



Annual Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee

Date **Thursday 29 June 2023**

Time **2.00 pm**

Venue **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham**

Business

Part A

Items which are open to the Public and Press

1. Membership of the Joint Committee
2. Appointment of Chair
3. Appointment of Vice-Chair
4. Apologies for Absence
5. Substitute Members
6. Minutes of the meeting held 26 April 2023 (Pages 5 - 8)
7. Declarations of Interest, if any
8. Changes to the Constitution/Terms of Reference (Pages 9 - 24)
Report of the Clerk to the Joint Committee
9. Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 (Pages 25 - 42)
Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee
10. Revenue Outturn and Joint Committees Annual Return for the Financial Year Ended 31 March 2023 (Pages 43 - 62)
Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee
11. Quarterly Performance and Operational Report - 1 April to 31 May 2023 (Pages 63 - 70)
Report of the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar
12. Forward Plan 2023/24 (Pages 71 - 76)
Report of the Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee

13. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration
14. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information

Part B

Items during which it is considered the meeting will not be open to the public (consideration of exempt or confidential information)

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

Helen Lynch
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
21 June 2023

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

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

Contact: Jo March

Tel: 03000 269 709

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

CENTRAL DURHAM CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of **Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee** held in **Committee Room 1A , County Hall, Durham** on **Wednesday 26 April 2023** at **2.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor N Foster (Chair)

Durham County Council:

Councillors J Chaplow (Vice-Chair), D Brown, S Quinn, K Robson, A Simpson, M Stead, C Varty and M Wilson

Spennymoor Town Council:

Town Councillors C Maddison and D Ranyard

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Blakey and K Fantarrow.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising:

The Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar advised that he had visited the Resomation facility at Herrington Crematorium. It was expected that the facility would be completed and operational in May 2023 and he would make arrangements for Members to visit the facilities.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Quarterly Performance and Operational Report

The Joint Committee received a report of the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar which provided Members with 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 742 cremations undertaken during the period 1 January to 31 March 2023, compared to 664 in the comparable period last year, an increase of 78 cremations for the period. It was noted that 224 families were from Durham, 40 from Spennymoor and 478 families were from other areas. The total number of cremations in 2022/23 was 2,513 compared with 2,306 in 2021/22, an increase of 207 cremations.

The number and value of memorial plaques sold were 97 / £26,798 compared to 93 / £24,412 in the comparable period last year, an increase of 4 memorials sold and £2,386 in terms of income generated.

It was reported that the Joint Conference of the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities and the Cremation Society of Great Britain conference was being held at Southampton from Monday 26 June to Wednesday 28 June 2023. Arrangements were to be made for the Chair and Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar to attend the conference and represent the Joint Committee.

Referring to the Recycling of Metals Scheme, it was noted that ManHealth and the Teenage Cancer Trust each received a payment of £6,000 which was presented by the Chair in April 2023. It was noted that a new company was being trialled with regards to collection of metals for recycling which could increase distribution for charities.

Following queries from Town Councillors D Ranyard and C Maddison, the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar explained how the Recycling Metals Scheme worked and noted that the new local company offered more monetary value for the metals which would be shared out from the Scheme to benefit local charities. He added that there had been a couple of occasions where requests had been made for metals to be returned to families.

Resolved:

- (i) That the current performance of the crematorium be noted;
- (ii) That attendance at the Joint Conference of the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities and the Cremation Society of Great Britain be noted;
- (iii) That the distribution of recycling income to the respective charities be noted.

6 Financial Monitoring Report - Provisional Outturn as at 31 March 2023

The Joint Committee received a joint report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and the Corporate Director Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee that provided details of the provisional outturn position for 2022/23 and the projected level of reserves and balances at 31 March 2023 (for copy see file of minutes).

Town Councillor C Maddison noted the healthy reserve balance and asked if the donation to St. Cuthberts could be increased. The Chair explained that the donations were from members of the public from the sale of Christmas tree decorations provided by St. Cuthberts Hospice.

Responding to a query from Town Councillor D Ranyard regarding the chapel dome underspend, the Principal Accountant advised that capital spends were identified a year in advance and the cost previously reported was an estimate. The project had now been completed and final costs confirmed which was less than anticipated.

Resolved:

That the April 2022 to March 2023 financial monitoring report and associated provisional revenue and capital outturn positions at 31 March 2023, including the projected year position with regards to the reserves and balances of the Joint Committee be noted.

7 Risk Register Update 2022/23 Review 2

The Joint Committee received a joint report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee that provided details of the outcome of the half-yearly risk review in March 2023 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the content of the report and the updated position be noted.

8 Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

The Joint Committee received a report of the Chief Internal Auditor and Corporate Fraud Manager that provided an opinion which made conclusions on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Committee's Framework of Governance, Risk Management and Control (for copy see file of minutes).

The Audit Manager advised that the report provided a 'Substantial' overall assurance opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and internal control arrangements operating across the

Joint Committee in 2022/23 and the 'Substantial' opinion identified that there was a sound system of control.

Responding to questions from Town Councillor D Ranyard regarding the best practice recommendations, the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar confirmed that the Business Continuity Plan review date had been corrected and the recommendations regarding purchase orders had been implemented.

Resolved:

That the content of the Annual Internal Audit Report and the overall 'Substantial' opinion provided on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and control environment for 2022/23 be noted.

9 Any Other Business

Annual Meeting Date Change

The Chair suggested that the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee Annual meeting date be changed due to the Crematorium Conference and suggested that the meeting be held on Thursday 29 June 2023 at 2.00pm. The Committee Services Officer would notify Members when arrangements had been made.

**Central Durham Crematorium
Joint Committee**

29 June 2023

**Changes to Constitution/Terms of
Reference**



Report of the Clerk to the Joint Committee

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides details of a review of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee's Constitution, which in accordance with the Annual Governance Statement requirements is reviewed on an annual basis at the Joint Committee's Annual General Meeting.

Executive Summary

2. The Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee has its own terms of reference and Constitution. These were last presented to and approved by members on 26th June 2019 and confirmed in an Agreement under Seal dated 4th July 2019.
3. Members gave a commitment to review the Constitution on an annual basis, as part of the approval process for the Annual Governance Statement.

Recommendation(s)

4. It is recommended that:-
 - (i) The Committee note the outcome of the review of the Constitution of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee in accordance with the requirements of the Annual Governance Statement; and reapprove the Constitution as set out in Appendix 2.

Background Information

5. The Constitution has been reviewed by the Clerk to the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.
6. Members will recall that the Constitution, as adopted in 2013 and updated in 2019, retained the constituent authority legal titles, expenditure and subsequent surplus distribution arrangements to Durham County Council/Spennymoor Town Council on an 80/20 basis: and policies concerning the transfers to reserves of retained surpluses.
7. The constituent authority membership appointments and asset ownership remain as per the original constitution of 3 May 1983.
8. The Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee will continue to operate within the procedure rules and financial regulations of the lead partner authority, Durham County Council, who will continue to be responsible for the management of the facility and for supporting the Joint Committee.

Contact: Sarah Grigor, Clerk to the
Joint Committee

Tel: 03000 269 676

Email:
sarah.grigor@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Joint Crematorium Committee of Durham and Mountsett were set up further to section 102 (1)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972. Section 8.02(a) of Durham County Council Constitution, allows the Council to establish joint arrangements which may involve the appointment of a joint committee with other local authorities

Finance

There are no financial implications associated with this report

Consultation

There is no requirement for Consultation

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

None specific within the report.

Procurement

There are no procurement issues associated with this report.

