

Forward Plan reference number: Not applicable

Report title: 2024/25 Proposed Fees and Charges - Essex Record Office	
Report to: Councillor Mark Durham, Cabinet Member for the Arts, Heritage and Culture.	
Report author: Sam Kennedy, Director, Environment and Climate Action	
Date: 16 February 2023	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Martin Astell, Essex Record Office Manager, email: martin.astell@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Everyone's Essex

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to implement the proposed charges in the Essex Record Office, from April 2024.
- 1.2 The Essex Record Office provides a range of services. These contribute to making Essex a great place for children and families to grow up, as well as benefitting the health wellbeing of people in Essex.
- 1.3 The Essex Record Office charges for some services it provides in order to help limit cost and drive revenue growth.
- 1.4 The benefits for Essex residents of approving the recommendation of this report are that Essex County Council (ECC) can limit the cost of providing the archive service for the County while ensuring that fees charged, particularly for commercial services, remain competitive and reasonable.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To authorise the implementation of the proposed charges as set out in Appendix 2 from 1 April 2024.

3 Background and Proposal

- 3.1 A range of Heritage and Culture services are currently delivered from the Essex Record Office (ERO). The services include the county Archive Service, which acquires, preserves and makes available documents, maps, images and sound and video recordings. This collection tells the story of nearly 1,000 years of history for the County of Essex and is made available for people to use and enjoy and makes a valuable contribution to increasing Essex residents' sense of place and community. The ERO Services deliver both important statutory and non-statutory services to our communities.
- 3.2 The ERO offers a wide variety of services. Some are offered primarily as a benefit to the public, enabling people to benefit from the value of collections

held by ERO in ways which are most convenient to them. Other services are offered on a commercial basis.

- 3.3 The appropriateness of individual charges has been determined by consideration of ensuring full cost recovery where appropriate, benchmarking and market insight (customer & competitor), as well as an annual inflationary increase review in line with ECC's Fees and Charges Policy.
- 3.4 For most charges, the agreed ECC rate of 4.1% inflation is proposed (in most cases rounded to provide a more convenient figure for both customers and staff). For talks given by Archivists, it is proposed to have no increase and keep the charges at the same figure as for 2023/24.
- 3.5 In terms of benchmarking, when considering fees such as camera licences, reprographics and search services the proposed fees have been compared to those of other similar record offices. Conference Centre fees have been compared to other venue hire offers in the Chelmsford area. Subscription fees have been compared to similar online genealogy services.

4 Links to our Strategic Ambitions

- 4.1 This report links to the following aims in the Essex Vision
 - Enjoy life into old age
 - Strengthen communities through participation
 - Connect us to each other and the world
- 4.2 Approving the recommendations in this report will have the following impact on the Council's ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030:
 - No impact
- 4.3 This report links to the following strategic priorities in the 'Everyone's Essex' Organisational Strategy:
 - Health wellbeing and independence for all ages
 - A good place for children and families to grow

5 Options

- 5.1 **Option 1: Approve the proposed Fees and Charges (Recommended).** Authorise the changes to fees and charges as set out in Appendix 2 to be implemented from 1 April 2024. The increases set out in appendix 2 will support the achievement of the budgeted income requirement for the service while ensuring that charges benchmarked against comparable commercial offers remain competitive.

- 5.2 **Option 2: Apply the proposed ECC rate of 4.1% inflation across all Fees and Charges.** This would in theory support the achievement of the budgeted income requirement for the service, but it may mean that charges benchmarked against comparable commercial offers become uncompetitive, potentially resulting in fewer sales and reduced income.
- 5.3 **Option 3: Leave Fees and Charges at current levels – no inflationary or other increases.** If no fees are increased the service will find it more challenging to achieve the budgeted income requirement in 2024/25 of £517,000. If this is the case, the service would need to review alternative options to mitigate the pressure if the fees are not increased.

