

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT**

To: GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE		Subject: REGISTRATION SERVICE: CEREMONIES MARKING LIFE EVENTS
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 8 January 2004	Ref: JAF/IL	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report, under reference to the responses authorised by the Committee to the consultation document "Civil Registration in the 21st Century", recommends that the Council authorise the extension of services offered by the Registration Service to include such ceremonies as baby naming ceremonies and ceremonies to renew marriage vows.

2. Background

- 2.1 The consultation document issued by the Registrar General for Scotland "Civil Registration in the 21st Century" included consultation on the question

'Should local councils be encouraged to provide through their Registrars ceremonies analogous to civil marriage but marking other life events?'

This was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 19 December 2001 and the following response approved:-

The fundamental and core service provided by the Registration Service is the recording of life events. Ancillary to this is the celebration of civil marriages, and it is considered that, without prejudice to the central role of the Registration Service, it could be possible to provide other ceremonies such as baby naming ceremonies or ceremonies to renew marriage vows. It is not, however, considered appropriate that the Registration Service offer such ceremonies as civil funerals. Such services (i.e. baby naming ceremonies or ceremonies renewing marriage vows) would have resource and staff training implications and, if introduced, would require to be accompanied by safeguards with regard to staff deployment, quality standards etc.

- 2.2 The consultation document acknowledged that to require, or indeed encourage, local authorities to provide additional services would involve primary legislation which is not as yet in place. It is, however, open to local authorities to provide such services voluntarily and a number of local authorities in Scotland have taken this initiative.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 There is evidence of a demand in North Lanarkshire for ceremonies such as baby naming and marriage reaffirmation ceremonies, and it is proposed that the Council agree to extend the range of services provided by the Registration Service to include those services subject to the availability of registration staff.

3.2 As was acknowledged in the response to the consultation paper, the provision of such services will have staff training implications and will require to be accompanied by safeguards with regard to staff deployment, quality standards etc. If agreed by Committee, this process will now commence, building on the experience of other local authorities who already provide those services.

3.3 There are staffing resource implications for the provision of additional services. This has been acknowledged by the Committee in its approval of arrangements for marriages outwith Registration Offices and during extended hours and, in that regard, the position is being closely monitored. If introduced, the provision of additional services would be included in the general resource monitoring.

4. **Charges**

4.1 It is proposed that, if introduced, the fee for accommodation for baby naming ceremonies and marriage reaffirmation ceremonies be the same as that for civil marriages, and the fee for performing those ceremonies be set at a level £10.00 above that of performing civil marriages. This, having regard to the absence of statutory registration fee, will result in a total fee for those services at a level lower than that for civil marriages.

5. **Recommendation**

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve the foregoing proposals.


Director of Administration

Members seeking further information on the contents of this report are asked to contact John Fleming, Head of Central Services on Extension 2228.