

Agenda



Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Date: Wednesday, 18 October 2023

Time: 12.00 pm

To: Councillors Y Forsey, L Lacey, Lane, Thomas, S Evans, Leadbeater, J Simmonds, J Taylor and Cross

Item		Wards Affected
1	<u>Apologies for Absence</u>	
2	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
3	<u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 24.05.23</u> (Pages 3 - 8)	
4	<u>Review of Budget Performance 2023/24</u> (Pages 9 - 24)	
5	<u>Community Energy: Solar PV at Gwent Crematorium</u> (Pages 25 - 32)	
6	<u>Facilities Management</u> To receive an oral update from the Newport Norse representative	
7	<u>Funeral Director's Report</u> To consider any issues raised by local Funeral Directors	
8	<u>Manager's Report</u> (Pages 33 - 36)	
9	<u>Part 2 Exempt or Confidential Items</u> Part 2: Not for publication as consideration of the report involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.	
10	<u>Equipment Update</u> (Pages 37 - 42)	

Contact: Taylor Strange (Governance Officer)
Tel: 01633 565656
E-mail: Taylor.Strange@Newport.Gov.uk
Date of Issue: 13th October 2023

This page is intentionally left blank

Minutes



Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Date: 24 May 2023

Time: 10am

Present: Councillors Y. Forsey (Chair), L. Lacey (NCC), S Evans (Torfaen) Lane (Monmouthshire), Elizabeth Bryant (Head of Law and Standards), Phillip Toms, Joanne Hazelwood (Finance Business Partner - Systems with Finance IT Project responsibilities), Joanne Gossage (The Service Manager Environment & Leisure) Karl Donavon (Newport Norse), Meirion Rushworth (Head of Finance), Councillor J Taylor (Caerphilly).

Apologies:

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

N/A

3. Minutes

The Head of Law and Standards noted some accuracy corrections but informed the committee that this would be dealt with outside the meeting.

4. Draft Accounts Report 2022-23

Presented by Joanne Hazlewood (Finance Business Partner - Systems with Finance IT Project responsibilities)

Key Points

The purpose of bringing the report to the committee was to have the draft accounts approved as well as the annual returns approved in preparation for the audit.

It has also been proposed to the committee to approve a 1 of distribution payment of £450,000.

The Finance Business Partner - Systems with Finance IT Project responsibilities would like any decision to be made after the Managers Report agenda item is presented.

The draft outcome was expected to be £478,000 at the last committee meeting, however the draft outturn position is now £678,000.

The reserve balance brought over into 2022/23 was just over 1 million, the agreed budget took the balance down to £832,000, although with the outturn it has resulted in a 1.2 million budget.

1.2m balance- expenditure – reduced staff cost due to agency staff covering a vacancy

The Finance Business Partner - Systems with Finance IT Project responsibilities noted that repair works such as relining 2 cremators that cost a total of £118,000 and the replacement of filter bags and filter bases at the cost of £20000, also it was highlighted that future repairs and renewals would be brought to the committee when they occur.

Capital financing showed an underspend due to proposed works not taking place during the financial year.

The Finance Business Partner - Systems with Finance IT Project responsibilities noted that 6 was average cremation a day with the max being around 7 a day.

Towards the end of the year there was an increase in cremation with it levelling out at the end of the year.

Time slots were increased to an hour and fees were also reduced.

Finance Business Partner - Systems with Finance IT Project responsibilities highlighted that once the maximum level of services provided is reached there wouldn't be a high increase in revenue.

Finance Business Partner - Systems with Finance IT Project responsibilities raised the options presented to the committee was to agree the reserve balance, agree an additional £450,000 to reduce the balance to £800,000.

The Head of Finance noted there was some unexpected costs and options were brought to their attention.

The Head of Finance noted the additional one-off payment could be brought back to the committee at a later date in the year.

The Committee proposed looking at the one-off payment once more information could be provided on it.

The Committee approved the Annual Return.

The Head of Finance noted recently there was some extra costs.

Councillor Evans agreed to look at the one-off payment at a later date.

Councillor Taylor felt it was sensible to keep things as they were until it was clear of the costs that the work may require.

The Chair highlighted all the members' agreement and noted to the Officers the desire to defer the decision until a later date.

5. Facilities Management

Presented by Karl Donavon (Newport Norse Representative)

Key Points

K. Donavon highlighted repairs to the fencing and fire alarms, as well as noting that work was underway for the new toilets and waiting area.

Phase two will commence once phase one has been completed.

K. Donavon noted that in the next meeting he would encourage members to see the finished works.

The Chair asked when the works would be completed?

- K. Donavon informed the committee that he was unsure of the specific date however he was aware that they are working on schedule.

The chair followed up by asking if the building was still running?

- K. Donavon noted there was no clear disruption.
- J. Gossage (the service manager Environment & Leisure) informed the committee the first service starts at 11:30am.

6. Funeral Directors Report

Phil Tom wanted to defer this agenda item until a policy on the splitting of remains has been looked into.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure would like this to be taken away looked at and brought to the next meeting.

Phil Tom noted that there had been no negative feedback in relation to the building works that were occurring.

7. Managers' report

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure noted a drop in attendance once other crematoriums began to open, with the 2021-22 figures referred back to.

With the time of the cremations increasing to 1 hour time slot this led to an increase in attendance.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure highlighted that the recent inspection by the Burial and Cremation Authority had been very positive, with full compliance achieved as well as complimentary comments being made towards the staff and the crematorium.

The Chair asked about the report in which it stated the crematorium doesn't offer a longer service.

- The Service Manager Environment & Leisure informed the committee that this would be in reference to the crematorium not offering 2-hour slots.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure informed the committee of the several staffing matters, that include the replacement of an Administrative Support role and a Cremator Operator.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure also informed the committee of the resignation of Karen Sansom the Team Manager of the Bereavement Team as of June 30th, 2023, with the position being advertised as soon as possible.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure would like to know if the committee is happy to send a letter of thanks to the long servicing member.

- The Committee agreed to this.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure went on to state another staffing issue as Paul Dundon is currently unwell and it is not clear when he would be able to be fully active in his role. Therefore, it was suggested to externally source a temporary cremation manager.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure would like the committee to approve the recruitment posts as well as the external sourcing of a temporary manager.

- Councillor Taylor noted he was happy to agree to this.
- The Chair also agreed to this request.

Councillor Evans asked about the urgency in hiring the roles as it relates to which ones will be sought to be filled first.

- The Service Manager Environment & Leisure informed the members that both the interim manager and deputy will be sought after at the same time although the interim manager position may be fulfilled sooner.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure did confirm she would be meeting with Paul to figure out his plans, with this being reported back to the committee.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure reported that the 12-week contract for the work on the waiting room and toilets had been conducted in the early hours to avoid as much disruption as possible.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure also confirmed the first time slot begins at 11:30am

The Chair wanted to give thanks to the workers.

