



Technical, Economic And Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel

Review of The Council's Cemeteries And Crematorium Service

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Report On The Panels' Scrutiny Review On The Policies And Provision Of The Council's Cemeteries And Crematorium Service

1. Introduction By The Chair

Firstly, my Panel Members and I, congratulate Mr M Gurney and all of his staff for the excellent and compassionate work they do, and on achieving their second Charter Mark award.

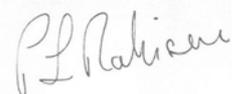
I would like to emphasise that this Review is about the structure of our facilities, the buildings, roads, footpaths and grounds maintenance.

This Review has taken Panel Members to each of the Council owned Cemeteries and the Crematorium, across to the Howe Bridge Crematorium in Atherton, Manchester Crematorium, Stockport Borough Crematorium and Cemetery and the new Cemetery at Mill Lane, Cheadle, Stockport.

Members were taken around all of the facilities and we were able to see and ask any questions, which were fully answered. We thank all of the staff at each of the sites we visited.

I would also thank the Members of the Panel for the interest shown in this Review especially the Members of the Citizen 2000 Panel, who took an active part in the Review from the beginning. It was the first time that any Members of the 2000 Panel have been invited to take part in a Scrutiny Review, and it is also the first time that Members of any Scrutiny Panel have been filmed whilst undertaking a Review.

Thank you.



Councillor Peter J Robinson
Chair of the Technical, Economic and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel



2. Summary

The Technical, Economic and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel undertook this Review in response to the concerns of a Member of the Panel relating to the need for potential improvements to Cemeteries, and the flow of mourners in and out of the Crematorium Chapel; and at the request of a member of the public, who wanted to ensure that Tameside Council was meeting the needs of all faiths in the community.

In undertaking this Review the Panel acknowledged the Charter Mark that had been re-awarded to Bereavement Services for excellence in customer service and used some of the recent consultation material that had been obtained during the assessment process. The Members of the Scrutiny Panel undertook visits both collectively and individually to cemeteries and the crematorium in Tameside and outside the authority. Extensive consultation also took place on their behalf, with representatives of the faith communities in the Borough. The Panel was also assisted by several members of the Citizen 2000 Panel and by Mr Steven Howse, a co-opted member of the Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services Scrutiny Panel who together with Ms. Brenda Hilditch, helped advise the Members about disability issues.

The Review identified that there was a need for significant investment in the maintenance of footpaths at cemeteries and that health and safety issues had led to the laying down of vertical head stones that were deemed to be unstable. This had proved to be a very sensitive issue and Members suggested that the resulting appearance of the Cemeteries be reviewed to ensure that the feelings and anxiety of relatives be fully taken into account. The extreme personalisation of graves was considered by the Panel, together with facilities and access for disabled people and access and egress issues at the Crematorium.

The Scrutiny Panel gave detailed consideration to the requirements of the faith communities in Tameside for the disposal of the deceased. The Scrutiny Panel was satisfied that the Council was doing everything practicable to meet these needs and welcomed the provision of both a Hindu Deity at the Crematorium together with other necessary facilities, and special Muslim burial areas at both Ashton-under-Lyne and Hyde Cemeteries. Members were also satisfied, following consultations, that burials were taking place in accordance with the requirements of the Quran.

The Scrutiny Panel recognised that there was a need for a considerable investment in the maintenance of the Council's Cemeteries and improvements to the Crematorium Chapel and identified assets that could be utilised to enable some capital investment in the service.

3. Membership Of The Scrutiny Panel

Councillors P Robinson (Chair), Councillor S Shepherd (Deputy Chair), Councillors Bailey, Downs, Grundy, Meredith, S Quinn, Seabourne and S Smith

4. Terms Of Reference

The following Terms of Reference and objectives for the Review were approved by the Panel at its meeting held on 26th July 2004:-

Terms of Reference

“To review the Council’s policies and provision relating to the Cemeteries and Crematorium to ensure the service meets the needs of the residents/visitors and report with recommendations in relation to any improvements”

Objectives

- 1. To produce accurate information on the provision of Cemeteries and Crematorium, present and planned, to include eg. quality: quantity: locations and comparisons with other authorities;**
- 2. To assess and clarify the Council’s policy for the service provision and the development of that policy. (To include if/how it links to any other strategy eg. Equalities, the views of the Cabinet Deputy and service providers);**
- 3. To record public satisfaction and identify any improvements;**
- 4. To assess need and whether current and planned provision will meet that need. (To include demographic information, consultation with key groups, links to any other strategies, views from the Cabinet Deputy and service providers, models from other authorities, etc.)**

See Appendix 1 for details of the Scoping Document.

5. Methodology

- 5.1 This Scrutiny Review was undertaken by the Members of the Technical, Economic and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel, who invited representatives from the Citizen 2000 Panel to assist in an advisory capacity.
- 5.2 The Panel commenced the Review by meeting with the Council's Head of Environmental Operations, Mr Robin Monk and the Senior Registrar Cemeteries and Crematorium, Mr Michael Gurney to obtain some background information on the Council's policies.
- 5.3 Councillor Robinson and the Designated Research Officer visited Dukinfield Crematorium and Howe Bridge Cemetery and Crematorium in Wigan.
- 5.4 The Scrutiny Panel attended site visits to:- Stockport Cemetery and Crematorium, Mill Lane Cemetery, Stockport and Manchester Crematorium
- 5.5 The following representatives of religious denominations were consulted:-
- (i) Reverend Father Michael Walsh, Dean of the Catholic Parishes in the Lancashire Section of Tameside;
 - (ii) Reverend Cecil King from the circuit of Methodist Churches;
 - (iii) Reverend P Dixon from St. Stephen's Church, Audenshaw Road, Audenshaw;
 - (iii) Jean Taverner, Independent Methodist Minister;
 - (iv) Black Minority Ethnic Communities in the borough. Responses were received from Mr Mohammed from the Ashton Pakistani Community, and Mr Reza from the Hyde Bangladeshi Welfare Association.
- 5.6 Individual Panel Members visited the Cemeteries and the Crematorium in Tameside, together with the Designated Research Officer.
- 5.7 The Panel has consulted Mr Stephen Howse, a wheelchair user who is an advisory member of the Lifelong Learning Services Scrutiny Panel, and Mrs Brenda Hilditch, who is also a wheelchair user, and former Elected Member of this Council, with regard to access to the Council's Cemeteries and the Crematorium.
- 5.8 All Elected Members of the Council were asked to submit their comments on their Ward Cemetery.
- 5.9 The Panel met with the Head of District Assemblies, Mr Andrew Mason.
- 5.10 The Review, the Panel met with the Cabinet Deputy for Environmental



Services, Councillor Cath Piddington, and once again, the Head of Environmental Operations, Mr Robin Monk.

6. Review Findings

6.1 General Information

Objective One - “to provide accurate information on the provision of Cemeteries and Crematorium, present and planned”. In support of this objective, the Panel commenced its review by ascertaining the current procedures regarding the Council’s policies and provision relating to Cemeteries and the Crematorium.

Service Provision

- 6.1.1 The Cemeteries and Crematorium Service was previously the responsibility of the Leisure Services Department. Since 2001, the Service has been the responsibility of the Directorate for the Economy and Environment.
- 6.1.2 The Council provides Cemeteries at Ashton, Audenshaw, Denton, Droylsden, Dukinfield, Hyde, Mossley and Mottram and a Crematorium at Dukinfield.
- 6.1.3 The Crematorium undertakes up to 14 cremations per day.
- 6.1.4 The Cemeteries and Crematorium are managed by the Council’s Bereavement Services who have been successful in achieving Charter Mark status. This has recently been renewed and reconfirms the continuing high standards provided to its customers.
- 6.1.5 A service may be held at any of the Chapels located at Denton, Droylsden, Dukinfield, Hyde or Mossley Cemeteries.
- 6.1.6 The Council’s Cemeteries and Crematorium facilities are comprehensively publicised on the website, and include links to related matters.
- 6.1.7 The Panel commends Bereavement Services for achieving Charter Mark status, and congratulate the officers for the high level of service provision, and their



commitment in ensuring customer satisfaction and meeting customer need.

