

# North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 9 December 2013

## ITEM 6(d)

Upgrade and  
Refurbishment of Preston  
Crematorium

Portfolio(s): Housing and Environment

Cabinet Member(s): Councillor J Harrison

Report from  
Directorate: Community Services

Report Author: Phil Scott, Head of Environment and Leisure (Tel: 0191 6347295)

Wards affected: All

### PART 1

#### 1.1 Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval to commence the upgrade and refurbishment of Preston Crematorium, which includes the provision of replacement cremators.

#### 1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet agree to seek authorisation from full Council for unsupported borrowing of up to £2.927m to commence with the upgrade and refurbishment of facilities and provision of new cremators at Preston Crematorium.

#### 1.3 Forward plan:

This report has been listed on the Forward Plan for the Cabinet meeting on 9 December 2013.

#### 1.4 Council plan and policy framework

This report is relevant to 'Our Places' theme included in the Our North Tyneside Plan 2014-18.

## 1.5 Information:

- 1.5.1 The cremators at Preston Crematorium were installed in 1998 and are approaching the end of their effective and economic life. Cabinet approved the commissioning of the design for the refurbishment of the crematorium at its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2013.
- 1.5.2 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, there are two crematoria in the Borough (Whitley Bay Crematorium and Preston Crematorium) which are operated by the Authority. Currently, neither Crematorium is fitted with the necessary abatement equipment to enable the Authority to comply with this legislation.
- 1.5.3 Pending a permanent mercury abatement solution, the Authority entered into a burden sharing arrangement with Newcastle City Council, (who are abating their mercury emissions at 100%), for 2 years from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013, with an option to extend for a further year. This arrangement comes to an end in December 2015. There may be an option to extend the agreement after this period: however this may only be short term, as we cannot rule out the possibility of the Government introducing a 100% target in 2020.
- 1.5.4 At its meeting of 8 July 2013 Cabinet agreed there would be a phased approach to the Bereavement offer. The first phase will consist of an upgrade of Preston Crematorium, which will include the replacement of the two cremators, 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 public 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.
- 1.5.5 The Authority will be able to maintain a cremation service during the period of time that Preston Crematorium is closed for refurbishment.
- 1.5.6 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 Preston, Cabinet approved the design work and survey fees associated at an estimated cost of £155k at 8 July Cabinet. Original estimates were that £2.927m will be required to refurbish Preston and replace 2 cremators. This estimate was provided using a single supplier quotation for the cremation equipment although the scheme has been widened to include added value in regard to energy efficiency measures for example a heat recovery system. The scheme will still be delivered in line with original £2.927m budget.
- 1.5.7 Following completion of the design works, Cabinet agreed that a further report should be brought back to Cabinet and/or Council, as appropriate for a decision to proceed with the upgrade and refurbishment project.
- 1.5.8 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.
- 1.5.9 Following completion of Preston Crematorium upgrade, improvement plans for Whitley Bay Crematorium will be considered.

## **1.6 Decision options:**

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet

### **Option 1**

To progress with the upgrade and refurbishment of Preston Crematorium including the replacement of the two cremators, installation of mercury abatement equipment and space for a refrigeration unit. This is an essential step towards ensuring compliance and continued service delivery within the affordability envelope of £2.927m.

### **Option 2**

To continue to run both Preston 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 Preston 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  
Ian Lillie, Client Manager, Asset tel: 643 6143

## **1.9 Background information:**

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- 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)
- Cabinet report 8 July 2013

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

The current estimated cost for the refurbishment of Preston Crematorium, including the replacement of the 2 cremators is £2.927m. The borrowing associated with this project needs to be approved by full council as the scheme was not included within the capital plan within the budget approved by Council in March 2013.

At 8th July Cabinet, approval was given for £0.155m of the £2.927m to enable Kier to proceed with the detailed design work in 2013/14. This would ensure the refurbished crematorium could be reopened ready for winter 2014, when demand is at its highest.

It is proposed that the costs will be funded through the Bereavement Service budget. The Service has a budget to generate £0.300m of net controllable income every year. In 2012/13 the service overachieved by £0.273m against budget. The annual cost of the depreciation and interest costs associated with the investment are estimated to be no more than £0.269m. Therefore, the additional income from this service and an element of future price increases will fund the additional costs of borrowing associated with this investment. Cabinet draft budget proposals for 2014-2018 have been prepared on this basis.

### **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 month's 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.

### **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 Housing and Environment.
- Internal consultation has also been carried out with the Change, Efficiency and Improvement Theme 'C' board.

#### **2.3.2 External consultation**

- Officers from Environment and Leisure first consulted with Funeral Directors on the Crematoria Review on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011.
- Officers from Environment and Leisure 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 facilities at Preston Crematorium is 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**

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 the new cremators and mercury abatement equipment. Overall, carbon dioxide emissions from the operation of Preston Crematorium are expected to decrease and will be monitored through the Council's carbon budget reporting process.

Officers are also exploring the possibility of the introduction of a heat recovery system as part of the project which would be delivered to the crematorium, chapel, toilets and office buildings on the site.

The refurbishment of Preston Crematorium will ensure that all current building regulation standards are met.

### PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive  X
- Strategic Director  X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)  X
- Chief Finance Officer  X
- Monitoring Officer  X
- Strategic Manager for Policy, Partnerships,  
Performance and Communications  X