

Report of Director of Environment and Housing

Report to Executive Board

Date: 22nd June 2016

Subject: Cremator Replacement

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of ward(s): Adel and Wharfedale, Alwoodley, Roundhay, Gipton and Harehills, Killingbeck and Seacroft, Harewood, Temple Newsam, Cross Gates and Whinmoor, Garforth and Swillington, Kippax and Methley, Wetherby		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:		

Summary of main issues

1. There are 8 cremators across the city at 3 sites undertaking a total of over 5,000 cremations each year. Mercury abatement work for the 3 cremators at Rawdon was completed in 2013, and 2 at Cottingley completed in 2015, which fulfils the current legal requirement for 50% abatement of emissions.
2. A decision on future cremation provision in the city is necessary in the near future as Lawnswood has 1 cremator which has reached the end of its operating life with the other 2 due to be decommissioned before 2020.
3. Demand is projected to increase and there is a trend away from burial towards cremation. This demand can however be met with current capacity provided that the city continues to operate with 8 cremators.
4. Options in this report are considered as follows:
 - Option 1: replace existing cremators at Lawnswood
 - Option 2: develop a new crematorium to the east of the city

5. There is a suggestion by the European regulatory body that 100% mercury abatement may be required by 2020. DEFRA statutory guidance for crematoria recommends that any new cremators that are replaced are fitted with filtration equipment.
6. The option is to only replace cremators at Lawnswood without filtration. The option to extend the building and include 3 cremators with filtration equipment is difficult but may be possible. No cost appraisal has taken place thus further feasibility work would be required to determine if this was a viable option.
7. The geographic spread of current crematoria sites is an issue as families from the east of the city need to travel to either the south west (Cottingley) or north west (Lawnswood and Rawdon) and do not have access to a more local crematorium. Option 2 will therefore also be explored subject to a land search to identify suitable site locations.

Recommendations

8. It is recommended that Executive Board:
 - Note that the existing cremators at Lawnswood are coming to the end of their operational life and need replacing.
 - Note that it is not suitable to only replace cremators at Lawnswood without filtration as this would be vulnerable to a change in legislation and contrary to statutory guidance.
 - Approve a feasibility study to RIBA B at Lawnswood to install 3 cremators with mercury filtration equipment.
 - Conduct a land search to the east of the city to identify suitable site locations according to the criteria identified in paragraph 3.4.4.
 - That the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside is responsible for implementing these recommendations and a future report to Executive Board is anticipated before the end of 2016.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report considers options to sustain cremation provision in the city to meet current and anticipated demand.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Leeds City Council is the burial and cremation authority, responsible for the management of 3 crematoria, 24 cemeteries and 22 closed churchyards and one of the largest burial authorities in the country.
- 2.2 There are 8 cremators across the city at the 3 sites undertaking a total of over 5,000 cremations each year which is deemed sufficient to continue to meet demand now and in the future. The estimated operational lifespan of a cremator is between 20 to 25 years.
- 2.3 Mercury abatement work for the 3 cremators at Rawdon was completed in 2013, and 2 at Cottingley completed in 2015, which fulfils the current legal requirement for 50% abatement of emissions. There is however a suggestion by the OSPAR Commission (Oslo and Paris Commission), the European regulatory body, that 100% abatement may be required by 2020.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 A decision on future cremation provision in the city is necessary in the near future as Lawnswood has 1 cremator which has reached the end of its operating life with the other 2 due to be decommissioned before 2020. Based on population forecasts and predicted death rate in Leeds, it is anticipated that the number of cremations will rise from just over 5,200 per annum in 2011 to 6,300 in 2035, an average increase of around 45 each year.
- 3.1.1 It should also be noted that there is a general trend away from burial towards cremation. The following table provides a summary of burials and cremations since 2008 along with the respective proportion of each.

Year	Cremations	Burials	% Cremations	% Burials
2008/09	5,343	1,079	83.2%	16.8%
2010/11	5,218	945	84.7%	15.3%
2012/13	5,383	995	84.4%	15.6%
2014/15	5,422	892	85.9%	14.1%

- 3.2 This demand can be met with current capacity provided that the city continues to operate with 8 cremators. There is therefore a need to ensure that cremation capacity at Lawnswood is sustained. Options in this report are considered as follows:

