

## Children's burial & cremation & direct cremation fees

Report Author	Gavin Waite / Trevor Kennett / Nicola Dowsett <b>Relevant Director/Head of Service/Service Manager</b>
Portfolio Holder	<b>Cllr Savage, Deputy Leader ands Cabinet Member for Operational Services</b>
Status	<b>For Approval</b>
Classification:	<b>Unrestricted</b>
Key Decision	<b>Budget</b>
Reasons for Key	Budget Framework (Option to add in burials for free under 17 years to the approved cremation and burial fees and charges).

### **Executive Summary:**

This report outlines an officer decision to add free burials to the free cremation of 17 years and under and to reduce direct cremation fees as agreed by Council for fees and charges for 2019/20.

### **Recommendation(s):**

To amend the decision made on item 13. Fees and Charges of the Council meeting, held on the 6 December 2018.

The minutes read "Council approve the Fees and Charges as listed in Annex 1 of the report, subject to the removal of cremation fees for those up and including 17 years of age."

1. After the word cremation to add 'and burial'.
2. To introduce a direct cremation service fee of £425.00.

These service changes will be added to the Council published fees and charges for 2019/20.

### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Financial and Value for Money</b>	The decision to make children's (17 years and under) burials and cremations free of charge will reduce income by around £3,000 per annum and to lower direct cremation costs to assist with the Council's commitment to addressing the issue of funeral poverty.
<b>Legal</b>	None. This service will now be available to all.
<b>Corporate</b>	Priority 2: Supporting neighbourhoods Priority 3: Promoting inward investment
<b>Equality Act 2010 &amp; Public Sector Equality Duty</b>	The implementation of these fees will not impact on any protected characteristics, but enhance facilities already available.

<b>CORPORATE PRIORITIES (tick those relevant)</b>	
A clean and welcoming Environment	
Promoting inward investment and job creation	✓
Supporting neighbourhoods	✓

<b>CORPORATE VALUES (tick those relevant)</b>	
Delivering value for money	✓
Supporting the Workforce	
Promoting open communications	

## **1. Introduction**

### Burial & cremation fees

At the Finance, Budget & Performance Scrutiny Panel on Tuesday, 20 November, 2018 a proposal was agreed stating ‘ Could Cabinet consider waiving the £50 fee for child cremation? Death in youth was tragic to affected families’.

At the meeting of the Extraordinary, Cabinet on Thursday, 6th December, 2018 In response to recommendations from the Finance, Budget and Performance Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Gregory proposed, Councillor Savage seconded and Members agreed to recommend the following to Council: The removal of the fee for cremation services of children under the age of seventeen years;

At the meeting of the full Council on the 6 December 2018 it was agreed that ‘Council approve the Fees and Charges as listed in Annex 1 of the report, subject to the removal of cremation fees for those up and including 17 years of age’.

The Equalities Act 2010, which simplifies, strengthens and harmonises the current legislation to provide protection for individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

The inclusion of free cremations only would discriminate against individuals with protected characteristics who for religious beliefs only use burial services.

### Direct cremation fees

The costs of funerals has been topical for some years now and on 29 November 2018 a consultation was opened by the Competition and Markets Authority following major concerns regarding fees charged by funeral directors and crematoria.

In order to keep with the trends in bereavement services and show the Council’s commitment to addressing the issue of funeral poverty, a shorter service of 30 minutes was introduced back in April 2017 at a reduced fee of £605.00, the normal longer service fee was £768.00 (fees for 2017 - 2018) . During this period, 95 families opted for the reduced fee service. Whilst this could be seen as a loss of income, it is important to remember, there is a strong chance the shorter services could have been held at other nearby crematoria offering a reduced fee service.

In addition to the shorter service, it is now proposed to offer a direct cremation service. This is a service which has no one in attendance except for those delivering the coffin to the catafalque. A short piece of music can be played during this time and then the coffin will be committed.

This has recently been introduced by our nearest competitor at a cost of £500 for 2019 - 2020, and failure not to introduce this service could result in loss of the cremation, and possibly income.

## **2. Proposal**

1. It is proposed to add after the word cremation to include 'and burials'.
2. It is proposed to introduce a direct cremation service fee of £425.00.

These services will be added to the Council published fees and charges for 2019/20.

Contact Officer:	Nicola Dowsett, Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager and Registrar
Reporting to:	Sharon Carter, Open Spaces Manager
Head of Service	Trevor Kennett

### **Corporate Consultation**

<b>Finance</b>	Sharon Westbrook, Finance Manager
<b>Legal</b>	Tim Howes, Director of Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer