

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 6 FEBRUARY 2001

ITEM No 6

**INCREASE IN CHARGE FOR USE OF MARRIAGE ROOM
INTRODUCTION OF CIVIL MARRIAGE BOOKING FEE DEPOSIT**

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF LAW AND ADMINISTRATION

ABSTRACT

This Report formally seeks approval to the application of an increase in the charge for the use of marriage room facilities and the introduction of a non refundable reservation fee for civil marriage bookings.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee approve:-

- (a) an increase of £5 to £30 in the charge for the use of marriage room facilities; and
- (b) the introduction of a reservation fee deposit of £30 for civil marriage bookings.

2. BACKGROUND**(a) Fee For Use of Marriage Room Facilities**

Reference is made to Report No 155/00 approved by this Committee on 8 February 2000 when it was agreed to introduce a charge of £25 for the use of marriage room facilities for wedding parties exceeding a total number of 10 persons.

It is appropriate to reconsider this charge in light of the preparation of the Departmental Revenue Budget for 2001/2002. Accordingly, it is recommended that, with effect from 1 April 2001, the existing fee for the use of marriage room facilities should be increased to £30.

(b) Introduction Of Deposit For Booking A Civil Marriage

When couples decide to get married by civil ceremony in a Registration Office, they approach the Registrar, sometimes up to a year in advance, and select a day and time which is then reserved. Subsequent to this, they are only required to revisit the Registrar three weeks prior to the event to complete the formal marriage preliminaries and pay the statutory fees. In the event of the couple not revisiting the Registrar, this marriage cannot proceed and the booking is cancelled. The time cannot be reallocated because of the three week notice period.

An analysis has recently been carried out by the Council's Senior Registrar into the number of marriages which did not proceed after initial booking. In the calendar year 1999, 45 proposed marriages were cancelled. In the year 2000, to October, 22 were cancelled and in 75% of these cases, no prior notification was received. The majority of these bookings are for the prime time slots such as Friday afternoons or, in the case of the Arbroath Office, Saturday mornings, which effectively prevents other couples from being allocated these times. The requirement for a deposit at the time of booking would therefore be appropriate.

It is proposed that a non refundable reservation fee of £30 should be introduced for civil marriage bookings, which would subsequently be deducted from the total fees payable if the marriage proceeded. This fee is charged by most Councils and has proved to be a deterrent to impulsive bookings and has the knock-on effect of making the more popular wedding days and times available for genuine bookings without incurring additional costs to the parties.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- (a) It is anticipated that the increased charge for the use of marriage room facilities would generate additional income of £500 in the year 2001/2002.
- (b) A reservation fee is unlikely to generate much income but its introduction should reduce impulsive bookings.

4. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATION

There are no human rights implications arising from this Report.

5. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive and the Director of Finance have been consulted on the contents of this Report.

CATHERINE A COULL
Director of Law and Administration

NOTE: No background papers as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing this Report.