

ALDERSHOT CREMATORIUM – REPAIRS TO CREMATORS

Summary

Following the six monthly inspection, urgent works have been identified to reline a cremator and replace venturi's and nozzles which extract gases from the cremators at the crematorium, to ensure they remain operational.

The Council will at the end of this financial year have £600k available in reserves to replace the cremators with ones that are mercury compliant. Given the additional spend anticipated in 2019/20 it is proposed that the Council seek specialist advice and costings on the feasibility, design and procurement of new cremators with the final project being presented to Cabinet in due course with a view to bringing forward the investment required.

Recommendation

Cabinet is recommended to approve:

- a supplementary estimate of £63k for 2018/19 to enable the urgent relining of a cremator and to replace the venturi's and nozzles at the crematorium.
- the feasibility, design and procurement of new cremators with the final project detail being presented to Cabinet in due course with a view to bringing forward the investment required

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper seeks approval for a supplementary estimate to enable urgent works to the cremators at the crematorium.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Aldershot Crematorium has three cremators and through a pre-planned maintenance programme receives detailed inspections every six months. The brickwork to the cremators were relined in 2012 with the venturi's and nozzles having been replaced in 2010.
- 2.2 It was anticipated that all three cremators would have required either, relining or replacing and the venturi's and nozzles replacing in 2019/20.
- 2.3 A recent inspection identified more advanced brickwork decay and work required to the hearth in cremator one. Due to the deterioration of the venturi's and nozzles, the suction from the cremators to the chimney has also deteriorated.

- 2.4 The Council currently receives a levy from each cremation through the Mercury Abatement Scheme. The Council will have accrued just over £600,000 by the end of 2018/19 towards the replacement of the existing cremators, with ones, which are mercury compliant.

3. Details of the Proposal

General

- 3.1 Due to their poor condition the venturi's and nozzles to all three cremators need to be replaced as soon as possible. To ensure no disruption the above works will be completed over a weekend.
- 3.2 The walls of cremator one are very worn and the brickwork needs replacing. The hearth also requires urgent attention. These works will take around a week to complete and any disruption will be kept to a minimum.

Alternative Options

- 3.3 The following alternative option has been considered and rejected. Rather than reline cremator one the Council could try to operate with the remaining two cremators. However, this would place additional strain on the cremators and require additional staff to cover longer working hours in order to complete the current level of cremations. If a further cremator failed, the Council would have to divert cremations to other crematoriums. This would significantly reduce both income and customer service.
- 3.4 If the venturi's and nozzles are not replaced it is likely the cremators would cease operating due to safety concerns before the end of this year.

4. Implications / Risks

Legal implications

- 4.1 The crematorium must operate in a safe manner. If the above works are not completed in a timely fashion, it is likely that one or more cremators will be taken out of commission.

Financial and resource implications

- 4.2 The Council receives a net income of around £700k pa and carries out around 1,700 cremations a year.
- 4.3 A supplementary estimate of £63k is required for 2018/19 to reline the bricks and carry out works to the hearth to cremator one (£36k) and replace venturi's and nozzles to all three cremators (£27k). If cremator one is not relined this will reduce the crematoriums ability to carry out cremations at peak times and put a strain on the remaining cremators. If the venturi's and nozzles are not replaced, there is a high risk that cremations will cease with the resulting loss in customer service and income.
- 4.4 The additional cost of £63k in 2018/19 is equivalent to an increase on the Council Tax of £2.03p. This is equivalent to an increase of 1.025% on the Council Tax Rate.

- 4.5 Previously this report refers to a reserve that will have built up to approximately £600k by the end of the financial year 2018/19 that is to be used to replace the cremators. This has been estimated at between £1m and £1.2m. Clearly, it doesn't make financial sense to spend short-term budgets when the Council could bring forward the replacement and cash flow the spend accordingly. As a result, the Council will obtain quotes to urgently move forward the project to replace the cremators and carry out necessary feasibility, design and procurement of such in advance of financial year 2019/20.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.6 There are no direct equalities impact implications, as there are other crematoriums within a reasonable distance

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The Council is seeking specialist advice and costings on the feasibility, design and procurement of new cremators with the final project being presented to Cabinet in due course with a view to bringing forward the investment required. However a recent inspection has identified that cremator one requires urgent works and the venturi's and nozzles to the cremators need replacing. A supplementary estimate is requested to ensure the continuation of this important service at the Aldershot Crematorium.

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