

EXECUTIVE MEMBER - THE MAYOR

A meeting of the Executive Member - The Mayor was held on Thursday 1 May 2025.

PRESENT: Mayor C Cooke

OFFICERS: S Bonner, A Johnstone and A Wilson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None.

24/5 **WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Mayor described the fire evacuation procedure to all those present.

24/6 **IMPACT ASSESSMENT POLICY**

The Mayor considered a report regarding the Impact Assessment Policy. The purpose of the report was set out revisions to the Impact Assessment Policy.

Regular reviews of policies were required to ensure that they continued to meet the needs of the organisation, reflect case law that impacted on impact assessment processes and continue to reflect best practice.

The Impact Assessment policy was scheduled for review every three years. It was not yet due to be reviewed, however an interim review was proposed to enable the Council to systematically assess the impact of its decision-making on its underpinning ambition of reducing poverty, which cut across all of the Council Plan ambitions.

This was one of the actions identified from a recent poverty sprint, held by the Council with partners, to identify the steps that could be taken to maximise whole-Council, cross-policy, cross-strategy action to drive real change to poverty in Middlesbrough.

Steps had also been taken to amend the committee report format template to ensure it contained a section which would set out the impact of proposed decisions on the reducing poverty aim.

OPTIONS

The Council could choose not to amend the Impact Assessment Policy. however, it would be missing an opportunity to embed an approach that would champion a consistent, considered approach that would support delivery of its aim of reducing poverty.

ORDERED that the Mayor:

- 1. APPROVES the revised Impact Assessment Policy**

REASONS

Putting in place a systematic approach to assessing the impact of the Council's decision-making on its ambition to reduce poverty, would ensure that there was an improved focus on this within decision-making processes.

24/7 **OUT OF HOURS REGISTRARS OFFER**

The Mayor considered a report regarding the Out of Hours Register Offer.

The purpose of the report was to seek approval of the minor amendments to the Out of Hours Registrars offer to reflect the needs of the community and to continue to deliver best value.

The decision required Single Member Executive approval as it was a 'minor variation to an

existing policy or procedure' as per Section 6.38.2(a) of the constitution.

The Out of Hours Registrars offer, as set out in the Registration & Bereavement Services Charter, currently offered an on-call service of two hours each Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 11am. The cover for this call-out was provided by a rota of Registrars.

The charter stated that the Registrar would be on call on a Saturday & Sunday morning between the hours of 9:00am and 11:00am (excluding bank holidays & festive holidays) to issue any paperwork for any urgent faith burials / cremations or an 'Out of England Order'. Contact Tel 01642 726050 and asked to be connected to the Registrar on call service.

There are three main circumstances in which the on-call service would be required by members of the community, namely Certificate for burial or cremation before registration (commonly known as "Green Forms"), Out of England Order and Urgent marriages and civil partnerships.

The most common requirement for the on-call service in Middlesbrough is around the green forms. In September 2024 the process for death registrations was changed by the introduction of the Medical Examiner.

As a result of the ME system being introduced, the Registration Service had been monitoring the impact of this change, particularly in terms of lead times between dates of death and registration dates and looking at the calls into the weekend on call service.

Since the introduction of the ME System there had not been any calls to the on-call service on Sundays and only three on Saturdays. Data was not kept pre-September 2024 regarding the number of calls for the purpose of comparison, however the number of calls, particularly on Sundays had always been minimal.

OPTIONS

Remove the out of hours option for both Saturdays and Sundays – this change would have brought Middlesbrough out of line with other Local Authorities in the area and would not have best met the needs of the community in terms of being able to respond to any urgent requests.

ORDERED that the Mayor

- 1. APPROVES the changes to the Out of Hours Registrars offer as set out in the Registration & Bereavement Services Charter, namely to remove the offer of an on call service on Sundays and to provide clarification around the introduction of the Medical Examiner process.**

REASONS

The Out of Hours Registrars offer, as set out in the Registration & Bereavement Services Charter, currently offered an on-call service of two hours each Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 11am. The cover for this call-out was provided by a rota of Registrars.

Since the Medical Examiner changes in September 2024, which were set out in Section 4 of the report, the use of this service had been monitored as part of an informal review of its impact. Within that six-month period, no calls had been received on Sundays.

The proposed change to the offer would bring Middlesbrough in line with other Local Authorities in the region.

Although this reduction would not result in a significant financial saving, it provided Best Value as the service was not being used significantly within the community and would have a significant benefit for the wellbeing of the Registrars Team. An Equality Impact Assessment had been completed which concluded that the amendment to the on-call offer would not negatively impact on any specific groups or individuals.

The duty appointment slot would remain available each weekday and the service would continue to work within the guidance of the General Register Office handbook.

Other options had been considered but have been discounted for the reasons as set out below in Section 5, primarily due to not meeting the needs of the community, and/or additional cost.

All decisions will come into force after five working days following the day the decision(s) was published unless the decision becomes subject to the call in procedures.