

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Port Health & Environmental Services	22 September 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Period 1 (April – July 2020) Cemetery & Crematorium Business Plan Performance update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Open Spaces	<b>For Information</b>

### **Summary**

This report provides Members with an update on the Cemetery and Crematorium's performance during the period April to July 2020. This period was the height of the COVID19 pandemic. The Cemetery and Crematorium provides a 'critical service' and implemented its pandemic plan. It was open and fully staffed throughout the lockdown, continuing to provide burials and cremations five days a week. The huge increase in workload meant that some staff worked in areas they would not normally expect to work in, and all worked tirelessly during these first four months in extremely difficult and challenging circumstances; both physically, mentally and emotionally.

The death rate in the areas served by the Cemetery and Crematorium increased by 55% in the four months of April to July. The cemetery and crematorium carried out a total of 1,600 funerals. There were 405 burials, approx. 50% greater than the same four-month period last year and 1,195 cremations, approx. 65% up on the same four-month period last year. Using London Resilience statistics, The City of London Cemetery and Crematorium carried out almost 12% of all London cremations and 20% of burials.

Income from the four-month period April to July, due to COVID19, has achieved 50% of its budget (£2,567,645) which is greater by over £900k than the same period last year. However, death rates are likely to fall for the rest of this year (and beyond) unless there is a significant second spike of the COVID-19 virus, which will result in less funerals and therefore less income for the remainder of the year.

### **Recommendations**

Members are asked to

- Note the performance of the Cemetery and Crematorium during this April to July 2020 reporting period.

### **Main Report**

#### **Background**

1. The Open Space's Departmental Business Plan for 2020-21 together with a Business Plan for the Cemetery and Crematorium was approved by this Committee on 14 January 2020.

2. The City of London Cemetery and Crematorium's vision is:  
*'to provide a model cemetery and crematorium constituting both a site of excellence in bereavement services, a forerunner in cemetery conservation and the greatest choice of burial and cremation facilities in the UK.'*  
This together with the Department's vision and objectives inform and direct the work of the service.

### **Current Position**

3. The end of 2019/20 saw the Country dramatically change as the Coronavirus pandemic spread across the World and our Government introduced new regulations, asking us to; *Stay home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives.*
4. The Cemetery and Crematorium provides a 'critical service' and implemented its pandemic plan in good time. It was open and fully staffed throughout the COVID19 lockdown, continuing to provide burials and cremations five days a week from April to July (the grounds were open seven days a week). All of the team were required to work on site in very difficult conditions, in very challenging circumstances. The huge increase in workload meant that some staff worked in areas they would not normally expect to work (e.g. operating cremators, grave digging, managing families wishing to attend funerals), all whilst implementing changes (due to COVID19) to standard practices for death administration and reacting to the changing Government Guidelines.
5. Ensuring the health and safety of staff, the public and funeral directors during the pandemic was a primary aim for the management team and many different operational practices were introduced including:
- Staggering start / lunch / finish times for grounds maintenance teams
  - Opening the Ernie Turner Training Centre as an extra canteen facility for staff breaks to facilitate good social distancing
  - Suspending all 'non-urgent' service provision and appointments, such as ash strewing and burial appointments, non-urgent grave selections and transfers, memorial garden and genealogy appointments
  - Cleaning chapels with disinfectant after each service and not allowing staff to enter the chapel during a funeral
  - Restricting the number of mourners able to attend a funeral in line with government guidance
  - Allowing multiple drop-offs for 'no service' funerals to help funeral directors and allow for most effective use of the cremators
6. At its height, the Cemetery and Crematorium was undertaking nine burials and 27 cremations a day. This situation continued from late March, throughout April May, June and only just eased at the end of July.

### **Performance Measures**

7. The Cemetery and Crematorium has identified nine performance measures. It also contributes to several Departmental measures such as sickness absence, health and safety reporting, Green Flag and Green Heritage awards.

