

Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee

4 February 2011

Provision of Support Services 2011-2012

Joint Report of Terry Collins – Corporate Director: Neighbourhood Services; Don McLure – Corporate Director: Resources and Treasurer to the Joint Committee

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present for approval a proposed Service Level Agreement (SLA) for Support Service provision (excluding Internal Audit Services, which are subject to a separate SLA) by Durham County Council to the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee for the period April 2011 to March 2012.

Background

2. Following the consideration of the Internal Audit SLA in September 2010, Members requested a similar formal SLA be prepared for consideration in relation to the Support Services provided by Durham County Council to the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee.
3. The current £8,330 Support Services Charge was inherited from the former Derwentside District Council and had not been subject to review for a number of years. The service provided to the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee by DCC officers is equal to that provided to the Central Durham Crematorium (CDCJC) other than the requirement for CDCJC to produce annually, a fully SORP Compliant Statement of Accounts. The historic and proposed 2011/12 Support Service charge to the CDCJC is £32,000.
4. This report sets out details of the proposed SLA for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 to cover the following functions:
 - Management Services
 - Financial Services
 - Administration Services
 - Payroll Services
 - Creditor Services
 - Human Resources Services

Service Level Agreement (SLA)

5. It is proposed that an annual SLA be established for the provision of Support Service functions to the Joint Committee to provide a commitment for both parties over the medium term. This includes the provision of Management advice and attendance at Joint Committee Meetings by the Head of Finance, HR and Business Support, in addition to Accountancy, HR, Payroll, Creditor and Administration Services.

6. The proposed SLA, attached at Appendix 2, has been developed in consultation with the Head of Finance, HR and Business Support 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. Members should be aware that previously the cost of the work carried out by Support Services has been included in an overall administration recharge and does not provide an individual service breakdown. It is therefore proposed that all work carried out directly on behalf of the Joint Committee will be recharged in future and the resultant budget requirement for Support Services is set out in the SLA. Details of all work to be carried out will be itemised so that costs are more transparent.
8. The Support Service SLA totalling £17,200 (exclusive of Internal Audit Services) is attached at Appendix 2 for consideration and approval by members. Attached at Schedule 1 to the Appendix 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 Annual Statement of Accounts and Annual Return
- Liaison with both Internal and External Audit

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

Creditor Services

- Processing and payment of Crematorium invoices

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

9. The combined effect of the proposed Support Services and Internal Audit SLAs increases the charge to Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee from £8,330 to £22,200 (£17,200 relating to Support Services and £5,000 relating to Audit Services) for the financial year 2011/2012. An overall increase of £13,870 has been factored into the 11/12 budget.

10. The SLA will be reviewed on an annual basis with the annual budget amended (if required) respectively.

Recommendations

11. It is recommended that:-
 - Members consider and approve the Service Level Agreement attached at Appendix 2 (including relevant schedule) for the year 2011 / 2012

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Implications

Finance

With the approval of a service level agreement costs in respect of the support service will be agreed in advance for the forthcoming (subject to any agreed inflationary increase) and will cover a 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.

The charges proposed within the report result in an increase on the historic Support Services charge from £8,330 to £17,200 (exclusive of Internal Audit which is subject to a separate report), with an overall charge including Internal Audit Services of £22,200 being factored into the 2011/12 budget. The service provided to the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee by DCC officers is equal to that provided to the Central Durham Crematorium (CDCJC) other than the requirement for CDCJC to produce annually, a fully SORP Compliant Statement of Accounts. The historic and proposed 11/12 Support Service charge to the CDCJC is £32,000.

Staffing

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

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

Equality and Diversity

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

Accommodation

There are no Accommodation implications associated with this report.

Crime and Disorder

There are no Crime and Disorder implications associated with this report.

Human Rights

There are no Human Rights implications associated with this report.

Consultation

Officers of Gateshead Council were consulted on the contents of this report.

Procurement

None

Disability Discrimination Act

None

Legal Implications

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