

# **PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD**

14 February 2012

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor: Hilary Thompson (Performance Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive  
Joanne Machers, Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer  
Christine Armstrong, Customer and Support Services Manager  
Edwin Jeffries, Hartlepool Joint Trades Union Committee  
James Walsh, Scrutiny Support Officer  
Amanda Whitaker, Democratic Services Manager

## **39. Registration & Nationality Service Fees and Feedback from an External Review of the Service** *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

**Type of decision**

Non key.

**Purpose of report**

To agree new fees in relation to Registration and Nationality Service activities for the financial year 2012-13 and to provide feedback on an external review of the service.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The report included a review of the structure of fees in relation to marriages, civil partnerships, renewal of vows, naming ceremonies and individual citizenship ceremonies together with a review of other ad hoc fees. Feedback from a service review by the Registrar General's account manager for Hartlepool was also set out in the report.

The Portfolio Holder noted that the fees in relation to the Registration & Nationality Service were in 2 parts - the statutory fees and non-statutory fees. The statutory fees were set by the Registrar General following approval by government. The non-statutory fees were set by the local authority to reflect

their reasonable costs of providing services. The main fees that were non-statutory related to the provision of ceremonies and the nationality checking service. The current level of fees was appended to the report. The current fees had been reviewed and proposed fees in relation to ceremonies for 2012-13 were also appended to the report together with details of proposed increases in other fees.

It was noted that the number of ceremonies had fallen again this year resulting in less income though the nationality checking service had remained static ensuring that the income target across the whole service was met. Fee levels of neighbouring authorities have been considered in setting the new fees and charges for ceremony provision. Although there were higher than inflation increases for some fees, others had remained the same or reduced to ensure that ceremony provision was still affordable for Hartlepool residents. Income would be closely monitored on a monthly basis to ensure that targets were being met.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that in November last year, the Registrar General's office (GRO) had undertaken a standard service review that was their first visit since the Register Office was relocated to the Civic Centre. The terms of reference for the review were set out in the report. Overall the findings of the service review were very positive and were summarised in the report together with the strengths and innovations, areas for development and the key findings. It was noted that areas which had been identified for development were being addressed and, where appropriate, would be included in the Registration & Nationality Service Development Plan.

In response to clarification sought from the Portfolio Holder, the Customer and Support Services Manager provided information on the nationality checking service and on the rationale for the proposed fee structure. It was agreed to update the Portfolio Holder further when the Customer Survey, identified as an area for development by the Registrar General Office, was completed.

## **Decision**

The Portfolio holder agreed that -

- (i) The fees included in Appendix 2 be implemented with effect from 1 April 2012 excluding ceremonies that have already been paid for in full.
- (ii) The advance booking fee be implemented with immediate effect.
- (iii) A project be undertaken to consider provision of standard and enhanced ceremonies.
- (iv) That the findings of the GRO service review be noted.

## **40. Hartlepool Borough Council's Social Media Presence** (Assistant Chief Executive)

### **Type of decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To inform the Performance Portfolio Holder of plans to formalise arrangements and structural content for Hartlepool Borough Council's Social Media Presence.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The report set out the background to the development of a social media policy and structure for Hartlepool Borough Council's Facebook presence. On 18 April 2011 Cabinet had approved an action plan by the Young People's representatives of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum, following their investigation into the Council's use of Social Networking. Subsequently, a Social Media Officer Group had been established to address the production of a corporate social media policy and to provide recommendations in relation to the formalisation and structural content for the Council's social media presences. Appended to the report was information relating to approximately 30 Council social media presences across four social media sites.

It was recognised that Facebook was the largest social media site, where the Council had the most presences and the most logical to create a social media structure to fit the needs of the Council. The report set out the proposed structure of the site together with timescales to 'launch' the Council's use of social media and future developments in respect of other social media sites.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder noted the report and agreed to identify with appropriate officers, post meeting, how she could be involved in the Public Launch of the Council's social media presences identified in the report.

**41. Workers Memorial Day** (*Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer*)

**Type of decision**

Non key.

