

Joint Report of

Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change

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

Electoral division(s) affected:
Countywide

Purpose of the Report

1. This report outlines the proposed Service Level Agreement (SLA) for Support Service provision by Durham County Council to the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee for the period April 2024 to March 2025.

Executive Summary

2. A formal Service Level Agreement for Support Services provided by Durham County Council to the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee has been considered and approved by the Joint Committee for the past twelve years. As part of the budget setting for 2024/25, Members are now requested to consider the Support Services requirements for the coming year.
3. This report sets out details of the proposed SLA for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 to cover the following functions:
 - Management Services
 - Financial Services
 - Administration Services (including Committee support)
 - Payroll Services
 - Human Resources Services

Recommendation(s)

4. It is recommended that members consider and approve the Service Level Agreement attached at Appendix 2 (including relevant schedule) for the year 2024/25.

Service Level Agreement (SLA)

5. The SLA established for the provision of Support Service functions to the Joint Committee provides a commitment for both parties over the medium term. This includes the provision of Management advice and attendance at Joint Committee Meetings by the Finance Manager: Neighbourhood and Climate Change, in addition to Accountancy, HR, Payroll and Administration Services.
6. The proposed SLA, attached at Appendix 2, has been developed in consultation with the Finance Manager: Neighbourhood and Climate Change under the delegated responsibility of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee and reflects the nature of the current partnership, the services to be provided, the period of agreement and total estimated annual budget.
7. The proposed SLA considers the proportion of time spent by key staff undertaking the requirements of the Joint Committee. The proposed charge for 2024/25 is £26,200, a 5% increase on the recharges levied in 2023/24. The applicable fee takes into consideration the impact of pay and price inflation.
8. The Support Service SLA is attached at Appendix 2 for consideration and approval by Members. Schedule 1 to the Appendix, as attached, provides a more detailed breakdown of the following functions and responsibilities:

Management Services

- Overall Support Service Management and attendance at Joint Committee Meetings.

Financial Services

- Preparation and Production of Revenue Budget
- Budget Monitoring and guidance
- Preparation and production of the Joint Committees Annual Return
- Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit
- Creditor payments and day to day cash flow management.
- Financial Appraisals and budget monitoring of Service Asset Management Plan works

Administration Services

- Committee and Secretarial services including the remit of Clerk to the Joint Committee (providing advice and guidance to Members).

Payroll Services

- Employee crematorium salary processing.

Human Resources Services

- Provision of Health & Safety advice and guidance in compliance with relevant Health and Safety legislation.

- Management and co-ordination of arrangements regarding employee relations and interaction with trade union officials.
- Delivery and facilitation of staff training, recruitment and selection processes.

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APPENDIX 1 – Implications

Legal Implications

The services outlined within this report will be provided in accordance with the guidelines and legislation relevant to each function.

Finance

With the approval of a service level agreement costs in respect of the support service will be agreed in advance for the forthcoming year (subject to any agreed inflationary increase) and will cover a number of specified functions. This means that the cost of the service is more transparent and the committee has more control over the work areas covered. Details of how costs will be factored into the Joint Committee budget and how they will be recharged are shown in the Service Level Agreement.

Consultation

None. However, Officers of Gateshead Council were provided with a copy of the report and given opportunity to comment / raise any detailed queries on the contents of this report in advance of circulation to members of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee.

Equality and Diversity/ Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Climate Change

None

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

There are no staffing implications associated with this report. All staff are provided from within the various functional areas of Durham County Council.

Accommodation

There are no Accommodation implications associated with this report.

Risk

Many tasks considered within the SLA must be completed within statutory deadlines and in line with changing guidance. By ensuring such tasks are delivered by staff who are appropriately experienced, qualified and competent and who receive adequate training and supervision, any relative risk will be minimised.

Procurement

None