

EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION



REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Environment & Operations
LEAD OFFICERS:	Strategic Director of Environment & Operations
DATE:	01 December 2023

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Departments

WARD/S AFFECTED: (All Wards);

SUBJECT: Increase in charges for burials and cremations

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The costs of delivering burial and cremation services have increased significantly in the past 12 months due to the spiralling costs of utilities and inflationary pressures on the cost of goods and services, including equipment and vehicles.

The Council reviews fees and charges on an annual basis for those services which can make a charge. Fees and Charges for burials and cremations are usually reviewed and increased each year. This report sets out the proposed increases in fees and charges to be implemented with effect from 1 January 2024 and also provides benchmarking information for surrounding local authorities which provide burials and cremations within their borough boundary.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member:

- Approves the proposed increases in charges for burials and cremations, to be implemented from 1 January 2024.

3. BACKGROUND

The cost associated with the provision of burials and cremations have increased significantly in the past year due to the spiralling costs of utilities and the increasing costs of goods and services, including the purchase and maintenance of equipment and vehicles. The Council is also having to manage broader financial challenges due to inflationary pressures on budgets, which are unfunded.

Fees and charges income makes a valuable contribution to the running costs of cemeteries and crematoria services, enabling these important services to be sustained and provided. The Council normally reviews fees and charges on an annual basis, any increases have taken place on 1 January each year for the majority of services.

The following increases in fees and charges is proposed for burials and cremations:

	2023 Charges	2024 proposed charges	Percentage increase
Grave purchase	£1,450	£1,600	6.08%
Burial – 1 space	£590	£630	6.78%
Burial - 2 space	£640	£680	6.25%
Burial – 3 space	£755	£800	5.96%
Cremation Adult	£920	£980	6.52%

As part of the process of proposing increases in fees and charges, a benchmarking exercise has been conducted with other surrounding local authorities to compare fees and charges for burials and cremations, the results of the benchmarking exercise are detailed in the table below.

It should be noted that the other local authorities in the surrounding area may also decide to increase their fees and charges for burials and cremations in 2024/25.

Benchmarking – Cemeteries and Crematoria charges

Benchmarking Cemeteries and Crematoria charges	BwD proposed charges 2024/25	Current charges in Hyndburn	Current charges in Pendle	Current charges in Burnley	Current charges in Bolton	Current charges at Charnock Richards	Current charges in Blackpool	Current charges in Preston
Grave with Exclusive right of burial and erect memorial	1600	875	1462.50	1446	1080	N/A	1825	1115
Interment - 1 space	630	825	768	1299	804	N/A	N/A	N/a
Interment - 2 space	680	825	861	1299	898	N/A	included in purchase	576
Interment - 3 space	800	N/A	N/A	1299	1010	N/A	N/A	N/A
Large grave	N/A	1725	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Re-open fee	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	815	N/A
CREMATION								
Full	980	935	N/A	873	980	1150	892	792
No service	660	N/A	N/A	455	450	710	485	450
Saturday	N/A	N/A	N/A	1108	1314	1534	N/A	1078

The Council will continue to provide public health funerals for people who have passed away in the Borough and have no next of kin, or whose next of kin, relatives or friends are unable to make the necessary arrangements for a funeral to ensuring that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their circumstances.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

The cost of delivering services at the cemeteries and crematoria have increased significantly due to inflationary pressures.

The Council reviews fees and charges on an annual basis, in recent years, the increase in fees and charges has taken place on 1 January each year for the majority of services.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The increase in charges for burials and cremations and the additional income generated aligns with the Council's Corporate Plan and the supporting mission to tackle the budget challenge.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The increases in fees and charges for burials and cremations will generate an additional £130,000 income in 2024/25 based on the average number of burials and cremations conducted each year.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council is acting in its legal capacity as a burial authority in setting charges for burial and cremation services.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None – this is an existing service and all resources to deliver the services are in place.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

10. CONSULTATIONS

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

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CONTACT OFFICER:	Joanne Byrne/Martin Eden/Tony Watson
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DATE:	17 November 2023
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	
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