

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 25 November 2019

Title: Whitley Bay Crematorium and Cemetery upgrade

Portfolio:	Environment and Transport	Cabinet Member:	Councillor Carl Johnson
Report from Service Area:	Environment, Housing and Leisure		
Responsible Officer:	Phil Scott, Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure	Tel: (0191) 6437295	
Wards affected:	All wards		

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

On 9th December 2013, Cabinet approved the investment for the refurbishment of Tynemouth Crematorium, (including the provision of fully mercury abated cremators) and at the same time committed to an improvement plan for Whitley Bay Crematorium, at a later date.

The Cremators at Whitley Bay Crematorium were installed in 2000 and are coming to the end of their useful life.

This report seeks Cabinet approval to commence a procurement exercise in line with section 8(6) of Contract Standing Orders, supporting the upgrade and refurbishment of Whitley Bay Cemetery and Crematorium. The total cost of the works to be procured is expected to exceed £500,000 in value.

This project has been included in the Council's Investment Programme.

1.2 Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1) approve the upgrade and refurbishment and the provision of a new cremator at Whitley Bay Cemetery and Crematorium subject to approval of the budget by full Council;
- 2) delegate authority to the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Head of Resources and Head of Law and Governance to commence a procurement and subject to budget

approval award a contract to the bidder who represents the most economically advantageous tender.

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 28th October 2019.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the “Our Places” priority in the 2018-2020 Our North Tyneside Plan.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

The Authority operates two crematoria in the Borough (Tynemouth and Whitley Bay). Both carry out around 1,000 cremations per annum. In 2015, Tynemouth Crematorium was refurbished at a cost of £2.777m, (cremators £1.886m and building work £0.891m).

Following the completion of the upgrade at Tynemouth an improvement plan for Whitley Bay has been considered. The cremators at Whitley Bay are approaching the end of their economic life and it is considered best practice that any replacement cremators are mercury abatement compliant.

All new cremators as defined in Process Guidance Note 5/2(04) Secretary of State's Guidance for Crematoria and note AQ1 (05) Control of Mercury Emissions from Crematoria, should be fitted with mercury abatement. The notes provide information on the conditions appropriate for the control of emissions into the air from crematoria processes/ installations and guidance on using the Best Available Techniques (BAT).

1.5.2 Whitley Bay

The two cremators at Whitley Bay were fully commissioned in January 2000. They are nearly 20 years old and use outdated technology with no mercury abatement in place.

Historically, Tynemouth Crematorium carried out the most cremations, however, over the past few years demand for both Crematoriums has become similar. This is largely due to residents from outside of the Borough choosing to use Whitley Bay.

The average number of cremations carried out at Whitley Bay over the last three years is 1,015 per annum and 30% of these services were from outside the Borough. The average out of Borough income equates to £225k per annum, so there is a risk of losing potential future income if Whitley Bay Crematorium was not upgraded. It is also important to note that not all custom would transfer to Tynemouth.

1.5.3 Design and Procurement

The upgrade at Whitley Bay Crematorium will include the following improvements;

- Replacement of the two cremators with one larger capacity fully mercury abated cremator
- A new vehicle exit will be introduced at the north west corner to create a one way system within the Cemetery

- Provision of a car park for approximately 15 cars plus 2 disabled parking bays
- Relocation of the Book of Remembrance to an unused building near the main entrance
- Minor refurbishment work to the public toilets
- Changing the use of the current Book of Remembrance room into a waiting/overflow area for services.

The Authority will be able to maintain a cremation service at Tynemouth Crematorium during the period of time that Whitley Bay Crematorium is closed for refurbishment. Funeral Directors will liaise directly with families, so they are aware of the alternative options available in respect of the cremation service.

A competitive tendering exercise will be carried out for the provider of the cremation equipment.

1.5.4 Project Timetable

The overall programme of works is proposed to take place in the financial year 2020/2021 and is scheduled to take 26 weeks.

1.6 **Decision options:**

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Cabinet may approve the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 to upgrade Whitley Bay Cemetery and Crematorium including the installation of one larger size fully mercury abated cremator and commence a procurement.

