

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**HIGHWAYS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
CABINET MEMBER**

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To outline progress made within Bereavement Services since June 2012 including the completion of its Mercury Abatement Project.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Bereavement Services covers crematorium and cemetery services provided by the council. A new management arrangement for the service was put in place in June 2012. The service has recently completed the 'Mercury Abatement Project' approved by the council.
- 2.2 The Mercury Abatement project to renew the two cremators was necessary to comply with the government's revised mercury abatement regulations. This project was completed on time. It is now fully operational. The main benefits are as follows:
- the facility now fully complies to mercury abatement regulations;
 - has more capacity and as such can accommodate a number of additional services; and
 - new waiting room facilities including disabled access are now available and previously identified by customers as important.
- 2.3 The works stage of the project lasted for approximately nine months (April 2012 to December 2012). Bereavement services managed to maintain full operational daily services. The service also successfully retained the 'Green Flag' accreditation for its parks and gardens.
- 2.4 Consideration has been given as to how to maximise future usage of the new facility. This is supported by the service undertaking an assessment of its customer needs. The review has also assessed opportunities for introducing new commercial ventures at all of the bereavement facilities and locations operated by the council.
- 2.5 The service is also currently working in partnership with the military TA forces to consider installing a veteran's memorial garden at the

Woodlands Crematorium for bereaved families to remember loved ones lost in recent conflicts.

- 2.6 The assessment has also taken into account the work the service has undertaken in partnership with Scunthorpe General hospital and Lindsey Lodge hospices. The service has helped to produce the 'Help for the Bereaved Guide'. The guide aims to keep customers informed of procedures and choices during difficult times.
- 2.7 As a result of the assessment it is proposed that the following actions be progressed:
- Maintain the 40 minute services at Woodlands Crematorium which commenced on 1 April 2013.
 - The intention to introduce a new range of memorials at Barton, Brigg and Winterton Cemeteries.
 - Continue with the range of services at Woodlands Crematorium.
 - Additional material can be presented at the meeting if necessary.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Option 1: To note the completion of the Mercury Abatement Project and support the further transformation of services at Woodlands Crematorium and the introduction of new memorials at Barton, Brigg and Winterton Cemeteries.
- 3.2 Option 2: To note the completion of the capital project but not to support the intended transformation of the services at Woodlands Crematorium and the introduction of new memorials at Barton, Brigg and Winterton Cemeteries.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 The capital works are now fully completed. The extended services recently introduced have improved bereaved families funeral arrangements and helped funeral directors and clergy to meet their customer's expectations. As a result, families are not rushed through their service. This idea to change came directly from the staff based at the crematoria. It was implemented without the need to change hours or incur additional costs.
- 4.2 A wide range of new memorial keepsakes has already been introduced. We propose to introduce further these Ash Vaults and Tower plaques into the rural cemeteries of Brigg, Barton and Winterton initially to offer choice

on cremated remains areas rather than just burial plots This allows improved customer choice and costs at rural locations.

- 4.3 Similarly the intended development of a veteran's memorial garden was prompted by customer feedback. This demonstrates putting our customer's needs first and working in partnership.
- 4.4 Finally the joint work with Scunthorpe General Hospital and Lindsey Lodge hospice is raising customer's awareness of the process of bereavement and the variety of choices available during difficult times.
- 4.5 To not carry out the transitional changes would leave the service as it is. This would also not take into account customer expectations to develop the service.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 Financial - The purchase of plaques and vaults for customers, all generate income but incur no extra costs until orders are confirmed. There may be some initial cost of footpath/bases in rural cemeteries dependant upon proposed locations but these will be considered on an individual basis and costs can be contained within the additional income generated from the plaques.
- 5.2 Staffing - There are no changes to the current staffing establishment arising from the proposals. The Woodlands Crematorium team have worked innovatively to adapt to the changing need of the service and share in the transformation vision. The Woodlands team will administer the procurement and sales. The plaques and vaults will be ordered and placed in situ by the Woodlands team supported by Neighbourhood Services Area teams.
- 5.3 IT - Bacas/ booking system upgraded at nil cost. Memorial sales are administered through the current Woodlands purchase and invoicing systems.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Not applicable.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

- 7.1 Consultation has taken place with funeral directors and they support the 40 minute services. These services have been requested for numerous years by funeral directors and families but never introduced until recently

7.2 Woodlands team have been consulted on working hours and changes and adapted to service developments and training

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That the Cabinet Member supports Option 1 as outlined and approves offering memorials to rural cemeteries with a view to offering new customer choice and notes the completion of the Mercury Abatement Project.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report - None