EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

THE NORTH WALES (EAST AND CENTRAL) (CORONER'S DISTRICT) ORDER 2012

2012 No. 2605

1. This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Ministry of Justice and is laid before Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

2. Purpose of the instrument

2.1 This instrument seeks to amalgamate the two coroners' districts of North East Wales and Central North Wales into one district to be named North Wales (East and Central).

3. Matters of special interest to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments

3.1 None.

4. Legislative Context

4.1 The coroner for both districts retired in April 2011 and died in May 2011. As a result of this, Wrexham County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council proposed that the coroner's district of North East Wales (which comprises Wrexham Borough Council and Flintshire County Council) should be amalgamated with the coroner's district of Central North Wales (which comprises Denbighshire County Council and Conwy Borough Council).

4.2 The amalgamation of coroners' districts in Wales is made by Order by the Secretary of State for Justice. However, before the Secretary of State can make an Order he is required to consult the relevant councils and coroners who may be affected by the order, as well as any other persons as he thinks appropriate.

5. Territorial Extent and Application

5.1 This instrument applies to Wales.

5.2 It affects Denbighshire and Flintshire County Councils and Wrexham and Conwy Borough Councils.

6. European Convention on Human Rights

6.1 As the instrument is subject to negative resolution procedure and does not amend primary legislation, no statement is required.

7. Policy background

7.1 This Order amalgamates the North East Wales and Central North Wales coroner's districts. This amalgamation is in line with long-standing Ministry of Justice policy to support and encourage the amalgamation of smaller or part-time coroner districts to create more fully-loaded caseloads for full-time coroners, wherever possible. This is because the amalgamation of smaller districts has economic benefits for local authorities and can promote consistency in coronial service over a wider area.

7.2 The separate coroner's districts of North East Wales and Central North Wales each have approximately 1,200 deaths reported to the coroner each year. The new amalgamated district is therefore expected to have approximately 2,400 deaths reported to the coroner per year which is a fairly average caseload for districts in England and Wales.

8. Consultation outcome

8.1 In accordance with statutory requirements, officials wrote on behalf of the Secretary of State to the relevant local authorities, coroners, funeral directors, local hospitals, faith groups and MPs notifying them of the proposal to amalgamate North East Wales and Central North Wales coroners' districts and inviting objections.

8.2 As the requirement is to conduct a targeted consultation only, and given that Wrexham Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council had already consulted the relevant borough councils and coroners, it was agreed that a formal twelve week consultation was not required. There was therefore a five-week consultation period commencing on 16 July 2012. No objections were received.

9. Guidance

9.1 None required.

10. Impact

10.1 An Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this instrument.

11. Regulating small business

11.1 The legislation does not apply to small business.

12. Monitoring and review

12.1 There is no need to monitor or review this instrument.

13. Contact

13.1 Judith Bernstein at the Ministry of Justice Tel: 020 3334 6407 or email:.judith.bernstein@justice.gsi.gov.uk who can answer any queries regarding the instrument.