Appendix 2 Durham Crematorium Constitution dated 4th July 2019

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Dated 4th July. **2019**

**CENTRAL DURHAM
CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE**

AGREEMENT

for the constitution of the above named Joint Committee

**Helen Lynch
Head of Legal and Democratic Services**

A G R E E M E N T

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT made the day of
Two Thousand and Nineteen **BETWEEN THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF
DURHAM** (hereinafter referred to as "the Durham County Council") of the one
part and **THE TOWN COUNCIL OF SPENNYMOOR** (hereinafter referred to as
"the Town Council of Spennymoor") of the other part.

WHEREAS:

- (1) The Councils being parties hereto may by Section 4 of the Cremation Act 1902 as amended by the Cremation Act 1952 respectively provide and maintain crematoria.
- (2) The Authorities to this Agreement have by their respective Councils (Durham County Council and Spennymoor Town Council) and by virtue of Section 102(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 2000 the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2000 the Local Authorities and all and every power enabling them agreed and resolved to constitute a joint committee to exercise the powers which each of the Authorities hereto might respectively have exercised by virtue of the Cremation Acts 1902 and 1952 for the provision of running, maintenance and management of the existing Crematorium at Durham within the County of Durham.
- (3) The said Authorities now wish to constitute the said Joint Committee on the terms set out below and to the intent that this of Agreement between the said Authorities and dated the third day of May one thousand nine hundred and eighty three shall cease to have effect.
- (4) By Section 103 of the Local Government Act 1972 is it provided that the expenses of a Joint Committee appointed thereunder shall be defrayed by appointing authorities in such proportions as they may agree upon.
- (5) The said Councils have each of them passed a resolution to enter into an Agreement as hereinafter appearing.

Interpretation

- (6) In this Agreement the following expressions have the meanings set out below, unless the contract otherwise requires.

"Authority", either Durham County Council or Spennymoor Town Council and "Authorities" shall be construed accordingly.

"Annual meeting", the annual meeting of the Joint Committee held each year in accordance with paragraph 6.1 of this Agreement.

"Chief Executive", the head of an Authority's paid service being the person designated as such under Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1980.

"Clerk", the person appointed by virtue of paragraph 6.1 to carry out certain duties allocated by this Agreement.

“Council”, the Council of elected members of one or other of the Authorities to this Agreement.

“Crematorium”, the crematorium known as Central Durham Crematorium which includes all buildings, grounds, equipment and other property appurtenant there.

“Financial year”, the period running from 1 April in one calendar year until 31 March in the next calendar year (inclusive).

“Joint Committee”, the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee constituted by this Agreement.

“Member”, unless the context otherwise so requires, a member of the Joint Committee.

“Monitoring Officer”, Durham County Council’s Head of Legal and Democratic Services being the person designated under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 or the Officer’s nominated deputy in the case of absence or illness.

“Ordinary Meeting”, any meeting of the Joint Committee that is not an Annual Meeting or a Special Meeting.

“Principal Office” in the case of Durham County Council, the Council Offices, County Hall, Durham and in the case of Spennymoor Town Council the Town Hall, Spennymoor.

“Special Meeting”, a meeting of the Joint Committee convened in accordance with paragraph of this Agreement.

The Crematorium site is now vested in Durham County Council by virtue of Section 120(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and all and every power so enabling and registered at HM Land Registry with Title Absolute under Title Number.

The Agreement

NOW IT IS HEREBY AGREED by and between the parties hereto in pursuance of the powers conferred upon them by virtue of the hereinbefore recited enactments and of every other power (if any) them respectively hereunto enabling as follows that is to say:-

- 1 There shall be constituted a Joint Committee (hereinafter referred to as the “Joint Committee” of both the Councils being parties hereto (hereinafter collectively referred to as the two Councils) consisting of members appointed under provisions hereof and having the functions, powers and duties upon and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter mentioned.
- 2 The name of the Joint Committee shall be the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

3 Membership of Joint Committee

3.1 The Joint Committee shall consist of Members appointed by each of the two Councils from amongst their respective Members in the following manner that is to say:-

<u>Appointing Council</u>	<u>Number of Members to be Appointed</u>
Durham County Council	12
Spennymoor Town Council	3

3.2 The whole number of Members of the Joint Committee shall retire on the first Thursday in May 2013 and on the first Thursday in May of every fourth year thereafter.

3.3 Each of the two Councils shall in respect of Members to retire on the first Thursday of May 2013 appoint the said Members at the first convenient meeting of such Council held after the execution of this Agreement.

3.4 In the year 2013 and every fourth year thereafter being a year in which Members of the Joint Committee shall retire each of the two Councils shall appoint Members of the Joint Committee as herein provided **at the first convenient meeting of such Councils.**

3.5 The two Councils may revoke an appointment of any Member at any time.

3.6 If either Authority does not appoint the number of Members which it is entitled to appoint the other Members of the Joint Committee shall be competent to carry out the business pursuant to the Agreement.

3.7 Any person who is a member of the Council of both Authorities shall only represent the first Authority to appoint him or her as a Member and any subsequent appointment by the other Authority shall be void.

3.8 Without prejudice to the generality of sub-clause 5 of this clause if a Member fails to attend four consecutive meetings of the Joint Committee such fact shall be reported by the Clerk to the Joint Committee to the Council by whom that Member was appointed and the Council may thereupon terminate the Member's term of office notwithstanding any other provision in this Agreement contained and any such termination of appointment shall be reported to the Clerk to the Joint Committee by the Council concerned.

3.9 If by reason of the operation of statutory provisions failure to attend meetings as hereinbefore mentioned or otherwise there shall be a vacancy and the Members of the Joint Committee as herein provided the Council out of whose appointment the vacancy occurs may thereupon appoint another Member to fill such vacancy and the person so appointed shall remain a Member of the Joint Committee until and shall retire on the date of the normal retirement under the provisions of this Agreement of the member whose place he or she fills.

4 Powers of the Joint Committee

The two Councils hereby delegate to the Joint Committee upon and subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement all powers of the two councils with respect to the provisions and maintenance of crematoria in the area of each of them other than powers of borrowing money, levying or issuing a precept for a rate of holding land and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing the Joint Committee shall to the exclusion of the two Councils have all the powers of each of the two Councils under the Cremation Act 1902 and 1952 and under any Act of Parliament or statutory instruments with respect to the provision of maintenance of crematoria.

5 Meetings of the Joint Committee

- 5.1 The Joint Committee shall hold four meetings at least in every year for the transaction of general business and may hold such other meetings including a visit to the Crematorium premises at such intervals as it may find necessary or convenient.
- 5.2 The Joint Committee shall elect annually from amongst its Members a Vice Chairman and shall appoint the outgoing Vice Chairman as Chairman.
- 5.3 The Election of the Chairman and Vice Chairman shall be respectively the first and second business transacted at the first meeting of the Joint Committee after the First June in any year (hereinafter referred to as the Annual Meeting).
- 5.4 So far as it is practicable to do so the Chairmanship and Vice Chairmanship shall alternate each year between a Member of Spennymoor Town Council and a Member of Durham County Council.
- 5.5 The Chairman of the Joint Committee shall, unless he or she resigns or becomes disqualified continue in office until his or her successor becomes entitled to act as Chairman. The Vice Chairman of the Joint Committee shall unless he or she resigns or becomes disqualified hold office immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Joint Committee at the next meeting of the Joint Committee.
- 5.6 If there is equality of votes as the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair then the Chairman for the time being of that meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

6 Notice of Meeting

- 6.1 The Joint Committee must appoint a Clerk and may appoint and pay such officers and servants as it may deem necessary for the purpose of carrying out its duties under this Agreement.
- 6.2 Sections 114 to 119 of the Local Government Act 1972 shall apply to an officer of the Joint Committee in the same manner as the said sections

apply to an officer of a local authority with such modifications as are necessary to make them applicable to officers of the Joint Committee.

