



Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee

Date **Wednesday 27 September 2023**
Time **5.00 pm**
Venue **Durham Crematorium, South Road, Durham**

Business

Part A

Items which are open to the Public and Press

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the meeting held 29 June 2023 (Pages 3 - 8)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any
5. External Audit Annual Review of the Return for the year ended 31 March 2023: (Pages 9 - 20)
Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee.
6. Quarterly Performance and Operational Report: (Pages 21 - 72)
Report of the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar.
7. Financial Monitoring Report - Position at 31/08/23, with Projected Revenue and Capital Outturn at 31/03/24: (Pages 73 - 82)
Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee.
8. Risk Register Update 2023/24 Review 1: (Pages 83 - 90)
Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee.
9. Internal Audit Charter: (Pages 91 - 112)
Report of the Chief Internal Auditor and Corporate Fraud Manager.

10. Annual Review of the System of Internal Audit:
(Pages 113 - 116)

Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee.

11. Budget Strategy Report: (Pages 117 - 128)

Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee.

12. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Helen Bradley

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
19 September 2023

To: **The Members of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee**

Durham County Council: S Quinn (Chair), R Adcock-Forster,
J Blakey, D Brown, J Chaplow,
J Cosslett, K Robson, A Simpson,
M Stead, C Varty and M Wilson

Spennymoor Town Council: N Foster (Vice-Chair), C Maddison and
D Ranyard

Contact: Jo March

Tel: 03000 269 709

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

CENTRAL DURHAM CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

At a **Annual Meeting of Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on Thursday 29 June 2023 at 2.00 pm**

Present:

Durham County Council:

Councillors R Adcock-Forster, D Brown, J Cosslett, S Quinn, K Robson, M Stead, C Varty and M Wilson

Spennymoor Town Council:

Town Councillors N Foster, C Maddison and D Ranyard

1 Membership of the Joint Committee

Resolved:

That the membership of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee be noted:

Durham County Council: R Adcock-Forster, J Blakey, D Brown, J Chaplow, J Cosslett, S Quinn, K Robson, A Simpson, M Stead, C Varty and M Wilson

Spennymoor Town Council: N Foster, C Maddison and D Ranyard.

2 Appointment of Chair

Nominations were sought for the Chair of the Joint Committee for the ensuing year.

County Councillor S Quinn was proposed for the position of Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year. No further proposals were made.

Resolved:

That County Councillor S Quinn be appointed Chair of the Joint Committee for the ensuing year.

COUNCILLOR S Quinn in the Chair

3 Appointment of Vice-Chair

The Chair sought nominations for Vice-Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year.

Town Councillor N Foster was proposed for the position of Vice-Chair to the Joint Committee for the ensuing year. No further proposals were made.

Resolved:

That Town Councillor N Foster be appointed Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee for the ensuing year.

4 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Blakey and J Chaplow.

5 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

6 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

7 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

8 Changes to the Constitution/Terms of Reference

The Joint Committee considered a report of the Clerk which provided details of a review of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee's Constitution, in accordance with the Annual Governance Statement requirements (for copy see file of minutes).

The Clerk advised that the review had not highlighted any requirements for change to the current constitution and therefore reaffirmed continuation of the existing Constitution and governance arrangements set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

Resolved:

That following a review in accordance with Annual Governance Statement requirements, the Constitution as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be reapproved.

9 Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

The Joint Committee considered a Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and the Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee which provided details of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year April 2022 to March 2023 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

- (i) That the content of the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement be noted;
- (ii) That the Chair and Treasurer approve and sign the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement as part of the consideration of the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023.

10 Revenue Outturn and Joint Committees Annual Return for the Financial Year Ended 31 March 2023

The Joint Committee considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and the Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee which sought approval of the Joint Committees Annual Return for Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee for the financial year ended 31 March 2023. The report also included details of the final outturn position against the approved budgets for 2022/23 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

- (i) That the revenue outturn position as at 31 March 2023, including the year end position with regards to the reserves and balances of the Joint Committee be noted;
- (ii) That the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 of the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 be approved;
- (iii) That the Accounting Statements 2022/23 of the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 be approved;
- (iv) That the Chair, Clerk and Treasurer sign the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023.

11 **Quarterly Performance and Operational Report - 1 April to 31 May 2023**

The Joint Committee considered a report of the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar which provided an update relating to performance and other operational matters (for copy see file of minutes).

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar reported that there were 375 cremations undertaken during the period 1 April to 31 May 2023, the same number compared to the comparable period last year. It was noted that 111 families were from Durham, 17 from Spennymoor and 247 families were from other areas.

The number and value of memorial plaques sold were 41 / £10,347 compared to 45 / £12,451 in the comparable period last year, a decrease of 4 memorials sold and £2,104 in terms of income generated.

It was reported that 2 relief members of staff had been appointed to assist in the operational areas of the crematorium and were currently undertaking training in all aspects of the roles within the crematorium.

As in previous years, arrangements would be made for representation at the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition which was being held at Kenilworth from the 18-20 September 2023. It was proposed that the Bereavement Services Manager and the Chair attend the conference to represent the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

Durham Crematorium has been part of the Durham Heritage Open Weekend for several years and has agreed to participate this year which would be held from 14-17 September 2023.

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar referred to the current terms and conditions with regards artificial flowers and advised that he had been approached by members of the public to review the terms and conditions with a view to allowing plastic/silk flowers to be placed in rose bowls etc beneath the plaques/niche units. Therefore, Members were asked to review this and decide if they were willing to allow plastic/silk flowers or to uphold the current terms and conditions.

Members discussed the issue of artificial flowers and the effect it would have on jobs and the possibility of leading to other items which would obstruct ground maintenance. It was highlighted that artificial flowers deteriorate and there was no way of recycling, whereas real flowers were recycled into compost. Following the discussion, it was agreed that the current policy remains unchanged.

Responding to a query regarding staffing, the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar confirmed that relief staffing was included in staffing budget that had been set and added that following the completion of training, the relief staff would cover annual leave and sickness absence as and when required.

Resolved:

- (i) That the current performance of the crematorium be noted;
- (ii) That the staffing update at the crematorium be noted.
- (iii) That attendance at the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition 2023 be noted;
- (iv) That dates for the Heritage Open Weekend be noted;
- (v) That the distribution of recycling income and subsequent charity nominations be noted;
- (vi) That the terms and conditions in relation to artificial flowers remain unchanged.

12 Forward Plan 2023/24

The Joint Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which set out a suggested forward plan of meetings of the Joint Committee for the forthcoming year 2023/24 (for copy see file of minutes).

It was noted that the Annual meeting venues alternate between Durham County Council and Spennymoor Town Council and the Annual Meeting in June 2024 would be held at Spennymoor Town Council.

It was suggested that a future meeting be held at the crematorium for new Members to have the opportunity to view the facilities.

Resolved:

That the report and forward plan of meetings be noted and approved.

13 Any Other Business

Crematorium Conference

Town Councillor N Foster provided the Joint Committee with an update following his attendance at the Joint Conference of the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities and the Cremation Society of Great Britain conference.

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Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee



27 September 2023

External Audit Annual Review of the Return for the year ended 31 March 2023



Joint Report of

Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change

Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report presents to the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee, the External Auditors (Mazars LLP) Annual Review of the Joint Committees Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023.

Executive summary

- 2 In June 2023 the Joint Committees Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2023 was submitted to Mazars LLP for audit under the limited assurance audit regime.
- 3 The audit has been completed and has not highlighted any material weaknesses around the Joint Committees system of internal control and accounting statements and reports no exceptions to the Return.

Recommendation(s)

- 4 Members of the Joint Committee approve the Joint Committees Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2023 including the External Report 2022/23 Certificate (attached at Appendix 2).

Contact: Philip Curran

Tel: 03000 261967

Cathy Mallam

Tel: 03000 268580

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Accounts and Audit Regulations set out the legal and regulatory framework in which the accounts of the Joint Committee are prepared. The proposals within this report seek to strengthen the Joint Committees compliance with these.

Finance

The Annual Return was completed in line with the Accounts and Audit Regulations. Financial planning and management is a key component of effective corporate governance.

Consultation

None. However, Officers of Spennymoor Town Council were provided with a copy of the report and given opportunity to comments / raise any detailed queries on the contents of this report in advance of circulation to members of the CDCJC.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

No material issues were highlighted in the External Auditor's Report for the year ended 31 March 2023 thus demonstrating the Joint Committee's governance arrangements and awareness of risks associated with the Crematorium operations are considered to be appropriate.

Procurement

None.

Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023

The annual governance and accountability return on pages 2 to 7 is made up of four sections:

- Sections 1 and 2 are completed by the person nominated by the Joint Committee
- Section 3 is completed by Mazars LLP as the reviewer appointed by the Joint Committee.
- In addition, the internal audit report is completed by the Joint Committee's internal audit provider.

Each Joint Committee must approve Section 1 and Section 2.

Completing your annual governance and accountability return

Guidance notes, including a completion checklist, are provided on page 7 and at relevant points in the annual governance and accountability return.

Complete all highlighted sections. Do not leave any highlighted box blank. Incomplete or incorrect returns require additional work and so may incur additional costs.

Send the annual governance and accountability return, together with your bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023, an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements and any additional information requested, to us, Mazars LLP by the due date.

We will identify and ask for any additional documents needed for our work. Therefore, unless requested, do not send any original financial records.

Once we have completed our work, the certified annual governance and accountability return will be returned to the Joint Committee for publication and public display of Sections 1, 2 and 3. It is recommended that you publish and display the annual governance and accountability return, including the external auditor's report, by 30 September 2023.

****Please note that this annual governance and accountability return is a variant of the version produced by JPAG for parish councils and other smaller authorities. As joint committees are not covered by JPAG's Practitioner's Guide it does not part of proper practice defined in the Practitioner's Guide.***

Guidance notes on completing the 2022/23 return

1. Please make sure that your annual governance and accountability return is complete (ie no empty highlighted boxes), and is properly signed and dated. Avoid making amendments to the completed return. Any amendments must be approved by the Joint Committee, properly initialled and explanation provided. Annual governance and accountability return's containing unexplained or unapproved amendments may be returned and incur additional costs.
2. **Joint Committees must approve Section 1 on page 2 before approving Section 2 on page 3.**
3. Please use the checklist provided below. Use a second pair of eyes, perhaps a member of the committee or the Chair, to review your return for completeness before sending it to us. Do not send us any information not specifically asked for. Doing so is not helpful. However, you must notify us of any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair.
4. Please make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation confirming the balance held on your behalf which you send with the return covers all your bank balances. If the Joint Committee holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. We must be able to agree your bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (Section 2 on page 3). You must provide an explanation for any difference between Box 7 and Box 8.
5. Please explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on page 3. Do not just send in a copy of your detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. We want to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include a complete numerical and narrative analysis to support your explanation.
6. If we have to review unsolicited information, or receive an incomplete bank reconciliation, or you do not fully explain variances, this may incur additional costs for which we will make a charge.
7. Please make sure that your accounting statements add up and the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2022) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2023).
8. Please do not complete section 3. We will complete it at the conclusion of our work.

Completion checklist - 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Done?
All sections	All highlighted boxed have been completed?	✓
	All additional information requested has been provided to us?	✓
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', an explanation is provided?	✓
Section 2	Joint Committee approval of the accounting statements is confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?	✓
	An explanation of significant variations from last year to this year is provided?	✓
	Bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023 agrees to Box 8?	✓
	An explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 is provided?	✓
Internal Audit Report	All highlighted boxed completed by internal audit and explanations provided?	✓

Section 1 – Annual Governance statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

Enter name of
Joint Committee here:

Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed		Yes*
	Yes	No*	Means that the Joint Committee has:
1 We approved the accounting statements prepared in accordance with the guidance notes within this Return	✓		Prepared its accounting statements and approved them.
2 We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3 We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with generally accepted good practice that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the body to conduct its business or on its finances and have reported our financial results to our host authority for inclusion in their accounts.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with generally accepted good practice.
4 We carried out an assessment of the risks facing the Joint Committee and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered the financial and other risks it faces and has dealt with them properly.
5 We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of the Joint Committee.
6 We took appropriate action on all matters raised during the year in reports from internal and external reviews.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external reviewers.
7 We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the Joint Committee and where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.

The annual governance statement is approved by this Joint Committee on:

29 JUNE 2023

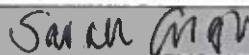
and recorded as minute reference:

Minute 9

Signed by Chair at meeting where approval is given:



Clerk:



*Note: Please provide explanations to us on a separate sheet for each 'No' response. Describe how the Joint Committee will address the weaknesses identified.

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

Enter name of
Joint Committee here:

Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee

	Year ending		Notes and guidance Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank, and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1 Balances brought forward	2,154,327	2,257,967	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2 (+) Income from local taxation	0	0	Total amount of local tax received or receivable in the year including funding from a sponsoring body. Exclude any grants received.
3 (+) Total other receipts	1,866,873	2,120,165	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the taxation and/or levy (line2). Include any grants received here.
4 (-) Staff costs	302,822	402,392	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and employment expenses.
5 (-) Loan Interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and Interest made during the year on the body's borrowings (if any).
6 (-) All other payments	1,460,411	1,726,395	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan Interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7 (=) Balances carried forward	2,257,967	2,249,344	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6)
8 Total cash and short term investments	2,264,063	2,289,336	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – to agree with bank reconciliation.
9 Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	4,627,060	4,855,777	This cell shows the value of all the property the Joint committee owns. It is made up of its fixed assets and long-term investments.
10 Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB)

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the accounting statements in the annual governance and accountability return present fairly the financial position of the Joint Committee and its income and expenditure, or properly present receipts and payments, as the case may be.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer:

PA Curran

Date

29 June 2023

I confirm that these accounting statements were approved by the Joint Committee on:

29 June 2023

and recorded as minute reference:

Minute 9

Signed by Chair of meeting where approval is given:

B O

Annual internal audit report 2022/23 to

Enter name of
Joint Committee here:

Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee

The Joint Committee's internal audit service provider, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year ended 31 March 2023.

Internal audit has been carried out in accordance with the Joint Committee's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Joint Committee.

Internal control objective	Agreed? Please choose one of the following		
	Yes	No*	Not covered / applicable**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been kept properly throughout the year.	✓		
B. The Joint Committee met its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. The Joint Committee assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The annual taxation or levy or funding requirements resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with the Joint Committee's approval, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		

For any other risk areas identified by the Joint Committee adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas below or on separate sheets if needed) adequate controls existed:

n/a

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: Paul Monaghan

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: P. Monaghan Date: 26/5/23

*Note: If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or, if coverage is not required, internal audit must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 3 – External Report 2022/23 Certificate

In respect of:

Enter name of
Joint Committee here:

Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee

Respective responsibilities of the Joint Committee and the reviewer

The Joint Committee has taken on the responsibility of ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The Joint Committee prepares a return which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on various governance matters in accordance with generally accepted good practice.

This report has been produced in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 20 April 2023 (“the Engagement Letter”) and in accordance with the International Standard on Related Services 4400 applicable to agreed-upon-procedures engagements as published by IAASB.

We have performed the following work in respect of the annual governance and accountability return prepared by the Joint Committee:

- agreed the bank reconciliation to the annual governance and accountability return and bank statements;
- agreed the annual governance and accountability return to the trial balance or ledger;
- ensured the trial balance and accounting statements add up;
- agreed any precept or other income from local taxation / levy to the funding body;
- agreed any loans to the Public Works Loan Board or whoever the loan is with;
- checked the comparative figures to prior year accounts;
- undertook an analytical review of the figures and investigated variances above agreed tolerance levels;
- ensured that the accounting statements and annual governance statement have been signed and dated as required;
- investigated any no answers in the Annual Governance Statement; and
- investigated any no answers in the Internal Audit Report.

No exceptions were found

We have not subjected the information contained in our report to checking or verification procedures except to the extent expressly stated above and this engagement does not constitute an audit or a review and, as such, no assurance is expressed. Had we performed additional procedures, an audit or a review, other matters might have come to light that would have been reported.

You were responsible for determining whether the agreed upon procedures we performed were sufficient for your purposes and we cannot, and do not, make any representations regarding the sufficiency of these procedures for your purposes.

Our report is prepared solely for the confidential use of the Joint Committee. Our report must not be used for any purpose other than for which it was prepared or be reproduced or referred to in any other document or made available to any third party without the written permission of Mazars LLP.

We accept no liability to any other party who is shown or gains access to this report.

Signature

Mazars LLP

Mazars LLP, Newcastle, NE1 1DF

Date 4 September 2023

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**Central Durham Crematorium Joint
Committee**

27 September 2023

Performance and Operational Report



**Report of Graham Harrison, Bereavement Services Manager &
Registrar**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide Members of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee with an update relating to performance and other operational matters.

Executive summary

- 2 This report provides Members of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee with an update of performance and operational matters at the crematorium.

Recommendation(s)

- 3 It is recommended that Members of the Central Durham Joint Committee:
 - a. Note the current performance of the crematorium.
 - b. Note the current position with regards to the staffing.
 - c. Note the updated position with regards to the Green Flag scheme and consider whether to continue with applying for the award.
 - d. Note and agree the content of the Service Asset Management Plan attached at Appendix 3, which will be factored into budget planning in 2024/25 and beyond.

Background

- 4 This report provides Members of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee with an update of performance and operational matters at the crematorium since the last meeting of the Joint Committee.

