

REPORT

To: GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE		Subject: REGISTRATION: CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 1 March 2004	Ref: JAF/IL	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report refers to the requirement of the local authority to provide, through the Registration Service, citizenship ceremonies and brings forward recommendations on the content of citizenship ceremonies in North Lanarkshire.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, which received Royal Assent on 7 November, includes provisions which require that all applicants for naturalisation or registration as a British Citizen who are aged 18 years or over take a citizenship oath and pledge at a citizenship ceremony. The Act goes on to provide that, in Scotland, that ceremony, oath and pledge will be administered by Registrars.
- 2.2 The first such citizenship ceremony took place last month within the London Borough of Brent and, within the next few weeks, a pilot citizenship ceremony will take place within the City of Glasgow. Thereafter it will be the obligation of all local authorities to meet demands for citizenship ceremonies within their areas.
- 2.3 In a consultation terminating in October 2003 the Nationality Policy Directorate of the Home Office sought views on the form and content of citizenship ceremonies. In the responses to that consultation, a majority considered that the use of national symbols – such as flags – was appropriate as a component of the citizenship ceremonies, that the importing of a local flavour was also appropriate as was the use of registration premises. There was majority support, also, for the playing of the National Anthem and, in addition, music of local significance. Finally a clear majority of respondees expressed satisfaction with the standard oath and response and confirmed that it would be appropriate to invite local dignitaries to participate in the ceremony.

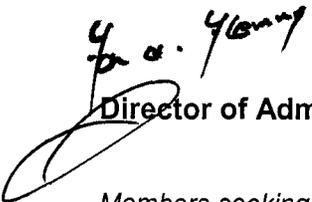
3. Proposals

- 3.1 Within North Lanarkshire it is not anticipated that there will be a significant number of large-scale ceremonies: rather it is considered that the norm will be individual or small group ceremonies. Against that background, with regard to the arrangements for citizenship ceremonies, it is proposed
- that citizenship ceremonies take place within the marriage accommodation of the Registration Office most convenient to the address of the person(s) receiving grant of citizenship – with the exception of Cumbernauld where it is proposed that the ceremonies take place in the District Court;
 - ceremonies generally take place on Wednesday afternoons;

- for the duration of the ceremonies there be displayed on the premises the Union Flag, the Saltire and the Council flag;
- that there be invited to participate in the ceremonies the Lord Lieutenant (or his representative) and the Provost (or his representative);
- that appropriate national music be played and, at the conclusion of the ceremony, the National Anthem be played;
- following the ceremony a certificate be awarded bearing the Council's crest and commemorating the event.

4. **Recommendation**

4.1 It is recommended that the Committee give consideration to 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.