

CORE OFFER BUDGET FOR MAINTENANCE OF COUNCIL CEMETERIES & CREMATORIUM

WHY DOES THE COUNCIL HAVE TO PROVIDE THIS SERVICE AND WHAT DOES IT NEED TO COVER?

Local authorities do not have a duty to provide either a cemetery or a crematorium, however if they already have cemeteries and closed churchyards, they need to maintain in good order. In addition, the Council has a duty to make arrangements for public authority funerals (to bury or cremate an individual where no other arrangements have been made).

The Council currently manages and maintains the cemeteries; West, North and East and operates one crematorium within West Cemetery, and maintains five closed churchyards; St Cuthbert's Darlington, Holy Trinity Darlington, All Saints Hurworth, St Andrew's Haughton and St Peter's Bishopton.

The Council currently carries out approximately 150 burials per year and 66 cremated remains, approximately 1600 cremations per annum and 15 to 20 public funerals per year.

HOW DOES THE CORE OFFER BUDGET MEET THE COUNCIL'S OBLIGATIONS?

As the Council have three cemeteries, it is fulfilling its obligations in maintaining them alongside the five closed churchyards. As the crematorium returns a surplus for the Council it is appropriate to continue to provide this service to residents and include it in the core offer. However, it has to be noted that the crematorium will require significant capital investment in the next few years.

DOES THIS DIFFER FROM THE CURRENT SERVICE?

The proposal is to increase burial fees over the next three years to move the cemetery service to break even. This would mean the burial charge, for 2016/17 £710, would increase to £799 by 2018/19.

WHAT IS THE CORE BUDGET MADE UP OF?

2019/20 budget (£894,621)

	Budgets 2019/20 £
Employee	335,720
Premises*	229,405
Transport	26,637
Supplies & Services^	113,829
Support Services	2,208
Income#	(1,575,062)
Overheads	(27,358)
Total	(894,621)

*The utility costs associated with cemeteries and the crematorium is £98,000, of which, £73,000 relates to the consumption of gas for the cremators. Non domestic rates are £52,000 with the remainder of the budget used for maintenance of the grounds and buildings.

^Supplies & Services include £57,000 of cost related to contract funerals and medical reference fees which are recoverable through income.

#Income from cemeteries is £292,000 with £170,000 from internment fees and £89,000 from ownership of graves. £1,282,000 is received from the crematorium.