

Decision of:	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Neal Brookes – Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Public Safety, Highways and Transport
Relevant Officer:	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships
Date of Decision:	23 June 2022

RENEWAL OF THE MORTUARY AGREEMENT FOR THE CORONERS SERVICE WITH BLACKPOOL TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider reviewing and seeking to extend the mortuary agreement between Blackpool Council and Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust which was initially agreed in 2010 for the shared use of the mortuary facilities within the Hospital.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 To approve the revised agreement up until and including the 31st March 2031.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 Blackpool Council is the Lead Authority for Coroner's Services provided in Blackpool and Fylde (the "Coronial Jurisdiction") and has appointed a Senior Coroner and he has a team of officers appointed to assist and support him.

3.2 The Senior Coroner will inquire into a death once they receive a report that a body is lying within their jurisdiction. A Senior Coroner has the power to have a body brought into the public mortuary and keep it there while they carry out investigations.

3.3 The Senior Coroner will investigate each case in an appropriate way. It may be as simple as consulting with the doctor who last treated the person who has died, or a post mortem examination may be needed. In some cases, the Senior Coroner may open an inquest, which is a judicial inquiry into the death.

3.4 This agreement provides the service with the adequate facilities and pathologists who perform autopsies as directed on behalf of the Senior Coroner to complete and file with the Authority the reports required in respect of such procedures.

3.5a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.5b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.6 Other alternative options to be considered:

Not to update the agreement, however, by not updating the agreement the Council would have to provide alternative arrangements.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The mortuary service meets all the Council's priorities.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 As detailed above the Blackpool Council is the Lead Authority for Coroner's Services provided in Blackpool and Fylde (the "Coronial Jurisdiction") with statutory responsibility to provide the Coroner's Service by virtue of the Lancashire (Coroners' Districts) Order 2002 ("the Order").

5.2 The mortuary located in the Blackpool Victoria Hospital is an excellent shared facility for both Coronial, Hospital and Community deaths and is the only facility within the local Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre area(s).

5.3 The agreement by virtue of its length provides some stability for both the Local Authority and the Hospital for the shared use of both facilities and costs. The agreement is required to ensure that the Senior Coroner and his team have access to a Mortuary which provides the necessary staff and resources within this to carry out all duties of the role.

5.4 Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust also has excellent facilities for both the storage of the deceased, viewing arrangements for families and is a leading mortuary in the North West with a large number of fully trained Pathologists, which is become very rare across the country.

5.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.6 List of Appendices:

Appendix A – Proposed Agreement attached

6.0 Financial considerations:

6.1 The budget for the Coroners Service takes into account the charge for this service and a 41% contribution on an annual basis is made by Lancashire County Council for the Fylde element of this.

7.0 Legal considerations:

7.1 As contained within the report.

8.0 Risk management considerations:

8.1 The Council as lead authority should provide a public mortuary with its services for the work of the Senior Coroner.

9.0 Equalities considerations:

9.1 The proposed agreement and service provided caters for the needs of the local faith communities.

10.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

10.1 No issues in this area with regards to the proposed agreement.

11.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

11.1 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Brookes as the relevant Cabinet Member and Blackpool Teaching Hospitals Cellular Pathology Manager. Subject to the approval of this agreement this will be countersigned by representatives of both organisations.

12.0 Background papers:

12.1 None

13.0 Decision of Chief Officer

13.1 To approve the revised agreement up until and including the 31st March 2031.

14.0 Reasons for the Decision of the Chief Officer

14.1 Blackpool Council is the Lead Authority for Coroner's Services provided in Blackpool and Fylde (the "Coronial Jurisdiction") and has appointed a Senior Coroner and he has a team of officers appointed to assist and support him.

The Senior Coroner will inquire into a death once they receive a report that a body is

lying within their jurisdiction. A Senior Coroner has the power to have a body brought into the public mortuary and keep it there while they carry out investigations.

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This agreement provides the service with the adequate facilities and pathologists who perform autopsies as directed on behalf of the Senior Coroner to complete and file with the Authority the reports required in respect of such procedures.