

**NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL
DECISION**

DECISION OF SECTION 151 OFFICER OF THE COUNCIL,
CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE



DECISION NO: CSD 135

SUBJECT: Decision to enter into a 10 year contractual arrangement with Somerset County Council for the delivery of Registration Services within the North Somerset district.

BACKGROUND:

On 8th December the Executive considered a report from the Head of legal and Democratic Services with regard to entering into a shared arrangement with Somerset County Council. The Executive resolved the following:

that the authority enter into a shared arrangement for Registration Services with Somerset County Council hosting that arrangement, as detailed in option iv) in paragraph 3.4 of the report, subject to conducting due diligence, entering a contractual arrangement and delegating the final decision to the Section 151 Officer and the Head of Legal and Democratic Service, in consultation with the Executive Member for Community Services, and subject to approval of the Minister for the Office of the General Registrar.

Following this decision due diligence was conducted and as a result a contract was drafted to cover issues that became apparent through this process. A detailed contract has now been prepared that covers the partnership arrangement with Somerset County Council hosting the Registration Service as part of the shared arrangement.

The contract is for a 10 year period with provisions for the enhancement of the service to be provided by Somerset CC within the first year. It also details the financial arrangement between the two councils, with North Somerset receiving 40K per annum for residual services. The service is designed on a cost recovery basis but should there be any surplus then that will be shared between the two councils.

The service will be delivered from its present base in the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare and the part time office next to Clevedon library. Weddings will still take place in the Town Hall as well as those premises throughout North Somerset that have been approved for the consummation of marriage and civil partnership.

During the summer the service will begin to provide the public with a dedicated contact team that will book appointments, together with the flexibility for the public to be able to book appointments on line.

Approval has been given to both authorities by the General Register Office and the contract requires that the service provided by Somerset CC will conform to GRO best practice and KPI's.

DECISION: That the Council enter into a 10 year contract with Somerset County Council for a shared Registration Service, with Somerset County Council hosting the service for the provision of services under the Registration Act 1953 and the Civil Partnership Act 2004 and to provide the Proper Officer with the administrative support under the Marriage Act 1949, the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, and the Marriages and Civil Partnerships for licensing approved premises and conducting Citizenship ceremonies.

Reasons:

The Registration Service is a very small dedicated service with a small number of employees, making it difficult to cover the usual employee absence. Being part of a larger team will enable better cover and training. The service required considerable development to improve telephone contact and provide the ability for the public to use digital technology to contact the service. Somerset County Council are providing these solutions at no additional cost to North Somerset Council.

Other Alternatives Considered: North Somerset Council would have to find the expenditure to purchase a software system. It would then have the additional expense of providing a dedicated contact centre to deliver better telephone connectivity.

Financial Implications:


(state financial implications for example by deleting those statements that do not apply or using the other facility)

- There is no cost to North Somerset to enter into this contract, plus the enhancement for public access to the service will be delivered by Somerset County Council at no cost to North Somerset.

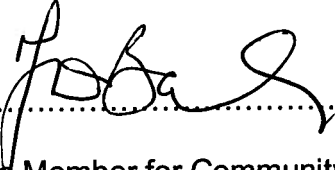
Implications for Future Years: There is no additional cost to this authority in forthcoming years. If the service delivers a surplus it will be divided between the North Somerset and Somerset County Council.

Signed: 
Section 151 Officer, North Somerset Council

Dated: 23.3.16

Signed 
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Dated: 23.3.16

Signed 
Executive Member for Community and Corporate Organisation as having been consulted

Dated: 23-3-16

