

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration & Environmental Services (Housing & Regeneration Services)

Community Safety and Environmental Safety Committee : 7 February 2007

Subject: Clydebank Crematorium – Crematoria Abatement of Mercury Emissions Organisation - CAMEO Scheme

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the development of the CAMEO scheme as it affects Clydebank Crematorium.

2. Background

2.1 The Committee will recall that the CAMEO scheme was the subject of a report entitled “Mercury Emissions at Clydebank Crematorium” to the Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee of 11th January 2006. The report advised on the environmental damage caused by the emission of mercury from crematoria, guidance issued by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and how this impacted on the future operation of Clydebank Crematorium.

2.2 Following consideration of this report, the Committee agreed :-

- 1) that the Council join the Crematoria Abatement of Mercury Emissions Organisation (CAMEO) scheme concerning the abatement of mercury emissions from crematoria;
- 2) that consideration be given to the inclusion of the necessary contribution to CAMEO as part of the 2006/07 budget;
- 3) in principle, to the future installation of necessary abatement equipment at all three of Clydebank Crematorium’s cremators; and
- 4) that the Director be instructed to submit bids for funding at a future appropriate time within the Council’s capital budget process.

2.3 West Dunbartonshire Council is now registered with the CAMEO scheme, and the £25 environmental surcharge was incorporated into the fee structure for burials and cremations in 2006/07.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** At the time of the initial report it was anticipated that crematoria participating in the CAMEO scheme would require to pay the environmental surcharge of £25 per cremation from 1st January 2007. However, this position was challenged by a number of cremation authorities and legal opinion was sought. Consequently, it has been determined that even where a cremation authority is a member of CAMEO there is no legal requirement for payment of the environmental surcharge to commence until 1st January 2013.
- 3.2** The CAMEO steering group further advise that, following information supplied by the manufacturers of mercury abatement equipment that the current £25 surcharge no longer reflects the costs associated with mercury abatement, and therefore recommend that the cremation authorities increase the surcharge to £35 per cremation from 2007.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** As a consequence of not having to pay the surcharge, additional income will be generated by the crematorium in 2006/2007.
- 5.2** The crematorium utilises highly technical plant and equipment in order to retain its operating licence, meet legislative requirements and deliver a high standard of service. This investment however also requires sufficient income stream.
- 5.3** Although the additional income generated by the CAMEO charge is welcome, it will be short lived in that the Council has committed to installing the necessary mercury abatement equipment prior to December 2012. Taking into account design considerations, alterations to buildings, equipment order lead times, demand on equipment manufacturers, installation lead times etc. it is likely that the latest date that that the Council could place the necessary orders would be in 2010. The income gain from the non payment of the environmental surcharge is therefore only likely to last for the next two to three years but will assist in maintaining standards at the Crematorium.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** There is the risk of reduced income to the Crematorium should the Committee decide to discontinue applying the environmental surcharge. In any event, the environmental surcharge must be applied by no later than 31st December 2012 to meet the requirements of the CAMEO scheme.

7. Conclusions

7.1 The Council acted in accordance with the best advice available in applying the environmental surcharge to the cremation fees for 2006/07. Subsequent developments and advice from CAMEO means that in theory the environmental surcharge could be withdrawn, however this would result in a significant loss of income to the Council at a time when further investment is required and utility costs are increasing.

7.2 Even having applied the environmental surcharge in 2006/07 the charges for cremation at Clydebank Crematorium are just slightly over the national average.

8. Recommendation

8.1 It is recommended that Committee agree to the continuation of charges which includes a fee that reflects the recommended CAMEO surcharge of £35.00.

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Date: 7th February 2007

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Appendices Nil

Background Papers: Mercury Emissions at Clydebank Crematorium -
Community Safety and Environmental Services
Committee 11th January 2006

Wards Affected : All wards