Funding

6.1.8 The 2004/2005 Revenue Budget for Bereavement Services, which is responsible for the Council's Cemeteries and Crematorium is as follows:

Cemeteries

Expenditure	£
Total Expenditure	691,190
Income	
Total Income	446,100
<u>Net Deficit</u>	<u>245,090</u>

Crematorium

Expenditure	£
Total Expenditure	301,590
Income	
Total Income	642,990
<u>Net Surplus</u>	<u>341,400</u>

Capital Project Funding Bids

At the time of writing this report, capital project funding bids have just been submitted for the following projects:

Droylsden Cemetery Extension £133,000.00
Renewal of Cemetery Footpaths and Driveways £394,000.00
Headstone Safety - £100,000.00 per year for four years

(NB. For Headstone Safety Bereavement Services received capital funding of £100k in 2003/04 and again in 2004/05).

Tameside Demographics

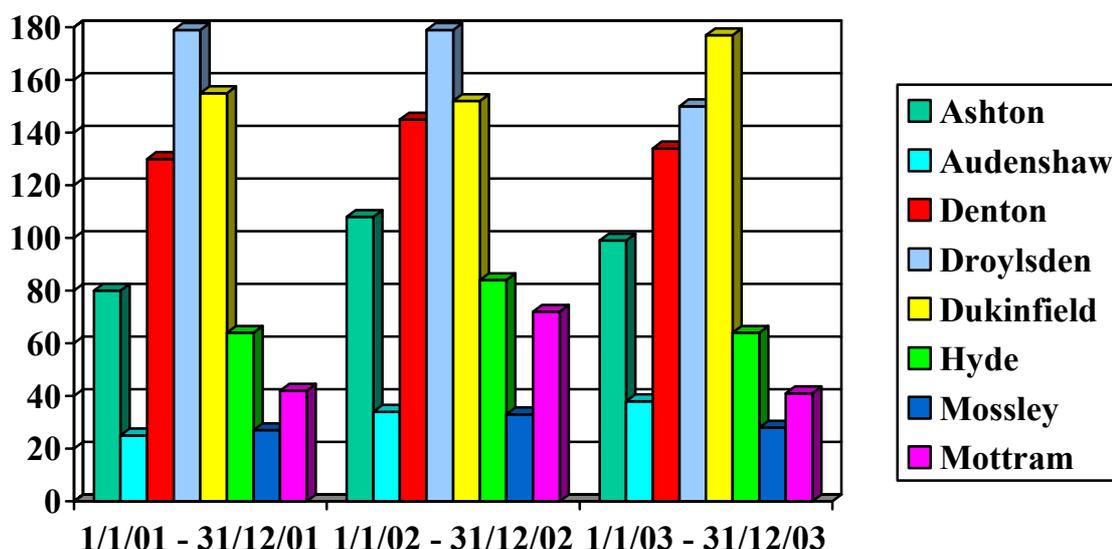
6.1.9 The following projection is based on figures from 1996, because figures based on the 2001 census have not yet been made available.

6.1.10 The statistics show that in Tameside, the older population is predicted to rise, while the number of deaths will be static or fall slightly.

Thousands	mid-1996	mid-2001	mid-2006	mid-2011	mid-2016	mid-2021
Pop 0-15	47.9	45.9	42.5	39.8	38.9	38.6
Pop 16-24	22.1	21.9	23.9	23.8	21.7	20.2
Pop 25-44	68.4	67.1	62.6	57.4	54.9	54.8
Pop 45-64	49.6	51.3	54.8	59.8	60.8	60.0
Pop 65-74	18.1	16.4	16.6	17.9	20.6	21.1
Pop 75+	14.6	14.8	14.2	13.8	14.3	15.5
Pop – Total	220.7	217.5	214.5	212.4	211.3	210.3
Deaths		2.5	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3

N.B. The figures shown are thousands, i.e. Pop 0-15 mid-1996 is 47.9, likewise the deaths projected for mid-2021 are 2.3.

6.1.11 The following graph shows the numbers of burials by Cemetery in Tameside from 1st January 2001 until 31st December 2003



Dog Fouling

6.1.12 In recent surveys, the service has established that dog fouling ranks highly on the customers' list of issues.

6.1.13 Although dogs are prohibited from the borough's Cemeteries or the Crematorium grounds, this policy is not actively enforced, due to the cost implications.

6.1.14 The Scrutiny Panel is pleased to note that the Council is amongst the most successful Councils for prosecuting owners of dogs responsible for dog

fouling, and encourages the enforcement of this policy in the grounds of the Council's Cemeteries, and Crematorium.

Objective Two - "to assess and clarify the Council's policy for the service provision and the development of that policy."

Policies

- 6.1.15 During the Review, it became apparent that although there is a Service Charter displaying the Council's commitment to providing a quality service, there does not appear to be a general Council policy for the service provision.
- 6.1.16 The Service however, is governed by legislation, and the Council does ensure that the Service Charter (See Appendix 2), Standards of Service (See Appendix 3) and "Our Customer Pledge" (See Appendix 4) relate to specific policies, ie. Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety which also relate to legislative requirements.

Equalities Issues - Religious Denominations

- 6.1.17 Another aspect of Objective two of the Scrutiny Review, was "... to include if/how it (the Council's policy) links to any other strategy eg. Equalities)".
- 6.1.18 The Council's Cemeteries have provision for burials of various denominations, with separate Muslim sections at Hyde and Ashton (Hurst) Cemeteries. The Crematorium also facilitates cremations for various denominations.
- 6.1.19 The Standards of Service clearly demonstrate the Council's commitment to meeting the religious requirements of all denominations. For example, Bereavement Services will undertake to bury or cremate a person within one working day if this meets with the family's religious requirements.
- 6.1.20 Reverend Father Michael Walsh, Dean of the Catholic Parishes in the Lancashire section of Tameside, has provided a list of comments about the Council's Cemeteries and Crematorium. He does raise concerns regarding vandalism in the Cemeteries. He also comments on queuing at Dukinfield Chapel, caused by the overrunning of the previous funeral and sees the problem as the result of the pure volume of funerals.
- 6.1.21 Reverend Cecil King from the circuit of Methodist Churches concurs with the comments provided by Reverend Father Walsh.

- 6.1.22 Comments have also been received from Jean Taverner, Independent Methodist Minister, who again concurs with Reverend Father Walsh and Reverend King.
- 6.1.23 Consultations have been undertaken with the Chairman of the Hyde Bangladeshi Welfare Association, who does not have any concerns regarding the services provided to the Bangladeshi community.
- 6.1.24 During consultations with representatives of the Muslim community, the representatives state that they require Muslim burials within 24 hours of a death.
- 6.1.25 Like other religions, Islam has laws and customs regarding the preparation of the body and ceremony, however, the Iman states that it is important that the burial takes place **as soon as possible** after death. (Appendix 6 refers to a translated extract from the Quran).
- 6.1.26 The Panel are pleased to note that Bereavement Services work extremely hard to accommodate the requirements of the Muslim faith, evidenced in the figures detailed below. Furthermore, in order to bury the deceased as early as possible, Bereavement Services ensure that there are always two graves prepared at Ashton (Hurst) Cemetery and Hyde Cemetery, to facilitate this.
- 6.1.27 During 2003/2004 there was a total number of 3010 Funerals.
- 6.1.28 The total number of Muslim funerals during 2003/2004 was 12. 7 Muslim funerals were held at Ashton (Hurst) Cemetery, and 5 Muslim funerals were held at Hyde Cemetery.
- 6.1.29 2 of the Muslim funerals were held on the same day of death.
- 6.1.30 8 of the Muslim funerals were held on the day following death.
- 6.1.31 On one occasion a family were offered the funeral service on the day following death but the family requested that the service be held two days after the death.
- 6.1.32 1 Muslim funeral was held five days after the death, due to Coroner enquiries.
- 6.1.33 The figures show that the demand for weekend funerals is minimal and would not be financially viable. These figures however, are monitored annually and should any changes occur the provision will be reviewed.
- 6.1.34 Furthermore, comparisons have been made with other local authorities regarding their working procedures regarding the provision of Saturday funerals, the details of which are as follows:-

<u>Authority</u>	<u>Saturday Working</u>	<u>Comments</u>
St. Helens		No demand
Rochdale	No	
Trafford	If staff are available. No set rule on it.	Charge double. No demand.
Wigan		Only ever done three.
Manchester	Yes	Large Muslim Community. Charge Extra.
Bury	Yes	Large Muslim Community
Salford	No	Accommodate Monday - Friday
Stockport	No	Don't have any request
Oldham	Yes	Staff are paid £55 per weekend to be on stand-by just in case one is required. Do very few at weekend.

- 6.1.35 A recent addition at the crematorium is the provision of a Hindu Deity. This enables Hindu mourners to pray to their own Deity and there is also provision for their funeral tradition of bathing hands and feet.

