

# North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 16 January 2017

**ITEM 6f**  
Title: Response to  
Overview, Scrutiny and  
Policy Development  
Committee Sub Group  
report on Bereavement  
Services

Portfolio(s): Environment

Cabinet Member: Councillor  
John Stirling

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## Report from Service

Area: Environment, Housing and Leisure

Responsible Officer: Phil Scott – Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure (Tel: (643 7295))

Wards affected: All

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## PART 1

### 1.1 Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval to the proposed response to the recommendations of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee Sub Group in relation to its study of Bereavement Services. The sub group of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee report was presented and recommendations were made to Cabinet at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

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 two months. In providing this response, Cabinet is asked to state whether or not it accepts each of the recommendations and the reasons for this decision. Cabinet must also indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take.

### 1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet agree the proposed responses to the recommendations from the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee Sub Group in relation to its study into Bereavement Services, as shown in Appendix 1 of this report.

### 1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty eight days notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

### 1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priority in the 2016/19 Our North Tyneside Plan

Our places will:

Provide a clean, green, healthy, attractive and safe environment

## **1.5 Information:**

### **1.5.1 Background**

At its first meeting of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee of the Municipal Year on 6 June 2016, the Committee agreed its work programme for the year ahead.

The Committee was reminded that the topic of a review on the Bereavement Services had been raised for potential review the previous year, relating to information and guidance available to the bereaved.

It was agreed that the establishment of a Bereavement Services Sub Group to carry out a short review, would be the most appropriate means of undertaking this piece of work.

The following members served on the group:

- Councillor Sandra Graham
- Councillor John O'Shea
- Church Representative – Rev Michael Vine

The sub group agreed the following objectives:

- 1) To have an understanding of the extent of advice customers receive and to ensure that procedures are implemented consistently.
- 2) To investigate the facilities and customer and personal space available within the building used by the service.
- 3) Identify where any improvements could be made to the services delivered to customers.

The sub group met on two occasions and also carried out a visit to Preston Cemetery and Crematorium to see the facilities, which included the customer front door services, the back office accommodation and the working environment.

The sub group concluded their review on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and presented a report and recommendations to Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

## **1.6 Decision options:**

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Cabinet may accept the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above

Option 2

Cabinet may not accept the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above

**Option 1 is the recommended option.**

## 1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

It is recommended that Cabinet agree option 1 in order to improve the Bereavement Services offer.

## 1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Proposed response to Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee recommendations.

## 1.9 Contact officers:

Samantha Dand, Acting Head of Environment, Culture and Leisure, tel. (0191) 643 7294  
Julie Evans, Bereavement Services Manager, tel. (0191) 643 6076  
Alison Campbell, Senior Business Partner, tel. (0191) 643 7038

## 1.10 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:

- (1) An Overview of the Bereavement Service – [briefing note](#)
- (2) Information and Views requested at meeting of 09/08/16 – [briefing 2](#)
- (3) Notes of the sub group meetings and visit to Preston Cemetery –  
[Notes](#) (16 August)  
[Notes 2](#) (22 August)
- (4) North East Cemetery fees and charges list 2016/17 [S:\Environmental Services\Bereavement Services\General\fees and charges\NE Cem Group Cem Fees 1617 appendix 1.xls](#)
- (5) Funeral Process workflow [U:\Funeral process chart appendix 2.pptx](#)
- (6) Intestate Deaths information - [Appendix](#)
- (7) Non resident grave purchases 2015-2016 - [Link](#)
- (8) Customer Satisfaction Survey 2013/14 – [results](#)
- (9) Questionnaire to Funeral Directors [S:\Environmental Services\Bereavement Services\Charter Information & Documents\Quality Control Service Questionnaires\SERVICE QUESTIONNAIRE-FDs-Ver1.01.pdf](#)
- (10) Bereavement Services sub group report October 2016 – [report](#)

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

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

It is anticipated that actions can be completed within existing resources.

The proposal to assess the viability of setting up a North Tyneside Council Funeral Director Service through the Authority's Trading Company would have financial implications for the Authority. If, following review, this proposal is to be progressed, the results, including full financial implications, would be reported to Cabinet for a decision before it was progressed.

### **2.2 Legal**

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 two months. In providing this response, Cabinet is asked to state whether or not it accepts each of the recommendations and the reasons for this decision. Cabinet must also indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take.

The proposal of setting up a North Tyneside Council Funeral Director Service through the Authority's Trading Company would require the consideration of the business case to support it and if supported the approval of Cabinet to incorporate the proposal into Trading Company's Strategic Business Plan.

### **2.3 Consultation/community engagement**

In producing their report the sub group consulted with the manager of the service and staff. Previous customer satisfaction survey data was used and Funeral Directors were asked to contribute.

### **2.4 Human rights**

There are no specific human rights implications arising from this report.

### **2.5 Equalities and diversity**

There are no specific equalities and diversity implications arising from this report.

### **2.6 Risk management**

There are no specific risk management implications arising from this report.

### **2.7 Crime and disorder**

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

### **2.8 Environment and sustainability**

There are no environment and sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

### **PART 3 - SIGN OFF**

- Deputy Chief Executive  x
- Head(s) of Service  x
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)  x
- Chief Finance Officer  x
- Monitoring Officer  x
- Head of Corporate Strategy  x