

Report for Resolution

Report to Executive
22 April 2009

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Subject Operational Management of Earlham and Rosary
Cemeteries

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Purpose

This report details the operational proposals to maximise the limited space available at Earlham and Rosary Cemeteries

Recommendations

That the following be agreed:

1. To maximise the remaining burial space. Plots be only sold in conjunction with a planned funeral;
2. Plots be sold for a minimum of 4 interments; and
3. The period for the exclusive right of burial is reduced to 25 years, which will allow any remaining space in the grave to be used for “common graves” if the right is not renewed.
4. Two areas be created at Rosary Cemetery for the interment of cremated remains.

Financial Consequences

The financial consequence of this report is a small increase in income from the sale of exclusive rights to use plots.

Risk Assessment

Unless proactive action is taken to maximise the remaining space available in both the cemeteries the Council could be in a position of running out of burial space earlier than anticipated. This risk would be greatly increased if there was a flu pandemic in the next few years.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority “Aiming for excellence – ensuring the Council is efficient in its use of resources, is effective in delivering its plans, is a good employer and communicates effectively with its customers, staff and partners” and the service plan priority to continue to improve our use of resources score

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Background Documents

None

Report: Operational management of Earlham and Rosary Cemeteries

Background

1. In October 2008 the Executive considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services explaining that the amount of burial space in both the Earlham and Rosary Cemeteries was very limited. The report made suggestions on maximising the remaining burial space. In considering the issue the Executive felt that the long term future burial provision options should be considered by the Scrutiny Committee and report back with recommendations.
2. The Scrutiny Committee are currently considering the Council's long term future burial provision needs. However, there are steps that can be taken in the short term to improve the operational management and maximise the remaining spaces in both the Earlham and Rosary Cemeteries which the Executive is now being asked to endorse.

Current Position

Current Burial Trends

3. The demand for interments in Norwich over the past 4 years is on average 300 per annum, although this number has been falling each year with 240 interments taking place in 2008.
4. This down turn indicates that we are starting to follow the national trend which shows a reduction in the number of interments, with 72% of all funerals now resulting in cremation. Appendix 1 gives some comparator figures.

Earlham Cemetery

5. Earlham is the primary burial site for Norwich, and there are currently 1469 plots remaining.
6. The demand for interments is on average 300 per annum therefore with careful management and development of overgrown areas, the remaining plots will satisfy current demand for 3-4 years (2012)

Rosary Cemetery

7. Rosary is no longer considered a primary burial site, with considerable importance now being placed on its historical value and content.
8. The remaining space is minimal, although this has been extended by utilising land not originally designated for burials so that the number of plots now remaining, subject to the land being able to be used, has now been increased from 20 to 99.¹
9. The demand for interments is on average 15 per annum therefore with careful management the remaining plots will satisfy current demand for next 4-5 years (2013).

¹ Area of land is an infill site, which may not allow the full area to be utilised

Proposed operational changes to maximise the remaining burial plots.

A Existing spare capacity in each cemetery

Issues:

1. The Council currently has the exclusive right to burial for a plot to be purchased in reserve i.e. a plot may be bought but may not be used for many years, which effectively reduces the remaining burial capacity for the immediate demand each time a plot is sold.
2. The situation in 1 is further aggravated in that the plot may currently be purchased for a minimum of two interments which again reduces the remaining burial capacity.
3. The plots are currently sold for a period of 50 years, which are renewable for the payment of a further fee.
4. The leasing of the crematorium in 1999 now prevents the Council from interring cremated remains in Earlham cemetery.

Proposals

5. To maximise the remaining burial space it is proposed that in future a plot is only sold in conjunction with a planned funeral;
6. The plot is sold for a minimum of 4 interments; and
7. The period for the exclusive right of burial is reduced to 25 years, which will allow any remaining space in the grave to be used for "common graves" if the right is not renewed.
8. There is space in Rosary cemetery to create two areas for the interment of cremated remains and these should be developed for future use.

TREND BETWEEN CREMATIONS AND INTERMENTS

	CREMATIONS	BURIALS
IPSWICH		
2005	2288	264
2006	2325	232
GREAT YARMOUTH		
2006	1800	400
These figures have remained stable over the last 3 - 4 years		
LIVERPOOL		
2005 Anfield	1898	1256
2006 Anfield	1887	1231
2005 Springwood	2209	
2006 Springwood	2262	
PORTSMOUTH		
they only run Crematorium for that area, but their understanding is it runs along the line of the national average of 72%		
MILTON KEYNES		
2005	1633	559
2006	1517	545