

| | |
|---|---|
| Cabinet Wednesday, 29 th November 2023 |  TOWER HAMLETS |
| Report of: Julie Lorraine Corporate Director, Resources | Classification: Open (Unrestricted) |
| New fees for the Garden Suite at St. Georges Town Hall – Register Office | |

| | |
|--|---|
| Lead Member | Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding |
| Originating Officer(s) | Raj Chand, (Director, Customer Services) |
| Wards affected | All Wards); |
| Key Decision? | No |
| Reason for Key Decision | This report has been reviewed as not meeting the Key Decision criteria. |
| Forward Plan Notice Published | 20 September 2023 |
| Exempt information | N/A |
| Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome | Boost Culture, business, jobs and leisure, invest in public services, a council that works for you and listens to you |

Executive Summary

To agree new fees being introduced by the Registration Service for post wedding celebrations in the new Garden Suite at St. Georges Town Hall. This item is being proposed to allow customers and residents the opportunity to hire a new space within St. Georges Town Hall (the Register Office). The new room, called the Garden Suite, will be completed by October 2023 and it will be available initially for post wedding celebrations as part of wedding packages. This will mean that the room will only be available during office hours (including Saturdays and Sundays when weddings are booked) but not exceeding 6pm due to the close proximity of residents and noise disturbance. There will also be scope in the future, when the room is not booked out for post wedding celebrations, to dry hire the room at the weekends, for any other function within the community. A consultation with residents will take place in the future if it is decided to hire the room out beyond office hours.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Authorise the Corporate Director Resources to agree new fees being introduced by the Registration Service for post wedding celebrations in the new Garden Suite at St. Georges Town Hall as set out in section 3.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 This item is being proposed to allow customers and residents the opportunity to hire a new space within St. Georges Town Hall (the Register Office). The new room, called the Garden Suite, will be completed by October 2023 and it will be available initially for post wedding celebrations as part of wedding packages.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 N/A

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Registration service is based at St. Georges Town Hall in Cable Street. The building is used for the legal and statutory registrations of births, deaths, marriages, and civil partnerships as well as marriage, civil partnership, and citizenship ceremonies.
- 3.2 The newly decorated Garden Suite is based on the ground floor of St. Georges Town Hall and was originally refurbished to be rented out to a contractor for a café type facility. Unsuccessful tenders resulted in the prospect of renting out the space as not viable due to lack of interest. The Superintendent asked to take over the space and to use it as a post-wedding function room, to be offered to wedding parties after their ceremony for an additional fee over and above the cost of the statutory wedding ceremony.
- 3.3 The proposed fee structure is a basic dry hire fee. Once it becomes more established, we will investigate offerings for more bespoke wedding packages to include caterers, room decorations, flowers etc.
- 3.4 In the future, we are also intending on hiring out the Garden Suite beyond the registration service functions to include weekend events such as birthday parties, mehndi, and other celebrations which will benefit not only ceremony couples, but the local community and Tower Hamlets residents looking for a room to hire.

| | 3 Hour Hire (times in T&Cs below) |
|--|--|
| Monday – Friday (excluding Bank Holidays) | £400* |
| Saturday | £600* |
| Sunday and Bank Holidays | £800* |
| Late Exit Fee (min charge) | £100* |
| Cleaning/Damage (min charge) | £50* |
| Cleaning/Damage Fee | As invoiced |

*VAT included

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no implications specific to this report.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding,
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 There are no statutory implications.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 The new fees would generate additional income for the Council. Current estimates suggest that the income could be £62k next year rising to £104k in three years. However, the actual income will depend on the level of demand for the new service.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 The Council has a wide discretion to set a suitable fee for the use of its assets.

7.2 However, any decision of the Council could be subject to judicial review on the grounds that such a decision was not a decision a reasonable Council might make in the circumstances. However, comparison with other venue

hire fees shown in the appendix suggests that the set fee is one which another reasonable authority might alight upon in the circumstances.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Benchmarking – Garden Suite August 2023
- Appendix 2 – Wedding Brochure Draft August 2023 (final copy in hard back now available)
- Appendix 3 – Garden Suite at St. Georges Town Hall Proposed Fees and Charges
- Appendix 4 – Financial Projection of Income for Fees from St. Georges Town Hall Garden Suite

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE.

Officer contact details for documents:

Raj Chand, (Director, Customer Services)