

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **EXECUTIVE**

DATE: **27 MARCH 2012**

REPORT BY: **HEAD OF ICT AND CUSTOMER SERVICES**

SUBJECT: **POLICY FOR THE APPROVAL OF PREMISES AS**
 VENUES FOR CIVIL MARRIAGES AND CIVIL
 PARTNERSHIPS AND PROPOSED FEES

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.01 To seek approval from Members the adoption of:
- (i) a policy for the approval of premises as venues for civil marriages and civil partnerships from 1 April 2012;
 - (ii) revised fees for registration services provided by the Flintshire Registration Service.

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.01 The Registrar General for England and Wales in accordance with her duties under the Marriage Act 1949 and the Civil Partnership Act 2004 has issued revised guidance to the public, local authorities, registration officers and faith groups on the process to approve premises for the solemnization of civil marriages and the registration of civil partnerships.
- 2.02 The revised guidance was issued in December 2011 following the implementation of the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 which allow civil partnerships to be registered in religious premises. The Council's policy for administering applications has been reviewed and updated to reflect changes to legislation. The revised policy is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.03 Local Authorities are responsible for setting fees in pursuance of Section 26(1)(bb) of the Marriage Act, 1949 (as amended by the Marriage Act, 1994) and the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.
- 2.04 There are seven fees which may be levied by the Local Authority, all other fees relating to births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships are statutory. The six fees are:
- 1) The fee for the application of secular premises to be licensed as a venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships;

- 2) The renewal fee for secular premises to be licensed as a venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships;
- 3) The fee for the application and renewal of religious premises to be licensed as a venue for civil partnerships which are currently registered for marriages;
- 4) The fee for the application and renewal of religious premises to be licensed as a venue for civil partnerships which are not currently registered for marriages;
- 5) The fee for the attendance of the Superintendent Registrar and Registrar at civil marriages or civil partnership ceremonies held at premises licensed for civil marriages and civil partnerships;
- 6) The fee for the attendance of the Civil Partnership Registrar at civil partnership ceremonies held at religious premises licensed for civil partnerships;
- 7) The fee for celebratory services held at the Register Office or premises licensed for civil marriages and civil partnerships.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 The adoption of the revised policy for the approval of premises as venues for civil marriages and civil partnerships will ensure compliance with the recent changes to legislation (Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) (Amendment) Regulations 2011). The policy provides clear advice and guidance to applicants and licensees including the requirements for approval and conditions attached to licences.
- 3.02 A review of fees has been undertaken and has identified a need to increase non statutory fees. The recommended fees (Appendix 2) have been increased to take account of the cost of administering licence applications and inflation over the last two years since the fees were last reviewed.
- 3.03 The statutory fee for a marriage or civil partnership in a Register Office is £40 and remains unchanged.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 Members are asked to agree and adopt the new policy for the approval of premises as venues for civil marriages and civil partnerships as set out in Appendix 1 with effect from 1 April, 2012.
- 4.02 Members are asked to agree and adopt the revised fees for non statutory services as set out in Appendix 2 with effect from 1 April, 2012.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 The recommended revised fees will cover the actual cost of these services and is based on the rate of inflation over the past two years.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None directly.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None directly.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None directly.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None directly.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None directly.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Not applicable.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 - Policy for the approval of premises as venues for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships in the County of Flintshire

Appendix 2 - Proposed non statutory registration fees from 1 April 2012

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None

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