

## NOTICE OF MEETING

# CABINET MEMBER SIGNING

**Monday, 7th December, 2015, 10.00 am - Civic Centre, High Road, Wood Green, N22 8LE**

MEMBERS: Councillor Jason Arthur, Cabinet Member for Resources and Culture

Quorum: 1

### **1. FILMING AT MEETINGS**

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### **2. URGENT BUSINESS**

The Cabinet Member will advise of any items they have decided to take as urgent business.

### **3. HARINGEY REGISTRATION AND CITIZENSHIP SERVICE (REGISTER OFFICE) MOVE FROM HARINGEY REGISTRATION SCHEME 1977 TO A NEW SCHEME UNDER NEW GOVERNANCE (PAGES 1 - 28)**

The report will seek Cabinet Member approval to transfer to the New Governance registration scheme. A move to a new registration scheme under the government's New Governance programme will enable Registrars the flexibility to arrange its services to meet local needs. A New Governance

scheme will allow the service to restructure and make required budget savings without the approval of the Secretary of State. The report will also seek Cabinet Member approval for the appointment of the Business Manager, Legal Services, as Proper Officer for the purposes of the Registration Service Act 1953 and to note that Constitution will be amended accordingly.

#### **4. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any items of Urgent Business admitted under Item 2 above.

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Date: 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015

**Report for:** Councillor Arthur, Cabinet Member for Resources and Culture.

**Item number:** 3

**Title:** Haringey Registration and Citizenship Service (Register Office) move from Haringey Registration Scheme 1977 to a new scheme under New Governance

**Report authorised by :** Bernie Ryan, Assistant Director for Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer

**Lead Officer:** Terese Johansson, Business Manager, 020 8489 3975  
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**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Report for Key/**

**Non Key Decision:** Non Key Decision

## **1. Describe the issue under consideration**

- 1.1 Register Offices operate under registration schemes and these outline how services and staffing structures are organised. The majority of Register Offices operate under a 'New Governance' scheme under the provisions of the Registration Service Act 1953 and Haringey is one of only three offices still on a traditional scheme.
- 1.2 This report seeks approval to transfer to the New Governance registration scheme. Haringey's current registration scheme dates back to 1977 and it cannot be altered without the permission of the Secretary of State. A move to a new registration scheme under the government's New Governance programme will enable Registrars the flexibility to arrange its services to meet local needs. A New Governance scheme will allow the service to restructure and make required budget savings without the approval of the Secretary of State. By signing up to a new governance scheme the Haringey registration service will commit to the National Code of Practice and Good Practice Guide.
- 1.3 The report also seeks the appointment of a "Proper Officer" for the registration of births, deaths and marriages, in accordance with the Registration Service Act 1953. It is proposed that the Business Manager for Legal Services is appointed Proper Officer for this purpose, as the person with managerial responsibility for the service.

## **2. Cabinet Member Introduction**

- 2.1 A transfer to the New Governance registration will give the Council more control of how the Registrars Service delivers services to our residents. We will be able to adapt to changing demand quicker and we will be operating with the same anatomy as other local authorities' Register Offices.

- 2.2 Given the benefits of this transfer and the support of the General Register Office for Haringey to move on to a new governance scheme I am confident that this will enable the service more flexibility and benefit our residents.

### **3. Recommendations**

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Culture is asked:

- 3.1 to approve the London Borough of Haringey Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Scheme as set out at Appendix 1, for submission to the Secretary of State.
- 3.2 to approve the appointment of the Business Manager, Legal Services, as Proper Officer for the purposes of the Registration Service Act 1953 and to note that Constitution will be amended accordingly.

### **4. Reasons for decision**

- 4.1 A move to New Governance will provide Haringey with more independence in the running of Registrars services to residents and other customers. The service can be more flexible and will be able it to adapt faster to changes in demand and corporate initiatives. A move will enable the implementation of a new structure, which will meet the £77,000 savings which are required for the service to operate within the available budget.
- 4.2 The General Register Office (GRO) supports Haringey's move to a New Governance scheme and Haringey is now one of only three remaining offices on a traditional registration scheme. A change of scheme will remove the requirements to seek approval from the Secretary of State prior to any changes to service points; service availability and contract arrangements; the number of principal posts; location of the registration office and historical records. This will make it faster to adapt to any new corporate changes, e.g. move of offices.
- 4.3 Changes to legislation (mainly affecting immigration) have seen a reduction in demand for weddings, civil partnerships and people attending Citizenship Ceremonies. The service has also undergone major transformation, phone calls are now handled by Customer Services and appointments are booked online by customers. The combination of these changes has lead to a reduction in work levels and income and the service is currently making a loss.
- 4.4 The current scheme requires the service to have a prescribed number of statutory officers including two Registrars of Births and Deaths (RBD). The number of RBDs in the traditional registration scheme is determined by the population size of the borough, and does not reflect the work levels. Haringey is a borough without any major hospitals and birth and death registration levels are extremely low. The service is also required to have an Additional Superintendent Registrar (ASR). A more efficient structure as set out in the Service Delivery Plan (Appendix 2) can be created if New Governance is approved.

