

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Assistant director environment and place</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Monday, 18 June 2018</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Review of burial and cremation charges for children under the age of eighteen</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Bereavement and markets services manager</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

Non-key

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose and summary**

To consider charges relating to burial and cremation for children, not exceeding eighteen years of age, in Herefordshire Council cemeteries and crematorium.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- (a) **All charges relating to burial and cremation for children, not exceeding eighteen years of age, are removed in Herefordshire Council cemeteries and crematorium.**

## **Alternative options**

1. For charges to remain as they are currently. At present, the Council either charges a reduced fee or waives the fee altogether depending on the age of the child.

## **Key considerations**

2. In March 2018 the Prime Minister indicated that a funeral fund for grieving parents who have lost their child will be established. Under the scheme, parents will no longer have to meet the costs of burials or cremations. Fees will be waived by all local authorities and met instead by the government fund. This will bring England in line with Wales. The date as to when this scheme is to be introduced has yet to be agreed.
3. Since 2011 Herefordshire Council has not charged a fee for the cremation and interment of children not exceeding five years of age. There is a reduced cremation fee for children from five years and not exceeding 16 years of age
4. A reduced fee for the purchase of the Exclusive Rights of Burial is in place for children not exceeding 16 years of age.
5. In 2017/18 the total income received for child burials and cremations was circa £2.5k.

## **Community impact**

6. The proposal will remove the financial burden for parents who might otherwise have concerns of the financial burden in meeting the funeral costs.

## **Equality duty**

7. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
8. This recommendation will not have a detrimental effect on service users but will ensure that the financial burden borne by parents for funeral costs is further reduced.

## **Resource implications**

9. The effect of the proposed change to children's charges will be within the current service budgets.

## **Legal implications**

10. The council has a power to determine its own fees regime for its cremation and burial services. It must publish any charges it does decide to levy. In this instance, the Report proposes the removal of a charge; there is no obligation to consult on this change of the council's policy and there are no other significant legal implications arising from this Report.

## **Risk management**

11. There are no risks associated with implementing this recommendation.

## **Consultees**

12. None

## **Appendices**

None

## **Background papers**

None identified