

## Long Term Supply of Burial Space

Date: 2 February 2023

Report of: Chief Officer Parks and Countryside

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### Brief summary

This report is in response to the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) request for an update on the long-term burial plan for Leeds. In 2008, the Council had 8,485 new graves available across the city, equivalent to 15-16 years supply and it was evident that the east-northeast area of the city had the lowest supply of new graves available. To address this, a new cemetery was developed at Whinmoor and became operational in July 2014 along with extensions to cemeteries at Garforth and Kippax. The focus then turned to the south-southeast of the city with new burial provided at Hunslet Cemetery along with phase 1 of an extension at Cottingley Cemetery. There is the potential to extend Cottingley further on a former playing pitch area subject to planning consent and consultation. The Council also has planning consent on an area of land to the north of Whinmoor cemetery with around 12 acres that could be brought into use along with over 1 acre at land off Elmete Lane, Roundhay. Overall, there is around 35 years availability which is on target given that the 50-year plan commenced in 2008. The east-northeast has sufficient long-term provision with less pressure on the south-southeast area. However, in the medium term there is a need to consider additional burial capacity in the west-northwest area of the city which has estimated availability for a further 17 years.

### Recommendations

- a) The Scrutiny Board Housing, Environment and Communities is asked to note and comment on the update to the long-term supply of burial space in Leeds.

## What is this report about?

- 1 This report is in response to the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) request for an update on the long-term burial plan for Leeds.
- 2 On the 3 December 2008, the council's Executive Board received a report which reviewed the long-term supply of burial space in the city. The report included options for meeting demand for the next 50 years and beyond. In essence the policy is to establish a preference for smaller, locally based cemetery sites combined with the extension, where possible, of existing sites thus providing burial provision closer to where people have lived.
- 3 In 2008, the Council had 8,485 new graves available across the city, equivalent to 15-16 years supply and burial provision was distributed across the city as follows:

Area	Number of Graves
East-northeast	1,080
West-northwest	4,289
South-southeast	3,116
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,485</b>

- 4 When the location of graves available was considered in 2008, it was evident that the east-northeast area of the city had the lowest supply of new graves available and therefore was under most pressure, particularly as Harehills was the only active cemetery in this area. To address this, proposals were developed to construct new cemeteries at Whinmoor and Elmete with Whinmoor becoming operational in July 2014 (Elmete has not yet been developed into a cemetery). Cemeteries at Garforth and Kippax were also extended. This had the impact of increasing burial supply in the east-northeast area and highlighted a need to increase supply in the south-southeast of the city.

## What impact will this proposal have?

- 5 To address this shortfall, new burial provision has been provided at Hunslet Cemetery along with phase 1 of an extension at Cottingley Cemetery. This now means that the following projected supply is available as of the end of November 2022:

Area	Number of Graves	Approximate Years Left (based on recent demand)
East-northeast	2,498	13.4
West-northwest	1,713	16.6
South-southeast	1,786	13.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,997</b>	<b>14.2</b>

- 6 There is the potential to extend Cottingley further on a former playing pitch area subject to planning consent and consultation which could increase grave availability by a further 630. This would add an average of 7.1 years to the south-southeast area, thus providing a total of 20.9 years availability.
- 7 As indicated, Whinmoor Cemetery is now operational in the east-northeast area with an initial 5 acres brought into use. The Council does however have planning consent on an area of land to the north of the existing cemetery with around 12 acres that could be brought into use. It is assumed that Whinmoor could be extended in this way and still meet the preference for smaller, local based cemetery sites as determined by Executive Board in 2008. This would add around a further 7,000 graves with availability for a further 54 years based on demand over the last 6 years.
- 8 A further area of land in the east-northeast area is off Elmete Lane, Roundhay and is owned by the Council. Planning approval was obtained for a 7.03-acre cemetery in July 2012 with 1.06 acres of land initially available for burial, with the possibility to extend this to 5 acres in future

years. Further archaeological ground investigative work would need to be undertaken and the necessary planning approvals would also have to be factored in. The 1.06 acres could provide a further 594 graves thus adding 34 years to availability based on overall average demand over the last 6 years.

- 9 The following table projects new grave availability across the city based on all potential new burial space being developed:

Area	Number of Graves	Approximate Years Left (based on recent demand)
East Northeast	10,027	53.9
West Northwest	1,778	16.6
South Southeast	2,581	20.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,386</b>	<b>34.3</b>

- 10 Overall, there is availability for around 34 years which is in line with the 50-year plan commenced in 2008. The east-northeast has sufficient long-term provision with less pressure on the south-southeast area. However, in the medium term there is a need to consider additional burial capacity in the west-northwest area of the city which has estimated availability for a further 17 years.

**How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?**

- Health and Wellbeing       Inclusive Growth       Zero Carbon

- 11 The Council’s cemeteries play an important role for those who have been bereaved by providing good quality greenspaces for quiet and spiritual reflection as visitors remember their loved ones.

**What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

Wards affected:
Have ward members been consulted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

- 12 No specific consultation has been undertaken.

**What are the resource implications?**

- 13 There would be implications for the council capital programme if land acquisition was necessary for burial provision.

**What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

- 14 There is generally sufficient burial provision to meet projected demand in accordance with the 50-year burial plan approved at Executive Board in 2008. Some consideration will need to be given to identify burial space in the West-northwest area and to a lesser extent the South-southeast.

**What are the legal implications?**

- 15 There are no significant legal implications associated with this report.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

16 This is not a decision report and therefore alternative options have not been considered.

### **How will success be measured?**

17 As above.

### **What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

18 As above.

### **Appendices**

- None.

### **Background papers**

- None.