

Development & Environment Scrutiny Panel

Assigned Task Report on Renewal of Crematoria and Cemeteries

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1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In June 2010 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee considered a proposal from Janet Russell, Director for Environment and Public Protection, that scrutiny should review the Council proposals regarding the programme of improvements for Bereavement Services. Areas outlined for consideration included:
- Reviewing the proposals to deliver the improvement programme.
 - Assessing the proposals against the objective of enhanced and improved customer service.
- 1.2 The issue was referred to the Development and Environment Scrutiny Panel and it was subsequently included in the 2010/11 work programme to be undertaken as an assigned task.
- 1.3 The Council offers a range of bereavement services for the residents of Kirklees as well as operating and maintaining two crematoria and 13 cemeteries. Overall responsibility for Bereavement Services has over the years transferred between different Services and Directorates.
- 1.4 In 2003, Bereavement Services was located with Culture & Leisure Services within the Lifelong Learning Directorate. The Bereavement Services Partnership was created that year, and utilised as the main consultation vehicle to prepare the 2003 draft strategy referred to in this report - *To 2008 and beyond – A strategy for the improvements and regeneration of Kirklees burial grounds and crematoria*. The strategy was never formally endorsed by Cabinet.
- 1.5 In 2005, the service was transferred to Public Protection within Environment Services, under the Environment and Transport Directorate, and it was tasked to explore outsourcing cemeteries and crematoria. In November 2007, the Cabinet considered the outcomes of the subsequent tendering exercise and agreed to retain the service in-house.
- 1.6 In 2008/09, approval was given for a programme of improvements to Bereavement Services including the replacement of Dewsbury Crematorium, refurbishment of Huddersfield Crematorium, provision of a new cemetery in South Kirklees and a number of other improvements and upgrades to cemeteries across Kirklees.
- 1.7 In July 2010, the Cabinet supported a Bereavement Strategy Update report together with the revised Improvement Programme, and approved the revised capital plan.
- 1.8 Following the most recent Council restructure, Bereavement Services is now within Streetscene & Housing in the Directorate of Place. The current service structure can be viewed at Appendix 1.

2 AREAS OF FOCUS

2.1 The main objective of this assigned task was to review the effectiveness of the programme of improvements to satisfy the demands that will be placed upon the service both now and in the future and to meet the needs of customers.

2.2 The agreed terms of reference of the assigned task were:

1. To review the existing burial provision across Kirklees covering all Council and non Council controlled cemeteries.
2. To understand the trends in burial methods and cremations and establish the impact on the future requirements of council provision.
3. To establish the rationale and reasons for the provision of a new crematorium in Dewsbury and the refurbishment of Huddersfield Crematorium.
4. To review the overriding Bereavement Services Strategy and identify and consider the key issues relating to bereavement services.

3 THE PANEL AND WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 The Panel comprised its membership from representatives of the Development & Environment Scrutiny Panel:

Councillor Nigel Patrick (Chair)
Councillor Vivien Lees-Hamilton
Councillor Carole Pattison
Malcolm Ellison, Co-optee (until November 2010)
Amanda Stublely, Co-optee (from November 2010)

3.2 The Panel was supported by Valerie Wartelle and Richard Dunne from the Scrutiny Office.

3.3 The Panel held a series of meetings between September 2010 and February 2011 in order to receive information and evidence from a range of individuals and organisations. A full list of attendees and witnesses are shown on page 20.

3.4 The review included input from the Bereavement Services Partnership (BSP) in the form of a postal questionnaire and telephone interviews. Details from the BSP questionnaires are shown at Appendix 2.

4 SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE RECEIVED

4.1 This section of the report will set out for each area of focus, a summary of the key evidence that has been received, followed by an outline of the Panel's views.

4.2

Term of Reference 1

To review the existing burial provision across Kirklees covering all Council and non Council controlled cemeteries.

4.2.1 It is collectively agreed that there is a national shortage of burial space throughout the country and in Kirklees there are current pressures with burial capacity particularly limited within the Almondbury, Lockwood and Kirkheaton areas of the Authority.

4.2.2 Information¹ detailing the current burial provision across Kirklees shows that capacity in council owned cemeteries is lowest in South Kirklees with five open cemeteries providing 1550 spaces compared to five open cemeteries in North Kirklees providing 4440 spaces.

4.2.3 Bereavement Services has advised that it is satisfied with burial provision in North Kirklees with good levels of capacity in the areas covering Dewsbury, Cleckheaton and Batley. However provision in South Kirklees, particularly in the Huddersfield area, is low and the need to provide significant additional capacity in the areas surrounding Huddersfield is a priority.

4.2.4 In addition to the council owned cemeteries there are also a number of other burial sites provided by churches and private bodies. The majority of these burial grounds are under the jurisdiction of the Church of England. There is one private burial ground located in Birkby, Huddersfield which offers natural burials and has capacity for around 5000 spaces. Appendix 4 shows a map provided by Bereavement Services with the location of active council owned cemeteries and known non-council controlled burial grounds across Kirklees.

4.2.5 In response to the low levels of burial capacity in South Kirklees, Bereavement Services has advised the Panel of a number of strategies it is undertaking in an attempt to increase burial provision. These are detailed and explored below.

4.3 Extensions and Modifications to Existing Sites

4.3.1 Bereavement Services has arranged extensions to a number of existing cemeteries, which includes an extension to Batley Cemetery and, following a recent successful planning application, permission has been secured to provide

¹ See appendix 3 for a summary of the burial capacity across Kirklees including planned extensions and new development

an additional 1000 burial plots at Slaithwaite Cemetery. The possibility of planning permission for Liversedge Cemetery, which is a new acquisition, and a new cemetery at Cleckheaton is currently being explored.

- 4.3.2 One way of responding quickly to alleviate the current shortfall in provision is to develop additional infill sites at existing cemeteries. The Council has recently installed approximately 100 burial chambers at Lockwood Cemetery and this is proposed as an option in areas where land is unsuitable for traditional burial techniques.



Lockwood Cemetery Burial Chambers

4.4. Sourcing of New Burial Sites

- 4.4.1 Bereavement Services has advised the Panel that in 2007 it had identified a potential new burial site in Fenay Bridge, Huddersfield. However in early 2010 this site was put on hold due to the increasing costs associated with ground conditions. A Cabinet report dated 6th July 2010 stated that the estimated costs for developing the site had reached £2.1m against an allocation of £1.2m.
- 4.4.2 As a result of this, and the continuing shortage of burial land in South Kirklees, the Council's asset management section was asked to identify council owned sites within South Kirklees that might be suitable for developing a new cemetery.
- 4.4.3 During this period the Council has also been producing the Local Development Framework (LDF), which will set out how much development there should be over the next 18 years and where it should go. The LDF will govern how future planning applications and proposed developments are treated and will result in areas of land across Kirklees being earmarked for specific types of development.
- 4.4.4 A number of potential sites in Kirklees' ownership were identified and initially assessed for their use and ease of development. The locations of the sites and the dates of the assessments are listed below:
- Highlands Avenue, Almondbury, Huddersfield – January 2008
 - Dawson Road. Newsome, Huddersfield – January 2010
 - Jagger Hill, Kirkheaton, Huddersfield (3 areas) – January 2010
 - Hey Lane, Lowerhouses, Huddersfield – January 2010
 - Newsome Road South, Newsome, Huddersfield -
 - Liley Lane, Kirkheaton, Huddersfield – January 2010
 - Newsome Road South, Newsome, Huddersfield – July 2010

