

Report of the Interim Deputy Chief Executive

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| WELFARE FUNERALS |
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1. Purpose of report

To update Committee on welfare funerals in Broxtowe and Erewash Boroughs.

2. Background and Detail

Committee will recall asking for a report on this subject at its last meeting on 10 January 2019.

The councils have a statutory duty under the provisions of Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 to undertake the disposal of deceased persons, either by cremation or burial, who die in Broxtowe or Erewash Boroughs and where no other arrangements have been made.

In both Boroughs the service is administered by the Environmental Health section as the relevant legislation is primarily public health in nature.

Further background and detail is given in the appendix.

3. Financial implications

Financial information is given in the appendix.

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| <u>Recommendation</u> |
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| The Committee is asked to NOTE the report. |
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Background papers

Nil

APPENDIX

Background

The councils have a statutory duty under the provisions of Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 to undertake the disposal of deceased persons, either by cremation or burial, who die in Broxtowe or Erewash Boroughs and where no other arrangements have been made.

A cremation will be arranged unless it is established that it would be contrary to the wishes of the deceased for personal or religious reasons.

The appointed funeral director is contracted by the relevant council to provide a dignified funeral with a coffin taken to the crematorium or cemetery in a hearse attended by bearers.

If a person dies in hospital, the responsibility for funeral arrangements is with the hospital.

Cost recovery

If there are relatives who are not prepared or able to undertake responsibility for the funeral arrangements, then the relevant council has a duty to dispose of a deceased person and to recover their costs, including appropriate staff administration time, in making the arrangements.

The nearest family member will be required to sign a disclaimer, acknowledging and agreeing that the council will collect any funds which become available to offset their costs in undertaking the funeral arrangements.

The Borough Councils have statutory authorisation to enter a property to ascertain the extent of the estate and to remove any items or assets which may assist in funding the funeral.

Generally, after the funeral costs and administration charges have been deducted, any funds, in excess of £500, remaining from a deceased person's estate will be forwarded to the Treasury Solicitor if no known relatives can be traced.

In Erewash the Council pays the cremation fees so any shortfall in recovery of funds is born by the Council.

Detailed information

| Year | No. in Broxtowe | Net cost to Broxtowe £ | No. in Erewash | Net cost to Erewash £ |
|---------|-----------------|------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 2015/16 | 10 | £7,849 | 7 | £2,573 |
| 2016/17 | 5 | £4,621 | 4 | £743 |
| 2017/18 | 6 | £3,498 | 4 | £1,620 |

- In Broxtowe 1 of the 21 deceased was buried and the other 20 were cremated.
- In Erewash 1 of the 15 deceased was buried and the other 14 were cremated.
- In Broxtowe full cost recovery was made in 11 of the 21 cases.
- In Erewash full cost recovery was made in 5 of the 15 cases.