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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 September 2017</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Chief Financial Officer</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>FIN/69/17/AP/LA</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Alan Puckrin</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712223</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Marriages within Inverclyde Council Premises</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Committee approval on proposals regarding the delivery of marriage ceremonies within Council premises.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 As part of the Office Asset Management Plan, West Stewart Street, which hosts a bespoke Marriage suite, is due to close in October, 2017. A report to the Committee in June highlighted the need to identify a temporary location for marriage ceremonies and it was agreed that the Provost's Room in Greenock Municipal Buildings be used pending a further report to the Committee identifying a permanent solution.
- 2.2 Interest in the Provost's Room as a marriage facility is growing and it is anticipated that interest will increase once the availability of this location becomes wider known. Registrars will also continue to conduct ceremonies outwith Inverclyde Council premises.
- 2.3 Officers examined options for the permanent designation of the Marriage Facility taking into account that it is a requirement that the facility requires to be dedicated for that purpose and needs to be fully accessible to members of the public without compromising building security or day to day Council business.
- 2.4 Officers' recommendations are the following:
1. That the Provost's Room in the Port Glasgow Town Hall become the designated Marriage Facility for the Council from the Summer of 2018.
  2. That following the planned refurbishment the former District Court be promoted as an alternative unique and historical location for Marriage Ceremonies and that access be via the Town Hall.
  3. That officers work with Inverclyde Leisure to promote both facilities and the opportunities this gives to couples for an integrated marriage and reception offering.
  4. That the option to book the Provost's Room in the Greenock Municipal Buildings for marriage ceremonies be discontinued for any ceremonies scheduled post July, 2018.
- 2.5 Discussions have taken place with Inverclyde Leisure regarding access to the former District Court from the Town Hall with access via the stairs next to the Hall Keeper's office. Options for access for anyone with mobility issues are outlined in the report. As a minimum there will require to be some decoration and security work around the stairwell at a cost of around £15,000 whilst the option to install a dedicated lift would require Historic Environment Scotland approval and is estimated to cost around £200,000 and would require the relocation of the Hall Keeper's office.

- 2.6 Following discussion at the last Committee officers have developed proposals for the pricing structure for the marriage facilities for the period post July, 2018. The structure recognises the difference between booking the designated facility and the former District Court.
- 2.7 On the basis that the Committee approve the proposals in this report then officers will finalise arrangements with Inverclyde Leisure and progress any works to ensure the timescales are met.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve the following:

1. That the Provost's Room in the Port Glasgow Town Hall become the designated Marriage Facility for the Council from the Summer of 2018.
2. That following the planned refurbishment the former District Court be promoted as an alternative unique and historical location for Marriage Ceremonies and that access be via the Town Hall
3. That officers continue to work with Inverclyde Leisure to promote both facilities and the opportunities this gives to couples for an integrated marriage and reception offering.
4. That the option to book the Provost's Room in the Greenock Municipal Buildings for marriage ceremonies be discontinued for any ceremonies scheduled post July, 2018.
5. That the pricing structure outlined in section 6 be approved.

**Alan Puckrin**  
**Chief Financial Officer**

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Environment & Regeneration Committee has previously agreed to the refurbishment of the former District Court. Committee has also been advised of the closure of West Stewart Street which is due at the end of September when Safer Communities move into the former Education HQ offices in William Street.
- 4.2 Registrars currently officiate at around 80 weddings per year and, in 2016, 50% of these took place at West Stewart Street. The use of a Council facility generates roughly £7,000 per year depending on the size of the wedding and the day of the week on which it is held. The two wedding suites at West Stewart Street can accommodate 4 for the most basic ceremony or 44 guests including the couple.
- 4.3 The Council has a legal requirement to be able to provide a wedding “celebrant” and to provide a venue from within its “Registration Office” and the Committee agreed in June that the Provost’s Room in the Greenock Municipal Buildings in the interim become the designated marriage facility for the Council.

