

Title of Report:	General Register Office (GRO) Review of Funding Model for District Registration Offices Update
Committee Report Submitted To:	Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	23rd March 2021
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-2025)	
Strategic Theme	Improvement and Innovation; Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council maintains its performance as the most efficient of NI's local authorities; Our elected members work collaboratively and make decisions on an evidence led basis and in line with its policies.
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	-
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date: N/A
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)			
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide members with an update on the Review of Funding Model for District Registration Services. The main finding is that the General Registry Office does not propose to reduce the existing allocation of resource at present but will keep this under review.

1.2 Background to Review of Funding Model for District Registration Service

In October 2019 Council was informed of The General Register Office (GRO) plans to carry out a review of the funding model in relation to the provision of the registration service. The last review was completed in 2015 and a number of changes have been introduced since then including a new computer system, the Northern Ireland Registration Office System (NIROS), the ability of humanists to conduct civil marriages and the introduction of same sex marriage and opposite sex civil partnerships.

1.3 The Department of Finance Business Consultancy Service (BCS) was engaged to conduct the review and Council was provided with the Terms of Reference which were presented to Council in October 2019.

1.4 The review has now been completed and GRO has shared a summary of the findings in correspondence from the Assistant Registrar General to Chief Executives dated 18th February 2021 in order to agree the level of staffing required to deliver the function of the registration service on behalf of the Registrar General.

2.0 Update

2.1 The Assistant Registrar General's correspondence advises that the purpose of the independent review was to ensure that the model was fit for purpose and that the appropriate number of staff are available to Council to enable it to deliver the service in the district.

2.2 The terms of reference for the review were:

Terms of Reference (TOR)

“To review the appropriateness and effectiveness of the current funding model for DROs and design an optimal funding model.”

Specifically, the review will address the following:

- *Review the workload of each DRO in light of its funding allocation to establish the extent of excess/insufficient capacity in the current system and inform future funding decisions.*
- *Review and verify timings and formulae for each of the working processes/activities used to inform funding decisions.*
- *Verify the appropriateness of funded activities e.g. specific registration tasks, non-registration and core Council activities.*
- *Review working practices and procedures in light of prescribed practices and procedures, and identify any areas for improvement.*
- *Review existing reporting arrangements (e.g. frequency, content etc.) and identify optimal reporting arrangements.*
- *Make recommendations in relation to the optimal future funding model for DROs.*

2.3 The Assistant Registrar General provided the main findings, recommendations and information covering the current and updated funding model activities, the rationale for the funding model updates and the updated process maps.

2.4 The consultants have updated the activity figures (average over 2017- 2019) into the model. For Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council this shows that for the district the estimated whole time equivalent (WTE) resource required to provide the registration service is 3.62. As these are estimates we are accepting that the true requirement may lie within +/- 10% of these figures. The exercise shows that the WTE for Causeway Coast and Glens district falls outside the tolerance however GRO does not propose to reduce the existing allocation of 4.28 at present but will keep this under review.

2.5 No adjustments have been made to the funding model to take account of the current Covid-19 situation as this is viewed as an extraordinary year which would not demonstrate true reflection of the Registrar's work. GRO have and are continuing to provide additional funding to enable Councils to cover the costs of additional staff, equipment, training and overtime that may be required at this time.

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that Council notes the content of the report in relation to the update on the Review of Funding Model for District Registration Offices.