

Executive Committee

23rd February 2026

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Sharon Harvey
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Assistant Director		Simon Parry, Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services
Report Author Adam Smith	Job Title: Bereavement Services Manager Contact email: adam.smith@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 62174 ext 3352	
Wards Affected		Abbey Ward (All wards)
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		N/A
Relevant Council Priority		Economy, Regeneration, & Prosperity
Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is asked to RESOLVE that:-

- 1) the delivery of a pet cremation service at the Abbey Crematorium be approved.**

Subject to approval of resolution 1 above, the Executive Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that:-

- 2) A budget of £50,000.00 is added to the Capital Programme for 2026/27 within the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the purchase of the Pet Cremator Machine and all ancillary plant equipment associated with the delivery of this service.**
- 3) the following fees be charged for the Pet Cremation service:**
 - a) small pets £50 - £145;**
 - b) cats £145 - £175; and**
 - c) dogs £175 - £250.**

2. BACKGROUND

Executive Summary

- 2.1** This proposal introduces a dedicated Pet Cremation Service at Abbey Cemetery, Redditch, designed to complement our respected human bereavement services and establish a sustainable new income stream for the council. The service leverages our experienced cremator operators to deliver compassionate, high-quality care for pet owners across Redditch, Bromsgrove, neighbouring areas, and.
- 2.2** Abbey Cemetery's rear yard is the preferred location, enabling discreet integration with existing operations, minimal disruption, efficient oversight, as well as an emphasis on utilising operational space within the current footprint. We will secure APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency) licensing, procure and install the cremator, and operate to APPCC (The Association of Private Pet Cemeteries and Crematoria) code of practice—introducing phased enhancements such as memorial viewing areas. Financial modelling (7 cremations/day capacity) indicates **break-even by Month 5** and strong income potential thereafter. Key risks—staff unsettlement and public perception—will be mitigated through restructure/upskilling and transparent communications.
- 2.3** It is important to note that this service will be treated totally separate to the current human cremation service both in terms of operational equipment used to carry this service out, but also from a customer service perspective.

2.4 Vision and Mission

Redditch and Bromsgrove Bereavement Services operates with empathy, care and understanding at its core. Our mission is to provide the highest standard of cremation and burial services, offering choice, affordability, and unwavering support to those coping with bereavement. We are committed to serving the community's needs with dignity and professionalism. These principles also guide our expansion into pet cremations, ensuring a seamless and compassionate service for residents who wish to honour their beloved pets with the same respect and care.

These principles underpin the expansion into pet cremations, providing a seamless and compassionate offer for residents.

- 2.5** Pet cremation and memorialisation is among the fastest-growing areas in the UK with 57% of households (16.2 million) own pets, with the pet population up from 35 million to 38 million (+9%) between 2022 and 2023. Worcestershire recorded 259,900 households in 2021, up 8.4% since 2011; applying the 57% ownership rate suggests roughly 148,000 pet-owning households locally, with further demand likely from adjoining counties. The UK pet funeral market is expected to grow from £110 million in 2024 to £195 million by 2030, driven by owners seeking dignified, personalised services. These trends show strong local and national demand, making a new pet cremation service a timely and viable opportunity.
- 2.6** This new element of bereavement service delivery will create a new revenue stream further improving the cost effectiveness of the overall operation. The effect of this additional income will be to release funds elsewhere within the council for use in other key areas of service delivery.
- 2.7** In 2016 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council launched the first council owned Pet cremation service and have successfully developed an integrated service for their local communities. This has provided the business model for this project providing the evidence and case study necessary to make a success of our new facility.

2.8 Local Market Landscape

Three established pet crematoria operate within a 15–45 minute drive radius of Redditch and the local competition in this market sees the closest pet cremator located within 10 miles of Redditch Crematorium, the 2nd closest at 15 miles, and the 3rd closest over 20 miles away.

This underscores both market maturity and the opportunity for a high-quality public service alternative.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1** A review of how this service will work operationally has been undertaken and should approval be given, we will place it here. Part of the considerations at the crematorium end of the operation are as follows.

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3.2 We assessed two potential locations within Abbey Cemetery for installation, utilities, accessibility, and aesthetics. The crematorium rear yard is the only viable option for the reasons described below.

- Discreet siting behind the crematorium, out of sight from human funeral services.
- Minor gate reconfiguration to optimise access and animal transfer.
- Ability to run power; efficient incorporation into current staff workflows.
- Future-proofing for additional filtration systems if regulations change.



Image: Redditch Crematorium highlighting direction for pet cremation service.

3.3 Regulatory and Governance

- Apply for APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency) licence to operate within government standards.
- Operate under APPCC (The Association of Private Pet Cemeteries and Crematoria) code of practice and seek listing among recommended pet crematoria.