Performance Update - Number of Cremations

- 5 The table below provides details of the number of cremations for the period 1 June 2023 to 31 August 2023 inclusive, with comparative data in the same period last year:

	2022/23	2023/24	Change
June	192 + 1*	205 + 2*	+13 + 1*
July	206 + 2*	174 + 2*	- 32 + 0*
August	198 + 1*	209 + 1*	+11 + 0*
TOTAL	596 + 4*	588 + 5*	- 8 + 1*

* = Non-Viable Foetus (NVF) ** = Stillborns (STs) *** = Body parts

- 6 The full profile of where families came from can be seen in Appendix 2. In summary 166 came from Durham, 21 came from Spennymoor and 401 from other areas. There have been 5 NVF cremations undertaken for the period covered by this report compared to 4 in the comparable period last year. There were 8 less cremations undertaken in the period June to August 2023 compared to the same period last year.

Memorials

- 7 The table below outlines the number and value of the memorials sold in the period June to August 2023 compared to the same period the previous year.

	Jun-Aug 2022/23	Jun-Aug 2023/24
	Number £	Number £
Vase Blocks	6 4,044	3 2,004
Large Plaques	12 5,154	20 8,760
Small Plaques	1 276	1 273
Niche	2 2,491	0 0
Renewal	41 7,919	29 4,834
Memorial leaves	14 1,400	16 1,600
Total	76 21,284	69 17,471

- 8 The number and value of memorials sold 69 / £17,471 compares to 76 / £21,284 in the same period last year, which is a decrease of 7 memorials sold and a decrease of £3,813 year on year.

Operational Matters

Staffing

- 9 As members may recollect, we recently appointed 2 relief members of staff to assist in the operational areas of the crematorium. I can now confirm that they have undertaken all training and have recently passed their cremator operator test.

Cremators

10. For members information we recently had a service carried out in June 2023. On the inspection it was identified that there was an issue with the brickwork within the cremator as well as an issue with the charging door, also we were experiencing issues with regards to poor emission monitoring due to loose brickwork which was identified on the service.
11. A decision was therefore made to shut down this cremator due to Health and safety concerns from ourselves until a full reline could be undertaken. The reline is booked in for the middle of September.
12. This was not included in this year's budget as it had been factored into our 2024/25 SAMP. A sum of £68,900 is required for this work and this can be met from reserves.

Green Flag Application

13. The Green Flag Award recognises good quality parks and green spaces, and a sign to visitors that sites are well maintained and well managed with excellent facilities. Once again, this year Durham Crematorium was successful in obtaining a Green Flag Award for the twelfth year running, which is a great achievement.
14. This award is testimony to the dedication of the staff working at the Crematorium and comes on top of the award of Gold Star Status in the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Accreditation.
15. Durham County Council has decided to withdraw from entering the green flag awards for cemeteries in future years.
16. By way of background Durham County Council and the Joint Committees have built up a good reputation for green flag Crematoria. Feedback from judging is valuable as to how we are performing and any improvements we can make.

17. Winning a green flag visibly demonstrates well managed cemeteries/crematoria, setting the benchmark standard for the management of outdoor space across the UK.
18. Holding a Green Flag visibly demonstrates to the local community that a clear improvement has been made to a site.
19. Upgrading a site to achieve Green Flag status can, for example, bring about improvements to health and education, reduce crime and improve the general cleanliness of an area, whilst at the same time providing a boost to its profile.
20. Therefore, I am seeking view from members if they wish us to continue with the green flag award for Durham Crematorium.

Service Asset Management Plan

21. The Service Asset Management Plan (SAMP) was presented to Members on 29th September 2022 and has been reviewed and updated to provide further direction and highlight future budget pressures for the Joint Committee. The SAMP is attached at Appendix 3 and will need to be refined in line with any future decisions taken by Members.
22. The Service Asset Management Plan is split into four priorities of maintenance need and includes all the completed and planned crematorium improvement works.

Priority 1 essential works for 2024/25 have been estimated to the sum of £1,648,130. These will need to be considered as part of the budget setting process for next year. These works include:

- Re-decoration works.
- Carry out re-lining of 1 hearth.
- Carry out installation of resin pathway around top memorial garden.
- Purchase and install resomation system/building.
- Replace carpets.
- Commission study for roof and gutter replacement where necessary.
- Carry out improvements to chapel area.
- Remove redundant radiators in chapel area.

Priority 2 works, which will need to feature in 2025/26 budget plans have been estimated to the sum of £123,000 and the works are set out below:

- Carry out re-lining of 1 hearth.

- Carry out installation of resin pathway around turning circle.
- Carry out re-lining of 1 cremator.
- Carry out replacement of chapel lights.

Priority 3 works, which would fall beyond the next two years, have been estimated to the sum of £123,000 and the works are set out below:

- Re-decoration works x 1
- Carry out re-lining of 1 cremator.
- Carry out re-lining of 1 hearth.

Longer term works have been costed to the sum of £401,400 and some of the works include:

- Re-decoration works x 3
- Carry out re-lining of 3 cremators x 2 Year 2028,2029
- Carry out re-lining of hearths x 9

Contact: Graham Harrison

Tel: 03000 265606

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Finance

As identified in the report with regards to the position of the Income.

Consultation

Officers of Spennymoor Town Council were consulted on the contents of this report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no Equality and Diversity implications associated with this report.

Human Rights

There are no Human Rights implications associated with this report.

Crime and Disorder

There are no Crime and Disorder implications associated with this report.

Staffing

As identified in the report.

Accommodation

There are no accommodation implications associated with this report.

Risk

As identified in the report.

Procurement

There are no procurement issues associated with this report.

Climate Change

There are no climate change issues associated with this report.

Appendix 2: Breakdown of Figures

	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total Jun- Aug
DURHAM	57	55	54	166
BARNARD CASTLE			1	1
BILLINGHAM	1			1
BISHOP AUCKLAND	5	7	4	16
BISHOP MIDDLEHAM		1	1	2
BLACKHALL	3	1	3	7
BIRTLEY	1		2	3
CHESTER LE STREET	13	10	7	30
CHILTON		2		2
CONSETT	1		1	2
CROOK	5	5	2	12
DARLINGTON			1	1
EASINGTON	4	4	10	18
EAST RAINTON			1	1
ESH	1			1
ESH WINNING	2	3	3	8
FENCEHOUSES		1	1	2
FERRYHILL	4	2	4	10
FISHBURN	1			1
GATESHEAD	2			2
GREAT LUMLEY	2	3	5	10
HARTLEPOOL		1	1	2
HASWELL		1	4	5
HETTON LE HOLE	3	2	8	13
HORDEN	4	4	4	12
HOUGHTON	11	7	3	21
HOWDEN	1			1
KIMBLESWORTH			1	1
LANCHESTER		1	2	3
LANGLEY PARK	5	2	3	10
MURTON	6	3	8	17
NEW BRANCEPETH	1	1	1	3
NEWCASTLE	1	1	1	3
NEWTON AYCLIFFE	4	4	3	11
NORTHUMBERLAND		2	1	3
OUSTON	2		2	4
PELTON	2			2
PETERLEE	15	14	12	41
SACRISTON	5	4	1	10
SEAHAM	11	6	14	31

SEDGEFIELD	2		4	6
SHILDON	1			1
SHOTTON	2	6	4	12
SOUTH HETTON	2	1	3	6
SPENNYMOOR	8	6	7	21
STANHOPE		2		2
STATION TOWN			1	1
STOCKTON			1	1
SUNDERLAND	1	2	1	4
SOUTHERN ENGLAND	1		1	2
THORNLEY		1	3	4
TRIMDON	4	2	3	9
WASHINGTON	2		1	3
WEST CORNFORTH	2	1	2	5
WHEATLEY HILL	3	3	2	8
WILLINGTON	2	2	4	8
WINGATE	2		3	5
YORKSHIRE		1		1
Total	205	174	209	588



Central Durham Crematorium

Service Asset Management Plan 2023/24+

*To provide a sensitive, respectful service, fitting for the bereaved.
Our plan for maintaining and developing the site and its facilities*



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Alan Patrickson
Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Climate Change

Foreword

Welcome to our tenth Service Asset Management Plan (SAMP) for the Central Durham Crematorium. The property and land that is our Crematorium is one of our key assets and we need to ensure that our approach to the management of it enables us to deliver our service in the best possible way, meeting the needs and expectations of customers and staff.

The publication of our property plan represents a significant moment in the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committees approach to its property management. We need to view our premises, not simply as a building from which we deliver our service, but as an asset in the widest sense driving forward continual service improvement and investment.

We also increasingly need to see our property as a resource to deliver against the priorities set out in our service vision and also as a way of helping us to deliver a professional and dignified service for the residents of County Durham.

I am confident that this new Service Asset Management Plan provides an important part of our service delivery approach.

1. Introduction

Our overall vision for all our cemeteries and crematoria, including The Central Durham Crematorium, is set out in our Service Development Plan and is:

- To provide a sensitive, respectful service fitting for the bereaved.
- To ensure that sympathetic, supportive, and confidential advice is given to the recently bereaved on funeral service arrangements and give assistance in co-ordinating the funeral process if required.
- To provide consistent high-quality standards of maintenance in cemeteries and crematoria across County Durham, working to maximise value for money.
- To ensure the proper respect of all Council cemeteries and crematoria with fair Rules and Regulations, which are explained to all visitors.
- To work in partnership with our colleagues at Spennymoor Town Council through the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

Our vision reflects our overall Neighbourhoods and Climate Change Directorate aim which is to improve services and make a real difference to our communities. The Central Durham Crematorium SAMP is a document which can enable us to deliver our vision by: -

- Identifying the property needs of the service to enable it to deliver its vision.
- Assessing the condition, sufficiency, suitability, accessibility and energy performance of our crematorium and looking at their appropriateness to deliver the future service.
- Identifying the portfolio gaps and appraising the options and priorities to close the gaps between future needs and current provision.
- Mapping a way forward to deliver the changes needed which takes into consideration available funding streams and opportunities.

Our Crematorium 'stand-alone' SAMP will inform the Neighbourhoods and Climate Change Service



Durham Crematorium

SAMP. The Neighbourhoods and Climate Change Service SAMP links to other Service Grouping SAMPs and the Corporate Asset Management Plan to ensure the Council and its partners obtain best value for property assets they occupy and gets maximum return from these assets in terms of meeting its objectives.

1.1 How we fit in with Durham County Council and Spennymoor Town Council Corporate Priorities

Under the terms of the CDCJC Constitution, the Crematorium is legally vested in Durham County Council and operated by a Joint Committee on behalf of Durham County Council and Spennymoor Town Council. All employees engaged in the service are employed by Durham County Council. The Committee operates within a strict Code of Corporate Governance which comprises systems, processes, culture and values by which the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee directs and controls its activities (Section 1.2 below sets this out in further detail).

Durham County Council's Bereavement Services team (part of Environmental Services within Neighbourhoods and Climate Change Services) manage the Crematorium on behalf of the Joint Committee. Bereavement Services align to the constituent authorities' corporate priorities through the Durham County Council, Council Plan 2023-27 and the Spennymoor Town Council Mission which is explored further below.

Council Plan 2023 to 2027

In 2019, public, private and voluntary sector bodies that make up the [County Durham Partnership](#) jointly agreed a long-term [Vision 2035](#). This vision is based on a strategic assessment of need using our intelligence platform [Durham Insight](#) and was developed following extensive consultation with the public. Our Council Plan sets out our contribution to achieving this vision for County Durham as well as our own improvement agenda and major programmes of work that we will be undertaking over the medium term to recover from Covid-19.

The Plan aligns to both our [Medium-Term Financial Plan](#) and the County Durham Plan. It sets out:

- how we will consider our corporate priorities for improvement.

- the key actions we will take to achieve the longer-term ambitions in the [Vision 2035](#).
- our own improvement agenda.

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023-24 to 2026-27 sets out how our priorities will be resourced and the County Durham Plan is a spatial representation of our ambitions contained within the Council Plan around housing, jobs and the environment until 2035, as well as the transport, schools and healthcare to support it.

Our Council Plan for 2023-2027 was discussed at Cabinet on 8 February 2023 and at the meeting of our full council on 22 February 2023.

- [Cabinet agenda and minutes 8 February 2023](#)
- [County Council agenda and minutes 22 February 2023](#)

Our ambitions within the Plan are structured around five themes for the county council:

- Our economy
- Our environment
- Our people
- Our communities
- Our council

The Spennymoor Town Council, Mission

Spennymoor Town Council's mission is "to engage with residents, working with all to make Spennymoor a better place for us all to live."

The Council has identified 5 goals that form the landscape within which the detailed aims and objectives will be developed. The 5 goals are:

1. Improve the working of Spennymoor Town Council.
2. Implement open, relevant, timely, informative engagement with residents.
3. Improve the visibility of STC with residents.
4. Make Spennymoor a better place to live, in areas within STC control.

5. Make Spennymoor a better place to live, in areas outside STC control.

1.2 Governance - The Central Durham Joint Crematorium Committee

Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee comprises of 12 Durham County Councillors and 3 Spennymoor Town Councillors. The key elements that comprise the Joint Committee's governance arrangements include:

- Defining and documenting the roles and responsibilities of the Durham Crematorium Joint Committee member and officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication.
- Developing, communicating and embedding codes of conduct, defining the standards of behaviour for members and officers.

Reviewing and updating financial instructions and supporting procedure notes/manuals, which clearly define how decisions are taken and the processes and controls required in managing risks.

Durham County Council and Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee Constitutions set out how they operate, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are effective, transparent and accountable to service users.

A risk management approach is in operation that aids the achievement of strategic objectives, supports decision making processes, protects the reputation and other assets of the Crematorium and is compliant with statutory and regulatory obligations. This involves regular reports by internal audit, to standards defined in the CIPFA code of practice, and in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. These include the Head of Internal Audit's independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control at the crematorium, together with recommendations for improvement.

The annual report and accounts include a governance statement which is approved by the joint committee.

1.3 The scope of our Service Asset Management Plan (SAMP)

STAGE 1: The purpose of our Service and how it may be changing in the future



An introduction to our Service; our roles and responsibilities, our links to Corporate Priorities, the scope of this Plan, and the anticipated changes to our Service over the next 10 years



STAGE 2: The future needs of our Service alongside our existing portfolio

Consideration of what our 'ideal' assets should look like in the future, an assessment of our existing portfolio and how it is performing, and an analysis of how our 'ideals' differ from our existing asset base



The Central Durham Crematorium SAMP is intended to show how our property assets should be developed to meet our continuing service delivery obligations and aspirations and is also a means by which we can map how our current property assets match the future needs of our Service. It is a strategic document which will provide us with a clear direction of travel for the future.

The main stages in the development of the SAMP are outlined in the left column and are covered in more detail throughout the document.

The SAMP provides the framework by which our existing property assets are aligned to our service delivery priorities. Overall, it ensures that our buildings and land can support service needs and provide the opportunity to lead and enable change.

The SAMP will also be an important tool which, alongside those documents from other Service areas, will inform the Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan and the Central Durham Crematorium Maintenance Programme. This will enable us to.

- formulate a planned maintenance and repair programme,
- Consider property alterations, refurbishment works and new build projects.

The SAMP provides an effective link between the management of Crematorium utilised assets to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of service need. To achieve this, it is essential that we analyse our existing property performance and carry out a comprehensive review of our Crematorium. Asset information, including building condition data and the outcomes of access audits will be detailed in the SAMP and reflected within the performance data detailed in Section 4. This baseline information enables us to view the performance of the Central Durham Crematorium and provides a high-level overview of investment need.

2. Our Service

Bereavement Services provides professional, sympathetic, supportive and confidential advice on funeral service arrangements and can give assistance in co-ordinating the funeral process if required. Overall, the service provided is a valued one that has achieved a Gold standard through

STAGE 3: The key areas of change for our Service

Develop priorities for our assets over the next 10 years, evaluating how we intend to deliver these (within available financial resources), and the impact that priorities will have upon our existing portfolio

the ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management). There are also three green flags awarded to Council cemeteries and crematoriums including the Central Durham Crematorium, in recognition of their maintenance standards and community involvement. In August 2023, Bereavement Services was rated by ICCM as a gold performer in the country.

There are several areas of change that have affected delivery of our service. The main challenge to the Service was the requirement (from 1st January 2013) for 50% of all cremations to be mercury abated.

According to estimates from Public Health England, two thirds of adults and a quarter of children between two and 10 years old are overweight or obese. Obese children are more likely to become overweight adults and to suffer premature ill health and mortality, and by 2034, 70 per cent of adults are expected to be overweight or obese. Should this trend continue as indicated, we will have to adapt to dealing with larger clients for the foreseeable future. We need to monitor this trend and in the long term, consider adaptations to our existing crematorium facilities and equipment.