- K. Donavon noted he will pass this onto the workers.

Councillor Evans would like the staff to be informed of the positive report.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure informed the committee of the works in 2020 which involved relining 2 of the cremators as well as replacing the boilers.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure detailed to the committee that during the servicing visit some critical issues were noted with the other 2 cremators with both requiring the filtration bags and dans costing £15,000 and £40,000 respectively.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure noted that immediate action will be needed to keep those 2 cremators in action.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure further went on to detail that of these cremators both would need relining within the next 2 years as well as the boiler for these cremators, totalling a cost of £250,000.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure also noted technical issues with the consoles that control the cremators. Further going on to explain that the FT3 is the newer model of cremators.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure detailed the extent to which the newer model is superior such as its larger size, and the creation of less emissions, which would lead to reduced pollution and allow the crematorium to take in larger coffins.

The Service Manager Environment & Leisure would like the committee to agree to allowing an information search on the costs and benefits of both the works required compared to switching from the two FT2 to one FT3.

Councillor Evans questioned whether by reducing from 4 cremators to 3 would that reduce services?

- The Service Manager Environment & Leisure noted that two cremators are in constant use with the 3rd serving as a backup and the fourth rarely being used.

Councillor Tudor affirmed that due to cremation being in a competitive market, it would be worth looking if Gwent wants to keep up with the times.

P. Toms highlighted that with the population getting larger in physical size, the funeral home has taken measures by increasing the casket size they cater for, noting that any casket above 31 inches in diameter will go to the private crematorium in Langstone.

The Chair asked if the boilers were gas powered.

- The Service Manager Environment & Leisure noted that the boilers are connected to the system and are powered by gas.

The Chair wanted to know if there were any eco-friendly options for the boilers.

- The Service Manager Environment & Leisure informed the chair they could find this out, as well as highlighting that the newer model is less harmful to the environment.
- The Service Manager Environment & Leisure also noted the new cremator has an integral boiler and not external.

The Chair would like a cremator with reduced emissions looked at, as well as the use of solar panels.

Councillor Evans noted that it is the right time to be looking at a more modern and cost-effective machine.

- The Service Manager Environment & Leisure noted that a more efficient machine would reduce emissions.

The Chair asked about whether Blaenau Gwent is chairing the meetings.

The Head of Law and Standards noted they will chase this up.

The Chair also asked when the next change over for chairs is?

The Head of Law and Standards informed the chair they will look to resolve this.

Councillor Taylor noted that the changeover used to occur in the September meeting.

8. Date of Next Meeting.

To be confirmed at a later date.

This page is intentionally left blank

Report

Greater Gwent Crematorium Joint Committee

Part 1

Date: 18th October 2023

Subject **Review of Budget Performance 2023/24**

Purpose To provide information relating to the budget performance in 2023/24 and confirm the restated audited annual return for 2022/23 and the impact of that on the financial position of the joint crematorium service.

Author Finance Business Partner - Systems

Ward General

Summary The financial position of the crematorium service has been adversely affected by the current and on-going building works at the crematorium, as shown by the current forecasts for the 2023/24 financial year.

The Council's external auditors have finalised their audit of the 2022/23 financial year and corrections are required. The report set's out the impact of those and the audited 'annual return' for 2022/23 is attached to this report for the Committees information and approval.

Appendix:

Appendix 1: Audit Wales Independent Examination of the 2022-23 Annual Return Closing Letter

Appendix 2: Restated Annual Return for 2022/23

Proposal **Members are asked to:**

- **Note and consider the budget position, and the potential impact on reserves**
- **note/approve the restated annual return for 2022/23**

Action by Head of Finance

Timetable 1. Draft budget proposals, fees and charges and distribution level to be agreed for 2024/25 at the next Committee meeting in January

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Head of Finance
- Service Manager for Environment and Leisure
- Head of Law and Standards
- Head of People, Policy and Transformation

Signed

Background

It is necessary for the Joint Committee to review the financial position of Gwent Crematorium for the current financial year.

As the table and commentary shows, the issues leading to the forecast overspend currently shown are temporary and should not feature too significantly in the 2024/25 budget.

The base budget agreed was already relying on use of reserves to maintain the historical 'distributions' to the former Gwent Council's but the forecast overspend will now require more use of reserves to maintain that position. The overall balance in reserves is still robust and any use of reserves to maintain the expected distribution will need to be reviewed and confirmed by this Committee at the outturn stage.

Financial Summary 2023/24

	FY Budget 2023/24	Actual to 30 Sep	Forecast 2023/24	Variance to Budget
Total INCOME	(1,537,500)	(519,079)	(1,365,500)	172,000
Employees	313,890	192,500	363,770	49,880
Premises	652,259	246,173	549,019	(103,240)
Transport	1,010	0	300	(710)
Supplies & Services	162,329	99,020	173,132	10,803
Capital Financing	67,722	0	53,161	(14,561)
Total EXPENDITURE	1,197,210	537,694	1,139,382	(57,828)
(SURPLUS) / DEFICIT	(340,290)	18,614	(226,118)	(114,172)
Less Budgeted Distribution	450,000		450,000	
(Increase)/Decrease to Balances	109,710		223,882	

Potential impact on Reserves at 31st March 2024

Reserves b/f £1,162,806	£1,053,096		£938,924	
----------------------------	-------------------	--	-----------------	--

Explanation of projected variances

Employees – since both the Manager and Deputy Manager left earlier in the year, there has been an arrangement with an agency for a temporary manager to be in post. This post has been projected to be in place until a permanent manager has been appointed, and there has been a suitable handover period.

Premises –in the last few years there has been increased costs in relation to the cremators, and ensuring the equipment is maintained to the required regulations, so within the budget there is now provision for an annual contribution into a Repairs and Renewals Reserve, which when set up, will build over time, and bridge the gap between the revenue budget and overspends in expenditure relating to the cremators.

The service manager will be presenting a separate report on the future requirements of the equipment, which could impact the budget setting for 2024/25.

Supplies & Services – historically there has been an underspend within Supplies and Services, but the budget was reduced for purchase of burial memorials, and this year there is an additional 24k expenditure relating to professional fees of the refurbishment works.

