

Cheltenham Crematorium Project
Lessons Learnt Update - Audit Committee – 24th April, 2019
Response to Scrutiny Task Group Recommendations

This document sets out the actions taken during the development of Cheltenham's new crematorium, in response to the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group recommendations, arising from its review of the previous cremator replacement project in 2009-11

Recommendation	Programme Response	Was the response successful?
On future projects, where the Council is bringing in a consultant to offer specialist knowledge and experience, the evaluation criteria should be set so that the 'quality' factor is given more weighting than 'cost' and a face-to-face interview should be carried out.	Selection of consultant for initial feasibility study was based on a 30:70 'cost to quality' weighting and an interview / presentation process was undertaken.	Yes. The results of the feasibility study, specifically the recommendation to build a new crematorium and the establishment of a programme budget, have been vindicated by the subsequent success of the development project.
At an early stage, more opportunities should be provided for the industry (in this case the funeral directors) to input any technical expertise or recommendations, whilst being cautious as to their own agendas.	Funeral directors were involved throughout the project development, from face-to-face meetings with consultants at the initial feasibility stage, through to invitations to take part in 'funeral walk-through rehearsals' in the new buildings.	Yes. Their views (most notably support for a new build solution) have been influential throughout the project. Their involvement and support helped mitigate the impact of significant and recurring problems with the old cremators.
During the procurement process there should be an agreed and adequate period of testing, to confirm that equipment is functioning properly before final payment is made. That the percentage of money retained for this purpose is more significant than the 5% held back on the earlier project.	A three month programme of commissioning and testing of the new cremators took place after they were delivered to site. In contract negotiations, it was agreed that 3% of the interim amounts payable would be retained, pending final sign-off on the project.	Yes. The design and installation of FT cremators was procured as a sub-contract by the lead contractor, Willmott Dixon, who thus remain liable to CBC for defects during the 12 months period following handover.
Consideration should be given to putting in place a maintenance contract at the same time as agreeing the purchase contract.	A 10 year maintenance contract is in place with the cremator suppliers. It was tendered and selected by Willmott Dixon with CBC involvement, alongside the design and	Yes. Whilst there were some procurement and contractual complexities surrounding the novation process, we were successful in obtaining a competitively tendered package

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	installation contract. It has subsequently been novated to CBC.	(design, installation and maintenance) from a reputable cremator manufacturer, who is arguably the market leader.
On future projects of this size, at least two site visits are carried out to a preferred supplier and preferably another visit to the supplier with the second highest score.	In respect of the cremator selection, meetings were held with potential suppliers as part of the selection process, supplemented by the Bereavement Services Manager's extensive research into supplier performance at other UK sites.	Yes. CBC has a high degree of confidence in the cremators supplied and the manufacturer's ability to support them and was able to play a key role in the selection process, with additional expertise provided by Willmott Dixon and their consultants.
All projects over a certain cost and timescale need to be fully managed according to the project management principles and procedures adopted by the Council.	The programme and initial feasibility project were managed as 'high cost, high risk' initiatives according to the standards laid out in the project management guidelines (See also responses to subsequent recommendations).	Yes. The Programme has been delivered on time and within budget. The quality of the buildings has been welcomed by all stakeholders and will be subject to applications for various industry awards, as an exemplar of best practice.
On all significant projects, decisions are logged and brought to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member at the appropriate time, so that an audit trail can be maintained.	A decision log has been maintained throughout the programme and reviewed at each Programme Board meeting. As a member of Programme Board (which was typically chaired by the officer Project Sponsor), the Cabinet Member was therefore constantly in touch with the process and decisions made. Appropriate decisions were brought to Cabinet, or the Cabinet Member, in line with the provisions set out at the outset of the programme and to meet requirements set out in the Council's Constitution	Yes. A clear and complete audit trail is available for scrutiny as required.

