

 Employment Committee 12th September 2018		Agenda Item No. 5
Title	Revision of the Bereavement Services staffing structure in Neighbourhood Services	
For further information about this report please contact	Pam Chilvers Bereavement Services Development Manager 01926 651418 Pamela.chilvers@warwickdc.gov.uk	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	22 nd March 2017. Employment Committee Minute Number 42	
Background Papers	As above & Executive Meeting 8 th March 2017 Minute Number 104	

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	Yes
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes/No
Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken	No
Not relevant to this report	

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	30/08/2018	Bill Hunt
Head of Service	15/08/2018	Rob Hoof
CMT		
Section 151 Officer	29/08/2018	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	31/8/2018	Andrew Jones
Finance	16/08/2018	John Gould
Portfolio Holder(s)	29/08/2018	Cllr Moira-Ann Grainger
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Not relevant to this report		
Final Decision?		Yes

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposal to revise the staffing establishment of the Bereavement Services Team, which forms part of the Neighbourhood Services Portfolio

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That, subject to approval of funding by Executive, the Committee approves the following changes to the establishment structure:
- Change in hours for Bereavement Officer (post no WD00662) from 0.8 FTE to 1FTE
 - Creation of an additional FTE Bereavement Officer post

3. Reasons for the Recommendation

- 3.1 Changes to the staffing structure of Bereavement Services were made in April 2017 to support a 6 day per week service offering. A significant increase in the number of cremations over the last 12 months (1,997 cremations in 2017/18 compared to an average of 1,836 for the previous 5 years, equating to a c9% increase in demand) has prompted a review of the team resources to ensure an excellent standard of service provision can be maintained.
- 3.2 Although a temporary post was agreed by CMT in March 2018 to backfill a long-term sickness absence the review has confirmed that additional resources are required to provide a stable structure that improves service resilience as, currently any staff absences within the small but specialist crematorium team have a severe impact on the ability to deliver the service.
- 3.3 There is a legal requirement for the Council to ensure that the staff operating its cremators are suitably qualified. Securing agency staff with the required qualification, to cover absences has proved problematic and costly (c£450.00 + travel per day), hence it is more cost effective to add to the staffing establishment.

4. Policy Framework

4.1 Fit for the Future (FFF)

The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects

The FFF Strategy has 3 strands – People, Services and Money and each has an external and internal element to it. The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy:

FFF Strands		
People	Services	Money
External		
Health, Homes, Communities	Green, Clean, Safe	Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment
<u>Intended outcomes:</u>	<u>Intended outcomes:</u>	<u>Intended outcomes:</u>

Improved health for all Housing needs for all met Impressive cultural and sports activities Cohesive and active communities	Area has well looked after public spaces All communities have access to decent open space Improved air quality Low levels of crime and ASB	Dynamic and diverse local economy Vibrant town centres Improved performance/productivity of local economy Increased employment and income levels
Impacts of Proposal		
The provision of high quality Bereavement Services, which enable cultural rites and rituals to be performed, support residents and non-residents through their grieving journey.	Oakley Wood Crematorium is situated within the boundaries of ancient woodland. It is used by members of the public for quiet contemplation and remembrance of their loved ones as well as by the wider community as a leisure destination.	The additional posts are likely to be filled by local residents.
Internal		
Effective Staff	Maintain or Improve Services	Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> All staff are properly trained All staff have the appropriate tools All staff are engaged, empowered and supported The right people are in the right job with the right skills and right behaviours	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Focusing on our customers' needs Continuously improve our processes Increase the digital provision of services	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Better return/use of our assets Full Cost accounting Continued cost management Maximise income earning opportunities Seek best value for money
Impacts of Proposal		
These proposals will introduce a more resilient staffing structure, better support for staff, and training and career development opportunities.	Due to increased levels of business, burials and cremations have been the sole priority. This has resulted in zero capacity to react to other types of service requests, leading to dissatisfied customers. For Example, Memorial applications, grave transfers, family history are amongst the services that have severe delays	In the first 12 months the number of funerals taking place has surpassed original expectations. There are opportunities (eg through improved marketing of memorials, etc...) to maximize income that are not able to be exploited with current staffing levels.

4.2 **Supporting Strategies - N/A**

4.3 **Changes to Existing Policies**

This report does not bring forward changes to existing policies.

4.4 **Impact Assessments**

This report does not require impact assessments as there are no changes to existing policies.

5. **Budgetary Framework**

5.1 The cost of the additional staffing resources are set out below. These are based on the highest increment point and it is likely that starting salaries will initially be lower.

- 0.2 increase Bereavement Officer post £6,023 pa
- Additional FTE Bereavement Officer post £30,700 pa

5.2 The funding for these posts will be considered by Executive on 26 September 2018.

6. **Risks**

6.1 In order to carry out the volume of cremations required last year there have been several occasions where staff have worked in shift patterns to extend the working day. This has meant redeploying staff from other duties; staff have given up "rest days" and cancelled leave to make sure the front line services are carried out. In the long term this is unsustainable and staff may leave or become de-motivated. There is no resilience in the service leaving the authority in a vulnerable position. This report and its recommendations are the mitigation for this situation.

6.2 There is currently no capacity for training (to operate the cremators) to take place. Obtaining the qualification is the grade boundary on the career graded posts. Staff who are enthusiastic about their career progression are being held back. This report and its recommendations are the mitigation for this situation.

6.3 The volume of cremations that took place in 2017/18 may not be sustained. Whilst this report has concentrated on crematory resilience (because of the legal requirement for operators to be certificated) there are only 2 members of the team competent in relation to cemeteries work, training across the team is required to enhance resilience for the burial aspect of the service. There are projects being planned for the future that will require additional resource to complete

7. **Alternative Option(s) considered**

7.1 To continue with the existing levels of staffing resource has been discounted as this is incompatible with the existing service offering and has therefore been discounted.

7.2 Reducing the service offering to remove the need for additional members of staff has been discounted because the opportunities for additional income generation would be lost, customers would have less flexibility, waiting times would be increased and the service would be less competitive.