- 6.3 Ordinary meetings and Annual meetings of the Joint Committee shall be convened by the Clerk who shall deliver notice thereof to each Member at least five clear days before the date of the meeting. This notice will give the date, time and place of each meeting and specify the business to be transacted.
- 6.4 With reference to the Notice referred to in paragraph 6.3 the Clerk shall send a copy of the agenda for the meeting which shall include:-
- Provision for the declaration of interests by Members for the purposes of the Code of Conduct issued under Section 50 of the Local Government Act 2000;
 - All items of business which have been, or are deemed to have been, referred to the Joint Committee by a Council resolution of either Authority
 - All reports submitted by any officer of either Authority, and
 - Any items of business directed to be included by the person appointed to preside at the meeting.
- 6.5 The quorum of a meeting will be one quarter of the whole number of Members (4 Members). Provided that there is at least one Member present from each Authority. During any meeting if the Chairman counts the number of Members present and declares there is not a quorum present, then the meeting will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date to be 'fixed' by the Chairman'. If he/she does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.
- 6.6 The Joint Committee and every officer thereof who is by reason of his office entrusted with the custody or control of money shall keep accounts of all money received by the Joint Committee or any such officer and all expenditure thereof by it or him as may be required for the purpose of Part VIII of the Local Government Act 1972 and Part III of the Local Government Finance Act 1982.
- 6.7 No act or proceeding of the Joint Committee shall be questioned on account of any vacancy or on account of any defect in the appointment of any Member.
- 6.8 The Chair and two members of the Joint Committee may at any time by notice specifying the business to be transacted and sent to the Clerk require a Special Meeting of the Joint Committee to be convened and the Clerk shall accordingly convene a special meeting which shall be held within thirty clear days of receipt by the Clerk of the said notice.
- 6.9 The Clerk shall give Members of the Joint Committee at least five clear days notice of the Special Meeting and such notice shall specify the business proposed to be transacted.

- 6.10 No business shall be transacted at a Special Meeting other than that specified in the notice sent to the Clerk and referred to in sub-clause 6.9 above.
- 6.11 Any member who is unable to attend a meeting of the Joint Committee for any reason may appoint another member of the relevant authority of which he is a member as a substitute member provided notification of the named substitute is given to the Clerk (including by electronic means), before four o'clock on the day before the meeting in question and thereon the substitute member shall be entitled to attend that meeting only and (subject to the requirements relating to the declaration of interests contained in the Code of Conduct of the Council of which he is a member) shall be entitled to speak and vote on all items of business. A member may only substitute another member from the relevant authority of which he is a member.

Chair at Meetings

- 6.12 The Chair or in his absence the Vice Chair shall preside at every meeting provided that if both the Chair and the Vice Chair are absent the Members present shall elect another Member of the Joint Committee who shall preside at that meeting.

Voting

7 Majority

- 7.1 Unless this Agreement provides otherwise, any matter will be decided by a simply majority of those Members voting and present in the room at the time the question was put.

Chairman's Casting Vote

- 7.2 If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chairman will have a second or casting vote. There will be no restriction on how the Chairman chooses to exercise a casting vote.

Method of Voting

- 7.3 Unless a recorded vote is demanded under sub-clause 7.4 the Chairman will take the vote by show of hands or if there is no dissent, by the affirmation of the meeting.

Recorded Vote

- 7.4 If 3 Members present at the meeting demand it the names for and against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be taken down in writing and entered into the minutes.

8 Minutes

- 8.1 The Clerk shall be responsible for keeping a record of attendance and a record of the business transacted at every meeting of the Joint

Committee and the minute book shall be submitted to, and signed at the next following meeting.

- 8.2 The person presiding at the next following meeting referred to in paragraph 1 above shall put the questions that the minutes be approved as a correct record of the previous meeting.
- 8.3 No discussion shall take place upon the minutes, except upon their accuracy. If no question is raised as to accuracy or if it is raised then as soon as it is disposed of, the person presiding shall sign the minutes.
- 8.4 Copies of the minutes of every meeting of the Joint Committee and any sub-committee thereof shall as soon as possible after each meeting be sent by the Clerk to each Authority.

9 **Sub-Committee**

The Joint Committee shall have power to appoint sub-committees from amongst its Members with or without delegated powers for any purpose which in its opinion could more satisfactorily be dealt with by a sub-committee.

10 **Finance**

- 10.1 The Joint Committee shall as soon may be after the conclusion of every financial year (which shall for the purposes of this Agreement be taken to be a period of twelve months ending on the thirty first day of March in any year) send to each of the two Councils a report on the operations of the Joint Committee during such financial year and a copy of the statutory statements of the Joint Committee for such financial year.
- 10.2 If the Joint Committee shall at any time require to incur capital expenditure for the acquisition of property or the construction of works or for other capital purposes in connection with the provision of crematoria then (unless the Joint Committee shall in their discretion decide to defray such expenditure out of revenue) such expenditure shall be borne by the two Council's respectively in the proportions four parts by the Durham County Council and one part by the Spennymoor Town Council **PROVIDED THAT** the Clerk of the Joint Committee shall obtain approval from both of the two Councils before the Joint Committee shall incur such expenditure.
- 10.3 That where possible any necessary borrowing be effected by the Durham County Council and that any requests for transfers of borrowing authority or capital expenditure allocation between the two Councils be made to the appropriate Minister or other authority.
- 10.4 Where any sum is to be borrowed by the County Council in pursuance of sub-clauses (1) and (2) of this clause the loan may be effected at the discretion of the Corporate Director Resources and Chief Financial Officer for the time being of the Durham County Council through the Durham County Council's loans pool in which case the loan shall be chargeable at such rates of interest and expenses as shall be applicable to such loans as prescribed by the said Corporate Director Resources

and Chief Financial Officer and the period of such loan shall be in accordance with any guidelines prescribed for the time being for loans by local authorities by the Secretary of State for the Environment or other authority.

- 10.5 Subject to any condition or conditions prescribed by either or both of the two Councils in giving consent to any capital expenditure under the proviso to sub-clause (2) of this clause the two Councils or either or them shall pay to the joint committee the amount of any sums borrowed in pursuance of this clause in such sums and at such times as the Joint Committee shall direct.
- 10.6 Subject as is hereinafter provided the Joint Committee shall from time to time pay to the two Councils or either or them the amounts of all interest and all instalments of principal or as and when the same shall become due and the cost of taking up any loans raised for such purposes by the two Councils or either of them.
- 10.7 The legal estate in all land acquired and works constructed whether by means of capital or annual expenditure for the purpose of enabling the Joint Committee to exercise its functions under the provisions of this Agreement shall be vested in the Council in whose area the same shall situate and that Council shall hold such land or works as the case may be for the purpose of provision and maintenance of crematoria expressly for the same to be maintained, controlled and managed by the Joint Committee.
- 10.8 All expenses incurred by the Joint Committee in any financial year so far as they are not paid out of income other than contributions from the two Councils under this clause shall be borne by the two Councils respectively in the proportions four parts by Durham County Council and one part by Spennymoor Town Council and such Councils shall pay to the Joint Committee such sum as the Joint Committee may estimate will be the proportion to be borne by that Council of any estimated deficit for that financial year.
- 10.9 The Joint Committee may:-
 - (a) use any part or all of any profits or surplus made in any financial year to finance capital expenditure or to redeem debt;
 - (b) carry forward part or all of such profits or surplus or reserves as is in the opinion of the Joint Committee required to meet contingencies or to defray any expenditure which may fall to be defrayed before the date on which moneys to be received by the Joint Committee whether from the two Councils in accordance with this Agreement or from the operation of the crematoria established by the Joint Committee will become available and the Joint Committee shall as soon as practicable return to the two Councils the amount of such profits or surplus or reserves not so applied by the Joint Committee in proportion to the total amounts respectively contributed by each of the two Councils towards previous deficits provided that if at any time both the two Councils shall have had the total amount of their contributions towards previous deficits

returned to them the Joint Committee shall pay all such unapplied profits or surplus to the two Councils in the same proportions in which by virtue of sub-clause (1) hereof the two Councils would have borne a deficit in that financial year had one occurred.

