

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Audit, Risk and Scrutiny
DATE	8 May 2018
REPORT TITLE	Inspection Report of Aberdeen Crematorium by the Inspector of Crematoria
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/18/012
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
REPORT AUTHOR	Graham Keith
TERMS OF REFERENCE	6.9

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

At its meeting on 1 November 2016, the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee resolved to present resulting reports of audits of Aberdeen Crematorium to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee for assurance purposes. This report provides the Committee with the Inspector of Crematoria's Inspection Report carried out by the Inspector of Crematoria on 31 January 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 notes the inspection report

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 1 November 2016, the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee approved a suite of compliance measures with the aim of improving arrangements at the Aberdeen Crematorium. One of these assurance measures was that the Inspector of Crematoria's annual inspection report be presented to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.2 The Inspector of Crematoria's Inspection Report is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The Inspectors report refers to "plans being progressed as regards a major refurbishment of the building" and "this will include co-locating the administration office". The refurbishment of the chapels and public areas of the Crematorium is currently scheduled to begin at the end of May 2018 with the work expected to take 20 weeks. Cremations will continue to be carried out during this time but the chapels and public areas will be closed. Alternative arrangements for holding services are being investigated and these include the Beach Ballroom, the Winter Gardens at Duthie Park, Churches, Halls and other appropriate Council premises. The Bereavement

Services administration team are scheduled to relocate to Aberdeen Crematorium following the completion of the refurbishment work.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	None identified	L	Not applicable
Legal	None identified	L	Not applicable
Employee	None identified	L	Not applicable
Customer	None identified	L	Not applicable
Environment	None identified	L	Not applicable
Technology	None identified	L	Not applicable
Reputational	None identified	L	Not applicable

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous People	People and communities are protected from harm

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights	Full EHRIA not required

Impact Assessment	
Privacy Impact Assessment	Not required
<u>Children's Rights Impact Assessment/Duty of Due Regard</u>	Not applicable

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Aberdeen City Council Report to Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee
Aberdeen Crematorium Performance Indicators (CHI/16/251)
<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=503&MIId=3877&Ver=4>

10. APPENDICES (if applicable)

Appendix 1 - Inspection Report (Jan 2018) - Aberdeen Crematorium

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix 1 - Inspection Report (Jan 2018) - Aberdeen Crematorium

Inspector of Crematoria Scotland

Robert Swanson QPM

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Inspection of Crematoria

Name and Address of Crematorium: Aberdeen Crematorium Skene Road Aberdeen	
Name of Cremation Authority: Aberdeen City Council	Date of Inspection: Wednesday 31 st January 2018
Undertaken by: Robert Swanson QPM Inspector of Crematoria Scotland	In the presence of: Graham Keith Performance and Development Manager Angus Beacom Crematorium Manager

1. Operational Hours / Time Between services

Opening Hours: (as advertised)

Monday to Friday – 0830hrs to 1630hrs

Saturday - 0900hrs to 1200hrs

Time between services:

45 minutes with option of booking extended period.

2. Staffing levels and structure

Staff certificated to carry out cremations:

7 members of staff qualified to carry out cremations.

3. Office Management

Administration Procedure:

The majority of the administration and record keeping is currently carried out by Bereavement Services at Aberdeen Council Headquarters, however, as part of a refurbishment programme (to the Crematorium), the administration office will be relocated to the Crematorium.

Whilst the present arrangement works well, the move is welcomed by the Inspector for a number of reasons, including providing attendees (on Admin. matters) with much improved parking, and minimising the need for manual transfer of documentation.

The administration procedure and process was examined from point of first intimation to disposal of the ashes, and subsequent storage of documentation, with checks carried out on paperwork and computer records.

All were found to be of a high standard with much emphasis placed on ensuring compliance with the applicant's instructions.

Computer System:

BACAS

4. Total Number of Cremations Carried Out

Breakdown by category	2016:	2017:
Adult:	2410	2162
Under 1 yr:	19	2
1 – 16 yrs:	3	2
Stillbirth:	15	8
Pregnancy Loss:		
Individual:	142	163
Shared:	1360	1343
Body Parts:	13	10

5. Cremation / Identity Card Process

The process and all related documentation was examined and demonstrated from point of arrival of the coffin, throughout all stages, including cremation, cooling, cremulation, storage and dispersal of the ashes, subsequent updating of computer records and storage of the documentation.

All were found to be of a high standard with meticulous attention to detail, ensuring the process was fully in compliance with the instructions of the applicant, and with a number of safeguards to minimise the risk of human error resulting in the mislabelling of ashes.

6. Recovery of Ashes

Ashes were recovered from all cremations.

