

Single Member Cabinet
Decision

Executive Forward
Plan Reference

E3629

Cremator Replacement at Haycombe Crematorium

Decision maker/s	Cllr Manda Rigby, Cabinet Member for Communications & Community
The Issue	<p>The cremators at Haycombe will be coming to the end of their 20-year life at the end of 2026 and as the maintenance contract has expired, call-outs are increasing with the age of the equipment and there is a risk to service provision.</p> <p>The average size of people is increasing which is putting pressure on the 1 existing large cremator which is overused while the small cremator is under-utilised. This growing population size also increases the physical burden on staff moving coffins around the crematory.</p> <p>While the emissions from the crematorium are closely monitored and regulated new technology is available which can further reduce gas consumption and emissions</p>
Decision Date	22 July 2025
The decision	The Cabinet Member agrees to approve a capital budget allocation of £1.5m for the replacement of the two cremators and all associated equipment and works and delegate to Director of Place Management the power to appoint contractors and all other matters relating to project delivery and implementation.
Rationale for decision	<p>A Feasibility Study in 2024 recommended the cremators should be replaced at or before they are 20 years old which would also have the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Replacing the existing 1x small and 1 x large cremator with 2 new Bariatric Cremators which are larger in size to future proof the service against the increasing size of the average person within the population which in turn will increase the capacity of the service and potentially increase income• New technology cremators will enable a reduction in gas consumption. While the crematorium can never be fully carbon neutral, the reduction in energy consumption will further support the council's climate emergency objectives and reduce utilities costs to the service.• Include partial replacement of the current emissions abatement equipment to install the latest technology which will further reduce emissions. While emissions from crematoria are closely regulated, updating the abatement equipment will ensure that when regulations are updated and tightened, Haycombe will continue to remain compliant.• Upgrade the charging trolley used by staff to load the cremators to a semi-automatic or fully automatic charging trolley system to reduce physical burden on staff for health and safety reasons & improve the overall efficiency of operation.

<p>Financial and budget implications</p>	<p>A Feasibility Study of £12k was funded by a reserve fund and has not impacted on the below</p> <p>Forecast Capital Costs</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="344 259 1493 640"> <thead> <tr> <th>Items</th> <th>Amount</th> <th>Notes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cremators</td> <td>£924,750</td> <td>Lead time 20-24wks</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Auto Loader</td> <td>£28,000</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Electrical System Upgrade</td> <td>£66,122</td> <td>National Grid</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Internal Electrical works</td> <td>£80,000</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resourcing</td> <td>£55,033</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Redecoration/making good</td> <td>£10,000</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inflation @ 3%</td> <td>£34,917</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Contingency</td> <td>£301,178</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>£1,500,000</td> <td>Total Budget as fully approved by CSG via PID</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The Provisional budget on CAP2223001P of £1.5m Corporate Supported borrowing (CSB) is currently aligned to 27/28. The replacement of the cremators needs to take place before 2026/27 meaning some funding is required in 25/26 for pre delivery work with implementation in 26/27. The PID therefore pulls forward the provisional budget from 27/28 and apply as fully approved as £398k in 25/26 & £1,102k in 26/27</p> <p>Revenue Implications</p> <p>There will be no impact on Bereavement Services revenue budget if the project is delivered as expected and within the timescales. The intention is to replace one cremator at a time during June-September, thereby leaving one cremator fully operational throughout which should be sufficient but if delay pushes installation back to October/November there could be an impact on revenue income budgets of up to £35k per month based on the average number of cremations per month. There could be positive revenue impacts from cremator replacement: increased income linked to increase capacity; reduced maintenance costs from the current average of £96k/yr (based on the last 10yrs costs), to £78k/yr maintenance contract; reduced energy consumption; reduced emissions. Revenue impacts will be closely monitored moving forward.</p>	Items	Amount	Notes	Cremators	£924,750	Lead time 20-24wks	Auto Loader	£28,000		Electrical System Upgrade	£66,122	National Grid	Internal Electrical works	£80,000		Resourcing	£55,033		Redecoration/making good	£10,000		Inflation @ 3%	£34,917		Contingency	£301,178		TOTAL	£1,500,000	Total Budget as fully approved by CSG via PID
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<p>Issues considered</p>	<p>Customer Focus; Sustainability; Corporate; Health & Safety</p>																														
<p>Consultation undertaken</p>	<p>Cabinet colleagues; Section 151 Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer</p>																														
<p>How consultation was carried out</p>	<p>Due to the nature of the project (asset replacement) there is no requirement to consult wider than the Exec Member and those listed above</p>																														
<p>Other options considered</p>	<p>1. Do Nothing - Increased risk of breakdowns and faults of the out-of-date cremator equipment as each year elapses putting financial pressure on the corporate maintenance budget and possibly reputational damage if services have to be cancelled and capacity decreases. There has never been a maintenance contract with the current cremators so the existing maintenance budget of £98k p.a. is existing spend on maintenance where each instance of breakdown or callout is billed individually. This will only increase year on year now that the cremators are 20 years old.</p>																														

	<p>2. Replace the smaller cremator with a larger cremator - Maintenance costs for the remaining large cremator will continue to rise each year. Costs for installing 1 cremator will be exponentially higher than for doing both at the same time i.e. will still have to do the electrical upgrade work and inevitably the old cremator will require replacing eventually anyway. There will be issues with incompatibility running 2 different types of cremators on different technologies at the same time with the additional ancillary equipment that will be required for the new ones</p> <p>3. Replace both cremators - This ensures service disruption is kept to a minimum; installation is efficient by replacing all the infrastructure and ancillary equipment at the same time and increasing the reliability and capacity of the equipment and the service with new technology and infrastructure. Also enables full realisation of emissions reductions and utilities costs thereby future proofing the service against energy price rises and future legislation to further reduce emissions.</p>
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Declaration of interest by Cabinet Member(s) for decision:	None
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Any conflict of interest declared by anyone who is consulted by a Member taking the decision:	
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Name and Signature of Decision Maker	Cllr Manda Rigby
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Date of Signature	22/07/25
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Subject to Call-in until 5 Working days have elapsed following publication of the decision