

North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 20 May 2013

ITEM 6(d)

Title: Review of North
Tyneside's Crematoria

Portfolio(s): Housing and Environment

Cabinet Member(s): Councillor J
Harrison

Report from
Directorate: Community Services

Report Author: Phil Scott, Head of Environmental Services (Tel: 634 7295)

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval to commission the design for the refurbishment of Tynemouth Crematorium, including the provision of replacement cremators.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet authorise the Head of Environmental Services and the Client Manager for Property Services, in consultation with the Elected Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Environment, to commission the design for the refurbishment and provision of new cremators and associated facilities at Tynemouth Crematorium.

1.3 Forward plan:

This report has been listed on the Forward Plan for the Cabinet meeting on 13th May 2013.

1.4 Council plan and policy framework

This report is relevant to the Safer, Greener theme in the 2011-15 Council Plan.

1.5 Information:

- 1.5.1 The Authority currently operates a cremation service from both Whitley Bay and Tynemouth cemeteries. Whitley Bay Crematorium is a Grade II* listed building and carries out around 800 cremations each year. Tynemouth Crematorium is on the Authority's Register of Buildings and parks of local architectural and historic interest and

carries out around 900 cremations each year. Historically, Tynemouth Crematorium has always carried out more cremations.

- 1.5.2 Cremators at both facilities were installed in the late nineties and each has a lifespan of about 15 to 18 years, depending upon use, maintenance etc. The cremators are approaching the end of their economic life and replacement needs to be considered.
- 1.5.3 The Authority also has a requirement to comply with the Government's, (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)) target to reduce by 50% the amount of mercury emitted into the atmosphere from crematoria, by January 2013. Currently, neither facility is fitted with the necessary abatement equipment to enable the Authority to comply with this legislation.
- 1.5.4 Pending a permanent mercury abatement solution, the Authority has entered into a burden sharing arrangement with Newcastle City Council, (who are abating their mercury emissions at 100%), for 2 years from 1st January 2013, with an option to extend for a further year. This arrangement comes to an end in December 2015. There maybe an option to extend the agreement after this period, however this may only be short term, as the Government is considering the introduction of a 100% target in 2020.
- 1.5.5 In addition to the short term solution outlined above (1.5.4), an officer working group has been exploring the longer term options available, in order for the Authority to provide a fit for purpose cremation service moving forward. This has involved looking at a range of alternative service delivery models.
- 1.5.6 There has also been extensive consultation with Funeral Directors and Clergy who are the cremation services main customers and who act on behalf of the bereaved. In a survey carried out on 18th May 2012, feedback from both groups concluded that the existing crematoria buildings are dated and no longer fit for purpose, particularly in consideration of the increasing number of visitors attending services at these facilities.
- 1.5.7 Therefore, having considered all of the above, officers are now in a position to recommend a solution, which ensures the Authority's compliance with mercury abatement and a more fit for purpose building at one of the sites.
- 1.5.8 This solution comprises the replacement of the two cremators at Tynemouth Crematorium, together with the following improvement works to the building that will substantially improve the available facilities:-
 - The extension of the chapel to increase the seating capacity from 58 to 88
 - The provision of new toilet facilities
 - The creation of an enclosed entrance lobby and new waiting area
 - The creation of a new room for floral displays and the Book of Remembrance.
- 1.5.9 No work is proposed to Whitley Bay Crematorium at this time and therefore the Authority will be able to maintain a cremation service during the period of time that Tynemouth Crematorium is closed for refurbishment. On completion of the work the Authority will then be in a position to review the future of Whitley Bay Crematorium.
- 1.5.10 This will be a major building project and due to the long lead in time required to deliver this project and the pressing need to replace the cremators at Tynemouth, Cabinet is asked to approve the design work and survey fees associated with Option 1 below at an estimated cost of £155k. Current estimates are that circa £2.927m will be required to

refurbish Tynemouth and replace 2 cremators (cremators £1.881m, refurbishment £1.046m) but the detailed survey work will produce a more accurate estimate.

1.5.11 A further report will then be brought back to Cabinet and/or Council, as appropriate for a decision whether to approve the building work and cremator replacement based on more detailed cost implications.

1.5.12 The critical date in the project programme is the end of January 2014, at which point all approvals will need to be in place and orders raised to ensure that the crematorium is operational in advance of the winter 2014, when demand is at its highest.