3.4 Project Plan and Key Milestones

- Confirm site and aesthetics, coordinating with Property Services on enabling works (power, fuel, drainage).
- Stakeholder communications, any public consultation requirement, already reached out to Veterinary practices over last 3 months of 2025, WRS and council contract adjustments.
- Procure cremator (lead time 14–18 weeks); schedule installation and infrastructure works.
- Transfer chilled storage from Redditch and Bromsgrove depots to Abbey Cemetery; align Regulatory Service processes.
- Install cremator, complete supplier handover, and deliver comprehensive staff training; commence operations under APPCC membership.

3.5 Key Milestones

Phase 1 – Core Operations:

- Establish process with local Regulatory Service to bring roadkill to our facility.
- Inform local veterinary practices of the option to bring deceased animals. Prices will drive budget, and are designed to be competitive.
- Continue proactive public communications via social media and targeted press releases.

Phase 2 – Client Experience Enhancements:

- Create a designated office/memorial area to offer memorials and viewing options.

3.6 Risk Management

- Risk of inaction: missing a significant revenue opportunity and leadership position in integrated bereavement care.
- Staff unsettlement: mitigated via 1 new post (grade 4 post already in budget, but a grade 5 post required), consultation, and upskilling, including official training.
- Public reaction: mitigate through clear communications (website, social media, stakeholder forums, member committees).

3.7 Financial Case and Procurement

Manufacturers offer a range of cremators—from £23k for units without filtration up to £500k for fully filtered systems with ancillary equipment.

Our preferred option is to go with is the Addfield PET200 for the following reasons;

- It is the most cost-effective front-loaded cremator on the market, it is more labour intensive for staff to use a top loaded machine. With a front-loaded machine, mechanical wheels can be used to respectfully transfer the deceased animal from vehicle to machine or storage without staff having to man handle the carcass.
- This machine is manufactured in the UK and has all spare parts within the UK also.
- Remote maintenance would be set up if the software on the machine was to have an issue.
- Maintenance agreement being offered by supplier incorporates all staff initial training into the purchase and installation cost. Supplier representative would remain on site with staff for the first week of operation.

Note: Any and all procurement regulations will be adhered to throughout any required tender process.

Ramp-up utilisation (Months 1–9): 20–50% per week, with corresponding monthly income and surplus projections (see original table). Breakeven in Month 5 at ~30% weekly utilisation.

3.8 Marketing and Launch Timeline

- January - March: Agree on which cremator to be ordered through procurement process, pre-installation communications via website,

appropriate communications made to Vets and any other potential stakeholders regarding this new service, B&RC channels, and social media; councillor site visit; direct mail to database; publish new price list.

- March/April 2026: Launch with announcements via social media, website, B&RBC communications, and local papers; inform councillors, vets, animal charities, and suppliers; staff ready to offer the new service.
- 3-month intervals (June/September/December): Follow-up promotion via social media and R&B Communications.
- Capacity and Revenue Assumptions:
Benchmark capacity: 7 pets/day × 5 days = 35/week ⇒ £7,000/week at 100% utilisation.

3.9 Planning Considerations

A relevant Heritage Statement has been created and the crematorium is not listed or on the Redditch Local Heritage List but would be considered a non-designated heritage asset due to its architectural interest and its position in the townscape. It is described in the Worcestershire Pevsner as, 'Crematorium, Bordesley Lane. An excellent example, on an elevated site, by Richard Twentyman (Twentyman, Percy and Partners), 1971 -3; planned as early as 1955. Brick, copper roofs. Curving memorial corridor, its E wall fully glazed, leading to the chapel, also with its own flat-roofed porte cochere. Reverential interior, with angled timber-slattered roof, curving white roughcast side walls, and glazed E wall behind the catafalque (with view across the Arrow Valley). -Small detached office in matching style.'

Adjacent to the site is the scheduled monument at Bordesley Abbey, see the link below to the description. The crematorium is within the setting of the scheduled monument, however the pet cremator will be to the west of the site, so would not impact on the setting of the scheduled monument.

An official Operating Statement will be confirmed based on this report being passed through to the next phase. However, an operating model of how this service will work is detailed in the next paragraph.

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3.10 Operating Model

As stated earlier in this report, we are looking at applying charges of the following: small pets £50-£145, cats £145 -£175, dogs £175 - £250. This enables the service to have some flexibility regards breeds.

3.11 Administration

- Bookings will be made via phone call or email to the office, which will be input into Abavus and confirmation of booking sent out to company/vets practice who are handling the animal and family.
- Relevant information taken will be; name, contact information of pet owner (if not WRS contract, e.g. roadkill). Name of animal, animal type and any breed details needed in line with APHA licence and APPCC.
- Day of cremation, usual cremation monitoring details will apply; temperatures, emissions monitoring, times charged in/raked out. All records kept in line with regulatory service requirements.
- Booking times will be organised to ensure no clashes are created between animal and human cremation slots. In the early phases of this process, an early morning drop off time will be allocated, as well as an end of operational day time. As the business and numbers grow, timeslots will be managed accordingly as the average turnaround time between death and cremation for animals is shorter, we will be able to allocate time slots that have not been utilised for human services. For context the average time for human cremations between death and funeral service is roughly two weeks but often goes up to 3 weeks in busier periods.

