

APPENDIX 1
PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Management of Memorials

SCRUTINY MONITORING – PROGRESS UPDATE	
Review:	Management of Memorials
Link Officer/s:	Dale Rowbotham / Craig Willows
Action Plan Agreed:	September 2018

Updates on the progress of actions in relation to agreed recommendations from previous scrutiny reviews are required approximately 12 months after the relevant Select Committee has agreed the Action Plan. Progress updates must be detailed, evidencing what has taken place regarding each recommendation – a grade assessing progress should then be given (see end of document for grading explanation).

Recommendation 3:	<p>A separate, distinct policy be adopted for the offer of different grave types, initially in the new Durham Road cemetery extension (to operate in tandem with the current GPP), and for this to be effectively communicated to all cemetery-users before, and robustly enforced following, implementation. This would require:</p> <p>a) a thorough programme of awareness-raising across the Borough to inform relevant organisations within the funeral industry (e.g. funeral directors, memorial masons, North Tees Mortuary & Bereavement Team) and the public of these plans.</p> <p>b) the Registrars of Births and Deaths to work in partnership with the Bereavement Team. Registrars, following the registration of the death, to advise an informant who is choosing burial of the burial options available to them, thus allowing the family to be aware of what options are available to them prior to meeting with their chosen funeral director / funeral organiser.</p> <p>c) exploring the potential of widening the colour choice for the grave collars.</p> <p>d) an evaluation of the grave collar concept to be provided to the Place Select Committee prior to any potential further roll-out in other extensions to existing or new Borough cemeteries.</p>
Responsibility:	Dale Rowbotham & Andrew Ruddock
Date:	Ongoing / November 2019
Agreed Action:	<p>Produce new policy, procedure and associated information literature for the new 3 grave options within the extension to Durham Road Cemetery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New policy produced – July 2018 • Regulations amended – July 2018 • Webpages updated – July 2018 • Information leaflets/posters produced – August 2018 • New Notice of Burial to be produced – September 2018

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening – Late Spring <p>a) Arrange and deliver briefing sessions for staff, partners and stakeholders to ensure their understanding and their ability to explain options available to bereaved families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrars’ briefing – 11 July 2018 • Mortuary & Bereavement Services Staff briefing – 12 July 2018 • Funeral Directors’ briefing – 18 July and 14 August 2018 <p>Produce information literature and update webpages.</p> <p>b) Arrange and deliver an in-depth training session on the available options for bereaved families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial briefing – 11 July 2018 • In-depth briefing and site visits for each team member – commenced <p>c) Contact supplier/s to ascertain whether other colours are available for grave collars.</p> <p>d) Initial evaluation of grave collar concept to be provided six months after opening of extension. (Extension to be opened – Late Spring 2019, in order for ground to settle following essential drainage works)</p>
Agreed Success Measure:	<p>Effective communication, awareness raising and promotion of the separate policy.</p> <p>a) All parties will have a comprehensive understanding of available options in order that families can make an informed decision.</p> <p>b) All staff familiar and confident with existing and new grave options and administration thereof.</p> <p>Record maintained of advice given and decisions made by each family.</p> <p>c) Improving choice for bereaved families.</p> <p>d) Ascertain popularity of new grave options.</p> <p>Mechanism for monitoring compliance and complaints.</p>
Evidence of Progress (November 2019):	<p>The extension was opened on 3 June 2019. The original opening date in September 2018 was postponed, to allow ground settlement following drainage works. The following preparatory work was undertaken prior to the opening:</p> <p>a) <u>Awareness-raising</u></p> <p>i) <u>Bereavement Services Staff</u> – Individual briefings on the concept and cemetery visits took place over the course of July 2018. Refresher briefings were held in May 2019, prior to the opening.</p> <p>ii) <u>Registration Staff</u> – A group briefing took place on 11 July 2018, to ensure that Registration staff understood the new concept and would refer</p>

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enquiries from interested parties to the Bereavement Team. A refresher briefing was held in late May 2019, prior to the opening.

An additional presentation was given to both teams on 29 November 2018.

- iii) Funeral Directors – Two briefing sessions took place on 18 July and 14 August 2018. All those FDs attending were appreciative and supportive of the new concept. All agreed to refer their customers to Bereavement Services for full advice before graves in the extension were purchased.

