

Meeting:	<b>Scrutiny</b>
Date:	<b>12 December 2001</b>

**26. BEST VALUE REVIEW OF CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIA.** The Committee considered the report of the Cemeteries and Crematoria Best Value Review Team regarding the outcome of the Best Value Review of Cemeteries and Crematoria. Members were informed that the review team had examined the four challenges set by Cabinet. They included:

- The future of burial, locating a new cemetery and future funding mechanisms.
- Funding and maintaining cemeteries that were effectively closed.
- Managing and responding to the environmental issues concerning the Crematorium.
- Consideration of the asset sale of the crematorium and managing the loss of profit generated by the service.

The details of the main recommendations of the review team were set out in the report. Members were also informed that other areas for action included:

- Meeting the needs of Muslim community.
- Efficient and effective maintenance of cemeteries and crematorium grounds.
- Identifying uses for Ocklynge Cemetery Lodge/Office.
- Improved parking facilities at the Crematorium.
- Improved road and grounds signage.
- Completion of a Memorial Risk Assessment Programme.
- Identifying and establishment of wildlife areas on all sites.
- Improvement of the overall service to meet the needs of the bereaved.
- Reduction of vandalism at Ocklynge Cemetery.

The review team concluded that the most appropriate recommendation would be the retention and improvement of the in-house service for the following reasons:

- The service met national industry set standards on services and also met current Environmental Protection Act emissions legislation.
- Although no national Performance Indicators had been identified by Central Government, the profession itself (The Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration) had developed benchmarking standards through its introduction of the Charter for the Bereaved, of which the service was a signatory.

- The Cremation service had no direct competition from this type of service/product provision for a fifteen to twenty mile radius.
- If the service were ceased without another provider coming forward the impact on this community/area would be significant. Without ring fencing funds for essential maintenance and improvement programmes outlined in the Action Plan, the facilities would become unattractive. The possible provision of a new private facility within that radius may offer an attractive alternative for users on the boundary of Eastbourne.
- The sale of the service would be financially disadvantageous to the Council both in the immediate and long-term.

**RESOLVED:** (1) That Cabinet be recommended to retain and improve the in-house service for the reasons as set out in paragraph 7.5 of the report.

(2) That Cabinet be recommended to approve the Improvement Plan as set out at 10.0 of the report including:

- Establishment of an Ocklynge Cemetery Friends Group.
- Seeking a partnership to develop a new Cemetery site.
- A Business Plan to providing financial sustainability for the service incorporating the ring fencing of a proportion of income for maintenance and improvements.
- Implementation of a Memorial Safety Programme.

**Democratic Services**, Town Hall, Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4UG

Tel (01323) 415022/415023    Minicom (01323) 415111    Fax (01323) 410322

E Mail: [councillors@eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:councillors@eastbourne.gov.uk)

(der\P:\cabinet\reports\2002\bv scru extr cems)