The Cabinet Deputy for Environmental Services, Councillor C Piddington at the recent opening of the Hindu Deity



- 6.1.36 There is provision at Ashton (Hurst) Cemetery for Ukrainian burial plots.
- 6.1.37 There are also annual remembrance services held at Droylsden and Hyde Cemetery Chapels every November to enable Roman Catholics to pay their respects to the people who have died that year.

Equalities Issues - Accessibility

6.1.38 The Panel is pleased to see that Bereavement Services strive to continually improve their services to their customers, and have already made the following improvements in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act:-

- (i) Installation of a loop system at the Crematorium;
- (ii) Provision of large print funeral books;
- (iii) The provision of Braille funeral books at the Crematorium;
- (iv) Construction of ramps at Droylsden and Dukinfield to make it easier for people in wheelchairs to visit. There are also staff to provide help and a wheelchair if required;
- (v) New toilets with access for disabled people at Denton Cemetery;
- (vi) The provision of a signer for deaf people at the Crematorium Chapel.

6.1.39 With regard to access to all Bereavement Services buildings and premises, the service has asked external consultants to provide a report. When the report is completed, the Service will act upon the recommendations wherever possible.

6.1.40 The Panel Members have expressed concern regarding the condition of the footpaths within Cemeteries, and have consulted Mr Stephen Howse, a wheelchair user who is an Advisory Member of the Lifelong Learning Services Scrutiny Panel, and Mrs Brenda Hilditch, who is also a wheelchair user, and former Elected Member of this Council.

6.1.41 Mr Howse and Mrs Hilditch have submitted the following comments:-

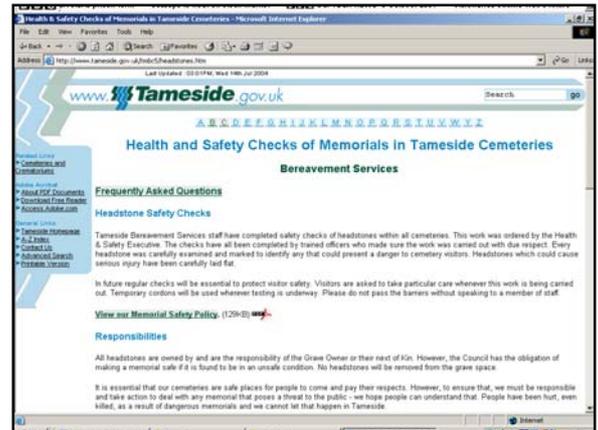
“Provision for disabled parking, within the grounds of Dukinfield Crematorium and Cemetery would be welcomed. Some sites are difficult to park near, and when unloading a wheelchair onto the pavement, there isn’t a dropped curb. This leads to unloading onto the road and mixing with the traffic.

Adequate toilet facilities for disabled people, should be available at all the Council’s Cemeteries. Some sites have no toilet facilities at all.

Pot holes, surface flooding, camber on some paths, loose or flaking paths, ground rutting and loose stones cause difficulties for access along the pathways and to the grave sides”.

Health and Safety Issues

Headstone Safety



- 6.1.42 In recent years, there has been increasing attention given to the stability of memorials and headstones and the risks these present to Cemetery staff and visitors. This is because fatalities and serious injury have resulted in Cemeteries nationally, and the Health and Safety Executive have taken a particular interest in this area in recent years. It must also be remembered that a serious injury occurred to a member of the public in 2002, in one of the Council's Cemeteries caused by a falling headstone.
- 6.1.43 The Council has been pro-active in taking measures to deal with headstone safety, and a Memorial Masons Registration Scheme was introduced in January 2002 to limit risks within Tameside Cemeteries, by regulating and monitoring those who carry out work on headstones and ensuring that headstones are erected and fixed to an approved and safe standard. (See paragraph 6.1.49).
- 6.1.44 Furthermore, the Council has introduced a Memorial Safety Policy, which provides clear guidance on the responsibilities of the Council to staff and visitors.
- 6.1.45 Most of the headstones are owned by and are the responsibility of the grave owner or their next of kin. Some headstones have been erected by the War Graves Commission, which is responsible for such memorials. In the case of public graves (where the Exclusive Right of Burial is held by the Council), the headstones are the responsibility of the Council.
- 6.1.46 The Council has a statutory and common law duty to ensure that the memorials remain in a safe condition. No headstones however are removed from the grave space if they are found to be unsafe.
- 6.1.47 In cases of immediate danger, the Council is empowered under the provision of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO) Article (3) to take immediate action to make safe dangerous memorials. There is no power or duty to repair or restore a memorial.
- 6.1.48 The Panel is pleased to note that the Council affords paramount importance to the safety of headstones in its Cemeteries, and is vigilant in ensuring that all risks are controlled as far as possible. Significantly, the Council has invested capital monies in dealing with this issue.

- 6.1.49 Since 2002, the Council has ensured that Stone Masons erect all memorials with a Ground Anchor System which is approved by The National Association of Monumental Masons). Consequently, there have been no safety problems experienced with these memorials.
- 6.1.50 Regular safety inspections are carried out on the headstones and all staff who undertake inspections, are trained by Tameside MBC structural engineers, The National Association of Monumental Masons and The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management.
- 6.1.51 A risk assessment and method statement for inspecting and testing headstones and monuments are established and Cemetery staff only inspect memorials, which are below 2m high.
- 6.1.52 Memorials above 2m require specialist inspections by structural engineers. These memorials will be identified during the routine inspection and a list forwarded to the specialist as soon as the inspection of that Cemetery is complete.
- 6.1.53 The inspections are undertaken every six months.
- 6.1.54 Memorials found to be in immediate danger of falling are lowered to the ground in accordance with the training given.
- 6.1.55 Adequate records are kept of all inspections and documents are kept for three years.
- 6.1.56 Members of this Scrutiny Panel are anxious that this report should reflect their concern that headstones which, on inspection, are found to be unstable and unsafe are laid down carefully to avoid damage wherever possible and with appropriate decorum so as to minimise distress to relatives of the deceased.
- 6.1.57 The Panel Members are concerned regarding the unsightly appearance of the Audenshaw Cemetery, where so many headstones have been laid down because they are unstable and unsafe.
- 6.1.58 The Panel are also concerned at the prospect that churches within the Borough will decide to close their churchyards and seek to transfer the liability for maintenance to the Council under Section 215 of the Local Government Act 1972. Such transfers will place an additional financial burden on the Council with no contribution from the churches.

Employee Health and Safety

- 6.1.59 During a site visit to Dukinfield Crematorium, the Chair asked about the health and safety of the operatives.

- 6.1.60 The Panel Members are keen to ensure that the operatives are sufficiently protected, when undertaking their duties, and a recent inspection by the Council's Health and Safety Unit, confirms that the service is complying with health and safety standards, and that appropriate safety equipment is provided.

Emergency Exits

- 6.1.61 Emergency exit provision is adequate at all Chapels and complies with health and safety regulations.

Objective Three - "to record public satisfaction and identify any improvements".

Customer Satisfaction

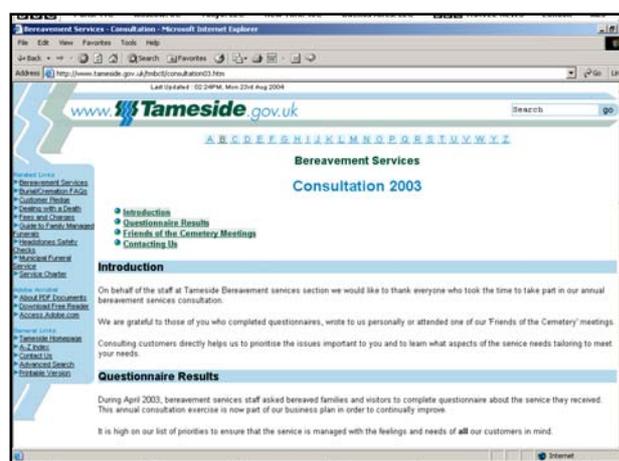
- 6.1.62 The Panel was informed that during April 2003, Bereavement Services staff asked bereaved families and visitors to complete a questionnaire about the service they had received.

- 6.1.63 This annual consultation exercise is now part of the service's business plan in order to continually improve the service provision.

- 6.1.64 During the consultation, 68 questionnaires were despatched and 43 were returned.

- 6.1.65 The questionnaire was broken down into the following 5 categories:-
- Facilities;
 - Access to the service;
 - Staff;
 - Information and choice;
 - Overall satisfaction.

