

Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee

27 January 2012

**Update on the Service Asset
Management Plan 2012/13 to 2015/16**



Report of Ian Staplin, Superintendant and Registrar to the Mountsett Crematoria Joint Committee

Purpose of the Report:

1. To provide members of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee with an update regarding the development of a Service Asset Plan as highlighted in the 2010/11 Annual Internal Audit Report.

Background:

2. The crematorium is nestled on the outskirts of Dipton on the (A692) and serves the residents of the whole of County Durham and Gateshead. The land the crematorium was built on was initially a quarry. The crematorium was dedicated on the 23rd July 1966 by the Bishop of Jarrow (the Rt. Rev A.K.Hamilton M.A.) and is owned and operated by a Joint Committee on behalf of Durham County Council and Gateshead Council. The first Cremation took place on 1st August 1966.
3. Arising from its background of historical importance and a rich cultural heritage, Durham County Council's vision is focused around an 'An Altogether Better Durham', and is made up of two components: to have an Altogether Better Place, which is Altogether Better for people. This vision helps to provide a framework which guides all of our plans and programmes which will turn our vision into a reality. This will be achieved through organising our actions for improvement into a structure made up of five priority themes:

Altogether Wealthier

Focusing on creating a vibrant economy and putting regeneration and economic development at the heart of all our plans;

Altogether Healthier

Improving health and wellbeing;

Altogether Safer

Creating a safer and more cohesive county;

Altogether Better for Children & Young People

Enabling children and young people to develop and achieve their aspirations and to maximise their potential in line with Every Child Matters;

Altogether Greener

Ensuring an attractive and 'liveable' local environment, and contributing to tackling global environment challenges.

Service Development Plan

4. As Members will recall, the Annual Internal Audit Report recommended the production of a Crematorium Service Asset Plan. Work has been undertaken by the Superintendent & Registrar and the Bereavement Services Manager with regards to the carrying out of surveys and the commissioning of detailed works.
5. An action plan has been developed (as highlighted in the table overleaf) and a full report and Asset Management Plan will be presented to the Committee at the 27 April 2012 meeting.
6. In setting out to achieve the service aims, the County Council has ensured that adequate funding is available to maintain the quality and the fabric of the crematorium to a high standard, which recognises its value as an open space. The Management Plan sets out how these standards are being achieved, through current practices. The primary aim is that Mountsett Crematorium shall remain a peaceful, safe, clean and aesthetically pleasing place for the bereaved. Any visitor who may wish to come to the crematorium shall be presented with an open space and surroundings that are safe, clean, peaceful, reverent and relaxing, which is effectively managed by the authority.
7. Although the County Council's Cemeteries and Crematoria have had a varied history in the past, the service now has a high reputation for providing a well maintained environment, customer friendly service and proactive solution in how it manages its cemeteries and Crematoria. However, more hard work has been done, as all services within a local government environment, need to consistently monitor and review its service functions if it wants to remain effective in its management responsibilities and efficient in its provision.
8. Service quality is about the delivery of a service to the specified standards and ensuring that customers have the necessary information to judge the service. Mountsett, like the other cemeteries and crematoriums have adopted the department's service quality aim, which is defined by the County Council as:
 - To provide a sensitive, respectful service fitting for the bereaved;
 - To ensure that sympathetic, supportive and confidential advice is given to the recently bereaved on funeral service arrangements and give assistance in co-ordinating the funeral process if required;

- To provide consistent high quality standards of maintenance in cemeteries and crematoria across County Durham, working to maximise value for money;
 - To ensure the proper respect of all Council cemeteries and crematoria with fair Rules and Regulations, which are explained to all visitors;
 - Fair and sensitive enforcement where Rules and Regulations are not followed and used as a last resort;
9. This document which uses Asset Management Planning principles to set the framework for the Council's ownership and use of buildings and land to deliver the council vision and corporate aims.
10. This strategy needs to be translated to a service level so that the property which any service occupies enables that service to deliver its aims and vision in the best possible way, meeting the needs and expectations of customers and staff.
11. It was therefore felt appropriate, to produce a Service Asset Management plan to ensure that:-
- a. The property needs of the service to deliver its "vision" could be identified.
 - b. The property occupied could be analysed and audited against the identified needs.
 - c. Options and priorities to close the gap between future needs and current provision could be appraised.
 - d. A way forward that would deliver the changes needed to meet Mountsett crematoriums needs taking into account cost, funding streams and opportunities.
12. Extensive work has recently been carried out with regards to looking at the future for Mountsett crematorium.
13. Substantial Improvements have been made through the opportunities afforded by the harmonisation of fees and charges in 2010/11. The Joint Committee has significantly more financial capacity to address investment requirements going forward.