6 Issues for consideration

6.1 Financial implications

6.1.1 The budgeted income requirement for the service increases from £511,000 in 2023/24 to £517,000 in 2024/25.

6.1.2 The Councils draft Medium Term Resource Strategy (MTRS) budget position for the ERO is as follows:

Essex Records Office	2023/24 Forecast (Period 8)	2024/25 Budget	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Income	(449)	(517)	(532)	(548)
Expenditure	1,360	1,476	1,522	1,548
Net Position	911	959	989	1,000

6.1.3 Applying the corporate Retail Price Index (RPI) uplift of 4.1% (allowing for rounding) to all discretionary fees and charges is proposed, except for the charge for Archivist Talks which is to remain at the same rate as 2023/24.

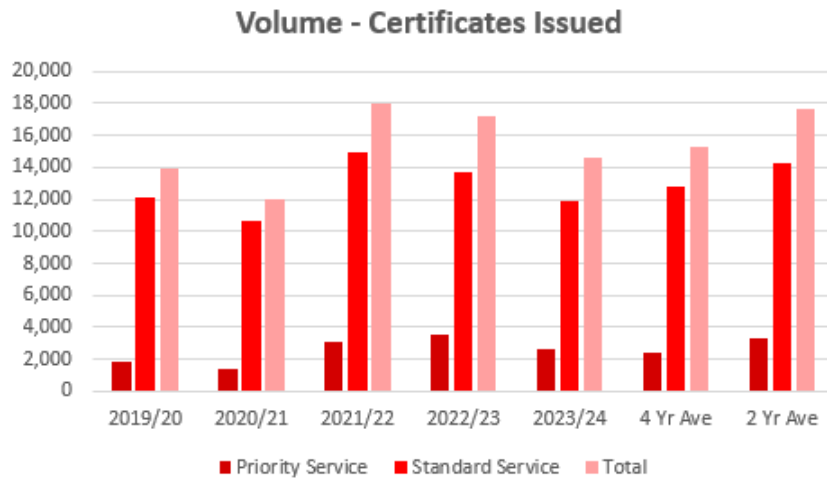
6.1.4 The statutory fees set by the General Register Office (GRO) remain unchanged.

6.1.5 Leaving all Fees and Charges at current levels is not recommended as this is likely to result in a budget pressure and alternative options would need to be considered.

6.1.6 It is anticipated that the proposed fee increases (as set out in Appendix 2) will generate income in 2024/25 which supports the achievement of the budgeted income requirement for the service. However, despite this there remains a risk of under recovery of income as use of the ERO services cannot be guaranteed.

6.1.7 In the 2023/24 financial year the latest forecast reports a shortfall of £62,000 mainly attributable to Certificate Income. The current year pressure is being managed with staffing vacancies and other expenditure reductions. Certificate

volumes do fluctuate, the trend indicates a reduction in numbers following a peak in 2021/22 to a level seen pre-covid.



6.1.8 A review of the cost base of delivering the certificate service and other discretionary services is to be undertaken to seek mitigations for future income pressures.

6.1.9 The Service is not currently operating on a full cost recovery basis. It should be noted that due to the wide range of services offered, in some cases it will be appropriate to recover full costs, in others the fee is set by statute and others are more sensitive to market forces/competition thus limiting the Service's ability to be completely self-sustaining.

6.2 Legal implications

6.2.1 All of the fees and charges for services provided by the ERO are discretionary except those for copies of civil registration certificates (marked with an asterisk [*] in the table in Appendix 2). These statutory fees are set by the General Register Office (GRO).

6.2.2 Local Authorities are permitted to charge for discretionary services by virtue of s93 of the Local Government Act 2003. However, this power may not be relied upon where there is an express power to charge for a service elsewhere.