- 6.1.66 The main results of the questionnaire indicated the following responses:-
- 82% of respondents rated the facilities as average or better;
 - 89% of respondents rated the access to the service as excellent;
 - 100% of respondents rated the attitude of staff as excellent;
 - 87% of respondents rated the quality of information as good;
 - 91% of respondents said their overall satisfaction rate was good.

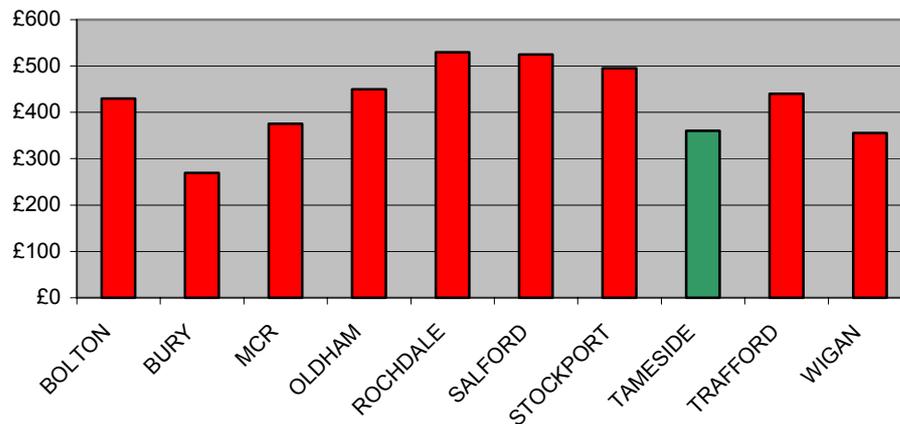


- 6.1.67 The main issues highlighted from the results of the questionnaire were:-
- Public toilets are required at Denton Cemetery¹;
 - Additional memorial facilities are required at Ashton Cemetery;
 - Disabled access is required at Droylsden Cemetery;
 - Improved signage is required at all Cemeteries with opening times being clearly displayed.

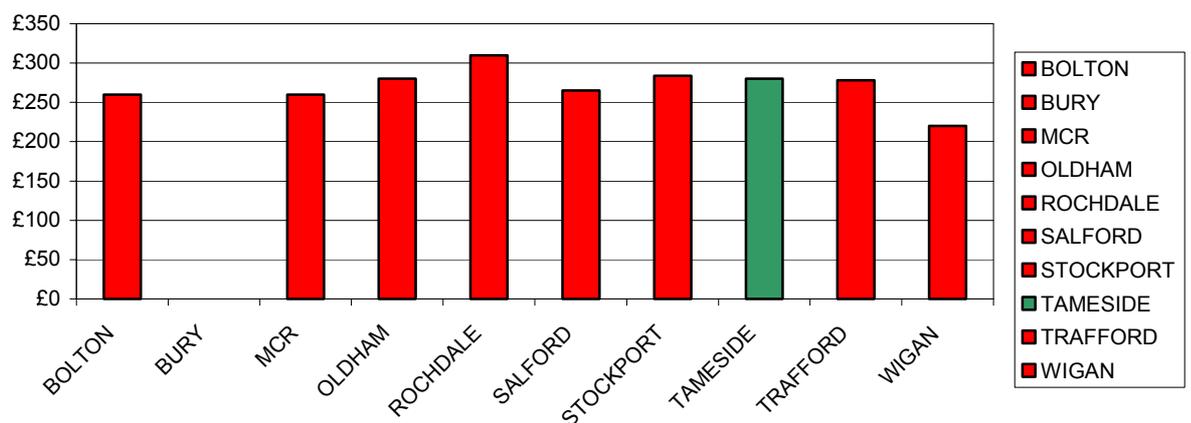
- 6.1.68 The survey highlighted some very positive feedback on the following issues:-
- New footpaths;
 - Crematorium Chapel appearance;
 - Cemetery/Crematorium records are available online;
 - Choice of memorials that are on offer.

Cost Comparisons with other local authorities in Greater Manchester²

Cost of Exclusive Right of Burial for Residents - Greater Manchester



Comparison of Cost of Cremation for Residents - Greater Manchester



(No figures available for Bury MBC)

¹ At the time of writing this report, the Panel are pleased to note that new toilet facilities at Denton Cemetery have been provided.

² For detailed Comparison of Schedule of Charges throughout Greater Manchester refer to Appendix 5

Vandalism

- 6.1.69 Although concerns have been expressed regarding crime and vandalism in the Council's Cemeteries, feedback from the Tameside Patrollers confirms that there are only isolated incidents reported to them in relation to this matter.
- 6.1.70 Furthermore, Greater Manchester Police have undertaken searches using a number of databases, and have submitted the following comments:-

“I can confirm that searches on Police databases reveal no specific problems, trends or patterns in relation to incidents or crimes in and around Cemeteries and the Crematorium, other than very isolated incidents that occur too seldom to merit any fixed problem.”

Security

- 6.1.71 Security in Cemeteries is provided on a joint basis by Bereavement Services staff and a contracted security company.
- 6.1.72 The contract is let by the District Assemblies and therefore Bereavement Services have very little control over this provision.

Woodland Burial

- 6.1.73 Bereavement Services are considering the provision of a Woodland Burial Site within the boundaries of Denton Cemetery. This would offer people the option of being buried in a natural environment rather than traditional Cemetery.

Mercury Emissions

- 6.1.74 On site visits to the various Crematoria in Greater Manchester, the possibility of mercury being discharged into the atmosphere from people with fillings is causing concern. The costs of installing additional equipment could run into amounts of six figures and these costs would consequently be borne by the public.

6.2 Specific Information

Objective Four - “to assess need and whether current and planned provision will meet that need”.

(Demographic information, consultation with key groups such as religious leaders and links to other strategies have been addressed earlier and are detailed within Section 6.1 of this report).

The Council’s Crematorium

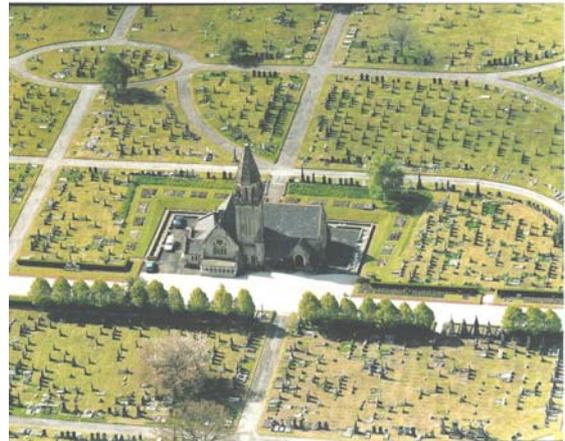
- 6.2.1 The Crematorium is situated at Dukinfield Cemetery, where services for both burials and cremations are held at the multi-denominational Chapel with seating for between 80 and 100 people.
- 6.2.2 The waiting room and toilets, including facilities for the disabled, are to be found in the Crematorium building. Toilets are also available at the Memorial Lodge.
- 6.2.3 Wheelchairs are available both at the Chapel and the Crematorium office should visitors require to use one.
- 6.2.4 The most recent survey conducted in 2003 reported positive feedback on the appearance of the Crematorium Chapel.
- 6.2.5 Following consultation with Elected Members, the following comments have been submitted regarding the Crematorium:-



“Dukinfield Crematorium serves the whole of Tameside and is the place where many people say farewell to their relatives and friends. As such, the reception area, access/egress could be much improved, to ease the flow of mourners. A separate exit would be of great benefit.” Ashton Hurst Ward Councillor

“Many people feel that there is insufficient time between funerals leading to more than one set of mourners at the same time. A number of Crematoriums I have seen have a separate entrance and exit, thus avoiding clashes”. Werneth Ward Councillor

- 6.2.6 Following a recent site visit by Councillor Robinson and the Designated Research Officer, the concerns outlined above are understood by the Panel Members.
- 6.2.7 Mourners have to enter and leave the Crematorium Chapel by the same door.
- 6.2.8 This can be upsetting for mourners, especially when they leave the Chapel and see the waiting cortege from the next funeral.
- 6.2.9 This situation could be avoided if there was a second doorway, made to allow mourners to leave by an alternative route at the rear of the Chapel.
- 6.2.10 The changes would provide an additional period for mourners to offer condolences, view the floral tributes etc, at a more leisurely pace, before leaving the grounds.
- 6.2.11 It is understood that Bereavement Services also acknowledge this matter, and have commissioned architects plans for the provision of a new doorway and vehicle access.



