

MINUTES OF RUGBY AND DAVENTRY CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

25 SEPTEMBER 2018

PRESENT:

Members of the Committee: Councillor Ms Robbins (Chairman) (Rugby Borough Council)
Councillor Robertson (Daventry District Council)
Councillor Mrs Lomax (Daventry District Council)
Councillor Mrs Parker (Rugby Borough Council)

Officers: Dan Green (Head of Environment and Public Realm)
Ruth Barnett (Principal Accountant)
Lisa Marshall (Senior Finance Officer)
Linn Ashmore (Democratic Services Officer) - Rugby Borough Council
Simon Bowers (Business Manager) – Daventry District Council
Julie Lewis (Contracts and Performance Manager) – Daventry District Council

8. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

9. FINANCE MONITORING 2018/19 – KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Joint Committee considered a revised report concerning the finance and performance for the crematorium for the period April – August 2018 that was circulated prior to the meeting.

Progress against the target for total number of cremations held at Rainsbrook were ahead of target as at the end of August 2018.

There was only one complaint recorded which was in relation to a dog walker being asked to put their dog on a lead.

There were a high number of compliments received. It was acknowledged that the majority of compliments received would be verbal and not formally recorded within the data.

The level of CO₂ emissions per cremation was now included in the report. A more pro-active approach was being taken to monitoring and a Health and Safety Audit was due to be carried out on 2 October 2018. The outcomes and actions from the audit would be reported to the Joint Committee and monitored on an ongoing basis.

The financial position was positive with no overspends reported and an anticipated increase in the profit share of £10,500 each for Rugby BC and Daventry DC according to the current year-end forecast.

The current financial forecast assumes 922 cremations will be carried out by year-end and this was based on the final number of cremations carried out for 2017/18.

There was an increased demand for use of the chapel which was well above budget. It was anticipated this budget would be increased for the next financial year.

RESOLVED THAT – the report be noted.

10. EXPANSION OF CAR PARK - COSTS

The Head of Environment and Public Realm informed the Committee that since the agenda was produced it had come to light that the detailed information required to enable Members to make an informed decision was not yet available.

There were longer-term plans to expand the car park but recent issues around lack of parking when large funeral services were being held resulted in bringing this proposal forward.

The indicative cost for the expansion was in the region of £80,000. The decision to expand the car park was for this Joint Committee but it was noted that both Rugby Borough Council and Daventry District Council had put processes in place to make financial provision for the project and works had already begun to be scheduled.

The topic would be considered by the Crematorium Operation Board at its meeting on 23 October prior to a detailed report being brought back to this Committee which would include:

- A full breakdown of costs
- Details of the contractors and the schedule of works
- A cost benefit analysis to include the implications of not carrying out the expansion
- A wider understanding of the evidence and need including estimates for the numbers of larger funerals

This would be a commercial decision and there was a need to prioritise. The topic should be linked to any plans to expand the area designated for memorials under a site development plan for consideration as one item.

RESOLVED THAT – officers prepare a detailed report for the next meeting of the Joint Committee on the topic of an overall Site Development Plan.

11. FUNERAL POVERTY

The Joint Committee received a verbal update from the Head of Environment and Public Realm.

At its last meeting the Joint Committee had requested details of financial modelling and comparable statics from authorities that operated similar lower-cost funeral services due to its concerns over financial viability.

The Head of Environment and Public Realm reported it had not been possible to produce a report for consideration by the Joint Committee based on the level of detail that was required.

The Crematorium Operational Board had raised concerns that people would take the lowest-price option as the main preference. One of the factors to be considered included the net impact on full-price funerals. There was evidence to suggest there was support from the industry for such a scheme but a clearer understanding of the associated effects on funeral directors was required. It was also noted that bad-debt would also be a consideration and the potential impact of this would need to be investigated further.

There were low-cost funerals available on the market meaning decisions could be led by market forces.

It was agreed the matter should be deferred until the next meeting and detailed reports should be prepared that include the financial risks to allow Members to make a fully informed decision.

RESOLVED THAT – officers prepare a detailed report for the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

12. LAND AGREEMENTS

The Joint Committee considered the additional report concerning land agreements that had been added to the agenda with the agreement of the Chairman.

Since the crematorium opened it had become evident that re-designating the land would be beneficial to both the cemetery and the crematorium. Due to the need to expand crematorium activity it was agreed that the smaller parcels of land currently designated as cemetery land would better serve the crematorium. Being closer to the building would also make this a more preferable area for memorialisation.

RESOLVED THAT – the Joint Committee endorse the proposal in the report.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Joint Committee be held at 10.00am on Tuesday 8 January 2019.

CHAIRMAN