

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM: 10 (d)

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

2 FEBRUARY 2016

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL PROGRESS REPORT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To provide members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) with an update on the work of the Environment Scrutiny Panel.

BACKGROUND

2. Since the last report to OSB, the Environment Scrutiny Panel has met on one occasion on the 7 January 2016.
3. At that meeting, the panel received information in respect of the Work and Pensions Select Committee's current inquiry into 'funeral poverty' and 'affordable funerals'. Written evidence, as was presented to the Government Committee, was considered by the panel in respect of the views expressed by a number of bodies including Kensington Citizen Advice Bureau, a Child Funeral Charity and Totnes Independent Funeral Service.
4. In addition the panel was also provided with examples of a range of Disbursement fees and funeral company changes, alongside a list of Local Authorities that offer Affordable Funeral Schemes. Members of the panel were in agreement that the Council should offer similar provision to residents in Middlesbrough.
5. On 10 January 2016 representatives from the panel met with the Manager of Relph's Funeral Directors in Middlesbrough to discuss a number of areas including how do funeral directors view the facilities and services offered by the Council? What investment in Teesside Crematorium would have the greatest impact in improving service provision? and what are the costs of a funeral in comparison to payments from the social fund?

RECOMMENDATION

6. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board notes the content of the report and the updated position.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE ROONEY
CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT
SCRUTINY PANEL**

Contact Officer:

Caroline Breheny

Scrutiny Support Officer

Democratic Services

Telephone: 01642 729752 (direct line)

e-mail: caroline_breheny@middlesbrough.gov.uk