The Council's Cemeteries

Ashton Cemetery

- 6.2.12 Councillor Bailey, together with the Designated Research Officer undertook a site visit to Ashton Cemetery.
- 6.2.13 Generally, the Cemetery has a pleasant outlook, and is tidy and well kept.
- 6.2.14 Councillor Bailey considers that maintenance is required to the footpaths in the Cemetery. The total cost of replacement footpaths, estimated about three years ago, would be approximately £44,471. The cost today, would be higher due to inflation. This work however, is considered necessary, particularly to ease access within the Cemetery for disabled people.



6.2.15 Furthermore, concerns are expressed regarding the lack of permanent toilet facilities in the Cemetery, and although the Council do not have a legal obligation to provide this facility, the Panel do feel that there is a moral obligation to provide a permanent toilet facility.



6.2.16 The Panel consider that some thought be given to the future of the unused Chapel within the Cemetery.

6.2.17 The building is in a poor state of repair, has been vandalised, and has safety fencing to avoid accidents.



6.2.18 The Council has no planned use for the building and has no funds to repair and maintain the Chapel.

6.2.19 An agreement has been made with Hurst Methodist Church, allowing people to use their Chapel.

6.2.20 The Panel would like consideration to be given to the possibility of marketing this building, to raise funding for essential maintenance works, which would enhance the service to the public.

6.2.21 Some areas of the Cemetery do appear to be overgrown, however, issues of personalisation of graves, and the laying of unsafe headstones prevent thorough grass cutting.



6.2.22 Councillor Bailey considers that the unsafe headstones which have been laid in accordance with the health and safety procedures, look as though they have been vandalised.

Audenshaw Cemetery

6.2.23 Councillor Seabourne, together with the Designated Research Officer, undertook a site visit to Audenshaw Cemetery.

6.2.24 Councillor Seabourne considers the Cemetery grounds, in general, to be well kept, with no obvious signs of graffiti or vandalism.



- 6.2.25 Access within the Cemetery could be improved with the repair and maintenance of the footpaths, which is estimated to cost over £40,095.
- 6.2.26 The future of the lodge within the Cemetery could be considered as part of an income generation initiative.
- 6.2.27 Councillor Seabourne is concerned about the manner in which some of the unsafe headstones are laid. She considers that some of these headstones look very untidy, and questions their safety.
- 6.2.28 Councillor Seabourne also raises concerns regarding the poor condition of the toilet facilities at this Cemetery, but, following discussions it has been ascertained that the District Assemblies have responsibility for the maintenance of the toilets in Cemeteries, and Bereavement Services have no control of this facility.



Denton Cemetery

- 6.2.29 Councillor Margaret Downs, together with the Designated Research Officer, undertook a site visit to Denton Cemetery.
- 6.2.30 Generally, Councillor Downs considers the Cemetery grounds to be well kept, and they do not display any signs of graffiti or vandalism.
- 6.2.31 It is presumed that due to recent heavy rain, there are small stones which have been washed onto the pavements. This will make walking difficult for the elderly or infirm. There are also examples of damaged footpaths. This can be evidenced in the photograph opposite.
- 6.2.32 Once again, concerns are expressed regarding the haphazard ways in which unsafe headstones had been laid. Evidence of this can be seen in the photograph below.



Droylsden Cemetery

- 6.2.34 Councillor Grundy, together with the Designated Research Officer, visited Droylsden Cemetery.
- 6.2.35 The Cemetery appears to be very well kept, however, once again the headstones, which are considered to be unsafe by health and safety standards, are laid in a haphazard manner.
- 6.2.36 Also, once again, the footpaths require repair and maintenance.
- 6.2.37 The estimated costs for the replacement footpaths, is likely to exceed £57,421.
- 6.2.38 The Panel also consider that there are significant road resurfacing works required, as can be seen in the following photographs. Furthermore, there is evidence that resurfacing works undertaken by a contractor to the roadway within the Cemetery, following maintenance works, have been insufficiently repaired.



Dukinfield Cemetery

- 6.2.39 Councillor P Robinson, together with the Designated Research Officer, visited Dukinfield Cemetery.
- 6.2.40 The grounds of the Cemetery appeared to be well maintained and tidy. However, the following concerns have been submitted from Ward Councillors:-



**“ ... poor quality of grass cutting especially along the main route.”
Dukinfield Ward Councillor**

**“The grass cutting is poor, the edges are not cut, the pathways are poor, there is moss on the paths and the paths are not clear.”
Dukinfield Ward Councillor**

- 6.2.41 The reception area is open plan within the office area, and whilst being well kept and tidy, it is unsuitable for confidential conversations. Architects Plans have been drawn with a view to carrying out appropriate alterations and improvements.
- 6.2.42 The Remembrance Room is opposite the Cemetery/Crematorium office and provides pleasant accommodation where people can remember their family and friends.
- 6.2.43 The waiting room has been repaired since it was severely damaged by vandals in 2002.
- 6.2.44 The footpaths are in need of repair, and are so uneven in places that access for disabled people would be very difficult. Repairs to the footpaths were costed last year at £105,348, however, this will now have increased due to inflation.



**“The pathways inside the Cemetery are very poor, they have never been replaced in my lifetime.”
Dukinfield Ward Councillor**

- 6.2.45 There is evidence of safety checks on headstones and in some cases, where headstones have been found to be unstable they have been laid down, albeit in a haphazard manner.

Hyde Cemetery

- 6.2.46 Councillor P Robinson, together with the Designated Research Officer, visited Hyde Cemetery.
- 6.2.47 The overall appearance is one of a tidy, well kept facility.
- 6.2.48 There is a section of Hyde Cemetery which is reserved for the burial of Muslim residents.

- 6.2.49 Toilet facilities are available at this Cemetery, however there is not a toilet that allows access for disabled people.
- 6.2.50 The Chapel in the grounds of Hyde Cemetery is still in use, but has been the subject of vandalism.
- 6.2.51 Footpaths in this Cemetery are again a cause for concern. The estimated cost of replacement footpaths is £62,006.
- 6.2.52 Headstone safety is also a cause for concern, as some headstones appear to have been vandalised, rather than “laid down”.

Mossley Cemetery

- 6.2.53 Councillor Smith visited Mossley Cemetery with the Designated Research Officer.



- 6.2.54 One of the main issues of concern at this Cemetery relates to the drainage of surface water.

- 6.2.55 It is understood that Bereavement Services, together with the Town Manager for Mossley have liaised on this matter, however, a suitable solution has not been found.

- 6.2.56 Another matter of concern relates once again, to the haphazard manner in which the unsafe headstones are laid.

- 6.2.57 The Panel understand that the Council does not have any future requirements for the Chapel, and believe that income could be generated for the service by its potential sale.



- 6.2.58 The costs of replacing the footpaths at Mossley Cemetery totals an estimated £39,942.

Mottram Cemetery

- 6.2.59 Councillor P Robinson, together with the Designated Research Officer, visited Mottram Cemetery.



- 6.2.60 This Cemetery is divided into three parts. The oldest part is the churchyard, followed by the “old” Cemetery and then the “new” Cemetery.
- 6.2.61 The churchyard and the old Cemetery are considered to be closed and there will not be any more new graves opened.
- 6.2.62 The new part of the Cemetery has considerable evidence of personalisation of graves.
- 6.2.63 All the footpaths require replacement or repair, and the memorials in the old Cemetery appear to have suffered significantly as a result of the movement of land, on which they have been laid.
- 6.2.64 The “laying-down” of headstones in the old Cemetery is haphazard and untidy.