### **5. Alternative options considered**

- 5.1 Option 1: The Service can stay under the current Scheme and comply with the requirements it contains, including service points; service availability and contract arrangements; the number of principal posts; location of the registration office and historical records.
- The only provision to vary the Scheme is through a formal application, requesting amendments of the Scheme, to be made to by Secretary of State for the Home Department for their approval.
  - A number of statutory posts can be left vacant and duties transferred to colleagues. This will limit the effectiveness of any restructure and make any further changes difficult.
  - The number of posts cannot be amended, and owing to a reduction in service demand, the service will continue to operate at a loss.
- 5.2 Option 2: The Service can approach the General Register Office to amend the current registration scheme. This would be a traditional approach to changing the way services are organised.
- This requires the permission of the Secretary of State, which is a long and complicated process.
  - The General Register Office (GRO) does not support this approach.
  - This process will need to be followed each time future changes need to be made, including service location.
- 5.3 Option 3: The Service can move to New Governance without changing the structure and posts.
- This will not meet the required savings.
  - This will not give the service the flexibility of having multi-skilled staff.
  - This will provide the possibility of implementing changes easier in the future.
  - The General Register Office (GRO) does not support this approach.

None of these options are being proposed owing to the constraints as detailed above.

## 6. Background information

- 6.1 The Council is having to make significant savings of £70 million over three years and has decided to do this by way of making transformational change across the Council rather than on a piecemeal basis. One of the transformational approaches has been concerning the way that Customer Service is operated across the Council with all initial contacts for all services, including Registrars, now being handled by Customer Services.
- 6.2 In addition to the above, changes to immigration rules and tighter criteria for people applying for citizenship have led to a reduction in overall demand for the services provided by the Registrars Service. As a consequence the service's income is no longer covering its costs and a new operating model needs to be put in place to make savings of £77,000 so that the service can operate within the available budget.

- 6.3 The Council's current registration scheme dates back to 1977. This scheme is rigid and requires the agreement of the Secretary of State in order for changes to be made and Haringey is now one of only three registration districts not to have changed from a traditional registration scheme to a new scheme under New Governance.
- 6.4 A New Governance Scheme requires the authority to self-report on standards, performance and to meet the Code of Practice (Appendix 3) as set out in the Proper Officer's Handbook. The General Register Office (GRO) supports Haringey in its proposal to move to New Governance.
- 6.5 Under the new scheme the service is required to have a Service Delivery Plan (Appendix 2) which sets out to explain how the service is delivered, staffing, service context and objectives. The Service Delivery Plan, together with the national Code of Practice (Appendix 3), are both annexes to the new Scheme.
- 6.6 A 45 day period of staff consultation covering the proposal to adopt New Governance, the Service Delivery Plan and a new service structure commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2015 and closed on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015. There was no staff opposition to the proposed change to the governance scheme. However, concerns were raised regarding continued service quality, and it was explained to staff that by meeting the standards as set out in the Code of Practice service quality will not be affected by a move to New Governance.
- 6.7 Staff also proposed an alternative structure, deleting the post of the Superintendent Registrars, during the consultation period. This proposal was rejected by the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance and the Business Manager during the consultation process, as both officers consider that a manager at the appropriate level who keeps up to date with legislation and service development needs to be available.
- 6.8 The service does not propose to reduce the service offer to the public. As a consequence, and with the agreement of the General Register Office, it has been agreed that consultation with the public on these proposals was not necessary.
- 6.9 There is no reduction in opening hours, access to services and therefore a full Equalities Impact Assessment will not be required for this change. Should service provision to the public change in the future consultation and a full Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed. An equalities impact assessment screening tool has also been carried out regarding the impact of the proposed restructure on staff in line with the Council's standard requirements, which found that there was no requirement to carry out a full equalities impact assessment.
- 6.10 New Governance will create flexibility and allow the service to adapt to changing circumstances with ease rather than approval from the Secretary of State and the overall benefits are:
- Freedom and flexibility with the delivery of the service
  - Ability to offer services that meet local requirements

- More efficient use of resources

## **7. Contribution to strategic outcomes**

- 7.1 The service works closely with Customer Services, who now take the majority of phone calls and some other customer contacts. Adopting New Governance will create the flexibility for the service to work more closely with the Customer Services Transformation programme as it will be able to adapt faster. The service will be able to meet the needs of any other corporate programmes in the future.