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<p>Risks are managed at a high level by the senior manager on a project as well as the day to day project risks and added to the corporate risk register as soon as any high-scoring risks become apparent</p>	<p>A detailed project risk register has been maintained throughout the programme and discussed at each Programme Board meeting. A sub-group of key CBC officers has been responsible for the detailed monitoring of the register and progression of associated mitigating actions on a monthly basis. A corporate risk item has been updated and reported on a monthly basis throughout the programme. The contractor's risk register was also a standing item on contractor progress meeting agendas.</p>	<p>Yes. The programme has broken new ground in its management of risk, including the graphical monitoring of the assessed total risk score throughout the programme. The project team also used a quantified measure of financial risk and associated budget contingency arrangements as part of regular programme budget management.</p>
<p>The well-being and health and safety of crematorium staff on any operational or maintenance project are treated as a priority and regularly reviewed at every project meeting and staff given the opportunity to express their views.</p>	<p>Bereavement Services staff were involved throughout the design and introduction of the new facilities and given extensive and appropriate training.</p> <p>Decisions relating to the old crematorium were made in consultation with the Bereavement Services Manager, with health and safety given priority consideration and ultimately resulting in the closure of our former cremation operation.</p>	<p>The challenging decision by the Director of Environment to discontinue use of the old cremators, in consultation with the Council's health and safety advisor, was due in part to the associated health and safety risk. Although not the primary consideration, this then allowed staff to focus their efforts on preparing for the safe operational use the new buildings.</p>
<p>When dealing with such a significant contract in the future, managers should receive full support from their Directors.</p>	<p>The development programme was sponsored by the Director of Environment. The Director chaired Programme Board, the change control group and the risk management group and was in regular contact with the Bereavement Services Manager, the</p>	<p>Yes. The resources made available by the Director to the programme team were considered to be a major contribution to the success of the programme.</p>

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	<p>Programme Manager and other key members of the programme team.</p> <p>The resourcing framework for the programme included, from its outset, provision for backfilling within Bereavement Services and Property Services to enable key resources to focus on the programme.</p>	
<p>The Cabinet Member should be involved throughout in any significant projects in the area of their portfolio, but particularly at the tendering stage.</p>	<p>The Cabinet Member was a member of Programme Board throughout. Whilst taking no direct role in the contractor selection process, he was consulted as to the procurement strategy and selection criteria and briefed on the rationale for appointments, providing opportunities for challenge and scrutiny.</p>	<p>Yes. The Cabinet Member was able to support and formally approve the recommendations made by the programme team.</p>
<p>Legal options could continue to be explored, particularly any potential for joint claims with other authorities in the same position.</p>	<p>This was not within the scope of the development programme itself and whilst options for legal redress were explored, there was not considered to be any reasonable prospect of success.</p>	
<p>All Elected members should be made aware of problems on projects of this nature with potential impact across the town and the public kept Informed.</p>	<p>Regular member briefings were issued and the Cabinet Member and programme team sustained close contact with a working group of members formed from the original scrutiny task group. At key stages (e.g. ahead of the decision to build a new crematorium) member events were held to explain the recommendation and the associated risks.</p>	<p>Yes. Awareness that the Council had committed to a new crematorium was instrumental in helping to mitigate the impact of the continuing problems with the old equipment, both in the member community and in the public at large.</p> <p>The flow of information and explanation of the</p>

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	Regular media briefings were provided on progress with the new crematorium and the difficulties with the old cremators, including several radio and television interviews.	risk profile made all aware of the inevitable issues and uncertainties which arise with a project of the ambition and scale involved in this case.
<p>The following recommendations for improving the crematorium should be explored:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ring fencing any finance secured from the sale of the Lodge for these improvements 2. Online booking system, initially for viewing bookings 3. New music system 4. New loop system in the chapels 5. Improved parking facilities 6. improved drop-off facilities for the disabled 7. introduce a policy on overhanging trees and shrubs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secured by Cabinet decision in June 2016 2. Not deemed a high priority need as part of the development, but will be explored as part of future commercialisation work 3. Implemented and operational 4. Implemented and operational 5. Implemented 6. Implemented 7. Not a current priority to develop a specific policy, but is being managed on site within available landscape resources. 	High priority recommendations implemented successfully.
The abatement cleansing issue is dealt with swiftly as this Council cannot sustain the significant amount of payment into the CAMEO fund for not being compliant, which we are not at this present time.	Full mercury abatement is now in place in association with the new cremator plant and will contribute significantly to the financial profile of the service moving forwards.	Yes. Payment into the CAMEO fund has now ceased. Awaiting information on any credits which will be returned to CBC from the fund in relation to future mercury-abated cremations.

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That the crematorium staff are formally thanked by the Council for their significant contribution to overcome the problems with the cremators.	<p>Crematory staff were specifically thanked through the Council's 'reward and recognition' scheme for their tireless efforts in keeping the old crematorium operational, in spite of repeated issues with the cremator plant.</p> <p>A further staff event is to be held to celebrate the successful delivery of the new crematorium, which will include both Bereavement Services staff and members of the project programme team.</p>	Details to be finalised.

Mike Redman
Director of Environment
9th April, 2019