Income – the position as at the end of September, is showing an out-turn forecast of £172k less income than budgeted. The budgeted position was based on 85% of available service times being booked, and the table below highlights that there has been a decrease in cremation numbers for April to September, which is due to the reduced services operating as a result of the refurbishment works currently being carried out at the Crematorium. Most of the works have taken place out of hours, however there has been an impact on the morning services. The works continue and are due to complete within the next 4-6 weeks. The cremation numbers for April to September compared to budget, are reduced by 93, which based on the adult cremation fee is a loss of £79k income

*October projected less than average due to continued refurbishment works
November to March projected on 85% of available service times booked. 9.30 am slot is often available*

Cremation numbers:	23/24 Budgeted	23/24 Actuals/Projected	Variance
Apr	125	125	0
May	125	105	-20
Jun	125	121	-4
Jul	125	113	-12
Aug	131	115	-16
Sep	131	90	-41
Oct	125	110	
Nov	131	131	
Dec	119	119	
Jan	125	125	
Feb	119	119	
Mar	137	137	
	1,518	1,410	93

2022/23 Restated Annual Statement

Audit Wales have completed their independent examination of the Annual Return for 2022-23 (Appendix 1)

Whilst providing the supporting information for the audit of the year end statement, it was identified that there was an error in the brought forward balances for Debtors/Creditors, and the annual return had to be restated.

These amendments have now been made to the revised Annual Return (Appendix 2)

The resulting impact of this error is that the reported outturn made to this Committee was overstated by £120k and therefore also the reserves position at the end of the 2022/23 financial year. Committee balances carried forward into 2023/24 have been restated from 1,282,850 to 1,162,806 a difference of £120k. In conjunction with the overspend currently forecasted for the current 2023/24 financial year and the base budget which utilised reserves to fund the 'distribution', the current impact on the reserves forecasted for March 2024 is reasonably significant.

The Committee should now re-approve the Annual Return.

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Reduced cremation numbers	H	H	Refurbishment works have already impacted the cremation numbers, so we will continue to monitor income levels and review distribution to Constituent Authorities, to ensure reserve balances are maintained	Head of Finance
Increase in building maintenance costs	H	H	Continue to monitor the increasing costs associated with the cremators, and refurbishment works.	Head of Finance

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The overall aim of the budget monitoring is to ensure the on-going delivery of the Cremation service whilst also providing an income source to Gwent Councils.

Options Available and considered

The Committee is asked to note the financial position for 2023/24, and consider the position when setting the budget, fees and distribution levels, at the next Committee meeting in January.

The Committee is asked to approve the restated annual return for 2022/23, noting the restated (lower) reserves balance carried forward of 1,162,806; a reduction of £120k based on that reported.

Preferred Option and Why

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

The report deals with the current forecast outturn for the current 2023/24 financial year. It shows that two issues are contributing towards the current overspend forecast but given the nature of the issues; are temporary only. There is an impact on forecast reserves at end of the year coming from the overspend which is shown in the report.

The audit of the 2022/23 financial statements by the Council's auditors highlighted errors made in the accounts for that year, including that reported to this Committee in the 2022/23 outturn report. Staff are aware of the oversight that led to this, and it should not occur again. The impact was a reduction of £120k in that year's surplus and therefore this also impacts negatively on the crematorium reserves position.

Whilst both of the above issues affect the crematorium reserves negatively; they are still forecasted at over £900k for the end of the 2023/24 financial year which is adequate

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no legal issues arising from this report

Comments of Service Manager for Environment and Leisure

Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

The report sets out an updated 2023/24 financial position for Gwent Crematorium and asks the committee to consider this position when setting the budget, fees and distribution levels, at the next Committee meeting in January 2024. The report also seeks approval of the restated annual return for 2022/23 following audit given that there was a previous error found in the brought forward balances for Debtors/Creditors.

An FEIA wasn't required for this report, but it has considered the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long-term needs. There are no direct HR implications associated with this report.

Comments of Cabinet Member

Scrutiny Committees

n/a

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

n/a

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

n/a

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

In preparing this report, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has been considered by balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long term needs. We are considering options to provide a service which will allow us to withstand the competitive market, and meet our future wellbeing goals and objectives, and in doing so, understand the importance of involving those with an interest in achieving them, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of those to whom we provide a service.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

n/a

1 Capital Quarter / 1 Cwr y Ddinas
Tyndall Street / Stryd Tyndall
Cardiff / Caerdydd
CF10 4BZ

Tel / Ffôn: 029 2032 0500

Fax / Ffacs: 029 2032 0600

Textphone / Ffôn testun: 029 2032 0660
info@audit.wales / post@archwilio.cymru

Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee
c/o Newport City Council,
Civic Centre,
Godfrey Road,
Newport,
NP20 4UR

Reference: NCC/GGCJC/22-23

Date issued: October 2023

Dear Joint Committee Members,

Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee – Independent Examination of the 2022-23 Annual Return

Requirement to produce an Annual Return

The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 (the Regulations) define local government bodies in Wales as ‘larger’ or ‘smaller’ bodies. To qualify as a ‘smaller’ body under the Regulations, a body must have gross income or expenditure (whichever is higher) of not more than £2.5 million in the year of account or in either of the two preceding years.

According to this year’s audited Annual Return, the Greater Gwent Crematorium Joint Committee (the Committee) has total gross income of £1.48 million, and gross expenditure of £1.37 million for the 2022-23 financial year. Consequently, the Committee is defined as a ‘smaller’ local government body for 2022-23.

As a ‘smaller’ body, the Committee is only required to produce a summarised Annual Return, rather than a full set of financial statements. That Annual Return is then subject to a ‘limited assurance’ independent examination rather than a full external audit, in line with the Auditor General for Wales’ Code of Audit Practice.

A limited assurance opinion, if satisfactory, aims only to confirm that:

- the information contained in the Annual Return is in accordance with proper practices; and
- no matters have come to the auditor's attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Outcome of Independent Examination

We have completed our independent examination of the Committee's Annual Return for 2022-23. In carrying out this work, we identified two required amendments to the Annual Return, arising from 2021-22 accruals which had not been correctly reversed out of the 2022-23 financial ledger:

- 'Total other receipts' (row 3) has been reduced by £120,934 to £1,482,284, with a corresponding decrease in 'Debtors' (row 8) of the same amount.
- 'Total other payments' (row 6) has been reduced by £890 to £1,047,635, with a corresponding decrease in 'Creditors' (row 10) of the same amount.

These amendments have now been made to the revised Annual Return.

Certification of the Annual Return

The Committee should now consider the recommended amendments above and decide whether or not to amend the Annual Return.

The above restatements have been made to the Annual Return, and, if re-approved by the Committee and Responsible Finance Officer at the Committee meeting on 18 October 2023, we propose to certify this amended Annual Return as follows:

'On the basis of our review, in our opinion, the information contained in the Annual Return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.'

We do not propose to add any further comments in the 'other matters and recommendations' section of our certificate.

