

Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee

29 April 2016

DCLG Review of Crematoria Provision and Facilities



Report of Graham Harrison, Bereavement Services Manager

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Members of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee of a Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) consultation paper on Crematoria provision and facilities. The consultation runs from 16 March to 26 May 2016 and is seeking the views of crematoria providers, local authorities, faith groups and other members of the community.

Background

2. The Chancellor announced in the July 2015 Budget a review of the size and provision of crematoria facilities to make sure they are fit for purpose and sensitive to the needs of all users and faiths. The review was announced in response to concerns about the capacity of crematoria, in particular to accommodate Hindu and Sikh cremations, at which traditionally larger numbers of mourners wish to attend. In addition, there have been concerns that crematoria do not always pay sufficient regard to the cultural sensitivities of different faiths.
3. The DCLG consultation, attached at Appendix 2, will review whether the capacity and facilities of the crematoria are suitable to meet the demand and cultural requirements of all communities and will then consider whether any policy changes are needed as a result of the review.

Consultation Review

4. The consultation asks 42 questions of which 22 are specific to providers of crematoria, split into the following categories:
 - Crematoria Provision in England
 - Size and Capacity of Crematoria
 - Accommodation and Amenities
 - Iconography
 - Car Parking
 - Staff training

5. The Bereavement Services Manager has provided answers to the 22 questions specific to providers of crematoria, attached at Appendix 3.

Local Considerations

6. Local considerations are taken into account below for every category of the consultation review.
7. *Crematoria Provision in England:* The table below shows the number of cremations that were carried out in 2015 at Mountsett Crematorium which indicates that there is a low usage by the Hindu, Sikh and Jewish faiths in County Durham.

Denomination	Number of Cremations in 2015
Church of England/Scotland/Wales	670
Hindu	1
Sikh	0
Jewish	0
Roman Catholic	115
Non Religious	0
Humanist	340
Other	44
Methodist	193

8. *Size and Capacity of Crematoria:* The table below shows the number of services available in 2015, the number of services held and the number of spare slots, which demonstrates the spare capacity available at the Crematorium.

2015	Number of Services Available	Number of Services Held	Number of Spare Slots
January	227	111	116
February	235	134	101
March	220	125	95
April	240	129	111
May	220	92	128
June	215	107	108
July	240	99	141
August	250	109	141
September	214	100	114
October	196	114	82
November	205	112	93
December	223	131	92
Total	2,685	1,363	1,322

9. *Accommodation and Amenities:* Mountsett Crematorium has the ability for small groups of mourners to be able to witness the committal of the coffin, as well as sufficient outside space and water facilities.
10. *Iconography:* The religious symbols at the crematorium is fixed to the main Chapel wall and therefore we are unable to remove as and when required for each service held.
11. *Car Parking:* Following the road widening along the exit road and the car park extension, the car parking facilities at the crematorium have been increased in size from 54 to 88 spaces to accommodate the increase in vehicles attending services There is also an overflow car park available at the adjoining cemetery available for mourners to use during busy periods.
12. *Staff Training:* Crematorium staff follow Durham County Council policies and procedures, which includes an Equality and Diversity policy.

Recommendations:

13. It is recommended that Members of the Mountsett Crematorium Joint Committee:-
 - (i) Note the Department of Communities and Local Governments review of Crematoria Provision and Facilities.
 - (ii) Note the responses to the consultation questions.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Staffing

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

Risk

There are no risk implications associated with this report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality and Diversity issues underpin the consultation. These, together with an assessment of the Mountsett Crematorium position, are outlined in the report.

Accommodation

The consultation asks questions about capacity and facilities available at the Mountsett Crematorium, with an assessment of the Mountsett Crematorium position outlined in the 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

There are no procurement issues associated with this report.

Disability Issues

There are no disability issues associated with this report.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report.