

Appendix 6b – Registration Service

1. Background

- Local Registration Services are able to set fees on a cost recovery only basis, for any non-statutory services they deliver and for certain statutory services they deliver in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 (powers to local authorities to promote economic, social and environmental well-being within their boundaries).
- Rotherham Registration Service aims to review such fees on an annual basis.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Rotherham Registration Service must be in a position to recover the costs of delivering services whilst remaining competitive with neighbouring services.
- 2.2 Registration Services must be delivered at a cost that will potentially attract business to the borough.
- 2.3 Costs must be set and collected in a way that promotes effective business and convenience for the customer.

3. Key actions and relevant timelines

- 3.1 Revise fees with effect from 01.04.2017.
 - 3.1.1 The revised fees should apply to events taking place on or after 01.04.2017, irrespective of when the booking was made.
 - 3.1.2. Ceremony bookings can be made up to two years in advance. Approval should be received no later than 31.03.2017 to allow a reasonable period of notification to those with existing bookings.
 - 3.1.3 Revised fees reflect additional administration and revised financial accounting in accordance with new Local Registration Service good practice guidance. This has resulted in additional administration charges being incorporated into the fees, which have in some cases contributed to the level of fee increase. As non-statutory ceremonies (naming and renewal) are not subject to legislative changes and processes have allowed for a streamlining of administration and training, some of these fees have reduced. Rotherham has a low take up of non-statutory ceremonies and the reduced fees may attract additional business.
 - 3.1.4 Revised fees are detailed in Appendix 1.
 - 3.1.5 Benchmarking data is at Appendix 2.
- 3.2 Introduce a booking and administration fee with effect from 01.04.2017. The fees would apply to any booking made or changed on or after 01.04.2017.

- 3.2.1 A non-refundable booking fee would secure a provisional ceremony booking, up to the point that it becomes a confirmed booking. Ceremony bookings are provisional up to the point that the couple complete all legal paperwork confirming the couple are lawfully free to marry in this country. The earliest point legal paperwork can be completed is one year in advance of the ceremony date. There is a significant amount of administration involved in provisional ceremony bookings, and the service would recoup the cost in the form of a booking fee. This has proved successful in other authorities and all neighbouring authorities charge a booking fee, see benchmarking data.
- 3.2.2 A non-refundable administration fee would enable the service to recoup the cost incurred when bookings are changed. A change, for example, of the date, time, venue, requires the majority of the booking process to be repeated. The administration fee should therefore be equivalent to the booking fee.
- 3.2.3 The booking fee is not applicable to private citizenship ceremonies as funding, which includes a booking element, is provided by the Home Office.
- 3.3 Alter the availability of statutory marriage ceremonies to Thursday Mornings only with effect from 01.04.2017.
 - 3.3.1 This would apply to bookings made on or after 01.04.2017.
 - 3.3.2 Approval should be received no later than 31.03.2017 to allow a reasonable period of notice of the updated offering.
 - 3.3.3 The Registration Service is required to provide a venue for basic statutory ceremonies, in Rotherham's case, Clifton Park Museum and two Registration Officers to officiate. When delivering a basic statutory marriage ceremony, Registration Services are permitted to charge only the statutory fee of £50.00 set by the Registrar General. These ceremonies are conducted at a considerable financial loss. Take up of such ceremonies is often based on personal preference not cost, for example couples who require a legal ceremony and are to have a cultural celebration elsewhere or couples who wish to marry in a simple ceremony with a minimum of guests. Couples who prefer a ceremony at other times are generally not influenced by cost and would therefore not be disadvantaged.
 - 3.3.4 An alternative day would be made available should there be an essential event at Clifton Park Museum on a Thursday morning that prevents the ceremony room being available. This would be an exception.
 - 3.3.5 Delivering the ceremonies consecutively, on a single day each week would mean registration officers spend less time travelling to and from Clifton Park Museum, making delivery more efficient and cost effective.
 - 3.3.6 In the year ending 31.03.16 there were 69 statutory ceremonies, on average 6 per month. The rationalisation would in effect offer 3 ceremonies per week, more than is required but managed by booking consecutive ceremonies, this would allow for efficiencies.

3.3.7 In times of financial constraints it has become common to rationalise when the ceremonies are offered. A neighbouring example would be Sheffield Registration Service, which offers statutory ceremonies on the third Wednesday of each month.

3.4 Terms and conditions would be amended accordingly.

4. Recommendations

4.1 To increase fees and charges on a cost recovery basis, as detailed in Appendix 1, from 01.04.2017.

4.2 To introduce a ceremony booking and administration fee, as detailed in Appendix 1, from 01.04.2017.

4.3 Rationalise the statutory ceremony offering to every Thursday to generate efficiencies and reduce income loss.

Appendix 1 Fees and Charges

Booking fee £	25.00				
Administration fee £	25.00				
Clifton Park Museum*					
* Fees include 1 certificate					
* Fees exclude the booking fee					
Marriage and Civil Partnership					
Offering	Availability	Current Fee £	Proposed Fee	Increase £	Increase %
Statutory	Thurs am only	50	Statutory	0	0
Enhanced	Mon- Thurs	165	200	35	21
Premium	Friday	200	205	5	3
Premium	Sat	200	245	45	23
Naming & Renewal of Vows					
	Mon- Thurs	175	230	55	31
	Fri	220	280	60	27
	Sat	220	295	75	34
Private Citizenship					
	Mon- Fri	150	150	0	0
Approved Venues					
* Fees include 1 certificate					
* Fees exclude the booking fee					
Marriage and Civil Partnership					
Availability		Current Fee £	Proposed Fee	Increase £	Increase %
Mon- Fri		250	285	35	14
Sat		300	345	45	15
Sun		300	370	70	23
Bank Holiday & 18:00-20:00		410	475	65	16
Naming & Renewal of Vows					
Mon- Fri		300	275	-25	decrease
Sat		370	345	-25	decrease
Sun		370	375	5	1
Bank Holiday & 18:00-20:00		495	500	5	1

