

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **CENTRAL DURHAM CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE**

At a Meeting of **Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee** held in Durham Crematorium, South Road, Durham on **Wednesday 25 January 2012 at 5.30 pm**

#### **Present:**

**Councillor J Marr (Chair)**

#### **Durham County Council:**

Councillors M Plews (Vice-Chair), N Foster, G Holland, D Stoker and K Thompson

#### **Spennymoor Town Council:**

Town Councillor JV Graham

#### **Apologies:**

Apologies for absence were received from J Blakey, J Chaplow, A Hopgood, M Williams and JL Wood

#### **A1 Minutes of the meeting held 28 September 2011**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 September 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed and initialled by the Chair.

#### **A2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### **A3 Report of the Superintendent and Registrar**

The Superintendent and Registrar presented the report which provided Members with the quarterly update relating to performance and other operational matters (for copy, see file of Minutes).

In delivering the report, the Superintendent and Registrar, Alan José, updated Members on the number of Cremations for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 with comparisons against the same period in 2010. An overview of the number of memorials sold during the same period was also provided.

In relation to operational matters, the Joint Committee were informed that the interviews for the vacant Cremator Operator post had taken place earlier that day and the successful candidate would be contacted the following day. It was hoped that the successful candidate would be in a position to commence work within 4 weeks.

Work on replacing the Cremator and the Crematorium Redevelopment Project was progressing well and the Joint Committee were appraised on the progress made.

Following the success of the Tree of Life project, the Superintendent and Registrar suggested that the provision of a Christmas Tree should become a regular feature. It was noted that St Cuthbert's Hospice had expressed an interest in being involved with the project on an ongoing basis.

In relation to the production of green energy, Members were advised that an allocation had been placed in the 2012/13 budget in order to carry out a Feasibility Study to look at all options available through which to use the energy produced at the Crematorium, including the generation of electricity to be fed into the National Grid.

In relation to the Tree of Life project, and in response to the Chair, the Superintendent and Registrar clarified that it would be a matter for future consideration by the Joint Committee as to whether an ongoing partnership was established with St Cuthbert's Hospice or whether other local hospices and charities should be invited to be involved. Councillor D Stoker voiced his support for extending the invitation to other local groups.

In response to queries from Councillor K Thompson and Councillor D Stoker, the Head of Finance (Financial Services), Paul Darby, explained the procurement and tendering exercises which had been undertaken in relation to the Crematorium Redevelopment Project and highlighted that this had been subject to extensive discussion at the time, including liaising with the External Auditors.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the contents of this report with regards to current performance of the Crematorium be noted;
- (ii) That the progress and advertising date of the vacant post be noted;
- (iii) That the progress made with regards to the Cremator Replacement and Crematorium Redevelopment Project be noted;
- (iv) That the current situation with regards to the Pre-Payment bond be noted.

**A4 Risk Register Update 2011/12**

The Head of Finance (Financial Services), presented the report which provided an update on the current position of the Risk Register for the Central Durham Crematorium, in accordance with the arrangements established for the routine reporting of risk issues (for copy, see file of Minutes).

The Joint Committee were advised that a new risk had been added to the Service Risk Register; Risk 18 "Pre-Payment Bond premium is not sufficient to cover future fees" and the Head of Finance (Financial Services) clarified the reasons for establishing that new risk. Members were advised that the risk would be continually monitored and altered if deemed necessary.

The Joint Committee were pleased to note that a robust risk management system was in place.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the content of the report and the updated position following the January review be noted;
- (ii) That the Risk Registers be kept up to date and continue to be reviewed by the Joint Committee on a half yearly basis, the next one to be completed in June 2012.

**A5 Financial Monitoring Report 2011/12: Spend to 31/12/11 and Projected Outturn to 31/03/12**

The Head of Finance (Financial Services) presented the report, which set out details of income and expenditure in the period 1 April 2011 to 31 December 2011, together with the forecast outturn position for 2011/12, and highlighted areas of over/under spend against the revenue budgets at a service expenditure analysis level (for copy, see file of Minutes).