Conclusion

We would like to thank all staff within Newport City Council who assisted with the production and independent examination of the 2022-23 Annual Return.

Yours sincerely,

Gareth Lucey

Audit Manager

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX 2 – Restated Accounting Statement 2022-23

Accounting statements 2022-23 for:

Name of body: **GWENT CREMATION COMMITTEE**

	Year ending		Notes and guidance for compilers
	31 March 2022 (£)	RESTATED 31 March 2023 (£)	Please round all figures to nearest £. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or nil balances. All figures must agree to the underlying financial records for the relevant year.
Statement of income and expenditure/receipts and payments			
1. Balances brought forward	1,437,303	1,046,681	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Must agree to line 7 of the previous year.
2. (+) Income from local taxation/levy	0	0	Total amount of income received/receivable in the year from local taxation (precept) or levy/contribution from principal bodies.
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,433,829	1,482,284	Total income or receipts recorded in the cashbook minus amounts included in line 2. Includes support, discretionary and revenue grants.
4. (-) Staff costs	313,140	313,524	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and related expenses eg termination costs.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	5,000	5,000	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on external borrowing (if any).
6. (-) Total other payments	1,506,311	1,047,635	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook minus staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,046,681	1,162,806	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6).
Statement of balances			
8. (+) Debtors	121,102	126,559	Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of debts owed to the body.
9. (+) Total cash and investments	941,528	1,491,932	All accounts: The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and investments held at 31 March. This must agree with the reconciled cashbook balance as per the bank reconciliation.
10. (-) Creditors	15,949	455,685	Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of monies owed by the body (except borrowing) at the year-end.
11. (=) Balances carried forward	1,046,681	1,162,806	Total balances should equal line 7 above: Enter the total of (8+9-10).
12. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	2,307,326	2,307,326	The asset and investment register value of all fixed assets and any other long-term assets held as at 31 March.
13. Total borrowing	318,963	265,803	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

Annual Governance Statement

We acknowledge as the members of the Committee, our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed?		'YES' means that the Council/Board/Committee:	PG Ref
	Yes	No*		
<p>1. We have put in place arrangements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective financial management during the year; and the preparation and approval of the accounting statements. 	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Properly sets its budget and manages its money and prepares and approves its accounting statements as prescribed by law.	6, 12
<p>2. We have maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption, and reviewed its effectiveness.</p>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.	6, 7
<p>3. We have taken all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the Committee to conduct its business or on its finances.</p>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Has only done things that it has the legal power to do and has conformed to codes of practice and standards in the way it has done so.	6
<p>4. We have provided proper opportunity for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.</p>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Has given all persons interested the opportunity to inspect the body's accounts as set out in the notice of audit.	6, 23
<p>5. We have carried out an assessment of the risks facing the Committee and taken appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.</p>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Considered the financial and other risks it faces in the operation of the body and has dealt with them properly.	6, 9
<p>6. We have maintained an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems throughout the year and have received a report from the internal auditor.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether these meet the needs of the body.	6, 8
<p>7. We have considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the Committee and, where appropriate, have included them on the accounting statements.</p>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Disclosed everything it should have about its business during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.	6
<p>8. We have taken appropriate action on all matters raised in previous reports from internal and external audit.</p>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Considered and taken appropriate action to address issues/weaknesses brought to its attention by both the internal and external auditors.	6, 8, 23

* Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'no' response given; and describe what action is being taken to address the weaknesses identified.

Additional disclosure notes*

The following information is provided to assist the reader to understand the accounting statements and/or the Annual Governance Statement

1.

2.

3.

* Include here any additional disclosures the Council considers necessary to aid the reader's understanding of the accounting statements and/or the annual governance statement.

Committee approval and certification

The Committee is responsible for the preparation of the accounting statements and the annual governance statement in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 (the Act) and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.

<p>Certification by the RFO</p> <p>I certify that the accounting statements contained in this Annual Return present fairly the financial position of the Committee, and its income and expenditure, or properly present receipts and payments, as the case may be, for the year ended 31 March 2023.</p>	<p>Approval by the Council/Board/Committee</p> <p>I confirm that these accounting statements and Annual Governance Statement were approved by the Committee under minute reference:</p>
<p>RFO signature:</p>	<p>Minute ref:</p>
<p>Name: Meirion Rushworth</p>	<p>Chair of meeting signature:</p>
<p>Date:</p>	<p>Name:</p>
<p>Date:</p>	<p>Date:</p>

Annual internal audit report to:

Name of body: **GWENT CREMATION COMMITTEE**

The Committee's internal audit, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, has included carrying out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year ending 31 March 2023.

The internal audit has been carried out in accordance with the Committee's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the following control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Committee.

	Agreed?				Outline of work undertaken as part of the internal audit (NB not required if detailed internal audit report presented to body)
	Yes	No*	N/A	Not covered**	
1. Appropriate books of account have been properly kept throughout the year.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Detailed Internal Audit report issued 23 rd December 2022.
2. Financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Detailed Internal Audit report issued 23 rd December 2022.
3. The body assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Not covered in the last audit 2022/23.
4. The annual precept/levy/resource demand requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget was regularly monitored, and reserves were appropriate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	The annual resource demand and reserves were not examined as part of the 2022/23 Internal Audit review. Budget monitoring was covered – budget not reviewed for first 6mths of year. Action taken: Budget forecasts entered and monitored.
5. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Detailed Internal Audit report issued 23 rd December 2022.
6. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Not covered in 2022/23 Internal Audit due to the low value of transactions.
7. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with minuted approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Detailed Internal Audit report issued 23 rd December 2022.
8. Asset and investment registers were complete, accurate, and properly maintained.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Detailed Internal Audit report issued 23 rd December 2022. Values or contents of the Chapel not included in inventory. Action taken: Inventory record updated.

	Agreed?				Outline of work undertaken as part of the internal audit (NB not required if detailed internal audit report presented to body)
	Yes	No*	N/A	Not covered**	
9. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Not covered in the last audit 2022/23.
10. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments/income and expenditure), agreed with the cashbook, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Th accounting statements were not examined as part of the Internal Audit 2022/23. Detailed Internal Audit report issued 23rd December 2022 supports that an adequate audit trail existed in relation to income & expenditure recorded in the Authority's main accounting system from which the statements were prepared.

For any risk areas identified by the Council/Board/Committee (list any other risk areas below or on separate sheets if needed) adequate controls existed:

	Agreed?				Outline of work undertaken as part of the internal audit (NB not required if detailed internal audit report presented to body)
	Yes	No*	N/A	Not covered**	
11. Insert risk area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
12. Insert risk area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
13. Insert risk area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	

* If the response is 'no', please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

** If the response is 'not covered', please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or if coverage is not required, internal audit must explain why not.