- Deighton Road, Deighton, Huddersfield – July 2010

- 4.4.5 However these sites were all discounted before progressing with ground investigations as they did not meet the main criteria for a cemetery which includes: ease of access; the lie of the land; and disabled access (Disability Discrimination Act considerations).
- 4.4.6 One privately owned site near Honley Station was also considered but unfortunately did not meet the minimum criteria to stand as a viable option.
- 4.4.7 In January 2010 further investigation of Council owned sites identified a potentially suitable site located in Hey Lane, Stirley Hill, Huddersfield. Bereavement Services have advised that this site can be developed at reasonable cost, has satisfactory access and would meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- 4.4.8 The cost of developing the first acre of the site to include access roads and car parking is estimated to be in the region of £600,000 and it is anticipated that the first acre would have a projected life of 5 years.
- 4.4.9 Bereavement Services has estimated that the cost of developing a burial plot at the Hey Lane site would be £667 per unit compared to £2800 at the Fenay Bridge site. The costs of future development of the site should be self financing and the site would have a projected life of approximately 40 years compared to the 4-5 years of the Fenay Bridge Site.



Hey Lane Cemetery Proposed Location

4.5 Hey Lane Cemetery Feasibility Study

- 4.5.1 The positive results of the initial desktop study have enabled Bereavement Services to commission an outline design of the new cemetery at Hey Lane.
- 4.5.2 A series of site investigation works have been carried out and Bereavement Services have advised that their investigations have shown that the new site will be fully compliant with the Environment Agency's Guidance Document – '*Assessing the Groundwater Pollution – Potential of Cemetery Developments*'. The Panel has requested sight of this information but to date this has not been received.
- 4.5.3 Representatives of the Council's Physical Resources & Procurement service undertook a site visit in December 2010 with representatives of Almondbury (Castle Hill) Civic Associates, as they had raised concerns about the potential for water pollution at the nearby Nature Reserve.
- 4.5.4 The Panel has been informed that a comprehensive interpretative report was issued to the Environment Agency (EA) for comment, and the EA have

responded that a small area of the site should be limited to single depth interments. In addition, the EA has requested that a 30m burial exclusion zone should be included around an area where there is some drifting of water.

- 4.5.5 Further investigation and development works still need to be undertaken at the site in order to submit a comprehensive planning application for the scheme and the EA has requested as part of any planned submission to see a full design of the scheme.
- 4.5.6 Bereavement Services has stated that potential leachate² from the site will be managed alongside the recommendations of the survey results and any conditions imposed by the EA via the planning condition process.
- 4.5.7 It is anticipated that a planning application should be ready for submission towards the end of May 2011 and, subject to planning approval, work on the site should be able to commence from mid September 2011 and the first phase completed by the end of the year.

4.6 Hey Lane Cemetery Capacity

- 4.6.1 The Hey Lane site is approximately 9 acres in size and an area of land around 4 acres in size to the east of the site has also been identified for possible extension in later years.
- 4.6.2 Bereavement Services expect the site to act as a replacement for the burials that currently take place at Lockwood, Almondbury and Kirkheaton which currently amount to around 120 burials per year. This figure is expected to rise to approximately 200 per year and section 4.8.2 of the report explores the reasons for an increasing number of burials.
- 4.6.3 Bereavement Services has calculated the estimated capacity of the site using a burial site density of 900 burials per acre, which includes infrastructure such as roadways & pathways This calculation has projected that the site can accommodate approximately 8000 burial plots, and with an estimated demand of 200 burials a year, the site would have a life span of around 40 years.
- 4.6.4 Members of the Bereavement Services Partnership have advised that the funeral industry believe a burial site density of 750 per acre is more realistic, which would result in a life span nearer to 34 years for the site.

4.7 Future Capacity in South Kirklees - Summary

- 4.7.1 Bereavement Services have advised that they believe the new cemetery at Hey Lane, and the proposed extensions to Slaithwaite Cemetery, will provide sufficient burial space in south Kirklees for the next 30 – 40 years.

² Leachate is a widely used term in the Environmental sciences where it has the specific meaning of a liquid that has dissolved or entrained environmentally harmful substances which may then enter the environment.

PANEL VIEW

- The Panel notes the low levels of burial capacity remaining in South Kirklees and the difficulties that the Council is currently facing in providing sufficient burial capacity in this area.
- The Panel acknowledges the actions taken by Bereavement Services in providing quick emergency measures, such as infill sites at existing cemeteries, to address the immediate shortage of burial space in South Kirklees.
- The Panel feels that the sourcing of a new cemetery site in South Kirklees has been a lengthy process and notes that there are still a number of investigations and tests to be carried out prior to submitting a comprehensive planning application.
- The Panel is disappointed that the information detailing the results of the new cemetery site investigations were not seen by the Panel during the course of this review.
- The Panel would like to see the Council take a more proactive approach to the sourcing of new burial sites across the district in the future, which should include Council owned as well as privately owned land. The Panel feels this approach would help to address future demand by enabling the Council to be more effective in the identification and planning of new burial sites.
- The Panel feels that sites identified as suitable burial land should be included in the Local Development Framework to ensure it is protected from future developments.
- The Panel feels that the Council should take into account the advice from members of the Bereavement Services Partnership that the burial site density ratio used by Bereavement Services is too high. The Panel feels that by using the lower burial site density ratio the Council will avoid the potential for shortfalls in future provision.

4.8

Term of Reference 2

To understand the trends in burial methods and cremations and establish the impact on the future requirements of Council provision.

4.8.1 The number of burials that currently take place across Kirklees each year total between 400 and 500. This compares to over 3000 cremations per year of which 60% are carried out at Huddersfield Crematorium with the remainder taking place at Dewsbury Crematorium.

4.8.2 It is evident that the number of burials that have taken place at Council owned cemeteries over the last decade has remained relatively static despite the increased popularity in cremations. However, Bereavement Services does anticipate that this trend is likely to change and it expects to see a gradual rise in the number of burials taking place. This is due to a number of factors including:

- An increase in current death rates resulting in more people being both cremated and buried. This is in part due to the impact from the increased numbers born in the UK between 1946 and 1965 (known as the 'Baby Boomers').
- The percentage of the population opting for cremations is likely to stabilise and is unlikely to increase.

- People of the Muslim faith are buried, not cremated, and as the Muslim population within Kirklees increases, the number of burials taking place is likely to rise. In addition, the current generation within the local Muslim community are increasingly opting to be buried in Kirklees rather than in their country of origin, which was the preferred choice of their parents.
- It is also the custom amongst the Muslim faith to be buried in single graves, rather than in multiple family plots, as is the custom amongst the Christian community. This will result in more individual graves being dug.

4.8.3 The Huddersfield Muslim Burial Society support the view of Bereavement Services that the number of Muslim burials will increase and it has advised that the rate of burials is likely to exceed current forecasts as the increase in the number of British born Muslims will lead to greater demand.

4.8.4 The Hey Lane site will provide both traditional and Muslim burial plots together with other memorial areas such as sanctums or remembrance gardens.

4.9 Localism

4.9.1 Funeral Directors have advised that they have seen a demand amongst the community for people to be buried close to where they lived. This desire to be buried close to your home is known as 'localism'.