Option 2

Cabinet may not approve the recommendations and continue to run the cremators with no improvements and defer a decision to later a date. However, this option increases the risk of unforeseen breakdowns and unplanned downtime, which could lead to disruption in the cremation service and unnecessary distress for bereaved families.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 **Reasons for recommended option:**

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

The Authority, as the Cremation Authority, is required in accordance with the Cremation Acts of 1902 and 1952 and the Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008 to ensure that crematoria are maintained and in good working order.

The cremators are coming to the end of their useful life and becoming more difficult to repair. Not only will on-going maintenance costs increase but there is also a high risk of breakdowns. Unplanned repairs would cause operational difficulties and potential distress for bereaved families.

If DEFRA increase the target for reducing the amount of mercury emitted into the atmosphere to 100%, the Authority would not be able to continue operating the current cremators. The average number of cremations carried out at Whitley Bay Crematorium over the last three years is 1,015 per annum, 30% of these services were from outside the Borough. The average out of Borough income equates to £225k per annum so there is a risk of losing potential future income as not all custom would transfer to Tynemouth.

1.8 Appendices:

None.

1.9 Contact officers:

Phil Scott – Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure. Tel 0191 6437295
Samantha Dand – Senior Manager, Local Environmental Services. Tel 0191 6437294
Andrea Taylor – Operations Manager, Bereavement Services. Tel 0191 6436076
Cathy Davison – Principal Accountant, Finance. Tel 0191 6435727

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information has been used in the compilation of this report and is available at the office of the author:

- Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999
- Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations 2000
- Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2010
- Process Guidance Note PG5/2(04)
- Additional Guidance Note AQ1(05)
- Cabinet report 8 July 2013
- Cabinet report 9 December 2013
- Cabinet report 23 January 2014

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The current estimated cost for the refurbishment of Whitley Bay Cemetery and Crematorium, including the replacement of the two cremators with one larger size fully mercury abated cremator is £1.541m. If approved this scheme will be included in the budget setting process and the project will be carried out in financial year 2020/21.

It is proposed that the costs of borrowing will be funded through Bereavement Services revenue budget. The service has a budget to generate £0.741m of net controllable income every year. The annual cost of the minimum revenue provision (MRP) and interest costs associated with the investment are estimated to be no more than £0.073m.

The asset lives for the buildings and equipment at Tynemouth Crematorium have been reviewed and as a result extended, resulting in a budget saving of £0.058m per annum. Therefore, this saving plus £0.015m income from this service will fund the additional costs of borrowing associated with this investment.

2.2 Legal

The Authority, as the Cremation Authority, is required in accordance with the Cremation Acts of 1902 and 1952 and the Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008 must ensure that crematoria are maintained in good working order.

A crematorium may be closed by a Cremation Authority, even temporarily for refurbishment, where the Cremation Authority has given not less than one month's notice. This must be done by an advertisement in a local newspaper and by a written notice fixed at the entrance to the crematorium where it can be easily read. The Cremation Authority must give one month's notice in writing to the Secretary of State for the permanent closing or the opening of a new crematorium.

The procurement shall be carried out in compliance with the Public Procurement Regulations 2015 and the Authority's Contract Standing Orders.

The Authority does not guarantee the acceptance of any tender therefore should Council not approve the budget the Authority may abort the procurement process.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Consultation has been carried out with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights issues directly arising from this report

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equality and diversity issues which arise directly from this report

2.6 Risk management

Any risk management issues are included within the Authority's risk register and will be managed by this process.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder issues directly arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

Replacing two cremators with one mercury abated cremator should result in a reduction to the Council's carbon footprint due to lower gas and electricity consumption. This will be further assessed during the procurement exercise. The carbon footprint of Whitley Bay Crematorium is monitored through the Council's carbon budget reporting process. Additionally, the mercury abated cremator will stop the release of mercury related emissions into the atmosphere.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive ☐ X
- Head(s) of Service ☐ X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) ☐ X
- Chief Finance Officer ☐ X
- Monitoring Officer ☐ X
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service ☐ X