<b>Market Share</b>	2018/19 Actual (annual)	2019/20 Actual (annual)	<b>2020/21 Target</b>		April – July 2018 (actual)	April – July 2019 (actual)	<b>April – July 2020 (actual)</b>
Maintain our market share of burials in relation to the Cemetery & Crematorium's seven neighbouring Borough's.	7.3%	7.1%	<b>7.5%</b>		7.6%	8.1%	<b>8.9%</b>
Maintain our market share of cremations in relation to the Cemetery & Crematorium's seven neighbouring Borough's.	22.0%	22.0%	<b>23%</b>		21.3%	20.9%	<b>25.1%</b>

8. As many other local cemeteries and crematoria did not react as well to the pandemic, the City of London carried out a high number of local funerals (using London Resilience statistics, we carried out almost 12% of all London cremations and 20% of burials). This is a testament to the staff and management of the cemetery as well as the cemetery infrastructure and chapel sizes.
9. We continued to maintain an open cemetery (following guidance from the City's Legal team) when other cemeteries and crematorium grounds were closed. Our large spacious chapels enabled the City to allow 20 people to attend a funeral safely when many crematoria were limiting numbers to 5 or 10 people. The number of burials is again a testament to the hard work of the team, the size and operational capacity of the site, having a pandemic plan written by those who understand the work and our ability to maintain a good service at a critical time.

<b>Burials</b>	2018/19 Actual (annual)	2019/20 Actual (annual)	<b>2020/21 Target (annual)</b>		April – July 2018 (actual)	April – July 2019 (actual)	<b>April – July 2020 (actual)</b>
The number of burials.	790	815	<b>861</b>		280	269	<b>405</b>

10. The number of burials at the cemetery is approx. 50% greater than the same four-month period last year.

<b>Cremations</b>	2018/19 Actual (annual)	2019/20 Actual (annual)	<b>2020/21 Target (annual)</b>		April – July 2018 (actual)	April – July 2019 (actual)	<b>April – July 2020 (actual)</b>
Increase the number of cremations.	2,468	2,528	<b>2528</b>		845	725	<b>1195</b>

11. The number of cremations at the cemetery is approx. 65% up on the figure for the same four-month period last year.

12. The death rate in the areas we serve increased by 55% in the four months of April to July with the largest increase being April with a 300% increase from 2019. There was a total of 5,773 deaths in the areas served over the four months (from 3174 the previous year) and the cemetery and crematorium carried out a total of 1,600 funerals.
13. It is important to recognise that death rates are likely to fall for the rest of this year (and beyond) unless there is a significant second spike of the COVID-19 virus, which will result in less funerals at the cemetery and crematorium and therefore less income.

#### **Other Performance Measures**

14. A number of new measures were introduced in 2019/20 and continue to be monitored this year. Where data is available for this 4-month period, it is included below.

<b>Description</b>	<b>2019/20 Actual (annual)</b>	<b>2020/21 Target (annual)</b>		<b>April – July 2019 (actual)</b>	<b>April – July 2020 (actual)</b>
Number of 'no service' cremations	60	<b>82</b>		21	<b>31</b>
% of early time slots taken up	48%	<b>30%</b>		12.6%	<b>93%</b>
Amount of gas used to heat the Modern Crematorium - kWh	23,126 kWh	<b>23,126 kWh</b>		21,255 kWh	<b>3,121 kWh</b>
Energy generation from Solar Power - electricity in kWh	25,126 kWh	<b>25,126 kWh</b>		6,225 kWh	<b>8,555 kWh</b>
% abated cremations	54.1%	<b>60%</b>		60.2%	<b>39.8%</b>

15. During the pandemic the Cemetery and Crematorium was approached by several funeral directors and asked to increase our capacity for 'no service cremations' as there were no family able to attend many funerals. We achieved this request, and this is reflected in the figures above.
16. The gas used to heat the crematorium shows a huge reduction and this is due to two things, the unseasonably mild weather throughout these four months and that we were operating our abated cremator earlier in the day and therefore not using the heating system to heat the building in the morning. Usually the heating would work from 6am and the cremator abated hot water would take over at around 10am, this was not the case during the pandemic as we were cremating from as early as 6:30am.
17. The statistic for abated cremations shows a significant drop, and one that in normal circumstances would take us below the legislative requirement of 50%. However, as soon as a pandemic was declared the environmental permitting legislation was amended and the 50% requirement removed. This allowed us to work our old cremators as hard as possible in order to achieve the high number

of funerals that we carried out. It should be noted that from the 3<sup>rd</sup> August all cremations at the cemetery have been completed using the newer 'abated' cremator and the overall figure for the year should be at 50%. Also, from February 2021 all cremations at the City will be abated.

