

Customer and Community Scrutiny Committee Report

Report of Operations Manager of Parks and Leisure

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## Bereavement Services Review

### Recommendation

1. That the Committee reviews and comments on the proposed scope of the **Bereavement Services Review** and nominates councillors to join the Fundamental Service Review (FSR) Board.

#### Reason for Recommendation:

In order to ensure the Committee's involvement in the fundamental service review process, the scope of the review is agreed and that appropriate resources are in place to undertake the review.

### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report outlines the scope of the fundamental service review of Guildford Borough Council's Bereavement Service to ensure a cost effective, efficient, and quality service, fit for the future that derives a viable income stream for the Council.
- 1.2 The review will assess a number of issues and opportunities to inform the refurbishment of Guildford crematorium and Stoke chapel, future burial provision, management of burial grounds and assess options for the operational delivery of the service to meet a future vision.

### 2. Strategic priorities

- 2.1 The FSR programme is an element of the Council's Key Delivery Target under Excellence and Value for Money, transform provision of our services through the Better place, better Council transformation programme.
- 2.2 The review of Bereavement Services supports the priority Sustainable Local Environment, by contributing to the key delivery targets of reducing the Council's Co<sup>2</sup> emissions, improving the quality of the built and natural environment while protecting the borough's heritage and character.

### **3. Background**

#### **3.1 Bereavement services Fundamental Service Review**

The FSR Framework was adopted to ensure a managed, robust and consistent approach to service reviews across the Council. This is a key element to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the services we provide. The framework also provides greater and more structured involvement of the Council's scrutiny committees, in the fundamental review of our services.

The Council's Executive approved the schedule of service reviews on 4 October 2012, which included Bereavement Services.

#### **3.2 Site history**

The site where Guildford crematorium sits was part of the Manor of Braboeuf held by the Braboeuf family from the mid-thirteenth century. Works to build the crematorium started in 1964 with the Right Reverend Reindrop assisting the Reverend Kenneth Morgan in performing the dedication of the crematorium in 1966. The first service took place on 2 January 1967 and today the crematorium carries out an average of 1600 cremations a year.

#### **3.3 Services provided**

Bereavement Services provide the facility for the cremation and burial of deceased persons. The Council also provides gardens and facilities for the bereaved to remember loved ones. The Council maintains one chapel within its crematorium grounds enabling memorial, remembrance and funeral services to be held. Chapels are also maintained at Stoke and the Mount cemeteries to allow for a church service prior to the burial where required. The service provides support and guidance to clients and funeral directors. This includes from arranging a funeral, grave digging, ensuring the service proceeds as planned on the day, and advising on memorial options.

The service also provides advice and assistance for families looking to arrange funerals without the services of a funeral director and is responsible for carrying out funerals as directed under section 46 of the Public Health Act (also known as Welfare Funerals).

The authority maintains memorial options in order that the bereaved may commemorate loved ones. These include memorial vaults, garden plots and remembrance roses and trees.

Staff are responsible for the disposal of cremated remains; this may be in the form of 'witnessed laying to rest' by the family or 'laying to rest' of ashes where the family choose not to be present.

Bereavement Services staff undertake tours of the crematorium and ancillary facilities for appropriate parties and members of the public when requested.

The service works to the Institute Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) Charter for the Bereaved, a recognised industry standard. Currently Bereavement Services are struggling to achieve this standard, in particular the provision to spend time with families advising on memorial and funeral options. This is affecting the ability to achieve customer care standards and maximise income generation.

The crematorium office is open from Monday to Thursday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Friday 9.00 am – 4.30 pm and Saturday 9.00am – 3.00 pm.

### 3.4 Legal obligations and industry standards

As a Burial Authority, the Council has various legal obligations (Local Authority Cemeteries Order 1977, Burial Act 1900, Public Health Act, Cremation Act 1902). Indirectly the Councils Emergency Planning Function and Excess Deaths Plan impact the service as the service may need to fulfil roles dealing with the bereaved and deceased should a pandemic or major incident occur.

#### 3.4.1 Closed churchyards

Once parish churchyards are declared full by the local Diocese and the Secretary of State, the relevant Parochial Church Council has the right to pass management and maintenance of the closed churchyard to its local council. Under ecclesiastical law, the closed churchyard must be maintained in good order.

Guildford Borough Council is responsible for eight closed churchyards:

- Holy Trinity, Guildford
- St John the Evangelist, Guildford
- St Mary Magdalene, Ripley
- St Mary's, Guildford
- St Nicholas' Compton
- St Nicolas, Guildford
- St Peters, Ash
- The Saxon Church of St Peter and St Paul, Albury.

Financial grants (£300 per annum) are issued to the Saxon Church of St Peter and St Paul and to East Clandon to assist in maintaining the sites. The Bereavement Services staff are responsible for general grounds maintenance tasks at the Church of St Magdalene.