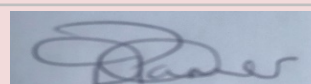
[The detailed findings and recommendations which I draw to the attention of the Committee are included in the detailed internal audit report dated 22nd December 2022].

Internal audit confirmation

I confirm that as the Committee's internal auditor, I have not been involved in a management or administrative role within the body (including preparation of the accounts) or as a member of the body during the financial years 2021-22 and 2022-23. I also confirm that there are no conflicts of interest surrounding my appointment.

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: DONA PALMER

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit:



Date: 16.05.23

This page is intentionally left blank



Report

Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Part 1

Date: 11/10/2023

Subject **Community Energy: Solar PV at Gwent Crematorium**

Purpose The purpose of this document is to seek approval for the installation of a 33.75kWp solar panel array on the roof of Gwent Crematorium via a Community Energy delivery route.

Author Eloise Laity, Newport City Council, Carbon Reduction Project Officer (E&PP)

Summary This document outlines the proposal to install a 33.75 kWp solar panel array on the roof of Gwent Crematorium via a Community Energy delivery route. While NCC operates and manages the Crematorium, pays the bills, and therefore also reports on the associated carbon emissions, Torfaen County Borough Council owns the building.

All Welsh Local Authorities have the target of becoming carbon net zero by 2030 in line with Welsh Government guidance. The solar array could generate up to 26.33 MWh of electricity annually, with all 26.33 MWh of this being used on site, resulting in energy bill reductions of circa £970/yr. The scheme is expected to realise annual carbon savings of 9.9 tonnes CO₂e, which would help to decarbonise the estate of Newport City Council (NCC) and the area of Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC).

Further benefits include zero capital input from NCC or TCBC, the community energy group would install, manage, and maintain the operation of the solar array, an ability to self-supply 15% of the current electricity demand on site with solar-generated electricity, and a positive image of the Councils being generated from the installation of the scheme, showing a commitment to meet carbon reduction targets and the ability to work collaboratively to do so.

Proposal **To proceed with installation of 33.75 kWp solar panel array at Gwent Crematorium**

Action by Joanne Gossage on behalf of Eloise Laity and NCC Carbon Reduction Team

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Joanne Gossage – NCC Service Manager Environment & Leisure
- Torfaen County Borough Council Energy Manager
- Torfaen County Borough Council Planning Department
- Newport City Council Legal Representative
- Newport City Council Head of Finance

Signed *Eloise Laity*

Background

In line with NCC's aspiration to achieve carbon net zero by 2030, this document sets out a proposal for Egni Coop to install rooftop solar PV at Gwent Crematorium, Tre-Herbert Road, Cwmbran, NP44 2BZ.

The proposal is for the installation of a 33.75 kWp solar array, involving 91 PV modules and 1 Solar Edge inverter, across the two flat roofs and the central pitched roof, as shown in Figure 1.

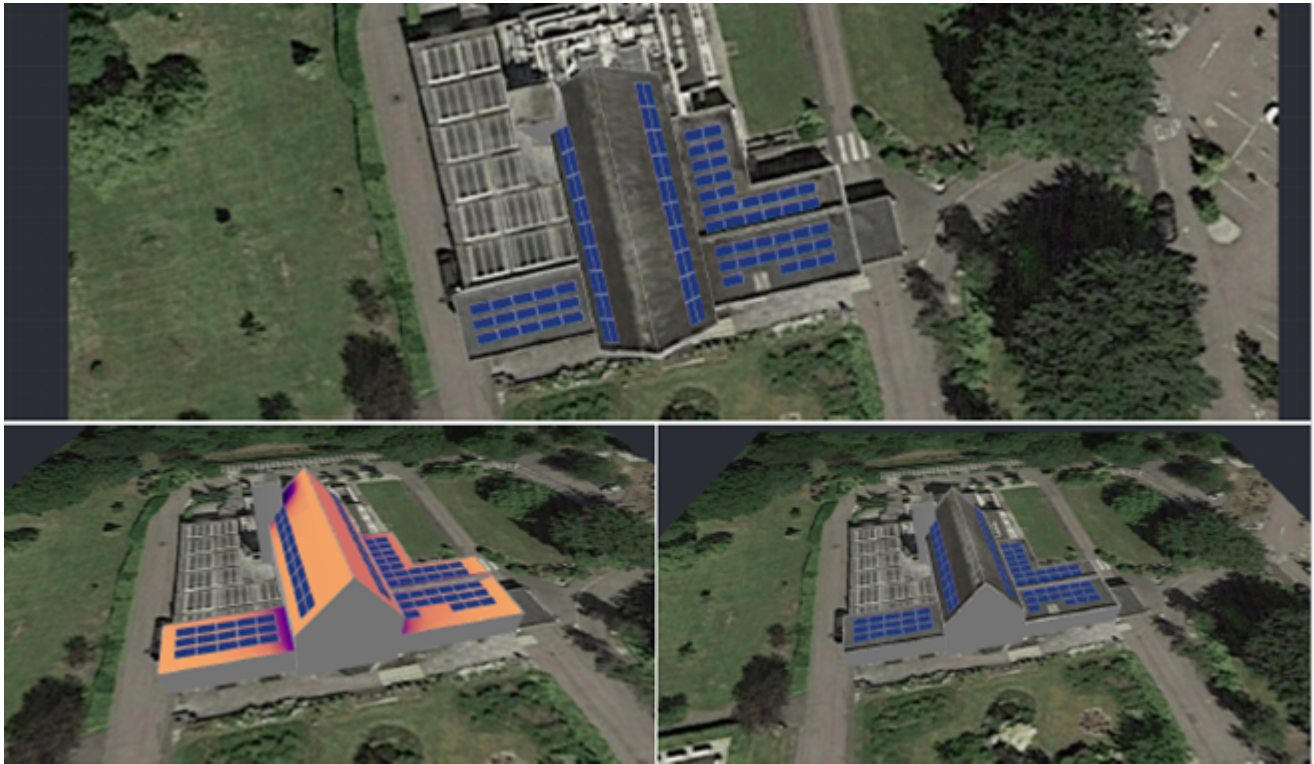


Figure1: Design for Rooftop Solar PV at Gwent Crematorium

The installation would be undertaken by Egni Cooperative ([Egni Coop](#)), a Community Energy Group based in South Wales. In 2020, NCC's Carbon Reduction Team entered a Procurement with Egni Cooperative, to install rooftop solar PV on numerous Council sites. Since then, they have installed rooftop solar PV across 31 sites, including schools, residential care homes, the Regional Pool & Tennis Centre, and the Geraint Thomas National Velodrome of Wales. Gwent Crematorium has been proposed as the last of this phase of works. However, while NCC operates and manages the Crematorium, pays the bills, and therefore also reports on the associated carbon emissions, Torfaen County Borough Council owns the building.

