

Cemeteries and Memorials Phase 1 - Progress Report July 2008

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Target Date / Completion Date	Evidence of Progress - 14/1/2008	Evidence of Progress (Include Dates)	Assessment of progress (1-4)
1	A comprehensive fees and charges review for the service be undertaken as part of the service planning process for consideration before April 2008.	Jayne Robins	01/12/2007/ April 2008	Cost comparison exercise completed. Proposed increase to be considered/implemented on 1 April 2008.	New fees in place from 1 April 2008, with annual review	1
2	The further capital investment to deliver the existing five year Improvement Plan for cemeteries and closed churchyards be considered through the Capital Asset Strategy Group to identify appropriate funding streams.	Technical Services / Sue Daniels	Nov-07	Site surveys have been ongoing to identify priorities. Completion of development plan delayed to include recommendation / outcomes from Phase 2 review. This will now be presented to the Capital Group for consideration by Feb 2008	Site surveys re-commenced in June 2008 with full structural details being identified for inclusion in Development Plan. The completed development plan will be presented to the Capital & Asset Management Strategy Group for consideration by Dec 2008.	3
3	The service reviews its medium term financial plan to re-assess the assumptions on which the budget has been set.	Jayne Robins/Sue Daniels	Dec-07	Worked with Finance Team to produce sustainable budget provision. This has been included in 2008/09 estimates	Complete	1
4	Care for Your Area be asked to review working arrangements in order to establish whether there is scope to provide an extended service on Fridays and Saturdays.	Richard Bradley	N/A	Operational activity continues to be flexible to meet customer needs	Complete. Consideration of working arrangements are ongoing, with a recently commissioned benchmarking exercise via ICCM to identify current best practice.	1
5	Registration and Bereavement Services review office opening hours to provide, where possible, an improved service to the public.	Jayne Robins	Apr-08	Research and monitoring exercise completed August 2007. Consultation with staff in progress. Pilot of Satellite office opening at University Hospital of North Tees opening 21st January 2008 for registration of Births and Deaths. Comprehensive Service Review to be undertaken in September 2008	Complete Satellite office in operation since January 2008	1 1
6	In view of the experience at Durham Road Cemetery, the installation of CCTV be considered for inclusion within the five year Improvement Plan for other cemeteries.	Sue Daniels / Richard Bradley	Nov-07	Included in 2 above	See 2 above	1
7	Further efforts are made to establish friends groups for all of the Council's cemeteries.	Jayne Robins	Apr-08	Contact made with a number of established groups that are members of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (NFCF). Stockton Residents and Community Groups Association to assist with recruitment and formation. (Findings from NFCF indicate that the best response for friends groups is where cemeteries are neglected or at risk of dereliction.)	Although take-up has been slow, we have a firm commitment from three supporters to form a friends group. There is ongoing consultation with visitors to our cemeteries to increase membership	2
8	Planting be undertaken at strategic locations to deter vandals and assist with traffic control within cemetery grounds	Richard Bradley	Dec-07	Site surveys have been ongoing. Findings will be incorporated in the Five-year Development Plan.	Slight delay owing to operational issues/memorial inspection regime. Will be picked up again in Autumn 2008.	3
9	Localised flooding problems be investigated and any capital implications identified for consideration by the Capital Asset Strategy Group.	Richard Bradley	Mar-08	Findings will be incorporated in the Five-year Development Plan	Complete and included in development plan at 2 above	1
10	Improvements are made to the way graves are back filled and reinstated	Richard Bradley	Mar-08	Benchmarking exercise has been undertaken with Carlisle Cemetery, which has led to new methods being introduced i.e. use of turf. Further improvements will continue to be implemented as they are identified.	Complete and ongoing. All new graves are reinstated using additional amounts of soil, so that when sinkage does occur, the levels do not go below ground level. Turf is now being used wherever possible	1
11	A "green" approach to the maintenance of cemetery grounds be developed.	Richard Bradley	Apr-08	Peat free compost now in use. Service are now looking at ways of reducing use of pesticides and increasing water conservation. It is planned to bring each cemetery up to Green Flag standard, meaning a 'green' approach will need to be adopted in each. Pilot to commence in Thornaby Cemetery from April 2008. Any financial implications will be reported to future committee.	Complete and ongoing. Thornaby Cemetery achieved Green Flag Status June 2008, demonstrating success with regard such a "green" approach Attention can now be given to other cemeteries, e.g. Oxbridge, with the aim of submitting an application in 2009.	1
12	Improvements be made to the maps on display in the cemeteries in conjunction with section signage in the cemetery grounds.	Jayne Robins	Sep-07	Updated Site plans prepared for all cemeteries for inclusion in noticeboards. Quotes requested from suppliers for section markers (based on initial estimates of £7 per marker, total costs would be £4,500 for supply only.)	Complete. Section Markers currently being placed	1
13	The redevelopment of the disused chapels of Oxbridge and Durham Road Cemeteries be further explored and a feasibility study be prepared on the various potential options.	Richard Bradley	March 2008 September 2008	Feasibility Study to be commissioned March 2008 Findings to be presented to Select Committee	The lack of storage for essential equipment is preventative until an alternative is found. The feasibility study does not support the redevelopment of Chapels until suitable alternative facilities with each cemetery are available	3
14	A project brief be prepared for submission to the Capital Asset Strategy Group to identify appropriate funding streams to meet the costs of extension into Area C at Billingham Cemetery (approximately £40,000) and the extension and development of a woodland cemetery at Thornaby (approximately £300,000).	Sue Daniels/Jayne Robins	Nov-07	Included in 2 above	Funding secured through Capital programme for Billingham and will be completed in this financial year The further development of Thornaby Cemetery will be included in the development plan referred to at 2 above (see also rec 23)	1
15	The Land and Property Section identify additional land within the Borough for the siting of a cemetery in order to meet future burial needs.	Paul Hutchinson / Garry Cummings	April 2008 October 2008	In progress and on track for presentation to Capital Group in October 2008	In progress and on track for presentation to Capital Group in October 2008	2