4.9.2 In the past, localism has been more evident with those families who have chosen to have a burial rather than those having cremations. However, cremated remains are now more frequently taken back to be buried in local cemeteries, to be stored closer to home or moved into sanctums. Families often factor easy access via public transport into their decision of a final place of rest for their relative.

4.10 Natural Burials

4.10.1 Demand for natural burials is currently relatively low and consequently the Council only provide a small area within Slaithwaite Cemetery for people who wish to have a natural burial. The largest provider in Kirklees to offer natural burials is at the privately owned burial site Rose Hill, which is located in Birkby Huddersfield.



Rose Hill Natural Burial Ground

- 4.10.2 One of the south Kirklees Funeral Directors, who is part of the Bereavement Services Partnership (BSP), advised the Panel that 80% of all funerals he undertakes are traditional services and that where a natural burial has taken place, it is often because of a lack of provision or convenience rather than guided by environmental aspirations.
- 4.10.3 A north Kirklees Funeral Director, also part of the BSP, advised that he had received very few requests for a natural burial in the last five years due to high costs and travelling distances.

PANEL VIEW

- The Panel notes that future burial trends are likely to change and that a gradual rise in demand for burials is expected.
- The Panel acknowledges the increased prominence of localism and feels that there will be a need in the future to offer a greater choice of burial sites across the district.
- The Panel believes that Bereavement Services should routinely carry out a forecasting exercise to help establish trends and demands of future burial provision, which would help to inform a service strategy and business plan.

4.11

Term of Reference 3

To establish the rationale and reasons for the provision of a new crematorium in Dewsbury and the refurbishment of Huddersfield Crematorium.

- 4.11.1 There are two distinct areas within Bereavement Services – crematoria and cemeteries. Details illustrating the expenditure and income from these two areas clearly show that the positive levels of income that are generated through the crematoria are currently subsidising the costs that the Council is incurring through the provision of its burial services and the associated costs of maintaining the cemeteries.
- 4.11.2 In March 2008 Cabinet gave approval for an £8.2million programme of improvements to Bereavement Services, which included a new cemetery in South Kirklees, a new facility to replace Dewsbury Crematorium and refurbishment of Huddersfield Crematorium.
- 4.11.3 There were a number of reasons supporting the proposed improvements to the crematoriums:
- Aging Facilities at Dewsbury Crematorium:
 - The crematorium buildings are over 50 years old and the chapel is too small to accommodate the numbers of mourners that now attend the funeral services.
 - The car parking provision is inadequate and insufficient to meet demand.
 - Access Improvements and Enhanced Customer Experience at Huddersfield Crematorium :
 - Current facilities that were rebuilt in 1985 are adequate in size but would benefit from refurbishment to address design faults such as building a new

exit walkway, improved shelter for mourners, a separate flower/tribute display area, and increasing the size of the waiting room.

- Cremation Equipment

- The cremators in Dewsbury are 20 years old and suffer frequent breakdowns and increasing maintenance costs.
- Both Dewsbury and Huddersfield Cremators will need to have mercury abatement equipment installed to meet the new law that will be introduced in December 2012 requiring all local authorities and private suppliers to abate emissions of mercury by 50%.

4.12 Mercury Abatement

4.12.1 In response to the requirement to abate mercury emissions some local authorities are setting up trading schemes, where providers unable to meet the December 2012 deadline will be able to continue operating by buying abatement allowances from other authorities.

4.12.2 It is anticipated that the charge for providing 100% abatement is likely to be around £40-£60 per cremation. This would mean that should the Council not install the necessary abatement equipment by the December 2012 deadline it could only continue to operate by purchasing an abatement allowance from another supplier. The cost to the Council of achieving the 50% abatement requirement without having the necessary equipment, based on a £60 charge and assuming 3000 cremations a year, could amount to approximately £90,000 per annum.

4.13 Facilities

4.13.1 The estimated number of visitors who attend funeral services held at the crematorium and visit the grounds and memorials is in excess of 250,000 a year. Bereavement Services recognise that the reputation of the Council will suffer if it is unable to provide facilities that adequately meet the needs of customers and visitors.

4.13.2 Evidence from the Bereavement Services Partnership supports the view that the crematoria facilities in Kirklees are outdated with poor access to the grounds, inadequate parking facilities, and a need to refurbish and update the buildings.

4.13.3 The Bereavement Services Partnership believe that business is being lost to neighbouring crematoria such as Park Wood in Elland and Grenoside in Sheffield, which offer more flexibility such as weekend funeral services and a wider range of facilities such as the provision of a cremator that has been designed to accommodate larger people.

4.14 Consultation

4.14.1 The proposed improvements to the crematoria have been informed by a consultation process, which included:

- Consulting with funeral directors, clergy, members of the public, and other interested parties
- Open days held at Dewsbury Crematorium to display the plans.
- Consulting with residents living within 200 yards of the sites.

4.14.2 Bereavement Services also visited a number of other crematoria whilst developing the design plans.

4.14.3 Planning permission was granted for a new crematorium at Dewsbury on 1 April 2010 and an extension and change of exit arrangements at Huddersfield crematorium on 23 June 2010.

4.15 Progress with Programme of Improvements

4.15.1 In July 2010 Cabinet received a report that presented an update to the Bereavement Services' programme of improvements. The report showed that the costs of the new cemetery located at Fenay Bridge would be too expensive due to ground condition and that the new crematorium in Dewsbury was running at over £1 million above budget.

4.15.2 Cabinet agreed to proceed with the programme of works subject to a new more cost effective cemetery being developed at Hey Lane, Stirley Hill, Huddersfield with the savings being used to subsidise the increased costs of the Dewsbury crematorium.

4.15.3 Since then, Bereavement Services has advised the Panel that although the refurbishment programme is ready to progress following a budget review towards the end of 2010 the programme of improvements was put on hold.

4.15.4 Following the Council's budget setting in February 2011, it is now anticipated that subject to Cabinet approval on specific proposals, a revised budget will allow Bereavement Services to continue improving its assets.

4.16 Partnership working

4.16.1 In 2007 the Council considered developing a joint venture partnership for Bereavement Services' activity. This venture was considered in recognition of the significant capital required to provide modern, up to standard, facilities that would meet the needs of the local community.

4.16.2 However the Service had concerns around non-compliance and the risk attached to the submitted tenders, and it was agreed by Cabinet to retain the services in-house. It was recognised that this would require a major service improvement programme supported by significant capital and revenue support.

4.16.3 Funeral directors from the Bereavement Services Partnership, when discussing the joint venture partnership, indicated that it had included a requirement to provide funeral services for both cremations and burials and, crucially, included the maintenance of existing cemeteries. The funeral directors believed that the high level of cost and liability associated with the maintenance of existing

cemeteries was the reason why there was little interest in the venture from the private sector.

- 4.16.4 The Panel has been advised that there are currently no plans for the Council to pursue further options of partnership working with the private sector or other local authorities.

PANEL VIEW

- The Panel supports the Council's plans to undertake a programme of improvements to Dewsbury and Huddersfield crematoria and would wish to see this implemented as soon as possible
- The Panel believes that partnership working with other local authorities and/or private providers should be considered in light of the potential efficiencies this could provide and the opportunity to create a broader range of funeral services.

4.17

Term of Reference 4

To review the overriding Bereavement Services Strategy and identify and consider the key issues relating to bereavement services.

