

### **Call-in Request: Hastings Register Office**

I have the support of Cllr Steve Murphy and Cllr Brett Wright to request a call in of the decision made by Cllr Dowling on Monday 10 November to relocate the registry office from Hastings Town Hall to Hastings Library for the following reasons.

1. No equalities impact assessment was presented at the meeting. The office is proposed to be moved from a ground floor level location to a second floor up 64 steps with a lift that has a record of breaking down. Also the impact on residents of removing these more affordable venues for wedding ceremonies. Mention was made of 34 other venues but many of these are likely to be hotels and private venues which will be more expensive. While HBC could of course continue to promote the use of the town hall as a wedding venue, there is currently no capacity to do so and therefore no guarantee that this can be continued.
2. At the meeting on Monday the reason given for the lack of public consultation was that the office was moving less than 500 meters. Where is the public information that consultation is only needed for relocations greater than 500 meters?
3. 407 letters as of this morning have been sent to the lead member protesting this decision and the lack of any public consultation. The main issues raised were much more restricted parking access, harder access for older and disabled people, loss of civic pride, impact on town centre businesses and the lack of a fair and open decision making process. The current venue is adjacent to Priory Meadow with plentiful parking. The library has limited on street parking.
4. No mention was made of where citizenship ceremonies will be held. These can be for up to 50 people.
5. No mention made that people registering deaths need a dedicated, quiet and reflective space not a busy library to come into at a difficult moment in their lives.
6. No assessment has been made to reflect the future impact of LGR. The registry office provides an income to sustain the town hall as a civic building. Removing this income will affect the long term sustainability of this historic building. While cllr Daniel referred to a future potential use by a town council, that town council (if one is agreed) would also need a sustainable income stream to maintain this building. This building will then become a liability for the future unitary council. There is no evidence that this impact was assessed as part of the decision making.

7. No consultation with staff prior to making the decision. While officers at the meeting stated that they had been informed, HBC staff have had direct communication with the staff on the ground who confirmed that they had not been informed before the papers were made public.
8. More generally, given LGR, there needs to be much closer collaboration with affected related councils on any decisions that also impact them financially. While this has been established as a principle it doesn't seem to be being carried out in practice. A clear and transparent process needs to be established for this collaboration over the next two years as part of budget setting processes and agreed with scrutiny committees.

Kind regards

Julia