The Report also set out details of the funds and reserves of the Joint Committee at 1 April 2011 and the projected position at 31 March 2012, taking into account the forecast financial outturn projection of income and expenditure during the year.

In addition the Report also included summary details of the Cremator Replacement and associated buildings work project.

The Head of Finance (Financial Services) advised that income and expenditure were being controlled very well and that any surplus funds were proposed to be placed into reserves.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the April to December 2011 Revenue spend financial monitoring report and associated provisional outturn position 2011/12 be noted;
- (ii) That the April to December 2011 cremator replacement and redevelopment Capital Project spend and associated outturn be noted.

**A6 Provision of Support Services 2012/13**

The Head of Finance (Financial Services) presented the report which sought approval of a proposed Service Level Agreement (SLA) for Support Service provision by Durham County Council to the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee for the period April 2012 to March 2013 (for copy, see file of Minutes).

The Joint Committee were advised that the SLA which had been established for the provision of Support Service functions included the provision of Management advice and attendance at Joint Committee meetings by the Head of Finance (Financial Services), as well as to accountancy, HR, payroll and administration services. A detailed breakdown of the costs, functions and responsibilities was provided.

**Resolved:**

That the Service Level Agreement as set out in Appendix 2 of the report (including relevant schedule) for the year 2012/13, be approved.

**A7 Fees and Charges 2012/13**

The Head of Finance (Financial Services) presented the report which set out details of the proposed fees and charges for the Central Durham Crematorium for 2012/13 (for copy, see file of Minutes).

The Joint Committee noted that the proposed fees and charges for Central Durham Crematorium for the coming financial year were in line with those proposed for Mountsett Crematorium.

In response to a query from Councillor D Stoker, the Superintendent and Registrar clarified the reasons for the proposed increase in the calligraphy charge.

In response to Councillor G Holland, the Superintendent and Registrar advised that the 5% increase in fees and charges had been calculated by looking at the balanced budget for the coming year. High reserves had always been a priority as with high building maintenance costs, such reserves could be called upon at any time. Furthermore, items had been removed from the current years expenditure budget and as such had been rolled over into the forthcoming years budget.

The Head of Finance (Financial Services) also advised that inflation pressures allowed for a modest increase in fees and charges and highlighted that a substantial amount of reserves had been used towards the redevelopment project.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the proposed fees and charges as at Appendix 2 of the report, effective from 1 April 2012, be approved;
- (ii) That the increase in pricing for inserts to the Book of Remembrance, effective from 1 April 2012, be approved;
- (iii) That the proposed treatment of the Cremation Pre-Payment Bond income (subject to FSA approval) be noted;
- (iv) That all approved fees and charges be incorporated into the 2012/13 budget.

## **A8 2012/13 Revenue and Capital Budgets**

The Head of Finance (Financial Services) presented the report which set out proposals with regards to the 2012/13 revenue budget for the Central Durham Crematorium (for copy, see file of Minutes).

The Joint Committee were advised of all individual changes which had been made from the 2011/12 budget and were advised that all spend pressures had been built into the 2012/13 budget.

### **Resolved:**

- (i) That the budget proposals as set out at Appendix 2 of the Report, be noted and approved;
- (ii) That the forecast level of reserves and balances at 31 March 2013, as set out at Appendix 2 of the report, be noted.

## **A9 Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit**

The Head of Finance (Financial Services) presented the report which provided an update on the Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit (for copy, see file of Minutes).

A checklist had been produced and completed for Members' consideration.

### **Resolved:**

That the effectiveness of the system of Internal Audit be approved, with an assurance being placed on the work of that service.

## **A10 Such other business - Constitution**

The Head of Finance (Financial Services) advised that ahead of the Annual Meeting of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee in June 2012, the Clerk to the Joint Committee, S Spence, would be reviewing the Constitution. The document would be brought up to date following which it would be made available electronically. Members of the Joint Committee would receive a copy on an annual basis and the document would continually be reviewed and updated on a rolling programme.