## **8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)**

### **Finance and Procurement**

- 8.1 The Chief Finance Officer supports the recommendation in this report as it will enable the service to be flexible and react to changing demand levels moving forward. The new proposed operational model will be fully funded from its remaining budget after taking into account the savings that the service is planning to achieve.

### **Legal**

- 8.2 The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance has been consulted on this report.
- 8.3 The Registration Services Act 1953 (the Act) requires that all local authorities must prepare a Registration Scheme for approval by the Secretary of State. A scheme covers such matters as the location of offices and the provision of officers. A new flexible governance scheme means that changes to a local registration service may be adopted without the need to apply for a formal amendment to the existing scheme. This would mean that the increase or decrease of post holders or the opening or closure of a service delivery point could be carried out without the need for a formal scheme change.
- 8.4 The New Governance scheme will have no impact on the delivery of the local service to the citizens of Haringey.
- 8.5 Under section 14(4) of the Act, all officers affected by a new scheme must be consulted. The report sets out the consultation that has been carried out with affected staff and the trade unions, who have confirmed that they do not have any comments or concerns on the proposals. As there are no proposed changes to service delivery, wider public consultation was not required.
- 8.6 The Council is responsible for preparing and submitting the scheme to the Minister. The new, proposed, local scheme is supported by the Service Delivery Plan, attached at Appendix 2 of the report. Both the new, proposed, scheme and the Service Delivery Plan have been considered by the General Register Office.



- 8.7 The new scheme is required to be sealed, following Member approval, subsequent to which it will be submitted to the Minister with a view to implementation with effect from the specified date of 3 February 2016.
- 8.8 Upon implementation of the new scheme, The Haringey Registration Scheme 1977 will be revoked.
- 8.9 This report also seeks the appointment of a Proper Officer, to manage the registration service and have overall responsibility for the delivery of the service in accordance with the Act. It is proposed that the responsibilities of the Proper Officer are transferred to the Business Manager for Legal Services, who is responsible for the management and delivery of the Registrars Service. Subject to agreement to this appointment, the constitution will be amended accordingly.

## Equality

- 8.9 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:
- tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
  - foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not
- 8.10 The subject matter of this Cabinet report is whether to adopt a 'new governance' model for the Registration and Citizenship Service. Decision makers are **not** at this stage being asked to consider future changes to how Registration and Citizenship services are delivered to customers and residents.
- 8.11 Any future delivery changes would be consulted and decided upon under the proposed 'new governance,' should this report's recommendations be passed. In this instance, a full equality impact assessment would need to be undertaken by the Council to understand how any proposed changes in future service delivery would impact on different groups of customers and residents, and to identify any mitigating actions necessary.
- 8.12 The equalities impact screening tool, reviewing potential equalities impact on staff of adopting the proposed new governance arrangements was carried out before consultation commenced. The equality impact screening tool established that changes will have 2% or less adverse impact on business unit profile for any of the equalities protected characteristics such as age, disability, race and sex (gender) and a full assessment was not required.

## 9. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Haringey Registration Scheme



Appendix 2 – Service Delivery Plan

Appendix 3 – National Code of Practice (Appendix A if the Proper Officer's Guide)

**10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

Haringey Registration Scheme 1977

Proper Officers Guide to Registration Service Delivery – August 2015

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Appendix 1

**LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY**

**REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES**

**SCHEME UNDER SECTION 14 OF THE REGISTRATION SERVICE ACT 1953**

The Council of the London Borough of Haringey, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by section 14 of the Registration Service Act 1953, makes the following Scheme:-

**TITLE**

1. This Scheme may be cited as “The Haringey Registration Scheme 2015” and shall come into operation on the third day of February 2016.