3.12 Transfer of animals/ storage/ cremation operation.

- Deceased animal will be expected to be delivered to rear of crematorium building to the west of the site at the back yard gates at agreed time of booking, in a suitable vehicle, in a covered material that is of natural fibres.
- Signage will be in place in order to manage the logistics at key points of the cemetery, Pet Cremation will be directed to the left of the crematorium building whilst human funeral services will be directed straight on to the large entrance at the south face of the building.
- The deceased pet will be placed on to a suitable set of mechanical wheels that the team will use to bring animal from the vehicle to

either the cremator if it is up to temperature or placed onto suitable racking. The deceased pet will not be visible to the public or visitors/contractors who may be in the vicinity of the working area. Suitable ID tag will be placed onto the animal from the moment it is received by the team.

- After cremation is complete, the remains will be cremulated and poured into a suitable biodegradable urn and stored appropriately. ID card that was originally placed on deceased will have been tagged onto the machine during the cremation, then placed with the ashes/urn afterwards maintaining a dignified process for the animals loved ones to have peace of mind in our processes.

3.13 Staffing

- In order to ensure all elements of Bereavement Services are covered 100% a business case will be submitted in the coming weeks for a new post which will incorporate both human and pet cremations as well as other elements of the service. Therefore, a rota can be created where staff cover pet cremations on a weekly basis as well as other elements. A grade 4 post has already been budgeted for from past staffing structure proposal, a grade 5 post will be an appropriate level for this requirement, therefore a further on cost of roughly 5K per year to current staff structure.
- Shift patterns will be created to coincide with booking slots, **potentially an 8 – 4 early shift and a 10-6 later shift to be confirmed.**

3.14 Equipment requirements

- Pet Cremator
- Mechanical wheels for transfer of carcass.
- Storage racking, up to 10 spaces.
- PPE
- Fridge.
- Cremulator

3.15 Further Considerations

- Soft rebranding to integrate pet services into Bereavement Services (e.g., logo/crest/staff uniform).

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- Online shop (integrated or standalone) for memorials and guidance, building on comparable practice (e.g., Worcester City Council).
- On-site card payments via Stripe handheld devices to enhance user friendliness for families, suppliers, and veterinary practices.
- Abavus integration: All records on new council system. This will help develop a customer database for when memorial packages are available.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Capital

- Pet cremator £35,000.00
- Mechanical wheels £3,000.00
- Storage racking £2,000.00
- Cremulator £10,000.00

4.2 Savings to consider

- Current roadkill disposal contract would be reversed and provide an estimate of £5,000.00 in savings for RBC.
- The facility would also take animal carcasses generated by WRS uprising a further in service saving of circa £10,000 per annum

4.3 Table below details estimated payback period.

	Month one	Month two	Month three	Month four	Month five	Month six	Month seven	Month eight	Month nine
Usage	20% / week	20% / week	30% / week	30% / week	30% / week	40% / week	40% / week	40% / week	50% / week
Expenditure £15 per pet (£)	420	420	630	630	630	840	840	840	1050
Income (£) per month	5,600	5,600	8,400	8,400	8,400	11,200	11,200	11,200	14,000
Surplus	5,180	5,180	7,770	7,770	7,770	10,360	10,360	10,360	12,950

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5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 It should be noted that the Council is not statutorily obliged to provide residents with a pet cremation service.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

6.1 New revenue stream to help support council income targets irrespective of whether through LGR there are 1 Unitary council or 2 .

Relevant Council Priority

6.2 Economy, Regeneration, & Prosperity. This will be a new service for local people and will generate funds to reinvest in local services

Climate Change Implications

6.3 The introduction of a pet cremation service will increase on-site energy use and emissions from the gas-powered cremator, but this is partially offset by reduced transport emissions as local residents, vets, and WRS will no longer need to travel to facilities 10–20 miles away. The cremator is UK-manufactured, lowering supply-chain emissions, and is compatible with future filtration or efficiency upgrades should council net-zero commitments require them. Use of biodegradable urns, efficient integration with existing utilities, and the opportunity to adopt renewable electricity and energy-efficient operational practices provide further mitigation and support alignment with the Council's climate objectives.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.4 N/A

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Risk of inaction: missing a significant revenue opportunity and leadership position in integrated bereavement care.

7.2 Staff unsettlement: mitigated via 1 new post (grade 4 post already in budget, but a grade 5 post required), consultation, and upskilling, including official training.

7.3 Public reaction: mitigate through clear communications (website, social media, stakeholder forums, member committees).

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8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Sharon Harvey	13 th Jan 2026
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Simon Parry	13 th Jan 2026
Financial Services	Maqsood Ahmed	14 th Jan 2026
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings – Principal Solicitor - Governance	14/01/26
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles	15 th Jan 2025