6.2.3 The income from charges should be on a cost recovery basis.

6.2.4 The Council is therefore able to charge for the ERO services by virtue of s93 of the Local Government Act 2003, with the exception of the charges for Room Hire which is permitted by s145 of the Local Government Act 1972 which enables local authorities to hire out premises and charge for admission.

7 Equality and Diversity Considerations

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that ‘marriage and civil partnership’ is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 7.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.
- 7.4 It is possible that those with lower incomes could be disproportionately affected by the changes. However, it remains possible for members of the public to access the collections preserved and made available by the Archive Service free of charge in person at the Essex Record Office.

8 List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 – Table of fees and charges for the Essex Record Office

9 List of Background papers

None

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date
Councillor Mark Durham, Cabinet Member for the Arts, Heritage and Culture	26.02.24

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Executive Director, Corporate Services (S151 Officer)	22.02.2024

Stephanie Mitchener on behalf of Nicole Wood	
Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)	19.02.2024
Laura Edwards on behalf of Paul Turner	

Appendix 1

Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment – Reference: ECIA587522514

Appendix 2

Table of fees and charges for the Essex Record Office

		2023-24	Proposed for 2024-25	% change
Certificates				
Copy Certificate (statutory)	Standard Charge*	£11.00	£11.00	0.0%
	Priority Service (24 hour)*	£35.00	£35.00	0.0%
Camera licence				
Self-service photography (camera licence)	Daily	£13.50	£14.00	3.70%
	After 5pm on Tuesday	£7.00	£7.30	4.29%
Photocopies				
Copies made by staff in the Searchroom	A4 Black and white	£0.72	£0.75	4.17%
	A3 Black and white	£1.00	£1.05	5.0%
	A4 Colour	£1.45	£1.50	3.45%
	A3 Colour	£2.00	£2.10	5.0%
Reprographics				
Research quality digital copy made by Archives staff	First exposure	£5.00	£5.20	4.0%
	Exposures thereafter	£1.00	£1.05	5.0%
Digitisation				
High quality digital image made by Archives staff	A – Existing master image	£5.00	£5.20	4.0%
	A – New image up to A2	£15.00	£15.50	3.33%
	A – Successive image up to A2	£5.55	£5.70	3.64%
	A – New image over A2	£25.50	£26.50	3.92%
	A – Successive image over A2	£9.20	£9.60	4.35%
	B – Hard copy print	POA	POA	n/a
	B – CD	£4.20	£4.35	3.57%
Search Services				
Research done by Archives staff	Per hour	£40.00	£41.50	3.75%
Single entry search	Including copy of entry	£25.95	£27.00	4.05%

Expedited search and copy - additional fee for urgent requests	Per request	POA	POA	n/a
Professional Services				
Certified copies of documents	Per item	£29.00	£30.00	3.45%
Advice and consultancy		£390 per day, £213 per half-day or £53 per hour	£406.00 per day, £222 per half day or £55 per hour	4.10%
Reproduction and publishing				
Permission to publish in print	Local commercial publication – per image	POA	POA	
Permission to publish in print	National/international commercial publication – per image	POA	POA	
Permission to broadcast on TV	World buyout, all media, unlimited broadcasts (incl. release on DVD etc.)	POA	POA	
Essex Archives Online subscriptions				
Essex Archives Online subscriptions	1 day (24 hours)	£20.00	£20.75	3.75%
	1 week (7 days)	£30.00	£31.00	3.33%
	1 month (30 days)	£42.00	£43.50	3.57%
	6 months (182 days)	£75.00	£78.00	4.00%
	1 year (365 days)	£99.00	£103.00	4.04%
Single image	Single image charge	£3.50	£3.65	4.29%
ERO Conference Centre				
Spalding Rm	Full day	£455.00	£475.00	4.40%
	Half day	£318.00	£330.00	3.77%
	Eve+W/E (per hour)	£144.00	£149.50	3.82%
Walker Rm	Full day	£170.00	£175.00	2.94%
	Half day	£100.00	£105.00	5.00%
	Eve+W/E (per hour)	£57.00	£59.00	3.51%
Norden Rm	Full day	£180.00	£187.00	3.89%
	Half day	£110.00	£114.50	4.09%
	Eve+W/E (per hour)	£57.00	£59.00	3.51%
Morant Rm	Full day	£180.00	£187.00	3.89%
	Half day	£110.00	£114.50	4.09%
	Eve+W/E (per hour)	£57.00	£59.00	3.51%
Flip chart		£5.50	£5.70	3.64%
Photocopies (per copy)		£0.25	£0.26	4.00%
Events				

