

**Central Durham Crematorium  
Joint Committee**

**23 April 2025**

**Risk Register Update 2024/25 Review 2**

**Ordinary Decision**



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**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 To inform the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee of the outcome of the half-yearly risk review in March 2025.

**Executive summary**

- 2 A service risk register and a health and safety risk register are maintained in accordance with Durham County Council's methodology and approach to risk management.
- 3 Since the previous review, there are no significant changes to report, but several minor updates are included below.
- 4 The net evaluation of each risk remains within the risk appetite.

**Recommendation(s)**

- 5 It is recommended that members of the Crematorium Joint Committee note the content of this report and the updated position.

## **Background**

- 6 A service risk register and a health and safety risk register are maintained in accordance with Durham County Council's methodology and approach to risk management, further details of which are included in **Appendices 2 and 3**.

## **Risk Review**

- 7 The current service risk register is included in **Appendix 4**.

There are no significant changes to report, but there is one minor update to acknowledge, which is included below.

- 8 **Appendix 4, risk 6** Sickness absence of key staff:

The number of Relief Cremation Attendants / Standby Cremator Operators has been reduced from 4 to 3.

This change is not expected to have a significant impact on operations, as staffing levels remain adequate to maintain service continuity.

- 9 There are no other changes to report.

- 10 A profile of service risks is included in **Appendix 5**.

## **Conclusion**

- 12 The net evaluation of every risk is within the risk appetite (shaded area in Appendix 5).

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

There are no direct implications, but effective risk management helps to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory obligations.

### **Finance**

There are no direct financial implications, but effective risk management helps to avoid or minimise financial loss.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

Officers of Spennymoor Town Council were consulted on the contents of this report.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

None.

### **Climate Change**

None.

### **Human Rights**

None.

### **Crime and Disorder**

None.

### **Staffing**

None.

### **Accommodation**

None.

### **Risk**

This report supports the delivery of the objectives of the Durham County Council's Risk Management Strategy. Each risk has been evaluated using Durham County Council's risk management methodology. Maintaining and continually reviewing the risk register is a key component of the control and governance framework for the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

### **Procurement**

None.

## Appendix 2: How Central Durham Crematorium risks are managed

Two risk registers have been developed for Durham Crematorium, containing service and health and safety risks respectively. They are maintained in accordance with Durham County Council's methodology and approach to risk management. Regular reviews are undertaken to ensure that risk management continues to be embedded and that the risk registers are kept up to date, taking current issues into account.

### Service Risk Register

The service risk register is maintained by the Bereavement Services Manager & Registrar (Countywide), supported by Durham County Council's Principal Risk and Governance Officer. Risk assessments are based on the impact on finance, service delivery and stakeholders if the risk materialises, and on the likelihood that the risk will occur over a given period, as shown in appendices 3A and 3B. This requires an evaluation of the gross risk and the net risk, which takes into account mitigating control measures. Formal reviews are undertaken twice a year and reported to the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee.

### Health and Safety Risk Register

The health and safety risk register is maintained by the Bereavement Services Manager & Registrar (Countywide), supported by Durham County Council's Occupational Health and Safety Team. Risk assessments are based on the potential severity of injury and the likelihood of occurrence, as shown in the table below. This requires an evaluation of the net risk, which takes into account mitigating control measures. In line with Durham County Council's procedures, an in-depth review is undertaken every three years. A light-touch review is also undertaken twice a year. A single, overarching health and safety risk is included in the service risk register, which is reported to the Central Durham Crematorium Joint Committee twice a year.

HEALTH & SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		Likelihood (a full definition of each rating is set out in the detailed methodology)			
		1 Very Unlikely	2 Unlikely	3 Likely	4 Very Likely
Impact	<b>4 Extreme</b> Death or multiple deaths; substantial damage.	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk	High Risk
	<b>3 Severe</b> Loss of limb or multiple injuries; significant damage.	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk	High Risk
	<b>2 Minor</b> Three day or greater injury or illness; insignificant damage.	Insignificant	Low Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk
	<b>1 Negligible</b> Less than a three-day injury or illness; superficial damage.	Insignificant	Insignificant	Low Risk	Low Risk

### Civil Emergencies

Durham County Council is jointly responsible for responding to civil emergencies (such as severe weather events, network power losses and flu epidemics) through the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum. An explanation of the arrangements for

managing the risk of such events and a copy of the latest Community Risk Register can be found on the web page of the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum.