1.6 Decision options:

Option 1

To progress with the design works relating to the refurbishment of Tynemouth Crematorium including the replacement of the 2 cremators (with space for a third cremator or refrigeration unit). This is an essential step towards ensuring compliance and continued service delivery.

Option 2

To continue to run both Tynemouth and Whitley Bay Crematoria with no improvements to either facilities (including the replacement of existing cremators), and defer a decision until a later date. However this option increases the risk to ongoing service delivery.

Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is considered the best option to ensure that the Authority can continue to provide a cremation service within the Borough and to provide an improved fit for purpose facility at Tynemouth Crematorium. This also ensures compliance with DEFRA's mercury abatement target of reducing 50% emissions from cremation operations.

1.7 Appendices:

None.

1.8 Contact officers:

Phil Scott, Head of Environmental Service tel: 643 7295
Sam Dand, Senior Manager, Street Environment tel: 643 7294
Alison Campbell, Finance Business Manager, tel 643 7038
Niall Cathie, Client Manager, Property tel: 643 6517

1.9 Background information:

- Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999
- Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations 2000
- Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2010
- Process Guidance Note PG5/2(04)
- Additional Guidance Note AQ1(05)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The current estimate is that £2.927m is required to refurbish Tynemouth Crematorium and replace 2 cremators (the breakdown of this includes the cost of the replacement cremators estimated to be £1.881m and the estimated cost of refurbishment at £1.046m), however at this initial stage funding of £0.155m is required, to allow the design work to commence. This will ensure that the long lead in times can be managed, and ensures that the refurbished crematorium can be reopened ready for Winter 2014, when demand is at its highest.

It is proposed that the initial costs of £0.55m are funded from the Bereavement Service revenue budget in 2013/14. If the capital project is subsequently approved, these initial costs would form part of the overall capital costs.

A further report will then be brought back to a meeting of Cabinet and/or Council, as appropriate, for a decision to approve the building work and cremator replacement once the more detailed cost implications have been confirmed. If this work is approved in the future it is anticipated that the costs would be funded through the Bereavement Service budget. The Service has a budget to generate £0.300m of net controllable income every year. At January 2013 the budget was forecasting to overachieve by £0.216m. The annual cost of the depreciation and interest costs associated with the investment are estimated to be £0.269m. Therefore, the additional income from this service and an element of future price increases could fund the investment. Full details of the costs and funding solution will be included in the subsequent reports to Cabinet and/or Council.

2.2 Legal

The Authority, as the Cremation Authority, is required in accordance with the Cremation Acts of 1902 and 1952 and the Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008 to ensure that crematoria are maintained in good working order.

A crematorium may be closed by a Cremation Authority, even temporarily for refurbishment, where the Cremation Authority has given not less than one months notice by an advertisement in a local newspaper and by a written notice fixed at the entrance to the crematorium where it can be easily read. The Cremation Authority must give one month's notice in writing to the Secretary of State for the closing or opening of a crematoria.

The procurement of design and survey work for the provision of replacement cremators and associated facilities will be undertaken in accordance with the Authority's Contract Standing Orders.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal consultation

- Internal consultation has been carried out with the Authority's Elected Mayor and Lead Cabinet Member for Environment.
- Internal consultation has also been carried out with the Change, Efficiency and Improvement Theme 'C' board.

2.3.2 External consultation

- Officers from Environmental Services first consulted with Funeral Directors on the Crematoria Review on 19th January 2011.
- Officers from Environmental Services consulted with Funeral Directors and Clergy as part of Engagement week in October 2012.
- Views were also sought from Funeral Directors and Clergy as part of a customer satisfaction survey carried out on 18th May 2012.
- The Authority receives regular feedback from our customers, which is positive in relation to the services provided, however there is a general view that the condition of the crematoria are no longer fit for purpose. Particularly in terms of handling cremations with a large attendance.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

Any risk management issues are included within the Authority's risk register and managed by this process.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

Sense of Place - make sure our local environment and open spaces are clean, green and attractive.

New cremators are likely to result in a reduction in gas consumption, however electricity is likely to increase due to the advanced technology associated with operating new cremators and mercury abatement equipment. Officers will also explore the possibility of recycling the heat produced by the cremators for the benefit of the chapel facilities.

As part of the design process for the refurbishment of Tynemouth Crematorium officers will ensure that all current building regulation standards are met.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive
- Strategic Director
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Strategic Manager for Policy, Partnerships,
Performance and Communications