## Finance

18. As costs rise and burial and cremation numbers fluctuate, managing resources to meet the budget is a constant challenge. The Superintendent continues to carefully manage his income and expenditure budgets and ensures that a high-quality service is maintained which helps safeguard our long-term market share of burials and cremations.
19. Due to COVID19 at the period to end July, income is at 50% of budget. This time last year, and most previous years, this has been at 31%.
20. The income to end of July is greater by over £913k on this period last year.

	2018/19 Actual (annual)	2019/20 Actual (annual)	2020/21 Target (annual)		April – July 2018 (actual)	April – July 2019 (actual)	April – July 2020 (actual)
<b>Achieve the gross income target for the Cemetery and Crematorium</b> (OSD local risk only)	£5,085,060	<b>£5,157,686</b>	<b>£5,139,000</b>		£1,696,529	£1,654,234	<b>£2,567,645</b>
<b>Achieve the overall net income target for the Cemetery and Crematorium</b> (OSD local risk only)	£1,919,283	£1,645,000	<b>£1,675,000</b>		£678,505	£551,643	<b>£1,488,286</b>

21. As explained in paragraph **13** we do not expect to see a sustained increase in burials and cremations unless there is a second COVID19 spike. We expect the death rate to drop below the 'norm' and therefore income for the second half of this year is likely to be below that of previous years.
22. Works commenced in August on the essential replacement of four cremators. This means that with only one cremator remaining, the maximum number of cremations that can take place per day between August and November is reduced from 35 to 10. This will also have an impact on our income.

## Cemetery and Crematorium Activity

23. Eleven key actions were identified in the Cemetery and Crematorium Business Plan. Due to the extreme volumes of burials and cremations, many of these identified projects were placed on hold during this reporting period. However the following have been achieved and more information is provided in Appendix 3.
  - The completion of the re-landscaping of the Sunken Garden
  - The commencement of the Cremator replacement project
  - The reclamation of a further 200 graves for reuse

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

21. The Business Plan identifies how the department's activities will support the aspirations of the organisation, as reflected in the Corporate Plan. By delivering the Business Plan, the Cemetery and Crematorium will support the Corporation's strategic aims:
- **Contribute to a flourishing society**
  - **Shape outstanding environments**

### **Conclusion**

22. The Cemetery and Crematorium staff have worked tirelessly during the first four months of this year in extremely difficult and challenge circumstances, both physically, mentally and emotionally.
23. The Cemetery and Crematorium remained open throughout Lockdown and enabled the public to make informed burial choices and provided an excellent cremation and burial service to the bereaved. The death rate in East London increased by 300% and the Cemetery and Crematorium undertook over 50% more burials and 65% more cremations during this period than usual. As a result, income is greater by £913k than would be anticipated during this period in a normal year.
24. It is anticipated that the number of burials and cremations and hence income, will now fall below the normal level for the remainder of the year unless there is a second COVID19 spike.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Cem & Crem business Plan.

Appendix 2 - Budget

Appendix 3 - Progress against Cemetery and Crematorium Business Plan actions

### **Background Papers:**

- Open Spaces Business Plan 2020/21 – PHES Committee January 2020

### **Gerry Kiefer**

Business Manager, Open Spaces Directorate.

T: 020 7332 3517

E: [Gery.Kieferr@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:Gery.Kieferr@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

## The Open Spaces Department's Vision is: we enrich people's lives by enhancing and providing access to ecologically diverse open spaces and outstanding heritage assets across London and beyond.

The 2020/21 Cemetery & Crematorium activity will help deliver the following Corporate Plan Outcomes:

### Contribute to a flourishing society

3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential

### Support a thriving economy

5. Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible
7. We are a global hub for innovation in finance and professional services, commerce and culture
8. We have access to the skills and talent we need

### Shape outstanding environments

9. We are digitally and physically well-connected and responsive
10. We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration
11. We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment

### What we do at the Cemetery & Crematorium:

provide high quality burial and cremation options to all in a magnificent Grade I listed landscape whilst consciously protecting the heritage value of our site.

