

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 19 th November 2019
Report Subject	Cemetery Provision and Strategy
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council 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 Cabinet approves the purchase of the identified land to extend Hope and Hawarden Cemeteries.
2	That Cabinet approves the investigations into future burial provisions at other Cemeteries in the County, which 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="400 338 1310 1245"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="400 338 860 394">Cemetery</th> <th data-bbox="860 338 1310 394">Closed Churchyards</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 394 860 450"><i>Bagillt</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 394 1310 450"><i>Ddol Chapel, Afonwen</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 450 860 506"><i>Bryn Road Connahs Quay</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 450 1310 506"><i>Ffordd y Llan, Cilcain</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 506 860 562"><i>Buckley</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 506 1310 562"><i>Old Churchyard, Halkyn</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 562 860 618"><i>Flint - London Road</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 562 1310 618"><i>St James, Holywell</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 618 860 674"><i>Flint - Northop Road</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 618 1310 674"><i>St Peters, Holywell</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 674 860 730"><i>Greenfield No 1</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 674 1310 730"><i>Trelawnydd</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 730 860 786"><i>Greenfield No 2</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 730 1310 786"><i>Tyddyn Street, Mold</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 786 860 842"><i>Hawarden No 1</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 786 1310 842"><i>Vownog Road, Sychdyn</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 842 860 898"><i>Hawarden No 2</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 842 1310 898"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 898 860 954"><i>Holywell</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 898 1310 954"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 954 860 1010"><i>Hope - Bryn y Grog</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 954 1310 1010"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1010 860 1066"><i>Hope - Old</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 1010 1310 1066"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1066 860 1122"><i>Kelsterton</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 1066 1310 1122"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1122 860 1178"><i>Rhewl</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 1122 1310 1178"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1178 860 1234"><i>Treuddyn</i></td> <td data-bbox="860 1178 1310 1234"></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>	
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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 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 required 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>

	If the extensions are approved at Hope and Hawarden, they would provide a minimum of 20 years burial capacity at each site.
1.08	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.
1.09	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.

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

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT																								
3.01	<p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>No change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>No change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> <td>No change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> <td>No change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Involvement</td> <td>No change</td> </tr> </table> <p>Well-being Goals Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Prosperous Wales</td> <td>No impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resilient Wales</td> <td>No impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Healthier Wales</td> <td>Cemeteries provide valuable “green space” that people can go and visit thus encouraging a healthier lifestyle</td> </tr> <tr> <td>More equal Wales</td> <td>The provision of additional burial space, particularly in Hawarden, will allow the authority to offer burials to alternative faith groups, which we don’t currently have in existing Cemeteries.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cohesive Wales</td> <td>No impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vibrant Wales</td> <td>No impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Globally responsible Wales</td> <td>No impact</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	No change	Prevention	No change	Integration	No change	Collaboration	No change	Involvement	No change	Prosperous Wales	No impact	Resilient Wales	No impact	Healthier Wales	Cemeteries provide valuable “green space” that people can go and visit thus encouraging a healthier lifestyle	More equal Wales	The provision of additional burial space, particularly in Hawarden, will allow the authority to offer burials to alternative faith groups, which we don’t currently have in existing Cemeteries.	Cohesive Wales	No impact	Vibrant Wales	No impact	Globally responsible Wales	No impact
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3.02	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.
3.03	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.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Natural Resource Wales – Groundwater risk assessments at individual sites
4.02	Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the matter at their meeting in October 2019. The Committee recommended Cabinet approve the recommendations contained within this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Burial Space.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Richard Blake – Bereavement Services Manager Telephone: 01352 704780 E-mail: richard.blake@fintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	None.