

# Gloucester City Council

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Organisational Development Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>17 June 2015</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Cemeteries &amp; Crematorium Service – Staffing Update</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Cemeteries &amp; Crematorium Service Manager</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Julienne Reeves, Cemeteries &amp; Crematorium Service Manager</b>		
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<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>None</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval to recruit an additional grounds operative (non-permanent) and to formalise permanent contracts for two catering assistants.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 **Organisational Development Committee** is asked to **RESOLVE** that;

- (1) The recruitment of one non-permanent member of grounds staff be approved;
- (2) The conversion to permanent contracts, of 2 zero hour contract Catering Assistants be approved; and
- (3) The recruitment of three zero hour contract catering assistants be approved.

### 3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 On the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015 Cabinet approved a scheme for the development and maintenance of a second Garden of Remembrance at Coney Hill Cemetery and Crematorium. The provision of this second garden is critical to ensure that the Cemeteries and Crematorium Service maintain the levels of income that have been achieved over the previous several years and meet its income target as set out in the Council's Money Plan.
- 3.2 Having undertaken phase 1 of the scheme it has been identified that an additional full time grounds operative will be required, and this report seeks approval to recruit to such a post on a non-permanent basis.
- 3.3 The current number of grounds staff covering the Cemeteries and Crematorium Service stand at 8.5 FTE. One of these members of staff is employed on a temporary basis whilst one is employed on an agency basis. Both these

arrangements are under review with a view to formalising these posts, pending the outcome of a review of the AMEY contract that might necessitate the need to offer re-deployment opportunities. It is envisaged that this review will be completed by October 2015.

- 3.6 The 8.5 FTE members of staff were deemed adequate for the existing service following a review into staffing levels which was completed in November 2014. However, phase 2 of the gardens project was not accounted for as part of the review and therefore did not include an assessment of the additional resource required for the planning and development of a second memorial area and the continuing maintenance need for another 500 individual memorial rose trees and associated items that the garden once filled, will contain.
- 3.7 The service is also responsible for day to day operations of The Arbor and Tea Rooms, with demand for both these facilities for wakes on the increase. For some months the increase in demand has resulted in some members of staff on zero hour contracts working regularised hours. However on days when there is the maximum number of wakes taking place, the service is in a potentially vulnerable position as staff are not obliged to attend work unless they are available.
- 3.8 Advice was sought from Human Resources on the issue and a time in motion study was carried out of catering staff. The study found that two Catering Assistants currently employed on zero hour contracts had for a period in excess of 6 months been working a consistent number of hours and days and their working pattern had become regularised.
- 3.9 The advice from Human Resources was that the two members of staff, both Catering Assistants currently on zero hour contracts, should be considered for a permanent contract of between 18.5 and 21 hours, and this report seeks approval to formalise this variation.
- 3.10 If this request were to be approved, it would be advantageous to recruit a small pool of additional zero hour contract Catering Assistants which would allow the Service Manager to cover annual leave and illness of those staff on permanent contracts. Having this flexibility in place is critical for business continuity as unlike many other Council services, postponing or cancelling a function (such as a wake or family gathering) would have both a significant financial and reputational impact.

#### **4.0 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 Developing and maintaining a second Garden of Remembrance with the existing number of grounds staff was deemed too much of a risk due to the amount of work involved, particularly maintenance. The grounds of Coney Hill Cemetery and Crematorium are beautiful and not recruiting an additional grounds operative would place maintaining these high standards under pressure, not just affecting the gardens but the wider grounds for which the service has become synonymous with.
- 4.2 Consideration was given to the option of hiring an agency member of staff to oversee the garden development. However for reasons of cost, continuity and ownership this was decided against with the preferred option being a non permanent grounds operative allowing us the flexibility to review role as we move forward.

## **5.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 5.1 To maintain levels of income generated through the Cemeteries and Crematorium service and to continue to provide beautiful looking grounds.
- 5.2 To provide families with the opportunity to continue to purchase memorials, and enable them to continue paying their respects in a memorial garden setting.
- 5.3 To provide a sufficient number of permanent Catering Staff, supported with a small pool of zero hour contract staff, to be able to confidently meet the growing demand for use of both The Arbor and Tea Rooms as a wake venue.

## **6.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

- 6.1 Pending approval of the recommendations -
  - Human Resources would be notified of the decision and the service would commence recruitment of a non permanent grounds operative immediately;
  - In the case of Catering Staff, Human Resources have advised that both Catering Assistants would be written to notifying them of their change in contracts with the number of hours specified by The Cemeteries & Crematorium Service Manager being 20; and
  - If approved, Human Resources have already expressed their support to increase the pool of zero hour contract staff (catering) through recruitment given the nature of the service and the validity of the request.

## **7.0 Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The revenue cost of a grounds operative over a 4 year period, when taking into account the income received by developing a second Garden of Remembrance, will see the Council maintain income in the region of £316,000. This is similar to phase 1 of the project so there is no reduction in income or profit as a result of this proposal.
- 7.2 In respect of varying the two Catering Assistants contracts to permanent, there is estimated to be a small saving of £220 per annum. Having these staff on permanent contract however will provide certainty in being able to resource functions and will see some efficiency savings as at present there are certain occasions when non catering staff within the service have to assist with these duties taking them away from their core work.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.)

## **8.0 Legal Implications**

- 8.1 No legal implications have been identified.

(Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.)

## **9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

9.1 The two proposals contained within this report will allow the crematorium to continue to provide memorial offerings within beautiful grounds. In addition it will provide the service with more certainty in meeting business demands of the facility as a wake venue.

## **10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):**

10.1 The PIA screening process was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

## **11.0 Other Corporate Implications**

### Community Safety

11.1 N/A

### Sustainability

11.2 N/A

### Staffing & Trade Union

11.3 Pending approval by the Organisational Development Committee, the recruitment process will be carried out in line with the Council's relevant policies, procedures and protocols, with support from HR.

**Background Documents:** None