The process of Community Energy works by leasing the building's roof space and entering into a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Egni Coop, whereby the site can buy the solar-generated electricity at a discounted price to market electricity. Egni Coop install the solar panels and own the equipment outright. As a result, they are responsible for operating and servicing the equipment for the duration of the lease (21 years). Egni are also responsible for the delivery of the project and engaging with stakeholders, the community, and the lead installer, who in this case would be ICE Solar. Please note that the system would be owned by Egni Coop with ICE Solar acting as their contractor, as chosen by them.

At the end of the 21-year lease, the site has three options:

1. Buy the panels from Egni,
2. Enter into another lease agreement,
3. Ask for the panels to be removed.

Solicitors from all sides have been in discussion and the following has been proposed:

- Roof space lease between Egni Cooperative and Torfaen County Borough Council
- PPA between Egni Cooperative and Newport City Council
- Side agreement between Newport City Council and Torfaen County Borough Council (to remove liabilities from TCBC and to give them the option to buy the panels at the end of the lease).

If, for whatever reason, the asset cannot fulfil the 21-year lease, the landlord would usually be expected to buy the panels at the depreciated value or transfer the panels to another building. The cost of the panels depreciates 4% each year. However, in this situation, TCBC are the landlords and so a note on this process can be written into the side agreement to determine who would take ownership of this process.

As stated, the PPA enables site to buy the generated electricity from Egni Coop at a discounted price compared to market electricity. Any excess energy generated by the panels is exported and sold by Egni to the grid, helping to further decarbonise the wider area. If the solar-generated energy doesn't meet site demand, the site can draw additional electricity from the grid, as normal.

Egni Coop are responsible for the installation of the panels and will work closely with staff members on site and within the relevant Councils to ensure disruption to the operation of the site is minimised. These details will be arranged at the point of installation. Egni Coop will be the client from a CDM perspective. They are also responsible for appointing a Principal Designer & Principal Contractor for the project, who will be ICE Solar in this case. Roof surveys and necessary feasibility work to be conducted before any works are progressed. If the roof structure is not suitable, the work will not progress.

Egni Cooperative and their contractors, ICE Solar, have confirmed that the designs fall within Permitted Development, however, a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) application has been submitted and is currently with TCBC's Planning Department (Reference: 23/P/0598/CEA). In addition, designs and plans will have to be agreed by both TCBC and NCC (including Newport Norse), and a landlord consent application approved.

There is zero upfront cost to NCC or TCBC, with the only ongoing cost on NCC to purchase the solar-generated electricity from Egni Coop. However, this model still enables the Council to save money, as higher rates would be paid to its existing electricity supplier. It is expected that the solar array could generate up to 26.33 MWh of electricity annually, with all 26.33 MWh of this being used on site. This equates to an annual energy cost reduction of £974 and annual carbon savings of 9.9 tonnes CO₂e, helping to decarbonise the estate of Newport City Council and the area of Torfaen County Borough Council. In 2022/2023, 9.9 tonnes CO₂e would have been equivalent to 0.2% of NCC's total carbon emissions from all building electricity.

Egni Coop would be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the panels and for performing the statutory checks, including fire risk assessments and inspections. If, for any reason, the panels need to be removed for works to be undertaken on the roof, Egni will remove the panels free of charge, up to three times for the term of the lease. If panels need to be removed more than this, the cost will fall on NCC or TCBC. Again, this will need to be discussed and written into the side agreement between NCC and TCBC. The use of specified Solar Edge inverters means that the system can be isolated from the rest of the building and can be set up to turn off in the event of a fire, reducing risk.

Egni Cooperative were set up in 2013 by Awel Aman Tawe, a community renewable energy charity. The group has over 20 years of experience researching, developing, and delivering renewable energy projects at a local level. Egni Coop are funded and supported by groups such as the Cooperative Membership Community Fund, the Nature save trust, Renew Wales, Wales Co-operative Centre, and the Development Bank of Wales, amongst others. Their co-op share offer also gives people the chance to invest their money towards a more sustainable future and providing a chance for interest on their investment. In addition, any surplus made, goes back into climate change education in schools.

Procurement has already been undertaken and received internal NCC sign off at the start of the phase. If approval for this scheme is given, NCC’s Carbon Reduction Team will work with Egni Coop and TCBC to progress the installation.

An alternative option to this scheme is to do nothing. However, in 2022/2023 Gwent Crematorium used 178,776kWh of electricity, equating to 67 tonnes of CO2e (using Welsh Government reporting methodology). Doing nothing will increase the risk of not meeting carbon reduction targets as demand for this electricity is not expected to change over the next few years. Electricity costs have seen a rise in recent years and while long term electricity prices are difficult to predict at this time, large decreases in unit rate prices are not expected to occur.

Another option is to deliver the scheme “in-house”, whereby TCBC or NCC would fund and deliver the scheme themselves. At this point it is not clear who would be responsible for this as TCBC owns the building but NCC manages it, pays the bills, and is therefore responsible for the carbon emissions. Further conversations and agreements would be needed to explore this option. A table showing a comparison between this delivery route and the community energy delivery route is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison between In-House and Community Energy Delivery Routes

<u>Delivered In-House</u>	<u>Delivered by Community Energy Route</u>
NCC/TCBC responsible for install	Egni Coop responsible for install
NCC/TCBC responsible for associated maintenance and management costs for lifetime of panels	Egni Coop would be responsible for the maintenance and management of the panels for the duration of the lease
Officer resource required to install panels and manage the maintenance and management	Egni Coop would project manage and be the client from a CDM perspective
Requirement to procure and source solar panels and associated equipment	Quick delivery route due to Egni Coop and their installers having solar panels ready
Requirement to procure and source structural surveys, grid connections, and designs	Egni Coop would be responsible for undertaking structural surveys, grid connections, and designs
Requirement to secure circa £36,956 funding	Zero upfront cost to NCC/TCBC
Annual maintenance costs of £500	No ongoing maintenance costs
In the first instance, any savings made will need to be used to pay back any borrowing. A payback period of 39 years is predicted.	100% savings are kept from year 1
No realisation of education benefits or community share benefits	Dedicated Education Officer provided by Egni. Community Share benefits.
TCBC or NCC would own the panels outright	Option for TCBC or NCC to own the panels after 21 years

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

As stated, the scheme would require **zero capital input** from NCC or TCBC with the only ongoing cost being on NCC to purchase the solar-generated electricity from Egni Coop.