- 4.17.1 In August 2003, Bereavement Services had drafted a strategy entitled '*Bereavement Services to 2008 and beyond*'. The strategy set out the Service's agreed aims, priorities and the key actions required to significantly improve the bereavement services offered in Kirklees. However, the strategy did not pass the draft stage and was never formally endorsed.
- 4.17.2 In 2005, Bereavement Services was transferred to Environment & Public Protection Services and in July 2007 presented a private report to Cabinet considering the outcomes from the evaluation of tenders received on the Joint Venture Partnership.
- 4.17.3 The Panel has been advised that Bereavement Services does not currently have a formal endorsed strategy that outlines service aims, priorities and the actions required to ensure sufficient provision for the future.
- 4.17.4 In the absence of a strategy, the Panel has identified a number of key issues which they consider to be relevant in helping to inform how future burial services are provided in Kirklees. These issues are outlined in the sections below and in the main relate to quality of facilities, customer experience and public and stakeholders' consultation.

4.18 Bereavement Service Partnership - Views

- 4.18.1 The Panel was keen to obtain input from the funeral industry and commissioned a questionnaire³ that was sent to members of the Bereavement Service Partnership as well as the owners of the natural burial ground in Rose Hill. The aim of the questionnaire was to assess the effectiveness of the current provision, establish what was required to meet future demand, identify improvements to the customer experience and highlight examples of good practice.

³ See appendix 2 for details of the questions and a summary of the response received.

- 4.18.2 Responses to the questionnaire indicated that:
- Crematoria facilities are outdated and require refurbishment.
 - Praise for the Council staff that provide a high standard of work, presentation and sensitivity, although the numbers of staff now working in Bereavement Services is seen as too low to consistently maintain a high quality service and adequately manage the cemeteries.
 - A demand for longer time slots for services held at the crematoriums and greater flexibility in the burial timetable.
- 4.18.3 The Bereavement Services Partnership are of the view that funeral services today are now more focused on celebrating a person's life, and this means that customer requirements and expectations are different to the traditional services of the past. Although they believe the quality of services has improved, they feel that further work is needed to provide burial services that meet the demands of the 21st Century. The Bereavement Services Partnership has put forward a number of suggestions that they feel would help to accommodate current demands and help enhance the customer experience, including:
- Online booking – this is currently being looked at by Bereavement Services;
 - Broadband and multimedia facilities at crematoria;
 - Extended access to burials and cremations on Friday afternoons and Saturday for all funerals;
 - Extended cremation timeslots to 45 minutes;
 - Extra large cremators.
- 4.18.4 Bereavement Services has in the past coordinated annual meetings with the Bereavement Services Partnership, which currently comprises of 50 members including funeral directors, faith leaders, Muslim burial committees and cemetery support groups. The meetings were used to get an understanding of burial trends, views and feedback on issues regarding Council burial services. The Partnership was also used to inform planned programmes of improvement, for example in 2005, when a public consultation was undertaken on the improvement plans to crematoria in Kirklees. However, in recent years, the meetings have become infrequent and the last meeting took place in September 2009.
- 4.18.5 Members of the Bereavement Services Partnership have acknowledged the benefits of the Partnership meetings, and have expressed a wish for renewed and more frequent communication with the Council. Members of the Partnership have stated that the meetings were useful and enabled them to pass on issues of concern and receive feedback and updates from officers on service provision.
- 4.18.6 The Partnership hope to re-establish a regular dialogue with Bereavement Services and would wish to see the following:
- Small localised groups of representatives to address day to day practical issues, meeting on a quarterly basis; commencing at around 4.00pm so as not to interfere with funerals.
 - An annual meeting with all members of the Partnership invited. This should include the Cabinet Member responsible for bereavement services and would focus on strategic issues.

4.19 Maintenance of Cemeteries

- 4.19.1 The responsibility for maintenance of graves rests with the family of the deceased, however the problem of maintenance becomes an issue for the Council when graves are left untended. The Council currently takes the view that it should provide basic maintenance to the tops of untended graves. Bereavement Services has advised that it does offer customers an option to purchase a grave maintenance service.
- 4.19.2 There are currently two voluntary groups working with Bereavement Services: Batley Cemetery Support Group and Dewsbury Cemetery Action Group.
- 4.19.3 A member of the Batley Cemetery Support Group has advised the Panel that the working relationship with Bereavement Services is good and that they work together to help with the care, upkeep and preservation of Batley Cemetery. However the Support Group has raised concerns that the litter bins aren't emptied often enough which has led to overflowing rubbish and the machinery used to cut the grass is too large and has resulted in edges not being properly trimmed and graves being damaged.
- 4.19.4 Following the most recent Council restructure, Bereavement Services is now part of a wider service called Streetscene and Housing⁴ and is managed together with the regulation services of the council.
- 4.19.5 This revised structure means that the maintenance of cemeteries will now be carried out by staff from Streetscene who are developing a new way of working through Area Based Working Teams⁵. Bereavement Services believe that the new Area Based Working Teams will provide a more co-ordinated approach to the maintenance of cemeteries and will be better able to meet agreed Council standards.

4.20 Local Community Engagement

- 4.20.1 Bereavement Services has advised that despite carrying out a consultation exercise on the crematoria there has been no engagement with the local community on burial provision. The Service currently has no plans in place to carry out a consultation with members of the public to ascertain local views and preferences for the burial services offered by the Council.

⁴ Streetscene is a new service that is made up from staff that have come from a number of areas of the Council and aims to focus on the whole street environment from parks and communal areas to roads and pavements.

⁵ The area based working teams are made up of staff from landscape maintenance, street cleaning and environmental rangers with access to specialist teams such as enforcement where required.

PANEL VIEW

- The Panel acknowledges the views of the Bereavement Services Partnership that customer expectations and requirements have changed over time. The Panel would wish to see Bereavement Services embrace these changes and develop services to meet the demands of the 21st Century.
- The Panel welcomes the contribution that voluntary groups provide in helping to support cemetery maintenance, and would wish to see the Council encourage this good practice with the aim of expanding this type of support across Kirklees.
- The Panel welcomes the move to have Area Based Working Teams and feel that the inclusion of cemetery maintenance in their work programme would help the council to provide a better co-ordinated approach to maintenance and to meeting Council standards.
- The Panel supports the wishes of the Bereavement Services Partnership to re-establish regular dialogue with the Council and would encourage Bereavement Services to introduce regular meetings to address practical issues and an annual strategic meeting as soon as possible.
- The Panel acknowledges that Bereavement Services has used the meetings with the Bereavement Services Partnership to understand views and issues relating to the Council's burial services but feels that it is equally important to gather the wider views and preferences of the local community.
- The Panel believes that bereavement provision is a developing market, and greater choice and flexibility are critical factors in meeting the varying needs of Kirklees' diverse communities, and to help enhance the customer experience.
- The Panel believes that the absence of a service strategy incorporating aims, priorities and key actions has been a major factor in leading the Council to a position where it now faces a critical shortage of burial space in South Kirklees. The Panel therefore feels that Bereavement Services should develop an overarching strategy and business plan as a matter of urgency.

