

**Cabinet Response to Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development sub group Recommendations
Completed Action Plan**

Report of the Bereavement Services Sub Group

In accordance with Section 21B of the Local Government Act 2000, Cabinet is required to provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee within 2 months. In providing this response Cabinet is asked to state whether or not it accepts each recommendation and the reasons for this decision. Cabinet must also indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take.

Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation	Officer Commentary	Cabinet Decision (Accept or reject)	Action to be taken (if any) and timescale for completion
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>That Cabinet: carry out a review of its charging policy for Resident/Non Resident interment fee and be mindful of the charges of other local authorities of the North East;</p>	<p>Currently non residents are charged almost double the price of a resident to purchase a grave plot. This ensures that priority is given to those who pay council tax to NTC and preserves land.</p> <p>Two Local Authorities in the region charge double interment fees for the interment of a non resident into a grave but NTC does not.</p> <p>The service is mindful of the growing issue of funeral poverty when undertaking its annual review of fees and</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Arrange for a review of fees and charges for 2018/2019, to be carried out in line with other local authorities in the North East.</p>

Appendix 1

	charges and its price point in comparison to other authorities in the region.		
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>That Cabinet: If it determines to change interment fees that guidance is established with distinct criteria to reduce any ambiguity to who would have resident/non resident status.</p>	<p>Current guidelines state: A non-resident fee is applicable if the deceased lived outside the Borough of North Tyneside at the date of death, with the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deceased lived outside the Borough for less than a year before death • The deceased moved to receive specialist care unavailable within the Borough. 	Accept	Review current guidance in preparation for 2018/2019.
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>That Cabinet: Carry out a review of guidelines to the use of tributes. The review should look at actions that would be taken to remove old tributes to ensure that graves are</p>	<p>The service currently removes floral tributes when the blooms are gone.</p>	Accept	Carry out a review of guidelines.

Appendix 1

<p>maintained and kept in an orderly presentable condition with associated timescales</p>			
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>That Cabinet: notes and monitors the possibility to use new techniques of remains disposal in the future</p>	<p>Officers keep up to date with new developments through the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Will continue to monitor and consider new technologies.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>That Cabinet: implements an online service that enables Funeral Directors/Customers to book and pay for funerals</p>	<p>The Customer Journey programme is looking at all interactions that the Council has with its residents and service users, with the aim of streamlining these and increasing the ability for residents to “self-serve”, which in many cases could be facilitated through the introduction of new self-service technology. This recommendation will be added to the programme plan and scoped in detail to understand the potential for this and progress accordingly.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Noted</p>

Appendix 1

<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>That Cabinet: implements processes to enable customers to make applications and pay for services online</p>	<p>The Customer Journey programme is looking at all interactions that the Council has with its residents and service users, with the aim of streamlining these and increasing the ability for residents to “self-serve”, which in many cases could be facilitated through the introduction of new self-service technology. This recommendation will be added to the programme plan and scoped in detail to understand the potential for this and progress accordingly.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>Information for customers be made available and marketed at Libraries/CFC for ease of access for customers</p>	<p>A new Bereavement Brochure has been produced and will be available on line, at the registrars, libraries and in customer first centres.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Action in progress</p>

Appendix 1

<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>Bereavement Services staff be provided personal alarm devices that could be triggered in the event of potential personal risk</p>	<p>Risk assessments are in place across the service and are regularly reviewed.</p> <p>Risk assessment will be reviewed to determine whether personal alarms are required.</p>	<p>Accept / Reject following outcome of risk assessment review.</p>	<p>Risk assessments to be reviewed in line with this recommendation. If the assessment concludes that personal alarms are not required, then the recommendation will be rejected.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>The opening times be reviewed with the intention to ensure customers were able to access advice etc throughout the working day (including lunchtime) in line with the operation of other Council customer centres</p>	<p>The office is currently open to the public from 9:00 till 12:00 and 1:00 till 3:00.</p> <p>A trial of revised hours will take place in January 2017.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Action planned for January 2017.</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Environment to receive feedback on results of trial.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>That a review be undertaken to provide guidance on the positioning of garden seats in the garden/cemeteries to future buyers and the</p>	<p>A memorial bench scheme is currently in place within the cemetery, which incorporates a ten year lease arrangement.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Carry out a review of memorial seating arrangements to incorporate recommendation.</p>

Appendix 1

<p>limiting of the amount of further memorials and flowers that could be attached</p>			
<p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>That a customer survey be undertaken to seek the views and opinions of those who use all the Bereavement Services and facilities</p>	<p>Visitors to Preston Cemetery Office are asked to provide feedback via a survey, relating to the service they receive on the day of their visit.</p> <p>Funeral Directors are asked periodically via questionnaire about their views and experience of the service.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>An appropriate method of consultation with the newly bereaved to be implemented.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12</p> <p>That Cabinet: Carry out a review to assess the viability of setting up a North Tyneside Council Funeral Director Service through the authority's trading company</p>	<p>The Commercial and Business redesign team together with Bereavement Services are appraising the option of providing a Funeral Director Service.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Environment to consider options following completion of the appraisal.</p>