

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 15 October 2019
Report Subject	Cemetery Provision and Future Strategy
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bereavement Services currently manage 15 Cemeteries and 8 Closed Churchyards located throughout Flintshire. In addition the service also has 2 Gardens of Remembrance located at Hawarden and Kelsterton, a dedicated Child and Baby Memorial at Kelsterton Cemetery and a Woodland / Natural burial area also located at Kelsterton Cemetery. Also located within the 15 Cemeteries are approximately 300 memorial benches and 12 buildings of various sizes and usage, including the chapel located in Hawarden (No 1) Cemetery.

Currently the major challenge and risk facing the service is the availability of future burial space, particularly at Hope (Bryn y Grog) and Hawarden (No 2) Cemeteries in the short term and beyond that at Buckley Cemetery.

Without action being taken to address these shortages, local residents will no longer be able to be buried in their local Cemetery with other family members and loved ones.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee supports the purchase of the identified land to extend Hope and Hawarden Cemeteries.
2	That Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that investigations into future burial provisions at other Cemeteries in the County should commence 4 years prior to the anticipated point when the existing capacity will be reached.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	PROVISION OF FUTURE BURIAL SPACE																																
1.01	<p>Bereavement Services currently manage 15 Cemeteries and 8 Closed Churchyards located throughout Flintshire as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="400 412 1313 1323"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="400 412 860 472">Cemetery</th> <th data-bbox="860 412 1313 472">Closed Churchyards</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 472 860 524"><i>Bagillt</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 472 1313 524"><i>Ddol Chapel, Afonwen</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 524 860 575"><i>Bryn Road Connahs Quay</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 524 1313 575"><i>Ffordd y Llan, Cilcain</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 575 860 627"><i>Buckley</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 575 1313 627"><i>Old Churchyard, Halkyn</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 627 860 678"><i>Flint - London Road</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 627 1313 678"><i>St James, Holywell</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 678 860 730"><i>Flint - Northop Road</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 678 1313 730"><i>St Peters, Holywell</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 730 860 781"><i>Greenfield No 1</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 730 1313 781"><i>Trelawnydd</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 781 860 833"><i>Greenfield No 2</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 781 1313 833"><i>Tyddyn Street, Mold</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 833 860 884"><i>Hawarden No 1</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 833 1313 884"><i>Vownog Road, Sychdyn</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 884 860 936"><i>Hawarden No 2</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 884 1313 936"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 936 860 987"><i>Holywell</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 936 1313 987"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 987 860 1039"><i>Hope - Bryn y Grog</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 987 1313 1039"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1039 860 1090"><i>Hope - Old</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 1039 1313 1090"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1090 860 1142"><i>Kelsterton</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 1090 1313 1142"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1142 860 1193"><i>Rhewl</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 1142 1313 1193"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1193 860 1245"><i>Treuddyn</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 1193 1313 1245"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Cemetery	Closed Churchyards	<i>Bagillt</i>	<i>Ddol Chapel, Afonwen</i>	<i>Bryn Road Connahs Quay</i>	<i>Ffordd y Llan, Cilcain</i>	<i>Buckley</i>	<i>Old Churchyard, Halkyn</i>	<i>Flint - London Road</i>	<i>St James, Holywell</i>	<i>Flint - Northop Road</i>	<i>St Peters, Holywell</i>	<i>Greenfield No 1</i>	<i>Trelawnydd</i>	<i>Greenfield No 2</i>	<i>Tyddyn Street, Mold</i>	<i>Hawarden No 1</i>	<i>Vownog Road, Sychdyn</i>	<i>Hawarden No 2</i>		<i>Holywell</i>		<i>Hope - Bryn y Grog</i>		<i>Hope - Old</i>		<i>Kelsterton</i>		<i>Rhewl</i>		<i>Treuddyn</i>	
Cemetery	Closed Churchyards																																
<i>Bagillt</i>	<i>Ddol Chapel, Afonwen</i>																																
<i>Bryn Road Connahs Quay</i>	<i>Ffordd y Llan, Cilcain</i>																																
<i>Buckley</i>	<i>Old Churchyard, Halkyn</i>																																
<i>Flint - London Road</i>	<i>St James, Holywell</i>																																
<i>Flint - Northop Road</i>	<i>St Peters, Holywell</i>																																
<i>Greenfield No 1</i>	<i>Trelawnydd</i>																																
<i>Greenfield No 2</i>	<i>Tyddyn Street, Mold</i>																																
<i>Hawarden No 1</i>	<i>Vownog Road, Sychdyn</i>																																
<i>Hawarden No 2</i>																																	
<i>Holywell</i>																																	
<i>Hope - Bryn y Grog</i>																																	
<i>Hope - Old</i>																																	
<i>Kelsterton</i>																																	
<i>Rhewl</i>																																	
<i>Treuddyn</i>																																	
1.02	<p>The management of Cemeteries is in the main covered by the Local Authorities Cemetery Order 1977 (LACO). LACO states that whilst the provision of Cemeteries is not a statutory duty, if a Local Authority does take on this provision, it must then maintain the provision of the these Cemeteries to an acceptable standard.</p> <p>The Authority also has a statutory duty under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1974 to undertake the funeral arrangements for those residents of Flintshire who are unable to fund their own funeral or have no Next of Kin able to do so.</p>																																
1.03	<p>The service is staffed by 2 full time Officers (Bereavement Services Manager and Bereavement Services Officer) and 6 Streetscene Operatives who undertake the grave digging operations and cemetery maintenance. The service also manages a team of 6 seasonal operatives who undertake grass cutting duties during the growing season (April to October).</p>																																

