

# EXECUTIVE BOARD

## 23<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2017

### PROPOSED REMOVAL OF CEMETERY FEES FOR THE BURIAL OF CHILDREN UP TO AND INCLUDING THE AGE OF 18 YEARS

#### RECOMMENDATIONS / KEY DECISIONS REQUIRED:

The Executive Board is requested to consider the information contained within this report and to further consider and endorse the recommendations based on the proposal made.

Following a recent campaign by a Welsh MP, many local authorities have reconsidered their burial fees in relation to the death of a child.

In line with other local authorities in South Wales, it is recommended that the proposal to waive burial fees for children up to and including eighteen years of age is approved.

#### REASONS:

Abolishing burial fees would enable all families, regardless of financial means, to bury their child without adding undue stress to an already difficult time and will bring Carmarthenshire County Council in line with other local authorities in South Wales. This move will also demonstrate the Authority's empathy towards parents in such circumstances and will lessen the financial strain on families, in particular the younger parents who don't always have the means to cover such unexpected funeral costs.

**Relevant Scrutiny Committee consulted** N/A

**Exec Board Decision Required** YES

**Council Decision Required** NO

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** Cllr. H. Evans

Directorate: Environment	Designations:	Tel Nos. E Mail Addresses:
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
EXECUTIVE BOARD  
23<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2017**

**PROPOSED REMOVAL OF CEMETERY FEES FOR THE BURIAL OF  
CHILDREN UP TO AND INCLUDING THE AGE OF 18 YEARS**

**Background**

The County Council is responsible for the management of one cemetery which is located at Dyffryn Road, Ammanford.

The statutory arrangements for the management of municipal cemeteries are contained within the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO). Article 15(1) of this order permits local authorities "to charge such fees as they think proper for or in connection with burials in a cemetery".

Members may be aware of a recent campaign led by Carolyn Harris (MP for Swansea East) to abolish burial fees for children including fees imposed by local authorities. The campaign has prompted many Welsh local authorities to review their policy in this regard and consequently, many Welsh local authorities no longer levy any charges for the interment of children under the age of eighteen.

Welsh Government are currently seeking the views of local authorities on a proposal to bring uniformity across Wales with a view to cease the charging of fees for the burial or cremation of children.

**Current Position**

Carmarthenshire County Council has a range of component charges relating to burials that currently include children. A typical breakdown is provided as follows:

Exclusive Right of Burial £375.00

Interment fee £77.00 (one fifth of which is charged for child burials i.e. £15.40)

Approval for erection of memorial £107.00

Therefore the total charge currently levied by Carmarthenshire County Council for the burial of a child is £497.40.

The opening of graves is arranged directly between the family of the bereaved and the funeral director. When a child is buried, the funeral director provides their vehicles and their time free of charge and will only charge 50% of their grave digging fee.

**Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It requires public bodies to think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. This is to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

In order to work towards this vision, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals and the proposal in this report links to three of these goals.

**A Healthier Wales**

The removal of fees will reduce an element of stress that is related to financial burden on families at a very difficult time.

**A More Equal Wales**

The removal of the fees will also offer equal access to the service regardless of financial status.

## A Prosperous Wales

The removal of fees will obviously assist less affluent families to a significant degree.

## Financial Implications

During the last three financial years, only one such burial has been undertaken at the cemetery and therefore the financial implications are minimal.

## Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that the Executive Board agree to waive all fees in relation to the burial of children up to and including the age of eighteen. This would demonstrate the Council's compassion and empathy towards those parents at a very difficult time and it would also prove to be a positive and appropriate response to the recent campaign and Welsh Government's position on this. There will be very little financial impact to the Authority and the proposal would bring Carmarthenshire County Council in line with many other neighbouring local authorities with respect to child burial fees.

<b>DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?</b>	<b>NO</b>
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## IMPLICATIONS

**I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :**

**Signed: Ainsley Williams**

**Head of Waste & Environmental Services**

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
None	None	Yes	None	None	None	None

**3.Finance** - Minimum Impact

## CONSULTATIONS

**I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below**

**Signed: Ainsley Williams**

**Head of Waste & Environmental Services**

1. Scrutiny Committee – N/A
2. Local Member(s) – N/A
3. Community / Town Council - N/A
4. Relevant Partners – N/A
5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations - N/A

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 - Access to Information**  
**List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**THERE ARE NONE**