



COUNCIL CABINET
15 March 2005

Report of the Planning and Environment Commission

Best Value Review of Bereavement Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Cabinet reconsider the recommendations of the Best Value report on Bereavement Services listed in 2.2 in the light of the comments made by the Planning and Environment Commission.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 16 February 2005 the Planning and Environment Commission received a presentation from Geoff Hall, the Commercial Services Assistant Director - Works and Engineering on the outcome of the Best Value Review of Bereavement Services. The Commission also considered the Executive Summary, Improvement Plan and Financial Implications of the Best Value Review.

Issue(s)

- 2.2 Members were concerned about the following outcomes of the Best Value Review:

Category A recommendations

- a) The recommendation to compare adult crematorium charges annually against those of other Unitary Authorities to ensure that charges are in line with current rates. (Objective 5)
- b) The recommendation to increase staffing levels by one FTE admin post at Nottingham Road Cemetery and by half an FTE admin post at Markeaton Crematorium. (Objective 6)
- c) The recommendation to undertake a review of cremator running times to ensure that the system is running efficiently and effectively. (Objective 11)

Category C recommendations

- d) The recommendation to develop a covered area to allow the visitors to view the floral displays at Markeaton Crematorium (Objective 9)

Conclusions of the Commission

2.3 In respect of points a) to d) listed in 2.2, the Commission expressed the following views:

- a) As no complaints appeared to have been received about the service offered to the public at Nottingham Road Cemetery and at Markeaton Crematorium, there seemed to be no need to increase the staffing levels at these facilities in the way proposed in the Best Value report.
- b) It was inappropriate to compare adult cremation charges at Markeaton Crematorium with those of other Unitary Authority Crematoria and to maintain them in line with the national average for Unitary Authorities. This was because of the differing nature and staffing levels of the other crematoria and their wide range of charges (£220-£400/cremation). The Commission also pointed out that when the issue of charging had been considered as part of their review of the Council's draft Revenue Budget they had recommended that the increase should be limited to a maximum of 4%.
- c) The operation of the cremators was largely automatic and all the cremator operators were fully trained. It was difficult to see how the efficiency of the technicians could be improved by reviewing the opening/operating hours of the crematorium.
- d) There seemed no real need to provide a covered area for viewing the flowers at Markeaton Crematorium and it was felt that this could actually have a detrimental effect on the flowers.

Recommendations of the Commission

2.4 That the recommendations of the Best Value report listed in 2.2 are reconsidered in the light of the comments made by the Commission.

Reasons for Commission's Recommendations

2.5 For the reasons stated in 2.3.

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Background papers:	Background Papers - None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. None arising from this report.

Legal

2. None arising from this report.

Personnel

3. None arising from this report.

Equalities impact

4. The provision of high quality cost effective bereavement services will be of benefit to all Derby people.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

5. This report links to the following of the Council's corporate objectives and priorities for change:

Corporate Objectives: Integrated cost effective services

Priorities for Change: responding to people's needs appropriately