



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY PANEL 1 – CEMETERIES

9 NOVEMBER 2017

BRIEFING NOTE: BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE AND CEMETERIES

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its inaugural scoping meeting, Scrutiny Panel 1 (Cemeteries) agreed that it would receive details of best practice to inform its evidence base.

2 BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

2.1 The International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA)

- 2.1.1 The International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA) published in May 2006, Top 10 Cemetery Best Practices.

2.1.2 The ICCFA suggests five criteria:

1. Does it do something for the customer? Does it improve the delivery of products or services for your families?
2. Does it benefit your company? Does this practice help you become more profitable, reduce costs or increase safety?
3. Does it benefit the employee? Does it increase employee morale, or foster teamwork and buy-in?
4. Does it also improve the community?
5. Does it raise the bar for the entire profession and make funeral and cemetery services that much more relevant to consumers?

2.1.3 The ICCFA further suggests:

- Have a good performance management system in place
- Have written policies and procedures
- Have a focus on career development

- Have a vehicle, equipment and facilities maintenance programme
- Undertake internal inspections and quality control and compliance audits
- Disclose the nature of all services
- Have a system in place for resolving any customer complaints
- Have good technology, such as an informative Webpage
- Have cemetery master planning, and build this around what you know about your customers
- Have safety processes in place:
 - Safeguard the deceased
 - Safeguard the employees
 - Safeguard the visitors

2.2 ICCM

2.2.1 The ICCM has produced excellence criteria for Cemeteries and Crematoria. It is reported that the guidance is a tool to encourage organisations to pursue recognised principles of organisational excellence. The guidance is for organisations that provide and operate cemeteries, using the experiences of organisations working in this field.

2.2.2 The guidance states that the excellence criteria incorporates elements that are relevant of specific quality initiatives for cemeteries and crematoria such as ISO9002, ISO14001.

2.2.3 The excellence criteria is split into 18 sections:

1. **Leadership** - The aim being Leaders demonstrate commitment to providing value-adding cemetery and crematoria services, and to the concepts and practices of continuous improvement; Leaders create a system in which the team and individuals “own” the responsibility for planning, delivering and improving the service, Leaders seek to develop partnerships and relationships with other bodies to deliver integrated cemetery and crematoria services for the community,
2. **Public Consultation and Research** - The aim being a proactive approach to formal and informal consultation is implemented, to develop an understanding of the needs, wants and expectations of the various individuals and groups in the community for cemetery and crematoria services, external market information is used to develop an understanding of the needs of the various

individuals and groups in the community for cemetery and crematoria services.

3. **Policy and Strategy** - The aim being the organisation reviews and develops its strategic approach to ensure that it is attempting to meet the needs and expectations of the community for cemetery and crematoria services, the organisation effectively implements and communicates its policy and strategy.
4. **Process Management and Improvement** - The aim being the processes involved in providing cemetery and crematoria services are systematically identified and managed to ensure that they are effective and efficient, the processes involved in operating cemetery and crematoria services are improved as required, in order to generate increasing value for the stakeholders, particularly the bereaved.
5. **Environmental Performance Planning** - The aim being the organisation's formal policy and strategy reflects a commitment to sustaining and improving the environment, particularly relating to bio-diversity, management of waste, pollution, global warming and the use of non-renewable, global resources, the environmental policy and strategy is effectively implemented and communicated.
6. **Financial Management** - The aim being the organisation values the cemeteries and crematoria as assets, and is committed to using financial resources to ensure sustainability and to enhance these assets, the organisation's financial resources are managed in a way which ensures added value to the community
7. **Staff Planning, Training and Development** - The aim being Cemetery and crematoria staffing is planned, managed and improved to enable the services to be provided safely, effectively and efficiently, the organisation ensures that all staff involved in planning and implementing the service are competent, and that the service is improved continuously through ongoing training and development.
8. **Service Design** - The aim being Cemetery and crematoria facilities and services are designed and regularly reviewed and developed, bearing in mind the identified needs, wants and expectations of the community.
9. **Grounds Maintenance** - The aim being Preparation and maintenance of the grounds is planned, based upon the identified needs of the bereaved, and these plans are implemented effectively, Grounds maintenance work outside of the planned work is identified and action is taken effectively.