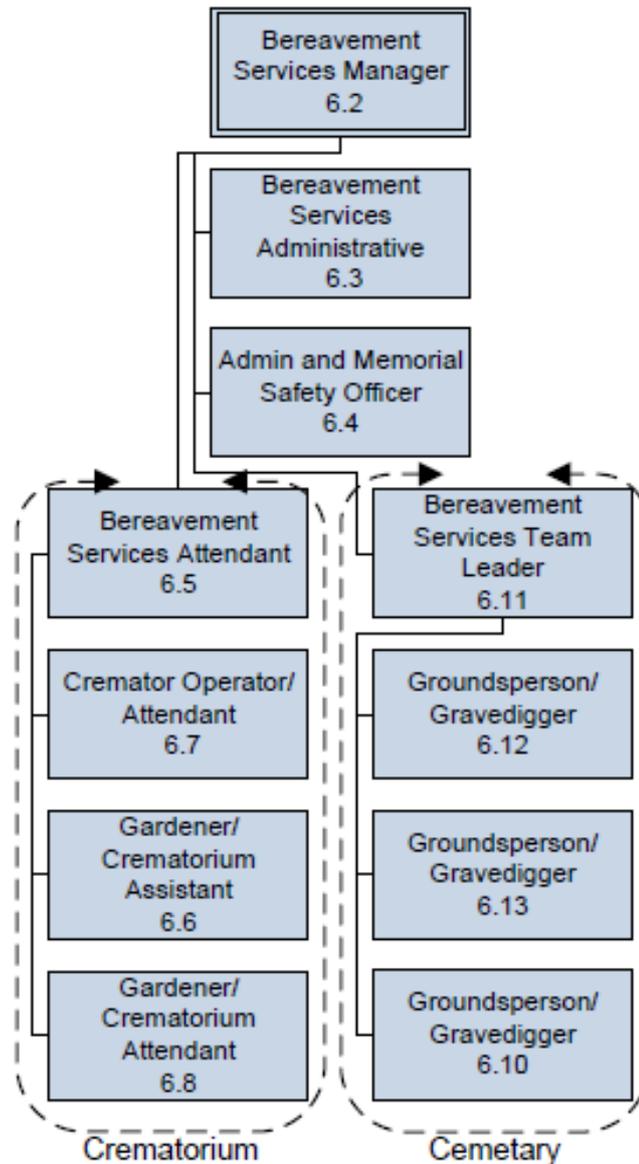
#### 3.4 Key statistics:

##### January to December 2012

Service	Quantity (no.)
Cremations	1674
Burials	36
Memorial Applications	734
Witnessed Layings to rest	205
Extension Services (Double length services)	253
Welfare Funerals	5

### 3.6 Staff structure

Eleven full time staff are employed in the Bereavement Service. The service is also supported by the grounds maintenance team within Parks and Leisure Services. The staff structure is shown below.



**3.7 Revenue budget actual expenditure**

Year	Expenditure	Income	Net
2012/13*	£569,412	(£762,055)	(£192,643)
2011/12	£904,337	(£953,477)	(£49,140)
2010/11	£806,034	(£945,191)	(£139,157)
2009/10	£620,009	(£889,013)	(£269,004)
*Part year			

## **4. Objectives and scope of the Bereavement Services Review**

The following areas will be examined to inform the review.

### **4.1 Establish customer, stakeholder and staff infrastructure requirements and service needs**

To establish a brief for refurbishment it is essential that key users, customers and staff are consulted to ensure a refurbished facility meets their needs. When identified, these needs are to be examined as to their viability and included as appropriate.

### **4.2 Analyse additional service opportunities**

The following opportunities will be explored to assess their commercial viability and suitability:

- feasibility of a florist, shop, and refreshments service
- memorialisation options
- payment plans
- CAMEO (Crematoria Abatement of Mercury Emissions Organisation) burden sharing arising from the installation of the new cremators - an emissions trading scheme with other crematoria
- service recording options, for example webcam, DVD and CD recordings
- other options identified as appropriate.

### **4.3 Establish the viability of a second chapel**

This critical issue should establish whether the crematorium has sufficient capacity to operate effectively in the long term with one chapel. However, this needs balancing against the other infrastructure needs a second chapel will bring along with potential impacts on other areas of the service. Core issues to examine are:

- future need
- potential new facilities in the area
- additional car parking requirements
- potential loss of burial space and memorialisation land
- requirement for additional staffing
- additional revenue costs and income.

### **4.4 Technical issues**

A number of technical issues will arise from refurbishment of the crematorium and investment in burial grounds. Therefore, clarification will be sought on:

- planning permission and policy
- building regulations – a substantial refurbishment is likely to trigger the requirement for other areas of the crematorium to be enhanced in line with current building regulations, for example, disabled access and energy efficiency. These will be identified as part of the study
- any other issues as identified such as Environment Agency consent.

