

Our service plan 2024-2025

Bereavement and Registration Services

Customer and Cultural Services



Councillor

Cabinet portfolio - Communities and Leisure

Customer Services supports the Council Plan objectives:

Revitalising our towns and local centres

Enable communities to thrive

Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull

Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities

Enhance Solihull's natural environment

Promote employee wellbeing

Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres

Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality, and reduce net carbon emissions

Service managers:

Bereavement Service

Julie Williams

Cemeteries & Crematoria Manager

Registration Service

Donna Palfrey

Superintendent Registrar

Strategic Lead:

Annabel Dolphin

Business Development

Head of Service:

Angie Pretty

Assistant director:

Alison McGrory

Communities and Partnerships

Background

Bereavement Services provide an interment and cremation facility for all religious and non-religious groups for Solihull's diverse and multi-cultural community. This is provided across 3 sites: Robin Hood cemetery and crematorium; Woodlands cemetery and crematorium and Widney Manor Cemetery.

The Civil **Registration Services** in England and Wales has existed since 1837. A statutory service with a main purpose to create accurate and timely records of all Births, Still-births, Deaths, Marriages, and Civil Partnerships.

Key functions: Bereavement Service

1. Provision of cremation and interment and all associated services
2. Maintaining statutory records in accordance with legislation.
3. Statutory duty to provide funeral services under the Public Health Act 1984

Registration Service

1. Register births, still-births, deaths and marriages
2. Issue certificates of births, still-births, deaths, marriages from current registers
3. Issue documents to allow burials or cremations
4. Provide Notice appointments to facilitate a civil partnership or marriage ceremony
5. British Citizenship Ceremonies (Private and Group)

Makes Best Use of our Resources

Financial overview

Bereavement Service

Budget (staffing)	£647,030	Budget pressures <i>Income is dependent upon death rate and is difficult to predict. Additional land is required for us to continue to provide a burial service in the North of the Borough.</i>
Budget (non-staffing)	£1,196,630	
Budget (income)	£4,522,090	
Savings target	£14,030 salary savings target £101,000 with reg	

Registration Service

Budget (staffing)	£450,920	Budget pressures <i>Income is dependent on the take up of Weddings, Civil Partnerships and Citizenship ceremonies. Increase in revenue from birth registrations as deputy for Birmingham City Council with additional booking slots having been made available.</i>
Budget (non-staffing)	£18,930	
Budget (income)	£558,620	
Savings target	£9,990 salary savings £20,000 savings target £101,000 with bereavement	

Celebrates our key achievements

Bereavement Services

- Maintaining service levels with increased demand from the closure of Yardley Crematorium
- Retaining our green flags in two of our grounds
- Successful audit by the FBCA of our work at Robin Hood
- Improved contractual and financial delivery
- Continual improvements with our communications to the bereaved with notices on our web and within our cemeteries
- New furniture and investment into Woodlands
- Improvements to our memorial space and breakout space for the service at Robin Hood with re-investment into the services' facilities
- Successful handover of our assets to the Corporate Landlord
- Increased communication to key stakeholders with our newsletters
- Development of upfront payment concept
- Ongoing development with bereavement colleagues across the UK with participation under APSE & FBCA
- Co-location of the support team with registration services
- Review and revision of memorial Terms and Conditions for improved customer service delivery
- Cultural change in attitude around H&S and improved reporting

Celebrates our key achievements

Registration Services

- Adjusting to changes from GRO and Government in the delivery of our services
- Completing more services on record in a financial year
- High level of assurance from GRO following our most recent, successful audit
- Closure of Chelmsley Wood as an RBD office
- Co-location of Bereavement support team and Registration services
- Digital copy certificate system brought in and delivered on budget
- Efficiencies to copy certificate processes
- 360° review of ceremony bookings
- Successful application for Capital bid monies for a digital booking system
- Support provided to Birmingham creating extra revenue within the service
- Comprehensive stock holding and storage review within repositories
- Successful review of H&S approaches with commendation from H&S team for delivery

Supports our people to deliver

Bereavement and Registration Service

- Building team relationships to support one another in challenging situations
- Develop a Succession plan for aspiring leaders
- Review staff personal development plans during one-to-one meetings.
- Develop a professional team through the training and learning modules available on SMBC's intranet
- Regular full team meetings for open dialogue and shared knowledge
- Agile working
- Team wellbeing action plans

And enables long term improvement

Bereavement and Registration Service

- Co-location with shared resources
- Improved software solution to improve processes

Bereavement Service

- Introduce a solution to the CMA Report
- Development of Widney Manor land and burial options for the North of the Borough

Registration Service

- On-line citizenship ceremony planning

Service priorities 2024/2025

Council plan priority	Service objective	Performance measure(s)	Owner	Six-month review	Nine Month Review
Enhance Solihull's natural environment	Progress environmental efficiency works across all services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Biodiversity: FBCA best practice plan</i> <i>Review Memorial Sustainability to reduce our carbon footprint</i> <i>Burial Land strategy</i> <i>Abatement equipment delivery plan/project: legislative driven</i> <i>Review of cremator needs</i> 	<p>Julie Williams</p> <p>Annabel Dolphin</p>	<p>Identified areas for biodiverse improvements Understanding of options available</p> <p>Provisional timeline developed for land appraisal Identified the plan for abatement equipment approvals Analysis of cremator bookings and requirements</p>	<p>Initial concept for approval by CPH</p> <p>RFQ for spend on memorial options and potential for contracts to be in place</p> <p>Land options available presented</p> <p>Options appraisal for Cabinet approval</p> <p>Options appraisal for a second cremator</p>

Take action to improve life chances in our most disadvantaged communities	Prepare for statutory, legislative changes and statutory reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Examiner requirements from 9th September • Monitoring the potential for the introduction of a celebrant, marriages outside • Digitisation of booking systems: modernising the service • Best in practice: focus on customer journeys and customer service 	<p>Wendy Henry/Donna James</p> <p>Donna James</p> <p>Annabel Dolphin</p> <p>Entire management team</p>	<p>Operating systems updated as required. Communication with key stakeholders on changes Service processes updated</p> <p>Options appraisal of celebrant offering and how it could be delivered</p> <p>RFQ out ahead of contract preparation</p> <p>Reduction in corporate complaints Increased corporate compliments</p>	<p>Review of success/lessons learned/further changes required</p> <p>Plan of action subject to GRO/Government changes</p> <p>Contract completed and project delivery underway</p> <p>Professional awards; APSE for e.g.</p>
Revitalising our towns and local centres	Unification of services for efficiency and improved customer service and employee improved working process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD for roles • Unification • Customer journeys • Process maps • What we want as a utopia • Family hubs/community advice hubs & being peripatetic 	Entire management team	<p>Comprehensive review of roles and responsibilities against JDPS for enhanced service delivery</p> <p>360° review of key service functions with our customers for a focus on customer experience</p>	<p>All service employees confident and comfortable with role expectations following review</p> <p>Smarter ways of working across the Borough to meet the needs of all service users</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication; our roles, letters post etc. • Modern, efficient services • Pilot project of upfront payment model • ICT development opportunities e.g. digital booking, CrIBS, ememorials • Protection of revenue • Website review • Review options available for the borough's demographics including faith, gender 		Working options across Connect, Reg & bereavement in Family hubs	
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