Service Development Plan Progress Crematoria Grounds

14. Mountsett Crematorium has carried out just in excess of 55,000 cremations in 45 years of operating in which approximately 70% of the cremations have had the ashes interred in the crematorium grounds (all ashes are interred and none scattered). Recent trends indicate that the percentage rate for ashes being removed from the crematorium will eventually exceed 50% which will mean less land will be required in the future.

15. We estimate that the unused land we have is similar in size to the amount used to date which would indicate that with the fall in the number ashes being interred we have sufficient land to last at least another 50 years.
16. Recently an area leading up to the entrance to the crematorium has been identified as being in need of some remedial works to which this is currently being carried out. This work had been identified in conjunction with the monthly site inspection tour carried out by the Superintendent & Registrar.
17. One of the outstanding actions within the crematorium grounds is that a full tree survey is required in order to identify the exact number and species of trees within the crematorium and to identify any potential problems and to devise a future maintenance regime for the life span of these trees.

Crematorium Building

18. The Crematorium, designed by Charlton & Crowther 21 Bond Street, Leeds, is a letter T shape, giving panoramic views over the meadowland surrounding the building and of the distant woodland surrounding the site. The Chapel has seating for approximately 120 people, with standing room for a further 100. The Crematorium was opened in August 1966. Service times are on every 45 minutes, giving time for the Chapel to be tidied between each funeral service.
19. Improvements throughout the year have been carried out with regards any Health and Safety issues that have been identified.e.g.access platform for the inspection and maintenance of the cremators etc.
20. Whilst carrying out an inspection of the crematorium a number of future improvements have been highlighted and have been included in the action plan namely:
 - No schedule has been put in place with regards to carrying out any internal or external decoration to the crematorium. Therefore it is proposed that this be placed onto a 2 year cycle subject to the necessary funding being secured in order to carry out this work.
 - The windows within the mess room have been in since the crematorium was built, however these are now starting to deteriorate and require replacing in 2012.
 - The carpets within the crematorium have been laid down since 1999/2000, these are starting to show signs of wear and require replacing in 2012/13
 - The curtains are regularly cleaned, however they have been in situ since 2001, it is envisaged that they will be in need of replacement in 2015.
 - The seating/furniture within the chapel area has had some minor repairs carried out recently; therefore it is proposed to monitor this with a view to possibly replacing these in 2015/2016.

- Currently within Mountsett crematorium there are no facilities in which a programme of services can be viewed for that current day, therefore we could look to link an order of service display unit with the Wesley music system currently installed at Mountsett.

Book of Remembrance Building

21. The Book of remembrance building was designed and built by Charlton & Crowther 21 Bond Street, Leeds. This is a hexagonal building which incorporates the book of Remembrance along with a book view system which is touch screen to enable the whole book of remembrance to be viewed. The controls are easily understood and full instructions are on screen. All calligraphy for the book of remembrance is done by F.G.Marshall of Banstead, Surrey. There is also a facility available for the bereaved to place flowers within the building and vases are supplied with water.
22. The Display cabinet which holds the book of remembrance is now not fit for purpose, due to the increasing number of entries and on numerous occasions 2 pages have to be displayed on certain days; therefore a new display cabinet is required in order that the bereaved can view their entry.

Memorial Plaques

23. A feasibility study has been carried out, specifically for the development of the crematorium grounds for the display of memorial plaques etc. The Joint Committee recently agreed to the sale of memorial plaques which are to be displayed on the outer walls of the chapel of remembrance. We have had talks with the company who produce the plaques and have produced a booklet which will be forwarded along with the book of remembrance literature to all applicants. It is envisaged that these will shortly be taken up by the recently bereaved. Depending on the success of this, future plans could allow for the erection of a memorial wall.

Machinery

24. Currently machinery used for the grounds maintenance operations is funded using current existing budgets, apart from the ride on grass cutter which is still funded from within the cemeteries and closed churchyard budget.
25. Therefore it would be prudent to allocate a small amount of budget to accommodate the provision of new machinery as and when required.

