

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**11 DECEMBER 2025**

**REPORT OF PLACE SELECT  
COMMITTEE**

**CABINET DECISION**

**Cabinet Member for Resources and Transport - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor  
Paul Rowling**

# **Scrutiny Review of Muslim and Faith Burial Services**

## **Summary**

The attached report presents the outcomes of the Place Select Committee's review of Muslim and Faith Burial Services.

## **Reasons for Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)**

The topic was included on the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2025-2026. The review is now complete, and the recommendations have been endorsed by the Place Select Committee for submission to Cabinet.

## **Recommendations**

The Committee recommends that:

1. To extend choice within the Borough's burial provision, a minimum of 10 concrete burial rings with the appropriate drainage are installed in the Muslim section of Thornaby cemetery. This should be an optional offer at an additional cost to those purchasing the plot. The number of burial rings installed may be extended if there is a greater demand for pre-purchasing these.
2. Officers carry out a further review of the operational feasibility of extending burial hours

## **Detail**

1. The Council has a statutory duty to provide suitable burial provision, and it is one of the most essential and sensitive services that the Council provides. There can be significant social implications if the Council is not able to offer sufficient levels of burial provision to ensure that families can choose a grave space in geographical areas where they have a personal preference or local connection with. The review aimed to understand the need, as well as the associated financial and operational requirements, for the provisions of

burial chambers/vaults within the Borough cemeteries as an alternative option to the standard grave plot.

2. Currently all burials in the Borough are conducted in standard soil plots, with wooden frames used for Muslim burials. Burial chambers are a preference of some members of the Muslim community, and the Committee recognises the need for a balanced approach that respects cultural and religious practices. The recommendations therefore focus on extending burial provision by offering a small number of burial rings as an optional service for those who prefer them while maintaining traditional soil burial as the standard option. During the review requests were received for extending burial hours and the Committee recommends that further investigation into the feasibility and benefit that would be added by this is required.
3. The Committee has taken evidence from Bereavement Services at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, as well as the two local Funeral Directors that carry out Muslim burials in the Borough. Local faith leaders have also shared their views on the topic, and evidence has been sought from four Local Authorities that have installed burial chambers/vaults.

### **Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment**

4. A EPIA has been completed with the outcome that the recommendations will potentially have a positive impact on the protective characteristics of Religion or Belief as they show that the Council has listened to, and is increasing choice for, the Muslim Community.

### **Corporate Parenting Implications**

5. There are no direct implications in the report.

### **Financial Implications**

6. There is a capital cost for installation of concrete burial rings. This will be recouped by charging an increased cost for a burial ring plot.

### **Legal Implications**

7. There are no direct implications in the report.

### **Risk Assessment**

8. The review is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

### **Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward/ Councillors (refer to Concordat for Communication and Consultation with Members)**

9. This review is relevant to all Wards across the Borough.

### **Background Papers**

10. None

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