**Purpose of report**

To present a request from the Hartlepool Joint Trades Union Committee for the Council to recognise and support Workers Memorial Day on 28 April 2012.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

A letter and report from the Hartlepool Joint Trades Union Committee was attached which includes information about arrangements for Workers Memorial Day. The Secretary of the Joint Trades Union Committee advised on the background and purpose of Workers Memorial Day. An update was provided on the arrangements for the Workers Memorial Day Remembrance Service and Wreath Laying Ceremony and other events to be held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012 in terms of a Health and Safety Seminar to be held at the College of Further Education and a Remembrance Service and Tree of Remembrance Dedication Service also to be held at Hartlepool College of Further Education on 27<sup>th</sup> April.

**Decision**

The Portfolio Holder expressed her support for the arrangements set out in the report and agreed the following requests from the Hartlepool Joint Trades Union Committee that:

- a) The Authority considers promoting a minutes silence in Council Buildings and to Council staff at 12.30pm on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2012, in remembrance of 'those workers who have lost their lives through industrial accident or disease.
- b) The Authority gives consideration to authorising the lowering of flags on public buildings on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2012.
- c) The Authority gives consideration to allowing the sale of the Workers Memorial Day Remembrance forget-me-not purple ribbons on Council premises to staff and public.
- d) The Authority gives consideration to assisting in promoting / publicising the event to the wider public
- e) The Authority authorises the use of Council Premises on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2012 for the service and for guests before / after the Workers Memorial Day Service & Wreath Laying Ceremony.

## **42. Single Status Agreement Appeals** *(Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer)*

### **Type of decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To provide an update on progress on appeals received and obtain ratification of Appeals Panel outcomes in respect of High, Medium, Low and Very Low Priority Appeals.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The report provided a background to the Appeals Procedure together with an update on the progress of appeals received and requests ratification of Appeals Panel outcomes in respect of High, Medium, Low and Very Low Priority Appeals. Since the last report to the Portfolio Holder, the Appeals Panel had met on one occasion and had agreed outcomes, subject to ratification, in respect of five appeals relating to 6 appellants. It was envisaged that the one remaining appeal would be held in March along with Priority 1 appeals being reconsidered. A summary of the Appeals Panel outcomes were set out in the report. Further details of the outcomes of individual appeals were included in an exempt appendix to the report (the item contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, namely information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of the Council).

### **Decision**

(i) That the progress to date be noted.

(ii) That the Appeals Panel Outcomes in respect of Council Employees, as detailed in a confidential appendix to the report be ratified.

## **43. Publishing Equality Information & Objectives** *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

### **Type of decision**

Non key

### **Purpose of report**

To provide the Portfolio holder with an update on the progress made to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The report set out details of the progress that had been made on the Equality and Diversity Action Plan including the action that had been taken to meet the requirements to publish equality information. In order to comply with the requirement to publish equality information for both customers and employees, an equality report 'Equality Information 2012' had been published together with a 'Workforce Equality Information' report. Both documents were available on the Council's website. It was noted that by 6 April the Council had to develop and publish equality objectives and review them every 4 years. Members of the Diversity Sub-Group were currently assisting officers in their own departments to identify equality objectives as part of the Council's annual service planning activities. Consultation with stakeholders was taking place or in the process of being arranged.

### **Decision**

The report was noted.

## **44. Statutory Workforce Equality Data Reporting Requirements** *(Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer)*

### **Type of decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To advise the Portfolio Holder of the arrangements made to comply with statutory workforce equality data reporting requirements.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The report set out the arrangements made to comply with statutory workforce equality data reporting requirements. It was noted that the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 placed workforce equality data reporting requirements on the Council. Updated guidance on how to meet the requirements of the above regulations was provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission on 15 December 2011. The deadline for

publishing the workforce equality data was 31 January 2012. A comprehensive report which had been submitted to the January Portfolio meeting was appended to the report and explained the requirements in more detail and advised how the deadline for publishing the workforce equality data was to be met.

A report also appended to the report contained the workforce equality data which had been published on the Council's website.

### **Decision**

The report was noted.

The meeting concluded at 10.55 a.m.

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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