

Consultation on proposal to relocate Registration Services

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Registration Service is a statutory service provided by the council to facilitate the registration of births, deaths and marriages. The service also offers a diverse number of other services including nationality checking, citizenship, naming ceremonies and civil funerals.
- 1.2 A review of the delivery of this service has been undertaken and has been linked with the corporate review of the council's use of its buildings. For some considerable time the Registration Service has been based at Royal Oak House and in addition, has offered a predominantly death registration service at the Bereavement Centre at Royal Derby Hospital.
- 1.3 There is a corporate need to utilise Royal Oak House for delivery of a number of council services and to provide office space for Unison. The removal of IT support to the St Mary's Gate building from 1 January 2016, has resulted in the need to re-locate Unison. Following a corporate property review, it has been determined that the Registration Service could be re-located to the Council House from 14 December 2015, to maximise the customer experience and also provide much needed resilience to support the growing demand for the service.
- 1.4 The delivery of the Registration Service is overseen by the General Register Officer - GRO. The GRO has advised that in-order to re-locate the Service from Royal Oak House, which is currently the "designated Register Office", consultation with the public must take place.
- 1.5 The Director of Governance is appointed as the Proper Officer with statutory responsibility for the delivery of the Registration Service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To authorise the Proper Officer for the Registration Service to commence a period of consultation in respect of the proposed re-location of the Registration Service from Royal Oak House to the Council House as detailed in 4.6 below.
- 2.2 To note the contents of this report and that a further report will be provided by way of update in respect of the review of Registration Services.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is a requirement of the General Register Office that a period of consultation takes place in respect of the proposed re-location of the Registration Service.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Royal Oak House is a council-owned building and has been the location for the Registration Service for a number of years.
- 4.2 The financial circumstances of the council has resulted in a review of the use of its buildings to ensure they are used to their maximum efficiency. This property review has prompted a review of the delivery of Registration Service which is a key customer service for the city.
- 4.3 The Registration Service has its “designated Registration Office” at Royal Oak House but also provides a registration service at Royal Derby Hospital. There is a growing demand for the ability to register deaths and increasingly births at Royal Derby Hospital. However, the council is keen to maximise the customer experience and in order to achieve this it is felt that the transferring the Registration Service to the Council House would further promote the purpose-built facilities in the reception area of the Council House.
- 4.4 A project board has been established comprising of key officers and stakeholders including Royal Derby Hospital and GRO to undertake the review of the service. It is strongly believed that the review of the Registration Service can achieve the following:
- A greatly enhanced customer service for residents and further promotion of self service;
 - Greater use of Royal Oak House as a multifunctional building;
 - Much needed resilience in order to generate additional income; and
 - An improved service offer at the Royal Derby Hospital
- 4.5 Future phases will focus on building resilience, improving the customer experience and generating more income by:
- Providing online capability to book appointments for births, deaths, marriages and nationality checking;
 - Increasing the number of nationality checking appointments available to residents;
 - Reviewing the current wedding service offer to include the potential for tailored wedding packages;
 - Increasing the number of staff trained to conduct appointments and carry out a celebrant role at weddings; and
 - Reviewing how customer contact to the service is managed.

Consultation and Communication

4.6 In order to comply with GRO guidance it is proposed that public consultation will take place over a four-week period seeking views from the public using the council's website. This will coincide with a substantial communications plan by the council to ensure service users are fully aware of the proposed change and also of the wide range of services offered.

Royal Derby Hospital

4.7 A weekday service is offered at Royal Derby Hospital. This is a predominantly death registration service but has been expanded to offer a limited birth registration service. The hospital does not charge the council for the use of hospital resource as the hospital is extremely keen to widely promote and see the expansion of the service offer to a full five days per week service.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 The Registration Service could remain at Royal Oak House. The cost of retaining the St Mary's Gate property makes this option unaffordable.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	Janie Berry, Director of Governance, Proper Officer for Registration Services
Financial officer	N/A
Human Resources officer	N/A
Estates/Property officer	John Sadler Strategic Asset Manager
Service Director(s)	N/A
Other(s)	Nick O'Reilly, Director for Digital Services Bernard Fenton, Head of Customer Services

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 There are no costs incurred with the requirement to undertake the consultation exercise.

Legal

- 2.1 The Registration Service is a statutory service regulated by the General Register Office. It is a requirement that consultation must occur in respect of the proposed change in location of the Designated Register Office.

Personnel

- 3.1 None arising from this report

IT

- 4.1 The council's website will host the proposed consultation exercise.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 There are no known equalities impact issues related to this report. However it should be noted that the Council House is fully DDA compliant should the service be re-located.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 None arising from this report

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 None arising from this report.

Property and Asset Management

- 8.1 The use of Royal Oak House has been evaluated as part of the council's review of the usage of its buildings. While it is proposed that Registrars Service will be relocated to the Council House, it is proposed that the Ceremony Rooms would remain at Royal Oak House and will continue to be used for ceremonies etc. The space vacated by the service would host a wider range of other council services and thus maximise efficiencies.

Risk Management

- 9.1 None arising from this report.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 The proposed transfer of the Registration Service would offer an enhanced

customer experience.