

92 PROPOSED REVENUE BUDGET 2015-16

The Finance Manager Technical and Corporate reported on the projected financial performance for the Crematorium for 2014-15 and sought approval for the proposed budget and fees and charges for 2015-16. She provided an explanation of the variances between budget and projected outturn as at 31 January 2015, which was projected to produce a surplus of £112k.

The Finance Manager Technical and Corporate reported that the Joint Committee had considered proposals to strengthen the staffing structure at the Crematorium and Burials Service to mitigate against the impact of significant cuts to public sector spending by forging closer working relationships between the two areas. She outlined a proposed budget for 2015-16 based on whether the existing structure remained in force (Option A) and on the basis of the staff restructure (Option B) approved earlier in this meeting.

The Finance Manager Technical and Corporate outlined the spending requirement of £953k identified in the Business Plan. She stated that income budgets had been prepared assuming a general increase in fees of 2% (1% average CPI plus 1%), which had also been realigned to reflect current levels of activity based on the number of cremations, which excluded the one off income built into the budget in respect of increased activity during the period Margam Crematorium was not fully operational. The decrease in income had been partially mitigated as the fee for weekday cremations had been to £615, which had resulted in a £65k decrease in the fees and charges budget.

The Finance Manager Technical and Corporate reported that an accumulated balance of £1,131m was projected, which had been built up over a number of years to meet the planned costs of replacing the cremators, which would now be used to fund installation of the new cremators during 2015-16.

In response to a question from the Joint Committee, the Crematorium Manager and Registrar stated that she was not fully aware of the costs of cremations to be charged by other crematoria as yet but it was anticipated that other crematoria would have similar increases in cost of cremations. The Crematorium Manager and Registrar also informed the Joint Committee that clientele gained during the closure of Margam Crematorium had been lost since its re-opening.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee:

- (1) Approved the revenue budget for 2015/16 in line with the restructure of the service.
- (2) Approved the increase in fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2015.

93 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2015/16

The Crematorium Manager and Registrar reported on the proposed Programme of Meetings for 2015/16:

Friday, 12 June 2015 - Annual General Meeting  
Friday, 18 September 2015  
Friday, 4 December 2015  
Friday, 4 March 2016

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee approved the Programme of Meetings for 2015/16.

94 CREMATORIUM BUSINESS PLAN AND CREMATION FEES

The Crematorium Manager and Registrar sought approval of the Business Plan and expenditure programme for 2015/16 which included proposed increases in crematorium fees.

The Crematorium Manager and Registrar reported on the total number of cremations for 2014 was 1651, made up of 965 from Bridgend, 194 from Vale of Glamorgan and 342 from Rhondda Cynon Taff, with 150 non-residents.

She also reported on the proposed Service Level Business Plan for 2015/16 which outlined the service objectives for the period. The replacement of the cremators had been delayed until 2015/16 to allow the accumulation of operational surpluses necessary to cover the cost of this project which had been achieved.

The Crematorium Manager and Registrar reported that the current cremation charge places the Crematorium at 221 out of 271 cremation authorities in a national fee league table published in summer 2014. In accordance with the funding strategy included in previous Business Plans, it was recommended that the cremation charge be increased from £580.00 (by inflation + £25) to £615.00. This would ensure that sufficient funding was available to support the future programme of improvements works but still retain the Crematorium's competitive position. The Crematorium Manager and Registrar highlighted a table which showed a comparison on current cremation fees for adjoining crematoria.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee:

- (1) Approved the Service Level Business Plan 2015, and
- (2) Confirmed the cremation fee for 2015/16 at £615.00.

95 AUDIT INSPECTION

The Crematorium Manager and Registrar reported on the recent Internal Audit of the administration processes within the Crematorium. The objective of the Audit was to provide assurance that satisfactory internal controls are operating at the Crematorium.

The Crematorium Manager and Registrar reported that the audit had identified a number of strengths and areas of good practice due to the Crematorium's good performance and based on an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the areas examined, the Audit concluded that the effectiveness of the internal control environment was considered to be sound and substantial assurance could be placed upon the management of risks. This overall opinion was supported by the identification of a well-controlled system and no recommendations were made for enhanced control or improved value for money.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Joint Committee, thanked the Officers of the Crematorium on an excellent audit.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee noted the report.

96 CREMATOR REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME

The Crematorium Manager and Registrar reported on the progress of the cremator replacement programme and sought approval to appoint a manufacturer to install and maintain through a maintenance agreement the new cremators and mercury abatement plant.

The Crematorium Manager and Registrar reported that the Joint Committee at its meeting on 5 December 2014 approved the appointment of an external consultant to oversee the preparation of specifications / tender documentation and the selection of a suitable manufacturer to install the new cremators and mercury abatement equipment and to undertake future repairs and

maintenance of the plant. Stopher Associates limited were appointed as the external consultant and tender documentation prepared accordingly.

The Crematorium Manager and Registrar reported that Tender invitations for the works had been issued and tenders will be received and evaluated in March/April 2015. She stated that the cost of the new cremators, mercury abatement plant and associated equipment was estimated to be £900K inclusive of fees, which could be accommodated from the accumulated balance of £1,131,000 built up over a number of years to meet the planned costs of replacing the plant. The Crematorium Manager and Registrar informed the Joint Committee that the procurement exercise would be undertaken in accordance with Bridgend County Borough Council's Contract and Financial Procedures Rules. Subject to the contract value not exceeding the estimated value of the works (900k) by more than 10%, authorisation was sought from the Joint Committee, to award the contract and appoint as the contractor the most economically advantageous tender in accordance with the tender selection and evaluation exercise, to undertake the installation and future maintenance of the new cremators and associated plant and equipment.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee:

- (1) Noted the progress on the works to the new cremator building extension.
- (2) Authorised the appointment of a contractor to undertake the installation and annual maintenance of the new cremators and associated plant within the financial parameters described.

The meeting closed at 2.45pm.