

Appendix 3

Minute extract from Council Cabinet 29 July 2008.

50/08 Provision of Bereavement Services

The Council Cabinet considered a report on Provision of Bereavement Services. The report indicated that the fees charged for burial within the Council's cemeteries did not reflect the true costs of the service and were disproportionately cheaper than the charges for cremation at Markeaton Crematorium. This had resulted in the cremation service having to subsidise the burial service and the public having to make choices based on cost as opposed to personal preference.

The report indicated that there was a need for a review of charges to bring burial fees into line with cremation fees. The differences in current charges may discriminate against community groups whose religion dictates that the cremation service is used, in favour of the groups for whom interment or burial is a requirement. Community groups requiring the construction of a burial vault were further subsidised and the vaults also took up more space than traditional burials.

Differences in charges also encouraged the greater use of cemeteries posing increased demands on the capacity of existing cemeteries. If not addressed this would require the Council to consider the acquisition of new sites for burial purposes. Pressure on cemetery capacity would also be eased by proposed changes in legislation aimed at maximising capacity and sustainability. This would be done through the re-use of old abandoned graves where there had been no interment for over 100 years.

Options Considered

There were no options considered.

Decision

1. To increase average burial fees from £305 to £366.50 in September 2008 and again to £428 in April 2009.
2. To increase cremation charges by 3% in 2009/10 so that the cost of cremation is £428.
3. To defer consideration to withdraw any subsidies for vault interments that currently exists until consultation has been undertaken and the findings of this reported to the Council Cabinet.
4. To note the recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Commission in relation to Bereavement Services.

Reasons

1. To bring burial fees in line with cremation fees to enable the provision of a bereavement service which allows the public to make choices based on personal preference. Additional income would also release funding for much needed improvements to the cremation service at Markeaton Crematorium.
2. To ensure service users views are considered in respect of proposals to withdraw subsidies for vault interments.