

RENEWAL OF CREMATORIA AND CEMETERIES

Update February 2012

Recommendation 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. • Will provide sufficient burial provision to meet future demand.
Original Response	<p>Agreed - Through Consultation with Bereavement Services 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.</p> <p>Nominated lead officer – Tracy Bousfield Anticipated Timescale – Strategy out for consultation end September 2011</p>
Current Position - Lead Officer to Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A search for similar strategy documents and examples of best practice has been carried out. • From this a draft strategy outline was drafted for initial consultation & input from stakeholders. • Requested Bereavement Services Partnership to consider the content/gaps in the outline in order to shape a draft consultation document. • Outlined the approach being taken to the Kirklees Disability & Multi faith Forums. • Launched initial draft consultation document on Kirklees website at beginning of January 2012,

	<p>notified key stakeholders & encouraged input.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talked with the Chair of Scrutiny Wednesday 11 January. Consultation document to be updated and sent to Scrutiny for comment. Once final comments have been received from Scrutiny the formal consultation will commence. • Formal consultation will be for a period of 6 to 8 weeks to wider stakeholder groups these will include Bereavement Charities and faith groups.
Specific outcomes resulting from the recommendation	Initial feedback from the early consultation has been good. Examples of areas being considered are; moving from a 30 minute to a 45 minute slot for cremation services; improving the music and media facilities at the crematoria; and offer funeral services later in the afternoon and at weekends. Together with the planned improvements to facilities, these are seen to be positive moves to improve the service received by customers.
Service Lead Officer	Tracy Bousfield
Recommendation 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.
Original Response	<p>Agreed - Consultation will be carried out as part of preparation of Strategy & Business Plan</p> <p>Nominated lead officer – Tracy Bousfield</p> <p>Anticipated Timescale – Strategy out for consultation by end September 2011</p>
Current Position - Lead Officer to Complete	This is part of the wider consultation on Bereavement Services Strategy generally. Please see response to Recommendation 1 above.

Specific outcomes resulting from the recommendation	As above
Service Lead Officer	Tracy Bousfield
Recommendation 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.
Original Response	<p>Agreed - 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.</p> <p>Nominated lead officer – Tracy Bousfield Anticipated Timescale – End of July 2011</p>
Current Position - Lead Officer to Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information produced by the Office for National Statistics in its biannual Sub-national Population Projections has been used to predict death rates across Kirklees. • In 2008, Kirklees and the four other West Yorkshire districts commissioned Leeds University to calculate population projections by the five broad ethnic minority groups for the years 2006 to 2031 using, where possible, similar methods to those employed by the Office for National Statistics in producing the biannual Sub-national Population Projections. • Crude death rates for Kirklees residents were calculated from this work and applied to the projected totals to give estimated numbers of future deaths by ethnic group, which can be shown to be a good proxy measure of religion and hence preferences for bereavement services. • The forecasting exercise will be referenced in the overall strategy for Bereavement Services • The forecasting exercise will be carried out every five years in line with the review of the overall strategy.

Specific outcomes resulting from the recommendation	Having statistically valid data allows the Service to more accurately plan for future need. In particular allows early consideration to be given to burial needs as finding suitable land for burial is extremely difficult.
Service Lead Officer	Tracy Bousfield
Recommendation 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 land¹ should be included in the Local Development Framework to ensure it is protected from future development.
Original Response	<p>Agreed - 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.</p> <p>Nominated lead officer – Tracy Bousfield Anticipated Timescale - End of September 2011</p>
Current Position - Lead Officer to Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LDF core strategy defines cemeteries as a category of open space and contains policies for protecting open space (SCS9) and providing open space (SCS10). There is no specific reference to need for more burial space in the introduction to policy SCS10 (where needs for other types of open space are noted in general terms). However the infrastructure delivery plan (IDP), which is part of the LDF documentation, does include reference to this need. It is considered that this is sufficient to

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.

	<p>provide the context for the identification of a new cemetery site (or sites) at the next stage of the LDF.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will probably start in about 18 months, when land allocations for specific uses are identified. • Bereavement Services has commissioned Physical Resources and Procurement to carry out an ongoing assessment of land in both Council and private ownership as it becomes available to assess its suitability for potential cemetery sites. • Any land that meets the initial criteria of ease of access, topography of site, size of land available, adjacent land uses will be progressed to a desk top study.
Specific outcomes resulting from the recommendation	Once the LDF allocation is adopted Bereavement Services will have secured adequate burial land for the next 20 years.
Service Lead Officer	Tracy Bousfield
Recommendation 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.
Original Response	<p>Agreed - Bereavement Services will use the recommended industry standard in future calculations to predict capacity of cemeteries.</p> <p>Nominated lead officer – Tracy Bousfield Anticipated Timescale - Ongoing</p>
Current Position - Lead Officer to Complete	The expected life of all the cemeteries in Kirklees has been assessed using the information from the forecasting exercise and 750 plots per acre. Apart from those cemeteries in the Huddersfield area (Kirkheaton, Lockwood and Almondbury) all cemeteries are anticipated to have enough capacity to cover the 20 year period of the strategy document. However this will be refreshed every five years in line with the review of the Strategy.

