

## PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Scrutiny Committee – 12 June 2013

**REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, MARRIAGES AND  
CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS - INSPECTION REPORTS BY NATIONAL  
RECORDS OF SCOTLAND**

**Report by Head of Democratic Services**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report comments on the annual inspection reports from the National Records of Scotland on the provision of registration services in the Perth and Kinross local government area in 2012.

**1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES**

- 1.1 The Head of Democratic Services has responsibility for the delivery of Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships throughout the Perth and Kinross local government area, in partnership with the National Records of Scotland.
- 1.2 Registration services are delivered from various locations throughout the area - a central office in Perth and from local Area Offices in Auchterarder, Blairgowrie, Crieff, Kinross and Pitlochry, by staff employed by Housing and Community Care. In 2012 there was one solicitor-based provider in Coupar Angus and home-based registrars were operating in Milnathort, Aberfeldy and Kinloch Rannoch, where the latter two registrars deliver registration from the Breadalbane Community Campus and the local medical practice respectively.
- 1.3 With effect from 1 January 2007 each Council area in Scotland became a single registration district, with one or more registration offices. The boundary for each registration district matches the boundary of the local authority. Legislation also changed whereby the registration of births and deaths no longer have to be registered in the district where the event occurred but can be registered at any registration office in Scotland.
- 1.4 Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships is subject to annual inspection by the National Records of Scotland. Inspections are carried out by district examiners from the National Records office. Registers of events are recorded in calendar years and inspections are carried out during the following year. The inspections referred to in this report are for the year 2012. Please note that with the retiral of the home-based registrar for the District of Milnathort in March 2012, the inspections referred to for Milnathort relate to the period between 1 January and 31 March 2012.

- 1.5 Members will be aware that the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee, at its meeting on 19 September 2012, agreed that with effect from 1 January 2013 registration services in the Coupar Angus area be delivered from the Blairgowrie registration office; and that the Service Level Agreement with the current agency provider be terminated with effect from 31 December 2012. The accuracy rates shown for Coupar Angus are therefore for the whole of 2012.

## 2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Included at **Appendix I** to this report is a table detailing the outcomes of the inspections for each of the registration offices in Perth and Kinross for the period 2008 - 2012. This shows an improvement in accuracy rate from 96.36% in 2008 to 97.83% in 2012. **Appendix II** to this report details the Examiner's remarks for each office.
- 2.2 Overall there are 18 members of staff throughout Perth and Kinross delivering the registration of births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships. Five members of staff now hold the Certificate in the Law and Practice of Registration. With the introduction of single status there is no longer any financial incentive for staff to study for the examination which requires extensive commitment and dedication outwith their normal working week. The overall accuracy level of the registration entries has continued to show a gradual improvement whilst the number of registrations has fluctuated. The improvement in the accuracy rate is partly due to twice yearly assessments on various sections of the Registrar's Handbook which identifies individual training needs, whilst also keeping staff up-to-date with the changes in legislation. Robust checking put in place for more systematic checking and on-line checking of entries are continuing to reduce errors and deliver an improved level of service overall.
- 2.3. Perth and Kinross Council is one of a small number of local authorities which retains home-based registrars. Due to the mix of registration offices within Perth and Kinross, it should be noted that an error in an office with large numbers of transactions will not affect the overall accuracy rate to the same extent as an error in an office where very small numbers of transactions are carried out annually. The effect can appear disproportionate in terms of the number of errors against the number of events registered. However there have been slight improvements to the accuracy levels in nine offices on the 2011 figures with the Perth office showing a negligible deterioration.
- 2.4 The cross-government programme, Tell Us Once (TUO) service, led by the Department of Work and Pensions, was launched in Perth and Kinross in November 2011. This service transforms the way the public can inform councils and public sector organisations about a change in circumstances due to a birth or bereavement. The Council services, such as Council Tax, Housing & Council tax benefits, Blue Badge, Adult Social Services and Libraries, received a total of 1,836 notifications during 2012. The notifications from the TUO system allows services to act on the information obtained to update their systems and to cancel services, payments or memberships. The take up for the bereavement service for the first year was between 60% and 80% and varies from week to week dependent on customer circumstances. The take up for the birth service is lower,

between 30% and 50% as customers perceive there are fewer benefits for them in using the TUO birth service. TUO is very well received by customers and are very appreciative and satisfied with the service and support offered at a difficult time.

- 2.5 The National Records of Scotland's chart of entries and accuracy rates for all local authorities in Scotland for 2012 is not yet available but will be circulated once available.

### 3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 The staff involved in the registration of births, deaths and marriages and civil partnerships provide a competent high quality level of service to the residents of Perth and Kinross. Accuracy rates only play a small part of the quality of services provided but the National Records of Scotland use these to measure and monitor the service which makes a permanent record of people's life events. Action in the form of continued provision of training and reviewing best practice all contribute to maintaining high levels of performance which are reflected in the inspection reports for 2012.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Committee note the content of this report with regard to the annual inspection reports by the National Records of Scotland on the provision of registration services in the Perth and Kinross local government area.