- 11.1 Either of the two Councils may terminate this Agreement by giving the other not less than one year's notice in writing to that effect expiring on the thirty first day of March in any year.
- 11.2 The Council which shall have given notice under sub-clause (1) of this clause shall bear the expense of settling the adjustment required by clause (12) hereof.
- 12 In the event of either of the two Councils at any time hereafter terminating this Agreement under the provisions hereinbefore contained or otherwise there shall as on the date of such termination be an adjustment between the two Councils of all property income debts liabilities and expenses then existing and of any financial relations affected by such termination and on such adjustment there shall be an adjustment of capital assets and liabilities acquired or assumed by either of the two Councils on such termination including any outstanding loans borrowed by either or both of the two Councils under clause 13 hereof and provision may then be made for the payment to either or both of the two Councils of such sum as seems equitable.
- 13 When this agreement is silent the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee will operate within the procedure rules and financial regulations of the lead partner authority, Durham County Council to ensure that the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee have effective and appropriate corporate governance arrangements and financial management arrangements in place, given the Committee's fiduciary duties in relation to the management of public resources, and Durham County Council will continue to be responsible for the management of the facility and for supporting the Joint Committee.
- 14 Subject to Section 103 (1) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 all disputed between the two Councils or between either of them and the Joint Committee on the interpretation of this Agreement and all disputes or differences in any way or at any time arising hereon (including without prejudice to the generality of these words the adjustments required by clause 17 hereof) shall be referred to some competent arbitrator agreed on by the two Councils or in the absence of agreement to be named by the Secretary of State for the Environment or his successor and the Arbitration Act 1950 or any statutory modification thereof for the time being in force shall apply to any such arbitration.
- 15 This Agreement shall come into effect on the date of its sealing when it shall in all respects supersede and replace the provisions of the Memorandum of Agreement made on the third day of May one thousand nine hundred and eighty three between Council of the City of Durham and the Town Council of Spennymoor relating to the constitution of a Joint Committee of those Councils to perform the functions of those Councils under the Cremation Act 1902 as amended by the Cremation Act 1952 and the Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008

provided 1) that any rights or liabilities arising under the said Memorandum of Agreement dated the third day of May one thousand nine hundred and eighty three prior to the coming into effect of this Memorandum of Agreement shall not be affected thereby

16 That the making of this Agreement shall not be deemed to be a withdrawal by any party from the joint committee constituted thereby

IN WITNESS whereof the Parties hereunto have caused their respective Common Seals to be affixed to this Deed the day and year first before written

EXECUTED as a **DEED** (but not)
delivered until the date of it) by)
the affixing of **THE COMMON**)
SEAL of **THE COUNTY COUNCIL**)
OF DURHAM was hereunto affixed)
BY ORDER:)

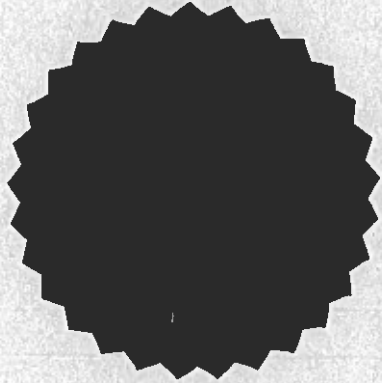
B Smith



THE COMMON SEAL of **THE**)
TOWN COUNCIL of)
SPENNYMOOR was hereunto)
affixed in the presence of:)

Town Clerk: *K H*

Mayor *E. M. Wood.*



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**Central Durham Crematorium Joint
Committee**

29 June 2023

2022/23 Annual Governance Statement



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 details of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year April 2022 to March 2023. The AGS will need to be formally approved as part of the consideration of the Joint Committees Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 and is attached at Appendix 2.

Executive summary

- 2 This report details the Joint Committee's 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement, which demonstrates how the Joint Committee complies with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the annual review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control.
- 3 The statement is contained within Section 1 of the Joint Committee's Annual Governance and Accountability Return and must be considered and approved in advance of the approval of the annual accounts.
- 4 There are seven assertions within the statement relating to good governance, financial management and internal control. Evidence is provided within the report setting out how the Joint Committee has complied with each assertion, providing Members with assurance that governance arrangements are sound and operating effectively.
- 5 Members will be aware that the annual Internal Audit report provided a Substantial overall assurance opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control operating across the Joint Committee in 2022/23. This opinion has been taken into account in providing the

assurance that the Joint Committee requires in considering the Annual Governance Statement.

Recommendation(s)

6 It is recommended that:-

- The content of the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement is noted.
- 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.

Background

- 7 The Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in a way which functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 8 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk and performance.
- 9 The Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee has adopted and operates under (via Durham County Council, its lead Authority), a Local Code of Corporate Governance which is consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) / Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Framework – ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government’. The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) explains how the Joint Committee complies with this code and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to an annual review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control.
- 10 The AGS will need to be formally signed by the Chair and Treasurer (Durham County Council’s Corporate Director: Resources) to the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee and published along with the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee’s Annual Return no later than the 30 June 2023.

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS)

- 11 The Annual Governance Statement for Joint Committees is based around a number of statements or assertions in relation to good governance, financial management and internal control.
- 12 In approving the AGS, the Joint Committee is required to provide an answer of ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to each assertion.
- 13 The Joint Committee is expected to have relevant evidence in place to support each ‘yes’ answer and would need to provide an explanation to the external auditor if it is not able to provide a ‘yes’ answer, including details of how the Joint Committee will address any identified weaknesses in its governance arrangements.

- 14 The seven assertions relevant to the Joint Committee are summarised below:
- i. We approved the accounting statements prepared in accordance with the guidance notes within this Return.*
 - ii. We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.*
 - iii. 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.*
 - iv. 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.*
 - v. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.*
 - vi. We took appropriate action on all matters raised during the year in reports from internal and external reviews.*
 - vii. 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.*
- 15 The statement is initially compiled by the Finance Manager, Neighbourhoods & Climate Change, in accordance with guidance contained within the Framework and reflects the current position within the Joint Committee.
- 16 The statement is evidence based and relies upon the review of the effectiveness of internal audit undertaken by the Audit Committee of the lead authority (Durham County Council) along with written assurances from the Bereavement Services Manager, internal audit's views, having carried out a review during the year and commented on the assurance given by each, external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates and the assurances contained within their reports to the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

17 The Statement is submitted to the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee for approval with submission to External Audit – Mazars LLP by 30 June 2023.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Accounts and Audit Regulations and Code of Practice 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 regulations.

Finance

Finance planning and management is a key component of effective corporate governance.

Consultation

Engaging local communities meets a core principle of the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Engaging local communities including hard to reach groups meets a core principle of the CIPFA/ SOLACE guidance.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

Ensuring staff are adequately trained and professionally competent to meet the core principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance.

Accommodation

Asset Management is a key component of effective corporate governance.

Risk

Risk is intrinsic to the system of internal audit and governance.

Procurement

None.

Climate Change

None.

Appendix 2: Annual Governance Statement

1 Responsibility

The Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. It also has a responsibility under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy efficiency and effectiveness. This Committee was established in 1955 by the Rural District Council of Durham and the Urban District Council of Brandon and Byshottles (transferred to the City of Durham Council, 1983) and the Urban District Council of Spennymoor (transferred to Spennymoor Town Council, 1983).

Following Local Government Reorganisation in 2009, as successor to the City of Durham Council, Durham County Council acts as the lead authority.

The Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk and performance.

The Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee has adopted a local code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework `Delivering Good Governance in Local Government` and operates under the policies and strategies including Contract Procedure Rules, Financial Procedure Rules, Financial Regulations, developed, agreed and adopted by the Durham County Council, its lead authority.

2 Requirements

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities to prepare an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) every year.