Since Local Government Review, we have carried out significant investment in the Central Durham Crematorium, some of this work has included: -

Project		Cost
New additional car park	£	182,899
Crematorium extension	£	953,983
New cremators and mercury abatement plant	£	1,292,918
Re-surfacing of car park	£	18,000
Alterations/upgrade to catafalque doors, heating control, fire alarms	£	29,745
Disabled Toilets upgrade	£	6,500
Improvement to office facilities	£	145,000
Alterations to Book of Remembrance Room	£	171,463
Improvements to ramp ways	£	18,569
Improvements to drainage system	£	18,398
Alteration to bin storage area	£	5,803
Installation of outside lighting to new office entrance	£	2,500

Refurbishment of chapel	£	122,698
Alterations to chapel doors	£	20,145
Refurbishment of the internal waiting room	£	131,819
Alterations to external waiting area	£	63,451
Improvements to crematorium heating	£	11,853
Additional toilet facilities	£	66,035
Replacement of seating in waiting room	£	3,380
Re-lining of hearths x1	£	3,800
Replacement of curtains/blinds to chapel area	£	3,857
Re decoration works	£	4,231
Upgrade Wesley Music system	£	3,679
Upgrade Wesley Tribute system	£	11,856
Replacement of copper roofing canopies	£	277,184
Purchase of weed ripping machine	£	3,514
Purchase of coffee machine	£	3,968
Purchase of electric mowing machine	£	8,595
Re decoration works	£	11,600
Replacement of lectern to chapel area	£	1,800
Re placement of windows to office & new paving	£	26,314
Re placement of shrub beds in grounds	£	7,150
Replacement of pathways around garden of remembrance	£	18,800
Creation of staff car parking area	£	56,466
Hedge Layering	£	2,903
Purchase of pressure washer	£	545
Replace exterior gates	£	940
Re-Decoration Works x 1	£	12,722
Carry out Re-lining of hearths x 1	£	4,160
Carry out energy improvement works	£	59,048
Replace organ	£	6,750

Improvements to wall by book of remembrance building	£	4,930
New paving around floral tribute area	£	15,800
Improvements to office accommodation	£	183,950
Improvements to boundary wall	£	7,720
Carry out Re-lining of cremators x 3	£	38,700
Carry out enlarging of cremator 1	£	61,500
Carry out the replacement of grass with block paving	£	1,870
To remove existing turning circle.	£	2,040
To provide and install new liner for water fountain.	£	860
To provide and install new viewing screens	£	5,297
To provide and install new catafalque.	£	6,000
Carry out replacement of chapel dome	£	3,148
To provide and install security viewing camera.	£	1,814
To purchase and install 2 memorial trees	£	3,695
Re-Decoration Works x 1	£	16,599
Carry out a replacement for ride on grass cutter	£	10,762
Install new gates and adjust roadway	£	68,165
Install lighting to the crematorium	£	8,878
Carry out a replacement for cooler cassettes	£	157,331
Carry out installation of charging points	£	14,376
Carry out a replacement for pedestrian sweeper	£	2,219
Carry out repairs to boundary wall	£	8,422
Carry out improvements to shrub beds	£	1,540
Excess heat regeneration works	£	ongoing
Carry out Re-lining of hearths	£	ongoing
Carry out enlargement of cremator no 2	£	82,680
Secure a suitable budget and carry out the installation of resin pathway.		ongoing
Source budget provision and carry out a improvements to entrance area	£	9,079
Secure a suitable budget and carry out improvements to Boundary.	£	1,990

Secure a suitable budget and carry out improvements to garden fountain.		ongoing
Secure a suitable budget and carry out purchase of additional memorial tree.		ongoing
Secure a suitable budget and carry out improvements to walls.		ongoing
Source budget provision and carry out an additional option for memorialisation.		ongoing
Total	£	4,514,406

2.1 The Vision for our Crematorium

The building and land utilised for our crematorium needs to work towards delivering the overall vision for both Durham County Council and Spennymoor Town Council, and our Service Vision described in Section 1. Bereavement Services works towards delivering our environment strand of the Council Plan. In addition, there are many external factors that have driven change across our Service i.e. the cremator replacement programme and Mercury Abatement issues, and the requirements to replace cremators able to accommodate the anticipated increase in adult obesity. To enable us to deliver our vision we require buildings that are legislatively compliant and provide an appropriate and sympathetic environment for the bereaved.

We will also need to ensure that a process of continual maintenance and periodic upgrade is established so that we can sustain an effective and efficient portfolio.

When considering future investment in our property portfolio we must therefore seek to ensure that we:

- V1** Provide buildings which provide a sensitive, respectful service fitting for the bereaved
- V2** Provide cremators and abatement equipment which are fit for purpose and comply with the requirements set out in Environmental Protection Legislation and complies with Environment Protection Act 1990 and Statutory Guidance notes issued by DEFRA.
- V3** Maintain and develop the grounds and buildings of our crematorium to give comfort and consolation in a landscape setting

3 The anticipated changes to the delivery of our Crematorium

Services over the next ten years

As a service we also recognise that other challenges may lie ahead in the delivery of our service vision and aspirations and that it is important that we respond to any anticipated changes that may impact upon our Service delivery over the coming years, whether this be brought about by a shift in Government policy, changes in delivery methods, social or demographic changes etc.

As such, this section of our SAMP outlines the anticipated changes which we expect to appear on the horizon over the short term (up to 2 years), medium term (3 to 5 years) and longer term (6 to 10 years). In establishing these changes, we will then be able to map out how our existing property portfolio meets required needs and the changes we may need to make in the future.

Short-term changes (up to 2 years)

- To continue to respond to property and other service changes brought about through the implementation of the new changes with regards to the death certification process.
- To respond to the changes with regards to service delivery and the changes identified in the feasibility study for the crematorium improvements.
- To respond to any maintenance back logs during the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Medium-term changes (up to 3 to 5 years)

- As corporate priorities are reviewed in line with future Council Plans, we will need to revisit and adapt our own Service priorities so that these continue to align with any changing local needs
- Further to the draft Cemetery Policy we will continue to seek to have a sustainable crematoria and cemetery portfolio which is fit for purpose.

Long-term changes (up to 6 to 10 years)

- It is anticipated that the death rate is expected to increase from 2020 naturally placing greater pressures upon the service that we will need to provide. We will need to monitor changes and adapt/improve/replace our Crematoria and Cemeteries as necessary.
- The anticipated lifespan of our Cremators is normally 20 years. At the end of the loan repayment period in 2021, the Annual contribution to the reserve fund will be a sum equivalent to the current loan and will allow a substantial reserve fund to be created. This will enable the installation of replacement cremators and mercury abatement equipment if necessary, without the need to source capital funding. We will need to monitor any increase in costs and source additional or alternative funding where required.
- It is anticipated that adult obesity levels will increase substantially in the long term. We will need to monitor this trend and adapt our crematoria to accommodate our larger clients.

THE FUTURE NEEDS OF OUR SERVICE ALONGSIDE OUR EXISTING PROPERTY PORTFOLIO

4. Asset Supply Profile

If we are to achieve our ambition to provide a sensitive, respectful service fitting for the bereaved, we must have a land and property portfolio which assists us. This means we must provide buildings and grounds that give comfort and consolation.

Whilst major steps have been taken over recent years to improve our existing Crematorium there are still significant steps that we need to take to realise our vision, and as such it is essential that we have up to date knowledge of our existing asset base and how it is performing.

4.1 Our existing property assets

4.1.1 Central Durham Crematorium

The Crematorium is owned by Durham County Council and operated by a Joint Committee on behalf of Durham County Council and Spennymoor Town Council.

The Crematorium is nestled on the outskirts of Durham on South Road (A177 Just off A167) close to Durham Cathedral and serves the residents of the whole of County Durham and beyond. The Crematorium Chapel, designed by J P Chaplin, A.R.I.B.A is hexagonal in shape and has large windows, giving panoramic views over the meadowland surrounding the building and of the distant woodland surrounding the site. The Crematorium was opened in August 1960.

Areas are set aside for the scattering of cremated remains throughout the crematorium land and an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity prevails in the surrounding of the Crematorium.

Within the crematorium grounds there are also 2 bungalows which are owned by Durham County Council, both properties are currently rented out.

An area of land to the bottom of the crematorium which is owned by Durham County Council was established as a community owned woodland burial site which was created by the Woodland Burial Trust by way of a lease agreement, however this went into administration and Durham County Council have now taken this over and are currently working with a friend's group on this site.

More recently Durham crematorium was granted Green Flag status for the eleventh year running.

In excess of 2,200 cremations are carried out each year.

4.1.2 Crematorium Chapel

The Crematorium Chapel has been refurbished and now provides seating for up to 100 people with standing room for over 50. Adjoining the chapel is a waiting room. The covered floral display area is situated to the exit area of the chapel, in which relatives and friends can view floral tributes following the service. All areas of the crematorium are accessible to people in wheelchairs.

For the hard of hearing, induction loops are installed in the Chapel. Specially adapted toilet facilities, suitable for disabled persons, are provided adjoining the waiting room opposite the Chapel entrance. Guide dogs and assistance dogs are permitted to enter all parts of the buildings and grounds.

Service times are on every hour and half hour, allowing some 20 minutes for each service and giving time for the Chapel to be tidied between each funeral service.

The style, character and condition of the building are in keeping with the crematorium.

4.1.3 Chapel of Remembrance

The Chapel of Remembrance is situated to the right-hand side of the crematorium.

It is a hexagonal building which incorporates the books of remembrance along with a book view system



Crematorium Chapel



Chapel of Remembrance

which is touch screen to enable the whole book of remembrance to be viewed. There is also a facility available to place flowers within the building and vases are supplied.

4.2 How our Existing Assets are Performing

As part of the Authority's Corporate Property Database, details where available, are held on all assets utilised by Bereavement Services including Durham Crematorium, with regards to their condition, sufficiency, suitability accessibility and energy performance.

4.2.1 Condition/outstanding repairs

A condition survey was carried out in respect of Durham Crematorium in 2019 showed that the premises are in good condition, only requiring internal/external decoration in 2024/25. There are however several works identified which will improve the service offered to the bereaved. This has a conditional estimated survey need of **£2,295,530**, **£1,648,130** considered as works which are urgent / essential and are included in the 24/25 budget. **£123,000**, desirable works which are required in 25/26, **£123,000** for 2026/27 and **£401,400** are longer term works.

Premises Condition Summary (as at last survey in April 2019)

PROPERTY	PRIORITY 1 URGENT, ESSENTIAL (24/25)	PRIORITY 2 LONGER TERM DESIRABLE WORKS (25/26)	PRIORITY 3 LONGER TERM DESIRABLE WORKS (26/27)	PRIORITY 4 LONGER TERM WORKS (27/28 onwards)
Durham Crematorium	£ 1,648,130	£ 123,000	£ 123,000	£ 401,400
TOTAL				£2,295,530

The table above does include any requirements or costs in relation to the future replacement of the Cremators.

In seeking to address the condition needs of our crematorium, we routinely prioritise and address maintenance issues where possible through our Repairs and Maintenance Budget and Repair Reserve. Investment has been made in recent years to address the maintenance backlog and other repairs identified by the premise's manager through a premise's suitability assessment.

4.2.2. Sufficiency

Unfortunately, sufficiency assessments are not planned to be undertaken across the Councils Portfolio – the resources are not available to do so.

Durham Crematorium is optimally used by residents of Durham County Council and Spennymoor Town Council providing sufficient needs for the bereaved; however, this may only become an issue for Durham Crematorium where death rates do increase considerably. Sufficiency will, where resources allow, be looked at as one part of the Councils Property Review Programme although the property review programme covers whole portfolio areas rather than one individual property such as Durham Crematorium.

4.2.3 Suitability

Unfortunately, suitability surveys assessments are not planned to be undertaken across the Councils Portfolio as the resources are not available to do so.

The manager of Durham Crematorium has carried out a basic suitability audit, the results of which are set out below at Section 6 (Gap analysis)

However, providing investment into the current building will provide suitability in terms of service delivery and the right location.

Suitability is about whether the property users/customers consider that the premises meet requirements in terms of use. A series of questions are asked around whether staff/customers find the heating/lighting/ventilation/decoration staff facilities and general aesthetics etc. in their opinion as good/fair/poor. This detail helps to inform future investment requirements. In this instance, the premises



Crematorium general view

manager advised in his opinion what the issues were in terms of suitability and this enabled the gaps to be drawn out. It is possible although, we usually find that the premises manager is the best source of knowledge, that there may be other suitability issues that staff/customers may be able to highlight which could, subject to service approval and of course resources are included in the premises Investment Plan.

4.2.4 Accessibility

As part of the Council's recognised duty to plan for improved access to facilities for disabled or impaired service users, staff and visitors, Durham Crematorium was subject of an accessibility audit carried out in 2011. A feasibility report to deliver these works was carried out by our in-house Design Team and necessary works were undertaken.

4.2.5 Energy performance

Annual energy performance details are collated on all assets utilised by Bereavement Services and include information around energy consumption (electricity and gas) and water consumption. These figures are reported as part of the Corporate Asset Management Plan. The latest figures available for 2022/23 show that the energy consumption for Durham Crematorium was in excess of 1,429,253, Kilowatt-hours (kWh) (based on a gross internal area of 560.31 sqm). In monetary terms, this consumption cost the Crematorium Joint Committee £117,325 during 2022/23.

The total water consumption in 2022/23 was also in excess of 477 m³; in monetary terms this consumption this resulted in a cost of £462.

The tables below provide a summary of the energy performance of Durham Crematorium during 2022/23. In light of our commitment to support the Council's sustainability and climate change agendas we recognise the need to improve these energy performance statistics over the coming years, particularly in respect of carbon emissions from our buildings.



Crematorium front entrance

Energy Performance Summary

Year	TOTAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION (kWh)	TOTAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION (£)	TOTAL WATER CONSUMPTION (m ³)	TOTAL WATER CONSUMPTION PER SQM
2022/23	1,429,253	117,325	477	0.37

As Durham Crematorium buildings and the cremator is updated and/or replaced it should be the prime objective to reduce all these figures.

The data collated shows us that

- For obvious reasons the Crematorium consumes a far greater amount of gas and electricity (based on kWh usage) than the Council average. This is considered to have a consequent knock on effect on CO² emissions
- Water consumption is below the Council average.

Energy Proposals

Proposals have include fully exploring the possibilities that may allow the use of surplus heat from 2 cremators could be utilised however it was felt that this be put on hold, we are now therefore looking at an option with regards to organic Rankine cycle (ORC) that could use heat to generate electricity instead of an additional electric generator. We are however in early discussion around this technology. The installation of solar energy panels to the building has been undertaken during 2022/23. The installation of electric vehicle charging points was also undertaken during 2022.

In 2016 Durham crematorium was subject to an energy assessment and recommendations were made to improve energy performance, therefore an energy improvement option feasibility report was undertaken in 2018 to identify improvements. Members agreed to this report and energy improvement works were undertaken in 2019.



Resomation

Resomation

Water cremation is the new alternative to flame cremation and burial. Giving people a new choice, environmentally friendly option that offers a natural process using water instead of flames. Natural water cremation is the new, greener alternative to flame cremation and burial. This natural approach to cremation uses water instead of flame to reduce the body to ashes and offers people the choice of a gentler, more environmentally friendly end of life solution. Families across North America are already choosing this natural process for their departed loved ones. With a growing global population that is becoming increasingly aware of their environmental footprint more and more people are seeking greener alternatives, both in life and death. With no harmful emissions and wider environmental benefits, water cremation is a natural alternative to existing end of life solutions, giving people a new, modern option to consider when planning a funeral.

What are the benefits?

By offering water cremation to families in your community, you can:

- Provide a greener alternative to people at the end of life so they have an environmentally friendly choice
- Be one of the first in the country to introduce this as a service
- Be part of something that is modernising the funeral industry and changing the way people make a choice at the end of life

Work is currently underway with regard to design and costing of this installation subject to members approval.

5. Asset demand Profile

Being mindful of the anticipated changes that our Service is likely to face over the next 10 years, it is important that we consider what our 'ideal' property portfolio should look like to reflect our future needs. In this section of our SAMP we therefore take a 'blank piece of paper' to set out what our real asset needs are, without being restricted by our existing portfolio.

These 'ideals' are however tempered by a realistic appreciation that we do not have infinite resources.

5.1 Our ideal property assets for the future

In assessing what our ideal Crematorium should look like we have analysed the needs of our Service. In doing so we have recognised that our assets need to be fit for purpose and provide for changes in legislation and government guidance whilst delivering improvements and maximising the opportunity to achieve value for money.

As part of Property Assets for the future we carried out a survey of users on our open evening held in May 2013 and an online survey was again undertaken in 2019. This highlighted some future investments going forward.

The table below sets out the considerations for our Crematorium:

Location

- A woodland or parkland setting in an area of undulating ground with good natural features and mature trees
- Accessible by public transport
- Section 5 of the Crematoria Act 1902 stipulates that no crematorium shall be within:
 - 200 yards of any dwelling house
 - 100 yards with consent
 - 50 yards of any public highway nor in any consecrated part of a burial ground

Size

- A minimum of two hectares (approximately five acres) per estimated 1000 cremations per annum

Layout and image

- Entrances and exits should not be in close proximity to incompatible establishments
- Entrances and exits should not be located on main trunk roads
- The flow of traffic to the building should be simple, dignified, uninterrupted and screened.
- Shared vehicular entrance and exit roads should be at least five metres wide.
- Entrances and exits to ancillary rooms should flow through the building in sequence.
- Adequate car parking facilities which are DDA compliant.
- Undercover entrances
- Undercover entrances
- The entrance hall or vestibule should be spacious and provide for toilet facilities
- The waiting room should have adequate seating capacity, toilet facilities and be set out to allow the arrival of the cortege to be seen by those waiting.



Memorial Garden

- The vestry should be located at the front of the building
- The chapel should provide for 80/100 mourners and should be flexible enough to allow for funerals of different denominations. It should be set out in such a way that provides for the comfort and use of all mourners and is DDA compliant
- The provision of a cremator that is compliant with Environmental legislation and Secretary of State guidance particularly in relation to mercury abatement
- The provision of an adequate and suitable music system including an organ
- CCTV to allow for traffic monitoring, chapel and crematory arrangements and security.
- A suitably designed and appropriate for use catafalque.
- The provision of a Committal Hall and viewing room
- Provision of adequate and suitable ancillary accommodation including a Bearers Room Chapel of Rest, Coffin Storage Facilities, Treatment Room for Cremated Remains and staff facilities.

