

**Central Durham Crematorium
Joint Committee**

17 June 2009

**Introductory Report for the
new Joint Committee**



**Report of Alan José, Superintendent and Registrar to the Joint
Committee**

1. Purpose of the Report

To bring Members of the Joint Committee up-to-speed on the current position in relation to issues relating to the Central Durham Crematorium and provide copies of relevant documents, such as the Joint Committee Constitution and subsequent amendments (Appendix 2).

2. Background

Crematoria have been regulated under Part 1 of the Environmental Protection Act (1990) since 1991.

Substantial improvements have been made through the requirement under the Act, to use BATNEEC (Best Available Techniques Not Entailing Excessive Cost) and Statutory Government Guidance, known as Process Guidance Note PG5 / 2.

These controls did not however, relate to the emission of Mercury and it was on 10 January 2004, that DEFRA published PG5 / 2 (04) which required the Cremation Industry to abate 50% of all Cremations by 31 December 2012. AQ1 (05) required existing Crematoria where Abatement Equipment was to be fitted to do so by 31 December 2012.

These amendments constituted Statutory Guidance under Regulation 37 of the Pollution Prevention and Control (England & Wales) Regulations 2000. Additional guidance from DEFRA in January 2005 required Cremation Authorities to advise their Regulator by 31 December 2005 of their intention to install Mercury Abatement Equipment or if it was their intention to Burden Share.

DEFRA had indicated that for Crematoria to carry out more than 1850 Cremations per annum, if sufficient Crematoria did not indicate that Mercury Abatement Equipment was to be installed then, new Legislation would make this a requirement.

In anticipating this requirement, the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee had commissioned a Feasibility Study from Jane Darbyshire and David Kendall Ltd., into how the Durham Crematorium could be adapted to comply with the new Legislation.

This Report was completed in May 2005 and was subsequently considered by the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

It must be pointed out that the Feasibility Study looked at all areas of the Crematorium operation and not only the Cremators and ancillary equipment.

The anticipated costs of implementing the findings of the Feasibility Study were very high, partly due to the fact that it would be a requirement that the Crematorium remain fully operational during the project. A copy of the Feasibility Report has been sent to each member of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee (Appendix 3).

3. Current position

The Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee has, since the publication of the Feasibility Study, looked at all options available to enable the proposed project to proceed and indeed agreed that new Cremators are Mercury Abatement equipment would be installed by 31 December 2012.

The prospect of Local Government Review halted any further progress on this major project until the new Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee could review the options available and make the necessary decisions.

In order to ensure that the Durham Crematorium could continue to operate efficiently and within the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act (1990), the three Cremators were relined in April 2007 and electrical upgrades have been made to the operating systems of each Cremator. The Cremator Maintenance Budget has been increased to allow for possible additional expenditure as the Cremators are now over 18 years old.

In June 2008, the Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, exercised powers conferred in him by Regulation 61 (1) and (2) of the Environmental Protection (England) (Crematoria Mercury Emissions) Direction 2008, which came in to force on 27 June 2008 (Appendix 4).

This direction required regulatory action to be taken by 25 July 2008, and as a result information was to be supplied by each Cremation Authority to the relevant Regulator by 31 October 2008, copies of the subsequent reports to the Regulator for Durham Crematorium are attached at Appendix 5 and 6.

4. In the Future

In August 2010, the Crematorium will celebrate 50 years of service to the community and in order that a high quality service can be offered in the future, important decisions will need to be made at the earliest opportunity.

Over the past few months, the Superintendent & Registrar has been keeping abreast of developments within the industry, maintaining contacts with Cremator Manufacturers, speaking to Specialist Architects together with Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, so as to be able to advise the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee of a way forward to meet not only the requirements of Mercury Abatement but also to meet the expectations of the Funeral Services and the Bereaved who use the Durham Crematorium.

5. Recommendation

That the Report be noted and that the Superintendent & Registrar be asked to prepare a comprehensive Report for the next meeting of the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

Background Papers:

- Constitution of the Joint Committee, 1983.
- Deed of Variation to the Constitution, 2004.
- Feasibility Study, 2004/2005.
- Direction from DEFRA, June 2008.
- Regulator Report, October 2008.
- Report to Environmental Health, May 2009.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

As outlined in the Report

Staffing

As outlined in the Report

Equality and diversity

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and disorder

None

Environment

None

Human rights

None

Localities and rurality

None

Young people

None

Consultation

None