#### Author(s)

Name	Designation	Contact Details
Brenda Lackie	Team Leader (Registration/Elections/Community Councils) Democratic Services 2 High Street, Perth PH1 5PH	Ext. 75123 bmlackie@pkc.gov.uk

#### Approved

Name	Designation
Gillian Taylor	Head of Democratic Services

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Council Text Phone Number 01738 442573

## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Yes / None</b>
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Plan	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	<b>None</b>
Workforce	<b>None</b>
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	<b>None</b>
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>None</b>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<b>None</b>
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	<b>None</b>
Legal and Governance	<b>None</b>
Risk	<b>None</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	<b>None</b>
External	<b>None</b>
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	<b>None</b>

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The Council's Draft Community Plan 2013-23 builds on the priorities and outcomes identified in the Single Outcome Agreement 2009-11 and focuses on five strategic objectives which sets out a clear context within which the partnership is striving to make an impact and drive improved outcomes. They are as follows:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

Whilst the Chief Executive's Service supports all of the above objectives this report does not directly support a particular objective.

#### Corporate Plan

- 1.2 The Council's Corporate Plan 2013-2018 focuses on five strategic objectives which provide clearly outline strategic corporate actions which will be carried out to meet the vision and strategic objectives of the Council. They are as follows:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

Whilst the Chief Executive's Service supports all of the above objectives this report does not directly support a particular objective.

### **3. Assessments**

#### Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

This section should reflect that the proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

#### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

### **2. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 2.1 The Annual Inspection Reports by the Registrar General for Scotland were relied on to a material extent in preparing this report.

### **3. APPENDICES**

- 3.1 Appendix I to this report details the outcomes of the inspections for each of the registration offices in Perth and Kinross for the period 2008 - 2012.
- 3.2 Appendix II to this report details the Examiner's remarks for each office.



PERTH AND KINROSS		APPENDIX I										
District	Office	Accuracy Rates %					Numbers of Registrations					
	FT, MP, HB or A	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012 Errors
Aberfeldy	HB	95.37	95.80	98.47	94.59	95.87	108	119	131	111	121	5
Auchterarder	MP	95.10	93.15	97.97	95.74	96.00	204	146	148	141	150	6
Blairgowrie	MP	98.42	98.19	98.27	99.01	99.50	444	386	405	404	398	2
Coupar Angus	A	73.81	77.92	77.53	80.49	83.33	84	77	89	82	78	13
Crieff	MP	95.20	95.50	97.65	95.39	95.56	333	333	298	282	293	13
Kinross	MP	96.26	94.21	97.44	97.92	98.70	214	190	195	144	231	3
Milnathort	HB	85.51	89.04	88.37	95.05	100.00	69	73	86	101	15	0
Perth	FT	97.55	97.56	98.06	98.27	98.22	2289	2256	2219	2311	2363	42
Pitlochry	MP	95.41	97.18	95.35	96.72	99.49	218	248	215	183	197	1
Rannoch and Foss	HB	95.00	100.00	95.45	76.00	100.00	20	25	22	25	21	0
		<b>96.36</b>	<b>96.50</b>	<b>97.16</b>	<b>97.23</b>	<b>97.80</b>	<b>3983</b>	<b>3853</b>	<b>3808</b>	<b>3784</b>	<b>3867</b>	<b>85</b>

Office FT=Full Time, MP=Multi-Purpose & HB=Home Based Registrar(this may include a workplace e.g. doctor's surgery), A = Agency (e.g. solicitor's office)

## PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

## EXAMINER'S REMARKS 2012

OFFICE	REMARKS
Aberfeldy	This maintains the good increase on the 94.59 recorded for 2011 shown at the interim examination.
Auchterarder	After the little dip in accuracy at the interim (to 94.92), it is good to see a final figure just above the 95.74 recorded in 2011.
Blairgowrie	Slightly higher than the final 99.01 achieved in 2011 and the interim 99.39, the accuracy in this office continues to be excellent. Well done!
Coupar Angus	The accuracy is higher than the 80.49 recorded for 2011, but as in recent years the accuracy decreased in the latter part of the year - only 77.08% for the entries checked in the final examination.
Crieff	This is almost identical to the 95.39 recorded for 2011. There were a variety of errors, mainly spelling and some where details were missed and had to be added later.
Kinross	Although you weren't able to maintain the 100% accuracy achieved at the interim examination, this is still a good increase on the 97.92 for 2011 - well done.
Milnathort	Very happy to see that the final examination for this office shows 100% accuracy.
Perth	The accuracy is almost identical to the 98.27 recorded for 2011 and is on target for an office of this size and type
Pitlochry	Although you did not quite achieve 100% accuracy this is a very good result, and a significant increase on the 96.72 recorded in 2011. Well done
Rannoch & Foss	Congratulations on achieving 100% accuracy – excellent.