Customer needs

- Provision for commemorative floral tributes to be accommodated within the general vicinity of memorials.
- Provision of chamfered terra-cotta brick or stone edging to the walks of the Garden of Remembrance to allow for the fixing of memorial plates.
- Provision of a Book of Remembrance
- Provision of a Columbaria

Other Requirements

- The provision of a Chapel of Remembrance, hexagonal shaped 8' sides, situated to the right-hand side of the crematorium in an area designed for the floral tribute. The building should be designed so that it can be used for the storing and display of the Books of Remembrance, in suitable cabinets. Ideally this chapel should be separate from the main building and close to the Garden of Remembrance. Visitors, who wish to view the Books of Remembrance, or quietly mediate in the chapel, should not be disturbed by mourners attending services and vice versa.



Life and Soul Garden

6. Supply and Demand Comparison (Gap Analysis)

The aim of the gap analysis is to review our existing Crematorium against our anticipated future requirements. We need to provide the right environments and particularly the right buildings with the right facilities, which project the right image to our service users and the wider community. By examining our existing crematorium (Section 4) against our 'ideal' property portfolio (Section 5) we can see what improvements and modifications this will need to entail, which in turn allow us to target available resources towards our areas of greatest need and importance over the coming years.

6.1 How our 'ideal' property portfolio differs from our 'existing' asset base

Investment has been made to reduce our overarching maintenance need and to improve facilities in line with our changing service delivery need requirements. Over the last 9 years total investment of over 4.1 million has been carried out on the replacement of cremators, crematory extension, and additional car parking facilities, along with office and chapel improvements. Despite this investment however, there are gaps between our current asset portfolio and our 'ideals' for the future.

6.1.1 Cremator Replacement and Mercury Abatement

The anticipated lifespan of the Cremators at Durham Crematorium is in excess of 20 years. In 1998/99 prior to LGR, the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee established a Cremator Replacement Reserve Fund with an annual contribution of £25k factored into the revenue budget. Following LGR, the Committee updated its reserve policy approving that all additional surplus generated (over and above budget) to be transferred to the Cremator replacement reserve.

It is estimated that, based on today's prices, the funding required for the future cremator replacement is £800k per cremator.

In 2004 DEFRA issued guidelines in the cremation industry advising that at least 50% of all cremations should be mercury abated by the end of 2012. Should this not be achievable, legislation would be introduced whereby all crematoria undertaking excess of 1970 cremations during 2003 would be required to install abatement equipment.

The Federation of Cremation Authorities felt that rather than the cost of Mercury Abatement being met by the busiest crematoria the cost should be shared around the industry and introduced the CAMEO scheme (a burden sharing scheme where those who with abatement equipment would receive payment from those without, based on the number of cremations undertaken).

In 2003 Durham Crematorium carried out significantly more cremations than the threshold set out in the 2003 legislation (1,326) and was therefore compelled to install equipment in line with legislation. In consideration of this Members of the Joint Committee agreed to install abatement equipment.

6.1.2 Outstanding Repairs

Durham Crematorium is well located in terms of the service required and provides an ideal atmosphere for customers and users. We consider that both are suitable for use and matches the majority of the criteria set out as our 'ideals'. There are, however, improvements that can be made to portfolio which are identified below:

Repairs and maintenance investment from 2024/25 onwards are currently estimated at £2,295,530 through the implementation of a robust repairs and maintenance strategy. There are also other works in the long-term categories in the condition survey that will need to be considered going forward.

The investment does not include the future Cremator Replacement requirements.

In addition to those works identified in the Condition Survey, a number of works which are outside the scope of this particular survey type have been identified. As detailed below an identified portfolio gap is the need to have a maintenance plan which will address repair and improvement need going forward. The Plan has been developed and is set out at Section 8.2 below and includes work identified outside the condition survey remit.

6.1.3 Suitability

As highlighted in Section 4 Suitability Surveys are not planned to be undertaken across the Councils Portfolio – the resources are not unfortunately available to do so. The Durham Crematorium property



manager has carried out a suitability audit which has shown generally the suitability of the building to deliver the service is good.

Health and Safety requirements are being satisfactorily met and the premises are considered suitable in terms of internal layouts. The location of the Chapel of Remembrance is considered suitable in terms of image location and environment being situated away from the main chapel in a secluded and peaceful area setting the right tone for the service it provides.

The main areas of weakness in terms of suitability are: -

Redecoration

The Durham Condition Survey includes redecoration requirements and indicative costs (£25k) with the work required in 2024. Therefore it is proposed that this is placed on a two-year cycle and that funding be secured in order to carry out this work. It is however appreciated that redecoration works may need to be aligned to the delivery of other maintenance and improvement works

GAP 1	Secure a suitable budget, and develop a 2-year schedule for internal and external redecoration	Target: April 2024
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Re lining of hearth

The current cremators have been in situ since 2012 and hearths need replacing.

GAP 2	Source budget provision and carry out Re-lining of hearth.	Target: April 2024
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Installation of resin pathway to first memorial gardens

Carry out improvements to non slip pathways using a resin.

GAP 3	Secure a suitable budget and carry out the installation of resin pathway.	Target: April 2024
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Carry out Installation of resomator & additional extension.

Carry out the purchase and installation of a resomation unit.

GAP 4	Source budget provision and carry out extension and purchase of resomator.	Target: Sept 2024
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Crematorium carpets

Carry out improvements to entrance area,including replacement carpets where required.

GAP 5	Source budget provision and carry out a improvements to entrance area	Target: April 2024
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Roof and gutter

Carry out commission for remedial work to improve roof and gutters.

GAP 6	Secure a suitable budget and carry out improvements to roof and gutters.	Target: April 2024
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Chapel Improvements

The original layout of the chapel is in need of redesign and a more suitable alternative to increase capacity.

GAP 7	Secure a suitable budget and carry out improvements to Chapel.	Target: April 2024
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Radiators in Chapel

Removal of redundant radiators.

GAP 8	Secure a suitable budget and carry out the redundant radiators within chapel area.	Target: April 2024
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Re lining of hearth

The current cremators have been in situ since 2012 and hearths need replacing.

GAP 9	Source budget provision and carry out Re-lining of hearth.	Target: April 2025
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Installation of resin pathway to driveway

Carry out improvements to driveway using a resin.

GAP 10	Secure a suitable budget and carry out the installation of resin driveway.	Target: April 2025
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Carry out Re-lining of cremators

The current cremators have been in situ since 2012 and will shortly require re-lining.

GAP 11	Source budget provision and carry out Re-lining of cremators.	Target: April 2025
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Installation of replacement lights within chapel area

Carry out improvements to replace current light fittings.

GAP 12	Secure a suitable budget and carry out the replacement of lighting within chapel area	Target: April 2025
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Redecoration

The Durham Condition Survey includes redecoration requirements and indicative costs (£30k). Therefore it is proposed that this is placed on a two-year cycle and that funding be secured in order to carry out this work. It is however appreciated that redecoration works may need to be aligned to the delivery of other maintenance and improvement works

GAP 13	Secure a suitable budget, and develop a 2-year schedule for internal and external redecoration	Target: April 2026
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Re lining of cremator

The current cremators have been in situ since 2012 and will be in need of a re-line.

GAP 14	Source budget provision and carry out Re-lining of cremator.	Target: December 2026
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Re lining of hearth

The current cremators have been in situ since 2012 and hearths need replacing.

GAP 15	Source budget provision and carry out Re-lining of hearth.	Target: April 2026
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Redecoration

The Durham Condition Survey includes redecoration requirements and indicative costs (£30k). Therefore it is proposed that this is placed on a two-year cycle and that funding be secured in order to carry out this work. It is however appreciated that redecoration works may need to be aligned to the delivery of other maintenance and improvement works

GAP 16	Secure a suitable budget, and develop a 2-year schedule for internal and external redecoration	Target: April 2028
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Re lining of cremator

The current cremators have been in situ since 2012 and will be in need of a re-line.

GAP 17	Source budget provision and carry out Re-lining of cremator.	Target: 2029,2030
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Re lining of hearth

The current cremators have been in situ since 2012 and hearths need replacing.

GAP 18	Source budget provision and carry out Re-lining of hearth.	Target: December 2027
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6.1.4 Accessibility

Equality colleagues will develop an Access Strategy the purpose of which, is to identify accessibility works through Audits and to agree, working alongside services, and through the priorities identified in SAMPs accessibility works that will be carried out.

We are committed to ensuring that all our premises are DDA compliant.

6.1.5 Energy

As identified in Section 4.2.5 our energy costs are high, for obvious reasons, when compared to the rest of the Council portfolio. Notwithstanding that comparable are not presently available; we remain committed to reducing our energy costs and CO² emissions. From June 2012 the heating for the crematorium buildings has been mainly provided via a plate heat exchanger fitted to the no 2 cremator, early indications are that the heating bills will be reduced by 60% as a result of this installation.

7. Closing the gaps in our Provision

As determined by our Gap analysis there is specific areas that require investment so that we are able to achieve our 'ideal' property, and thus allow us to deliver our service vision. In order for the SAMP to be an effective planning tool in mapping our progress, it will be reviewed annually to take account of future emerging needs, whilst also re-visiting our stated priorities (Section 8)

7.1 How we intend to close the 'gap'

We recognise the need to use asset management planning as a strategic tool to tackle our property related issues and problems, and to steer investment in line with our priorities. The key projects and targets which we believe will enable us to close some of the 'gaps' are set out in section 8, and the platforms which can enable us to reach our property 'ideals' for the future described below

7.1.1 Reserve Fund

In 2003/04 (pre-Local Government Re-organisation) a ring-fenced reserve fund, met from surpluses generated by the crematorium, was established for the purpose of which was to accommodate the future capital investment requirements regarding cremator replacement and any risk / Asset management issues as they might arise. These reserves were developed in the context of a financial strategy aimed at providing sufficient funding within the Durham Crematorium accounts. The Reserve Fund presently comprises:

Reserve	Balance @ 1st April 2023 £	Transfer to Reserve £	Transfer from Reserve £	Estimated Balance @ 31st March 2024 £
General	(548,175)	(889,475)	856,250	(581,400)
Masterplan Memorial Garden	(81,250)	(5,000)	86,250	0
Major Capital Works	(1,642,475)	(265,499)	126,579	(1,791,396)
Cremator Reline Reserve	(109,943)	(25,000)	0	(134,943)
Small Plant	(13,405)	(2,000)	0	(15,405)
Total	(2,405,248)	(1,186,974)	1,069,079	(2,523,144)

In addition, the following Revenue Budgets are available for Repairs and Maintenance

General repairs and maintenance	Equipment Repairs and Servicing	Total R&M budget
£42,693	£66,500	£109,193

7.2 How we intend to monitor the ‘gaps’ in our provision

The Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee meets Quarterly to discuss all issues relating to Durham Crematorium which are highlighted through the Bereavement Services Manager reports. In addition to their remit as set out in Section 2, the Committee will also be used as a means to refine the recognised gaps in our portfolio, direct funds and monitor delivery of our SAMP.

7.3 How we intend to determine future investment priorities and mitigate risk

Durham Crematorium is providing the required service to the residents of County Durham and other users of our service however, as with any property changes and improvements are continually required to keep up to date with 21st century service delivery needs, with routine investment also required in respect of repairs and maintenance issues to prevent premises from further deterioration.

In developing priorities for investment, and to ensure that required Service delivery improvements are made, we have adopted a robust options appraisal process in order to consider needs fully, whilst also following the Council’s corporate risk assessment protocols when assessing any project or investment opportunity.

7.3.1 Options Appraisals and Criteria for Determining Priorities

As a Service, we always ensure that full options appraisals are undertaken by a team of multi-disciplined officers when considering investment, including representatives from Bereavement Services and colleagues in Asset Management. Advice and support is also taken from other appropriate Council Services where required. The aim of any options appraisal is to provide value for money solutions that

meet our strategic objectives and which also:

- Consider all delivery avenues for projects, including changes in the way we provide our service
- Undertake feasibility options for projects which involve maintenance and refurbishment works and,
- Prepare fully costed project appraisals, whilst also identifying project benefits and risks

In future months/years, we will need to undertake full and robust options appraisals in respect of the 'gaps' that have been identified (as set out in Section 6) and how we will deliver value for money solutions in respect of these issues.

A high-level options appraisal on each gap identified is shown below. This details potential high-level considerations for taking forward work to minimise our identified gaps.

High level options to minimise the 'gaps' in our portfolio

	GAP IDENTIFIED	OPTION 1	OPTION 2
GAP 1	Secure a budget, and develop a 2-year schedule for internal and external redecoration	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 2	Carry out the relining of hearth	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 3	Carry out the installation of resin pathway	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 4	Secure a budget, and carry out installation of resomator	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 5	Carry out the replacement of carpets	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 6	Comission study for roof and gutter repairs	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 7	Carry out the improvements to chapel area	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 8	Carry out the removal of redundant radiators	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 9	Carry out the relining of hearth	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 10	Carry out the installation of resin pathway	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 11	Carry out the relining of cremators	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 12	Carry out the replacement of chapel lights	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 13	Secure a budget, and develop a 2-year schedule for internal and external redecoration	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 14	Carry out the relining of cremators	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 15	Carry out the relining of hearth	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 16	Secure a budget, and develop a 2-year schedule for internal and external redecoration	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 17	Carry out the relining of cremators	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan
GAP 18	Carry out the relining of hearth	Do Nothing	Maintenance Plan

7.3.2 Risk Assessments

The Council has a formal adopted Risk Management Policy and Strategy which sets out the approach to risk management. It ensures consistency of approach and an understanding of the management of business risks across the Council, with each Service having a designated Risk Manager to mitigate risks associated with Bereavement Services strategic business objectives.

Through this SAMP we therefore hope to consider the areas of greatest risk to our assets over the short to medium term, and particularly for those 'gaps' which have been identified. In turn this will also help us to determine whether additional finances, which cannot be presently met from our Reserve Fund, are required and avoid longer-term service delivery problems. The approach to risk assessment through the SAMPs is approached by reviewing each identified gap in turn and highlighting potential risks

Property Risk assessment (for gaps' in existing portfolio)

	GAP IDENTIFIED	RISK IDENTIFIED	MITIGATION
GAP 1	Secure a suitable budget, and develop a 2-year schedule for internal and external redecoration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Reserve fund resources available to carry out repairs outside the urgent and essential category so will not suffice 2. Re-decoration on a 2-year cycle will not align with maintenance plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund. 2 Develop a suitable re-decoration investment plan and align this with urgent and essential category works
GAP 2	Source budget provision and carry out Re-lining of hearth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cremators require new hearths. 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a suitable investment plan for re-placement work 2.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund
GAP 3	Source budget provision and carry out a installation of resin pathway	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Reserve fund resources available to carry out this work are outside the urgent and essential category so will not suffice 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund 2. Develop a suitable investment plan for alteration work and align this with longer term desirable category works
GAP 4	Source budget to install resomator and associated building/plant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Reserve fund resources available to carry out this work are outside the urgent and essential category so will not suffice 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a suitable investment plan for re-placement work 2.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund
GAP 5	Source budget provision and carry out a replacement of	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Reserve fund resources available to carry out this 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of

	carpets.	work are outside the urgent and essential category so will not suffice 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works.	surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund 2. Develop a suitable investment plan for improvement works
GAP 6	Source budget provision and carry out a commission study for roof and gutter repairs.	1. The Reserve fund resources available to carry out this work are outside the urgent and essential category so will not suffice 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works.	1.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund 2. Develop a suitable investment plan for improvement works
GAP 7	Source budget provision and carry out chapel improvements	1. The Reserve fund resources available to carry out this work are outside the urgent and essential category so will not suffice 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works.	1.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund 2. Develop a suitable investment plan for improvement works
GAP 8	Source budget provision and carry out the removal of redundant radiators in chapel	1. The Reserve fund resources available to carry out this work are outside the urgent and essential category so will not suffice 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works.	1. Develop a suitable investment plan for re-placement work 2.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund
GAP 9	Source budget provision and carry out Re-lining of hearth	1. Cremators require new hearths. 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works.	1. Develop a suitable investment plan for re-placement work 2.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund
GAP 10	Source budget provision and carry out a installation of resin pathway	1. The Reserve fund resources available to carry out this work are outside the urgent and essential category so will not suffice 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works.	1. Develop a suitable investment plan for re-placement work 2.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund
GAP 11	Carry out Re-lining of cremators	1. Existing cremators requires re lining. 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works.	1. Develop a suitable investment plan for re-line work 2.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund
GAP 12	Source budget provision and carry out the replacement of lighting within the chapel	1. The Reserve fund resources available to carry out this work are outside the urgent and essential category so will not suffice 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works.	1. Develop a suitable investment plan for re-placement work 2.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund
GAP 13	Secure a suitable budget, and develop a 2-year schedule for	1. The Reserve fund resources available to carry out	1 Explore the potential for increasing the amount of

Property Gaps	internal and external redecoration	repairs outside the urgent and essential category so will not suffice 2. Re-decoration on a 2-year cycle will not align with maintenance plan	surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund. 2 Develop a suitable re-decoration investment plan and align this with urgent and essential category works
	GAP 14 Carry out Re-lining of cremators	1. Existing cremators requires re lining. 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works.	1. Develop a suitable investment plan for re-line work 2.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund
	GAP 15 Source budget provision and carry out Re-lining of hearth	1. Existing cremators requires re lining. 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works.	1. Develop a suitable investment plan for re-placement work 2.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund
	GAP 16 Secure a suitable budget, and develop a 2-year schedule for internal and external redecoration	1. The Reserve fund resources available to carry out repairs outside the urgent and essential category so will not suffice 2. Re-decoration on a 2-year cycle will not align with maintenance plan	1 Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund. 2 Develop a suitable re-decoration investment plan and align this with urgent and essential category works
	GAP 17 Carry out Re-lining of cremators	1. Existing cremators requires re lining. 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works.	1. Develop a suitable investment plan for re-line work 2.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund
	GAP 18 Source budget provision and carry out Re-lining of hearth	1. Cremators require new hearths. 2. Resources may not be available to carry out these works.	1. Develop a suitable investment plan for re-placement work 2.Explore the potential for increasing the amount of surplus that can be placed in the Repair Reserve Fund

8. Our priorities for delivery

In terms of our priorities over the short, medium and long term, we have already established our property gaps, this section of the SAMP summarises our key projects required to close these gaps. These projects are detailed at Appendix A and show how these projects are aligned to the identified

gaps. The Appendix also demonstrates how these projects align themselves with our Vision as set-out in Section 1. These will be subject to updates as the SAMP moves forward.