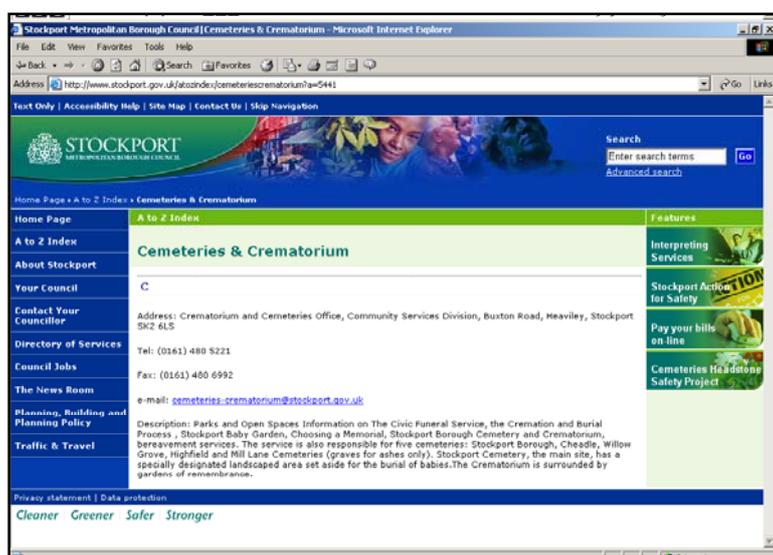
7. Consultation With Other Organisations

Howe Bridge Cemetery and Crematorium



- 7.1 Councillor P Robinson, Mr M Gurney, Senior Registrar, together with the Designated Research Officer visited Howe Green Crematorium and Cemetery.
- 7.2 The Crematorium is privately owned and is approximately 5 years old. It is the newest Crematorium in North-West England.
- 7.3 In the Garden of Remembrance, it is possible to take out a lease on a memorial plot. There are definitive conditions of rental and only approved memorials and flower vases are permitted. Any unauthorised items are removed.

Stockport Crematorium



- 7.4 On the 4th October 2004, the Panel Members undertook site visits to Stockport Cemetery and Crematorium and also to Mill Lane Cemetery in Cheadle. Mr Stephen Howse, a wheelchair user and Advisory Member of the Lifelong Learning Services Scrutiny Panel, also attended together with Messrs Bramall, McNicholls and Moss of the Citizen 2000 Panel.
- 7.5 The purpose of the site visits was to compare the provision of Cemeteries and Crematorium in a neighbouring authority, with a view to ascertaining best practise, and considering any possible improvements to the Council's service.
- 7.6 The Panel was welcomed to Stockport Cemetery and Crematorium by Mr Neil Buckley, Registrar, who explained that the Coop Funeral Service (CFS) now ran the Cemetery and Crematorium, in a partnership arrangement with Stockport Council.
- 7.7 The partnership arose out of necessity as the Council realised that their facilities would not be able to cope with the future demand.
- 7.8 The Council wrote to all local undertakers asking if they were interested in forming a partnership and the Coop Funeral Services responded positively.
- 7.9 A twenty year partnership agreement was forged, the basis of which is that the CFS retain the income from cremations and give the Council 10%. In return, CFS are making capital investments at the Cemetery and Crematorium.
- 7.10 To date, these include a new memorial garden known as Heartsease Garden, which is used for interment of cremated remains.

- 7.11 A second Chapel is in the process of being built, at a cost of £500,000. This Chapel is attached to the existing crematory and original Chapel.
- 7.12 The Panel considered the effects of such a partnership, and the possible monopoly effects of one company monopolising the funeral services in the area, to the detriment of other undertakers and indeed other Cemeteries and Crematorium.

Stockport Cemetery

- 7.13 Stockport Cemetery is showing signs of age and is suffering from the same maintenance requirements as the Cemeteries in Tameside, ie. paths which are in need of repair, and Health and Safety issues regarding headstones/memorials.

Mill Lane Cemetery, Cheadle

- 7.14 Mill Lane Cemetery is the newest Cemetery under the control of Stockport MBC. It is 13 years old.

- 7.15 The Bereavement Services Manager is Mr Paul Curran, who has only been in post for a few weeks. However, he reports that he already has ideas for improvement to offer customers more choice.



- 7.16 Notably, Memorial Headstones in Mill Lane are restricted to cushion type headstones. This alleviates the health and safety issues regarding headstone safety, as all headstones lie flat.
- 7.17 The Cemetery does experience personalisation of graves, and whilst this causes problems with grass cutting, it is acknowledged that this is the choice of the bereaved, and the removal of such items in the past has proven to be a very emotive subject.
- 7.18 It is also acknowledged however, that the personalisation of some graves, does spill over to unpersonalised graves, and Mr Curran reports that he is looking into the possibility of opening separate lawned grave areas and personalised grave areas, in order to offer customer choice.
- 7.19 The lawned areas will be maintained by the Council, and the personalised grave areas will be the responsibility of the bereaved families.

Manchester Crematorium Limited

- 7.20 Members of the Scrutiny Panel visited Manchester Crematorium on 25th October 2004.
- 7.21 There are extensive garden of remembrance facilities, which comprise mostly rose gardens.
- 7.22 The planting in the garden also includes plaques and items of personalisation such as wind chimes. The management allowed these in place for a while, but they would eventually be removed.
- 7.23 A new high wall has been provided which contains niches into which cremated remains can be placed with plaques indicating the deceased person with a dedication. Alternatively, there is a facility for a simple plaque to be placed on the wall if the remains are scattered elsewhere. Members were impressed by the plain dignity of this arrangement.

8. Borough Solicitor's Comments

As a burial authority the Council has both a common law duty of care towards visitors to and those employed in its Cemeteries and a statutory duty under the Health and Safety Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Occupiers Liability Acts.

In order to fulfil its common law and statutory duties the Council has introduced a twice yearly inspection of all monuments and headstones within its Cemeteries by means of a manual push test to determine whether a particular headstone or monument proposes an imminent risk. If and only if an imminent risk is established will the headstone be laid flat.

In addition to the push test the Council also undertakes a thorough structural inspection of each headstone and monument every five years.

The Council's method and approach to health and safety within its cemeteries has been discussed with and approved by the Health and Safety Executive. The Executive is extremely keen in exercising its statutory powers to prosecute in respect of dangers arising in Cemeteries because of deaths and serious injuries which have occurred nationally.

It is important to bear in mind that the Council must act immediately and effectively in dealing with any unstable monument or headstone so as to avoid serious risk arising. It should also be borne in mind that the Council's approach avoids possible liability arising on the part of a grave owner who shares a common law duty of care with the Council to prevent the risk of injury arising.

The Council has no power or duty to repair a monument or headstone only to remove an imminent danger or risk.

Whilst Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights protects the right to private and family life, specific provision is made under Article 8 that the right must be balanced against issues involving public safety. The Council must therefore address health and safety issues arising in Cemeteries within the borough so as to fulfil its common law and statutory duties and to protect the public at large from the serious dangers associated with monuments and headstones.

9. Borough Treasurer's Comments

The Borough Treasurer has submitted the following comments:-

Sale of Surplus Assets and Reinvestment of Receipts

- 9.1 A plan needs to be drawn up to identify the unused assets within the service, and examine the possibility of disposal. A bid could be made to utilise any capital receipt generated to fund capital expenditure within the service area, for example, renewal of cemetery footpaths/ purchase of an excavator, /provision of a new doorway to create improved access in and out of the building etc.
- 9.2 The disposal of unused assets together with bids for capital resources will, if approved, assist in meeting some of these suggested courses of action. However, the service needs to be quite clear on its priorities in order to maximise benefits from what will be a finite amount of money.

Capital Bids

- 9.3 The report notes that capital bids have recently been made by Bereavement Services. These will be assessed, along with other bids, early in the New Year.

Grounds Maintenance/Security & Toilet Cleaning

- 9.4 If these functions transfer from the District Assemblies, it will be necessary to agree on an adequate budget to transfer over with it. Any shortfall would have to be met by Bereavement Services/Environmental Health. In the current financial climate this would be difficult for the service to find.

Fees & Charges

- 9.5 At present Bereavement Services is a positive support in financial terms to the overall Environmental Health budget. Consideration needs to be given to increasing charges, significantly in some cases, where there is scope e.g.

burials. This could assist in meeting some of the recommendations of the report.

Provision to Replace the Crematorium Burners

- 9.6 An amount of £25,000 is set aside each year from the Crematorium budget to build up a provision for replacement of the burners at the Crematorium. The current balance is £150,000 including the 2004/05 allocation.

10. Conclusions

- 10.1 The Panel congratulates Bereavement Services for their commitment and hard work in providing an excellent customer service, which is recognised by their achievement in Charter Mark.



- 10.2 Although the Council works to a Service Charter, the Council does not have a general Council policy on the provision of Cemeteries and the Crematorium, which links together the Service Charter, Service Standards and Regulations.

- 10.3 It is understood that there are a number of unused assets within the Council's Cemeteries, which could be released, as part of an income generation scheme for the Service.



- 10.4 The Panel acknowledges customer concerns regarding issues of congestion in the Chapel at Dukinfield, due to the use of only one door for access and egress from the Chapel.