7. Ashes Policy (retain / scatter / inter / storage)

Details of process:

There has been no change to the policy since the last Inspection.

A check carried out on a dip sample of documentation found that the instructions of the applicant were complied with in all cases, with the disposal outcome clearly documented.

Ashes awaiting disposal are stored in a secure room with clear identification and instructions affixed.

8. Cremators

Number of cremators: 4

Make (s): All FT

Size (s): All large

9. Sample of Cremation Register

Category: Shared Pregnancy Loss

Cremation number: F6092

Result: All documentation and records examined and found to be in order. The cremation was carried out on 8th September 2017, with the ashes scattered by Crematorium staff within the Garden of Remembrance at Hazlehead on 15th September 2017.

Category: Individual Pregnancy Loss

Cremation number: F6124

Result: All documentation and records examined and found to be in order. The cremation was carried out on 21st November 2017, with the ashes scattered by Crematorium staff within the Garden of Remembrance at Hazlehead on 28th November 2017.

Category: Adult

Cremation number: 149526

Result: All documentation and records examined and found to be in order. The cremation was carried out on 28th December 2017 with the ashes scattered by Crematorium staff within the Garden of Remembrance at Hazlehead on 4th January 2018.

Category: Adult

Cremation number: 149648

Result: All documentation and records examined and found to be in order. The cremation was carried out on 12th January 2018 with the ashes collected by the applicant on 22nd January 2018.

Category: Adult

Cremation number: 149733

Result: All documentation and records examined and found to be in order. The cremation was carried out on 23rd January 2018 with the ashes collected by the applicant on 25th January 2018.

10. Use of Baby Tray

Number / Source: 4 - FT

When introduced: Re-introduced on 25th November 2013 with extended use applied on 23rd July 2014.

11. Pregnancy Loss Policy / Procedure

NHS / Shared:

There has been no change to the policy since the last inspection.

The Cremation Authority continue to have a contract/agreement with NHS Grampian for cremation of shared and individual pregnancy loss.

Ashes from shared cremations are scattered 7 days after cremation.

Ashes from individual pregnancy loss cremations are dispersed in accordance with the instructions of the applicant.

12. Metal Extraction

Policy:

All metal extracts are sensitively re-cycled in accordance with the policy of the Cremation Authority, unless otherwise instructed by the applicant.

There have been no issues in respect of any aspect of the process.

13. Code of Practice, Cremation Practice Guidance and Policy Statement (on website / displayed)

The inspection confirmed from observations, and examination of documentation and computer records that the Crematorium's procedures are fully in accordance with the Scottish Government Policy Statement on Infant Cremations.

All staff have ready access to relevant hard copy documentation and are required to sign acknowledgement when seen.

A number of key documents are prominently displayed within the Crematorium.

The Cremation Authority website was seen to provide comprehensive information on relevant matters, with links to a number of associated reports.

14. General Observations

All public and private areas seen during the course of the inspection were found to be clean and tidy.

Since the last inspection there has been improved lighting to the car park, with plans being progressed as regards a major refurbishment of the building. As mentioned earlier this will include co-locating the administration office.

It is understood that a defibrillator will be made available on completion of the works.

Whilst it was noted that there had been a reduction in the number of cremations carried out in 2017, this is considered most likely to be due to the opening of a new Crematorium (Baldarroch) in Crathes, in May, 2016. Major road works around Aberdeen during this period are also likely to have had an impact.

15. Overall Assessment

The inspection found there to be no shortcomings in any aspect of the cremation process, with current management and staff to be commended for the high standards they have set and maintained in recent times.

They have overcome hurdles set by their predecessors and appear to have restored public confidence with regards current working practice.

During the course of the inspection the Inspector had the opportunity to speak with a young person, currently on work experience at the Crematorium. The unrestricted access (under supervision) given to that person highlights openness and willingness by the Cremation Authority to demonstrate that all activities conducted within the Crematorium are of the highest standard. Such a secondment or placement is regarded by the Inspector as good practice which should be considered by other Cremation Authorities..

Another area worthy of praise is the high level of regular audit and service updates provided by management, ensuring that high standards are maintained. It should be stressed that these strict measures are not standard throughout the industry.

Aberdeen Crematorium is currently (January 2018) experiencing a very busy winter period, with a significant increase in the number of cremations compared to previous years.

It is with great credit to staff that they are coping with this demand whilst maintaining the same high standards.

Staff clearly have a good working relationship with management and each other at the

Crematorium, which is reflected in their professional and welcoming approach to attendees.

In conclusion, the inspection found working practices and standards at Aberdeen Crematorium to be of a very high standard, with no areas of weakness or concern identified.

Signed: Robert Swanson QPM
Inspector of Crematoria Scotland

Date: 7th February 2018.