5

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That Bereavement Services develops an overarching strategy and business plan that provides a vision, priorities and actions looking ahead for a minimum period of 20 years and to be reviewed at least every 5 years. The strategy should also include details on how the Service:
- Will approach the changing requirements and expectations of customers and develop services fit for the 21st Century;
 - Will provide greater choice and flexibility in the services it provides with the aim of improving and enhancing customer experience;
 - Will provide sufficient burial provision to meet future demand.
- 5.2 That Bereavement Services commissions a public consultation in order to establish a wide representation of public views and preferences on the burial services provided by the Council. This can be used to inform Council strategy and shape future provision.
- 5.3 That Bereavement Services develops a plan for carrying out a forecasting exercise covering burials and cremations that can be used to inform Council strategy and a business plan for the Service. The plan should include details of the methodology that will be used and how often the exercise will be carried out.
- 5.4 That the Council undertake a detailed land search across Kirklees covering public and private land to identify potential burial sites. The results of the land search should be included in the strategy document and should be reviewed at least every 5 years. Any sites identified as being suitable burial land⁶ should be included in the Local Development Framework to ensure it is protected from future development.
- 5.5 That Bereavement Services uses the burial density ratio of 750 plots per acre, as recommended by industry experts within the Bereavement Services Partnership, to calculate the future capacity of Council-owned cemeteries.
- 5.6 That the Streetscene Service's Area Based Working Teams should include regular maintenance of cemeteries including the emptying of litter bins in their work programme to help provide a more co-ordinated approach to maintenance.
- 5.7 That Bereavement Services develops an action plan to encourage and support greater voluntary participation in the maintenance of cemeteries across Kirklees.
- 5.8 That Bereavement Services reinstates at the earliest opportunity meetings with the Bereavement Services Partnership, which should include:
- Regular local meetings throughout the year aimed at addressing practical issues and concerns.

⁶ Any site that has been identified as being suitable burial land should include an assessment to ensure that it has met certain criteria including ease of accessibility for residents including the proximity of local transport links and parking facilities, meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and the appropriate field and desktop studies have been carried out to check that the site will achieve approval under the Environment Agency guidance that covers the assessment of groundwater pollution.

- An annual meeting focusing on strategic issues and should include the attendance of the Cabinet Member responsible for Bereavement Services.
- Invitations to broaden the membership of the Bereavement Services Partnership to include private sector providers and a larger number of representatives from different faith groups.

5.9 That Bereavement Services approach other local authorities and private providers to explore partnership working opportunities with the aim of providing efficiencies in service delivery and a broader range of funeral services.

6 ATTENDEES AND WITNESSES

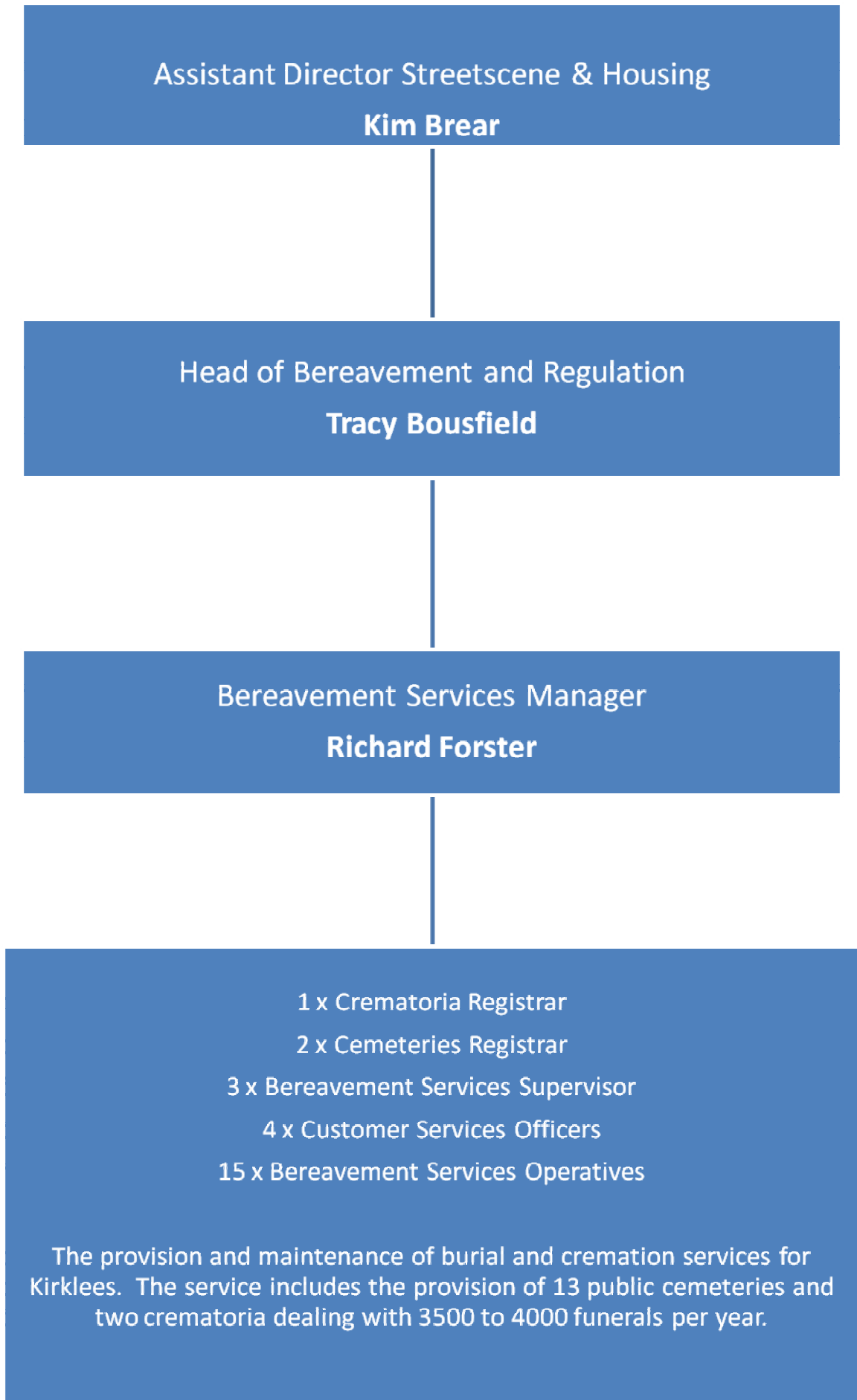
The review was carried out between September 2010 and February 2011 and included reviewing relevant documentation and interviews with:

- Tracy Bousfield, Senior Manager Environmental Services, Public Protection Services
- Richard Forster, Bereavement Services Manager, Public Protection Services
- Roger Jenkinson, Twin Chapel Centre, Bereavement Services Partnership Representative
- Paul McNulty, McNulty Funeral Service, Bereavement Services Partnership Representative
- Anthony Oade, F Oade & Son Funeral Directors, Bereavement Services Partnership Representative
- Andrew Sheard, Senior Manager Environmental Services, Public Protection Services
- Mr Tariq, Huddersfield Muslim Burial Society, Bereavement Services Partnership Representative
- Kim Wilson, Project Management Team, Physical Resources & Procurement
- Carl Woodhead, Senior Project Manager, Physical Resources & Procurement

The Panel would like to thank those members of the Bereavement Services Partnership who contributed to the review, both through meeting with the Panel and by responding to the questionnaire. Further information on the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2.