### 2020/21 proposed budget is:

	(Expenditure) (£000)	Income (£000)	Net (£000)
<b>CEM &amp; CREM LOCAL RISK BUDGET</b>			
Total Employee Expenses	(2,509)	-	(2,509)
Total Premises Related Expenses	(405)	-	(405)
Total Transport Related Expenses	(145)	-	(145)
Total Supplies and Services	(405)	-	(405)
Total Customer, Client Receipts	-	5,139	5,139
<b>Total Local Risk Budget</b>	<b>(3,464)</b>	<b>5,139</b>	<b>1,675</b>
City Surveyor's local risk (Cem & Crem)	(990)	-	(990)
Recharges (Cem & Crem)	(1,681)	-	(1,681)
Central risk (Cem & Crem)	-	-	-
<b>GRAND TOTAL ALL CHARGES</b>	<b>(6,135)</b>	<b>5,139</b>	<b>(996)</b>

### The Open Spaces Department's top line objectives and outcomes are:

#### A. Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible.

1. Our open spaces, heritage and cultural assets are protected, conserved and enhanced (12)
2. London has clean air and mitigates flood risk and climate change (11)
3. Our spaces are accessible, inclusive and safe (1)
4. Our habitats are flourishing, biodiverse and resilient to change (11)

#### B. Spaces enrich people's lives.

5. People enjoy good health and wellbeing (2)
6. Nature, heritage and place are valued and understood (3)
7. People feel welcome and included (4)
8. People discover, learn and develop (3)

#### C. Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

9. Our practices are financially, socially and environmentally sustainable (5)
10. London's natural capital and heritage assets are enhanced through our leadership, influence, investment, collaboration and innovation (10)
11. Our staff and volunteers are motivated, empowered, engaged and supported (8)
12. Everyone has the relevant skills to reach their full potential (8)

### We will measure:

- Net budget position
- Gross Income
- Market share of burials and cremations in relation to our seven neighbouring Borough's
- Number of burials, adult cremations, 'no service' cremations
- % of cremations that take up early time slots
- Amount of gas used to heat the modern crematorium
- Energy generation from solar power

**We will also contribute to a range of Department wide and Corporate performance measures.**

**KEY:** The numbers in brackets show how the Open Spaces Outcomes link to the twelve [Corporate Plan Outcomes 2018-2023](#).

## **The Cemetery and Crematorium's Vision is:**

**to provide a model cemetery and crematorium constituting both a site of excellence in bereavement services, a forerunner in cemetery conservation and the greatest choice of burial and cremation facilities in the UK.**

### **To achieve our vision, we will:**

- Serve the City and all surrounding areas the highest standards in customer care, conservation management and sustainable burial and cremation services.
- Develop the Cemetery so that it will be appreciated for the site's history and beauty as much as it is now valued as a place to mourn, remember, respect and appreciate the dead.
- Contribute a unique area of cemetery open space for the public to enjoy nature, admire architecture and landscape design, and learn about London's history.
- Ensure that the City of London is at the forefront of sharing best practice in the ongoing and dynamic management and conservation of a historic cemetery and crematorium landscape that provides ecologically sustainable facilities for the disposal of the dead whilst meeting the needs of the bereaved.

### **Cemetery and Crematorium activity:**

#### **Open Spaces and Historic Sites Are Thriving and Accessible**

1. To redesign and re-landscape the plantings of the sunken garden adjacent to the Traditional Crematorium in keeping with its original 'Arts and Crafts' design. (A1) (10d)
2. Landscape Projects – Continued development of the 'shoot' burial area. Removal of large conifers and planting of more appropriate hedging in the memorial gardens. Improve pathways to and the general condition of the paths at the Classic Ash Grave area. (A3 & A4) (11b)

#### **Spaces Enrich People's Lives**

3. Develop our audience and accessibility to the service by working in partnership with local schools, universities and representative organisations, providing free heritage tours for individuals and groups and organising an Open House event. (B6 & B8) (3b)
4. Continue to work in partnership with our established consultative groups and offer training to funeral directors to raise awareness and understanding regarding the Children's Funeral Fund introduced by government in 2019. (B7 & C10) (7a)

#### **Business practices are responsible and sustainable.**

5. Work with City Surveyors Department, Procurement and Comptrollers to progress the replacement of the ageing cremators with new abated ones. (A2 & C9) (5c)
6. Develop our grave reuse and reclamation programme as a model system for creating the sustainable UK cemetery – by increasing grave reclamation in management zone 2. (C9) (5b)
7. Develop the use of sustainable energy using Photovoltaic cells and increasing the use of waste heat recycling to operational areas of the modern crematorium. (C9) (11a)
8. Work to expand and develop our 'cleaner greener' fleet and machinery. (C9) (11a)
9. Implement the recommendations arising out of the workforce plan, staff and customer surveys as well as developing staff. (C11) (8a)
10. Develop a name search facility for the online burial register system. (B7 & B8 & C9) (9b)
11. Develop staffs' wider understanding in relation to managing the landscape whilst providing services and running a business. (C11 & C12) (8d)

#### **Key:**

The letter/number in brackets (e.g. A2) shows which Open Spaces outcome our activities are helping to achieve.