## Appendix 3A: Strategic Risk Assessment Criteria – Impact Factors

Factor and Description		Financial	Service Delivery/ Performance	Stakeholder and Reputation
5	Critical	> / = £15M > 5% of Service/ budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inability to meet statutory duties.</li> <li>Key services can no longer be delivered – emergency actions needed, which need Cabinet approval.</li> <li>Significant legal action or challenge</li> <li>Intervention or sanctions by regulatory body / prosecution or litigation (including corporate manslaughter)</li> <li>Strike action which is Council-wide or service-wide in a critical service for a long period</li> <li><b>(in context of a project, this can also mean that the project cannot proceed, or that several critical benefits/ opportunities cannot be achieved)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perception of the majority of potential partners and stakeholders that the Council is not 'fit to deal with'.</li> <li>Loss of life.</li> </ul>
4	Major	£5M - £15M 3% - 5% of Service/ budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major disruption to some statutory and / or non-statutory services i.e., key service delivery adversely affected – crisis management implemented, which needs Cabinet approval.</li> <li>Strike action which is Council-wide or service-wide in a critical service for a short period.</li> <li><b>(in context of a project, this can also mean major disruption to delivering the project, or that a critical benefit/ opportunity cannot be achieved)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serious reputational damage to the Council regionally/ nationally/ internationally.</li> <li>Damage to relationships with central government or other public bodies e.g., Environment Agency, other Councils.</li> <li>Perception of small number of potential partners and stakeholders that the Council is not 'fit to deal with'.</li> <li>Serious injury to individual.</li> </ul>
3	Moderate	£1M - £5M 1% - 3% of Service/ budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate disruption to statutory and / or non-statutory services i.e., some disruption to service delivery – action plans to rectify.</li> <li>Service fails to maintain existing status under inspection regimes e.g., Ofsted.</li> <li>Resolution requires approval at CMT level.</li> <li>Limited strike action within a service.</li> <li><b>(in context of a project, this can also mean moderate disruption to delivering the project, or moderate impact on achieving benefits/ opportunities)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results in negative Regional or National press / media coverage.</li> <li>Minor reputational damage to the County Council.</li> <li>Major criticism by other stakeholders e.g., partners, central government.</li> <li>Significant impact on the quality of life for a large section of the community.</li> </ul>
2	Minor	£0.5M - £1M 0.2% - 1% of Service/ budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor service disruption / customer dissatisfaction i.e., little disruption to service delivery – no long term or permanent impact on key services.</li> <li>Capable of resolution by Service Management Team.</li> <li><b>(in context of a project, this can also mean minor disruption to delivering the project, or minor impact on achieving benefits/ opportunities).</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results in negative press coverage within County Durham</li> <li>Minor criticism by Community or other stakeholders e.g., Partners, central government.</li> <li>Significant number of complaints from service users.</li> <li>Serious reputational damage to own service area.</li> <li>Significant impact on the quality of life for a small section of the community.</li> </ul>
1	Insignificant	< £0.5M < 0.2% of Service/ budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insignificant service disruption e.g., very little or no disruption to services</li> <li>Impairment of quality of service.</li> <li>Capable of resolution by head of service and their management team.</li> <li><b>(in context of a project, this can also mean insignificant disruption to delivering the project, or insignificant impact on achieving benefits/ opportunities).</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results in negative press coverage within the locality / ward</li> <li>Insignificant criticism by community or other stakeholders e.g., partners, central government.</li> <li>Insignificant number of complaints from service users.</li> <li>Minor reputational damage to own service area.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 3B: Strategic Risk Assessment Criteria – Likelihood Factors