7 SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- Bereavement Services To 2008 and beyond – A strategy for the improvements and regeneration of Kirklees burial grounds and crematoria – Final Draft 15-08-03 – Kirklees Bereavement Services
- Cardiff Bereavement Services A Strategy for the Future July 2005
- Environmental Protection Act 1990 Part 1 - Process Guidance Note PG5/2(04) and Air Quality Note AQ1(05)
- Geographical Research & Information Team - CT010 (2001 Census) Religion by ward (ages 50 and over)
- Geographical Research & Information Team – West Yorkshire Central Services Agency Population Database Jan 2010
- Kirklees Burial Grounds – Information on locations, capacity and planned cemetery works – Kirklees Bereavement Services
- Natural Burial Grounds- Guidance for Operators – Ministry for Justice
- Reports to Cabinet:
 - 28 November 2007 (Private) – Bereavement Services Joint Venture Partnership Evaluation of Tenders
 - 26 March 2008 – Bereavement Services Capital Investment Proposals
 - 12 May 2009 – Bereavement Services Capital Investment – proposed new crematorium at Dewsbury and cemetery at Fenay Bridge, Huddersfield
 - 6 July 2010- Bereavement Services Strategy Update
- The legislative background in relation to private operators of burial grounds – Kirklees Bereavement Services.



Renewal of Crematoria and Cemeteries Scrutiny Assigned Task

QUESTIONNAIRE Summary of Responses

Forty-three letters and questionnaires were sent on the 1st December 2010 to members of the Bereavement Services Partnership, of which three were returned. This was followed up by telephone calls to twenty-five contacts for whom details were available, which resulted in a further thirteen questionnaires being completed. The questionnaire sought the views of the Partnership on funeral trends and customer experiences.

Key Points:

- **There are no overwhelming concerns about burial capacity if plans for the new cemetery go ahead.**
- **Muslim communities are satisfied with current provision and facilities.**
- **The Council was praised for keeping facilities open during snow episodes.**
- **Requests were made for extended access to burials and cremations on Friday afternoons and Saturdays for all funerals.**
- **Requests were made for extended cremation timeslots to 45 minutes.**
- **It was felt that crematoria facilities are outdated, for example, access to grounds, parking facilities, entrance and exit of buildings, and maintenance of buildings.**
- **There is a need for a large cremator to accommodate for larger bodies.**
- **Cemeteries maintenance, for example, graves, chapels, grounds, is not considered adequate and is a safety concern.**
- **The staff ratio is seen as insufficient to provide a high quality service at all times.**
- **Staff were praised for their high standard of work, presentation and sensitivity to context, although this was no universal.**
- **The benefits of the Bereavement Services Partnership were recognised, and a wish expressed for renewed and more frequent meetings and communication.**

QUESTIONS ASKED

Future Trends and Demand

In your opinion, please indicate the types of burials/cremations services required to meet the demand from Kirklees diverse faiths and cultures.

- *New improvement plans should address the problem of burial space. Hey Lane is a nice spot. Huddersfield Crematoria is a disgrace. However this is only 50% of the problem. Other issues are weekly timetable for scheduling funeral, and staff ratio (see customer experience).*

- *Believes Dewsbury Crematorium will be kept open because it will be busier due to high Muslim population in the area and all Muslims are buried.*
- *Maybe green burials if possible*
- *At present, the best possible service from Kirklees. New graves already agreed bottom half of Dewsbury Cemetery and top half. Enough planning done to accommodate future demand in North Kirklees. Access for burials from 9am-8pm, 7 days a week except Christmas. Extended 1 hour*
- *Frequency of burials has decreased. Mostly bury people in new family plots, who lived in the locality. Sufficient provision to meet demand – use St Peter’s cemetery in Birstall.*
- *Cremations needed later in the day after 3.00pm. If big funeral try to get the church first – however can have a lot of people standing in aisles and doorways. Has noticed a slight increase in burial requests, and people buying graves.*
- *The funeral director mainly deals with the Christian Religions, but there is an increase in more civil type funerals (Non-religious). These take a little more time to prepare as it is more about the person, so pieces of music /poetry readings are chosen.*
- *Very much the same as present*
- *Batley Cemetery – sufficient weekend burials, have own license to do so - Council agreed to extend permission to weekend – promised 6 months ago. Enough for next 80 year. Private land in Dewsbury will be full in 2 months time. Approached Council for additional land to buy but not adequate; looked at private land but 5-6 miles away. If any land becomes available, the community is willing to buy.*
- *People from around here would want to be buried within their community at a local cemetery. Transport can be an issue, people need somewhere local they can walk to and visit (cemetery or crematorium); Undertakers take a lot of organisational stuff on; Need to increase awareness of environmental issues and options; more promotion required.*
- *I am not sure what you are trying to ask*
- *Present Crematorium facilities are outdated and inadequate/inappropriate. Restricted timings for some burials in the Municipal Cemetery are impractical.*
- *We have seen a slight increase in burials but otherwise steady (site opened in 2004 and we have had approximately 500 burials).50% of people come to us for a natural, green burial - other 50% for the facility and convenience. We accept burial from all denominations and the*

ground has been consecrated by the Church of England and the Catholic Church. We have approached the local Muslim community and offered to set aside an area of the ground for Muslim burials. 20 to 25% of our burials are for cremation remains.

Customer Experience

In your opinion, what aspects of the customers' experience are the most important to accommodate?

- *Can provide too much choice if not careful. However, 10 days waiting list to do a burial is too long. There's a need to extend timetable for burial services on Friday afternoon (last internment schedule is 1.30pm, cremation 3.00pm, why?) and burials and cremations at weekends. Calderdale offers funerals on a Saturday, at a slight additional cost. Also issue around staff ratio: x3 teams of x3 staff each are not sufficient for 12 cemeteries. To do this work, you need compassion and to go that extra mile. Some staff is extremely dedicated, of high standard, and well presented; however not all staff members have the same approach.*
- *The crematorium needs to be running on time and must be tidy for when the customer arrives.*
- *Not to feel rushed e.g. conveyor belt one in, one out.*
- *Service is brilliant – Nothing to request*
- *Staff not always organised at crematorium. Staff should be more attentive, awaiting the hearse, rather than the driver having to go and find staff. Always member of staff waiting at Birstall or Batley cemeteries.*
- *More time per service needed - people go to Park Wood in Calderdale out of choice (45 minutes time slots at Park Wood).*
- *The most important aspect is to ensure that the customer needs at the time are met. It is important to make sure that it is delivered at the crematoria and the cemetery to satisfy their needs.*
- *To fulfil the burial, either coffin or ashes, with ease, and to maintain surroundings to a high standard in future years so that families feel their loved ones are not being neglected*
- *Management of Kirklees Council provides excellent service in Batley. Have 30 years experience working in partnership with the Council and 10 years ago, there was no weekend facility.*
- *Provide an opportunity to grieve healthily and ability to move on.*
- *Consideration to be given to Timings /Availability of service provision/ Tidy premises, Quiet attentive staff*

- *Pastoral sensitivity at all times. A professional attitude on the part of all service providers. Flexibility on the part of services required.*

In your opinion what improvement to the customers' experience is the most needed?

- *Car park entrance is very narrow at Dewsbury crematorium. If there is an overspill from the car-park then customers park near the entrance which blocks the hearses from getting in.*
- *Not a lot really. All the staff is great.*
- *Service brilliant – Nothing to request*
- *More time, feel on a time schedule – don't know how to get away from that – maybe 45 minutes service instead of 30 minutes.*
- *Refreshments space would be welcome. People saying goodbye need to be sheltered.*
- *This is not a criticism but it is important that regarding staff/customer relations that staff are aware this is not “just another job”. It has to be right and there has to be attention to detail to ensure the customers' needs are met during a difficult time.*
- *Satisfied – no obstacle at this moment in time*
- *Families need to access what is best for them, what brings comfort and peace i.e. visit grave, plant a tree, etc. Must provide flexibility and ability to grieve or move on in a way appropriate for them*
- *Timings/Availability of service provision; Update of premises and grounds; Attentive well dressed staff*
- *Pastoral sensitivity at all times; a professional attitude on the part of all service providers; Flexibility on the part of services required.*
- *We offer to take pictures of the funeral service for relatives unable to attend. However we wish to keep the services in the spirit of natural burials.*

In your opinion what improvement to the facilities would most improve the customer experience?