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16	Future burial provision be considered as part of the planning development framework.	Sue Daniels	April 2008 and in accordance with LDF timetable	First planning meeting attended Dec 2007. In progress	In progress and on track in accordance with LDF timetable	2
17	Officers investigate alternative, space efficient ways of interring cremated remains within cemeteries.	Jayne Robins	Apr-10	Commercially available alternatives investigated and quotes received. Fees for purchase of exclusive Right of Burial and interments will need to reflect purchase and installation costs. Proposals will be presented to future committee	Project brief and outline timetable is in preparation for presentation to this Committee in Dec 2008	2
18	The audit of space available in unpurchased graves within cemeteries be continued and upon completion grave space be offered in the following circumstances subject to appropriate consultation or awareness raising exercises: Graves previously sold in perpetuity but containing no interments be identified for the purpose of cancelling Rights where the purchase took place over 75 years ago and re-offer the Rights of Interment and Rights to erect a memorial. That unused space within, previously 'reserved' graves be used for future interments. The Committee recommended that those 'reserved' graves where the previous interments took place 100 years or more ago be offered first.	Sue Daniels/Jayne Robins	April 2008 April 2010	Billingham & Egglecliffe cemeteries exempt Oxbridge Lane Cemetery completed Durham Road Cemetery audit 50% complete Thornaby Cemetery audit completed - validation of data in progress. Policy implications to be presented to future committee by April 2010	Audit now complete - see appendix to this report Policy implications will be presented to a future committee for consideration	1 2
19	All graves be excavated, as a matter of course, to allow for 3 interments.	Richard Bradley/Jayne Robins	Apr-10	Cemeteries liaison group to consider and agree procedure	Project group has been established to seek best practice and agree way forward. Findings will be presented to a future committee.	2
20	Articles be included in Stockton News to raise awareness on the full range of burial options and alternatives together with information on grave rights and transfer and the service offered by the Council in respect of civil funerals.	Jayne Robins	Dec 2007 and ongoing	A comprehensive Communication and Consultation Strategy is being developed on recommendations covering both Phase 1 and 2 reviews. Scheduled articles will be included in Stockton News from Spring 2008 edition.	Will be incorporated within the Communication and Consultation strategy.	2
21	Information leaflets be prepared on the issues to be considered when planning a "green" funeral, on how to organise your own funeral and that leaflets on planning funerals be provided to solicitors to distribute to people when they are making wills.	Jayne Robins	Sep-07	Information folders and leaflets prepared. Further research is now being carried out on issues relating to environmental impact of funerals. Guidance will be incorporated into the Communication and Consultation Strategy identified at 20 above.	Guidance will be incorporated into the Communication and Consultation Strategy identified at 20 above. A sample selection will be presented to the Committee at its' meeting.	2
22	A detailed business case be prepared on the feasibility of providing a crematorium for Stockton including possible funding streams and partnership arrangements	Sue Daniels/Jayne Robins	December 2007 December 2008	Feasibility Study commissioned - due for completion March 2008 Findings to be presented to future Select Committee	Feasibility study complete and appended for information and future discussion/consideration	2
23	The development of a woodland cemetery at Thornaby be considered by the Capital Asset Strategy Group to identify appropriate funding streams and that the extension and creation of a woodland cemetery be undertaken in one single phase to minimise the risk of subsequent phases causing damage to previously completed works.	Jayne Robins / Sue Daniels / C&AS Working Group	Sept 2008 April 2009	Thornaby Feasibility Study to be updated by Sept 2008 Project Brief to be developed by April 2009	On track	2
24	The identification of further woodland burial sites be supported.	Paul Hutchinson/Garry Cummings / Sue Daniels	April 2009 / October 2009	Surveys to be undertaken to identify any appropriate land	On track	2
25	The Council's current regulations in respect of type and design of coffin be reviewed to allow greater freedom of choice within the constraints of availability and safe materials.	Jayne Robins	Apr-09	Draft rules and regulations produced and awaiting implementation of phase 2 recommendations.	On track. Rules and regulations are being updated to incorporate changes from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 reviews for consideration by this Committee in Dec 2008	2
26	Bio-degradable coffins be supplied via Bereavement Services and that a reusable coffin shell (to be used in conjunction with a cardboard coffin) and a pall be available for use.	Jayne Robins	April 2008 / Long term	Suppliers of biodegradable coffins and prices investigated. Business Case to be developed by Sept 2008 to be incorporated into 2009/10 budget cycle.	A sample of alternative coffins and caskets have been purchased for display and use at roadshows. Business case will be considered in the 2009/10 budget cycle	1 2
27	Clearer guidelines are developed in respect of the dedicated benches and trees schemes together with the introduction of appropriate fees and that the benches, trees and other appropriate memorial dedications be extended to locations other than cemeteries.	Jayne Robins	Apr-09	Networking with other Local Authorities to be undertaken in 2008. Publicity/awareness raising dependent upon adopted policy. Placement of dedicated benches held until policy completed.	Policy is now being developed and will be linked to Phase 2, rec no. 5 and 6	2
28	The timescales included in the action plan for implementation of the review recommendations reflect a desire to make significant progress by December 2007	Sue Daniels	June 2007 / December 2007	Action plan developed Progress report to Select Committee Jan 2008.	Complete	1