8.1 Cremator Replacement and Relining

In the long term (10 years) our priority will be to ensure our that our cremators continue to control mercury emissions from the Crematorium – The Environmental Protection (England) (Crematoria Mercury Emissions) Direction 2008, advising that at least 50% of all cremations should be mercury abated by 1st January 2013 and 100% by 2020.

Notwithstanding the legislative imperative above, there also exists the issue of operational costs and CO² emissions (Section 4 above) and potential rising maintenance and repair costs. The cremators lifespan in 2012 was estimated to be approximately 20 years and as the cremators get older costs associated with maintenance and repair will rise, and parts will be obsolete.

In the short to medium and long term we will continue to maintain our crematorium and reline our cremators. Cremator relining will be carried out:

- No1 Cremator 2029,
- No 2 Cremator 2030,
- No3 Cremator 2028,

Cremator Hearth Replacement:

- No1 Cremator 2025,2027,2029,2031
- No 2 Cremator 2024,2026,2028,2030
- No3 Cremator 2025,2027,2029,2031

8.2 Outstanding Repairs (identified in the Condition Survey)

In the short (2024/25) to medium term (2025/26) our aim is to address those urgent repair and maintenance works, identified in our Condition Survey and those repairs identified by the Bereavement Services Manager & Registrar.

Previously we had carried out Feasibility studies which in turn lead to the redevelopment work in creating an extension to the Crematorium. This allowed us to install the latest Cremator equipment and mercury abatement system and a number of alternative improvements.

This will also ensure appropriate investment is made across our crematorium including the development of a maintenance and investment plan. This will form part of an overall 5-year investment plan for the improvement of our crematorium.

8.2.1 Maintenance Plan

Our crematorium will be subject to an annual maintenance regime to ensure that is maintained to an appropriate standard with, financial and other risks also controlled. As part of this we recognise, we recognise that the maintenance of our assets will fall into two distinct categories:

- **Reactive Maintenance** – i.e. the repair of components upon failure. Repair may have to take place immediately (emergency repairs) or almost immediately (urgent repairs) in order that the premises may continue to function effectively or safely, and
- **Planned Maintenance** – i.e. carried out to reduce the level of reactive maintenance, by replacing component and elements of repair before they have deteriorated to a critical level. This will comprise of both regular servicing of equipment and inspection/testing in accordance with the requirements of regulations (routine maintenance) and planned repair or replacement of deteriorated components, such as maintenance carried out according to planned recurrent cycles (for example, redecoration) or according to the lifecycle of the component/element (for example re-roofing)

Over the next year we will continue to address any reactive needs in the estate, as and when they may arise, and we will also seek to undertake planned maintenance works. Those works which need to be considered for investment are listed below, with any works not addressed during 2024/25-25/26, rolled forward.

The works and costs listed below are estimated and as such are indicative costs only. A Feasibility Study will be required before final budget costs can be established.

Planned Maintenance 2024/25– Priority 1

Project	Budget	Est Cost
Re-Decoration Works x 1	Premises	£25,000*
Carry out Re-lining of hearths x 1	Premises	£5,400
Installation of resin pathway around top memorial garden	Major Capital Works Reserve	£18,730
Purchase and install resomation system / building extension	Major Capital Works Reserve	£1,500,000*
Carry out replacement of carpets	Premises	£20,000*
Planned maintenance 2022/2023- Priority 2		
Comission study for roof and gutter repairs.	Premises	£50,000
Carry out improvements to increase chapel capacity	Premises	£25,000
Removal of redundant radiators in chapel	Premises	£4,000
ESTIMATED TOTAL SPEND		£1,648,130

Planned maintenance 2025/26- Priority 2

Project	Budget	Est Cost
Carry out Re-lining of hearths x 1	Premises	£ 5,400
Carry out installation of resin pathway around turning circle	Major Capital Works Reserve	£ 25,000*
Carry out Re-lining of cremators 1	Cremator Reline Reserve	£ 87,600*
Replacement of lights in chapel	Premises	£ 5,000
ESTIMATED TOTAL SPEND		£ 123,000

Planned maintenance 2026/27- Priority 3

Project	Budget	Est Cost
Carry out Re-lining of Hearth 1	Premises	£ 5,400*

Re-Decoration Works	Premises	£	30,000*
Carry out Re-lining of cremator x 1	Cremator Reline Reserve	£	87,600
ESTIMATED TOTAL SPEND		£	123,000

Planned maintenance 2027 onwards - Priority 4

Project	Budget	Est Cost	
Re-Decoration Works x 3 times (every 2 years)	Premises	£	90,000*
Carry out Re-lining of 3 cremators x 2 times (every 8 years)	Cremator Reline Reserve	£	262,800
Carry out Re-lining of hearths x 9 times (every 2 years)	Premises	£	48,600
ESTIMATED TOTAL SPEND		£	401,400

* Estimate

8.3 Suitability

In the short term (2024/25), our aim is to address those issues works which have potential health and safety implications. Our priority will also be to ensure that our crematorium continues to meet the expectations of all our service users and demonstrates a professional and dignified service.

8.4 Accessibility

Our aim is to ensure that are premises are DDA compliant and to provide better accessibility through our premises as identified.

9. Financial Resources available to deliver our priorities

Investment in our Crematorium is supported through our Crematorium Reserves. This is reviewed annually by the Durham Crematorium Joint Committee and is aligned to its budget setting processes.

In order to ensure that the repairs identified within this Service Asset Management Plan can be carried out, funding is to be allocated from a number of sources as including: -

- Repairs and Maintenance Revenue Budget
- Contributions from the Major Capital Works Reserve
- Contributions from the Cremator Reline Reserve
- Reduced contributions to the Major Capital Reserve in future years
- Prudential borrowing.

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Central Durham Crematorium

Joint Committee

27 September 2023

Financial Monitoring Report – Position at 31/08/23, with Projected Revenue and Capital Outturn at 31/03/24



Joint Report of

**Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and
Climate Change**

**Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the
Joint Committee**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report provides Members of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee with details of the provisional outturn position for 2023/24 and the projected level of reserves and balances at 31 March 2024.

Executive summary

- 2 This report sets out details of income and expenditure in the period 1 April 2023 to 31 August 2023, together with a forecast revenue and capital outturn position for 2023/24, highlighting areas of over / underspends against the approved budgets at a service expenditure analysis level.
- 3 The report also details the funds and reserves of the Joint Committee at 1 April 2023 and forecast final position at 31 March 2024, taking into account actuals to date and forecasts to the year end.
- 4 The projected revenue outturn is a surplus (before transfers to reserves and distribution of surpluses to the partner authorities) of £1,153,749 against a budgeted surplus of £1,018,062, which is £135,687 more than the budgeted position.

- 5 Contributions to earmarked reserves are forecast as £135,687 more than originally budgeted.
- 6 In line with the CDCJC Reserve Policy to maintain a General Reserve of 30% of the income budget, a transfer to the General Reserve of £33,225 is required. A contribution from the revenue surplus of (£265,499), offset by £126,579 funding of the capital programme results in a net transfer to the Major Capital Works Reserve of £138,920 in year.
- 7 The retained reserves of the CDCJC at 31 March 2024 are forecast to be £1,946,744 along with a General Reserve of £581,400, giving a forecast total reserves and balances position of £2,523,144 at the year end.

Recommendation(s)

- 8 It is recommended that Members note the April to August 2023 financial monitoring report and associated provisional revenue and capital outturn positions at 31 March 2024, including the projected year position with regards to the reserves and balances of the Joint Committee.

Background

- 9 Scrutinising the financial performance of the Central Durham Crematorium is a key role of the Joint Committee. Regular (quarterly) budgetary control reports are prepared by the Treasurer and aim to present, in a user friendly format, the financial performance in the year to date together with a forward projection to the year end. Routine reporting and consideration of financial performance is a key component of the Governance Arrangements of the Central Durham Crematorium

Financial Performance

- 10 Budgetary control reports, incorporating outturn projections, are considered by Neighbourhoods and Climate Change Management Team on a quarterly basis. The County Council's Corporate Management Team also considers regular budgetary control reports, with quarterly reports being considered by Cabinet / Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The outturn projections for the Central Durham Crematorium are included within this report.
- 11 The figures contained within this report have been extracted from the General Ledger and have been scrutinised and supplemented with information supplied by the Bereavement Services Manager. The following table highlights the provisional revenue outturn financial performance of the Central Durham Crematorium.

Subjective Analysis (Type of Expenditure)	Base Budget 2023/24 £	Year to Date Actual April – August £	Projected Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance Over/ (Under) £
Employees	351,439	124,834	371,362	19,923
Premises	363,444	227,730	496,441	132,997
Transport	2,800	537	1,267	(1,533)
Supplies & Services	147,532	58,175	154,935	7,404
Agency & Contracted	10,563	3,417	10,961	398
Capital Charges	0	0	0	0
Central Support Costs	44,160	0	44,160	0
Gross Expenditure	919,938	414,692	1,079,127	159,189
Income	(1,938,000)	(667,411)	(2,232,876)	(294,876)
Net Income	(1,018,062)	(252,719)	(1,153,749)	(135,687)
Transfer to / (from) Reserves				
- Masterplan Memorial Garden	5,000	0	5,000	0
- Major Capital Works	129,812	0	265,499	135,687
- Cremator Reline Reserve	25,000	0	25,000	0
- Small Plant	2,000	0	2,000	0
Distributable Surplus	(856,250)	0	(856,250)	0
80% Durham County Council	685,000	685,000	685,000	0
20% Spennymoor Town Council	171,250	171,250	171,250	0

Central Durham Crematorium Earmarked Reserves	Balance @ 1 April 2023 £	Transfers to Reserve £	Transfers From Reserve £	Balance @ 31 March 2024 £
General Reserve	(548,175)	(889,475)	856,250	(581,400)
Masterplan Memorial Garden	(81,250)	(5,000)	86,250	0
Major Capital Works	(1,652,475)	(265,499)	126,579	(1,791,396)
Cremator Reline Reserve	(109,943)	(25,000)	0	(134,943)
Small Plant	(13,405)	(2,000)	0	(15,405)
Total	(2,405,248)	(1,186,974)	1,069,079	(2,523,144)

Explanation of Significant Variances between Original Budget and Forecast Outturn

12 As can be seen from the table above, the projected revenue outturn is indicating a surplus (before transfers to reserves and distribution of surpluses to the partner authorities) of £1,153,749 against a budgeted surplus of £1,018,062, which is £135,687 more than the budgeted position.

13 The following section outlines the reasons for any significant budget variances by subjective analysis (type of expenditure) area:

13.1 *Employees*

The outturn shows a forecast overspend of **£19,923**, in relation to employee costs. The reasons for this are identified below:

- Staffing costs are forecast to overspend by **£19,923** mainly due to an increase in overtime.

13.2 *Premises*

The outturn shows a forecast overspend of **£132,997** in relation to premises costs. The reasons for this are identified below:

- Utilities are forecast to underspend by **(£3,695)** due to an overestimation of the budgets since the increase in gas and electricity costs last year.
- One off SAMP works for the purchase on an additional memorial leaf tree is forecast to overspend by **£700**.
- One off SAMP works for the re-lining of a hearth will be included in the reline of the cremator therefore forecast to underspend by **(£6,000)**.
- Grounds Maintenance is forecast to overspend by **£20,120**, due to incoming costs expected to be high in relation to winter gritting of the crematorium. Several trees also required felling which wasn't budgeted for.
- Cremator repairs are forecast to overspend by **£98,000** due to the reline of a cremator which is expected to be £70,000 as well as other necessary removals/replacements within the crematorium.
- Rates are forecast to overspend by **£23,872** due to an increase in rates since 22/23, which are due to the 2023 revaluation of non-domestic properties by the Valuation Office Agency.

13.3 Supplies and Services

The outturn shows a forecast overspend of **£7,404** in relation to supplies and services costs. The reasons for this are identified below:

- Due to the projected increase in cremations (highlighted later within the income section of the report), medical referee expenditure is projected to overspend by **£8,083**.
- Other general office costs such as conferences, cremator additives and subscriptions are expected to underspend by **(£679)**.

13.4 Income

An increase in income of **(£294,876)** from the 2023/24 budget is included within the outturn forecasts. The reasons for this are identified below:

- The outturn includes an increase of 305 cremations compared to the budget, totalling increased income compared to budget of **(£242,475)**. The outturn is based on a projected total of 2,505 cremations against a budgeted 2,200 during 2023/24.
- Sales of Books of Remembrance, plaques and webcasts are expected to be lower than budget resulting in a reduction in income of **£11,116**.
- Interest received is forecast to overachieve by **(£67,517)** due to rising interest rates.

14 Capital Programme

The following table highlights the capital outturn of the Central Durham Crematorium:

	Base Budget 2023/24 £	Revised Budget 2023/24 £	Year to Date Actual April - Aug £	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance to Revised Budget Over/ (Under) £
Redevelopment Works					
Installation of resin pathway around memorial garden	18,730	18,730	0	18,730	0
Carry out improvements to garden fountain	40,000	40,000	1,348	60,000	20,000
Creation of new memorial garden	12,000	12,000	0	12,000	0
Excess heat works	83,874	83,874	288	83,874	0
Resomation	0	0	3,637	5,000	5,000
Total	154,604	154,604	5,272	179,604	25,000

- The improvements to the garden fountain are expected to overspend by £20,000 compared to the budget. A quote is awaited from building services which is expected to be higher than the budgeted figure.
- The resomation works are expected to be included in the SAMP for 2024/25, however a forecast of £5,000 has been introduced due to incoming feasibility costs in 2023/24.

All other work is expected to be completed within 2023/24.

The cost of the Redevelopment Works is being financed from the Major Capital Works reserve.

15 Earmarked Reserves

Contributions to earmarked reserves are forecast as £135,687 more than originally budgeted for.

In line with the CDCJC Reserve Policy to maintain a General Reserve of 30% of the income budget, a transfer from the Major Capital Works Reserve to the General Reserve of **£33,225** is required. A contribution from the revenue surplus of **(£265,499)**, offset by **£126,579** funding of the capital programme results in a net transfer to the Major Capital Works Reserve of **£138,920**.

The retained reserves of the CDCJC at 31 March 2024 are forecast to be **£1,946,744** along with a General Reserve of **£581,400**, giving a forecast total reserves and balances position of **£2,523,144** at the year end.

Contact:	Philip Curran	Tel: 03000 261967
	Cathy Mallam	Tel: 03000 268580

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The outturn proposals contained within this report have been prepared in accordance with standard accounting policies and procedures.

Finance

Full details of the year to date and projected outturn financial performance of the Central Durham Crematorium are included within the body of the report.

Consultation

None. However, Officers of Spennymoor Town Council were provided with a copy of the report and given opportunity to comments / raise any detailed queries on the contents of this report in advance of circulation to members of the CDCJC.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

The figures contained within this report have been extracted from the General Ledger and have been scrutinised and supplemented with information supplied by the Bereavement Services Manager. The projected outturn has been produced taking into consideration the spend to date, trend data and market intelligence, and includes an element of prudence. This, together with the information supplied by the Bereavement Services Manager, should mitigate the risks associated with achievement of the forecast outturn position.

Procurement

None.

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Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee

27 September 2023

Risk Register Update 2023/24 Review 1

Ordinary Decision



Joint Report of Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Climate Change; and Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee

Electoral division affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To inform the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee of the outcome of the half-yearly risk review in August 2023.

Executive summary

- 2 A service risk register and a health and safety risk register are maintained in accordance with Durham County Council's methodology and approach to risk management.
- 3 Since the previous review one risk, relating to potential non-compliance with Covid advisory safety measures, has been closed. There are no other changes to report.
- 4 The net evaluation of each risk remains within the risk appetite.

Recommendation

- 5 It is recommended that members of the Crematorium Joint Committee note the content of this report and the updated position.

Background

- 6 A service risk register and a health and safety risk register are maintained in accordance with Durham County Council's methodology and approach to risk management, further details of which are included in **appendices 2 and 3**.

Risk Review

- 7 The current service risk register is included in **appendix 4**.
- 8 *Non-compliance with Covid advisory safety measures by members of the public leading to a local outbreak and capacity issues in deaths management services (appendix 4, risk 12).*

This risk has been closed as it is no longer considered a significant risk.

It is over one year since Covid restrictions and measures were lifted and, in April 2022, the Government issued the Living with COVID-19 plan. Basic precautions, such as the provision of hand sanitiser, are being maintained and there are currently no issues of concern.

- 9 There are no other changes to report.
- 10 A profile of service risks is included in **appendix 5**.

Conclusion

- 11 The net evaluation of every risk is within the risk appetite (shaded area in appendix 5).