- *Huddersfield Crematoria is dated. Carry out preventative maintenance; Park Wood Crematorium was build before Huddersfield Crematorium, yet is a much better facility.
There's a lack of privacy as parties simultaneously come in and leave Huddersfield Crematorium. The use of 2 chapels and a second entrance of Huddersfield road would resolve this problem. Top office where over*

spilled car park is located is very unkempt. Over spilled car park is too far walking distance to the Crematoria.

A tea room would provide visitors with shelter and as well as a meeting place.

Need a large size cremator, as people are getting larger (obese) and only available facility is Sheffield.

- *Looking at the plans, the car-park issue will be resolved.*
- *An undercover shelter at Huddersfield Crematorium when coming out. Sometimes there is an overspill e.g. people going in and those coming out sometimes the overlap gets a bit congested*
- *Cemeteries – Old graves need to be looked after as well as surrounding ground.*
- *Design of Dewsbury crematorium is not helpful, parties coming & going through the same door. Impressed with how the staff have kept access to crematorium opened during the recent snowfalls.*
- *People come out to the front, and see the next funeral coming in. If they could exit through back garden, it would avoid clashes.*
- *Car Parking at Dewsbury and also the decoration of the place could be improved.*
- *To insist that re-opened graves are restored to their original state i.e. surrounds and headstones are securely locked into place. Penalty for not doing so equal to the cost of council re-instating the gravestones*
- *Fine as it is*
- *There's no shelter for visitors coming to tend the graves and they need to bring their own water. I would like to have the St John's church open once a month to welcome visitors, have a cup of tea. In the municipal cemetery, the chapel is in great disrepair. I believe a group called 'Friends of Dewsbury Chapels' set themselves up to improve the buildings. Crematorium can be overfilled; people congregate in doorways. Improvements to facility are overdue. Time slots of 30 minutes are too short.*
- *Update of premises; Stop allowing the diggers to run over graves. This only occurs in Kirklees MDC*
- *A new Crematorium for North Kirklees – as planned for Dewsbury. The ability to have later weekday burials and Saturday interments.*
- *Maybe establish a small Chapel on the site.*

Do you have examples of good practice or innovative service from other councils or providers?

- *I consider Rastrick Cemetery and Park Wood Crematorium as benchmark for standard and quality of service. Grenoside in Sheffield, privately owned by Co-op is a good example, and no reason why Kirklees can't offer the same.*
- *All crematoria are standardised but cemeteries are all different. Wakefield and Calderdale graves are presented very well. They move the soil from the sides of graves with a smaller JCB which disrupts the land less. Kirklees graves are presented poorly.*
- *Possibly close circuit TV in Leeds they have the system. This enables funeral directors to see what is happening at the service.*
- *No other experience apart from Dewsbury cemetery. Huddersfield and Bradford cemeteries are used as examples of good practice by others.*
- *In some area, staffs is waiting at the door of the crematoria, this is not always the case in Kirklees. The staff is helpful and willing and it is important not to lose that.*
- *Kirklees Council is a prime example of good practice for the whole country, people come up from London.*
- *Looking to do things with 'greener' consideration*
- *Yes please visit Wakefield Crematoria/ Ardsley Crematorium, Bridlington (East Riding) Crematoria. For burials visit rose hill at Huddersfield for tidy grounds*
- *I have worked with South Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield Councils/Crematoria. Experience has been variable but Pontefract & Park Wood Crematoria are superior in my estimation.*

Bereavement Services working in partnership

What key aspects of partnership working between public, private and voluntary sectors do you think need to be developed to meet future needs?

- *Main concern for partnership working ought to be giving good service to the public first and then making money. Voluntary sector involvement has limited mileage as people move on. Staff to carry more then one function i.e. gardeners to work inside when weather doesn't permit outside work.*
- *It is a shame Kirklees Cabinet has not gone into a financial partnership.*
- *Dewsbury has 2 chapels, (listed buildings) needing renovation and regeneration programme. Could be put to better use i.e. multicultural*

centre/learning centre. Public and multi-faith groups could work together to improve the facility. Muslim burial committee would be happy to take that on board. If leases or uses can be extended for evermore by Kirklees, local communities would get involved. Many people walk through the cemetery; just a tea room with 2 or 3 computers would meet neighbourhood needs.

- *Ongoing need for maintenance of graves. Guidelines on how graves are maintained straight after a funeral, what is appropriate (extra flowers, temporary headstones etc) and how to go about it is required.*
- *Bereavement Services Partnership use to meet all the time. Information was passed on regularly – no longer happening. Kept us informed, involved, and consulted on new issues e.g. new cut backs, what will happen? Also opportunity for meeting colleagues.*
- *It is important to have regular contact and dialogue. There used to be Partnership meetings twice a year, this was very useful, but there has been none for some time.*
- *Important for links to be maintained and expanded with groups such as Batley Cemetery support group so there is a two way dialogue about ideas, problems and resolutions.*
- *Need to bring more people from different faith and communities together – Muslim community is 90% satisfied. Staff ratio is currently OK, but would not sustain less. Batley Cemetery Support Group brings together local Muslim and Christian people.*
- *Everybody is working together, everyone has the interest of the families at heart and communication exists between all the parties. As a member of the clergy, I am slightly shielded from it all. However sometimes the lack of flexibility or available time slots can cause frustration if I am otherwise engaged.*
- *Listening to experienced funeral directors with many years of experience would be a start. More staff required to be able to offer the public a more user friendly service. We do this for the public, bereaved families get a poor deal in Dewsbury/Batley area.*
- *That current proposals & plans are honoured & implemented as quickly as possible.*
- *We would like to be working more closely with Bereavement Services and happy to input into any meeting or consultation. We are concerned about range of information provided to customers regarding cemeteries or crematorium.*

Any other comment

- *Found the Bereavement Services Partnership useful, but not had any meetings for ages. Council is missing out on opportunities, and ought to develop the model.*
- *During the last heavy snow, the staff at Dewsbury Crematoria was excellent at clearing the roads and pathways usually by 8.30am. The staff are very helpful in the cemeteries department at Kirklees.*
- *Encouraged by plan for new crematorium at Dewsbury; benefits are clearly needed*
- *Local community is very happy with current services – don't know about tomorrow. The staff are very supportive. Service has come a long way in the last 10 years.*
- *When the Dewsbury crematorium is completed, Bereavement Services have agreed to open up a gateway between the crematorium and the church yard, providing easy access between 2 sites and saving visitors half a mile detour.*
- *More needs to be done around educating people about types of burials and cremations. Also cremations require a lot of energy and burials are far greener for the environment.*



Burial Capacity	2009-10 Available Capacity		Planned Improvements/ extensions	
	North	South	North	South
Burial Ground No Denomination	4440	1550		
Dewsbury Cemetery	1000			
Batley Cemetery (Planning permission recently achieved)	1190			
Liversedge Cemetery (Planning permission to be sought)	400		1600	
Cleckheaton New Cemetery (Planning permission to be sought)	450		2050	
Heckmondwike Cemetery	1400			
Skelmanthorpe Cemetery		250		
Kirkheaton Cemetery		70		
Slaithwaite Cemetery (Planning permission recently achieved)		1110		
Almondbury Cemetery		80		
Lockwood Burial Chambers		100		
Hey Lane Cemetery, Almondbury (Planning permission to be sought)				8000
Church of England	483	971		
Muslim Burial Ground				
Private	20			
Almondbury		3 months		
Natural Burial Ground				
Rose Hill (private)		5000		
Almondbury		some		

ADDENDUM

Assigned Task report – Renewal of Crematoria and Cemeteries

Comment from Cabinet

Cabinet Members have met informally to consider the draft Development and Environment Scrutiny Panel report on Renewal of Crematoria and Cemeteries and fully support the recommendations that are contained within the report.

