

**Subject:** Cemeteries Strategy

**Status:** For Publication

**Report to:** Policy Overview and Scrutiny  
Cabinet

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011  
17<sup>th</sup> March 2011

**Report of:** Director of Customers and Communities

**Portfolio**

**Holder:** Environment

**Key Decision:** Yes / No

Forward Plan  Y General Exception  Special Urgency

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 Introduce the Cemeteries Strategy and explain the intention and limitations of the document with a view to gaining approval for the strategy.

**2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:-

- Delivering quality Services to our customers
- Encouraging healthy and respectful communities
- Keeping our Borough clean, green and safe
- Providing value for money services

**3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- Some of the actions and objectives within the strategy and action plan are subject to funding opportunities and therefore can not be guaranteed in the present climate.
- Failure to provide safe and accessible cemeteries can result in legal challenges.

## 4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 Rossendale Borough Council manages and maintains four cemeteries across the borough (Haslingden, Rawtenstall, Bacup and Whitworth). Since the opening of the cemeteries they have been subject to varying maintenance regimes, services offered, rules and regulations; yet there has never been one comprehensive strategy guiding the longer term future of the cemeteries. These are high profile sites where our customers have high expectations and each site has its own characteristics and opportunities for development.
- 4.2 Rossendale Borough Council provides a bereavement service where customers are assisted with the options available to remember loved ones. The requests received are varied and trends will also change over time. We provide an efficient and well respected burial service, yet we provide much more than traditional burials, for example – alternative memorials and the creation of new ashes gardens.
- 4.3 Our cemeteries are also working sites and the needs of our staff are important too. Rossendale Borough Council has a legal obligation to provide a safe place of work.
- 4.4 There are many factors influencing our cemeteries and long term management needs to respond to our customer and staff needs. The strategy aims to pull together the many aspects of our cemeteries and guide the future management and maintenance practices to ensure sustainability and provide excellent customer services in the years to come. Our vision is simple:

***Rossendale Borough Council will provide cemeteries managed to a high quality, offer bereavements services of a high standard which meet the needs of its communities and ensure that our cemeteries remain viable in to the long term future.***

- 4.5 The strategy is intended as an internal document to guide Members and the staff who have responsibility for the maintenance, and management of our cemeteries. The objectives noted within the strategy are our aspirations and some are subject to funding, however they allow staff to remain focused on the things we want to achieve. The strategy will remain as a working document allowing additions and amendments to reflect changing trends and customer needs.
- 4.6 The only options are to approve and adopt the cemetery strategy, thus assisting staff with the delivery of core objectives or to consider the strategy as unnecessary and continue changing the way our cemeteries are managed and maintained in a more reactive, unplanned way.

## COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

### 5. SECTION 151 OFFICER

5.1 No comments

### 6. MONITORING OFFICER

6.1 No comments

### 7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

7.1 No Human Resources implications arising from the report

### 8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Adopting the strategy as a working internal document allows a focused approach to guiding the future of the cemeteries and bereavement services encompassing customer and staff needs.

### 9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

9.1 That the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend approve to Cabinet the adoption of the strategy.

9.2 All the Committee recommend to Cabinet that future minor amendments to the strategy to be delegated to the Director of Customers and Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

### 10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1 Consultation with cemeteries staff, bereavement services officer and staff from associated departments (estates section and communities team).  
Consultation with portfolio holder and senior managers.  
Feedback from customers.  
Consultation with funeral directors and memorial masons.

### 11. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Community Impact Assessment required Yes / No

Is a Community Impact Assessment attached Yes / No

### 12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required Yes / No

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached Yes / No

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No background papers