Contact:	Paul Darby	Tel: 03000 261930
	Kevin Roberts	Tel: 03000 269657

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

There are no direct implications, but effective risk management helps to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory obligations.

Finance

There are no direct financial implications, but effective risk management helps to avoid or minimise financial loss.

Consultation

Officers of Spennymoor Town Council were consulted on the contents of this report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

This report supports the delivery of the objectives of the Durham County Council's Risk Management Strategy. Each risk has been evaluated using Durham County Council's risk management methodology. Maintaining and continually reviewing the risk register is a key component of the control and governance framework for the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

Procurement

None

Appendix 2: How Central Durham Crematorium risks are managed

Two risk registers have been developed for Durham Crematorium, containing service and health and safety risks respectively. They are maintained in accordance with Durham County Council's methodology and approach to risk management. Regular reviews are undertaken to ensure that risk management continues to be embedded and that the risk registers are kept up to date, taking current issues into account.

Service Risk Register

The service risk register is maintained by the Bereavement Services Manager & Registrar (Countywide), supported by Durham County Council's Principal Risk and Governance Officer. Risk assessments are based on the impact on finance, service delivery and stakeholders if the risk materialises, and on the likelihood that the risk will occur over a given period, as shown in appendices 3A and 3B. This requires an evaluation of the gross risk and the net risk, which takes into account mitigating control measures. Formal reviews are undertaken twice a year and reported to the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

Health and Safety Risk Register

The health and safety risk register is maintained by the Bereavement Services Manager & Registrar (Countywide), supported by Durham County Council's Occupational Health and Safety Team. Risk assessments are based on the potential severity of injury and the likelihood of occurrence, as shown in the table below. This requires an evaluation of the net risk, which takes into account mitigating control measures. In line with Durham County Council's procedures, an in-depth review is undertaken every three years. A light-touch review is also undertaken twice a year. A single, overarching health and safety risk is included in the service risk register, which is reported to the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee twice a year.

HEALTH & SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		Likelihood (a full definition of each rating is set out in the detailed methodology)			
		1 Very Unlikely	2 Unlikely	3 Likely	4 Very Likely
Impact	4 Extreme Death or multiple deaths; substantial damage.	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk	High Risk
	3 Severe Loss of limb or multiple injuries; significant damage.	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk	High Risk
	2 Minor Three day or greater injury or illness; insignificant damage.	Insignificant	Low Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk
	1 Negligible Less than a three-day injury or illness; superficial damage.	Insignificant	Insignificant	Low Risk	Low Risk

Civil Emergencies

Durham County Council is jointly responsible for responding to civil emergencies (such as severe weather events, network power losses and flu epidemics) through the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum. An explanation of the arrangements for managing the risk of such events and a copy of the latest Community Risk Register can be found on the web page of the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum.

Appendix 3A: Strategic Risk Assessment Criteria – Impact Factors

Factor and Description		Financial	Service Delivery/ Performance	Stakeholder and Reputation
5	Critical	> / = £15M > 5% of Service/ budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to meet statutory duties. Key services can no longer be delivered – emergency actions needed, which need Cabinet approval. Significant legal action or challenge Intervention or sanctions by regulatory body / prosecution or litigation (including corporate manslaughter) Strike action which is Council-wide or service-wide in a critical service for a long period (in context of a project, this can also mean that the project cannot proceed, or that several critical benefits/ opportunities cannot be achieved) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception of the majority of potential partners and stakeholders that the Council is not 'fit to deal with'. Loss of life.
4	Major	£5M - £15M 3% - 5% of Service/ budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major disruption to some statutory and / or non-statutory services i.e., key service delivery adversely affected – crisis management implemented, which needs Cabinet approval. Strike action which is Council-wide or service-wide in a critical service for a short period. (in context of a project, this can also mean major disruption to delivering the project, or that a critical benefit/ opportunity cannot be achieved) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious reputational damage to the Council regionally/ nationally/ internationally. Damage to relationships with central government or other public bodies e.g., Environment Agency, other Councils. Perception of small number of potential partners and stakeholders that the Council is not 'fit to deal with'. Serious injury to individual.
3	Moderate	£1M - £5M 1% - 3% of Service/ budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate disruption to statutory and / or non-statutory services i.e., some disruption to service delivery – action plans to rectify. Service fails to maintain existing status under inspection regimes e.g., Ofsted. Resolution requires approval at CMT level. Limited strike action within a service. (in context of a project, this can also mean moderate disruption to delivering the project, or moderate impact on achieving benefits/ opportunities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results in negative Regional or National press / media coverage. Minor reputational damage to the County Council. Major criticism by other stakeholders e.g., partners, central government. Significant impact on the quality of life for a large section of the community.
2	Minor	£0.5M - £1M 0.2% - 1% of Service/ budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor service disruption / customer dissatisfaction i.e., little disruption to service delivery – no long term or permanent impact on key services. Capable of resolution by Service Management Team. (in context of a project, this can also mean minor disruption to delivering the project, or minor impact on achieving benefits/ opportunities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results in negative press coverage within County Durham Minor criticism by Community or other stakeholders e.g., Partners, central government. Significant number of complaints from service users. Serious reputational damage to own service area. Significant impact on the quality of life for a small section of the community.
1	Insignificant	< £0.5M < 0.2% of Service/ budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insignificant service disruption e.g., very little or no disruption to services Impairment of quality of service. Capable of resolution by head of service and their management team. (in context of a project, this can also mean insignificant disruption to delivering the project, or insignificant impact on achieving benefits/ opportunities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results in negative press coverage within the locality / ward Insignificant criticism by community or other stakeholders e.g., partners, central government. Insignificant number of complaints from service users. Minor reputational damage to own service area.

Appendix 3B: Strategic Risk Assessment Criteria – Likelihood Factors

Factor and Description		Expected Frequency
5	Highly Probable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than once a year • Something that is already occurring or is likely to be a regular occurrence throughout a one-year period. • Inevitable i.e., the event is expected to occur in most circumstances. • >80% chance of occurring.
4	Probable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once a year • Something that has occurred in the last year or is likely to occur at least once throughout a one-year period. • Probable or where the conditions of the loss occur on a regular basis i.e. the event will probably occur in most circumstances. • 61% to 80% chance of occurring.
3	Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every 1-3 years • Likely only to happen at some point over the next 1 to 3 years. • Possible but responding to well understood situations i.e., the event might occur at some time. • 31% to 60% chance of occurring.
2	Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every 3-5 years • Likely only to happen at some point over the next 3 to 5 years or likely to continue to occur i.e., the event is not expected to occur. • 11% to 30% chance of occurring.
1	Remote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 5 years • Rare activity or is unlikely based on current intelligence i.e., the event may only occur in exceptional circumstances. • < 10% chance of occurring.

Appendix 4: Service Risk Register for Central Durham Crematorium

This is a list of service risks, ranked in order of net risk evaluation, based on the strategic risk assessment criteria in appendices 3A and 3B. Where changes to the risk assessment have occurred during the last quarter, these are indicated in the last column.

Ref	Risk	Net Impact	Net Likelihood	Net Risk Score	Conclusion	Changes/ Comments
1	Demand for cremations exceeds capacity.	Minor	Possible	18	Tolerate	
2	Serious breach of health and safety legislation	Moderate	Unlikely	16	Tolerate	
3	ICT and Power Failure	Minor	Unlikely	10	Tolerate	
4	Loss of knowledge and ability to cover existing workload through premature staff loss	Minor	Unlikely	10	Tolerate	
5	Breakdown of the partnership (with Spennymoor Town Council)	Moderate	Remote	7	Tolerate	
6	Sickness absence of key staff	Moderate	Remote	7	Tolerate	
7	Failure of Cremators / Specialist Equipment	Minor	Remote	6	Tolerate	
8	Damage to Public or Vehicles due to tree branches falling	Insignificant	Unlikely	6	Tolerate	
9	Disclosure of confidential information through incorrect disposal / maintenance of information (data breach).	Minor	Remote	5	Tolerate	
10	Loss of Income/Money	Minor	Remote	5	Tolerate	
11	Potential breach of equality and diversity legislation	Insignificant	Remote	3	Tolerate	
12	Non-compliance with Covid advisory safety measures by members of the public leading to a local outbreak and capacity issues in deaths management services.	Moderate	Remote	8	Tolerate	<p>This risk has been closed as it is no longer considered a significant risk.</p> <p>It is over one year since Covid restrictions and measures were lifted and, in April 2022, the Government issued the Living with COVID-19 plan. Basic precautions, such as the provision of hand sanitiser, are being maintained and there are currently no issues of concern.</p>

Appendix 5: Profile of Service Risks for Central Durham Crematorium

Service Risks

This matrix profiles all service risks shown in appendix 4, based on the net risk evaluation. The shaded area represents the corporate risk appetite.

As the net evaluations of all risks are within the risk appetite, they are considered to be at an acceptable level.

Impact					
Critical (score 13 – 15)					
Major (score 10 – 12)					
Moderate (score 7 – 9)	5 Partnership 6 Sick Absence	2 Health & Safety Breach			
Minor (score 4 – 6)	7 Cremators 9 Confidentiality 10 Income Loss	3 ICT & Power Failure 4 Staff Loss	1 Cremations Capacity		
Insignificant (score 1 – 3)	11 Equality & Diversity Breach	8 Tree Branches			
Likelihood	Remote (score 1)	Unlikely (score 2)	Possible (score 3)	Probable (score 4)	Highly Probable (score 5)

**Central Durham Crematorium
Joint Committee**

27 September 2023

Internal Audit Charter



**Report of Tracy Henderson, Chief Internal Auditor and Corporate
Fraud Manager**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek agreement on the Internal Audit Charter to be applied to reviews undertaken as part of the Internal Audit plan for 2023/24.

Executive summary

2. The Internal Audit Charter defines the Internal Audit Service's purpose, authority and responsibility. It establishes Internal Audit's position within the organisation, including the nature of the Chief Internal Auditor and Corporate Fraud Manager's functional reporting relationship with the Joint Committee; authorises access to records, personnel and physical properties relevant to the performance of engagements; and defines the scope of internal audit activities.
3. The Charter reflecting the changes made to the PSIAS in 2017 was previously considered by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 29 September 2022. The Charter is subject to annual review by the Chief Internal Auditor and Corporate Fraud Manager. On this occasion, with no new revisions made to the PSIAS, it is considered that no further amendments to the Charter are required.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that in considering the content of the report, the Joint Committee approves the Internal Audit Charter attached at Appendix 2.

Background

5. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), that came into effect from April 2013, and which were subsequently revised from 01 April 2017, define internal audit as,

‘an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.’

Other useful documents

Report to Durham County Council’s Audit Committee on 23 May 2023

Contact: Paul Monaghan, Audit Manager Tel: 03000 269662

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Finance

The broad programme of work undertaken by Internal Audit supports the Joint Committee in maintaining safe and efficient arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

There are no direct risk implications arising for the Joint Committee as a result of this report, although we aim through our planning arrangements to review the adequacy and effectiveness of the risk management arrangements in place.

Procurement

None.

Climate Change

None.

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INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER

**For the Provision of an Internal Audit Service to the
Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee**

**September
2023**

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Introduction

1. The purpose of this Charter is to establish the terms of reference for the delivery of Internal Audit to the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee by Durham County Council Internal Audit & Risk Services. It sets out the purpose, authority and responsibility of Internal Audit.

Statutory Basis

2. Internal Audit is a statutory service in the context of the Accounts and Audit Regulations(England) 2015, which state that:

“A relevant authority must undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.”
3. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and CIPFA’s Local Government Application Note (LGAN), which came into effect April 2013, constitute proper practices to satisfy the requirements for larger relevant local government bodies as set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The PSIAS were updated on 01 April 2017 and the Charter has been updated to reflect these changes.
4. Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that every local authority should make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall secure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs (The Chief Financial Officer (CFO)). CIPFA has defined proper administration in that it should include, ‘compliance with the statutory requirements for accounts and internal audit’.
5. The CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer states that the CFO must:
 - Ensure an effective internal audit function is resources and maintained
 - Ensure that the authority has but in place effective arrangements for internal audit of the control environment
 - Support internal audit arrangements and
 - Ensure the audit committee receives the necessary advice and information so that both functions can operate effectively
6. This Internal Audit Charter recognises the mandatory nature of the PSIAS including the definition of Internal Auditing, the Mission of Internal Audit, the Code of Ethics and the Standards themselves.
7. As required by the PSIAS, this Charter defines the group or body determined to fulfil the roles and responsibilities of the ‘board ‘and ‘senior management’ for the purpose of internal audit activity, as referred to in the individual standards. These definitions are set out in Appendix C.

Definition

8. Internal Audit is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

Mission

9. The mission of the Internal Audit Service is "to enhance and protect the Joint Committee's values by providing risk based and objective assurance, advice and insight".

Code of Ethics

10. Internal Auditors in the UK public sector organisations must conform to the Code of Ethics, (the Code), as set out in the PSIAS. The Code applies to both individuals and entities that provide internal auditing services.
11. The Code consists of 4 principles that are relevant to the profession and practice of internal auditing and set out the rules of conduct that describe behaviour norms expected of internal auditors to guide their ethical conduct. The 4 principles are integrity, objectivity, confidentiality and competency.
12. Internal auditors must also have regard to the Committee on Standards in Public Life, "Seven Principles of Public Life", those being:
 - Selflessness
 - Integrity
 - Objectivity
 - Accountability
 - Openness
 - Honesty
 - Leadership

Strategic Aims

13. Our overall strategy is to support the Joint Crematorium in achieving its aims and objectives through the provision of a high quality internal audit service that gives management reasonable assurance on the effectiveness of the Joint Crematorium's internal control environment and acts as an agent for change by making recommendations for continual improvement.
14. The service aims to be flexible, pragmatic and to work in collaboration with management to suit organisation needs. Through a risk based approach to audit planning, the service will make a positive contribution to corporate governance arrangements and assist management in developing a framework for achieving objectives within acceptable levels of risk.

Objectives of Internal Audit

15. Our primary objective is the provision of reasonable, not absolute, evidenced based assurance on the effectiveness of the **whole** of the Council's risk management, control and governance environment to the Corporate Management Team and the Audit Committee.
16. The provision of our annual assurance opinion will be in compliance with professional guidelines and in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations. Our annual opinion will be included in the Council's Annual Governance Statement which forms part of the Council's published annual Statement of Accounts.
17. To determine the audit opinion the internal audit service will review, appraise and report upon:
 - The adequacy of risk identification, assessment and mitigation
 - The adequacy and application of controls to mitigate identified risk
 - The adequacy and extent of compliance with the Council's corporate governance framework
 - The extent of compliance with relevant legislation
 - The extent to which the organisation's assets and interests are accounted for and safeguarded from loss of all kinds including fraud, waste, extravagance, inefficient administration and poor value for money
 - The quality and integrity of financial and other management information utilised within the organisation.
18. When presenting the annual audit opinion the Head of Internal Audit will:
 - Disclose any qualification to that opinion, together with the reasons for that qualification
 - Present a copy of the finalised audit report reflecting work carried out in accordance with the agreed Service Level Agreement (SLA) and the detailed terms of reference agreed with the Crematorium Superintendent
 - Draw attention to any issues considered particularly relevant to the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement
 - Present a statement on conformance with the PSIAS and the results of a Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP) required by the PSIAS.

Outcomes of Internal Audit

19. The main outcome of Internal Audit is the provision of independent assurance to “those charged with governance”, which within the Joint Committee, is the Committee itself, on the effectiveness or otherwise of the Joint Committee’s risk management, control and governance arrangements and in so doing we contribute to:
 - Improved identification and management of risks contributing to improved performance management and the successful achievement of the Council’s vision and priorities.
 - Improved corporate governance through helping to support compliance with relevant legislation, the Joint Committee’s policies, plans and procedures.
 - Improved accountability, safeguarding of assets and interests and use of public resources
 - Improved quality and reliability of financial and other management information used to support informed decisions

Independence, Objectivity and Authority

20. To be effective Internal Audit must operate independently and in an unbiased manner and have unrestricted access to all information deemed necessary in the course of its work.
21. The Head of Internal Audit has direct and unrestricted access to any employee or elected member.
22. For day to day operational activities the Head of Internal Audit reports to the Joint Committee’s Treasurer but maintains independence by reporting in her/his own name on functionality of the audit service direct to the Joint Committee.
23. Internal Audit, with strict accountability for confidentiality and safeguarding records and information, is authorised full, free and unrestricted access to all records, assets, elected members, personnel and premises, including those of partner organisations or external contractors conducting business on behalf of or in partnership with the Joint Committee, in order to obtain such information and explanations as it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities.
24. Internal Audit will remain free from interference by any element in the organisation including matters of audit selection, scope, procedures, frequency, timing or report content to permit maintenance of the necessary independent and objective standards.
25. Objectivity is maintained by ensuring that all internal auditors are free from any conflicts of interest and being free from direct management responsibility for the development, implementation or operations of any of activities audited.
26. Internal Auditors will not be allocated to assurance reviews in areas where they have had a responsibility for, or have undertaken any significant advice and consultancy work, within the previous 2 years.

27. As the Head of Internal Audit also has responsibility within Durham County Council for corporate risk management, counter fraud and insurance services, arrangements will be made for any audit work to be carried out in these areas by a suitably experienced and qualified auditor. In these cases the Head of Internal Audit will remove themselves from the review process of these audits and all findings and draft reports will be shared at their conclusion with both the Head of Internal Audit and the Corporate Director, Resources in order to apply the necessary safeguards as set out in PSIAS standard 1112 where the Chief Audit Executive has roles beyond Internal Auditing.

