

# Overview and Scrutiny Panel Recommendations Report

REVIEW TITLE	O&S PANEL	DATE
Burials review (Phase 1, review of site options)	Communities and Environment	14 January 2020

## MEMBERS

### Site visits:

Councillors John Porter (Chairman), Tina McKenzie-Boyle (Vice Chairman), Angell, Brossard, Ms Gaw, Mrs Ingham and Mrs Mattick

### Meeting in the Council Chamber:

Councillors John Porter (Chairman), Tina McKenzie-Boyle (Vice Chairman), Angell, Brossard, Brown, Ms Gaw, Mrs Ingham and Mrs Mattick

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Executive continues to provide space for burials.
2. The exploration of two sites proceeds simultaneously noting that the Panel's preferred option is the pitch and putt site at Downshire Golf Club.  
Their second preference is the driving range at Downshire Golf Club.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Continuation of provision of burial space.

The Panel wanted to ensure that there is still a choice for burials within Bracknell Forest.

### 2. Pitch and putt at Downshire Golf Club

- This facility is used less than the driving range.
- It is a large enough plot (2/3 hectares) to provide approximately 25 years worth of burial space.
- It backs on to Easthampstead Crematorium and Cemetery allowing access from the current burial ground.
- There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) in effect.
- There is less financial impact on Everyone Active if this site is developed than the driving range.

### 3. Driving range at Downshire Golf Club

- This site is a large enough plot (2/3 hectares) to provide approximately 25 years worth of burial space.
- The trees at the side are adjacent to Easthampstead Crematorium and Cemetery allowing access from current burial ground.
- There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) in effect.
- There is more financial impact on Everyone Active if this site is developed than the pitch and putt.

## ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

### Bungalow

- Whilst it was close to Easthampstead Crematorium & Cemetery it would only afford approximately six years of space as only 0.3 hectares was available.
- The land behind the bungalow was heavily wooded and would require clearing.
- The sale of the property was likely to afford a better income for the Borough than use as a cemetery.

### Beaufort Park land adjacent to Easthampstead Crematorium & Cemetery

- Up to 10 hectares could be purchased which would allow for burials for many years to come. However, Bracknell Forest Council did not own the land and it would cost £2.67m per hectare, which was deemed too expensive.
- It was also noted 68 houses had received approval to be built on part of the land already.

## Football pitches

- The site was good as it was directly opposite Easthampstead Crematorium & Cemetery.
- The Panel did not want to change the use.
- Concern was expressed about removing green space available to residents.
- Sport England were unlikely to approve change of use of the site.

## RESPONSE FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

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The Overview and Scrutiny Commission has not met within the required timescales, to endorse the Panel's recommendations to the Executive. The recommendations of the review were shared with the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in advance of the Executive decision to seek their views and were approved.

## BACKGROUND

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On 5 November 2019 the O&S Commission commissioned a scrutiny review to scrutinise the burial and funeral choices within Bracknell Forest to ensure that residents' future needs are met. It was agreed that there would be two phases to the review depending on the decision taken by the Executive on 10 March 2020.

The Panel's initial piece of work, via a one day meeting review on 14 January 2020 was an options appraisal of the likely sites where additional interment space could be created supporting the investigation work that Officers are undertaking. The Panel's recommendations will be presented to the Executive as part of the officer report, and will be taken into consideration as part of the decision-making process on which site, if any, the council should invest in.

If the Executive decision on 10 March 2020 is that additional burial space within the Borough is to be provided, the Panel intends holding a second phase of the review to recommend how this new allocation is to be used, at what cost, how that matches in with the other services provided at Easthampstead Park Cemetery & Crematorium and that it ensures residents' needs are met for at least the next 25 years.

At the Panel meeting on 14 January 2020, it was agreed that the following recommendation would be carried over to a second phase of the review if it was commissioned.

**Engagement should be undertaken with local funeral directors who use Bracknell Forest Council Cemetery and Crematorium facilities to find out what types of burial are requested by their customers.**

## WORK PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

**Review Title**

Burial Choices

**Why are you asking for scrutiny's input? (optional)**

There is a wider variety, and greater freedoms, for funeral and burial choices than ever before. With the lack of current provision within BFC, an options appraisal of how to now meet this need is required. As clients move away from the traditional options, ensuring that any new provision is future proofed to meeting these changing client requirements, but within the resources that the council has available, needs to be investigated and options brought forward.

**Scope**

*(What exactly needs to be looked at?)*

- Review the current client requirements for funeral and burial.  
 '- Produce projections to determine client needs over the next 20 years.  
 '- Assess how to meet projected needs to include guidance and direction for the council for Investment options, given the council's limited financial resources and access to suitable burial locations within the borough.  
 The options to review are: Traditional funeral, Cremation, Green and woodland funerals, Humanist and civic funerals, any others (new and emerging options).

**What is to be achieved?**

Advice to the Executive on what options to invest into and recommendations on how to ensure that BFC continues to provide an excellent service, within the resources the council has available.

**Council theme**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Communities

**Decision maker**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Executive

**Time Constraints**

There is no specific time constraint on this review. An Executive decision will be taken before Christmas 2019. Scrutiny input will be required from early to mid 2020.

**Portfolio holder**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Councillor Harrison, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection

**Directorate**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Delivery

**Which team is affected?**

Cemetery & Crematorium

**Delivery method**

*(select one option from drop down list)*

Mixture of Spotlight Sessions, benchmarking and site visits/observations

**Are there any costs associated with completing this review?**

None identified