The AGS is set out in Section 1 of the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return and sets out seven statements or 'assertions'. These are summarised below:

- i. We approved the accounting statements prepared in accordance with the guidance notes within this Return.*
- ii. We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.*
- iii. 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.*
- iv. 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.*
- v. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.*
- vi. We took appropriate action on all matters raised during the year in reports from internal and external reviews.*
- vii. 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.*

In approving the Annual Governance Statement, the Joint Committee is required to provide an answer of 'yes' or 'no' to each of the above assertions.

The Joint Committee is expected to have relevant evidence in place to support each 'yes' answer and would need to provide an explanation to the external auditor if it is not able to provide a 'yes' answer, including details of how the Joint Committee will address any identified weaknesses in its governance arrangements.

This document evidences how the Joint Committee complies with the requirements behind each assertion, as set out in 'Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – A Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices'.

3 Governance Arrangements during 2022/23

The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the governance arrangements are detailed in Durham County Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance, which is documented in the Council's Constitution. This sets out the key documents and processes that determine the way the Council is directed and controlled to meet the seven statements or assertions.

The following sections demonstrate assurance that the Council has complied with each of these assertions in practice, and also highlights where we have further improved our corporate governance arrangements during 2022/23.

Assertion 1: We approved the accounting statements prepared in accordance with the guidance notes within this Return

The Joint Committee prepares a Revenue and Capital budget in advance of each financial year and robust budget setting processes are in place to support the Joint Committee's decision making process. The budget makes prudent but realistic estimates of income and expenditure, capital investment requirements and the need to maintain prudent levels of reserves.

Comprehensive monthly budgetary control systems including income and expenditure reconciliations and the preparation of regular financial reports which indicate actual expenditure against budget and forecast year end positions are also undertaken and reported quarterly to the Joint Committee, with corrective action being taken where required to address any budget issues.

The Treasurer is responsible for:

- ensuring the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Joint Committee
- establishing the Financial Management Standards and monitoring compliance with them
- reviewing the Financial Management Standards regularly to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- ensuring that proper professional practices, standards, and ethics are adhered to
- advising on the key strategic controls necessary to secure sound financial management
- ensuring that financial staffing resources are adequate to maintain adherence to these standards

- establishing a framework of documented business processes that support these financial management standards and ensuring that they are reviewed regularly

The Joint Committee prepares accounting statements each year via the Annual Return and these are supported by comprehensive working papers, supporting records and reconciliations.

Officers undertake a monthly reconciliation of the Joint Committee's bank accounts to the accounting records held on its financial management system. Quarterly budgetary control reports setting out actual spending and income against budget and details of financial performance are reported to the Joint Committee. The year end bank reconciliation also forms part of the year end external audit's limited assurance review.

The Joint Committee uses the lead authority, Durham County Council's Investment Strategy for short term investments.

The Finance Manager, Neighbourhoods & Climate Change is responsible for putting in place sound arrangements for ensuring that the Joint Committee's annual accounts are accurately prepared in accordance with statutory obligations and proper practices. The accounting statements are set out in the Annual Return and are prepared in accordance with 'Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – A Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements'. The accounting statements are approved by the Joint Committee prior to 30 June every year, in accordance with the statutory timetable set out in the Accounts and Audit regulations 2015.

Assertion 2: We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.

The Joint Committee, via its lead authority Durham County Council has in place comprehensive Financial Management Standards governing how it operates in accordance with the law and proper practices. These are supported by various policies and procedures covering specific requirements.

The Financial Management Standards cover how the Joint Committee orders goods and services, incurs liabilities, manages debtors, makes payments and handles receipts and how it puts in place efficient arrangements for safeguarding public money. A Risk Management strategy is in place supported by risk registers. Risk assessments are carried out and the registers updated on a six monthly basis. The Joint Committee employs an Internal Auditor to undertake audits of all key

services and systems and report on possible weaknesses or required improvements in internal controls. The system of internal control is risk based and focussed on key risk areas such as cash and fixed assets.

The Joint Committee, via its lead authority pays its staff in accordance with an approved establishment list and grading structure and in line with the terms and conditions as set out in the National Joint Council for Local Government Services 'Green Book' which sets out the national agreement on pay and conditions of service for local government staff. Comprehensive internal controls and checks are in place around the payroll system with significant internal audit time spent checking the accuracy and legitimacy of salary payments. The Joint Committee is responsible for ensuring compliance with all duties under employment legislation and has met its pension obligations and is not aware of any instances of non-compliance.

The Corporate Director: Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Joint Committee meets its statutory responsibilities in relation to VAT and putting in place robust arrangements for the processing of VAT and ensuring that the quarterly VAT claims are processed accurately and on time. All finance officers have had VAT training.

The Joint Committee revises its Service Asset Management Plan (SAMP) in September every year and ensures that its assets are secured, properly maintained and efficiently managed. This is demonstrated by:-

- Continuing to identify the property needs of the service to enable it to deliver its vision
- Continuing to assess the condition, sufficiency, suitability, accessibility and energy performance of the 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

The lead authority, Durham County Council has in place a Treasury Management policy and an annual Treasury Management strategy which includes the framework for the management of loans and comprises:

- Current treasury position
- Capital financing plans (including Prudential and Treasury Indicators)
- Interest Rate Outlook
- Policy on borrowing in advance of need

- Investment Strategy
- Minimum Revenue Provision Policy
- Policy on use of external service providers

The Joint Committee has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of senior managers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the annual report of the Chief Internal Auditor and Corporate Fraud Manager, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

Assertion 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.

The Joint Committee is responsible for ensuring that all relevant laws and regulations have been complied with in the undertaking of all service activity and decision making.

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.

Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee ensures that its financial management arrangements conform to CIPFA standards by:-

- Appointing as its Treasurer, the Corporate Director: Resources from the lead authority along with the Finance Manager, Neighbourhoods & Climate Change under the scheme of delegated responsibilities by the Treasurer. The Corporate Director and Finance Manager are professionally qualified and possess the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to perform effectively in both a financial and non-financial role
- Ensuring the finance function in support to the Treasurer is adequately qualified and resourced to fulfil its duties and a structure is in place that provides a line of professional accountability for the finance staff

- Ensuring that key CIPFA Codes such as the Prudential Framework for Local Authority Capital Finance and the Treasury Management Code are complied with where required
- Having a clearly articulated Medium Term Financial Plan/Reserves Strategy and Policy
- Producing Monthly Budgetary Control Reports which are considered on a quarterly basis by the Joint Committee
- Ensuring proper Internal Audit, Risk and Governance arrangements are in place
- Maintaining the Service Asset Management Plan.

Membership to the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities, which requires that each year a signed declaration, is made so that the Codes of Practice have been strictly adhered to. The Crematorium is also subject to bi-annual inspection by the regulator (DCC) who has to be satisfied that all Environmental Legislation is being implemented.

Performance monitoring undertaken through the use of comparative statistics with other crematoria and across years.

The Internal Audit Section is also subject to an annual review of its activities and performance. Evidence of the effectiveness of the Audit Service is presented to, and reviewed by the Audit Committee of the lead authority, Durham County Council. The assurance provided by the review is presented to, considered by and minuted by the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

The Joint Committee has various measures in place to ensure that it does not take any decisions during the year that may exceed its powers or contravene any laws, regulations or proper practices. The lawfulness of all decisions referred to the Joint Committee is always considered by senior officers and is clearly referenced in reports, particularly in relation to decisions involving income or expenditure. The Joint Committee is not aware of any instances of non-compliance with law and regulations during 2022/23.

The Corporate Director of Resources & Treasurer to the Joint Committee ensures full compliance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the Joint Committee's financial management, accounting and audit arrangements.

The financial results of the Joint Committee are reported to the lead authority, Durham County Council at the end of every financial year for inclusion in their accounts.

Assertion 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.

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 the decision making processes, protects the reputation and other assets of the Crematorium and is compliant with statutory and regulatory obligations.

The Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee ensures that the Risk Management approach:-

- Is conducted in accordance with the Risk Management Policy and Strategy of Durham County Council. The Bereavement Services Manager is advised by the Corporate Risk Management Working Group where strategic and operational risks are considered
- Has strategically aligned the Internal Audit and Fraud service provision to enable access to trained investigators and allow greater coverage of counter fraud work when required
- Includes a Fraud Awareness training programme undertaken by Senior Officers

Involves regular reports by internal audit to those charged with governance, to standards defined in the CIPFA Code of Practice and in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. These include the Chief Internal Auditor and Corporate Fraud Manager's independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control, at the crematorium, together with recommendations for improvement.

Risk based assessments of key financial systems (as approved in the SLA) are carried out in the final quarter of the financial year to ensure maximum coverage of the Crematorium's financial transactions and provide an informed opinion on the robustness, adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control, at the crematorium, together with recommendations for improvement.

The production of a Risk Register with regular reviews undertaken by the Bereavement Services Manager along with action plan reports are produced and approved where necessary. Full details are reported to the Joint Committee on a six monthly basis.

Service and operational risk registers are maintained through an evaluation of the gross risk based on an assessment of the impact and likelihood of the risk occurring. The net risk is evaluated on the same basis after taking into account mitigating control measures. Net risk evaluations are agreed by consensus and actions to mitigate and/or tackle issues arising from the individual risks are agreed for the upcoming year.

Risks are evaluated in a logical and straightforward process. Service risk assessments are based on the impact on finance, service delivery and stakeholders if the risk materialises, and also the likelihood that the risk will occur over a given period. Operational risk assessments are based on Durham County Council's health and safety risk assessment criteria, which include the likelihood of occurrence.

Assertion 5: We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.

The Joint Committee's internal audit provider is Durham County Council Internal Audit Services, whose service is delivered in accordance with a Service Level Agreement (SLA) approved by the Joint Committee every three years. The Internal Audit service is delivered in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 'for undertaking 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'.

The Internal Audit service applies a risk based audit approach and when determining the annual audit opinion considers the following:

- 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 Durham County 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

The Internal Audit service conforms to the requirements of the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) as evidenced through an external assessment by 'self-assessment with independent external validation'.

Durham County Council's Financial Management Standards include a specific requirement that internal auditors are given access at all reasonable times to premises, personnel, documents and assets that the auditors consider necessary for the purposes of their work. This complies with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Assertion 6: We took appropriate action on all matters raised during the year in reports from internal and external reviews.

The Joint Committee's Internal Auditor reports the conclusions and recommendations from every audit examination to the Joint Committee on an annual basis and follows up on audit recommendations in subsequent audits to ensure that they have been implemented.

The Joint Committee considers the annual review of the Annual Return from the external auditors and the Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee would put in place an action plan to deal with any matters raised, as and when necessary.

Assertion 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.

During the annual closedown of the accounts, the Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee assess whether there have been any events during the financial year or after year end, which may have potential consequences on the Joint Committee's finances. If any such events are identified, the Treasurer will determine whether the financial consequences need to be reflected in the accounting statements and disclose them as necessary.

4 Significant Governance Issues

Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee is fully committed to the principles of Corporate Governance, and has made further progress in recent months in developing its arrangements.

The Internal Audit Section sought further assurance, via its annual plan of work and review of key systems.

As a result, Internal Audit has provided **Substantial** overall assurance opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control operating across the Joint Committee in 2022/23. This opinion provides assurance that there is a sound system of control in operation and there are no significant control weaknesses that warrant inclusion within the Annual Governance Statement.

5 Assurance Statement

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework and the system of internal control by the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee and are satisfied that plans to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system are in place.

SIGNED:

Chair to the Joint Committee

29 June 2023

Corporate Director of Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee

29 June 2023

**Central Durham Crematorium Joint
Committee**

29 June 2023



**Revenue Outturn & Joint Committees
Annual Return for the Financial 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 seeks approval of the Joint Committees Annual Return (attached at Appendix 3) for Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee for the financial year ended 31 March 2023. It also includes details of the final outturn position against the approved budgets for 2022/23.

Executive summary

- 2 This report sets out details of income and expenditure in the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, 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 2022 and final position at 31 March 2023, taking into account the updated financial outturn.
- 4 The revenue outturn was a surplus (before transfers to reserves and distribution of surpluses to the partner authorities) of £1,076,344 against a budgeted surplus of £996,425, £79,919 more than the budgeted position.
- 5 The final outturn position is broadly in line with the forecast outturn position reported to the Joint Committee on 26 April 2023, with only

minor changes across a number of budget heads resulting in a £2,798 decrease to the overall net income for the year.

- 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 £16,500 was required from the Major Capital Works Reserve at year end. This transfer, in addition to the transfer in of the revenue surplus, combined with the funding of the capital programme results in a net transfer from the Major Capital Works Reserve of £57,123.
- 7 The retained reserves of the CDCJC at 31 March 2023 are £1,701,168 along with a General Reserve of £548,175, giving a total reserves and balances position of £2,249,343 at the year end.

Recommendation(s)

- 8 It is recommended that Members of the Central Durham Joint Committee:
 - Note 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.
 - Approve Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 of the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 (attached at Appendix 3).
 - Approve Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 of the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 (attached at Appendix 3).
 - The Chair, Clerk and Treasurer sign the Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 (attached at Appendix 3).

Background

- 9 The Joint Committees Annual Return will be subject to external audit by the Joint Committee's appointed external auditors, Mazars LLP and the limited assurance audit will commence on 1 July 2023. Upon completion, the auditor's report will be reported to the Joint Committee and will be made available online, along with the Return.
- 10 The attached Joint Committees Annual Return (Appendix 3) is not a compulsory requirement for the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee but is good practice. Also attached for Member's attention at Appendix 2 is the Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023.

Financial Performance

- 11 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 for the Central Durham Crematorium is included within this report.
- 12 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 revenue outturn financial performance of the Central Durham Crematorium as at 31 March 2023.

Subjective Analysis (Type of Expenditure)	Base Budget 2022/23 £	Outturn 2022/23 £	Variance Over/ (Under) £	MEMO – Provisional Outturn (26.04.23) 2022/23 £
Employees	326,530	402,393	75,863	402,393
Premises	308,130	390,879	82,749	392,229
Transport	2,800	2,641	(159)	2,641
Supplies & Services	140,715	180,031	39,316	181,109
Agency & Contracted	10,465	25,691	15,226	25,691
Capital Charges	0	0	0	0
Central Support Costs	42,185	42,185	0	42,185
Gross Expenditure	830,825	1,043,820	212,995	1,046,247
Income	(1,827,250)	(2,120,165)	(292,915)	(2,119,793)
Net Income	(996,425)	(1,076,344)	(79,919)	(1,073,546)
Transfer to / (from) Reserves				
- Masterplan Memorial Garden	5,000	5,000	0	5,000
- Major Capital Works	108,175	188,094	79,919	185,296
- Cremator Reline Reserve	25,000	25,000	0	25,000
- Small Plant	2,000	2,000	0	2,000
Distributable Surplus	(856,250)	(856,250)	0	(856,250)
80% Durham County Council	685,000	685,000	0	685,000
20% Spennymoor Town Council	171,250	171,250	0	171,250

Central Durham Crematorium Earmarked Reserves	Balance @ 1 April 2022 £	Transfers to Reserve £	Transfers from Reserve £	Balance @ 31 March 2023 £
General Reserve	(531,675)	(872,750)	856,250	(548,175)
Masterplan Memorial Garden	(76,250)	(5,000)	0	(81,250)
Major Capital Works	(1,480,881)	(188,094)	245,217	(1,423,758)
Cremator Reline Reserve	(157,755)	(25,000)	0	(182,755)
Small Plant	(11,405)	(2,000)	0	(13,405)
Total	(2,257,966)	(1,092,844)	1,101,467	(2,249,343)

Explanation of Significant Variances between Original Budget and Forecast Outturn

- 13 The final outturn position is broadly in line with the provisional outturn position reported to the Joint Committee on 26 April 2023, with only minor changes across a number of budget levels at the final outturn (£2,798 decrease) to the overall net income for the year.
- 14 The following section outlines the reasons for significant variances by subjective analysis area comparing the outturn position against the budget.

