

10 January 2019**Agenda Item:11****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES****REGISTRATION SERVICE MARKETING AND PUBLICITY ACTIVITIES****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval in principle for future countywide marketing and publicity activities to promote discretionary registration services.

Information

2. Income generated by public interest in discretionary services offered by the County Council's Registration Service has, in recent years, enabled the service to work to a substantially cost-neutral budget. These, non-statutory, services are offered under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Localism Act 2011, and include conducting civil marriage at premises other than the Register Office, plus a range of celebratory ceremonies including naming ceremonies, celebration of vows, civil funerals and individual citizenship ceremonies. The marketing and publicity activities referred to in this report relate solely to the promotion and advertising of these services.
3. Registration managers and staff are continually seeking new opportunities to offer non-statutory services that the public will wish to purchase, and to thereby optimise income for the service. Also, the service aims to maintain competitiveness with neighbouring authorities.
4. Marketing and publicity opportunities and initiatives include, for example, wedding fayres, open days, room hire, hosting exhibitions and linking in with local events to promote services. Some events may occur on an annual basis, linking in with normal core business cycles such as public interest in booking weddings early in the New Year and following Valentines Day. Others are continuous, such as webpages and printed literature available to existing and potential future customers. Such activities frequently seek to publicise the beautiful properties occupied by the service, which lend themselves to alternative activities to increase footfall and thereby promote the use of our buildings for a variety of different purposes and to generate income. The service will also seek to gain positive publicity from themed ceremonies and events linking with anniversaries, for example, where the customers involved are happy with this.
5. The registration service already works closely with a range of businesses and organisations within Nottinghamshire. This provides networking opportunities, an awareness of how registration service offer opportunities for new businesses and growth. Close working with the registration service benefits local businesses such as florists, caterers, car hire companies, and premises approved for civil ceremonies. This benefits the local economy by promoting use of

local providers. In respect of marketing for Approved Premises, the registration service benefits from income arising from registrars attending the venue to conduct ceremonies there.

6. Through the activities proposed in this report, service users and potential customers can gain an awareness of the full range of registration services available to them, and be able to select those they wish to use. This has the benefit of enhancing their experience of Nottinghamshire County Council, and thereby promotes a positive image of the Authority. At Wedding Fayres and Open Days, potential customers will see first-hand how proud staff are of the County Council's registration buildings and the level of expertise staff have to assist them in planning their perfect ceremony. Proposed forthcoming events include Wedding Fayres during February at County House, Mansfield, and at Bridgford Hall, West Bridgford.
7. Literature and other promotional materials will be prepared with the support and assistance of expert colleagues from the Communications and Market team and the County Council's Design and Print service. Related postings to social media will be in accordance with guidance and training provided by the County Council.

Other Options Considered

8. Experience over recent years has demonstrated that the marketing and publicity activities detailed in this report will be effective in bringing to public attention that the County Council offers non-statutory services that they may be interested in purchasing. It is not proposed to consider other options other than when linked to a future report seeking committee approval.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

9. The reason for the recommendation below is to enable registration managers to respond swiftly and effectively to future opportunities promote discretionary registration services using agreed marketing and promotion activities.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

11. The activities described in this report are aimed to increase income generation. Although it is impossible to be sure that new customers might not have accessed Nottinghamshire registration services without the marketing activities it is nevertheless estimated that (after deduction of costs) wedding fayres in the past have generated income of approximately £5k on an annual basis. The current room hire initiative at West Bridgford Registration Office has raised approximately £3k to date.

Implications for Service Users

12. The measures set out in this report will raise public awareness of services offered by the Registration Service that can enhance their marking of key events in life.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

- 1) The Committee agrees that Registration Service Area Managers are permitted to initiate and implement the marketing and publicity activities detailed in the report to promote discretionary registration services.

Derek Higton
Service Director, Place & Communities

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Constitutional Comments (EP 10/12/2018)

13. The recommendation falls within the remit of the Communities and Place Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SES 11/12/18)

14. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 11 of the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All