Scope of Audit Work

28. Internal Audit's role applies to all functions and services for which the Joint Crematorium is responsible, including those delivered by its partners where appropriate.
29. In addition to the regular review of all key systems of internal control which forms the bulk of our assurance work, Internal Audit will:
- Respond to requests for support, advice and guidance on implementing and/or improving best practice control procedures for current and new systems.
 - Promote the development and effective implementation of Control and Risk Self Assessments (CRSA) as outlined within the Audit Approach Section of this Charter.
 - Provide support, advice and guidance on risk and controls to staff involved in the design and implementation of new systems and processes.
 - Provide assistance on key projects, including attendance on project boards, and conduct specialist consultancy and value for money reviews. The scope of this work is agreed with management and is subject to having the necessary resources, skills and ensuring suitable assurance over our independence and objectivity. Any significant advice and consultancy work that may be considered to impact on the independence of the Internal Audit Service will be reported to the Audit Committee for approval.
 - Be alert in all its work to risks and exposure that could allow fraud or corruption to occur and to any indications that a fraudulent or corrupt practice may have been occurring
 - Review controls where a potential fraud has been detected/reported to provide assurance that the alleged fraudulent activity is unable to continue and to prevent a reoccurrence.
 - In consultation with appropriate officers, determine the most appropriate course of action by which fraud and irregularities should be investigated.
30. It must be noted that whilst Internal Audit will promote fraud awareness, it does not have responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption. Internal Audit cannot guarantee that fraud or corruption will be detected in its work. Managing the risk of fraud and corruption is the responsibility of service managers.

Audit Planning

31. The level of internal audit resources required to deliver an annual audit opinion will be specified in a SLA to be agreed by the Joint Committee.
32. A risk based approach to annual audit planning and the agreement of detailed terms of reference will be applied to allow sufficient work to be undertaken each year to draw reasonable conclusion and assurance on the effectiveness of the whole of the Joint Committee's risk management, control and governance arrangements in a way which affords suitable priority to the Joint Committee's objectives and risks.
33. In consultation with management internal audit will
 - Consider the Joint Committee's risk across two categories:
 - a. **Strategic Risks** - these are the business risks that may arise both internally and externally from the Joint Committee which should be included in the Strategic Risk Register
 - b. **Operational Risks** - these are the risks that arise directly from the core activities of delivering services which should be included in the Operational Risk Register
34. Risk registers will inform but not drive the internal planning process and internal audit will audit those risks where controls have been identified as the means of managing the risk. Priority will be given to those risks which have a high gross score and a low net score, where the effective management of the risk is heavily dependent on the identified controls, and there is little or no other source of assurance.
35. Some key risks where a high level of assurance is required to demonstrate the continuous effectiveness of internal controls, for example those associated with key financial systems, will be subject to annual review. The timing of annual reviews will be agreed in consultation with management wherever possible.
36. The level of audit resources required to deliver, at the very least, both a minimum level of independent assurance and adequate provision for advice and consultancy will be considered by the Head of Internal Audit and incorporated into draft SLA's to be approved by the Joint Committee.
37. Minimum assurance levels will be informed by the maturity of the Joint Committee's risk management arrangements and the reliance that can be placed on other assurance sources. Any concerns the Head of Internal has over the quantity and quality of skills available to deliver the required level of assurance, or to add value through its advice and consultancy work, will be referred to the Section 151 Officer, (Chief Financial Officer), and the Joint Committee for consideration.
38. Draft SLA and annual audit plans will be considered by the senior management and approved and monitored by the Joint Committee.

Audit Approach

39. Internal Audit will adopt a risk based approach to all our assurance work as outlined below:

Strategic Risk

Reviews of strategic risks will provide assurance that:

- Risk management processes, defined by the Joint Committee's risk management strategy and policy, are in place and are operating as intended
- Managers are responding to risks adequately and effectively so that those risks are reduced to an acceptable level
- The controls that managers have in place are successful in managing those risks

Operational Risk

40. Reviews of key service delivery activities and key systems will provide assurance on the effectiveness of
- Compliance with corporate governance arrangements
 - Risk identification, assessment and business continuity
 - The control environment to manage identified risks and to ensure that the Joint Committee's assets and interests are accounted for and safeguarded from loss of all kinds including fraud, waste, extravagance, inefficient administration and poor value for money, including
 - Information governance (quality and integrity of financial and other management information and how it is used and communicated)
41. Internal Audit will adopt a risk based approach to evaluate the effectiveness of controls designed to mitigate risks through substantive testing and/ or compliance testing. Compliance testing will confirm if a control actually exists and substantive testing will provide assurance that the control is effective and / or is consistently applied. The level of testing will be relative to the impact and likelihood of the risk occurring due to a control weakness.
42. Internal Audit will work with service managers to help embed effective risk management by supporting them to carry out a control and risk assessment (CRA) of risks for each annual audit review in advance of the audit.
43. Internal Audit will agree the objectives and risks associated with each key system or service delivery area to be reviewed with the Bereavement Services Manager prior to the start of each annual audit to ensure that the scope and objectives of each review are focused on providing assurance on the high or significant risks identified through the CRA. Terms of reference will be issued to the Bereavement Services Manager to formally agree the scope of each review, identified keys risks, potential impact and expected key controls.

Audit Reporting

44. Each annual audit will be the subject of a formal report and will include an audit opinion.
45. Towards the end of an audit we will arrange an exit meeting with the Bereavement Services Manager where we will share and discuss our initial findings. The discussion will seek to eliminate any inaccuracies in our findings so that these can be resolved before a formal draft report is issued. Draft reports will ask the Bereavement Services Manager to provide a management response to the recommendations made and agree target implementation dates and responsible officer.
46. To assist the Bereavement Services Manager in his response we categorise the importance of our recommendations as High, Medium or Best Practice. Details of how we assess the importance of audit findings leading to these recommendation rankings are given in Appendix A.
47. It is the responsibility of management to address audit findings and implement audit recommendations or other agreed appropriate action, or accept the risk resulting from not taking action.
48. An overall assurance opinion will be provided on each annual audit review to help inform the overall opinion required to support the Joint Committee's Annual Governance Statement.
49. The determination of our audit assurance opinion is derived from the overall level of assurance, positive as well as negative, on the effectiveness of controls operating in each specific area reviewed and is informed by the risk identified through recommendation rankings.
50. Where a Limited assurance opinion is given the control framework in place is considered to be ineffective and requires improvement to maintain an acceptable level of control. Further details of how assurance opinions are derived are given in Appendix A.
51. Management responses to recommendations made in the draft report will be incorporated into the audit report that will then be reissued as the final version. A copy of the final report will be shared with the Council's External Auditor on request.
52. The CRA will be updated with any further expected controls identified through the audit process and details of actual controls in place, and issued to Bereavement Services Manager as part of the reporting process. If controls are considered to be inadequate, recommended action to improve controls will also be entered to provide management with the necessary information to update risk registers which can then be regularly reviewed.
53. Wherever possible the circulation of audit reports will be agreed at the outset and will have due regard to confidentiality and legal requirements. Information gained in the course of audit work remains confidential without limiting or preventing internal audit from meeting its wider reporting responsibilities.

54. Internal Audit will follow-up progress made by management in responding to the draft report and on the implementation of all high and medium priority recommendations agreed. Any concerns on the lack of appropriate management action will be reported to the Joint Committee.
55. Where a limited assurance opinion is given, it is the intention of Internal Audit to follow up the audit within six months of issue to verify that agreed actions have been taken in line with recommendations made. A follow up report detailing progress made and any actions that are still to be completed will be prepared on completion of the review.
56. In accordance with the PSIAS, to maintain organisational independence, Internal Audit will report on the functionality of the audit service to the Joint Committee by:
 - Presenting the proposed SLA and planned annual audit coverage for each year covered by the SLA:
 - Presenting an Annual Audit Report and audit opinion detailing all work undertaken to formulate the annual opinion on the entire control environment, including reliance placed on work of other assurance bodies.
 - The annual audit report will also demonstrate the extent of compliance with the PSIAS and the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme, including internal and any external assessments carried out, and will draw attention to any issues considered particularly relevant to the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement.

Audit Resources, Skills and Service Quality

57. In order for Internal Audit to demonstrate high standards of professional conduct, the Internal Auditor must be impartial in discharging all responsibilities. Bias, prejudice or undue influence must not be allowed to limit or override objectivity.
58. The service is required to operate in accordance with compliance with both the PSIAS and the LGAN. Policies and standard working practices have been put in place to ensure all audit staff understand and comply with the PSIAS/LGAN.
59. An important element of the PSIAS is the requirement to undertake regular quality assurance assessments and maintain a QAIP.
60. A quality assurance framework, detailing the policies, procedures and working practices under which the service operates has been defined and documented in an Audit Manual.
61. The Head of Internal Audit is responsible for providing periodically a self-assessment on the effectiveness of the internal audit service and compliance with agreed procedures to ensure professional standards are maintained. Any areas of non-compliance with the standards and or the LGAN will be reported as part of the Annual Audit Report to senior management and the Joint Committee.

62. In accordance with the PSIAS, an external assessment will be carried out at least every five years. The results of this external assessment will also be reported to senior management and the Joint Committee.
63. The service is provided by Durham County Council's in house internal audit team, supported in specialist areas as and when considered necessary by a third party partner. The staffing structure will, as far as possible, be comprised of a suitable mix of qualifications, experience and skills.
64. The Head of Internal Audit ensures internal audit resources are sufficient to meet its responsibilities and achieve its objectives. Resource requirements are reviewed annually. Any concerns that the Head of Internal Audit has regarding resources available to deliver the service in accordance with the SLA and PSIAS will be reported to the Chief Finance Officer and the Joint Committee.
65. Individual training needs are identified in accordance with the County Council's Performance Appraisal Scheme and supplemented by regular audit skills assessments and post audit reviews. As well as basic training in audit techniques and the development of specialist skills, the service is committed to coaching and mentoring its staff and to providing opportunities for continuous professional development to all staff (CPD).
66. Internal Audit maintains its awareness of national and local issues through membership and subscription to professional bodies such as CIPFA's Better Governance Forum, Technical Information Service, Finance Advisory Network (FAN), County Chief Internal Auditor Network, the Institute of Internal Auditors as well as liaison with external audit and networking with other internal audit service providers.
67. The service will keep abreast of best audit practice by adhering to CIPFA's and the IIA's practice advisories and practice guides, where applicable, as well as networking with other internal audit service providers. In this regard the service considers trends and emerging issues that could impact the Joint Committee.
68. In accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, an annual review of the effectiveness of the internal audit service is undertaken by the County Council's Audit Committee. This will be informed by a review of the service carried out by the Corporate Director Resources and from consideration of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme and any internal or external assessments required by the PSIAS. By reviewing the service the Audit Committee is able to gain assurance that the service maintains its independence and objectivity, that it is effective and conforms to the expected professional quality standards so that it can place reliance on its work and the annual audit opinion.
69. The outcome from the annual effectiveness review is reported to the County's Corporate Management Team and Audit Committee as part of the Annual Internal Audit Report. The outcome of the annual effectiveness review and the QAIP will also be reported to senior management and the Joint Committee in accordance with the PSIAS.

Approval and Review

70. The Head of Internal Audit will annually review this Charter to ensure that it is kept up to date and fit for purpose. The Charter is endorsed by senior management and approved by the Joint Committee. Any amendments will be reported to Joint Committee for approval.

Key Contact

Head of Internal Audit

Tracy Henderson, Chief Internal Auditor and
Corporate Fraud Manager

Tel:

03000 269668

Mobile:

Email:

tracy.henderson@durham.gov.uk

Address

Internal Audit, Risk and Fraud
Resources Group
Durham County Council
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

Other Related Documents

- Other related documents that should be read in conjunction with this Charter are:
 - Public Sector Internal Audit Standards
 - CIPFA's Local Government Application Note
 - Service Level Agreement for the Provision of Audit Services

ASSESSMENT OF AUDIT FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AUDIT OPINIONS

APPENDIX A

Findings

Individual findings are assessed on their impact and likelihood based on the assessment rationale in the tables below:

Impact Rating	Assessment Rationale
Critical	A finding that could have a:
	Critical impact on operational performance (Significant disruption to service delivery)
	Critical monetary or financial statement impact (In excess of 5% of service income or expenditure budget)
	Critical breach in laws and regulations that could result in significant fine and consequences (Intervention by regulatory body or failure to maintain existing status under inspection regime)
	Critical impact on the reputation of the Council (Significant reputational damage with partners/central government and/or significant number of complaints from service users)
	Critical impact on the wellbeing of employees or the public (Loss of life/serious injury to employees or the public)
Major	A finding that could have a:
	Major impact on operational performance (Disruption to service delivery)
	Major monetary or financial statement impact (1-5% of service income or expenditure budget)
	Major breach in laws, regulations or internal policies and procedures (non compliance will have major impact on operational performance, monetary or financial statement impact or reputation of the service)
	Major impact on the reputation of the service within the Council and/or complaints from service users
Minor	A finding that could have a:
	Minor impact on operational performance (Very little or no disruption to service delivery)
	Minor monetary or financial statement impact (less than 1% of service income or expenditure budget)
	Minor breach in internal policies and procedures (non compliance will have very little or no impact on operational performance, monetary or financial statement impact or reputation of the service)

Likelihood	Assessment criteria
Probable	Highly likely that the event will occur (>50% chance of occurring)
Possible	Reasonable likelihood that the event will occur (10% - 50% chance of occurring)
Unlikely	The event is not expected to occur (<10% chance of occurring)

Overall Finding Rating

This grid is used to determine the overall finding rating.

LIKELIHOOD			
Probable	M	H	H
Possible	L	M	H
Unlikely	L	L	M
	Minor	Major	Critical
	IMPACT		

Priority of our recommendations

We define the priority of our recommendations arising from each overall finding as follows;

High	Action required, that is considered imperative , to improve the control environment so that objectives are not exposed to unacceptable risks through lack of or weaknesses in critical or key controls.
Medium	Action required to improve the control environment so that objectives are not exposed to risks through weaknesses in controls.
Best Practice	The issue merits attention and its implementation will enhance the control environment.

Overall Assurance Opinion

Based upon the ratings of findings and recommendations arising during the audit as summarised in risk matrix above we define the overall conclusion of the audit through the following assurance opinions:

Substantial Assurance	There is a sound system of control. Any weaknesses identified expose some of the system objectives to minor risk.
Moderate Assurance	Whilst there is basically a sound system of control, there are some weaknesses, which expose objectives to risk.
Limited Assurance	There are weaknesses in key areas in the system of control, which expose objectives to unacceptable levels of risk.

DEFINITIONS UNDER PSIAS

Public Sector Internal Audit Standards
Definition of the terms ‘Board’ and ‘Senior Management’ for the purpose of Internal Audit Activity

Standard		Reference to board or senior management	Proposed body/group to fulfil role	
Ref	Title		Senior Management	Board
1000	Purpose, authority and responsibility	Senior Management and the board must approve the Internal Audit Charter	Paul Darby Alan Patrickson	The Joint Committee
1110	Organisational Independence	<p>The Chief Audit Executive (CAE) must report to a level within the organisation that allows the internal audit activity to fulfil its responsibilities. The CAE must confirm the board at least annually the organisational independence if the Internal Audit activity.</p> <p>The CAE must report functionality to the board. The CAE must also establish effective communication with, and have free and unfettered access to the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Functionality includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approving the Internal Audit Charter • Approving the Risk Based Internal Audit Plan • Approving the internal audit budget and resource plan • Receiving communications from the CAE on the internal audit activity’s performance relative to its plan and other matters • Approving decisions regarding the appointment and removal of the Internal Audit Service Provider 		<p>The Joint Committee</p> <p>The Joint Committee</p>

DEFINITIONS UNDER PSIAS

APPENDIX B

Standard		Reference to board or senior management	Proposed body/group to fulfil role	
Ref	Title		Senior Management	Board
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making appropriate enquiries of management and the CAE to determine whether there are inappropriate enquiries of management and CAE to determine whether there are inappropriate scope or resources limitations 		
1130. C2	Impairment to Independence or Objectivity	Approval must be sought from the board for any significant additional consulting services not already included in the audit plan, prior to accepting the engagement		The Joint Committee
1312	Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP)	<p>External Assessments must be conducted at least once every five years by a qualified, independent assessor or assessment team form outside the organisation. The CAE must discuss with the board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The form of external assessments • The qualifications and independence of the external assessor or assessment, including any potential conflict of interests <p>NB The Public Sector requirement of this standard states,</p> <p>“The CAE must agree the scope of external assessments with an appropriate sponsor e.g the Accounting / Accountable Officer or Chair of the audit committee as well as with the external assessor or assessment team”</p>		The Joint Committee
1320	Reporting the results of QAIP	The CAE must communicate the results of the quality assurance and improvement programme to senior management and the board .	Paul Darby Alan Patrickson	The Joint Committee

DEFINITIONS UNDER PSIAS

APPENDIX B

Standard		Reference to board or senior management	Proposed body/group to fulfil role	
Ref	Title		Senior Management	Board
1322	Disclosure of Non-Conformance	Instances of non-conformance with the definition of Internal Auditing , the Code of Ethics or the standards impacts the overall scope or operation of the Internal Audit Activity, must be reported to the board by the CAE. More significant deviations must be considered for inclusion in the annual governance statement		The Joint Committee
2020	Communications and Approval	The CAE must communicate the internal audit activity's plans and resource requirements, including significant interim changes, to senior management and the board for review and approval. Where the CAE believes that the level of agreed resources will impact adversely on the provision of the annual internal audit opinion, the consequences must be brought to the attention of the board .	Paul Darby Alan Patrickson	The Joint Committee
2060	Reporting to Senior Management and the Board	The CAE must report periodically to senior management and the board on the internal audit activity's purpose, authority, responsibility and performance relative to its plan. Reporting must include significant risk exposures and control issues, including fraud risks governance issues and other matters needed or requested by senior management and the board.	Paul Darby Alan Patrickson	The Joint Committee
2600	Communicating the Acceptance of Risk	When the CAE concludes that management has accepted a low level of risk that may be unacceptable to the organisation, the CAE must discuss the matter with senior management . If the CAE determines that the matter has not been resolved, the CAE must communicate the matter to the board .	Paul Darby Alan Patrickson	The Joint Committee

NB. The role of Chief Audit Executive referred to in the Standards is that undertaken by the Chief Internal Auditor and Corporate Fraud Manager.

