

# Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

To: Corporate Policy and Resources Committee

18<sup>th</sup> August 2015

## REGISTRATION SERVICES:

For decision

Linkage to Corporate Plan	
Strategic Theme	Innovation and Transformation
Lead Officer	Moira Quinn
Cost: (If applicable)	N/A funded by Registrar General/Wedding Receipts

### 1.0 REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS DEATHS AND MARRIAGES, CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS AND CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Under the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 each local government district is a registration district and the district council is the local registration authority. The District Council in exercising this function acts as an agent for the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). DFP, for its part, is required to defray the costs of running the service. The bulk of the costs are made up of accommodation and staffing.

The General Register Office (GRO) commissioned a review of the funding model used to determine the number of staff required to deliver the service in districts. The new funding model came into operation on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015, in line with the 11 new Councils.

Councils can approve venues for marriages/civil partnerships and set the fees payable by the couple. GRO only require the basic solemnisation fee for these events, with the fee for the resource required to deliver the service at approved venues coming to Council.

Based on registration service activity figures (average 2010-2013) the model shows that for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council the estimated total whole time equivalent (WTE) resource required for non approved venue associated activity is

3.94 and for approved venue activity this is an extra 0.25. Details for the individual offices in Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council are shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Registration Service posts (WTE)**

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council	Current GRO funded posts	Workload estimated requirement		
		GRO funded	Non GRO funded	TOTAL
Ballymoney	1.00	0.80	0.05	0.85
Coleraine	1.60	1.66	0.16	1.82
Limavady	0.88	0.91	0.09	1.00
Ballycastle	0.80	0.57	0.05	0.62
Totals	4.28	3.94	0.25	4.29

The funding model focuses on calculating the number of staff days required to deliver the service in each new council area.

As these are estimates and accepting that the true requirement may lie within +/- 10% GRO does not propose to reduce the existing allocation of 4.28 to Council.

The current resource in registration service is:

- Ballymoney – Registrar - 1
- Coleraine – Deputy Registrars – 2
- Limavady – Deputy Registrar - 1
- Ballycastle – Deputy Registrar 1 – (Part-time)

There are currently six Relief Registrars to cover annual leave of permanent staff. The arrangements for Relief Registrars will be reviewed in September 2015.

## 1.2 PROPOSED REVISED ARRANGEMENTS

Taking account of the new funding model and merging the four registration offices into one service the following issues have been addressed.

### 1.2.1 Opening Hours:

Registration Offices will open to the public as follows:-

Ballymoney Coleraine Limavady Offices	9.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. 2.00 p.m. – 4.30 p.m. Monday - Friday
Ballycastle Office	9.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. Monday - Friday

### 1.2.2 Appointments System:

To improve the customer service and assist with managing workload, an appointment system, which operated as a pilot for six weeks, will be introduced at all Registration Offices. Introduction of a telephone messaging system at all offices will further enhance the customer experience.

### **1.2.3 Civil Marriages/Partnerships:**

There is provision for a maximum of three ceremonies on Saturdays within the borough area (cut off 1.00 p.m.); no bookings for ceremonies on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

The cost of undertaking ceremonies at external venues are met by the couple. There are 28 external venues licensed for civil marriages/partnerships.

### **1.2.4 Licensing of approved places:**

The processing of applications for the licensing of approved venues has been centralised within Environmental Health Section of Environmental Services Directorate.

### **1.2.5 Revised Schedule of Fees:**

Fees across the four legacy Councils have been reviewed to take account of the revised funding model and the fees are set out in appendix A.

### **1.2.6 Cemetery Administration:**

A software upgrade, introducing one managed system covering Coleraine, Ballymoney and Limavady will be introduced during August 2015. This web based solution with search facility will improve efficiency and effectiveness of cemetery administration.

## **1.3 RECOMMENDATION**

**It is recommended that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee approve revised arrangements for the registration service as set out above.**

- Revised opening hours, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015\*
- Appointments system, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015\*
- Civil Marriages/Partnerships outside normal working hours, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015
- Revised charges – Council costs. Schedule of Fees are set out in Appendix A, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015

\*the revised opening hours and appointments system will be communicated to the public via media and other communication methods.

## CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS BOROUGH COUNCIL MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP FEES

<b>Fees for Religious Marriage in Church etc. at any time or day:</b>			
*Schedule	£44.00		
*Marriage Certificate	£ 8.00		
Total Cost	£52.00		
<b>Fees for Marriage/Civil Partnership in Registrar's Office:</b>			
	Mon – Fri 9.00 am – 4.00 pm	Saturday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm	No Weddings on Public/Bank Holidays
*Schedule	£ 44.00	£ 44.00	--
*Ceremony	£ 36.00	£162.00	--
*Certificate	£ 8.00	£ 8.00	--
Total	£ 88.00	£241.00	--
Room Hire: (as per venue charging)			--
<b>Fees for Marriage/Civil Partnership in Approved Venues:</b>			
	Mon – Fri 9.00 am – 4.00 pm	Saturday 10.00 am – 1.00 pm	No Weddings on Public/Bank Holidays
*Schedule	£ 44.00	£ 44.00	--
*Ceremony	£ 36.00	£ 36.00	--
*Certificate	£ 8.00	£ 8.00	--
>Resource/Mileage Costs	£125.00	£175.00	--
Total Cost	£213.00	£263.00	--
<p>*Fees set by General Registrar Office (GRO) &gt;Council costs for Registrar attendance – paid by couple</p> <p>Fee of £400.00 for the cost of Licensing of an Approved Place for a 3 year period and to include the provisions of the Registrar and Environmental Services.</p>			