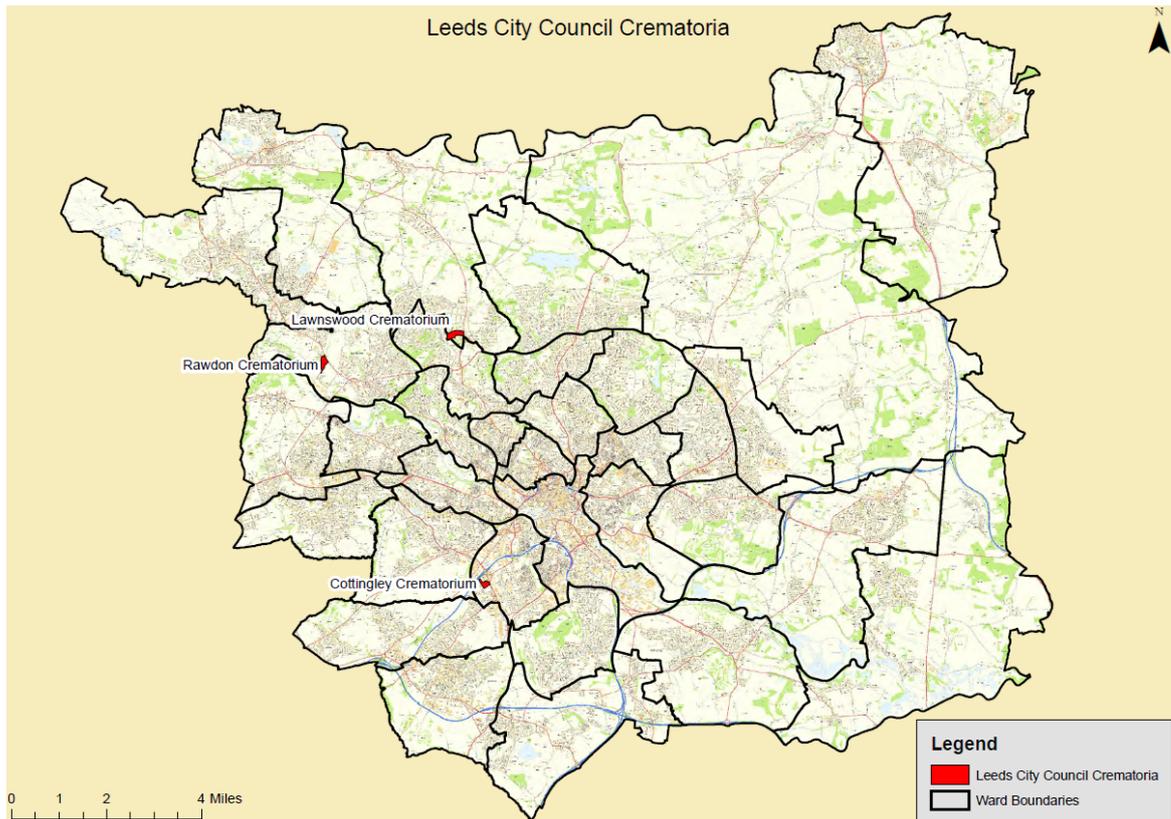
- Option 1: replace existing cremators at Lawnswood
- Option 2: develop a new crematorium to the east of the city

3.3 Option 1: replace existing cremators at Lawnswood

- 3.3.1 Whilst Lawnswood currently houses 3 cremators, if filtration equipment was included for mercury abatement there would only be capacity for 2 cremators within the existing footprint. Retrofitting the new plant into the existing Lawnswood facility would not be straightforward. The cremators are within a grade II listed building and the new plant would require an extension, which would need to be sympathetically designed so that it is in keeping with the existing buildings and their surroundings (which are also within a listed landscape). Therefore listed building consent would be required and the local planning authority would be required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historical interest.
- 3.3.2 A decision to replace 2 cremators with filtration equipment at Lawnswood would mean that there is insufficient cremator capacity to meet increasing demand. A decision to replace 3 without filtration equipment would be vulnerable to any changes in legislation to require a higher proportion of mercury abatement. Furthermore, DEFRA statutory guidance for crematoria recommends that any new cremators that are replaced are fitted with filtration equipment. For reference neighbouring authorities at Calderdale, Harrogate, Kirklees, Wakefield and York have achieved 100% mercury abatement. At a national level, Nottingham and Newcastle have achieved 100% abatement.
- 3.3.3 The option to only replace 2 cremators at Lawnswood is not considered viable as it would be vulnerable to a change in legislation and contrary to statutory guidance. The option to extend the building and include 3 cremators with filtration equipment is difficult, but may be possible and no cost appraisal has taken place thus further feasibility work would be required to determine if this was a viable option. It is therefore proposed that a closer evaluation of this option is conducted with a feasibility study to RIBA B funded from existing revenue budgets at an estimated cost of around £20k.

3.4 Option 2: develop a new crematorium to the east of the city

- 3.4.1 The geographic spread of current crematoria sites is an issue as families from the east of the city need to travel to either the south west (Cottingham) or north west (Lawnswood and Rawdon) and do not have access to a more local crematorium. The map below illustrates the current distribution of crematoria facilities across the city.



