

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

29 May 2018

Report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 TONBRIDGE CEMETERY CAPACITY REVIEW

Summary

This report informs Members of the outcome of a Capacity Review undertaken at Tonbridge Cemetery.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This Council owns and manages one burial facility within the Borough, this being Tonbridge Cemetery. Members will be aware from my previous report to this Board that in 2017 a study was commissioned to provide a comprehensive update on capacity at the cemetery, to determine the future availability of grave spaces.

1.1.2 The capacity review was undertaken in liaison with the Council's Internal Audit Team and with the support of the previous Cemetery Registrar.

1.2 Capacity Review

1.2.1 The review has been both extensive and comprehensive incorporating data capture on over 14,000 individual graves spread over 44 plots within the cemetery. The review considered a range of elements for each grave space including number, size and restrictions such as headstones and trees. The review also took into consideration burial numbers and trends from the previous 10 years to assist in estimating future burial rates.

1.2.2 The study has now been completed and has concluded that through the utilisation of existing spaces grave spaces that have no restricting factors, it is estimated that there will be adequate provision through until 2087. This length of capacity was greater than originally anticipated and shows the value of undertaking such a comprehensive review.

1.3 Future Reviews

1.3.1 The study recommends that the Council should review provision again in 30 years though. This future review will benefit from continuing monitoring to assist in the management of the cemetery and negate the need for such an in-depth study

being needed in the future. To facilitate this it is suggested that the Council's IT Service take the data spreadsheet provided within the report and develop software to assist in the day to day management of Tonbridge Cemetery, thus ensuring this information can be continually updated.

- 1.3.2 A broader review of burial capacity across the borough incorporating facilities provided by others including Parish/Town Councils was previously reported to Cabinet on the 31 January 2017. Following the completion of the review at Tonbridge Cemetery this broader review will be progressed in liaison with the Rochester Diocese.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 None

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 Future capacity availability is a factor that is taken into consideration when reviewing cemetery charges.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 The report commissioned aimed to assess the risk to the Council of future capacity issues at Tonbridge Cemetery. It has been concluded that in the short and medium term no issues are apparent, with a further review undertaken in 30 year's time.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 Business Continuity/Resilience and Asset Management.

1.9 Recommendation

- 1.9.1 It is, therefore, **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that:

- 1) the outcome of the Tonbridge Cemetery Capacity Review be noted;
- 2) the Council's IT Service progress with the development of software to assist in the future management of the Cemetery and ensure the continuing updating of capacity information;
- 3) liaison be undertaken with the Diocese at Rochester and Parish/Town Council's to progress the boarder review of burial capacity within the borough.

The Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Darren Lanes

Nil

Robert Styles

Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services