



BEST VALUE REVIEW OF BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

RECOMMENDATION

- 1 To approve the response to the comments of the Planning and Environment Commission on the Best Value report on Bereavement Services.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1 Best Value recommendation 2.2 (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)

Conclusions of Commission 2.3 (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%.

Response

Benchmarking of our services is a requirement of Best Value and the Commission requested this data when they were reviewing our budget proposals. As there are no resource implications in the implementation of this recommendation, it is considered that this should be implemented.

2.2 Best Value recommendation 2.2 (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)

Conclusions of Commission 2.3 (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.

Response

The Commission's view of this recommendation is accepted and further consideration will not be given to increasing the staffing levels to provide cover for all opening hours.

2.3 Best Value recommendation 2.2 (c)

The recommendation to undertake a review of cremator running times to ensure that the system is running efficiently and effectively. (Objective 11)

Conclusions of Commission 2.3 (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.

Response

The review indicated that the first opening hour of the crematorium had the least level of demand and that potential efficiency savings would be made if the crematorium did not function for this period. The Commission seem to have focused on the efficiency of the technicians and the cremators which was not the issue identified by the Best Value review. It is proposed that we continue to review the operating hours.

2.4 Best value recommendation 2.2 (d)

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

Conclusions of Commission 2.3 (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.

Response

The review felt that during inclement weather that people trying to view floral tributes would be inconvenienced by the lack of cover. It is appreciated that a cover that blocked daylight would have a detrimental effect on displays but a covering that did not significantly reduce the amount of daylight would be possible. It is proposed that we continue to evaluate providing a covered area for the flowers.

For more information contact:	John Winters	e-mail John.Winters@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	None	
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications	

Appendix 1

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. None arising from this report.

Corporate objectives

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.