Appendix 2 Benchmarking data

Marriage and Civil Partnership					
Authority	Venue	Availability	Booking fee £	Ceremony fee £	Total £
Rotherham	Clifton Park Museum	Mon-Thu	25	200	225
Barnsley	Register Office	Mon-Thu	26	116	142
Doncaster	Register Office	Mon-Thu	25	100	125
Sheffield	Register Office	Mon-Thu	50	184	234
Rotherham	Clifton Park Museum	Friday	25	205	230
Barnsley	Register Office	Friday	26	138	164
Doncaster	Register Office	Friday	25	100	125
Sheffield	Register Office	Friday	50	184	234
Rotherham	Clifton Park Museum	Saturday	25	245	270
Barnsley	Register Office	Saturday	26	165	191
Doncaster	Register Office	Saturday	25	100	125
Sheffield	Register Office	Saturday	50	184	234
Rotherham	Approved Venue	Mon-Thu	25	285	310
Barnsley	Approved Venue	Mon-Thu	26	310	336
Doncaster	Approved Venue	Mon-Thu	25	265	290
Sheffield	Approved Venue	Mon-Thu	50	304	354
Rotherham	Approved Venue	Friday	25	285	310
Barnsley	Approved Venue	Friday	26	349	375
Doncaster	Approved Venue	Friday	25	305	330
Sheffield	Approved Venue	Friday	50	304	354
Rotherham	Approved Venue	Saturday	25	345	370
Barnsley	Approved Venue	Saturday	26	444	470
Doncaster	Approved Venue	Saturday	25	430	455
Sheffield	Approved Venue	Saturday	50	334	384
Rotherham	Approved Venue	Sunday	25	370	395
Barnsley	Approved Venue	Sunday	26	452	478
Doncaster	Approved Venue	Sunday	25	555	580
Sheffield	Approved Venue	Sunday	50	334	384
Rotherham	Approved Venue	Bank Hol	25	475	500
Barnsley	Approved Venue	Bank Hol	26	452	478
Doncaster	Approved Venue	Bank Hol	25	555	580
Sheffield	Approved Venue	Bank Hol	50	434	484
No benchmarking for 18:00 to 20:00 as it is not offered by neighbouring authorities					
Renewal of Vows and Naming Ceremonies					
Rotherham	Clifton Park Museum	Mon-Thu	25	230	255
Barnsley	Register Office	Mon-Thu	26	N/A	N/A
Doncaster	Register Office	Mon-Thu	25	106	131

Sheffield	Register Office	Mon-Thu	50	180	230
Rotherham	Clifton Park Museum	Friday	25	280	305
Barnsley	Register Office	Friday	26	N/A	N/A
Doncaster	Register Office	Friday	25	125	150
Sheffield	Register Office	Friday	50	180	230
Rotherham	Clifton Park Museum	Saturday	25	295	320
Barnsley	Register Office	Saturday	26	N/A	N/A
Doncaster	Register Office	Saturday	25	125	150
Sheffield	Register Office	Saturday	50	180	230
Rotherham	Approved Venue	Mon-Thu	25	275	300
Barnsley	Approved Venue	Mon-Thu	26	165	191
Doncaster	Approved Venue	Mon-Thu	25	180	205
Sheffield	Approved Venue	Mon-Thu	50	180	230
Rotherham	Approved Venue	Friday	25	275	300
Barnsley	Approved Venue	Friday	26	165	191
Doncaster	Approved Venue	Friday	25	180	205
Sheffield	Approved Venue	Friday	50	180	230
Rotherham	Approved Venue	Saturday	25	345	370
Barnsley	Approved Venue	Saturday	26	165	191
Doncaster	Approved Venue	Saturday	25	251	276
Sheffield	Approved Venue	Saturday	50	180	230
Rotherham	Approved Venue	Sunday	25	395	420
Barnsley	Approved Venue	Sunday	26	165	191
Doncaster	Approved Venue	Sunday	25	300	325
Sheffield	Approved Venue	Sunday	50	204	254
Rotherham	Approved Venue	Bank Hol	25	500	525
Barnsley	Approved Venue	Bank Hol	26	165	191
Doncaster	Approved Venue	Bank Hol	25	300	325
Sheffield	Approved Venue	Bank Hol	50	204	254
No benchmarking for 18:00 to 20:00 as it is not offered by neighbouring authorities					
Private Citizenship					
Rotherham	Clifton Park Museum	Mon- Fri	0	150	0
Barnsley	Register Office	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Doncaster	Register Office	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sheffield	Register Office	Mon- Fri	0	50	0