- 10.5 Grounds maintenance in the Council's Cemeteries falls within the remit of the District Assemblies. Furthermore, the budget for the grounds maintenance of the Cemeteries, is the responsibility of the District Assemblies, and funding for this work is contained within their budget rather than Environmental Services.



- 10.6 Security within the crematorium and the cemeteries falls within the remit of the District Assemblies. It is noted that Environmental Services have no control over the contract, which is between the District Assembly and the contractor.

10.7 The “personalisation” of graves does cause significant problems for the grounds maintenance of the lawned areas. Graves that have been personalised cannot be maintained by the Council.



10.8 The Panel recognises that customer choice is important and therefore the Service needs to take into account people’s preference for personalised or plain graves.

10.9 Toilet facilities are inadequate in most Cemeteries. However, the maintenance of toilets falls under the remit of the District Assemblies, and Environmental Services do not have any control over this matter within the present arrangements.

10.10 The Panel expresses concern regarding the poor condition of the footpaths within the Council’s Cemeteries, which would make freedom of movement difficult for infirm people or people in a wheelchair.



10.11 The Panel understands that there currently is no system of “rolling repairs” for the maintenance of footpaths within the Council’s Cemeteries.

10.12 With regard equal opportunities, the Panel is pleased to note that consideration is given to all the predominant religions in the borough.

10.13 Although there are some reports of vandalism in the Cemeteries and the Crematorium, discussions with the Tameside Patrollers and Greater Manchester Police report that this issue is not of a particular concern.

11. Recommendations

- 11.1 That an over-arching policy be drafted for approval by the Cabinet Deputy, to bring together all aspects of the operation and provision of Tameside Cemeteries and the Crematorium.
- 11.2 That in order to fund essential improvements and maintenance to the Council's Cemeteries and the Crematorium, the sale of surplus assets be investigated and any funds raised, be reinvested into the Service.
- 11.3 That a second door be created at Dukinfield Chapel in order to provide a separate access and egress.
- 11.4 That consideration be given to the feasibility of transferring the responsibilities for grounds maintenance, security and toilet cleaning, currently undertaken by the District Assemblies, to Bereavement Services. It is however, recognised that there will be insufficient resources to fund the total cost of this work, so consideration should be given to the formulation of a budget specifically for this purpose.
- 11.5 That Bereavement Services work with Patroller Service and the Police to improve security, and the prevention of environmental nuisance such as dog fouling, and consider the enhancement of security by the provision of a columbium at Droylsden Cemetery. a.
- 11.6 That consideration be given for the future provision of separate areas for personalised graves and to plain grassed grave areas in order to meet customer choice.
- 11.7 That regulations relating to the appearance of Tameside's Cemeteries be enforced with clear explanations for any action taken.
- 11.8 That a general review be undertaken of the toilets and other facilities (including facilities for disabled people) at all Tameside's Cemeteries.
- 11.9 That consideration be given to the provision of an appropriate excavator which is capable of digging graves to a depth of 9 feet.
- 11.10 That a rolling programme of repairs to Cemetery footpaths be implemented, subject to appropriate funding being available.
- 11.11 That consideration be given to the future provision of horizontal cushion headstones rather than vertical headstones.
- 11.12 Although it is recognised that in certain cases unstable headstones have to be made safe, care should be given to ensure that headstones are laid down with the inscription facing upwards, that headstones are not broken and that the graves are left neat and tidy

- 11.13 That the feasibility be explored of laying down headstones, so that they are flush with the ground level, lying on top of the grave and causing no obstruction.
- 11.14 That relatives continue to be informed of the reasons why headstones have been laid down and advised about reinstatement.
- 11.15 That parking bays for disabled people be designated at the Council's Cemeteries either in car parks or on the highway where they will not cause an obstruction.
- 11.16 That Traffic Engineers be asked to give consideration to enhanced signage and making the entrances and exits from Dukinfield Cemetery easier to negotiate for funeral traffic.
- 11.17 That consideration be given to extending the areas for woodland burial to other parts of Tameside.

Technical Economic And Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel

Review Of Cemeteries And Crematorium (Policies And Provision)

Scope July 2004

Aim Of The Scrutiny Review Exercise

To review the Council's policies and provision relating to Cemeteries and Crematorium to ensure the service meets the needs of the residents/visitors and report back with any improvements

Objectives

1. To produce accurate information on the provision of cemeteries and crematorium, present and planned, to include e.g. quality: quantity: locations and comparisons with other authorities.
2. To assess and clarify the Council's policy for the service provision and the development of that policy. (to include if/how it links to any other strategy e.g. Equalities, views of the Cabinet Deputies, service providers)
3. To record public satisfaction and identify any improvements.
4. To assess need and whether current and planned provision will meet that need. (to include demographic information, consultation with key groups, links to any other strategies, views from the Cabinet Deputy and service providers, models from other authorities, etc.)

Timescale

Report to Panel meeting on 25th October 2004

→

Action Plan

The review consists of a number of activities designed to achieve the four objectives of the review. Many of these activities will contribute to more than one objective.

(Please note the column 'Action Ref' refers to actions in the detailed project plan that will be managed by the Scrutiny Panel.)

Objective 1	Action Ref	Action	Timescale
To produce accurate information on the provision of cemeteries and crematorium – present and planned. (to include, e.g. quality: quantity: locations and comparisons with other authorities)		Site visits to Tameside Crematorium and Cemeteries	➤ Feedback to 6 th September meeting
		Site visits to other local authorities to compare provision, policies and ways of assessing need	➤ Feedback to 6 th September meeting
		Written information about provision; charters	➤ Feedback to 6 th September meeting
		Consult with Robin Monk and Michael Gurney	➤ 6 th September meeting
		Review Health & Safety – including foot path safety; Headstone safety; Disposal of metals and mercury emissions	➤ Feedback to 6 th September meeting

Objective 2	Action Ref	Action	Timescale
To assess and clarify the Council's policy for the service provision and the development of that policy. (to include if/how it links to any other strategy, e.g. Equalities, views of the Cabinet Deputy, service providers		Meet with Cabinet Deputy	➤ 4th October 2004
		Meet with Head of Environmental Operations and Senior Registrar to discuss links to other strategies e.g Equalities, Recycling etc	➤ 6th September 2004
		Consultation with Ward members on experiences in their wards and suggestions for policy development	➤ Feedback to meeting 6th September
		Consult with recently bereaved	➤ Feedback to meeting 6th September
		Consult with British Legion	➤ Feedback to meeting 6th September
			➤
			➤
			➤
			➤
			➤
			➤
			➤

Objective 3	Action Ref	Action	Timescale
To record public satisfaction and identify any improvements.		Consult with Funeral Directors	Feedback to meeting 6 th September
		Consult with recently bereaved	
		Consult with British Legion	
		Consult with neighbours of cemeteries	
		Consult with registered Stonemasons	➤
		Consult with Police/Patrollers	➤
		Consult with Council Of Churches	➤

Objective 4	Action Ref	Action	Timescale	
To assess need and whether current and planned provision will meet that need. (to include demographic information, consultation with key groups, links to any other strategies, views from the Cabinet Deputy and service providers, models from other authorities,etc		Site visits to other local authorities	➤ Feedback to meeting 6th September	
		Site visits to Crematorium and Cemeteries in Tameside	➤ Feedback to meeting 6th September	
		Site visits to “Green” burial site – Glossop cemetery	➤ Feedback to 6th September	
		Consult with Gravediggers	➤ Feedback to 6th September	
		Consult with BME community	➤ Feedback to 6th September	
			➤	
			➤	
			Draft Report	➤ 4th October 2004
			Final Report	➤ 25th October 2004

Last Updated : 09:13AM, Tue 14th Dec 2004

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Service Charter

Bereavement Services

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We are committed to providing quality services.

The Service

Bereavements Services provide burial, cremation, memorial and related services.

The main office and crematorium are in Dukinfield Cemetery. Both burials and cremations take place at Dukinfield Cemetery. There are also seven other cemeteries in Tameside where burials take place.

You will find our cemeteries in the following places:

- [Ashton - Kings Road](#)
- [Audenshaw - Cemetery Road](#)
- [Denton - Cemetery Road](#)
- [Droylsden - Manor Road](#)
- [Hyde - Stockport Road](#)
- [Mossley - Cemetery Road](#)
- [Mottram - War Hill](#)

There are chapels at all these cemeteries, except Ashton, Audenshaw and Mottram.

Opening Hours

All cemeteries are open 365 days a year. The opening hours are shown outside the main gates at each cemetery.