### **4.5 Explore mortuary requirements of Surrey County Council**

Surrey County Council has an identified need for mortuary space. Currently undertakers are storing bodies at a significant cost to SCC due to a shortage of space at hospitals. Therefore, the following issues need to be explored:

- space requirements

- whether the crematorium is a viable location for such facilities
- whether SCC invests capital funds, pay a rental charge or both.

A recommendation will be drawn as to whether this is a viable option for the Council.

#### **4.6 Explore opportunities with adjoining district and borough councils**

The study will investigate plans for bereavement services in adjoining districts and boroughs, including the implications of pandemics and major incidents and any interest in collaborating with the Council in establishing the need and provision of new burial grounds. This information should also be used to inform the commercial potential of Guildford Crematorium (that is, the potential catchment area).

#### **4.7 Analyse and establish options for refurbishment of the crematorium and cemetery**

Establish options for the needs identified in 4.1- 4.6. These will be presented in written format and as outline drawings. This will look at all aspects of the crematorium buildings and how they may be improved to deliver the service. This will also examine options for remodelling and refurbishment of Stoke cemetery chapel and drainage at Stoke cemetery.

#### **4.8 Guildford Borough Council burial grounds**

The study will identify the following:

- future capacity for burials and need in the borough
- options for establishing future burial; memorial, woodland burial or natural burial grounds
- recommendations on management and maintenance (Asset Management Plan).

#### **4.9 Costing**

The study will identify the following costs:

Crematorium refurbishment

- capital cost of the options for refurbishment
- professional fees and project management cost
- potential loss of income while refurbishment is undertaken.

Burial Grounds

- capital and ongoing investment required to maintain infrastructure
- capital cost of refurbishing Stoke chapel
- capital cost of drainage to Stoke cemetery.

#### **4.10 Income and expenditure**

The study will establish the following:

- the increase in revenue costs arising from refurbishment
- potential increase in income through improved, refurbished, and additional services
- recommendations for fees and charges.

#### **4.11 Software and systems**

Existing software and systems will be examined to:

- determine their suitability

- recommendations on efficiencies that may be derived through systems and software improvements, for example online payments.

#### **4.12 Review of staff structure**

The staff structure will be reviewed to ensure:

- all functions and operations are covered efficiently
- incorporation of the work already completed on lean processes
- the service is competitive
- the identification of any skills gaps and recommendations for training
- there is resilience to ensure business continuity.

#### **4.13 Operational models**

The study will evaluate different operational models. This will include on - going management and options for investment in refurbishment.

- keep in house
- partnership with a private funeral director
- partnership with an existing specialist provider (outsourcing)
- set up a council run independent bereavement service.

### **5. Boundaries and methodology**

The review will follow the Fundamental Service Review process and be supported by Bereavement Services staff, Councillors, the employment of consultants, in depth consultation and benchmarking.

#### **5.1 Consultants:**

Council staff will work on and lead elements of the review, however those staff will be continuing to deliver this critical service. Therefore additional capacity, industry and professional expertise will be required to provide specialist skills and information to ensure the Council is able to inform the future of bereavement services.

The Executive will agree a budget on 28 March to support feasibility work for this review. Two consultants will be required ensuring that vital information is obtained for the review to inform.

A professional bereavement consultant will provide specialist industry expertise to the project. A chartered building surveyor will be appointed due to the scale of the refurbishment, its specialist nature and to ensure the capacity is available to deliver the work in the specified timescale. It will also ensure that all relevant technical and professional standards are considered as part of the refurbishment process.

#### **5.2 Bereavement consultant**

The Bereavement consultant will:

- work in conjunction with the Bereavement Services Manager to design, deliver and critically analyse consultation responses
- work in conjunction with the Bereavement Services Manager to make recommendations on refurbishment and a design brief for the Chartered Building Surveyor based on the recommendations listed in section 4
- work with the Chartered Building Surveyor on developing options for refurbishment
- assess options for the Operational Model for Guildford crematorium available to the Council

- produce statistics on burial provision and need for the Council for the next 50 years and options of how it may be addressed
- undertake case studies of other bereavement services to benchmark and compare the services and the quality provided
- substantiate all recommendations and decisions by robust demographic data, population modelling, and assessment of local and similar facilities, competitors and business cases.

### 5.3 Chartered building surveyor

The chartered building surveyor will:

- develop outline design options and costs based on the design brief submitted
- provide all technical expertise in relation to planning and building control regulations and advise on options for implementing the refurbishment while minimising operational disruption
- advise on the running costs of a refurbished crematorium
- undertake condition surveys of the burial grounds inclusive of built features and produces an asset management for the next 5 years.