Administration

26. The current process of carrying out the administration of the crematorium is by the way of a paper system and the recording of the information is backed up in the cremation registers which still need to be inputted by law.
27. We are currently in the process of transferring these records onto an access database which hopefully in the future allow staff to be able to find records much quicker,

however this is time consuming and early indications are that this process could take a number of years to complete.

Cremator Replacement

28. Mountsett crematorium currently has a service contract with The Phoenix Partnership for the servicing and maintenance of the L & P cremators within the crematorium.

29. The anticipated life span of the cremators is in excess of 15 years. The future installation of new Cremators and Mercury Abatement equipment is to be self financed following the increase in the fees and charges as a result of the harmonisation policy and Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee's subsequent policy on Reserves. Based on the current works being undertaken at the Central Durham Crematorium, the estimated costs for the purchase and installation of such equipment are estimated at £1.2m

30. An Action Plan has been developed as highlighted in the table below:

Action Plan:

Operational Objectives	Lead Officer	Key Actions and Milestones	Proposed Completion Date	Costings
Carry out tree survey	Graham Harrison		31/05/2012	TBC
Internal/external decoration of crematorium.	Ian Staplin	Cost Estimates to be calculated in advance of Final AMP	31/12/2012	TBC
Replacement windows to staff room	Ian Staplin	Cost Estimates to be calculated in advance of Final AMP	31/03/2013	TBC
Replacement of carpets within chapel area	Ian Staplin	Cost Estimates to be calculated in advance of Final AMP	2012/13	TBC
Replacement of curtains within chapel area	Ian Staplin	Cost Estimates to be calculated in advance of Final AMP	31/12/2015	TBC
Replacement of seating/furniture within the chapel area	Graham Harrison	Cost Estimates to be calculated in advance of Final AMP	2015/16	TBC
Look to provide order of service details using the Wesley music system	Graham Harrison/ Ian Staplin	Cost Estimates to be calculated in advance of Final AMP	2012/13	TBC
Replace display	Ian Staplin	Cost Estimates to be	31/12/2012	TBC

Operational Objectives	Lead Officer	Key Actions and Milestones	Proposed Completion Date	Costings
cabinet		calculated in advance of Final AMP		
Possible construction of memorial wall	Graham Harrison	Cost Estimates to be calculated in advance of Final AMP	2015/16	£48,000
Make provision in current budget for the renewal of machinery	Ian Staplin	Cost Estimates to be calculated in advance of Final AMP	2013/14	TBC
Back data entry of all cremation records	Graham Harrison/ Ian Staplin	Ongoing	2015/16	TBC
Replacement of the cremators	Graham Harrison	Cost Estimates to be calculated in advance of Final AMP	2025-2027	TBC

31. Contained within this action plan, there are several items which are in possible need of replacement in 2012/2013; however we have not been in a position to obtain the necessary costings for all of the work and therefore the 2012/13 budget does not consider these items individually. The 2012/13 budget does however have capacity via its Repair budget or via funding from reserves to undertake when required.

32. It is therefore proposed that we work alongside Asset Management in order to obtain these costs and to present these at a future meeting as part of the full Service Asset management Plan.

Recommendations and Reasons

33. It is recommended that Member of the Mountsett Joint Committee:-

- Note the progress on Mountsett Crematorium Asset Management Plan.
- Note the actions required from within the Action plan.
- Consider and agree to obtain costings for work required within the Action plan.
- Note that a full report and Asset Management Plan will be presented at the April 27th 2012 meeting.

Contact: Ian Staplin, 01207 570255

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

Where known, As identified in the report.

Staffin

There is no implications.

Risk

There are no implications.

Equality and Diversity Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no implications.

Accommodation

There are no implications.

Crime and Disorder

There are no implications.

Human Rights

There are no implications.

Consultation

None, however, officers of Gateshead 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 Mountsett Crematorium.

Procurement

There are no implications.

