

**19 September 2017****Agenda Item:5****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR SOUTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE  
AND PUBLIC PROTECTION****APPROVED PREMISES FOR CIVIL CEREMONIES****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an annual update and overview of the County Council's role in licensing premises for the solemnization of marriages and the registration of civil partnerships.

**Information and Advice**Background

2. The remit of the Planning and Licensing Committee includes responsibility for the licensing of premises for the solemnization of marriages and the registration of civil partnerships. Managerial responsibility for this function is currently delegated to the Corporate Director for Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection, however this will pass to Place Department from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017.
3. In accordance with the process followed in recent years, this report provides an update and overview of the County Council's role in licensing premises for marriages and civil partnerships. The last report to the committee on this topic was made in September 2016.

Approved Premises

4. Current legislation allows for the solemnization of marriages (for any couple) and the formation of civil partnerships (for same-sex couples only) to take place in venues other than register offices. Secular premises such as historic buildings, stately homes, country houses, hotels, civic buildings and sports stadia can all be licensed, provided this does not compromise the principles of English law and Parliament's intention to maintain the solemnity of the occasion. Also, to be approved, a venue must be a permanently immovable structure, comprising at least one room, or any boat or other vessel which is permanently moored. Premises outside this definition, such as the open air, a tent, marquee or any other temporary structure, and most forms of transport, are not be eligible for approval. The premise must be a seemly and dignified venue for the proceedings. It cannot be a religious premise, other than for the formation of Civil Partnerships. Also, it must be regularly available to the public, which precludes a domestic home.

5. There are currently 69 Approved Premises in Nottinghamshire (a net increase of one premise since last year), and these are listed in Appendix A to this report. The fee for approval of a premise is included in the set of registration fees, which is reported annually for approval by the Communities and Place Committee.

### Civil Partnerships in Religious Premises

6. The Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 allow civil partnership ceremonies to be conducted in places of worship in England and Wales. The Registration Services' role is to approve the premises. Nationally, the leaders of Liberal Judaism, the Quakers and the Unitarians have all expressed interest in holding ceremonies. The procedure, and the basis on which approvals will be granted, is broadly the same as that which currently applies to secular premises. Once approved, a premise will be included in the list of approved venues for civil partnerships, indicating that they are a religious premise. However, at present there have been no applications for a religious building in Nottinghamshire to be licensed for Civil Partnerships.

### Procedures

7. The registration service procedures for approval of premises have been developed following 'The Registrar General's Guidance to Authorities for the approval of premises as venues for civil marriage and civil partnerships' (Sixth Edition, Revised June 2015). The premises are assessed for suitability, fire safety, and the need (or otherwise) for planning permission. Once granted, each approval lasts for three years.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

8. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working 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**

9. There are no financial implications contained in this report.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That members agree to receive an update report in the next 12 months and that this be included in the work programme.

## **PAUL MCKAY**

**Service Director, South Nottinghamshire and Public Protection**

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### **Constitutional Comments (SLB 22.08.2017 )**

10.Planning and Licensing Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

### **Financial Comments**

11.There are no financial implications arising from the report.

### **Background Papers**

The Registrar General's Guidance to Authorities for the approval of premises as venues for civil marriage and civil partnerships' (Sixth Edition, Revised June 2015)

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All