



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE INFORMATION REPORT

SUBJECT: PROPOSED NEW FEE STRUCTURE FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICES

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide members with further information.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 A report was considered by the Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee on the 28th June on a proposed new fee structure for additional services. Members requested further information in relation to two items; this report sets out that information.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1 The proposed charges for additional services will ensure the division has the adequate resources to deliver services and meet specific priorities in light of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 In relation to the clarification of the £505.00 interment fee, attached as Appendix 1 of this report is the current fee structure. This structure was agreed by members at the inception of Caerphilly County Borough Council in 1996. These fees have been incremented annually in line with members' approval. The cremated remains interment fee of £505.00 is irrespective of whether the remains are being interred into a full grave or cremated remains plot. Members should be aware that the £505.00 fee not only relates to the initial grave excavation but includes subsequent maintenance of the grave (for a period of 50 years). Any reduction in this (or any other bereavement fees) will result in the Authority paying large subsidies, a factor which the Cross Party Task and Finish Group wanted to move away from with the aim of achieving full cost recovery after the five year period referred to in paragraph 4.2.

4.2 Members will be aware of the Cross Party Task & Finish Group, which considered a raft of issues facing the Authority's bereavement service. In relation to fees and charges, members endorsed the recommendation of the Task & Finish Group that fees should be increased annually by 18.5% plus inflation for 5 years to ultimately make the service self-financing. This approval ended in 2015/16 and for this current financial year (2016/17) fees were not increased.

4.3 In relation to the 50 year period for the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial, on 10th July 2003, the Environmental & Housing Scrutiny Committee received a report which set out a series of recommendations in this respect. A copy of this report is attached as Appendix 2. The report was endorsed by Cabinet on the 12th August 2003.

4.4 The report recommended moving away from issuing Exclusive Rights of Burial, which included the Right to Construct & Maintain a Memorial. It recommended the Authority separated these Rights and issued a separate Right to maintain a memorial for a period of 30 years. (This 30 year period at the time, was in accordance with industry standards).

4.5 It was also recommended that the period for the Exclusive Rights of Burial be reduced from 99 years to 50 years. This is intrinsically linked to the recommendations made by the Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management (ICCM) and will enable the Authority to maintain communication links with bereaved families.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no equalities implications within this report for specific groups or individuals. Therefore there is no requirement for an Equalities Impact Assessment to be undertaken.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The financial implications have been set out within the body of the report considered by members on the 28th June 2016.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 The report reflects the views of the listed consultees.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The views of members are sought.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To seek the views of the Scrutiny Committee prior to the report being considered by Cabinet.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977
Local Government Act 2003

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David A. Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh Language)

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Current Fee Structure
- Appendix 2 - Report to Environmental & Housing Scrutiny Committee 10th July 2003