

# **Community Services Department - Regulatory Services Registration Service - Service Plan 2008/09**

## **PURPOSE**

The Registration Service has a statutory duty to provide for the formalities of marriage (outside the Church of England and the Church of Wales), civil partnerships, the registration of births and deaths, and the performance of citizenship ceremonies.

## **AIM OF THE SERVICE**

To fulfil its statutory responsibilities through a customer focused service, together with other related services which complement this.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- To provide suitably equipped and accessible venues for the registration of births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships, and the provision of citizenship ceremonies.
- To grant approval for premises to be used for the solemnisation of marriages and the formation of civil partnership within Leicestershire.
- To maintain and securely store records of births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships within the County.
- To supply copies of certificates when requested and on payment of the required fee.
- To provide the Office of National Statistics with such information as they require.
- To provide other celebratory and ancillary services that complements the other strategic objectives.

## SERVICE PRIORITIES 2008/09

### High Priority

### Timescale

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1) Introduce, in line with Government targets, internet based registrations for:-   |                          |
| a) Births & Deaths  | November 2008            |
| b) Marriages – preliminaries<br>- registration  | April 2009<br>April 2010 |
| 2) To work positively on the implementation of the ‘Customer First’ programme in Community Services.  | April 2009               |
| 3) Roll out electronic booking system as follows:-  |                          |
| i) Statutory ceremonies   | July 2008                |
| ii) Births and deaths   | March 2009               |
| 4) Begin preparations for modernisation of the Service through a revised scheme, Code of Practice and Good Practice Guide including appointment of full time Registration Services Manager and completion of the restructure of the support team. | March 2009               |
| 5) Review and revise delivery of citizenship ceremonies in the light of any new national policy making best use of links with Children and Young People’s Service.  | March 2009               |
| 6) Complete and issue main Registration Business Continuity Plan.   | March 2009               |
| 7) Reissue Registration Public Notice   | September 2008           |

### Medium Priority

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 8) Carry out two customer satisfaction surveys save for death registrations which will be monitored on an ongoing basis. | July 2008     |
| 9) Expand the Nationality Checking Service at Loughborough from a fortnightly to a weekly service.                       | January 2009  |
| 10) Linked to 3 and 4 above, review opening hours for Registration offices with a view to offering better access.        | March 2010    |
| 11) Change the Registration stationery to reflect wider range of services (currently focused on marriages).              | December 2009 |

**Longer Term Priorities (as opportunities arise)**

- 12) Following completion of 3 above, centralise the booking system for all appointments assuming adequate accommodation at County Hall.
- 13) Improve the standard of service provided by preparing for expansion (or relocation) of the County Hall Register Office and the relocation of Coalville, Market Harborough and Hinckley Registration Offices to more suitable premises.

## **County Council Corporate and Community Objectives**

The Registration Service contributes to the corporate objective to achieve stronger communities. Through its work with citizenship ceremonies, new citizens are formally welcomed into the community. Taking this to schools and working with the Children and Young People's Service, the personal and social development of children can be enhanced by providing an understanding of the importance to the community of citizenship.

### **Equalities**

There is in place the means to monitor access and service usage by different groups that make up the community of Leicestershire. User surveys are conducted during the course of the year.

### **Financial Resources**

The net revenue funding for 2008/09 is £143,820. This does not include "support services" which are supplied by Commercial and Support Services of the Community Services Department.

Projected income for the Service totalling £571,530 is derived from fees and charges including approval of premises for civil marriage ceremonies and the formation of civil partnerships, performance of civil marriage ceremonies and civil partnerships, the issuing of certificates for and the registering of births, deaths and marriages, ceremonies for naming and renewal of vows and citizenship ceremonies together with the associated nationality checking service.

There is no capital allocation for the Registration Service in 2008/9.

## **SERVICE PERFORMANCE 2007/8**

### **Performance Indicators**

There are no national performance indicators for Registration although the Local Government Association has published a Good Practice Guide for the Service. A review of the service in January 2005 showed that the service met 96% of the minimum standards, 78% of the "Good Practice" standards and 61% of the "Better Practice" standards at the majority of its offices.

In July 2002 the Registration Inspectorate of the General Register Office undertook a thorough inspection of the Service and reported, among other things, that "the overall standard of service delivery in Leicestershire is very good".

A customer satisfaction survey conducted in January 2008 for all services other than death registrations, found that 98% of responses rated the service provided as either excellent or good.

Leicestershire's nationality checking service has been recognised in 2007 as one of the top three local authority providers.

## SERVICE PRIORITIES 2007/08 - OUTCOMES

	<b>High Priority</b>	<b>Progress to 31.03.07</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
1.	Introduce, in line with Government targets, internet based registrations for: i) Marriages - preliminaries ii) Marriages - registration	Delayed by Government until successful "re launch" of births and deaths on-line.	1 <sup>st</sup> October 2007 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2008
2.	Modernise the booking system for appointments so as to allow customers to do this "on-line".	Technical content agreed and implemented save for certain features which have not been supplied. This is being taken up with the contractor.	31 December 2007
3	Implement changes to the employment status of Registration Officers as a result of Government legislation.	Implemented from 1.12.07. New contracts issued. Amendments to finance procedures being considered.	31 March 2009
4.	Implement the proposed Government modernisation of the service through a revised "scheme", Code of Practice and Good Practice Guide.	Job description questionnaire completed for principal jobs ready for "trial" evaluation. Next step is to agree forms of consultation with stakeholders. Application to General Registrar Office has slipped beyond 31.03.08	31 March 2008
5.	Continue to develop new services including the Nationality Checking Service for new citizens at the Loughborough Registration office.	New service at Loughborough in operation. Recognised by national government as one of the top three local government providers.	31 March 2008

6.	Complete and issue the main Registration Business Continuity Plan.	Delayed due to other more pressing priorities.	31 March 2008
	<b>Medium Priority</b>		
7.	Improve customer service with the introduction of credit and/or debit card facilities for the payment of fees.	New payment facilities now available for use by customers.	31 March 2008
8	Linked to 3 and 4 above, review opening hours for Registration offices with a view to offering better access.	Unlikely to be completed until well into 2008/9	31 March 2008

	<b>Other Longer-Term Priorities (as opportunities arise)</b>		
9.	Following completion of 2 above centralise the booking system for all appointments assuming adequate accommodation at County Hall.		
10.	Continue to enhance facilities for weddings at Registration Offices by the installation of web cams at Loughborough, Coalville, Market Harborough and Hinckley.		
11.	Change the Registration stationery to reflect wider range of services (currently focused on marriages).		
12.	Improve the standard of service provided by preparing for expansion (or relocation) of the County Hall Register Office and the relocation of Coalville, Market Harborough and Hinckley Registration Offices to more suitable premises.		