Confirmatory letters containing detailed guidance to FDs were sent on 21 July 2018 and 15 August 2018. Reminder letters were sent in April 2019 in advance of the extension opening.

- iv) Memorial Masons – Masons were invited to a briefing session on 7 September 2018. Since then the Cemeteries Superintendent has also repeatedly highlighted the new concept whilst engaged on memorial fixing appointments with masons, and also updated them on the opening date.

- v) North Tees Mortuary & Bereavement Team – A full briefing session was undertaken by Vicky Hatton on 12 July 2018.

- vi) Updates to Regulations – in July 2018 the Council's Rules and Regulations were updated to include provisions specifically relating to the new grave options in the Extension.

- vii) Updates to Literature – in July 2018 the Council produced a new leaflet, "Durham Road Cemetery (Extension) Grave Options, together with a simple one-sided sheet displaying photographs of the available options.

- viii) Updates to "Notice of Burial" Form – The form was updated in October 2018 to reflect arrangements for the Extension, and again in July 2019.

- ix) Update to website – The website was updated in July 2018 to include details of the extension.

b) Registrars of Births and Deaths to work in partnership with the Bereavement Team

See "Awareness-raising", above.

Since the opening of the extension, the Registration Team has referred customers to Bereavement Services for information and clarification as to grave options available.

Meetings and discussions with customers have been recorded in a log. The Cemeteries Superintendent has met with several families in the extension to further clarify the concept and assist with the selection of graves (also recorded, as above).

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	<p>c) <u>Widening colour choice for grave collars</u></p> <p>Enquiries were made of the collar manufacturer. The only colours possible (other than black) were green and blue, both of which would be approximately 25% more expensive to produce.</p> <p>Samples of the two plastics were obtained, but neither shade appeared attractive. Moreover, there was concern that some families may not appreciate a coloured collar next to their own, and that limiting collars to black only would ensure overall consistency.</p> <p>d) <u>Evaluation of the grave collar concept</u></p> <p>The Durham Road Cemetery Extension was opened on 3 June 2019. Three of the six available sections were opened, each containing graves of one type.</p> <p>As at 24 October 2019, uptake was as follows:</p> <p>Section H4 – Pure Lawn Graves – 5 burials 2 solid purchases</p> <p>Section I4 – Short Collar Graves - 7 burials 2 solid purchases</p> <p>Section J4 – Full Collar Graves- 4 burials</p> <p>The initial impression gained when discussing the grave options with families is that they are largely already aware of what is available and have very firm views on the type of grave they wish to purchase. They appreciate being given a choice and have frequently expressed approval that the rules relating to personalisation are going to be enforced.</p> <p>As at 24 October 2019, only one headstone has been installed within the Extension. This was within a “short collar”. The mason concerned did not experience any difficulty during the fixing, and the work did not take significantly longer than usual.</p>
<p>Assessment of Progress (November 2019): (include explanation if required)</p>	<p>1 (Fully Achieved)</p> <p>Note: To allow for more time to evaluate the new grave collar concept, Committee requested a further update on the Durham Road cemetery extension at a future meeting.</p>
<p>Evidence of Progress (July 2020):</p>	<p>Progress as of 7th July 2020 is as follows:</p> <p>Section H4 – Pure Lawn Graves – 9 burials 3 solid purchases</p> <p>Section I4 – Short Collar Graves - 9 burials 5 solid purchases</p>

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	Section J4 – Full Collar Graves- 12 burials 6 solid purchases
Assessment of Progress (July 2020): (include explanation if required)	<p>1 (Fully Achieved)</p> <p>Policies and procedures produced with regard to Durham Road Cemetery have been fully implemented and are effective. Awareness on the section continues to be raised through circulation of literature and information is also available on webpages.</p> <p>The 3 personalised new grave options available in the extension have generated a high level of interest for families with section J4-Full Collar graves being the most popular option overall. There has also been a marked increase in solid purchases for the options offered when compared with traditional plots and no issues with compliance or complaints have been reported to date.</p>

Assessment of Progress Gradings:	1 Fully Achieved	2 On-Track	3 Slipped	4 Not Achieved
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