3.4.2 Population is predicted to grow in Leeds, in fact to around 940,000 by 2035 with a higher proportion in east Leeds through the proposed development of the east Leeds extension and potential growth around other settlements within this area. The east Leeds extension is the largest single area of allocated housing land in the Leeds City Region and covers some 215 hectares with the potential to accommodate up to 7,000 new homes.

3.4.3 There is therefore a case to develop a new facility geographically to the east of the city rather than replace at Lawnswood. A search area should broadly extend from Roundhay in the west to Kippax in the south east and be bounded by the A1 to the east. The rationale for identifying this area is that good practice suggests that crematoria are located so that main settlements are no more than a 45 minute drive time for a funeral cortege.

3.4.4 The 1902 Cremation Act states that no new crematorium can be sited within 200yds (183m) of existing dwellings. This therefore impacts upon the potential number of suitable sites. Any new facility would need an area of land between 1.25 to 2ha and use the latest cremation equipment and design. The criteria for a potential crematorium site are as follows:

- Minimum 75 seat auditorium capacity
- Reception, waiting area and welfare facilities
- Office and administration areas
- Crematory housing 3 cremators, mercury abatement equipment and chimney

- Exit porte cochere / flower court
- Service yard
- Garden of remembrance
- Approximately 75 car parking spaces plus disabled parking
- Ability to create an appropriately tranquil setting
- Good highways access avoiding need to utilise residential streets
- Access by public transport
- Cost effective access to utilities

3.4.5 It is therefore proposed that a land search is undertaken to identify potential sites that could be developed as a crematorium with 3 cremators and associated mercury filtration equipment. Any planning implications (including, for example, potential green belt policy issues) would need to be fully considered as part of the land appraisal study.

3.4.6 A recommendation on the development of crematoria provision would then be brought to Executive Board in due course. This would include the outcome of the feasibility study at Lawnswood along with suitable sites which could be considered on the east of the city.

3.4.7 If a future decision was taken to cease cremations at Lawnswood, there is potential to retain the ability to conduct funeral services within the existing auditorium if families with a close connection make a request.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 At this stage any decision will have no impact on service users or the wider population of Leeds. No public consultation will be therefore carried out until Executive Board has approved a list of potential sites.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 A screening has been undertaken and actions identified. If a future decision was taken to cease cremations at Lawnswood, there is potential to retain the ability to conduct funeral services within the existing auditorium if families with a close connection make a request. Any future consultation and design process that arose would aim to provide a venue that is more inclusive and does not imply alignment to a particular faith. Any proposals brought forward would be subject to a separate screening and impact assessment where appropriate including matters relating to employment as part of the decision making process.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

4.3.1 The recommendations in this report help the Best Council Plan priority 'improving air quality' and contribute to the 'cutting carbon and improving air quality' breakthrough project.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 A feasibility study and site searches would be conducted using resources identified within existing revenue budgets. There are inevitably capital costs associated with establishing a new crematorium which would be assessed if recommended, and presented in a future Executive Board report.

4.5 Legal Implications, access to information and call In

- 4.5.1 Mercury abatement work for 3 cremators at Rawdon was completed in 2013, and 2 at Cotingley completed in 2015, which fulfils the current legal requirement for 50% abatement of emissions. There is however a suggestion by the OSPAR Commission (Oslo and Paris Commission), the European regulatory body, that 100% abatement may be required by 2020. DEFRA statutory guidance for crematoria (process guidance note 5/2 (12) states that replacement plant should normally be designed to meet the standards specified for new installations and thus subject to mercury abatement. This decision is subject to call in.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 There are considerable business continuity risks with replacing 3 cremators at Lawnswood without mercury abatement filtration equipment because there could well be changes in legislation to require a higher proportion of mercury abatement.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 It is difficult but not necessarily impossible (subject to the outcome of a feasibility study) to install mercury abatement equipment and 3 new cremators at Lawnswood. The alternative option of seeking new land options in the east of city for a new crematorium would provide a more equitable spread across the city for cremation service provision.

6 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that Executive Board:

- Note that the existing cremators at Lawnswood are coming to the end of their operational life and need replacing.
- Note that it is not suitable to only replace cremators at Lawnswood without filtration as this would be vulnerable to a change in legislation and contrary to statutory guidance.
- Approve a feasibility study to RIBA B at Lawnswood to install 3 cremators with mercury filtration equipment.
- Conduct a land search to the east of the city to identify suitable site locations according to the criteria identified in paragraph 3.4.4.
- That the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside is responsible for implementing these recommendations and a future report to Executive Board is anticipated before the end of 2016.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.