



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET
Subject	PUBLIC HEALTH FUNERALS
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Juliet Layton - Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services Email: juliet.layton@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jon Dearing - Assistant Director for Resident Services Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenues Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider and approve a new Policy in respect of Public Health Funerals
Annexes	Annex A – Public Health Funeral Policy
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: I. Approve the Public Health Funeral Policy
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting Communities• Delivering Good Services
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Interim Head of Legal Services, Finance Business Partner, Assistant Director, Director of Finance (Publica)



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report along with Annex A introduces a new Policy in respect of Public Health Funerals which Cotswold District Council hold a statutory responsibility to deliver.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A public Health Funeral can be defined as a funeral arranged by Local Authorities for those people who have died and have no known relatives to arrange or pay for their funeral; or have relatives who do not want to; or are unable to arrange their funeral. Local Authorities have responsibility to arrange such funerals under Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 The council does not currently have an adopted Public Health Funerals policy. This could possibly leave the council open to legal challenge from interested parties if it takes on a very basic funeral arrangement and the family wants something more tailored.
- 3.2 The council needs to ensure it has an adopted policy to provide both a basis for a procedural framework for staff and further provide a consistent and transparent approach to the public on how it deals with such cases.
- 3.3 The provisions of section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 state:
- “It shall be the duty of a local authority to cause to be buried or cremated the body of any person who has died or has been found dead in their area, in any case where it appears to the authority that no suitable arrangements for disposal of the body have been or are being made otherwise than by the authority”.
- 3.4 The purpose of section 46 is to prevent the spread of disease through the proper disposal of bodies of deceased individuals where no-one else is willing or able to take responsibility for the funeral arrangements.
- 3.5 In many cases the lack of suitable arrangement is due to there being no known next of kin. These cases are generally referred to the council by the coroner’s office but on other occasions family members are traced who are unable or unwilling to take responsibility for arranging the funeral.



- 3.6** In some circumstances a successful application to the Social Fund will help meet the cost of paying for the funeral including arrangement fee costs.
- 3.7** Where the aforementioned cannot be achieved the council has an obligation to make and pay for the necessary arrangements. The council undertakes on average two to four public health funerals per year at a current cost of approximately £1,480 per funeral.
- 3.8** These costs, however, can be offset through the removal and sale of possessions from the deceased estate.
- 3.9** For such Public Health Funerals, the Council will only provide/fund the cost of an unattended funeral or cremation. These are when there is no family or friends present and these ceremonies are typically very short. For the avoidance of doubt, the Council will not fund any cost over and above this such as orders of service, flowers etc as set out in paragraph 9 of Annex A.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1.** The council currently has a budget of £2,500 per year to support such burials.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1.** The legislation is detailed within the body of this report.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1** The risks are detailed within the body of this report.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1.** There is sometimes a stigma around public health funerals that these are paupers' funerals. This is an outdated opinion, and the reality is that anyone who passes away in the district will be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of wealth and will receive a dignified burial.

8. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1.** None

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 9.1.** The council has a statutory responsibility to process such funerals; therefore, there are no available alternative options.



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10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1. None.

(END)