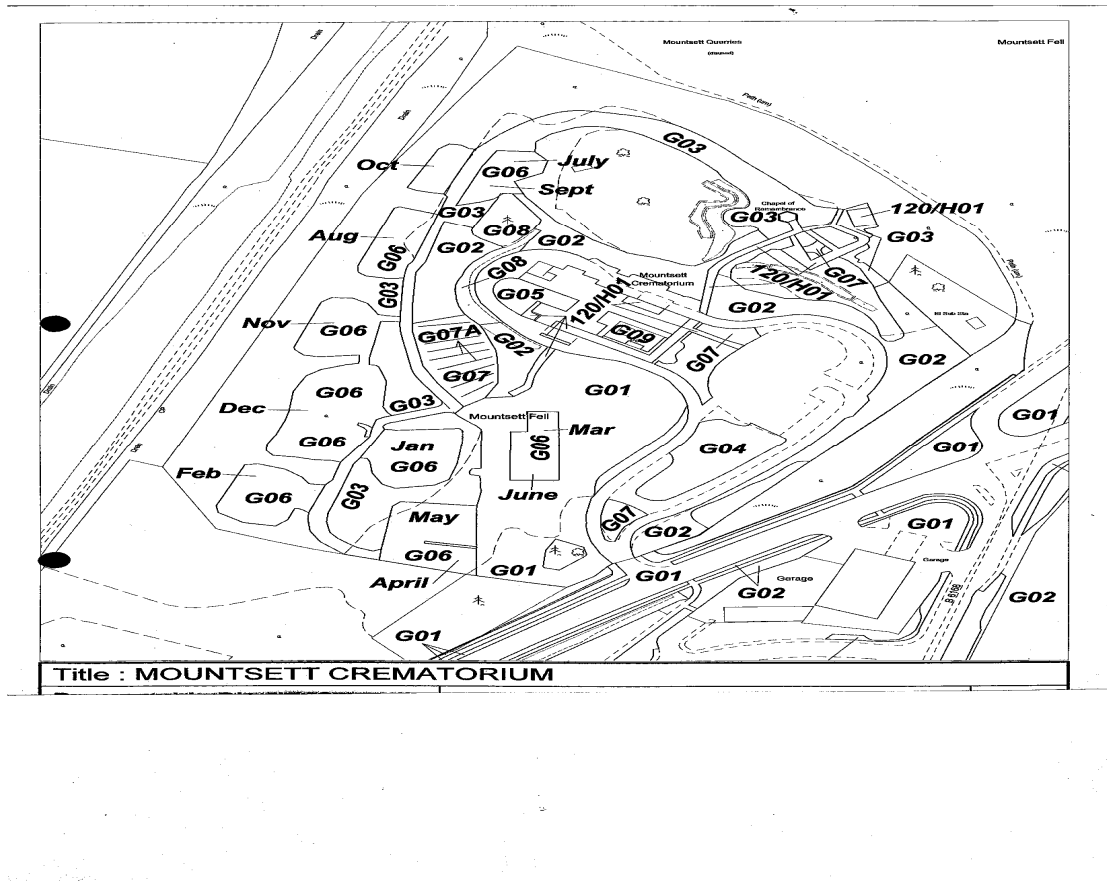
Disability Discrimination Act

There are no implications.

Legal Implications

As outlined in the report.

Appendix 2: Mountsett Crematorium Service Asset Management Plan



Asset Management Report

Site Name. Mountsett Crematorium
 Site Status. Municipal Crematorium
 Managing Service Neighbourhood Services
 Ward Neighbourhood Services



Location

Mountsett Crematorium
 Dipton
 Stanley
 Co Durham
 DH9 9JP

Area

Site: 7.55 Hectare

Property Details

Tenure: Various ownerships
Year Built: 1966

Type: Non HRA
Listed: No

Valuation

Valuation Basis	Asset Value	Land Value	Total
Depreciated Replacement Cost:			
Crematorium Building	639,124	1,330	640,454
Car Park	104,650	1,375	105,975

Hazard Surveys Completed

	Survey	Risk
Asbestos:	Yes	No
Contaminated Land:	No	No
Fire:	Yes	No
Legionella:	Yes	No