Factor and Description		Expected Frequency
5	Highly Probable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>More than once a year</b></li> <li>• Something that is already occurring or is likely to be a regular occurrence throughout a one-year period.</li> <li>• Inevitable i.e., the event is expected to occur in most circumstances.</li> <li>• &gt;80% chance of occurring.</li> </ul>
4	Probable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Once a year</b></li> <li>• Something that has occurred in the last year or is likely to occur at least once throughout a one-year period.</li> <li>• Probable or where the conditions of the loss occur on a regular basis i.e. the event will probably occur in most circumstances.</li> <li>• 61% to 80% chance of occurring.</li> </ul>
3	Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Every 1-3 years</b></li> <li>• Likely only to happen at some point over the next 1 to 3 years.</li> <li>• Possible but responding to well understood situations i.e., the event might occur at some time.</li> <li>• 31% to 60% chance of occurring.</li> </ul>
2	Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Every 3-5 years</b></li> <li>• Likely only to happen at some point over the next 3 to 5 years or likely to continue to occur i.e., the event is not expected to occur.</li> <li>• 11% to 30% chance of occurring.</li> </ul>
1	Remote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Over 5 years</b></li> <li>• Rare activity or is unlikely based on current intelligence i.e., the event may only occur in exceptional circumstances.</li> <li>• &lt; 10% chance of occurring.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 4: Service Risk Register for Central Durham Crematorium

This is a list of service risks, ranked in order of net risk evaluation, based on the strategic risk assessment criteria in appendices 3A and 3B. Where changes to the risk assessment have occurred during the last quarter, these are indicated in the last column.

REF	RISK	Net Impact	Net Likelihood	Net Risk Score	Conclusion	Changes and Comments (Narrative to include in the report)
1	Demand for cremations exceeds capacity.	Minor	Possible	18	Tolerate	No Change
2	Serious breach of health and safety legislation	Moderate	Unlikely	16	Tolerate	No Change
3	ICT and Power Failure	Minor	Unlikely	10	Tolerate	No Change
4	Loss of knowledge and ability to cover existing workload through premature staff loss	Minor	Unlikely	10	Tolerate	No Change
5	Breakdown of the partnership (with Spennymoor Town Council)	Moderate	Remote	7	Tolerate	No Change
6	Sickness absence of key staff	Moderate	Remote	7	Tolerate	The number of Relief Cremation Attendants / Standby Cremator Operators has been reduced from 4 to 3.  This change is not expected to have a significant impact on operations, as staffing levels remain adequate to maintain service continuity.
7	Failure of Cremators / Specialist Equipment	Minor	Remote	6	Tolerate	No Change
8	Damage to Public or Vehicles due to tree branches falling	Insignificant	Unlikely	6	Tolerate	No Change
9	Disclosure of confidential information through incorrect disposal / maintenance of information (data breach).	Minor	Remote	5	Tolerate	No Change
10	Loss of Income/Money	Minor	Remote	5	Tolerate	No Change
11	Potential breach of equality and diversity legislation	Insignificant	Remote	3	Tolerate	No Change



## Appendix 5: Profile of Service Risks for Central Durham Crematorium

### Service Risks

This matrix profiles all service risks shown in appendix 4, based on the net risk evaluation. The shaded area represents the corporate risk appetite.

As the net evaluations of all risks are within the risk appetite, they are considered to be at an acceptable level.

Impact					
Critical (score 13 – 15)				In this matrix, the key risks have been arranged according to the net impact and net likelihood evaluations to illustrate their relative severity. The full title of each risk is shown in the Key Risks Schedule.	
Major (score 10 – 12)					
Moderate (score 7 – 9)	5 Partnership 6 Sick Absence	2 Health & Safety Breach			
Minor (score 4 – 6)	7 Cremators 9 Confidentiality 10 Income Loss	3 ICT & Power Failure 4 Staff Loss	1 Cremations Capacity		
Insignificant (score 1 – 3)	11 Equality & Diversity Breach	8 Tree Branches			
Likelihood	Remote (score 1)	Unlikely (score 2)	Possible (score 3)	Probable (score 4)	Highly Probable (score 5)