14.1 *Employees*

The outturn shows an overspend of **£75,863** in relation to employee costs. The reasons for this are identified below:

- Staffing costs are overspent by **£28,631** mainly due to the national pay settlement for 2022/23 and average holiday entitlement back pay.
- The staffing restructure approved in January 2022 has resulted in a one off overspend of **£47,232** due to ERVR costs as mentioned in the September 2022 report

14.2 *Premises*

The outturn shows an overspend of **(£82,749)** in relation to premises costs. The reasons for this are identified below:

- Energy budgets are overspent by **£48,712** due to the global increase in the cost of gas and electric.
- One off SAMP budgets relating to redecoration works in 2021/22 were delayed until the current year and it is therefore overspent by **£16,599**.
- One off SAMP budget for the improvements to cremator charging operations is no longer required and therefore underspent by **(£3,075)**.
- One off SAMP budgets for the replacement sweeper, improvements to shrub beds and re-lining of a hearth are underspent by **(£5,134)**.
- Grounds Maintenance is overspent by **£17,959** due to increased winter maintenance costs and Green Flag works.
- Other premises costs such as general cleaning, cremator repairs and servicing are overspent by **£7,689**

14.3 Supplies and Services

The outturn shows an overspend of **£39,316** in relation to supplies and services costs. The reasons for this are identified below:

- Due to the increase in cremations (highlighted later within the income section of the report), medical referee expenditure is overspent by **£8,295**.
- The Wesley music system is overspent by **£7,581** as it required a total re-wire along with the purchase of a new rack and speaker.
- Refreshments are overspent by **£5,166** due to the purchase of a new coffee machine.
- Masterplan costs are overspent by **£9,261** due to an increase in plaque sales.
- Other general office costs such as purchase of urns, cremator additives and sundries are overspent by **£9,013**.

14.4 Income

An increase in income of **(£292,915)** from the 2022/23 budget is included within the updated outturn. The reasons for this are identified below:

- The outturn includes an increase of 313 cremations compared to the budget, totalling increased income to budget of **(£201,809)**. The outturn allows for a total of 2,513 cremations against a budgeted 2,200 during 2022/23.
- Book of Remembrance, plaques, webcasting and use of chapel have overachieved by **(£37,539)**.
- Interest received has overachieved by **(£53,566)** due to rising interest rates.

Capital Programme

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

	Base Budget 2021/22 £	Revised Budget 2021/22 £	Outturn 2021/22 £	Variance to Revised Budget Over/ (Under) £
Redevelopment Works				
Carry out installation of charging points	24,000	24,000	17,834	(6,166)
Carry out feasibility into excess heat regeneration	50,000	50,000	2,981	(47,019)

	Base Budget 2021/22 £	Revised Budget 2021/22 £	Outturn 2021/22 £	Variance to Revised Budget Over/ (Under) £
Redevelopment Works				
Carry out enlargement of cremator 2	67,650	67,650	72,812	5,162
Repairs to Chapel Dome	0	20,000	3,148	(16,852)
Replacement of Cooler Cassettes	0	132,000	131,109	(891)
Feasibility Fountain works - 23/24	0	0	834	834
Total	141,650	293,650	228,717	(64,933)

The cost of the Redevelopment Works is being financed from the Major Capital Works reserve. The outturn shows an underspend of **(£64,933)** and the main reasons for this are identified below:

- The installation of the charging points was completed within budget, resulting in an underspend of £6,166.
- The feasibility into excess heat was reported to the Committee in September 2022 and has resulted in an underspend of £47,019.
- The enlargement of cremator 2 was completed during the year, however it resulted in an overspend of £5,162.
- The chapel dome repairs were originally planned for 20/21 but the works were delayed and carried forward to 22/23. The project was completed during the year and resulted in an underspend of £16,852.
- The replacement of the 3 cooler cassettes was approved in 20/21 but the work was delayed and instead replaced in the current year, resulting in a small underspend of £891.
- The fountain works are due to be completed in 23/24, however the feasibility study for this has already commenced in the current year, costing £834 to date

Earmarked Reserves

- 16 Contributions to earmarked reserves are £23,648 less than originally budgeted.

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 £16,500 was required from the Major Capital Works Reserve at year end. This transfer, in addition to the transfer in of the revenue surplus, combined with the funding of the capital programme results in a net transfer from the Major Capital Works Reserve of £57,123

The retained reserves of the CDCJC at 31 March 2023 are £1,701,168 along with a General Reserve of £548,175, giving a total reserves and balances position of £2,249,343 at the year end.

Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability Return and Balance Sheet

- 17 The Joint Committees Annual Governance and Accountability return is attached at Appendix 3 and is supported by the Balance Sheet information contained in Appendix 2 to this report. This shows that the Crematorium had net assets of £3,846m at 31 March 2023 funded by reserves.

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 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.

Appendix 2: Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2022

Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2023

31 March 2022 £000		31 March 2023 £000
1,433	Property, Plant & Equipment	1,597
0	Intangible Assets	0
0	Long Term Investments	0
0	Long Term Debtors	0
1,433	Long Term Assets	1,597
500	Short term Investments	500
11	Inventories	4
69	Short Term Debtors	70
1,764	Cash & Cash Equivalents	1,789
2,344	Current Assets	2,363
0	Short Term Borrowing	0
(86)	Short Term Creditors	(114)
0	Provisions	0
(86)	Current Liabilities	(114)
0	Long Term Creditors	0
0	Provisions	0
0	Long Term Borrowing	0
0	Other Long Term Liabilities	0
0	Long Term Liabilities	0
3,691	NET ASSETS	3,846
2,258	Usable Reserves	2,249
1,433	Unusable Reserves	1,597
3,691	TOTAL RESERVES	3,846

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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:

and recorded as minute reference:

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:

[Signature box]

Date

[Date box]

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

[Signature box]

and recorded as minute reference:

[Signature box]

Signed by Chair of meeting where approval is given:

[Signature box]

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 / Apart from the following exceptions, noted below, 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, Newcastle, NE1 1DF

Date

**Central Durham Crematorium Joint
Committee**

29 June 2023



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

**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 the quarterly update relating to performance and other operational matters.

Executive summary

2. This report provides Members of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee with a quarterly 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 update with regards to the staffing at the crematorium.
 - c. Note the attendance at the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition 2023.
 - d. Note the date of the heritage open weekend.
 - e. Note the distribution of recycling income and subsequent charity nominations.
 - f. Discuss and agree if the terms and conditions are to be revised to allow plastic, silk or artificial flowers.

Background

4. As identified in the report.

Performance Update - Number of Cremations

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

	2022/23	2023/24	Change
April	176 + 0*	174 + 2*	- 2 + 2*
May	199 + 1*	201 + 3*	+ 2 + 2*
TOTAL	375 + 1*	375 + 5*	= 0 + 4*

* = 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 111 came from Durham, 17 came from Spennymoor and 247 from other areas. There have been 5 NVF cremations undertaken for the period covered by this report compared to 1 in the comparable period last year, which is an increase of 4 NVF and no increase in Cremations.

Memorials

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

	(Apr – May) 2022/23		(Apr – May) 2023/24	
	Number	£	Number	£
Vase Blocks	3	1,914.00	2	1,318.00
Large Plaques	13	5,436.00	6	2,580.00
Small Plaques	1	261.00	2	546.00
Niche	0	0.00	1	1,240.00
Renewal	22	4,240.00	20	3,663.00
Memorial leaves	6	600.00	10	1,000.00
Total	45	12,451.00	41	10,347.00

8. In overall terms the number and value of memorials sold of 41/ £10,347 compared to 45 / £12,451 in the same period last year shows a decrease of 4 / £2,104.

