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**APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF LICENCE FOR PREMISES TO BE APPROVED  
AS A VENUE FOR MARRIAGES AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS**

**WALWORTH CASTLE HOTEL, WALWORTH, DARLINGTON**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To consider an application received from the Walworth Castle Hotel for the renewal of a licence to be approved as a venue for Marriages and Civil Partnerships in accordance with the provisions of the Marriage Act 1949 (as amended by the Marriage Act 1994) and the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005.

**Summary**

2. Walworth Castle Hotel has been an approved venue for Civil Ceremonies since 2001 and is one of Darlington's most popular venues for Civil Ceremonies.
3. The Hotel is seeking to renew its licence with only one change to its conditions, offering an additional room within the hotel for ceremonies, the dungeon. The dungeon has been previously used as a public space, being a former bar and dining area. The space can be accessed from either inside or outside of the hotel and has adequate height, lighting and also two fire exits.
4. The dungeon, along with the currently licensed King James suite are not accessible other than by a flight of stairs and there are no lifts in the Walworth Castle Hotel at all. Customers are advised of the restrictions when booking ceremonies hence most of the ceremonies take place in the ground floor ballroom.
5. The guidelines for approving venues for Civil Ceremonies does not prevent a venue from having non accessible rooms and there are many other such examples in the area.
6. The application has been the subject of the usual officer consultations and has been advertised. No objections have been received. The building has the required fire risk assessments and there are no access or DDA issues which would adversely affect the application.
7. The premises are considered to be suitable for approval as a venue for Marriages and Civil Partnerships, subject to the standard conditions and a limit on the number of people permitted to be present in the nominated rooms.

## Information

8. The Marriage Act 1949 (as amended by the Marriage Act 1994) and the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005, (Reg. 4) permit a Local Authority to approve the use of certain premises as venues for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships. This Council is the appropriate Authority for premises within the Borough of Darlington.
9. A copy of the application submitted is attached.  
Following receipt of the application, consultations have been carried out with the following:-
  - (a) Licensing Officer, Darlington Borough Council
  - (b) Building Control Manager, Darlington Borough Council
  - (c) The Fire Service.
10. In accordance with building control requirements, the applicant has confirmed:
  - (a) that a Fire Risk assessment has been carried out within the last 3 years which covers the proposed areas for use and occupancy.
  - (b) That a Disability Risk Assessment has been carried out and that there are no access issues for persons attending ceremonies in the proposed areas for use and occupancy.
11. The Fire Safety Officer recommends that the maximum number of persons permitted in each room be as follows :-

Designated Room	Maximum Capacity
Reception Lounge	40
Ballroom Lounge/Breakfast Room	40
Ballroom	100
Cardinals Court	120
Hansards Restaurant	80
King James Suite	80
Library Tower	10
Prince Bishop Room	45
Dungeon	50

## Legal Implications

12. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

## **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

13. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

### **Conclusion**

14. The Officers are satisfied that it would be appropriate for the grant of Walworth Castle Hotel, Walworth, Darlington as a suitable venue for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships under the Marriage Act 1949 (as amended) and the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005, and the Licence be granted subject to the points above being taken into account. The licence will last for a period of 3 years from the date of issue.

### **Recommendation**

15. It is recommended that approval be granted for the Walworth Castle Hotel, Walworth, Darlington as an approved venue for the solemnisation of Marriages and Civil Partnerships in respect of the venue subject to the standard licence conditions and that the maximum number of persons permitted to occupy ceremony rooms on the occasion of Civil Marriages or Civil Partnerships should be as outlined in accordance with the Fire Officer's recommendations.

**Catherine Whitehead**  
**Proper Officer**

### **Background Papers**

Application from the Walworth Castle Hotel, Darlington for grant of premises as a venue for Marriages and Civil Partnerships.

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