**INTERPRETATION**

2. In this Scheme, the following expressions have the meanings hereby assigned to them:-

“the Act” means the Registration Service Act 1953;

“the Council” means the Council of the London Borough of Haringey;

“area” means the area of the London Borough of Haringey;

“the Code of Practice” means the Registrar General’s Code of Practice for Local Authorities in place at the time of the making of this Scheme, as amended from time to time, and attached to this Scheme as Annex 1;

“the Service Delivery Plan” means the Council’s plans and targets, as amended from time to time, for the local delivery of the registration service and attached to this Scheme as Annex 2;

“Principal Officer” means superintendent registrar or registrar of births and deaths and “principal office” shall be construed accordingly;

“the Proper Officer” means the officer appointed by the Council for the purposes of the Act;

“Registrar General” means the Registrar General for England and Wales appointed by virtue of section 1 of the Act (as amended by the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007).

**REGISTRATION DISTRICTS AND SUB-DISTRICTS**

3. The Council shall, in accordance with the Code of Practice, divide its area into registration districts and sub-districts and shall set out those district and sub-district boundaries in its Service Delivery Plan.

4. The Council shall determine the location of the offices and provide, equip and maintain those offices so as to meet the delivery targets in the Code of Practice and relevant legal requirements. The Council shall set out the location of all offices in its Service Delivery Plan.

## **OFFICERS**

5. (1) The Council shall determine the number of Principal Officers and other officers so as to provide sufficient staff resource to ensure delivery of services in accordance with the service standards contained in the Code of Practice. There shall be a minimum of one superintendent registrar and one registrar of births and deaths for each registration district and sub-district respectively. The Council shall set out the number of Principal Officers in its Service Delivery Plan.

(2) The Proper Officer shall notify the Registrar General of all Principal Officer appointments. Such notification may be made electronically.

## **DEPUTIES**

6. (1) It shall be for the Proper Officer to appoint deputies under section 8(1) (deputy superintendent registrars and registrars of births and deaths) of the Act (as amended by the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007).

(2) The Proper Officer shall notify the Registrar General of all deputy appointments. Such notification may be made electronically.

(3) A deputy shall continue to hold office notwithstanding a change in the holder of the principal office.

## **FUNCTIONS OF REGISTRAR OF MARRIAGES**

7. Every registrar of births and deaths appointed within the area may perform the functions of a registrar of marriages.

## **POWERS OF THE PROPER OFFICER**

8. There shall be vested in the Proper Officer, subject to any regulations that may from time to time be in force under section 20(b) (regulations) of the Act the powers and key responsibilities as set out in the Code of Practice. Additionally that the Proper Officer shall have the powers set out in Section 13(2)(h) of the Act.

## **REVOCATION**

9. The Haringey Registration Scheme 1977 is revoked but without prejudice to anything done or to any right, privilege, obligation or liability acquired, accrued or incurred under it.

**REVISION TO THE CODE OF PRACTICE**

10. The Council may adopt any revision to the Code of Practice by means of the Proper Officer confirming their acceptance of the revision to the Registrar General.

Dated this..... day of .....2015

Executed as a Deed by  
The Mayor and Burgesses of the  
London Borough of Haringey  
By Affixing its Common Seal  
Hereunto by Order

.....  
Authorised Officer

.....  
Date of Sealing

The Secretary of State for the Home Department hereby approves the foregoing scheme without modification.

Signed on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Home Department

.....

on this .....day of .....2016

Executive Director, Her Majesty's Passport Office

## Haringey Registration and Citizenship Service – Service Delivery Plan 2015 /16

Assistant Director

Bernie Ryan

Proper Officer

Terese Johansson

Superintendent Registrar

Paul Oram



# 1. Council Vision, Key Priorities and Over Arching Principles

**Vision:** To Work with communities to make Haringey an even better place to live

**Approach:** To encourage investment and create opportunities for all to share in

## Key Priorities

- Enable every child and young person to have the best start in life, with high quality education
- Enable all adults to live healthy, long and fulfilling lives
- A clean, well maintained and safe borough where people are proud to live and work
- Drive growth and employment from which everyone can benefit
- Create homes and communities where people choose to live and are able to thrive

## Underlying Principles

### PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

- Preventing poor outcomes for children, young people and adults and intervening early when help and support is needed.

### A FAIR AND EQUAL BOROUGH

- Tackling underlying factors of poverty and discrimination with a scale and intensity proportionate to the level of disadvantage.

### WORKING TOGETHER WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

- Building resilient communities where people are able to help themselves and support each other.

### VALUE FOR MONEY

- Achieving the best outcome from the investment made.

### CUSTOMER FOCUS

- Placing our customers' needs at the centre of everything we do.

### WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- Delivering with and through others.

## Corporate Programmes

1. Tottenham Regeneration
2. Haringey 54,000
3. Housing unification and improvement
4. Health and social care integration
5. Business Infrastructure
6. Customer Services

## 1.2 Haringey Registration and Citizenship Service's Vision, Aim and Key Priorities

### 1.2 Service Vision

To operate as a high quality, efficient, cost effective, modern and client focused service. Provide an effective registration service that meets national standards as set by General Register Officer.

Achieved the following ways:

- By providing a service to clients based around their current and future needs.
- By delivering excellent value for money services, using modern technology and sound business practices.
- By promoting the highest standards of corporate governance.
- By maintenance of robust financial management of the business to deliver high levels of services at a value for money cost.
- By developing all staff to achieve their professional and personal potential.

## 2. Service Description

### 2.1 Boundaries

The boundaries of Haringey registration district and sub-district are the same as those of London Borough of Haringey.

### 2.2 Accessibility and opening times

The Register Office is located on the ground floor of the Civic Centre, High Road, Wood Green, London, N22 8LE (N22 9SB for SATNAVs and maps) and easily accessible for all visitors.

The Register Office counter is open from 9.30am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday. The office closes at 1pm on the first Thursday of each month for staff training.

Appointments are available between 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 8.30am to 6pm Wednesday and 9am to 2.45pm. No appointments will take place after 1pm on the first Thursday of each month for staff training.

A ceremony service takes place every Saturday morning. Registrars attend ceremonies at approved Premises seven days a week (including bank holidays) on an as and when basis. A list of approved premises is available on Haringey Council's website [www.haringey.gov.uk/approved\\_premises](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/approved_premises)

The office can be contacted in emergencies and for faith deaths outside normal office hours via telephone on 020 8489 0000.

### **2.3 Service provision**

Haringey Registration and Citizenship Service (RCS) offers the following services:

- Notice of Marriage / Civil Partnerships
- Designated Register Office for people subject to immigration control
- Marriages and Civil Partnerships
- Register Office Marriages and Civil Partnerships for the statutory fee
- Ceremony planning meetings
- Naming and Renewal of Vows Ceremonies
- Registration of Births and Deaths
- Birth Declarations for babies born outside of the borough
- Licensing of Approved Premises for Marriages and Civil Partnerships
- Support to the Clergy / Registration of Place of Worship
- Nationality Checking Service
- Weekly Citizenship Ceremony
- Issuing of Certificates from the Historic Records

### **2.4 Staffing**

The Registration Service has 1 x Registration and Citizenship Manager / Superintendent Registrar, 1 x Senior Registration Officer, 5 x

Registration Officer. These officers are supported by a number of casual staff.

### **2.5 Additional service information**

Additional information about the service and services provided by RCS, including charges, can be found on the Birth, Death, Marriages and Civil Partnerships pages on Haringey Council's website: [www.haringey.gov.uk/bdm](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/bdm)

## **3. Service Context**

### *Brief description*

#### **3.1 Service standards**

Under the current governance arrangements the Registration Service Act 1953 confers upon the Local Authority obligations and powers in regard to the registration of births, deaths and marriages. The current local Scheme, as amended, came into operation in Haringey in 1977 and is known as "The Haringey Registration Scheme, 1977".

Under the new governance arrangements, Haringey is committed to the service delivery standards contained in the Code of Practice for Local Registration Authorities in England and Wales developed by the General Register Office (GRO). The Code of Practice is supplemented by good practice guidance within the Proper Officer's Guide to Registration Service Delivery. The service is also required to publish an Annual Performance Report to the General Register Office by the 30<sup>th</sup> April each year. This report requires the service to report Key Performance Targets (Appendix A)

#### **3.2 Complaints and compliments**

The RCS follows the Council's wider Complaints and compliment scheme. Details of the scheme are on display in all council public buildings, including the Civic Centre and on the Council's website [www.haringey.gov.uk/council-feedback](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/council-feedback)

Haringey Council operates the Haringey Stars scheme where teams and individuals can be nominated for awards when staff has gone beyond the call of duty. The RCS has been nominated for awards under the previous Extra Mile Award scheme.

Formal complaint levels are very low. The service aims to resolve issues at the earliest possible opportunity. All formal complaints are fully investigated and action taken as necessary to prevent reoccurrences of problems.

