



# REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

## PORTFOLIO AREA: ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING

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**Date of Meeting:** 5th April 2012

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**Public**

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**Key Decision:** No

**Recorded in Forward Plan:**

**No**

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**Inside Policy Framework**

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**Title:** CARLISLE CREMATORIUM EXTENSION

**Report of:** The Director of Local Environment

**Report reference:** LE08/12

**Summary:** This report summarises the results of a review undertaken within Bereavement Services and makes recommendations that will facilitate the funding of building improvements at the Crematorium leading to more flexible use of resources, improved service delivery and ongoing revenue savings.

### **Recommendations:**

That the Executive approves:

- i) The Option 2 proposal outlined in paragraph 1.4 in relation to the provision of a Crematorium extension.
- ii) The virement of £60,000 from revenue budgets as detailed in Section 2 of the report.

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**Note:** in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

- 1.1 As part of the Council's transformation process and the ongoing requirement for continuous improvement, a lean systems review was undertaken within Bereavement Services during 2011. In summary terms, this review identified the needs of customers, the subsequent demands on operational systems and a way forward to redesign workflow which provides improved service delivery and financial savings to the Council.
- 1.2 The main issue identified related to staff office accommodation and reception facilities for customers. It was apparent that the existing accommodation for the Bereavement Services Team Leader and administrative staff at the Richardson Street Cemetery lodge was cramped and not particularly suitable for meeting customer needs. In addition, the distance between this office and the Crematorium building situated over 750 metres away means inefficiency in terms of high levels of the travelling time between the two sites and a lack of co-ordination preventing flexible team working and the optimum use of staffing resources.
- 1.3 The solution is the bringing of all staffing resources together under one building (i.e. the Crematorium) to alleviate the above problems leading to future financial savings and offering up additional staffing capacity that can be invested in the ongoing training of funeral directors and the carrying out of necessary additional safety survey work on monuments in Cemeteries in general and disused graveyards in particular. In addition lone site working may be kept to a minimum.
- 1.4 Two options were considered as follows:

**OPTION 1** Construction of an extension to the existing front office in the entrance foyer of the Crematorium, with no independent access and in view of the most sensitive area of the building in terms of conducting funeral services – **Cost of this option is estimated at £35,000 (i.e. excluding independent parking)**

**OPTION 2** Add an extension onto the rear of the building in the service yard (which would require internal re-working of existing staff facilities). This option provides better independent access for customers in an area where independent parking facilities can be provided which is away from the focus of funerals at the entrance to the Crematorium. **Cost of this option is estimated at £60,000 including the provision of independent parking.**

- 1.5 Following consultation with staff and funeral directors, Option 2 was the favoured way forward and whilst there are higher one-off construction costs involved, it is this preferred solution which offers the greater customer focus and the primary reason for recommending this option. It should be noted that outline planning permission has been granted for this extension and associated external works which would be project managed by the Facilities Unit with works substantially undertaken by in-house operational staff.

## **2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 2.1 The initial capital cost of the extension is approximately £60,000 for which there is no current provision in the capital programme. Therefore if this scheme is approved, a virement of £60,000 will need to be approved by the Executive funded from within Local Environment base revenue budgets. This in effect would be a revenue contribution towards capital expenditure. There is some scope from the salary budgets to fund at least a portion of this non-recurring cost. Whilst it is not normal practice to vire from salary budgets, the only way for the Local Environment Directorate to achieve their transformational savings target of £300,000 for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012, is to utilise salary under-spends to undertake this capital project. In these circumstances it is suggested that this virement is approved on a one-off exceptional basis.
- 2.2 If available salary under-spends are not adequate to fully meet the cost of the extension, the balance will be met from savings within Bereavement Services in 2012/13 before savings are available for transformation in line with an invest to save approach. The use of salary under-spends will significantly reduce this burden and release transformation savings as soon as possible.
- 2.3 It is assumed that any on-going revenue costs can be met from within existing base budgets after the transformation savings of £32,000 per annum have been taken. All capital costs associated with this project to be met from the £60,000 capital budget.
- 2.4 A full business case needs to be prepared and considered by the Projects Assurance Group, to ensure that all capital and revenue implications have been addressed.

### **3 CONSULTATION**

#### **3.1 Consultation to Date.**

Staff  
Funeral Directors  
Medical Referees  
The Clergy  
Monumental Masons  
The Customer Contact Centre (where some current Bereavement Services administrative tasks would ultimately migrate to)  
SMT.

#### **3.2 Further Consultation proposed.**

None

### **4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 It is recommended that Executive approval is given to the Option 2 proposal outlined in paragraph 1.4 in relation to the provision of a Crematorium extension.
- 4.2 It is recommended that the Executive approve the virement of £60,000 from revenue budgets as detailed in Section 2 of the report.

### **5 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 The cost of the proposal is in excess of £35,000 and is therefore subject to Executive approval.

### **6 IMPLICATIONS**

- Staffing/Resources – Improved accommodation for reduced staff establishment. Training for staff in respect of revised working arrangements and migration of certain administrative tasks to the Contact Centre will be arranged.
- Financial – Included in the main body of the report.

- Legal – Outline planning permission has been granted for the proposal and the Council is able to develop its own property. Any procurement must be in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- Corporate – N/A
- Risk Management – Improved Health and Safety arrangements as indicated in the body of the report.
- Environmental – N/A
- Crime and Disorder – N/A
- Impact on Customers – Improved service provision
- Equality and Diversity – N/A

# Impact assessments

Does the change have an impact on the following?

Equality Impact Screening	Impact Yes/No?	Is the impact positive or negative?
Does the policy/service impact on the following?		
Age	No	
Disability	No	
Race	No	
Gender/ Transgender	No	
Sexual Orientation	No	
Religion or belief	No	
Human Rights	No	
Health inequalities	No	
Rurality	No	

If you consider there is either no impact or no negative impact, please give reasons:

...There is no equality based impact arising from the proposals

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If an equality Impact is necessary, please contact the P&P team.