



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Bereavement Services Improvement Programme
Date:	11 December 2014
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>Context</p> <p>Following a recent review of Bereavement Services carried out independently by the Institute of Cemeteries and Crematorium Management (ICCM), an improvement programme has been developed to improve operational practices in line with industry best practice and to focus more strategically on future development. The improvement programme includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operational reviews of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Bereavement services administrative processes and cremation application forms○ Recycling of metals from cremations○ Management and maintenance of memorials – policy and practice• Organisational design and alignment of business support• Future Capital Investment – cemeteries and crematoria. <p>This paper focuses on one element of the operational reviews which is the disposal of metals from cremated remains. A further report on the improvement programme will be presented to committee in early 2015.</p> <p>Operational Reviews – Recycling of metals from cremations</p> <p>Metals remains from the cremation process are principally those used in orthopaedic implants and ferrous metal used within the construction of a coffin. Precious metals, which may be left with the deceased prior to cremation, melt during the cremation process and are dispersed throughout the remains within the cremator and are reduced to tiny granules. Precious metals therefore cannot be recovered and returned to the family so it is recommended that funeral</p>

	<p>directors advise families to remove jewellery prior to the final closure of the coffin. There may also be some other small residues of non-precious metals remaining from clothing and personal effects with the deceased.</p> <p>Previously the practice at the City of Belfast Crematorium was that metal implants along with remaining ferrous metals from the construction of the coffin were removed from the cremated remains and stored in a container until there was sufficient quantity to be buried in the grounds at Roselawn - to the detriment of the environment.</p> <p>Since 2010 the City of Belfast Crematorium as a corporate member of the Institute of Crematorium and Cemetery Management (ICCM) has recycled these recovered metals by arranging for an approved provider (OrthoMetals) to collect the metal. OrthoMetals sorts, smelts and recycles the metal with the proceeds after costs going back to ICCM for distribution to nominated death related charities. The Council receives no funding from this arrangement.</p> <p>Since starting the scheme in 2010 metals collected from Belfast City Council has resulted in donations of approximately £7,000 per annum to charity.</p>
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2.	Key Issues
	<p>As part of the review of the disposal of metals from cremations a new process will be introduced to seek acknowledgement of understanding that any metal retrieved from remains will be recycled. The bereaved families should be made fully aware of the sensitive recycling of these metals rather than their disposal in the grounds of the crematorium. The metals can be returned to the family if they so wish but this would be considered an exceptional request.</p> <p>In addition as part of this scheme the money raised from the recycling is donated by the cremation authority if they so wish to a charity of their choice. It is proposed that further consideration is given to the process for selecting a charity or charities and that a further paper is brought to committee outlining options and recommendations.</p> <p>Council officers will work with the National Association of Funeral Directors regarding the proposed changes to forms and the information about recycling of metals to be made available to bereaved families.</p>

3.	Resource Implications
	No resource implications at this stage.

4.	Equality Implications
	No equality implications at this stage.

5.	Recommendations
	<p>Members are requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to note the development of the Bereavement Services Improvement Programme

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to agree to continue the arrangement with ICCM for the collection of metals from cremations and subsequent donations to charities • to note that a further report will be brought to committee on the process for donations to charities.
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6.	Decision Tracking
	Assistant Director Parks and Leisure.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	ICCM: Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management

8.	Documents Attached
	None