### 5.5 Consultation with stakeholders:

This is a critical element of the review to establish the services and facilities required at Guildford crematorium. This will occur with the stakeholders listed below and in the following formats:

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Method of Consultation</b>
Council bereavement services staff	Questionnaire, meetings and interviews
Funeral directors and arrangers	Questionnaire
Clients (members of the public who have used the service)	Questionnaire
Celebrants	Questionnaire
Institute of Civil Funerals	Questionnaire
Guildford Access Group	Questionnaire and meeting on site
Surrey university multi faith centre	Questionnaire and meeting on site
Diocese of Guildford	Questionnaire and meeting
Ministers (R.C and Methodist, United Reformed, Baptist, etc) not included in Diocese	Questionnaire and meeting
Surrey County Council	Meeting
District and borough councils	Questionnaire and meeting
Cruse bereavement care, and, stillbirth and Neonatal Death charity (SANDS)	Meeting on site
Local humanist association	Questionnaire
Local clergy	Questionnaire

The questionnaires will be online for ease of completion and analysis. Paper copies will be made available if necessary. The questionnaire will ask for quantifiable elements but also give opportunities for free responses so that all views are captured.

Meetings will detail discussions and views from the particular stakeholder.

## 5.6 Industry benchmarking

Local benchmarking will take place in the form of visits and research and this will be supported by the latest Cemeteries and Crematoria services data from Association for Public Service Excellence. This will include:

- costs
- quality and range of services provided
- accessibility.

## 7.0 Exclusions

The review is not a full market test for outsourcing the service. The Council will undertake an initial review of the options available to the Council to give an indication of the potential outcomes and risks that the Council would need to consider to establish whether outsourcing the service would be a cost effective option. It would not be value for money to market test the service at this stage as the Council needs to establish its future vision for the service through this review. The review will not include pet cremations or cemeteries.

## 8.0 Outcomes

- 8.1 To make recommendations for the design of a refurbished facility that is fit for the future.
- 8.2 To make recommendations on service resources including staffing structures.
- 8.3 To make recommendations for the services made available for customers, the cost of the services to the Council and customers in order to establish their commercial viability.
- 8.4 To make a recommendation on whether to explore different operational models for Guildford Crematorium post refurbishment.

These four outcomes will deliver an improved service fit for the future, while delivering financial efficiency and increased income.

## 9.0 Review timetable

The timetable will be agreed at an early meeting with the Fundamental Service Review board

Task	Date
Scoping report reviewed by Scrutiny	12 March 2013
Procure and appoint consultants	13 March – 12 April 2013
Formal start	14 March
Briefing to Bereavement Services Staff	14 March 2013

Executive Report requesting approval of provisional capital sums for consultant and essential improvements	28 March 2013
Benchmarking	TBC (Approx 8 weeks)
Consultation with Stakeholders	TBC (Approx 8 weeks)
Completion of assessment of space requirements for burial provision for the borough of Guildford in the next 50 years	TBC (Approx 10 weeks)
Completion of condition surveys for burial grounds (open and closed), and assessment of capital cost for refurbishment and repair and maintenance of assets	TBC (Approx 8 weeks)
Service needs analysis	TBC (Approx 2 weeks)
Options and Recommendations for services and facilities to be provided in a future service	TBC (Approx 4 weeks)
Development of options for refurbishment of the crematorium and Stoke Chapel including outline designs, capital costs and the impact on income and expenditure	TBC (Approx 8 weeks)
Recommendations on operational models	TBC (Approx 6 weeks)
Options appraisal and recommendations	TBC (Approx 4 weeks)
Draft final report	TBC
Challenge session and moderation	TBC
Final report for MT consideration	TBC
Final report for Scrutiny	TBC (Approx 9 months after start)

## 10. Review team

Parks & Leisure Services - Paul Stacey (Operations Manager, Parks & Countryside) – Project Manager.

Bereavement Services - Natasha Precious (Bereavement Services Manager) – Deputy Project Manager and to provide detailed information and support to the review. Provide significant input in to the consultation process and analysis of recommendations.

Nominated Councillors on FSR Board – to assist and monitor progress, provide necessary challenge, and act as a channel to the Scrutiny Committee as necessary.

Consultants - To be confirmed.

Bereavement Services Staff (as required).

HR – To advise on HR implications arising from recommendations.

Finance – Christine Davies - To provide financial information and scrutiny.

Property – To provide technical information on properties and enable access to property records.

Procurement – To assist with procuring consultants and advise on the procurement implications of refurbishment.

Planning policy – To advise on planning implications and options for new burial grounds.

Development Control - To advise on development control implications of refurbishment of the crematorium.

Legal – To provide legal advice as required.

Communications/IT - To support on line survey and analysis.