



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Notice of Non-key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Permission for Havering to take ownership of two body storage containers, in the event they are needed for future excess deaths planning resilience.
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Viddy Persaud, Cabinet Member for Public Protection & Safety
SLT Lead:	Barry Francis, Director of Neighbourhoods
Report Author and contact details:	<i>Louise Roast</i> <u>Louise.roast@havering.gov.uk</u> 01708 433498
Policy context:	This decision seeks permission Havering to take and store two body storage containers to increase resilience in planning for Excess Deaths.
Financial summary:	There are no costs to take the containers and some costs associated to run the containers operationally which will be met from the most appropriate budget
Relevant OSC :	<i>Towns & Communities</i>
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	Yes – Non Key Decision

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The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Places making Havering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connections making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>

Place an X in the [] as appropriate

Part A – Report seeking decision

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DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

This report seeks permission for Havering to take ownership of 2 body storage containers to support planning for future excess deaths. The proposal is to store them at Upminster Cemetery, until such time as they are required to become operational in an excess deaths situation. In the event they are required to be operational, the proposal is to also operate them from this site.

The containers (30 in total) were originally intended for use at the Nightingale hospital, so currently owned by the NHS, and have been 'gifted' to London Boroughs who may require them when ascertaining body storage capacity and resilience in light of planning for Excess Deaths during the pandemic. Westminster Council are overseeing their distribution and deployment and by taking receipt of containers, they will form part of the receiving Borough's permanent asset base at no cost for the containers themselves or their distribution.

The financial implications section of this report contains detail on the on-going costs.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Part 3 Responsibility for Functions] of the Council's Constitution:

Section 3.3 – Powers of Members of the Senior Leadership Team

Members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) have delegated authority to act as follows within the assigned service service/portfolio of responsibilities, subject to the general provisions and limitations set out in section 3.1 above.

General Powers

- (a) To take any steps necessary for proper management and administration of allocated portfolios.

- (c) To make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way the Council's functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness etc as required by external regulatory agencies.

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

It is recommended to take this decision to increase resilience in Havering in planning for excess deaths.

Following a de-brief by the East London Mortality Group after the second wave of Covid, it is evident that the Queens hospital exceeded capacity for deceased at end of December 2020. From this point, 157 deceased in total were transferred to other areas outside of the Havering between January – March 2021.

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Since this time, body storage capacity has been increased in Havering specifically at the King George's hospital site via an additional porta cabin facility. Both King George and Queen's have benefited from an additional 70 fridge spaces at each site via the CCG, 10 of which are bariatric at each site. In total that's added an additional 140 to the BHRUT capacity. The additional 70 spaces weren't provided to King George's until midway through the second wave so therefore didn't support the coronial's area when storage was close to capacity. This is a positive as we are now benefitting from both sites having extra space which would aide us in a third wave. It is also worth noting that during the second wave around 16 spaces were out of service at King George's due to technical failures. These issues have all been resolved since. It is however felt to be a prudent approach to take two of the body storage containers, with the mind-set of better to have them and not need them, than not have them and need them, particularly as the path of the pandemic is an unknown.

The units are currently the property of the NHS but recipient sites will take ownership of them as a transferred asset. Each unit has 32 spaces and will come supplied with body trays. Prior to deployment they are all being tested to ensure they are in full working order, and can be used as either a fridge or freezer.

Consultation with colleagues at the Queens Hospital, including their asset management and mortuary team, has determined that whilst it is considered the most suitable place for them to be sited, there is no space on the Queens Hospital site to accommodate the containers and therefore other options within Havering have been explored.

A site visit by Asset Management and the contractors appointed to de-commission the containers across London (De Boer) has determined that the most favourable site for storage of two containers is on an area of hard standing located at the far end of the new Cemetery Extension site. The containers are extremely discreet as they are not visibly body storage containers from the outside and in addition, screening will be erected in the event they are required to be used operationally.

It is considered that this is the most suitable site giving the nature of the service provided on site for the bereaved. Once again it is important to understand that these plans would only go ahead in the event of another wave that had detrimental impacts on deaths and mortuary storage within the Borough.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Use of the Queens Hospital site for the body storage containers has been considered but rejected due to lack of space. Other sites in Havering have been considered and rejected as not suitable. Not taking the containers has been considered but rejected for emergency planning resilience reasons.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

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Councillor Viddy Persaud, Cabinet Member for Public Protection & Safety

NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Louise Roast,

Designation: Head of Registration & Bereavement Services

Signature:



Date:

22.09.21

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

1. This report seeks approval to accept gift of body storage containers.
2. The Council has a general power under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that individuals generally may do, including to implement the arrangements proposed in this report. The Council also has a general power under section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its function.

Section 2 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires the Council, as a category one responder, to maintain emergency plans and business continuity arrangements; for the purpose of ensuring that if an emergency occurs or is likely to occur the person or body is able to perform his or its functions so far as necessary or desirable for the purpose of (i) preventing the emergency, (ii) reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects, or (iii) taking other action in connection with it.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Whilst there is no cost for the actual body storage containers, the receiving Borough will be expected to take responsibility for maintenance and running costs, although there is an expectation and understanding that the costs will be shared across London in the event the units need to become operational.

Estimated annual costs (with units not operational)

Maintenance Costs – est £1,000 p.a

Estimated monthly costs (with units operational)

Staffing - £5,238 pm (based on 2 staff £17.94 per hour)

Generator Hire – monthly £2,600.

PPE/Cleaning Materials/Stationary - £1,000 monthly

The storage costs of £1,000 can be absorbed within the Bereavement Services Revenue Budget.

Therefore it is anticipated that monthly operational costs will be between £8,000 - £9,000.

The costs of £8,000-£9,000 per year would need to be funded from the most appropriate budget given the event. This might be the Council's contingency budget should the event be unique to Havering.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

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This report does not currently impact on the existing workforce. In the event that the containers need to become operational, staffing will need to be arranged but this will not be from the Council's workforce as Waltham Forest have offered to partner with us to help make these arrangements at such time using contractors.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

There are no direct equality and diversity implications regarding Havering taking two body storage implications. If there are implications if the containers are ever put to use they will be dealt with sensitively at the appropriate time'. (E.g. deaths affecting one protected characteristic more than another.)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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Part C – Record of decision

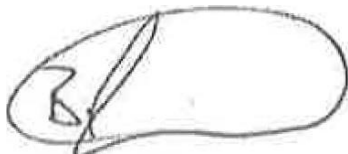
I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Details of decision maker

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Francis', enclosed within a hand-drawn oval border.

Name: Barry Francis

Cabinet Portfolio held:
CMT Member title: Director of Neighbourhoods
Head of Service title
Other manager title:

Date: 30th September 2021

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to the proper officer, Debra Marlow, Principal Democratic Services Officer in Democratic Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____

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