Contacts

Name	Job Title	Telephone
Ian Staplin	Superintendent & Registrar	01207 570255

	Score
1.Location	
1.1 Is the property in the right location/catchment area of the County	1
1.2 Is the property conveniently located to a good public transport system	1
1.3 Is the staff on-site parking adequate? (H&S issues,location,no. of spaces)	1
1.4 Is the public on-site parking adequate? (H&S issues,location,no. of spaces)	1
1.5 Is the off- site parking adequate? (H&S issues,location,no. of spaces)	1
1.6 Is there adequate provision for vehicular deliveries to the premises?	1
Location Total	1
2.Accessibility	
2.1 Can disabled people easily access the premises?	1
2.2 Does the internal layout allow disabled people using the service to get around easily and to exit the premises safely in an emergency	1
2.3 Are the toilet facilities suitable for disabled people?	1
2.4 Are reception/interview/meeting rooms/public areas suitable for disabled people?	1
2.5 Is the internal and external signage suitable to disabled people?	1
2.6 Can (or could) any disabled staff make full use of all the premises in their day to day work?	2
Accessibility Total	1
3. Environment	
3.1 Does the heating system for the property enable you to consistently maintain a suitable temperature?	1
3.2 Does the heating system meet your requirement? (Ability to heat different areas for different time spans to different temperatures)	1
3.3 Is the level of ventilation currently achieved acceptable?	1
3.4 Does the current method of ventilation generate other problems that interfere with the service being delivered?	1
3.5 Do the means of lighting achieve satisfactory levels?	1
3.6 Are there means of controlling the lighting arrangements satisfactory? (Ability to zone lighting,type of lighting)	2
3.7 Are the acoustics within the property suitable?	1
3.8 Is the internal decoration to a suitable level for the current use?	2
3.9 Do the floor finishes meet the requirement for the current use?	2
Environment Total	1
4. Safety and Security	
4.1 Does the property provide a safe and secure environment for it's occupants?	1
4.2 Is the property equipped with suitable means of reducing the impact of crime/vandalism?	1
4.3 Are there suitable means within the property for dealing with the initial outbreak of fire?	1
4.4 Are emergency procedures in place for building evacuation in case of fire,bomb threat etc?	1
4.5 Have risk assessments been carried out and measures taken to minimise risk to the occupants?	1
4.6 Is there any evidence of asbestos or is the presence of asbestos known to you?	1
Safety and Security Total	1
5. Space	
5.1 Is the layout of the space suitable for the purpose of service delivery? (How do different parts of the property relate to each other/are facilities located in the right place)	1
5.2 Is the building the right size?	1
5.3 Is the site the right size?	1
5.4 Is the property the right shape?	1
5.5 Is the storage space adequate? (Consider material types,environment required,timescales)	2
5.6 Are there adequate welfare facilities for staff? (Canteen/kitchen/medical room/changing facilities)	2

	Score
5.7 Are the toilet facilities suitable?	1
5.8 Are the reception facilities suitable for the purpose?	1
5.9 Are the interview facilities suitable for the purpose?	1
Space Total	1
6. Fixtures and Fittings	
6.1 Is the IT infrastructure adequate (access to DCC main network, sufficient cabling)	1
6.2 Is there an adequate supply and distribution of power points? (H & S issues)	1
6.3 Has adequate provision been made for services ? (Gas/electricity/water/telecommunication)	1
6.4 Are working areas suitably protected from excess sunlight?	1
Fixtures and Fittings Total	1
7. Image	
7.1 Is the age of the building appropriate? (Consider whether the service is better delivered from an older low profile property as distinct from a new high profile one)	1
7.2 Is the type of construction appropriate? (Consider perception issues arising from temporary type of structure, heavy architecture right for type of service operating)	1
7.3 Does the access to the property convey the necessary degree of openness? (Entrance off a side road/alley, forbidding type of doorway)	1
7.4 Does the property look shabby?	2
7.5 Is the external planting suitable? (Softens' the structure, compromises safety)	1
7.6 Are the external and internal planting areas adequately maintained?	1
7.7 Are public reception areas comfortable and inviting? (Consider reception points are clearly visible, furniture is suitable)	1
7.8 Is the cleaning regime suitable for the purpose?	1
Image Total	1
8. Financial	
8.1 Is there currently an adequate budget for the premises? (Consider repair and maintenance budgets, improvement budgets, all property related budgets)	2
8.2 Are property related maintenance costs high? (Benchmarking exercise)	2
8.3 Are other property related costs high? (Benchmarking exercise)	2
8.4 Are the cost of outstanding repairs high? (Benchmarking exercise)	2
8.5 Are there sources of external funding for the premises?	3
8.6 Is the external funding available immediately?	3
8.7 Is the current income generation from the premises adequate?	1
8.8 Is there potential for increasing income generation from the premises?	2
Financial Total	2
Overall Score	
	1

Suitability Scoring

Suitable – Score 1

Could be improved – Score 2

Cannot be improved – Score 3