

SUBJECT: MONMOUTHSHIRE REGISTRATION SERVICE COLLABORATIVE WORKING

MEETING: Individual Cabinet Member Decision – County Cllr Sara Jones

DATE: 8th April 2020

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All of Monmouthshire

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To approve the Monmouthshire Registration Service collaborative working agreement between Monmouthshire and the four other Districts making up the former 'Gwent' area, namely Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport and Torfaen.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Monmouthshire Registration Service collaborative working agreement (Memorandum of Understanding), attached as Appendix One, is approved and implemented.
- 2.2 That the agreement is reviewed and impact assessed by the Superintendent Registrar of Monmouthshire, and the other Districts, monthly for six months following implementation.
- 2.3 That performance under the new arrangement is incorporated into the Registration Services annual report to Strong Communities Select Committee – the first one being in May 2021 – to allow Member scrutiny of how the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is operating.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Monmouthshire County Council has responsibility to register all births and deaths which take place within the District of Monmouthshire.
- 3.2 In accordance with the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953, births and deaths have to be registered in the district in which they occur ("the Event District"). However, a declaration of particulars can also be attested at any other register office and that District then sends the declaration to the Event District to enable them to complete the registration.
- 3.3 Aneurin Bevan Health Board released plans to build a new hospital in Torfaen, potentially moving the majority of births and acute care from the current main care centres of Royal Gwent Hospital and Nevill Hall Hospital. The impact upon our Registration Service would be to potentially move the demand for appointments.

- 3.4 The MoU, attached at Appendix One, has been prepared and has incorporated the following :-
- advice from the General Register Office (GRO)
 - discussions between Proper Officers and Superintendent Registrars
 - advice from other departments, including Legal Services, regarding implementation and approval.
- 3.5 A Working Protocol has been agreed by the partner Districts, and approved by GRO, which outlines the practical implementation of the MoU. The partnership working will start with a phased approach, with the first phase involving birth registrations only. This will then be assessed to understand the benefits and pitfalls before considering increasing the scope to include death registrations.
- 4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION, (includes social justice, safeguarding and corporate parenting):**
- 4.1 The completed 'Equalities & Future Generations Evaluation' form is provided at Appendix Two, attached.
- 4.2 The Collaborative working agreement provides the public with greater access and choice to register events at a Register Office which is most convenient to them. The impact will be monitored and reviewed with partners and stakeholders. An assessment will also be reported to Strong Communities Select Committee in May 2021, as part of the annual performance report for 2020/21.
- 5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:** The options considered are as follows:
- 5.1 Take no action and allow Informants to continue with the current situation of travelling to the 'event' district, or attesting a declaration at a local office, and waiting for the registration to take place. The changes in Health Board provision might have implications for staff levels.
- 5.2 Implement the attached MoU. The MoU enables registrations to take place in any of the five registration districts, without using the declaration process, for the convenience of the customer. The Councils agree that the Registrars and Deputy Registrars employed and appointed by them, to discharge registration functions under the 1953 Act, shall be authorised to act as Deputy Registrars in any of the other Council districts. For the purposes of partnership working, the district in which the birth took place is referred to as the "Event" district. The other districts within the partnership will then be the "Registering" districts. This option will proactively improve residents choice and experience of registration.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- 6.1 A progress report setting out the impact of the partnership working on customer behaviour and appointment demand will be prepared annually, but in the meantime will be reviewed monthly. As per 2.3 above, scrutiny of the operation of the MoU will be included in a performance report to Strong Communities Select Committee in May 2021.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 To make proactive changes to the Registration Service, within the boundaries of current legislation, to improve the customer experience and maintain appointment availability. This is the first agreement of this kind within Registration within England and Wales, and is supported by the Governing Body, the GRO.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 It is anticipated that the scheme will be funded within the existing budget. No fees, payments or charges shall be due from any Council to another in relation to the provision of the registration services under the MOU.

9. CONSULTEES:

Social Care & Health DMT
General Register Office
Proper Officers and Registration Service Managers/Superintendent Registrars of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport and Torfaen

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Llanfrechfa Grange plans

9. AUTHOR:

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10. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Appendices

Appendix One Memorandum of Understanding
Appendix Two 'Equalities & Future Generations Evaluation' form