### **3.3 Responsibilities**

- Registers and secure stock
- Following guidelines and best practice
- Ensure continuous service provision
- Business continuity planning

### **3.4 Local management issues**

- Possible re-location of some or all services
- Ensure the council stays within its budget
- Fulfil statutory obligations placed on Registrars including requirements of the General Register Office
- Meet General Register Office requirements including service standards and tough performance targets
- Maintain a highly functioning case management system during IT infrastructure changes
- Training and development of permanent staff
- Establish a training programme for registration staff to complete General Register Office e-learning
- Customer relationship with Customer Services
- Introduce quality monitoring and mystery shopper checks for Registrars

### **3.5 Links to statutory, policy and other plans**

- Part of the Customer Services Transformation agenda
- Customer Services Commissioning Group member
- Haringey Corporate Plan 2015-18 [www.haringey.gov.uk/local-democracy/policies-and-strategies/corporate-plan-2015-18](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/local-democracy/policies-and-strategies/corporate-plan-2015-18)

### **3.6 Service priorities for 2015-16**

- Achieve greater channel shift including increasing the number of people booking appointments online

- Reposition the service to achieve a cost recovery budget
- Review of online content with the aim of reducing avoidable contacts
- Review of the staffing structure and staff terms and conditions
- Continue the, “My Conversation” approach to staff development

## 4.

## Completed and new initiatives

### 4.1 Completed in 2014 – 15

- Customer telephone calls for notice of marriage / civil partnership, births, deaths and the Nationality Checking Service were transferred to Customer Services.
- Telephone answering times extended to 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday
- Online booking for notice of marriage / civil partnership, NCS, births and deaths was introduced

### 4.2 Introduced for 2015 – 16

- Civil partnership to marriage conversions
- The Stopford online booking system has been upgraded. This now allows customers to pay for notice of marriage / civil partnership appointments at the time of booking
- Introduction of new fees allowing customers to get married or form a civil partnership over a 24 hour period of time
- Increased options for customers to personalise their ceremony scripts including ceremony planning meetings
- Migration of the registration website onto a new improved platform including better functionality on tablets and mobile devices
- Recruitment of two additional casual registrars

### 4.3 Planned for 2015 – 16

- A review of opening hours including the possibility of extended opening hours at least one working day per week
- Opening for longer on Saturdays including offering afternoon weddings and civil partnerships
- Further development of the renewal of vows and naming ceremony services
- Adoption of the council's one account system and increasing the digital offer to customers
- Introduction of online booking of citizenship ceremonies
- The adoption of New Governance with the General Register Office



# APPENDIX A – Key Performance Targets from April 2015

Extracted from The Proper Officers Guide to Registration Service Delivery August 2015 Appendix G

Key Performance Target	Standard
<p><b>1. <u>Waiting times for appointment</u></b></p> <p>Where an appointment system is operated, ensure an appointment within the agreed timescales for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth registration</li> <li>• Still-birth registration</li> <li>• Death registration</li> <li>• Marriage / Civil Partnership (CP) notice.</li> </ul>	<p>95% Births – within 5 working days of request</p> <p>95% Stillbirths – within 2 working days of request</p> <p>95% Deaths – within 2 working days of request</p> <p>95% Marriage / Civil Partnership notice – within 10 working days of request and therefore to allow the marriage / CP to proceed at a time and venue of the customer’s choice where reasonable and practical</p>
<p><b>2. <u>Customer Satisfaction</u></b></p> <p>Customers should be dealt with courteously, with sensitivity and in a personalised manner.</p> <p>To evaluate this and other aspects of service delivery, the customer should be asked a set of questions covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courteousness</li> <li>• Accessibility (e.g. initial contact and location);</li> <li>• Appointment availability;</li> <li>• Office accommodation</li> <li>• Future service provision / planning needs</li> </ul>	<p>95% of customer s satisfied</p>
<p><b>Annual Assurance Statements:</b></p> <p>In addition to reporting on the key performance targets above, the annual performance report template requires local authorities to include a compliance statement to the effect that national standards have been applied to guard against and report fraud, and to protect data. Details of the standards to be applied and the actions to be taken are set out in the Good Practice Guidance. The target is for the</p>	

Registrar General to receive a positive response from 100% of local authorities. To provide assurance of local monitoring, the Registrar General recommends that the Local Authority monitors volumes of S24 reports and suspicious certificate applications, and this is completed alongside the monitoring of the other performance targets. Proper Officers will also want to be made aware of these volumes / figures on a quarterly basis.