10. **Burials** - The aim being Burials are organised and conducted in a dignified manner, to meet the identified needs and expectations of the bereaved, based on the statutory requirements and the standards identified in the ICCM Charter for the Bereaved (“Rights” and “Targets”).
11. **Cremations** (this is outside the scope of the Scrutiny Review, but the aim is Cremations are organised and conducted in a dignified manner, to meet the identified needs and expectations of the bereaved, based on the statutory requirements and the standards identified in the ICCM Charter for the Bereaved (“Rights” and “Targets”).
12. **Buildings, Equipment and Consumables** - The aim being Suitable equipment and consumables are provided to support the provision of the service, Maintenance of buildings and equipment is planned, based upon the needs of the service and available resources, and these plans are effectively implemented, Repairs to the buildings and equipment are carried out in an effective manner to ensure that any adverse effects are minimised, The negative impact upon the environment arising from buildings, equipment and consumables is reduced.
13. **Health and Safety Management** - The aim being the organisation implements a planned and proactive approach to the management of health and safety for the bereaved and staff, in conjunction with partners; e.g. Funeral Directors, etc.
14. **Communication with the Bereaved** – The aim being the organisation manages communication with the bereaved so that all staff deal with users in a sensitive, friendly, professional and informative manner, portraying a suitable image.
15. **Feedback** - The aim being routine feedback from the bereaved regarding the service is encouraged and dealt with in a manner which attempts to achieve satisfaction, and this feedback is used as a means of improving the service.
16. **Public Relations** – The aim being Cemetery and crematoria services are effectively communicated throughout the community.
17. **Measurement and Review** – The aim being the organisation regularly measures and reviews its progress in pursuing its desired outcomes, to enable improvements to be planned and initiated.

18. **Results Achieved** - The aims of this area are to analyse how well the organisation is performing in achieving its desired outcomes throughout the community that it serves.

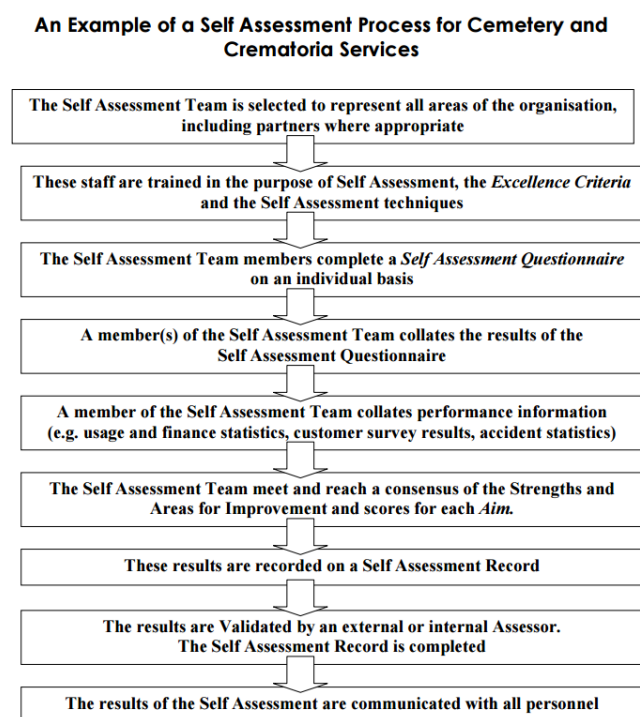
2.2.4 The Guidance states that it is important that self-assessments are undertaken as these are a key part of continuous improvement. ICCM states that effective self-assessment provides:

- Identification of the organisation's strengths;
- Identification of the organisation's areas for improvement;
- Measurement of the organisation's progress (i.e. through scores);
- A basis for the development of plans for improvement.

The process of carrying out Self-Assessment can also improve:-

- staff awareness of the organisation; April 2001 40
- staff ownership of improvements;
- values of continuous improvement;
- teamwork;
- understanding of what is required to improve the service;
- ability to view the organisation through customers' eyes.

2.2.4 The Guidance provides an example of a self-assessment process for cemetery and crematoria services:



2.2.5 The Guidance states that best practice benchmarking plays a significant role in assisting and driving continuous improvement. It goes on to suggest that benchmarking could involve the following steps:

1. Identify the issue which needs to be the subject of benchmarking. This could be carried out using Self-Assessment or process measurement and review activity;
2. Establish project team and plan;
3. Clarify the subject to be benchmarked;
4. Find suitable internal, external or competitive benchmarking partners. The following tools could be considered:-
 - I Researching Industry media for information on organisations and benchmarks;
 - II The ICCM facilitate Benchmarking partnerships through workshops and personal contact, involving organisations which have carried out ICCM Best value Charter Assessment, or have undergone an Excellence Recognition assessment;
 - III Staff networks often identify suitable partners, particularly regional groups;
 - IV Consultants can be used to identify and facilitate suitable partnerships;
 - V Industry networks; through the ICCM, etc.
5. Make contact and establish partnership;
6. Meet, discuss and collect the information;
7. Plan and carry out improvements;
8. Review progress.

2.2.6 A copy of the Guidance can be [accessed](#).

3 CONCLUSIONS

3.1 That the information provided informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

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