Staffing

9. For members information, we have recently appointed 2 relief members of staff to assist in the operational areas of the crematorium. They are

currently undertaking training in all aspects of the roles within the crematorium.

Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition 2023

10. As in previous years, the necessary arrangements will be made for representation at the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition which is to be held at Chesford Grange Hotel, near Kenilworth from 18th to 20th September 2023. It is proposed that the Bereavement Services Manager and the Chair attend this conference as representatives of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

Heritage Open Weekend

11. Members will be aware that the Durham Heritage Open Weekend has been running for several years and Durham Crematorium has been part of this event.
12. We have once again agreed to participate in the September 2023 event, which is to be held from Thursday 14th September to Sunday 17th September.

Recycling of Metals Scheme

13. As members were advised on the 26th of April 2023 Committee meeting, we nominated ManHealth and Teenage Cancer Trust. Photos from the presentation can be found in Appendix 3.

Artificial Flowers

14. Currently within our terms and conditions we have a sentence written in which says that the Joint Committee will not allow plastic, silk, or any other artificial flowers nor pot plants or any other items around the Book of Remembrance building and reserve the right to remove any such items and dispose of them.
15. More recently we have had a few members of the public approach us to ask if this could be reviewed with a view to allowing plastic/silk flowers to be placed in rose bowls etc beneath the plaques/niche units.
16. Therefore, members are asked to review this and decide if they are willing to allow plastic/silk flowers or to uphold the current terms and conditions.

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.

Appendix 2: Breakdown of Figures

	Apr	May	Total Apr-May
DURHAM	54	57	111
BILLINGHAM		1	1
BISHOP AUCKLAND	1	6	7
BLACKHALL	3	2	5
BURNHOPE	2		2
CHESTER LE STREET	11	18	29
CHILTON		1	1
CONSETT	1	1	2
CROOK	7	2	9
DARLINGTON		2	2
EASINGTON	4	1	5
EAST RAINTON		1	1
ESH	1		1
ESH WINNING	2	2	4
FERRYHILL	4	2	6
FISHBURN	1	1	2
GREAT LUMLEY		2	2
HARTLEPOOL	1	2	3
HASWELL	1	1	2
HETTON LE HOLE	2	5	7
HORDEN		7	7
HOUGHTON	8	11	19
HOWDEN		1	1
LANCHESTER		1	1
LANGLEY PARK	1	2	3
MURTON	4	3	7
NEW BRANCEPETH	1	1	2
NEWCASTLE	1	1	2
NEWTON AYCLIFFE	2	2	4
NORTHUMBERLAND		1	1
PETERLEE	10	14	24
SACRISTON	5	2	7
SEAHAM	9	12	21
SEDFIELD		1	1
SHILDON		1	1
SHOTTON	2	4	6
SOUTH HETTON	1	1	2
SPENNYMOOR	11	6	17
STANLEY	4		4
STATION TOWN		1	1
SUNDERLAND	1	1	2

SOUTHERN ENGLAND		1	1
THORNLEY	1		1
TOW LAW		2	2
TRIMDON	5	6	11
WASHINGTON	4	2	6
WEST AUCKLAND	1		1
WEST CORNFORTH	1	3	4
WHEATLEY HILL	2	2	4
WILLINGTON	3	3	6
WINGATE	1	1	2
YORKSHIRE	1		1
SINGAPORE		1	1
Total	174	201	375

Appendix 3: Recycling of metals cheque presentation



Photo from the cheque presentation with Heather Bowen from Teenage Cancer Trust.



Photo from the cheque presentation with Christopher Underwood from Manhealth.

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**Central Durham Crematorium
Joint Committee**

29 June 2023

Forward Plan 2023/24



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

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

1. This report sets out a suggested forward plan of meetings of the Joint Committee for the forthcoming year.

Forward Plan 2023/24

2. A proposed schedule of meetings for the remainder of 2023/24, showing a forward plan of reports that will be presented, is attached at Appendix 2. This includes the reports for the next Annual General Meeting in June 2024, with dates to be fixed nearer the time.

Recommendation(s)

3. That Members of the Joint Committee note and approve the proposed schedule of meetings as set out at Appendix 2.

Background papers

- None

Contact: Philip Curran
Cathy Mallam

Tel: 03000 261967
Tel: 03000 268580

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

There are no implications associated with this report.

Finance

There are no financial implications associated with this report. Routine monitoring of budgetary control information and annual budget and fees and charges setting processes are factored into the Forward Plan.

Consultation

None. However, Officers of Spennymoor Town Council were provided with a copy of the report and given opportunity to comment / raise any detailed questions on the content of the report in advance of circulation to Members of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no equality and diversity implications associated with this report. Equality Impact Assessments, where appropriate, are undertaken as a matter of routine part of the development of any new policy or policy change.

Human Rights

There are no implications associated with this report.

Crime and Disorder

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

Staffing

There are no implications associated with this report.

Accommodation

There are no Accommodation implications associated with this report.

Risk

There are no risk implications associated with this report.

Procurement

There are no implications associated with this report.

Climate Change

None.

Appendix 2: Forward Plan: 2023/24 Meetings

Meeting Date	Location	Reports to Consider	Report of
27 September 2023	County Hall, Durham	External Audit Annual Review of the Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2023	Report of the Corporate Director of Resources / Treasurer to the Joint Committee
		Quarterly Performance and Operational Report	Report of the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar
		Risk Register 2023/24 – Update	Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources / Treasurer to the Joint Committee and the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
		Service Asset Management Plan	Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
		Financial Monitoring Report 2023/24: Position at 31/08/23 with Projected Outturn to 31/03/24	Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources / Treasurer to the Joint Committee and the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
		Internal Audit Charter Report	Report of the Chief Internal Auditor and Corporate Fraud Manager
		Annual Review of the System of Internal Audit	Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources / Treasurer to the Joint Committee and the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
31 January 2024	County Hall, Durham	Quarterly Performance and Operational Report	Report of the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar
		Financial Monitoring Report 2023/24:	Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources /

Meeting Date	Location	Reports to Consider	Report of
		Position at 31/12/23 with Projected Outturn to 31/03/24	Treasurer to the Joint Committee and the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
		Provision of Support Services 2024/25	Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources / Treasurer to the Joint Committee and the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
		Fees and Charges 2024/25	Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources / Treasurer to the Joint Committee and the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
		2024/25 Revenue and Capital Budgets	Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources / Treasurer to the Joint Committee and the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
24 April 2024	County Hall, Durham	Quarterly Performance and Operational Report	Report of the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar
		Financial Monitoring Report 2023/24: Provisional Outturn as at 31/03/2024	Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources / Treasurer to the Joint Committee and the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
		Risk Register 2023/24 – Update	Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources / Treasurer to the Joint Committee and the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
		Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24	Report of the Chief Internal Auditor and Corporate Fraud Manager

Meeting Date	Location	Reports to Consider	Report of
June 2024 (AGM) Date TBC	County Hall, Durham	Appointment of Chair	Report of the Clerk to the Joint Committee
		Appointment of Vice-Chair	Report of the Clerk to the Joint Committee
		Annual Constitutional Review	Report of the Clerk to the Joint Committee
		Annual Governance Statement 2023/24	Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources / Treasurer to the Joint Committee and the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
		Revenue Outturn and Joint Committees Return for the Year Ended 31/03/2024	Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources / Treasurer to the Joint Committee and the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
		Quarterly Performance and Operational Report	Report of the Bereavement Services Manager and Registrar
		Forward Plan 2024/25	Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources / Treasurer to the Joint Committee and the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change

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