**Central Durham Crematorium
Joint Committee**

27 September 2023

**Annual Review of the System of
Internal Audit**



**Report of Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods
and Climate Change and Paul Darby, Corporate Director of
Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Joint Committee of a review of the effectiveness of the Durham County Council Internal Audit Service, which was carried out by the County Council's Audit Committee in June 2023.

Executive Summary

**Conformance with UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards
(PSIAS)**

2. In April 2013, the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) became effective. The standards apply to Internal Audit in all parts of the public sector in the UK and are mandatory. The standards are intended to reflect that "a professional, independent and objective internal audit service is one of the key elements of good governance". The standards were revised from 01 April 2017 and it is these standards that Internal Audit works to.

Summary of the outcomes from the review carried out by DCC Audit Committee

3. The DCC Audit Committee considered, at its meeting on 30 June 2023, a report presented by the Chief Internal Auditor and Corporate Fraud Manager that provided evidence on the effectiveness of the service during 2022/23.
4. It is a requirement for the service to be externally assessed once every five years. The latest external assessment, carried out by the Chartered Institute of Public and Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), in February 2022, concluded that 'Durham County Council's Internal Audit Service's self-assessment is accurate and as such we conclude that they FULLY CONFORM to the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the CIPFA Local Government Application Note'.
5. Internal Audit then completed a further self-assessment, for 2022/23, against the key elements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and CIPFA Local Government Application Note, which demonstrated that the Section continues to conform to the Code's requirements and was based on the revised PSIAS brought into effect on 01 April 2017.

Recommendation

6. The Joint Committee is asked to note:
 - The information provided that demonstrates the efficiency and effectiveness of the Durham County Council Internal Audit Service.

Background

7. The Joint Committee's internal audit provider is Durham County Council Internal Audit Services. The service is delivered in accordance with a Service Level Agreement (SLA) approved by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 29 September 2022.
8. In order to place reliance on the work of internal audit, and the annual audit opinion provided through it on the adequacy and effectiveness of the control environment operating across the Joint Committee, it is important that the Joint Committee is assured that the service is effective.
9. Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Durham County Council as a large public body is required to carry out an annual review of the effectiveness of its Internal Audit Service. Whilst there is no such legal requirement for the Joint Committee as a small body under these regulations to do likewise, assurance can be provided on the effectiveness of the service provided to the Joint Committee from this review.

Other useful documents

Report to DCC Audit Committee 30 June 2023

Contact: Paul Monaghan, Audit Manager Tel: 03000 2699662

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Completion of the self-assessment review ensures compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Finance

The broad programme of work undertaken by Internal Audit supports the Joint Committee in maintaining safe and efficient arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs Consultation

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

There are no direct risk implications arising for the Joint Committee as a result of this report, although we aim through our planning arrangements to review the adequacy and effectiveness of the risk management arrangements in place.

Procurement

None.

Climate Change

Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee



27 September 2023

Budget Strategy Report



Joint Report of

Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change

Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report outlines a range of issues that will need to be considered as part of medium-term financial planning for the Central Durham Crematorium. The report sets out proposals to increase the fees and charges from 2024/25 together with details of the budget planning assumptions over the coming three years. The views of the committee on these issues are sought in advance of the 2024/25 budget setting process.

Executive summary

- 2 The current level of surplus distribution to partner authorities was implemented on 1 April 2021 following Members consideration of the Budget Strategy report in September 2020 and the 2021/22 budget in January 2021.
- 3 There has been significant capital investment of over £4.5 million at Central Durham Crematorium since Local Government Reorganisation in 2009, with further investments of nearly £2.5 million planned for the coming years in line with the Service Asset Management Plan.
- 4 The next cremator replacement works are not scheduled until 2032 and would cost in the region of £2.4 million in addition to the investment costs mentioned in the previous paragraph.

- 5 Fees and charges, which are harmonised with Mountsett Crematorium are currently £795 and a proposed increase of £30 in 2024/25 to £825 would still mean that they remain among the lowest in comparison with neighbouring facilities and well below the average of £892.
- 6 The current surplus distributed is £856,250 per year (£685,000 to Durham County Council and £171,250 to Spennymoor Town Council). From 2024/25 onwards it is proposed that this will be increased to £931,250 per year (£745,000 to Durham County Council and £186,250 to Spennymoor Town Council).
- 7 An updated robust medium-term budget forecast has been produced for the Joint Committee and this demonstrates that the reserve balances of the Joint Committee are still projected to be healthy and sufficient to meet the liabilities and commitments of the Joint Committee for the coming years.

Recommendation(s)

- 8 It is recommended that Members of the Joint Committee: -
 - i. note and consider the contents of the report;
 - ii. approve the proposed increase in the fees and charges, as identified in the report;
 - iii. approve the proposed increase in the surplus redistribution to Durham County Council and Spennymoor Town Council; and
 - iv. agree to review the budget strategy in September 2024 in preparation for the 2025/26 budget setting year.

Background

- 9 The current level of surplus distribution to partner authorities was implemented on 1 April 2021 following Members consideration of the Budget Strategy report in September 2020 and the Budget Setting report in January 2021.
- 10 The earmarked reserves of the Joint Committee have built up significantly in recent years, in advance of the next planned cremator replacement programme, which is estimated for 2032. Increases to the fees and charges at the crematorium, which are harmonised with Mountsett Crematorium, have also been kept as low as prudently possible over recent years, resulting in the current charges continuing to be amongst the lowest of all neighbouring facilities and significantly below the regional average.

Capital Investment at the Crematorium

- 11 Since Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in 2009 there has been significant investment in the Central Durham Crematorium totalling £4,514,406 with the major improvement works including:

Project	Cost £
New additional car parking	182,899
Crematorium extension	953,983
New cremators and mercury abatement plant	1,292,918
Improvement to office facilities	145,000
Alterations to book of remembrance room	171,463
Refurbishment of chapel	122,698
Refurbishment of internal waiting room	131,819
Replacement of copper roofing canopies	277,184
Creation of staff car parking area	56,466
Carry out energy improvement works	59,048
Improvements to office accommodation	183,950
Carry out enlarging of cremator 1	61,500
Install new gates and adjust roadway	68,165
Replacement of cooler cassettes	157,331
Enlargement of cremator 2	82,680

- 12 The estimated costs of current and future improvements, as identified in the Service Asset Management Plan, together with proposed funding arrangements are summarised in the table below:

Year	Estimated SAMP Investments	Proposed Funding Arrangements	
		Premises Budget £	Earmarked Reserves £
2023/24	176,923	22,319	154,604
2024/25	1,648,130	129,400	1,518,730
2025/26	123,000	10,400	112,600
2026/27	123,000	35,400	87,600
2027 onwards	401,400	138,600	262,800
Total	2,472,453	336,119	2,136,334

- 13 In addition to the works above identified in the SAMP, an indicative amount of £33,556 has been allowed for the replacement of the current Burial and Cremation Administration software system in 2024/25. It has been assumed that this will be funded from earmarked reserves.

Cremator Replacement

- 14 The three cremators at the crematorium were installed in 2012/13, with full mercury abatement equipment being installed at that time. They have a life expectancy of 20 years, so the next cremator replacement programme is not scheduled until approximately 2032.
- 15 Based upon the cremator replacement works recently undertaken at Mountsett Crematorium it is estimated that the next cremator replacement programme at Durham would cost in the region of £2.4 million, based upon today's market prices. However, these requirements could be subject to change in the event of future changes in legislation affecting the provision of crematorium services.

Earmarked Reserves

- 16 The projected reserves and balances of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee at 31 March 2024 are as follows:

Earmarked Reserve	Balance @	Balance @
	1 April 23	31 Mar 24
	£	£
General Reserve	(548,175)	(581,400)
Masterplan Memorial Garden	(81,250)	0
Major Capital Works	(1,652,475)	(1,791,396)
Cremator Reline Reserve	(109,943)	(134,943)
Small Plant	(13,405)	(15,405)
Total	(2,405,248)	(2,523,144)

Fees and Charges

- 17 The fees and charges at Central Durham Crematorium are harmonised with those at the Mountsett Crematorium. The previous Budget Strategy report, approved by Members in October 2020 considered cremation fee increases of £10 in both 2022/23 and 2023/24. However, due to increasing levels of pay and price inflation the budgeted cremation fee increases for both years was set at a higher level.
- 18 A £20 (2.8%) increase was applied in 2021/22, a £25 (3.4%) increase in 2022/23 and a £30 (3.92%) increase in 2023/24 resulting in the current budgeted cremation fee (inclusive of medical referee's fees) being £795.
- 19 The current cremation fees for crematoria across the region, shown in the table below, indicates an average cremation fee of £892 (inclusive of medical referees fees and environmental surcharge where appropriate) across the region:

Crematorium	Cremation Fee
Gateshead	£794
Stockton	£865
North Tyneside	£854
South Tyneside	£816
Middlesbrough	£902
Northumberland	£850
Sunderland	£894
Newcastle	£939
Coundon	£1,030
Hartlepool	£890
Darlington	£982
Average	£892

- 20 The projected number of cremations at the Central Durham Crematorium in 2023/24 is 2,505, which will be 305 more than the budgeted position of 2,200. The number of cremations at Durham in the previous five years is shown below:

Year	Cremations
2018/19	2,392
2019/20	2,350
2020/21	2,738
2021/22	2,306
2022/23	2,513

- 21 The table below indicates how much additional income could be generated annually with fee increases ranging from £20 (2.5%) to £65 (8.2%) and with incremental increases in the budgeted cremation numbers, compared to the current budgeted position of 2,200. Therefore if the budgeted number of cremations remain at 2,200 the crematorium would receive an extra £22,000 for every £10 increase in the cremation fee.

No. of Cremations	Increase in fees £						
	£20 2.52%	£25 3.14%	£30 3.77%	£35 4.40%	£45 5.66%	£55 6.92%	£65 8.18%
2,200	£44,000	£55,000	£66,000	£77,000	£99,000	£121,000	£143,000
2,250	£84,750	£96,000	£107,250	£118,500	£141,000	£163,500	£186,000
2,300	£125,500	£137,000	£148,500	£160,000	£183,000	£206,000	£229,000
2,350	£166,250	£178,000	£189,750	£201,500	£225,000	£248,500	£272,000
2,400	£207,000	£219,000	£231,000	£243,000	£267,000	£291,000	£315,000
2,450	£247,750	£260,000	£272,250	£284,500	£309,000	£333,500	£358,000
2,500	£288,500	£301,000	£313,500	£326,000	£351,000	£376,000	£401,000

- 22 Should the 2024/25 cremation fees be increased by £30 (3.77%), and assuming a prudent forecast of 2,200 cremations again next year, an additional £66,000 income would be generated by the Joint Committee next year and this potential increase has been built into the medium term budget forecasts at this stage.
- 23 Members may wish to consider keeping the fees for direct cremations and early discounted slots the same as current levels to reduce the cost of living impact on service users.
- 24 Once other crematoria apply their fee increases for next year, the proposed 2024/25 cremation fee of £825 will remain among the lowest of all other neighbouring facilities in the region and £205

below the current charge at the nearest facility at Coundon. The benchmarking figures above are before other local authorities increase their cremation fees, so the gap between Durham and neighbouring facilities is likely to continue to grow.

Surplus Redistribution

- 25 Members will recall that the Constitution sets out the constituent authority title deeds and subsequent surplus distribution arrangements to Durham County Council (DCC) / Spennymoor Town Council (STC) on an 80 / 20 basis.
- 26 The current surplus distributed is £856,250 per year (£685,000 to DCC and £171,250 to STC).
- 27 The table below shows the levels of surplus redistribution over the last five years.

Constituent Authority	Distributable Surplus £				
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Durham County Council	445,000	510,000	685,000	685,000	685,000
Spennymoor Town Council	111,250	127,500	171,250	171,250	171,250
Total	556,250	637,500	856,250	856,250	856,250

- 28 From 2024/25 onwards it is proposed that this will be increased to £931,250 per year (£745,000 to Durham County Council and £186,250 to Spennymoor Town Council) and this has been factored into the medium-term budget forecasts.

Medium Term Budget Forecast

- 29 In terms of financial modelling for the Central Durham Crematorium, the following working assumptions have been applied:
- Premises budgets have been adjusted for priority repair costs (in line with the SAMP requirements);
 - Contributions from earmarked reserves to fund the planned capital works (in line with the SAMP) have been built into the budget forecast;
 - A £30 (3.77%) increase per cremation has been factored into the income budget from 2024/25 and then £30 (3.64%) in 2025/26 and £30 (3.51%) in 2026/27,

- An increase to the surplus redistribution to the constituent authorities of £60,000 for Durham County Council and £15,000 for Spennymoor Town Council has been assumed in the budget forecast,
- Expenditure budgets have been increased to reflect pay inflation in line with Durham County Council's MTFP model at 4% in 2024/25, 1.75% in 2025/26 and 1.5% in 2026/27,
- Expenditure budgets have been increased to reflect price inflation (non-pay) in line with Durham County Council's MTFP model at 2% in 2024/25, 1.5% in 2025/26 and 1.5% in 2026/27,
- The estimated / budgeted level of cremations remains at 2,200 per annum;

30 The table below provides a financial summary of the revenue budget, capital budget and forecast earmarked reserves of the Joint Committee projected for the next three financial years:

Revenue Budget	Base Budget 2023/24 £	Forecast Budget 2023/24 £	Base Budget 2024/25 £	Base Budget 2025/26 £	Base Budget 2026/27 £
Expenditure	919,938	1,079,127	1,106,361	1,002,960	1,042,849
Income	(1,938,000)	(2,232,876)	(2,007,127)	(2,075,508)	(2,143,935)
Net Income	(1,018,062)	(1,153,749)	(900,767)	(1,072,547)	(1,101,086)
Transfer to / (from) Reserves					
Masterplan Memorial Garden	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Major Capital Works	129,812	265,499	(62,483)	109,297	137,836
Cremator Reline Reserve	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Small Plant	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Distributed Surplus	(856,250)	(856,250)	(931,250)	(931,250)	(931,250)
80% Durham CC	685,000	685,000	745,000	745,000	745,000
20% Spennymoor Council	171,250	171,250	186,250	186,250	186,250

Capital Budget	Budget 2023/24 £	Forecast 2023/24 £	Budget 2024/25 £	Budget 2025/26 £	Budget 2026/27 £
Improvements to fountain	40,000	60,000			
Creation of Memorial Garden	12,000	12,000			
Excess heat works	83,874	83,874			
Resin pathway around garden	18,730	18,730	18,730		
Resomation system/extension	0	5,000	1,500,000		
Software purchase			33,556		
Re-lining of cremator				87,600	
Resin pathway - turning circle				25,000	
Re-lining of cremator					87,600
Total Spend	154,604	179,604	1,552,286	112,600	87,600
Transfer to / (from) Reserves					
Masterplan Memorial Garden	(86,250)	(86,250)			
Major Capital Works	(68,354)	(93,354)	(1,552,286)	(25,000)	
Cremator Reline Reserve				(87,600)	(87,600)
Small Plant Reserve					

Earmarked Reserve	Balance @ 1 April 2023 £	Balance @ 31 March 2024 £	Balance @ 31 March 2025 £	Balance @ 31 March 2026 £	Balance @ 31 March 2027 £
General Reserve	(548,175)	(581,400)	(602,138)	(622,652)	(643,180)
Masterplan Memorial Garden	(81,250)	0	(5,000)	(10,000)	(15,000)
Major Capital Works	(1,652,475)	(1,791,396)	(155,889)	(219,672)	(336,980)
Cremator Reline Reserve	(109,943)	(134,943)	(159,943)	(97,343)	(34,743)
Small Plant	(13,405)	(15,405)	(17,405)	(19,405)	(21,405)
Total	(2,405,248)	(2,523,144)	(940,375)	(969,072)	(1,051,308)

Conclusion

- 31 The budget forecast demonstrates that having incorporated all of the proposed changes, including the planned introduction of resomation at the crematorium, the reserve balances of the Joint Committee are demonstrating a sound financial position for the coming years.

Contact: Philip Curran

Tel: 03000 261967

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The outturn proposals contained within this report have been prepared in accordance with standard accounting policies and procedures.

Finance

Full details of the year to date and projected outturn financial performance of the Central Durham Crematorium are included within the body of the report.

Consultation

None. However, Officers of Spennymoor Town Council were provided with a copy of the report and given opportunity to comments / raise any detailed queries on the contents of this report in advance of circulation to members of the CDCJC.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

The figures contained within this report have been extracted from the General Ledger and have been scrutinised and supplemented with information supplied by the Bereavement Services Manager. The projected outturn has been produced taking into consideration the spend to date, trend data and market intelligence, and includes an element of prudence. This, together with

the information supplied by the Bereavement Services Manager, should mitigate the risks associated with achievement of the forecast outturn position.

Procurement

None.

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