Specific outcomes resulting from the recommendation	Accurate predictions of the life of all the cemeteries in Kirklees.
Service Lead Officer	Tracy Bousfield
Recommendation 6	That 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.
Original Response	Agreed - Will be incorporated into the roll out of area based working Nominated lead officer – John Fletcher & Roger Wilson Anticipated Timescale - September 2011
Current Position - Lead Officer to Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine cemetery maintenance including cutting of grass, sweeping of roads and pathways is carried out by area based working teams. • Emptying of litter bins will be incorporated into work rounds for street cleaners as part of the programme for including Parks and Open Spaces land.
Specific outcomes resulting from the recommendation	A more responsive maintenance regime which is based on the local need and is not dependant on the frequency of burials that occur within a cemetery.
Service Lead Officer	Tracy Bousfield

Recommendation 7	That Bereavement Services develops an action plan to encourage and support greater voluntary participation in the maintenance of cemeteries across Kirklees.
Original Response	<p>Agreed - Identify specific projects that could be carried out by voluntary sector, work with community support to trial initiative then develop action plan</p> <p>Nominated lead officer – Richard Forster</p> <p>Anticipated Timescale - End of September 2011</p>
Current Position - Lead Officer to Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified the need for support in ensuring memorials in cemeteries are maintained in a safe condition. • Identified probation Service Community payback as a potential for community involvement in cemeteries. • Preliminary discussions taken place with Probation Service on feasibility and scope of project. Indications are good that community payback could support the work in cemeteries. • Action plan on implementation has been prepared. • Worked with Batley Cemetery Support Group on projects including the planning application for 'Stairway to Heaven', planting bedding plants in the cemetery and carrying out litter picks.
Specific outcomes resulting from the recommendation	Involving the community in work in the cemeteries will not only improve the Health & Safety and general environment of the cemeteries but also give communities more ownership of the cemeteries, therefore reducing the level of littering and antisocial behaviour.
Service Lead Officer	Tracy Bousfield

Recommendation 8	<p>That Bereavement Services reinstates at the earliest opportunity meetings with the Bereavement Services Partnership, which should include:</p> <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 Services Partnership to include private sector providers and a larger number of representatives from different faith groups.
Original Response	<p>Agreed - Funeral Directors asked for expressions of interest in taking part in local meetings. Bereavement Services Partnership meeting held on 6 April 2011. Further meeting to be held September 2011 and Lead Member to attend. Membership of Bereavement Services Partnership to be reviewed and opportunity to join offered to wider audience.</p> <p>Nominated lead officer – Richard Forster Anticipated Timescale - Ongoing</p>
Current Position - Lead Officer to Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bereavement Services Partnership meetings are being held every 6 months. • The first meeting was held on 6 April 2011 at Riverbank Court. • The second meeting was held at Huddersfield Crematorium on 5 October 2011. Councillor David Sheard Cabinet Member responsible for Bereavement Services attended the meeting. • Invitations for the October meeting were given to the registered memorial masons. At the meeting partnership members were asked to suggest other groups which might be interested in being involved. • Members of the Kirklees Disability Forum indicated an interest in becoming involved in the partnership as a user group. They will be invited to future meetings. • Invitations to future meetings will be sent to the Multi faith Forum to allow for a wider representation at the partnership.
Specific outcomes resulting from the recommendation	<p>Improved relationships and communication between Bereavement Services and its key stakeholders.</p>

Service Lead Officer	Tracy Bousfield
Recommendation 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.
Original Response	<p>Agreed – Bereavement Services will explore opportunities with neighbouring Local Authorities and private providers.</p> <p>Nominated lead officer –Tracy Bousfield Anticipated Timescale - Commence April 2011 – Ongoing</p>
Current Position – Lead Officer to Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bereavement Services approached the West Yorkshire Authorities and two private providers to explore opportunities for partnership working. • Information from these meetings was included in a report that was considered by the Budget Implementation Group in July 2011. The group agreed that the Service be retained within the Council. • Operational managers from the West Yorkshire Bereavement now meet quarterly to share good practice and consider where efficiencies could be made.
Specific outcomes resulting from the recommendation	Establishing more regular contacts with neighbouring authorities has enabled a number of joint projects, for example the procurement of mercury abatement was carried out as part of a framework agreement with Yorkshire Purchasing organisation therefore reducing the costs of procurement. This was made possible because of the new closer contact and agreement to share good practice.
Service Lead Officer	Tracy Bousfield