

EFFORD AND WESTON MILL CREMATION PROCESSES

Bereavement Services



I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Executive Decision L10 18/19, signed by the Leader of the Council on 23 July 2018 authorised the change in cremation processes to the new crematorium from Efford and Weston Mill crematoria on completion of the new facility.
- 1.2. The new crematorium is now complete and operational. However, to complete the enactment of the decision L10 18/19, authority is sought to officially end the use of the cremation processes at Efford and Weston Mill in a phased approach following the change in cremation processes to The Park.
- 1.3. The Cremation Regulations 2008 require the cremation authority (Plymouth City Council) to write to the Secretary of State to give one month advance notice of any formal closure of a crematorium, in addition to publishing public notices via local newspapers and signage.
- 1.4. There will be no change to the use of Efford and Weston Mill cemeteries. These spaces will continue to be available for burial and memorialisation. The chapels at Efford and Weston Mill will remain active for memorial services.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Plymouth Crematorium at The Park will provide the citizens of Plymouth with a new, purpose built crematorium with associated facilities off Haye Road, Plympton. This investment was needed to provide a full upgrade to the equipment and to deliver quality facilities that meet 21st century customer expectations and capacity to meet future demands.
- 2.2. The new facilities include three ceremony spaces, designed to meet the varying needs to suit the number of mourners and the desired style of the ceremony; along with high quality audio-visual equipment for the ceremony and to allow those who cannot be present to take part.
- 2.3. The waiting areas, along with the flow of people throughout the building and outside spaces, have been designed to ensure that each funeral party receives the highest quality of experience when saying goodbye to their loved ones.
- 2.4. Behind the scenes, the crematory has new cremators with the latest abatement equipment, and the required space and facilities to improve all elements of care for the bereaved as well as health and safety improvements for our staff.
- 2.5. Outside of the buildings, the grounds have been designed to sit sympathetically in the environment, in the full awareness of the wellbeing benefits of green spaces. As well as landscaping including memorial gardens, there is appropriate car parking, road access, pathways and other appropriate external spaces.
- 2.6. In addition – and in excess of the initial designs – there is a café and wake facility. Our market research tells us that people value somewhere to meet in the warm and dry either before ceremonies or when visiting the memorials of loved ones; as well as giving us the opportunity to join in initiatives such as Compassionate Friends. The space is flexible, and would allow for either larger wakes, or smaller, more intimate, gather.
- 2.7. Plymouth's existing cremators which are located at Efford and Weston Mill are beyond their life expectancy. New cremators require added abatement technology to meet the

Government's emissions requirements, and these will not fit in the existing buildings. An extension is not possible in either location due to proximity of graves to the buildings. Both facilities are over 100 years old and do not provide the people of Plymouth with the type of facility that meets modern requirements.

- 2.8. Therefore, a new crematorium facility has been built at Merafield Road, Plymouth located within the City boundary adjacent to the Drake Memorial Park which will transfer to the Council in 2050. Since approval in 2018, all of the design, build and commissioning requirements have taken place and the new site, Plymouth Crematorium at the Park, opened operationally on 12th August 2024.
- 2.9. The Leader of the Council approved the business case for the Bereavement Infrastructure Project on 23 July 2018 through Executive Decision reference L10 18/19. As part of that decision, authority was granted for a change in cremation processes to a new location (from Efford and Weston Mill cemeteries) on completion of the new crematorium. The decision also authorised continued operation of the active cemeteries at Efford and Weston Mill for burial, memorialisation and chapel bookings.
- 2.10 Having now opened Plymouth Crematorium in The Park, we are now looking at ending cremation processes at the two sites of Efford and Weston Mill. To do this, there are additional steps required by Plymouth City Council as a cremation authority. Under the Cremation Regulations (1930) incorporated into the Cremation Regulations (2008) the cremation authority is required to write to the Secretary of State and provide public notice of the opening or closure of a crematorium.

3. PROPOSED CHANGES AND REASONS

- 3.1 The decision to relocate cremation processes to the new Plymouth Crematorium at the Park was taken through Executive Decision reference L10 18/19. Now that the new Crematorium is fully operational, a further decision is required to formally cease cremation processes at Weston Mill and Efford.
- 3.2 It should be noted that this decision does not impact on Efford and Weston Mill, other than the cremation processes, and they will remain open for burial (whilst space remains), memorialisation and chapel bookings.

Decision to be taken: To cease the use of the Efford and Weston Mill for cremation processes from xxx

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1. Do nothing: this is not possible as the policy decision to move cremation processes to the Park has already been taken under Executive Decision L10 18/19.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISK

- 5.1. There is no negative impact forecast on the baseline net revenue position due to operating cost efficiencies.
- 5.2. In the event of unforeseen revenue costs these will be fed into the preparation of the MTFP as part of the 2025/26 budget process.

6. TIMESCALES

- 6.1. Plymouth Crematorium at The Park is now operational (as at 12th August 2024), and is replacing our previous sites for cremation processes
- 6.2. As the cremation authority, Plymouth City Council has to give at least one months notice of closure of crematoria.