

REQUEST FOR A COOPERATIVE REVIEW



Please submit this document to Democratic Support once complete.

The request will be submitted to the Co-operative Scrutiny Board for consideration against the approval criteria and you will be notified of its success. If the Board approve the request for a Co-operative Review on the subject matter below then a project plan will be completed and you may be asked for further information.

What is the name of the review	Public Funerals
Please provide a brief outline of the subject and scope of the review?	<p>Plymouth City Council has a legal duty under the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984 to</p> <p><i>'cause to be buried or cremated the body of any person who dies or has been found dead, within its area, in any case where it appears to the local authority that no suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body have been or are being made otherwise than by the local authority.'</i></p> <p>As agreed at the Your Plymouth panel meeting on 4 November 2013, the scope of the review will be limited to consideration of the following –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funeral arrangements are made at a time to suit the Bereavement Service, rather than give a choice to family members. Should we accommodate the wishes of the family? • Even when family members have not accepted responsibility, we still notify them of the time and date of the funeral. Should we continue to do this? • The Council offer a simple, non-denominational burial, and no choice is given to family members for burial or cremation. The law requires that cremation should not be carried out if it was contrary to the wishes of the deceased, and if a next of kin was unable to be traced, the Council would always be legally required to provide a burial only. Should we offer a choice of burial or cremation to family members, even if cremation is more expensive? • Should we employ a minister where the denomination of the deceased is known, which currently has a fee of £179? • The service is basic and minimal and does not provide for flowers or anything but a graveside service, and no marking of a grave. Are the Council happy that this is acceptable? Some information is available from other Councils but further benchmarking data could be obtained about what is offered elsewhere.

Please outline the reasons as to why you believe a review needs to take place?	The cost to the Council for each Public Funeral, is in the region of £2000 to £2200 but can be more, depending on the time spent investigating the case. Traditionally, the older generation have made provision in their wills for their funeral arrangements but this is no longer the case and, with the number of public funerals set to rise combined with the existing budget pressures of the current economic climate, it is essential that the Council looks at ways of making better use of its resources.
What will the review attempt to achieve?	The review will help inform the Council's policy on dealing with public funerals which, in turn, will sustain and improve service delivery and public confidence.
Who will benefit from the review?	Members of the public, Councillors and Officers.
How long do you think the review might take?	It is anticipated that the review will be in the form of one half-day meeting.
When do you think the review should commence and why?	It is proposed that the review takes place in December 2013. Given the panel's existing work programme commitments this is the most suitable time for a review to be undertaken.
When do you think the review should be completed by and why?	The review will be completed by the end of December 2013 in order to avoid any conflict with budget scrutiny taking place in January 2014.
Review requested by?	Your Plymouth Scrutiny Panel

Received in Democratic Support Section:	Reviewed by the Co-operative Scrutiny Board:
Date:	Date:
Scrutiny Review Approved/Rejected	
If approved initial Project Plan meeting date:	