The Lead Cabinet Member will ensure that action is taken to implement the recommendations and the Development and Environment Scrutiny Panel will be kept informed on progress.

In addition Cabinet has recognised the issues raised in the report highlighting the low levels of burial capacity in South Kirklees and that the new cemetery site located at Hey Lane in South Kirklees still has a number of investigations and tests to be carried out prior to submitting a comprehensive planning application.

Cabinet has therefore decided to include the following additional measure in the Lead Cabinet Members action plan:

- That Bereavement Services commission further work to identify another burial site in South Kirklees that can act as a contingency burial site in the event that the Hey lane site cannot proceed or proceeds with reduced capacity.

Cabinet Members wish to place on record their appreciation for the work carried out by the panel in producing the report and its recommendations.

SCRUTINY ACTION PLAN

Project: Renewal of Crematoria and Cemeteries
Lead Scrutiny Officers: Val Wartelle and Richard Dunne

			FOR COMPLETION			
No.	Recommendation	Directorate and Cabinet Member(s) or organisation asked to coordinate the response to the recommendation	Do you agree with the recommendation? If no, please explain why.	How will this be implemented?	Who will be responsible for implementation?	What is the estimated timescale for implementation?
1	<p>That Bereavement Services develops an overarching strategy and business plan that provides a vision, priorities and actions looking ahead for a minimum period of 20 years and to be reviewed at least every 5 years. The Strategy should also include details on how the service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will approach the changing requirements and expectations of customers and develop services fit for the 21st Century. • Will provide greater choice and flexibility in the services it provides with the aim of improving and enhancing customer experience. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Director of Place Ken Gillespie</p> <p>Regeneration, Environment & Transport-Cllr David Sheard</p>	Yes	Through Consultation with Bereavement service Partnership, using forecasting information and consideration of industry best practice a draft strategy will be prepared which will then be part of a wider consultation exercise.	Tracy Bousfield Head of Bereavement & Regulation	Strategy out for consultation by end September 2011

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will provide sufficient burial provision to meet future demand. 					
2	That Bereavement Services Commissions a public consultation in order to establish a wide representation of public views and preferences on the burial services provided by the council. This can be used to inform Council strategy and shape future provision.	<p>Director of Place Ken Gillespie</p> <p>Regeneration, Environment & Transport - Cllr David Sheard</p>	Yes	Consultation will be carried out as part of preparation of Strategy & Business Plan	Tracy Bousfield Head of Bereavement & Regulation	Strategy out for consultation by end September 2011
3	That Bereavement Services develops a plan for carrying out a forecasting exercise covering burials and cremations that can be used to inform Council strategy and a business plan for the service. The plan should include details of the methodology that will be used and how often the exercise will be carried out.	<p>Director of Place Ken Gillespie</p> <p>Regeneration, Environment & Transport - Cllr David Sheard</p>	Yes	Bereavement Services will work with the Council's Geographic Research & information team and forecasting will be carried out using national and local information on Birth and Death rates.	Tracy Bousfield Head of Bereavement & Regulation	End of July 2011

4	That the Council undertake a detailed land search across Kirklees covering public and private land to identify potential burial sites. The results of the land search should be included in the strategy document and should be reviewed at least every 5 years. Any sites identified as being suitable burial land ¹ should be included in the local Development Framework to ensure it is protected from future development.	Director of Place Ken Gillespie Regeneration, Environment & Transport- Cllr David Sheard	Yes	Carry out high level feasibility study and options appraisal based on results of forecasting exercise. Bereavement Services will work with Planning Services on inclusion in Local Development Framework where appropriate.	Tracy Bousfield Head of Bereavement & Regulation	End of September 2011
5	That Bereavement Services use the burial density ratio of 750 plots per acre, as recommended by industry experts within the Bereavement Services partnership, to calculate the future capacity of Council owned cemeteries.	Director of Place Ken Gillespie Regeneration, Environment & Transport- Cllr David Sheard	Yes	Bereavement Services will use the recommended industry standard in future calculations to predict capacity of cemeteries.	Tracy Bousfield Head of Bereavement & Regulation	Ongoing

¹ Any site that has been identified as being suitable burial land should include an assessment to ensure that it has met certain criteria including ease of accessibility for residents including the proximity of local transport links and parking facilities, meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and the appropriate field and desktop studies have been carried out to check that the site will achieve approval under the Environment Agency guidance that covers the assessment of groundwater pollution.

6	That the Streetscene Service's Area Based Working Teams should include regular maintenance of cemeteries including the emptying of litter bins in their work programme to help provide a more co-ordinated approach to maintenance.	Director of Place Ken Gillespie Regeneration, Environment & Transport- Cllr David Sheard	Yes	Will be incorporated into the roll out of area based working	John Fletcher Head of parks & Street Cleaning/ Roger Wilson Head Waste, Recycling & Transport	September 2011
7	That Bereavement Services develops an action plan to encourage and support greater voluntary participation in the maintenance of cemeteries across Kirklees.	Director of Place Ken Gillespie Regeneration, Environment & Transport- Cllr David Sheard	Yes	Identify specific projects that could be carried out by voluntary sector, work with community support to trial initiative then develop action plan	Richard Forster Bereavement Services Manager	Trial carried out by September 2011
8	That Bereavement Services reinstates at the earliest opportunity meetings with the Bereavement Services Partnership, which should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular local meetings throughout the year aimed at addressing practical issues and concerns • An annual meeting focusing on strategic issues and should include the attendance of the Cabinet Member responsible for Bereavement Services • Invitations to broaden the membership of the Bereavement 	Director of Place Ken Gillespie Regeneration, Environment & Transport- Cllr David Sheard	Yes	Funeral Directors asked for expressions of interest in taking part in local meetings Bereavement Services Partnership meeting held on 6 April. Further meeting to be held September 2011 Lead Member to attend.	Richard Forster Bereavement Services Manager	Ongoing

	Services Partnership to include private sector providers and a larger number of representatives from different faith groups.			Membership of Bereavement Services Partnership to be reviewed and opportunity to join offered to wider audience.		
9	That Bereavement Services approach other local authorities and private providers to explore partnership working opportunities with the aim of providing efficiencies in service delivery and a broader range of funeral services.	Director of Place Ken Gillespie Regeneration, Environment & Transport- Cllr David Sheard	Yes	Bereavement Services will explore opportunities with neighbouring Local Authorities and private providers.	Tracy Bousfield Head of Bereavement & Regulation	Commence April 2011 - ongoing