Workshops	e.g. Discover Parish Registers, Discover Your House History, Discover Maps - 2 hours	£22.50	£23.50	4.44%
Searchroom Tours	45 minute introductory tours aimed at helping people to be more self-sufficient when visiting to research	£6.00	£6.25	4.17%
Conferences	One-day events on different historical topics	As appropriate	As appropriate	-
Essex History Group	Monthly talks on different historical topics	£6.00	£6.25	4.17%
Group visits – standard tour	A tour of the Searchroom, a visit to a repository and Conservation, a small display of maps and ERO treasures	£85.00	£88.00	3.53%
Group visits - tour + document display	As above, but with a bespoke document display	£145.00	£150.00	3.45%
Archivist talks	Archivists talking about certain topics	£85.00	£85.00	0.0%
Training (full day)	e.g. Oral history training, archival research skills training, social media training – per person	£79.00	£82.00	3.80%
Training (half day)	As above	£46.00	£48.00	4.35%
Training (half day)	Editing sound recordings training – per person	£40.25	£41.90	4.10%
Conservation				
Conservation services	Paper and parchment conservation – per hour	£45.00	£47.00	4.44%
	Book repair and conservation – per hour	£45.00	£47.00	4.44%
	Preparing documents for display or storage – per hour	£45.00	£47.00	4.44%
	Packaging with conservation grade materials – per hour	£45.00	£47.00	4.44%
	Advice on storage – per hour	£45.00	£47.00	4.44%
Essex Sound and Video Archive				

Digitisation of audio recordings	78rpm shellac records (8", 10", 12")	£12.00	£12.50	4.17%
	33rpm LP vinyl records (10" and 12")	£12.00	£12.50	4.17%
	45rpm (7" singles)	£7.40	£7.70	4.05%
	45rpm (12") singles and 7" Eps	£9.50	£9.90	4.21%
	Lacquer discs (8", 10" & 12")	£12.00	£12.50	4.17%
	Aluminium 5" 78rpm voice records	£30.00	£31.00	3.33%
	C30, C60	£12.00	£12.50	4.17%
	C90	£15.00	£15.70	4.67%
	C120	£18.15	£18.90	4.13%
	Mini-cassette	£18.15	£18.90	4.13%
	Micro-cassette	£18.15	£18.90	4.13%
	¼" reel to reel tapes	£30.00	£31.00	3.33%
	¼" 8-track reel to reel tapes	£36.65	£38.00	3.68%
	Baking	£6.85	£7.15	4.38%
	Mini-disc	£30.00	£31.00	3.33%
	DAT	£30.00	£31.00	3.33%
	VHS or Betamax audio transfer	£30.00	£31.00	3.33%
Audio restoration, noise reduction, and other manual procedures	Per hour	£48.00	£50.00	4.17%
Assessment service	Per hour	£24.85	£25.85	4.02%
Digitisation of video recordings Metadata collection Creation of access copies from digital master files	VHS	£30.00	£31.00	3.33%
	Betamax	£30.00	£31.00	3.33%
	VHS-C	£30.00	£31.00	3.33%
	Video 8	£30.00	£31.00	3.33%
	DV / MiniDV	£30.00	£31.00	3.33%
	DVD	£9.35	£9.70	3.7%

* Statutory fees determined by the General Register Office (GRO)