<p><b>3. <u>Suspicious certificate applications / Sham Marriage</u></b></p> <p>In the course of their duties, registration officers should maintain an awareness of suspicious certificate applications and the use of marriage and civil partnership to circumvent immigration controls and utilise the reporting mechanisms to counter it</p>	<p>Local Authority assurance statement provided to GRO relating to the principles set out in the associated APR Public Protection and Counter-fraud assurance statement template</p>
<p><b>4. <u>Data Protection</u></b></p> <p>Local authorities and registration officers should meet all legal responsibilities and obligations in respect of the security and sharing of data, including ensuring the integrity and security of the RON system</p>	<p>Local Authority assurance statement provided to GRO relating to the principles set out in the associated APR Public Protection and Counter-fraud assurance statement template</p>

**Appendix A – Code of Practice**

## Code of Practice for Local Registration Authorities in England and Wales

### **1. Preface**

1.1 The delivery of registration and celebratory services are of paramount importance both locally and nationally. Civil Registration plays an important role in key life events, ensuring the integrity of registration information, protecting the public and supporting counter fraud measures whilst also meeting the changing needs of individuals and families, and of society as a whole.

1.2 The organisation of the registration service in England and Wales is based on the Registration Service Act 1953. It establishes the post of Registrar General, whose role is to oversee the standard of the service, including the making of regulations and, in practice, the issuing of guidance on performance of registration functions.

1.3 The Registration Service Act 1953 places a duty on each council to prepare a local "scheme" for the approval of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and to appoint a "Proper Officer". The Proper Officer provides the Registrar General with details of organisation and coverage of registration services within the authority. The Proper Officer also manages the local service.

1.4 Under new governance arrangements the Scheme commits the local authority to comply with the service delivery standards contained in this Code of Practice. Taken together, the Scheme and the Code provide a formal governance agreement between the Registrar General and local authorities, the framework of which enables the local authority to plan, develop and deliver a registration service which meets the needs of the local community.

1.5 The Code of Practice is supplemented by Good Practice Guidance within the Proper Officer's Guide to Registration Service Delivery. This provides guidance on the application of the Code, and more generally on national standards and service delivery. In this respect the Code has a strategic focus whereas the Good Practice Guidance advises on application and operational delivery.

1.6 The Code of Practice also reflects the need for a customer focused, output driven local registration service, one which is delivered sensitively, economically and efficiently to the satisfaction of users.

1.7 The principal outputs from the service are accurate and timely:

- registrations of births deaths and marriages
- marriage notices and ceremonies
- certificates.

In relation to records and registers the principal outputs are:

- safe and secure custody of records and registers.

1.8 The Code of Practice does not extend to other statutory duties such as civil partnerships, citizenship ceremonies, or to discretionary / non-statutory registration services. However, authorities are recommended to adopt and apply common standards for all statutory, partnership, discretionary and non-statutory services, and to include all such services in the Service Delivery Plan. The Good Practice Guide contains guidance in this respect.

## **2. Application**

2.1. Each authority is required to consult locally and commit to the delivery of a registration service which meets both local needs and national standards, and to publish a Service Delivery Plan. The Registrar General will expect to be satisfied in this respect before recommending approval of a Scheme to the Secretary of State for the Home Department (or approves a Scheme with the Secretary of State's agreement where there are no unresolved representations).

2.2. The Code of Practice is complemented by Good Practice Guidance within the Proper Officer's Guide to Registration Service Delivery which provides further information on:

- specific statutory standards that authorities must meet
- performance standards that authorities should aim to meet
- effective performance monitoring and reporting
- guidance and advice on applying the requirements of the Code of Practice.

2.3. The original Good Practice Guidance was agreed jointly by the General Register Office and the former Local Authorities Coordinating Office on Regulatory Services (LACORS). It has since been further developed and will continue to be reviewed periodically by GRO and the National Panel for Registration. The national standards which an authority must achieve will contain both national and local elements. The national elements ensure that users of the registration service across England and Wales are able to discharge their statutory responsibilities within the timescales set out in the Marriage and Registration Acts, and have reasonable access to all statutory registration services.

2.4. Formal commitment to the Code of Practice by local authorities results in the adoption of a 'lighter touch' performance review regime by the Registrar General, with greater reliance on central monitoring, self assessment and annual reporting. This approach allows risk based assessments of performance to be used to direct review effort to those authorities that would most likely benefit.

## **3. Service Responsibility**

3.1. The Proper Officer is the person appointed by the local authority to manage the service, and is the link between the Registrar General and the registration authority, especially in relation to governance issues and the Scheme.