## **5.0 LATEST POSITION**

- 5.1 Subject to Historic Environment Scotland tenders for works to the District Court will be issued by the end of August.
- 5.2 Interest in the Provost’s Room as a marriage facility is growing and it is anticipated that this will result in a number of bookings as the availability of this location becomes wider known. Registrars will also continue to conduct ceremonies outwith Inverclyde Council premises. A photographer has been engaged to take some promotional photographs of the facility in order that the Registrars can use these to generate bookings whilst reducing any disruption to the day to day operation of the room.
- 5.3 Officers have examined options for the permanent designation of the Marriage Facility taking into account that it is a requirement that the facility requires to be dedicated for that purpose and needs to be fully accessible to members of the public without compromising building security or day to day Council business.
- 5.4 The potential for the former District Court to become the designated Marriage Facility has been discussed both at the Committee and the Environment & Regeneration Committee. Officers believe that whilst there is much to commend the use of the former District Court as a marriage facility post refurbishment by couples who wish a prestigious historical venue, a more functional facility is required for the designated facility given the number of small ceremonies (6 or less participants) which currently take place and the access issues outlined in the next paragraph.
- 5.5 Several detailed discussions have taken place with Inverclyde Leisure and Legal & Property Services to identify how the District Court could pragmatically be operated as a marriage facility. All access including disabled access would ideally be via the Town Hall to minimise any impact on the operation of the Customer Service Centre and any Council business taking place in the Chambers/Grand Corridor at the same time. The installation of a dedicated lift has been investigated and the installation of a lift from the current Town Hall Keeper’s office to just outside the District Court is estimated to cost around £200,000. This would require Historic Environment Scotland approval and would also require finding an alternative location for the Hall Keeper.
- 5.6 A more cost effective alternative for DDA access would be to allow any attendees with mobility needs at the wedding to access the former District Court via the Customer Service Centre. This however would have restrictions both in terms of numbers and when marriages could take place. This is another reason why officers would not recommend the former District Court being the permanent dedicated marriage facility.

- 5.7 Having considered alternatives, officers would propose that the Provost's Room in the Port Glasgow Town Hall become the dedicated marriage facility for the Council. This would require some investment including a replacement ceiling, new lighting, curtains/blinds and furniture. The estimated cost for this work including an element of redecoration elsewhere in the building is £25,000. The room currently has very limited alternative uses and therefore can be dedicated as is required by the Registrar General. Other factors to consider are that the size is slightly larger than the Stewart Suite (capacity for around 50), there is full DDA access and Inverclyde Leisure often take bookings for the use of the Town Hall for wedding receptions meaning there is a real opportunity for synergy and making increased use of the Port Glasgow Town Hall.
- 5.8 If this proposal is agreed then officers are confident that the facility will be available by August 2018.

## 6.0 PRICING

- 6.1 There is a legal requirement for councils to have a facility to hold small ceremonies for the couple and their witnesses at a cost of £125. This would continue to be the charge for the new permanent marriage facility (subject to any uplift in the interim advised by the Registrar General).
- 6.2 In addition it is proposed that the charges for the Provost's Room at Port Glasgow Town Hall for larger ceremonies (more than 6 attendees), mirror those currently charged for the Stewart Suite (Appendix 1). This will be subject to any charging decisions taken as part of the 2018/20 budget process.
- 6.3 Given the prestigious and unique nature it is proposed that there is a 100% uplift on the charges for the Provost's Room in Port Glasgow Town Hall for the former District Court. This would mean a maximum charge of £687 for a marriage on a Bank Holiday and a minimum of £307 for a marriage between Monday and Thursday. Officers believe these charges represent good value in the context of the overall costs of a wedding, the historical significance of the court combined with the investment in restoration committed to date and comparable charges for other prestigious facilities.
- 6.4 The proposals in this report will require a small degree of recompense to Inverclyde Leisure for the role that their officers will have in supporting the Registrars in managing the attendees at marriages. Discussions are progressing regarding the specific sum but any costs will be contained within the income generated.

## 7.0 IMPLICATIONS

### 7.1 Finance

It is proposed that the costs of refurbishing the Provost's Room at Port Glasgow Town Hall are met from the balance of the office Asset Management Plan. In the event Members want to install a dedicated lift from the Town Hall to the District Court then this will require resources to be allocated from the Free Reserves.

#### Financial Implications:

##### One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
AMP	Office Accommodation	2017/18	25		Refurbishment of Provost's Room PG Town Hall.
Capital	Property	2017/18	15		Cost of works to the Greenock Town Hall Stairs.

## Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Registrars	Income	2018/19	tbc		Will depend on uptake of use of the District Court facility and any ancillary costs.

### 7.2 Legal

The identification of a permanent dedicated marriage facility meets the Council's legal requirements.

### 7.3 Human Resources

There are no HR implications arising from the proposals in this report.

### 7.4 Equalities

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

Yes See attached appendix

No This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

### 7.5 Repopulation

It is important that the Council continues to provide an attractive marriage service as this will add to the reputation of the Council and make the area desirable to potential residents.

## 8.0 CONSULTATIONS

8.1 The proposals in this report have been endorsed by the Corporate Management Team.

## 9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None.



**Registrars**  
**FEES AND CHARGES FROM 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017**

<b><u>All Religious Marriages</u></b>	
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£70.00</u></b>

**SMALL CIVIL CEREMONIES WITHIN CLYDE SUITE**

<b><u>Small Civil Ceremony</u></b>	<b><u>Monday - Friday</u></b>
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
Ceremony	£55.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£125.00</u></b>

<b><u>Small Civil Ceremony</u></b>	<b><u>Saturday</u></b>
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
Ceremony	£55.00
Administration Fees	<u>209.00</u>
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£334.00</u></b>

<b><u>Small Civil Ceremony</u></b>	<b><u>Sunday</u></b>
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
Ceremony	£55.00
Administration Fees	221.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£346.00</u></b>

<b><u>Small Civil Ceremony</u></b>	<b><u>Public Holidays</u></b>
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
Ceremony	£55.00
Administration Fees	£273.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£398.00</u></b>

**Please Note:- A £50.00 non-refundable deposit must be paid on all Bookings**

## LARGE CIVIL CEREMONIES WITHIN STEWART SUITE

<u>Large Civil Ceremony</u>	<u>Monday - Thursday</u>
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
Ceremony	£55.00
Administration	£91.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£216.00</u></b>

<u>Large Civil Ceremony</u>	<u>Friday</u>
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
Ceremony	£55.00
Administration	£115.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£240.00</u></b>

<u>Large Civil Ceremony Out of Hours</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
Ceremony	£55.00
Administration Fees	£227.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£352.00</u></b>

<u>Large Civil Ceremony</u>	<u>Sunday</u>
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
Ceremony	£55.00
Administration Fees	£243.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£368.00</u></b>

<u>Large Civil Ceremony</u>	<u>Public Holidays</u>
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
Ceremony	£55.00
Administration Fees	£281.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£406.00</u></b>

**Please Note:- A £50.00 non-refundable deposit must be paid on all Bookings**

**\*\* EXTERNAL VENUES – HOTELS-TOWN HALLS etc...**

**\*\*\*Please Note: - that the fees are only for the attendance of a Registrar**

**\*\*\*THE VENUE MUST BE BOOKED AND PAID FOR SEPERATELY:**

**Deposits must be paid in advance**

<b>*** Venue</b>	<b>Monday - Friday office hours</b>
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
Ceremony	£55.00
Administration Fees	£169.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£294.00</u></b>

<b>*** Venue</b>	<b>Out of hours</b>
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
Ceremony	£55.00
Administration Fees	£208.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£333.00</u></b>

<b>*** Venue</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
Ceremony	£55.00
Administration Fees	£221.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£346.00</u></b>

<b>*** Venue</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
Ceremony	£55.00
Administration Fees	£234.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£359.00</u></b>

<b>*** Venue</b>	<b>Public Holidays</b>
Notices	£60.00
Certificates	£10.00
Ceremony	£55.00
Administration Fees	£274.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b><u>£399.00</u></b>

<b><u>OTHER SERVICES</u></b>	
Baby Naming Ceremonies	£209.00
Renewal of Vows	£209.00
Additional ceremony	£50.00
Certificates (extracts outwith one month of registration)	£15.00
Certificates (outwith one month of registration with original abbreviated produced)	£10.00
Certificates (if requested within one month of registration)	£10.00
Genealogy Search (per hour)	£15.00
Particular search traced or untraced	£5.00

**Please Note:- A £50.00 non-refundable deposit must be paid on all Bookings**