The proposed scheme would result in NCC purchasing the solar-generated energy from Egni Coop for 21 years using the model below:

- BAU - Business as Usual (no PV solar & continued grid electricity purchase) - typical price per unit that NCC is projected to pay in 2024 is 36p.
- Offer A - is an anticipated discount of 10% discounted off the standard NCC rate, 32p based on the expected 36p/unit in 2024.

Assuming 26,330 kWhs of electricity will be consumed by site, the total cost to NCC of purchasing this green energy over 21 years is calculated below (ignores inflation).

Model	Units purchased (per year)	Purchase price (£ per unit)	£ Value of solar energy purchased (per year)	Total Value over 21 years (£)	Savings over BAU over 21 years (£)
BAU (units from grid)	26,330	0.36	£9,479	£199,055	0
Offer A (units from PV)	26,330	0.36*0.90	£8,531	£179,149	£19,905

Risks

This model has been used to install rooftop solar PV across 31 sites, including schools, residential care homes, the Regional Pool & Tennis Centre, and the Geraint Thomas National Velodrome of Wales. Procurement was signed off internally by NCC at the start of the project and Gwent Crematorium is being proposed as the last of this phase of works.

Risk Title / Description	Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Risk Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Risk Mitigation Action(s) What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect?	Risk Owner Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk?
Financial failure of the community energy group	H	L	Council can have the panels removed or take ownership of the panels	NCC Legal/TCBC Legal
Roof not being viable causing a risk to project delivery	M	L	Egni Coop will commission structural surveys ahead of any works taking place.	NCC Carbon Reduction
ACM presence causing a risk to project delivery	M	M	Asbestos reports will be sent and assessed by Egni Coop's contractor. A clear route will be proposed, and further surveys requested, if required.	NCC Carbon Reduction
Financial savings not being realised	L	L	Setting a unit rate 10% lower than at grid electricity rates ensures guaranteed savings compared to business as usual. Carbon Reduction team will be processing/validating any payments that go from site for electricity therefore they will know exactly how much is being saved based on the electricity being used by the solar panels.	NCC Carbon Reduction

			Newport Council will have access directly to the generation data in order to validate the amounts on the invoices	
Experience of Principal Designer & Principal Contractor to deliver scheme of this size	M	L	Experienced installers who have installed on numerous NCC sites already.	NCC Carbon Reduction/H&S
Disruption to site as scheme is delivered	M	M	Work will be carried out when suitable for site, work areas will be clearly designated and fenced off, all relevant checks will be carried out on site personnel. Any scaffold work should take place at a time most suitable for site. Chosen installation company has experience working with all types of Local Authority buildings.	NCC Carbon Reduction
Site Access	M	M	Principal Designer will put forward most appropriate site access plan. Site access plan will be signed off by key stakeholders during pre-construction site meeting	NCC Carbon Reduction
Equipment lead time, delay could hold up installation programme	L	M	Equipment delivery should not be a problem as installation company is already working on number of other projects across UK using the same materials. Principal Designer has not suggested this would be an issue at all	NCC Carbon Reduction
Increased insurance premium of buildings	H	L	Lease agreement details how the tenant (supplier) would cover the increase building insurance premium (Clause 9.3)	NCC Carbon Reduction/TCBC Legal
Access for ongoing maintenance	H	L	Where practicable, inverters will be mounted in an outdoor area in close proximity to the solar array, with good access to allow for future replacements. Inverters should not be mounted in direct sunlight, i.e. unshaded south facing wall.	NCC Carbon Reduction

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Options Available and considered

A. Option 1: Do nothing

The Councils could choose to not install the solar PV and continue as is, noting that electricity costs are expected to continue to rise and risk not meeting carbon reduction targets.

B. Option 2: TCBC or NCC to fund and install the solar PV

At this point it is not clear who would have to fund and install the panels; TCBC or NCC, but the Councils would have to fund the capital work themselves. If a loan was agreed, savings would have to be used to pay the loan back, a payback period of 39 years is predicted. Councils would

incur significant maintenance and management costs, grid application fees, and officer resource would be required.

- C. Option 3: Enter into a contract with Egni Coop to install circa 33.75 kWp of solar PV on the roof of Gwent Crematorium.

Allow the Community Energy group to install the solar array, minimising risk to TCBC and NCC. Procurement has already been undertaken. The rooftop solar array would reduce site energy costs, reduce demand on local grid infrastructure, and reduce carbon emissions. This option would involve entering into an agreement with a Egni Coop who would be responsible for the design, installation, and ongoing maintenance of any solar PV for a 21-year lease.

Preferred Option and Why

The preferred option is *Option 3: Install circa 33.75 kWp of solar PV on the roof of Gwent Crematorium.*

Approval of Option 3 would allow for the installation of circa 33.75 kW of solar PV on the roof of Gwent Crematorium.

The scheme itself would deliver the following benefits:

- Further decarbonisation of NCC and TCBC, assisting in Organisational and National carbon targets.
- Support Welsh Government's Low Carbon Pathway targets of 70% of energy consumed in Wales to be from Welsh renewable-generated energy by 2030.
- Support Welsh Government's targets for all new renewable projects to have an element of community ownership by 2020 and for 1GW of capacity to be in community ownership by 2030.
- Ability to self-supply 15% of the current electricity demand on site with solar-generated electricity
- Zero financial input from NCC or TCBC
- Potential annual energy bill reductions of circa £970
- Potential annual carbon savings of 9.9 tonnes CO₂e
- 100% savings realised from year 1
- A positive image of the Councils will be generated from the installation of the scheme, showing a commitment to meet carbon reduction targets and the ability to work collaboratively to do so.
- Egni Coop would provide community engagement and links to community energy organisations
- Investment of officer resource much-reduced vs delivering projects in house.
- The Council would also benefit from free structural surveys, grid applications and design work.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

The report recommends that the Council enters into the Power Purchase Agreement for 21 years to secure carbon reduction and some modest budget savings, for no up-front costs and ongoing maintenance related costs. The Council's commitment is for 21 years. This is the final project in a long running programme.

There is a long commitment involved here, which is required for the provider to recover its own costs and make any profits linked to the commercial risks being taken. The Committee's attention is drawn to the fact that the panels would need to either be purchased, at the depreciated value, or transferred to another building, if the 21-year commitment cannot be fulfilled. Whilst it is unlikely that this scenario would materialise, it is important that the Committee are aware of this in order to make a fully informed decision. Should this situation arise, there would be a financial impact that would need to be afforded by the relevant party, at that point.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The comments of the Chief Financial Officer highlight a key consideration, namely that the consequences of withdrawing from the agreement early need to be considered. The Council should also consider how the proposed agreement may affect the Council's/TCBC's ability to carry out maintenance to the crematorium site during the 21-year term, for example, if repairs to the roof are needed.

