

**REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 21 FEBRUARY 2019**

**REPORT ON: REMOVAL OF BURIAL CHARGES FOR CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS OLD**

**REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

**REPORT NO: 75-2019**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To update members on further changes in relation to the removal of burial fees for children under 18 years old.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- i) Approve proposals to remove lair costs (including headstone inspection fees), compulsory maintenance cost and title costs for children under 18 years old with immediate effect

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 Depending on the level of demand, these changes may reduce the Council's chargeable income by approximately £14,000 per annum. This loss of income will be reflected in the Neighbourhood Services Revenue Budgets for 2018/19 and 2019/20. Appropriate charges will remain for additional proprietors of the lair who are over 18 years of age.

**4.0 BACKGROUND**

4.1 Reference is made to the Policy and Resources Committee of 22 February 2018, when the Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2018/19 were approved. Article II of the Minute of Policy and Resources Committee report no. 51-2018 refers.

4.2 In line with the objectives of the Fairness Commission, it was recognised that the high cost of funerals was an issue that could affect all but could have a greater impact for low income families. This financial burden for families could be particularly difficult with the loss of a child. On 30th May, 2018, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities had announced that the Scottish Government would be working with COSLA to remove all local authority charges for child burials and cremations for those aged under 18. It was therefore proposed that the interment fees for all children (i.e. those aged under 18) be revoked and there be no charge other than the cost of purchasing the lair and compulsory maintenance cost (where applicable).

4.3 In June 2018, Dundee City Council agreed that interment fees for children under the age of 18 be revoked and that there would be no charges other than the cost of purchasing a lair and its associated fees. (Article II of the minute of Policy and Resources Committee on 25 June 2018 refers.)

4.4 At its meeting on 24 September 2018, the Policy and Resources Committee agreed Report 283-2018 headed "Action on Funeral Poverty Update" (Article VI of the minute). The report informed members that the Scottish Government was seeking views on draft Statutory Guidance on Funeral Costs for local authorities, burial and cremation authorities, and funeral directors and a further report 363-2018, Article XIII sought agreement on the Council's response on 19 November 2018 and was agreed.

4.5 It is now intended to remove lair costs (including headstone inspection fees), compulsory maintenance cost and title costs for children under 18 years old with immediate effect.

**5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risks. There are no major issues.

**6. CONSULTATIONS**

6.1 The Council Management Team has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

**7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.

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**Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

**Tony Boyle**  
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