The number/letter in brackets (e.g. 2a) shows which Corporate Plan activity our activities are helping to achieve.



## Appendix 2

### Department of Port Health & Environmental Services Local Risk Revenue Budget - 1st April - 31st July 2020

(Income and favourable variances are shown in brackets)

	Latest Approved	Budget year to date (Apr-Jul)			Actual year to date (Apr-Jul)				Forecast for the Year 2020/21			
	Budget 2020/21 £'000	Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000	Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000	Variance Apr-Jul £'000	LAB £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Over / (Under) £'000	Note
<b>Open Spaces (City Fund)</b> City of London Cemetery and Crematorium	1,675	(1,096)	1,700	604	(1,077)	2,568	1,491	887	1,675	1,879	204	1
<b>TOTAL PORT HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE LOCAL RISK</b>	1,675	(1,096)	1,700	604	(1,077)	2,568	1,491	887	1,675	1,879	204	

#### Notes:

1. Cemetery forecast is £204K above target. There was a huge peak for the first 4 months of the year. However, the peak has been in burial and cremation income but is slightly clouded by little or no income from other income streams (Book of Remembrance, Garden Memorials and so on). The Coronavirus and lockdown is likely to have a lasting negative affect on these income areas and it is also likely that funeral numbers will drop away significantly. This will be compounded by the replacement of cremators and subsequent restrictions on cremation numbers (the works continue until February 2021).

### Appendix 3 – April to July 2020 progress against Cemetery and Crematorium Business Plan actions.

Cemetery & Crematorium Activity	Progress April to July 2020
1. To redesign and re-landscape the plantings of the sunken garden adjacent to the Traditional Crematorium in keeping with its original 'Arts and Crafts' design.	Work has now been completed
2. Landscape Projects – Continued development of the 'shoot' burial area. Removal of large conifers and planting of more appropriate hedging in the memorial gardens. Improve pathways to and the general condition of the paths at the Classic Ash Grave area.	More planting has been added to the Shoot entrance but work to the classic paving was halted at the time of lockdown and we are working to get the contractor back on site to complete the works
3. Develop our audience and accessibility to the service by working in partnership with local schools, universities and representative organisations, providing free heritage tours for individuals and groups and organising an Open House event.	No work has been carried out in this area.
4. Continue to work in partnership with our established consultative groups and offer training to funeral directors to raise awareness and understanding regarding the Children's Funeral Fund introduced by government in 2019.	No work has been carried out in this area but the CFF has continued to build slowly and all our claims have been successful.
5. Work with City Surveyors Department, Procurement and Comptrollers to progress the replacement of the ageing cremators with new abated ones.	This project commenced on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> August and is due for practical completion in February 2021
6. Develop our grave reuse and reclamation programme as a model system for creating the sustainable UK cemetery – by increasing grave reclamation in management zone 2	This continues and we have moved to another management zone. The Heritage (reuse) grave option was very well used during the Pandemic.
7. Develop the use of sustainable energy using Photovoltaic cells and increasing the use of waste heat recycling to operational areas of the modern crematorium	This has been completed and we are measuring the savings in energy use and generation.
8. Work to expand and develop our 'cleaner greener' fleet and machinery	The cemetery and crematorium vehicle replacement plan continues and where practically possible we are using the opportunity to purchase cleaner, greener options. This year we have one road vehicle and 3 site vehicles to replace.
9. Implement the recommendations arising out of the workforce plan, staff and customer surveys as well as developing staff.	Staff skill gaps are being closed through training and we are due to carry out another

Cemetery & Crematorium Activity	Progress April to July 2020
	customer survey later in the year or early next year.
10. Develop a name search facility for the online burial register system.	It has not been possible to develop a name search on our history records due to the volume and lack of indexes and cost. However, all paper based public burial records have been added to our hosted genealogy search facility and this is available through the website free of charge.
11. Develop staffs' wider understanding in relation to managing the landscape whilst providing services and running a business.	This is an ongoing process and all relevant decisions are explained to staff and managers so that there is an understanding of the thread that links the Listed Status of the site and historical context to present day practices.