In addition, the Council should be aware of and consider the potential implications of the insolvency or a change of ownership of Egni Coop. In particular, it would be beneficial to have confirmation that any new owner of Egni Coop or any successor organisation to it would be bound by the same contractual provisions as the original contractor.

With regard to insolvency, there are 2 considerations which are of particular relevance, given the length of the contract and the generally volatile nature of the energy industry:

1. The contract will provide that the panels are owned by the contractor. Therefore, if the contractor becomes insolvent and is liquidated, the ownership of the panels would pass to the liquidator; it may be difficult to enforce any contractual provision preventing this; and
2. In the event of the contractor becoming insolvent, any subsequent liquidation or winding-up process would probably release the contractor from its contractual obligations under the proposed agreement. This may affect the amount paid for electricity generated by the solar panels and the provision of ongoing maintenance. The Council may wish to consider what its options would be in this scenario.

If Newport City Council is responsible for insuring the building, the Insurance section should be consulted to ascertain whether the Council's insurer needs to be consulted or informed of the proposed works.

It would be advisable to ensure that the contract requires that so far as possible, works and maintenance under the contract are carried on outside of the crematorium's operating hours so as to prevent disruption and distress, having regard to the sensitive nature of the site. Regard should also be had to the need to preserve the visual appearance of the site whilst the works are being carried on.

It is noted that a Certificate of Lawful Proposed Development has been applied for and it would be advisable to await the issue of such a certificate before entering into the contract.

Head of People, Policy and Transformation

In preparing this report, the sustainable development principle of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has been considered by balancing short-term needs with the long term. There are no human resources implications arising from the report.

Consultation

Due to timing, consultation with Ward Members has not yet occurred. The Carbon Reduction Project Officer will happily consult with Ward Members in due course.

Agenda Item 8

Crematorium Manager's Report

STATISTICS

MEMORIAL SALES

MONTH	VASE BLOCKS	SANCTUM VAULTS	LEASE RENEWALS vase blocks	LEASE RENEWALS vaults
April	5	3	6	
May				
June	1	3	5	
July	8	5	11	
August	8	6	6	
September	8	6	7	

CREMATIONS

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Jan	142	134	241	211	233	246	268	240	262	278	220	254	278
Feb	137	129	225	197	211	254	258	243	262	254	200	268	256
Mar	156	134	148	196	204	230	299	277	287	241	267	279	249
April	116	141	111	223	178	237	229	268	245	222	268	237	193
May	103	143	93	240	195	219	266	266	230	234	274	270	232
Jun	121	129		140	150	164	260	264	241	239	218	193	232
Jul	110	122	100	91	212	186	219	211	237	257	211	175	204
Au	120	131	121	98	165	176	236	244	187	206	183	168	241
Sep	111	119	141	149	181	173	228	228	232	204	194	158	
Oct		132	123	141	206	193	240	224	225	243	234	186	233
Nov		141	146	186	169	190	251	239	249	222	226	176	220
Dec		132	139	215	197	166	191	244	266	248	200	182	234
	654	1586	1671	2087	2301	2434	2945	2948	2913	2848	2695	2546*	2793

Due to the ongoing refurbishments works reduced number of time slots means the team are currently booking into mid-November with very few available slots

OPERATIONAL MATTERS

STAFFING MATTERS

There a number of staff changes which need to be advised

- 1 The crematorium manager Paul Dundon stepped down from his post in early August. He had been with the service for many years. His knowledge and commitment to the service will be greatly missed. We reported to the committee at the last meeting that Karen Sansom was planning to retire at the end of June 2023 after being in post for 18 years. As deputy manager she had been acting up in the role of Crematorium Manager since February this year. Latterly Carolyn Tucker, an admin officer for 27 years also retired at the end of September. She will also be greatly missed.
- 2 I would urge the committee to thank those three members of staff who have been dedicated, professional and fantastic colleagues. We will always be grateful to them for their exemplary service especially during the challenging times of the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020/21, when they helped to keep the crematorium open and operating throughout all of the lockdowns. We do wish them well in their respective new ventures and retirements.
- 3 New starters in the team are a Deputy Manager who is Jill Martin-Edmunds, formerly the admin officer. Jill has come from a bereavement services background working for both local authority and private sector funeral directors. Jill is also a qualified celebrant. Our new Cremator operator is Delme Love who has joined us from a local funeral company. We are currently in the process of recruiting to the admin officer roles, one full time and a part time post. The closing date for these posts is the 19th October 2023.
- 4 Provision of managerial services is still being supplied an external company 'Lee Snashfold Crematoria Management and Consultancy Ltd.' Their representative James has been with us since June and will remain until we recruit to the post. We anticipate that the post for the Bereavement Service Manager may be filled by the end of December and we will continue to review the interim manager arrangement monthly.
- 5 The Bereavement Services manager Job description had an advisory role for the Newport cemetery team. Due to service pressures we are intending to formalise this role to cover direct management of the cemetery service as requires specialist knowledge and expertise to provide the best service delivery.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Refurbishment of waiting room and toilets

Refurbishment: construction work commenced on 24th April. The new toilets, flower room etc. have been completed and the enlarged waiting room, should be complete in next couple of weeks.

To accommodate the work without impacting on services we now still provide the first service at 11.30am to allow for noisy works to be undertaken daily in mornings. We are however still offering 8.30am direct cremations & 9am NVF's in addition to any late afternoon slots.

All working well and no complaints have been received.

The main funeral director entrance pillar and pedestrian gate were knocked down on Tue 26th September, with an estimated repair cost of nearly £9,000, this is going through Mobility Insurance. Only one vehicle was involved and fortunately no-one was injured.

On Tuesday 3rd October, an HGV driver undertaking a 3-point turn knocked down the exit gate pillar for the public car park. Although this was observed happening, by the time staff had reached the area the vehicle had left and we were not able to take a registration number. No CCTV was covering this area from either the crematorium or adjacent businesses.

Gate pier repair work commenced on 09/10/2023, by Davlan who are completing the refurbishment work currently on site.

Service schedule and related works

Servicing booked for Cremators 3 & 4 on Mon 16th – Weds 18th. The crematorium will have to be closed for these two days as the work is noisy and could be potentially disruptive to services.

Currently reviewing Christmas working & schedule for staff in consultation with funeral directors. It is likely that the site will close for services on the three days between Christmas and New Year. Confirmation of this will be provided shortly and the web site will be updated.

Equipment Work

Immediate works – advising the committee

Repairs to the cremators 1&2 for bag filter & ID Fan, is yet to have a date confirmed. This will enable 1 & 2 to provide back up while we review and potentially install a new larger cremator. Also needs to be carried out to ensure compliance with the emissions legislation

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank