

Joint Report of the Treasurer and the Executive Director

CREMATION FEES AND CHARGES 20241. Purpose of Report

To seek approval of the proposed fees and charges for 2024, in accordance with the service objective of providing efficient arrangements for funeral directors and clergy which meet the need of their service users at a reasonable cost.

2. Recommendation

The Joint Committee is asked to RESOLVE that the fees and charges for cremations and associated services from 1 January 2024, as detailed in the appendix, be approved.

3. Detail

Members will be aware of the inflationary pressures on prices for fuel, utilities and supplies. The information available at the time of setting the budget, suggested an allowance for inflation on energy was necessary and an additional £25,000 was included in the base budget for 2023/24. Since then, energy prices have risen to higher levels than anticipated. It is now forecasted that the cost of energy alone, based on regular annual consumption, will potentially add an extra £62,000 to operating costs in 2023/24.

In order to further improve operational efficiencies and reduce costs, Bramcote Bereavement Services is looking to implement strategic changes to the daily operations of the site. This will include operating only one cremator over a 12-hour working shift pattern, which will facilitate two extra cremations per day through one cremator. This practice will allow one cremator to remain on standby until required. A gas usage reduction of up to 15% is anticipated.

Whilst the uplift in energy costs can be partially mitigated by operational changes, the remainder will have to be met by service users. It is vital that fees and charges reflect the cost of the service and maximised to ensure that investment in the Crematorium and the budgeted surplus distribution can be maintained.

It is therefore proposed to uplift fees and charges relating to cremations and associated services from 1 January 2024. This is earlier than in previous years and will help to mitigate the impact of energy prices on the overall budget. The proposed increase in these fees for 2024 is around 9.1% and will see the cost of a full service increase from £820 to £895.

A benchmarking exercise of crematoria in the local area has been undertaken and it is anticipated that the proposed cremation fee at this level would still be within the mid-range fees charged across the region, keeping Bramcote Bereavement Services prices very competitive in the market.

The table below details fees and charges across the region in the current financial year 2023/24. It is expected that all crematoria will increase their prices again for 2024:

	Full Service £	Early Service £	Direct Service £	Attended Direct £	Chapel Hire £	Saturday Service £	Fuel Sur-charge £
Bramcote	£820	£642	£430	£530	£268	£1,105	Nil
Trent Valley	£865	£750	£325	£675	£375	£890	£35
Gedling	£925	£775	£475	Not Offered	£475	£1,155	£29
Wilford Hill	£773	£773	£450	Not Offered	£307	£1,082	Nil
Derby	£829	£623	£381	£562	£209	Not Offered	Nil
Rushcliffe	£950	£775	£475	£775	£450	Not Offered	Nil
Mansfield	£941	£749	£438	Not Offered	£303	£1,064	Nil

The proposed fees and charges for cremations and associated services from 1 January 2024 are provided in the appendix for Members' consideration.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

It is vital that fees and charges reflect the cost of the service provided and are maximised to ensure that investment in operations and the budgeted surplus distribution can be maintained. The approved budget for 2023/24 includes a surplus distribution of £800,000, split equally between Broxtowe and Erewash Borough Councils, given an assumed level of estimated revenue account surplus (minimum of £100,000).

The budgetary impact of fee increases will be costed into the overall budget setting process for 2024/25 with details presented to the Joint Committee for consideration as part of the Revenue Estimates budget report in January 2024.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Head of Legal Services were as follows:

Local authority responsibilities for the management and protection of cemeteries and crematoria are set out in the Local Government Act 1972 (Section 214 and Schedule 26) and the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order

1977. Section 9 Cremation Act 1972 allows the Council to set charges or fees for the burning of human remains in any crematorium provided by the Council.

Section 12 Cremation Act 1972 requires the Council to publish a table of fees, a fee may be fixed in respect of a burial service before, or after cremation, and, if no fee is fixed, the fee, if any, fixed in respect of a burial service shall apply. (section 12, Cremation Act 1972).

The provisions under the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 state that in determining the fees to be charged the burial authority shall take into account the effect of any resolution under section 147(3) of, or under paragraph 6 of Schedule 26 to, the Local Government Act 1972.

6. Human Resources Implications

There are no direct human resources implications for this report.

7. Union Comments

Not applicable.

8. Climate Change Implications

There are no further climate change issues to report.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

There are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

As there is no change to policy an equality impact assessment is not required.

11. Background Papers

Nil.

APPENDIX

Summary of Charges – Bramcote Bereavement Services

		Approved Charges 2023/24 £	Proposed Charges 2024 £
Part 1	<u>Cremation Fee</u>		
	To include Cremation Fee; Medical Referee's Fee; Use of Music Facilities; and Scattering of Cremated Remains (Monday to Friday)	820	895
	<u>For the cremation of the body of:</u>		
	A person below the age of 18 years * No charge to the family – fee of £240 is claimed back from the Children's Funeral Fund	Nil*	Nil*
	A person aged 18 years and over	820	895
	School of Anatomy cadaver	528	575
	Body part	50	55
	Direct Cremation (Unattended)	430	470
	Direct Cremation (Attended)	530	580
	Committal Service	820	895
	Saturday Service* (prices have been combined to make it easier to understand)	1,105	1,205
Part 3	<u>Miscellaneous Fees and Charges</u>		
	Extended Service Fee	268	295
	Witness Charge	78	85
	Non cancellation fee (administration charge)	95	95
	Use of chapel for memorial service (in the week)	268	295
	Use of chapel for memorial service (at a weekend)	373	410
	Sunrise Service (09:00 Serenity Chapel only)	642	700
	Additional charge for weekend scattering	28	30
	Scattering of remains from another Crematoria	71	80
	Temporary deposit per month (first month free)	36	40