, expedition and residential) to complete the full award. Participants pay a standard fee to take part in the expedition section of the award. This fee covers the costs associated in providing equipment, travel, transport and additional staffing costs incurred by the department to run expeditions.

All DofE administration services are currently provided free of charge. We have considered where there are opportunities to introduce charges that will increase the income received by the Community Learning and Development Team. The administration involved in delivering the award authority wide involves a significant time commitment from officers. It is therefore considered reasonable for a charge to be made which helps cover the cost (mainly staff time) of providing the service. The proposal would involve introducing a charge for the following administrative tasks associated with delivering DofE Award;

- Approval of Bronze, Silver & Gold completed awards. This involves officer's 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.
- The certification of all completed sections and full awards.

If charges are introduced the service would:

- provide information to all new and existing all schools, participants and their families of the introduction of a new administration fee
- have charges that are fair and reflect the amount of work undertaken;
- be clear about what participants will receive for their paid service;

The service will provide written documentation to all participants detailing the charges and the processes in place for making payments.

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Appendix 3

Table 1 – Administration Charges	
Bronze	£20 per academic year
Silver	£20 per academic year
Gold	£25 per academic year

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