	<p>The service undertakes the following main operations during the year:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 400 interments (70% Full Body, 30% Cremated Remains which is the direct opposite to the national trend) • Memorial Safety Testing of approximately 6000 memorials annually • Undertake on average, 8 Public Health Burials (with a cost recovery rate of approximately 73%) • Maintains approximately 140,000m² of grass (16 cuts per year) • Maintains approximately 100,000m of paths and areas around memorials (16 visits per year) • Maintains approximately 5000m of hedge
1.04	<p>Appendix 1 provides the estimated capacity (in years) for all of the Council Cemeteries - in relation to new burial space.</p> <p>Of particular concern is the Cemetery at Hope with only 1 year (7 new grave spaces) and Hawarden with 4 years capacity. Buckley Cemetery is the third in line with 9 years of capacity available.</p> <p>The remaining Cemeteries have on average 35 years capacity remaining.</p>
1.05	<p>Suitable land has been identified adjacent to the Cemeteries at Hope and Hawarden and the Capital Business Case has been submitted for the extension to Hope Cemetery and negotiations are currently ongoing with the landowner. The Capital Business Case for the extension to Hawarden Cemetery is awaiting approval, and negotiations are at an early stage with the landowner's agents.</p>
1.06	<p>Unfortunately, there is no suitable land available adjacent to Buckley Cemetery, meaning an extension is not possible at the existing site. Enquiries have been made which have confirmed that there is no suitable land available in the Council's ownership in Buckley which could be utilised as an alternative Cemetery site. Investigations would therefore be required to identify options to purchase another suitable site in Buckley or in neighbouring areas to utilise as Cemetery land.</p>
1.07	<p>Clearly the purchase of additional land, creation of infrastructure and the extensive ground investigation works would require significant investment from capital funds. However the investment would secure future income from burial fees, which would be lost should extensions not be provided.</p> <p>Based on current fee rates the proposed extension at Hope Cemetery would generate an anticipated income of approximately £375k over a 25 year scheme period with initial purchase and development costs of approximately £225k. The balance between expected income and the cost of developing the sites will be sufficient to cover the operational costs for maintenance and supporting the burial work. This ensures the service achieves full cost recovery as require by the corporate Fees and Charges policy.</p>

	<p>As Hawarden is the major Cemetery within Flintshire, undertaking a third of all our interments, a larger extension would be required. The anticipated cost of the land purchase and developing the scheme would be approximately £600k.</p> <p>If the extensions are approved at Hope and Hawarden, they would provide a minimum of 20 years burial capacity at each site.</p>
1.08	<p>On average the timescales involved for establishing new or extending existing Cemeteries is approximately 4 to 5 years from identification of suitable land. It is therefore recommended that any future extensions are addressed 4 years prior to the anticipated date that current capacity will be reached, based on the information provided in Appendix 1.</p>
1.09	<p>A move to three “Strategic” Cemeteries located throughout the County, was previously considered and rejected as it would mean that residents would not necessarily be buried in the areas that they have lived their lives in, and would potentially not be able to be buried in the same Cemetery as other family members or loved ones.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Capital funding would be required to purchase land and develop new burial sites.</p>
2.02	<p>There are no staff resource implications associated with this project.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>Natural Resource Wales – Groundwater risk assessments at individual sites.</p>

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>Approval of the recommendations made within this report will assist the Bereavement Services in managing and reducing the level of risk associated with this highly sensitive service.</p>
4.02	<p>Approval of the recommendations made within this report will reduce the significant “reputational & political” risk associated with discontinuing burial provision in local areas where it has been provided previously for in excess of 50 years.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Burial Space

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Richard Blake – Bereavement Services Manager Telephone: 01352 704780 E-mail: richard.blake@fintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None