The office at Dukinfield Cemetery is open from:

8.30am to 12.00pm - 1.00pm to 4.30pm (Monday to Friday)

You can contact the Senior Registrar and his staff at the office during these hours.

If you are disabled

We want everyone to be able to visit all of our cemeteries, Dukinfield Crematorium and the office at Dukinfield Cemetery.

- There are ramps at Droylsden and Dukinfield to make it easier for

people in wheelchairs to visit. There are also staff and a wheelchair to provide help if you may need it.

- If you have hearing or sight problems, there is a loop system and a Braille service book at the Crematorium chapel. We can also provide a signer for the deaf if required.

If you cannot visit the office to make arrangements, we will arrange a home visit.

How much does the service cost?

We get about £900,000 from the service. However we have to pay the following costs:

- Staff
- Crematorium, buildings, grave digging
- Services and Supplies
- Repaying loans for buildings and land
- Corporate Services

We regularly monitor the cost of the service to make sure it offers value for money. We also review our fees and charges to make sure they are consistent with other Councils and benchmark with the other 9 Greater Manchester Authorities.

Comments and Complaints

We want to know if you are happy with our service and whether it is meeting your needs. We use your comments and complaints to improve our service and to make sure we always provide a sympathetic and dignified service. If you want to comment on our service or make a complaint, contact us:



on 0161 330 1901 or the Council's Call Centre on 0161 342 8355 (Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)



on 0161 330 9566



at Dukinfield Cemetery and Crematorium, Hall Green Road, Dukinfield (Cemetery Office, Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 4.00pm), at the Customer Services Unit on the Ground Floor of the Council Offices or any of the District Customer Service Units



Complete the form entitled '[How to tell us your Complaints](#)' available from all Council Offices or write us a letter explaining your complaint and send it to:

Mike Gurney, Senior Registrar - Dukinfield Cemetery, Hall Green Road, Dukinfield SK16 4EP or

Robin Monk, Service Unit Manager - Council Offices, Wellington Road, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 6DL

We will write a reply to all complaints within 5 working days.



burialment.services@tamside.gov.uk

Last Updated : 02:39PM, Wed 14th Jul 2004

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Our Standards of Service

Bereavement Services

We set ourselves high standards and we do everything we can to make sure that our standards are higher than existing standards.

We will:

1. Meet all of our legal responsibilities relating to burials and cremations.
2. Offer 13 service times daily at Dukinfield Crematorium (Monday to Friday).
3. Carry out all cremations on the day of service.
4. Arrange a burial/cremation within 5 working days (where requested).
5. Bury or cremate a person within one working day if it is necessary:
 - to protect the health of the public;
 - to meet religious requirements; or
 - because the coroner has asked us to.
6. We will inspect and record the condition of every headstone in our cemeteries annually.
7. Offer a comprehensive memorial service and make sure that the cemeteries gardens and the Dukinfield Cemetery Book of Remembrance Room are open to the public, 365 days of the year.
8. Respond to all requests for information within 3 working days and all complaints within 5 working days.
9. Make sure we keep our costs as low as possible while always trying to improve the quality of the service we provide.
10. Ask our customers and other service providers for their opinions on our services annually.
11. Provide trained staff that offer a sympathetic, dignified and above all, accessible service to **all** our customers.

Related Links

- ▶ Bereavement Services
- ▶ Registering a Death
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Bereavement Services**Our Customer Pledge****1. Set standards and perform well**

- We will set standards that exceed statutory and corporate standards wherever possible. These standards are based on customer expectations and made widely available to our users.
- We will provide detailed information about our services.

2. Actively engage with customers, partners and staff

- We will consult our users regularly and deliver a service that is tailored to their requirements.
- We will analyse and take action from the results of feedback.
- We will work with a range of other service providers to create overall improvements for customers.

3. Be fair and accessible to everyone and promote choice

- We will treat **all** customers with fairness, privacy and dignity.
- We will provide a wide range of services and make them easily accessible to all, using new technology wherever possible.
- We will provide an efficient, professional and dignified service by trained staff.

4. Continuously develop and improve

- We will strive to continually improve our service.
- We will demonstrate that users are satisfied with the quality of our service.
- We will do our utmost to put right any failures or problems highlighted through our complaints procedure or other means.
- We will develop a business plan annually that will incorporate those actions and improvements identified from our consultation exercises.

5. Use your resources effectively and imaginatively

- We will provide best value for all our customers.
- We will regularly monitor our budget and make this information available in our annual review. We will benchmark against other local authorities.

6. Contribute to improving opportunities and quality of life

in the communities you serve

- We will endorse the Tameside Community Strategy.
- We will promote aspects of different cultures and lifestyles.
- We will continue to improve safety for visitors to our cemeteries.
- We will seek the views of our 'neighbours'.
- We will acknowledge statutory environmental issues and respond accordingly.

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**Comparison of Charges Levied by Greater Manchester Authorities April 04 -
March 05**

Schedule of Charges

	Bolton	Bury	MCR	MCR Crem	Oldham	Rochdale	Salford	Stockport	Tameside	Trafford	Wigan
Cemeteries											
Exclusive Right of Burial Resident	£443	£350	£385		£450	£583	£545	£645	£375	£473	£366
Exclusive Right of Burial Non Resident	£443	£650	£770		£675	£1,050	£685	£1,155	£750	£901	£549
Interment Fee-Resident	£397	£410	£530		£476	£506	£545	£480	£450	£511	£288
Interment Fee- Non Resident	£397	£710	£630		£660	£760	£685	£960	£900	£816	£432
Use of Chapel	N/A	£85	£40		£28	£61	£75	£60	£45	£77	N/A
Right to erect memorial	£58	£95	£85		£102	£73	£99	£115	£105	£77	£88
Additional Inscription	£27	£36	£40		£0	£20	£34	£27	£26	£25	£0
Interment of Cremated remains Resident	£85	£145	£150		£140	£135	£260	£98	£100	£116	£54
Interment of Cremated remains Non Resident	£85	£145	£150		£140	£216	£330	£190	£200	£116	£81
Interment of Body Parts	£0	?	£0		£0	£0	£26	£0	£50	£22	£54
Transfer of Burial Rights	£0	£50	£30		£37	£0	£30	£36	£40	£22	£0
Statutory Declaration/Indemnity	£0	£40	£30		£0	£0	£30	£30	£35	£0	£0
Foundation fee	£67	£50	£115		£36	£132	£0	£115	£105	£70	£88
Crematorium											
Cremation Resident	£275	N/A	£280	£325	£280	£326	£275	£297	£295	£293	£230
Cremation Non Resident	£275	N/A	£280	£325	£280	£326	£275	£297	£315	£293	£230
Scatter ashes	£35	£45	£35	£0	£33	£30	£52	£23	£32	£39	£54
Book of Remembrance 2 Line entry	£47	N/A	£60	£55	£54	£55	£75	£32	£60	£47	£38
Book of Remembrance 5 Line Entry	£93	N/A	£135	£127	£95	£73	£110	£57	£80	£77	£54
Book of Remembrance 8 Line Entry	£124	N/A	£190	£200	£162	£97	£160	£124	£100	£105	£63
Use of Organ (if charged as extra)	£0	N/A	N/A	£0	£20	N/A	N/A	£7	£13	£0	£40
Memorial Plaque	£165	N/A	£295	£153	£209	£93	£310	£304	£260	£371	£242

Muslim Funerals

Like other religions Islam has laws and customs regarding the preparation of the body and ceremony. The Iman can advise on funeral rites. It is important that the burial takes place as soon as possible after death.

The Holy Prophet urged Muslims to bury their dead quickly.

Islam

If possible, before a Muslim dies, the call to prayer should be whispered into the persons ear. Just as this happened at birth, so Allah should be the last word a Muslim hears before death.

After death Muslims believe the soul waits in barzakh, (place of waiting for Judgement Day). When judgement comes God will deal with everyone according to their actions. After judgement the dead will be restored to their bodies, hence Muslims will not cremate their dead.

As soon as possible after death the body is given a ritual washing called Ghusl. This is to wash away all sin so the body can meet Allah in a pure state. The body is anointed with perfumes and spices and wrapped in white cloth, usually the Ihram clothes used for the Hajj. This ritual is the same for rich and poor, in death, Muslims believe all are equal.

The funeral must be simple and inexpensive and take place soon as possible after death. A coffin should not be used, unless required by the local authorities, it is a waste of natural resources. The body must be buried with the face turned towards the Kab'ah in Mecca (the house of Allah).