3.2. The Proper Officer has the following key responsibilities:

- developing a Service Delivery Plan for the authority
- consulting, assessing and periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the service
- assessing and managing the resources needed to deliver a registration service which meets customer needs
- stakeholder management of related services ( e.g. Coroner services )
- staff discipline, seeking advice from the Registrar General on technical matters
- ensuring records are stored safely and securely

- liaising with the Registrar General on service delivery and issues related to the Code of Practice and the authority's Service Delivery Plan
- applying the Good Practice Guidance - as appropriate - to improve customer service standards.

#### **4. Service Delivery**

4.1. Service delivery includes all the aspects of the registration service that deliver registration services to customers, including structure, location, service availability and accommodation.

##### *Structure*

4.2 A registration authority will determine, taking into account the Good Practice Guidance, the number and boundaries of registration districts and sub-districts that best meet local requirements.

##### *Location of Offices*

4.3 The registration authority will determine, taking into account the Good Practice Guidance, the number and location of service outlets within each district and sub-district that best meet local requirements.

##### *Access and Service Availability*

4.4 The registration authority will:

- establish customer demand and preferences
- develop and publish a Service Delivery Plan that reflects customers requirements and reasonable expectations and the council's access to services/customer strategy, where appropriate
- publish service delivery targets and results
- assess accommodation requirements that reflect customer needs and delivery standards
- provide registration services that are accessible and available to the public at reasonable times
- ensure safe and secure custody of registers and other records in accordance with the Good Practice Guidance.

The service commitments contained in the authority's Service Delivery Plan must be such that the public are able to provide information for the registration of births and deaths within the statutory time limits. Furthermore, that the public's reasonable expectations are met in respect to the giving of marriage notices, marriage ceremonies, and the issue of certificates.

##### *Good Practice Guidance – Service Delivery*

4.5 The Good Practice Guidance sets out specific targets and standards that a registration authority must meet together with effective performance monitoring and reporting mechanisms. It also provides advice and guidance on how to meet each of the headings above, and in respect to the development and content of a Service Delivery Plan.

## **5. Quality**

5.1. Quality refers to the standards of registration service that the customer expects and receives and how satisfied they are with them. Also, quality management should include consideration of compliance, accuracy, customer service and complaints.

### *Quality - Compliance*

5.2 Delivery of the local registration service shall be undertaken in accordance with the Marriage and Registration Acts and regulations, and in line with the Good Practice Guidance.

### *Quality – Accuracy*

5.3 A registration authority will ensure that accurate registration records are made and maintained.

### *Quality - Service Delivery Plan*

5.4 A registration authority shall include in its Service Delivery Plan:

- registration office opening times (including emergency and out of hours arrangements)
- consultation procedures
- service delivery monitoring and reporting procedures
- complaints procedures.

### *Quality – Complaints*

5.5 A registration authority shall record and monitor complaints and other responses received and be prepared to show how it has taken account of customer feedback, where appropriate.

## **6. Staffing**

6.1 A sufficient number of staff, trained appropriately in registration service matters is essential to meeting statutory requirements and customer aspirations.

### *Staff numbers*

6.2 A registration authority must ensure that sufficient staff are appointed to deliver the local registration service to the standards set out in the authority's Service Delivery Plan.

### *Staff salaries*

6.3 A registration authority shall determine the salaries of its registration staff having regard to

- existing NJC arrangements and
- any local conditions and agreements that apply.

Information regarding pay and grading may be found in the NJC Circular 3/07.

### *Miscellaneous Service Provisions*

6.4 The Council shall put in place such service provisions regarding security, ordinary, sick and maternity leave and travelling and removal expenses in accordance with either the National Joint Council's Scheme of Conditions of Service or the Council's Conditions of Service.

*Training and Development*

6.5 Registration staff shall be trained so that they can demonstrate an appropriate level in the knowledge and conduct of registration matters and the law applying to them.

*Staff - Disqualification*

6.6 A registration authority should enforce appropriate disqualifications to ensure registration service staff conflicts of interest are avoided. The Proper Officer's Guide to Registration Service Delivery contains guidance on this.

**7. Information Technology**

7.1. A registration authority must provide appropriate hardware, software and internet links to allow reliable access to the central national database and an appropriate level of technical support to ensure a high standard of systems availability locally.

7.2. A registration authority shall exercise reasonable measures to protect the integrity of the national database and access to it. The Registrar General will issue specific guidance in this respect.



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