SUMMARY

1  This Report

1.1 Provides an update to the report of the Cabinet report in July 2004 regarding the level of available council burial provision, and it provides further information on the investigative work carried out to date.

1.2 It also provides the comments from Housing and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the 29 September 2011 and makes a recommendation for further work

2  Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet:

(i) Confirms that cemetery provision should continue, when Worting Road cemetery reaches capacity.

(ii) Approves the proposed next steps as set out in 10 (timeline in 11),

(iii) Approves the site criteria and scoring regime as set out in Appendix 1.

(iv) Notes the continuation of feasibility work on the provision of cemetery space adjacent to the existing crematorium, to include discussions with Dignity (management of the Crematorium) and the adjoining land owner to assess whether such an opportunity is workable in principle and capable of being secured.
PRIORITIES, IMPACTS AND RISKS

Contribution To Council Priorities
This report accords with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council Plan Ref 2011-14:</th>
<th>H3</th>
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<tr>
<td>3-Year Action Plan:</td>
<td>Operational 21</td>
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Impacts

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<table>
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Risk Assessment

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<td>Number of risks considered HIGH or Medium:</td>
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Strategic: Already identified on Corporate Risk Register?  Yes
Operational: Already identified in Service Plans?  Yes

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>MDA</td>
<td>Major Development Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JMC</td>
<td>Joint Manypdown Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHLAA</td>
<td>Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment</td>
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DETAIL/MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

3 Background

3.1 A paper was presented on Site Options for Additional Cemetery Land to Cabinet in July 2004. This set out the outcomes of a study which had been undertaken to look at potential sites for future cemetery provision.

3.2 The study considered a large number of potential sites in/on the edge of Basingstoke against a range of criteria e.g. size, location, cost, access, planning and management issues. As a result, six sites were identified as most suitable including

- Attwood Close Mobile Home site,
- Burgess Road Allotments,
- Manydown MDA,
- Old Common Road,
- London Road,
- Land adjacent to the Crematorium and
- Land at Homesteads Road, Kempshott.

3.3 The paper set out the constraints each of the sites faced and mindful of these, Cabinet resolved the following:

- “that the use of the Attwood Close mobile home site be discounted for future burial land;
- that the site for a new cemetery should be identified as part of the development framework being prepared for the Manydown MDA to provide a long term burial solution…;
- ….. and that only if (the MDA did not occur) the Attwood Close allotment site be used to provide additional burial land;
- that as a contingency, consideration be given to providing additional burial land on an alternative major development site or future land release or at the Homesteads Road or the Old Common at London Road, Basingstoke.”

4 Progress since the 2004

4.1 Since 2004, two different phases of work have been undertaken. The first sought to extend the capacity of the Worting Road Cemetery. The second was to, subject to the LDF and other factors, move forward with the sites as set out in 4.2 above.

4.2 During Phase One, to extend the capacity, the following were initiated:

- The re-use of graves which were never purchased originally by the family. Where a single body has been placed in a plot planned as a double grave, the space was offered as an alternative to new grave space. These graves are sold as “heritage graves” and were priced below newgrave spaces. 12% of the interments in 2010 were carried out in heritage graves
The use of columbaria or above ground niches, which have a relatively small footprint in comparison and increase the number of ashes which can be interred.

4.3 Phase Two - Progress with Sites

4.4 Manydown Major Development Area

4.4.1 This land was originally purchased by the council to be held for the proper planning of the area. The site was promoted through the review of the Local Plan as a ‘Major Development Area’ with a potential maximum capacity of 8000 dwellings. However, in late 2005, the Planning Inspector’s report on the Public Inquiry into the B&D Local Plan Review recommended that the plan should have a time horizon of 2011 instead of 2016 as proposed by the council - therefore Manydown was not required to meet the borough’s housing requirement. The Inspector also concluded that further infrastructure assessments should be undertaken, raising particular concerns around the treatment of waste water and highlighted issues around the delivery of a sustainable urban extension.

4.4.2 Subsequently, in 2006, BDBC resolved to cease the promotion of Manydown Land for development. Subsequently HCC also made the same resolution.

4.4.3 The LDF is an evolving document, the Core Strategy is proposed for adoption in late 2012. It is proposed that the Core Strategy will include site allocations of a strategic nature up to 2027.

4.4.4 As a result, to try to promote any part of Manydown land for a cemetery at this stage would be premature.

4.5 Attwood Close Allotment Site

4.5.1 The allotment land at Attwood Close was originally purchased in 1910 under the Burials Acts of 1852 for burial purposes. The scale of it would provide new burial space for 10 years. It is well placed close to the existing cemetery and the operational and administrative burial service would encompass the new site without major infrastructure requirements whilst still continuing to serve the existing cemetery.

4.5.2 However, bearing in mind the potential delay in bringing forward land at Manydown, in 2009, planning advice was sought on the potential use of this site. At that time, the advice was that the proposed development would not be supported unless it complied with policy C7 which, in summary, required an equivalent replacement of allotment land or evidence that the facilities were no longer required or that the proposed benefit to the community would outweigh the detriment.

4.5.3 However, as in 2009, there is a shortage of allotments in the Borough. There are 40 allotment sites in the town and approximately 99% of the plots are currently let and there is a growing waiting list of about 585 people. To gain release of this site for cemetery purposes would require approval from the Secretary of State.

4.5.4 In addition to the Planning Advice, initial discussions were also started with the Environment Agency. Notwithstanding its proximity to the existing cemetery, the Environment Agency suggested that they would not support an
extension of burial in the area, due to being the site being an area of Zone 1 Groundwater Source Protection and with the groundwater table is approximately 10m below surface

4.6 Homesteads Road and Old Common Road

4.6.1 As set out in the resolution from Cabinet in 2004, these two sites would have been subject to further detailed consultation only should the long term solution of the major development proposal fail.

4.6.2 However, bearing in mind the position with Manydown and having looked at the potential for the land at Attwood Close, similar initial discussions were held with the Environment Agency with regard to these sites. The Environment Agency felt that these sites were more viable than the site at Attwood Close and of the two, it appeared that Homesteads Road was considered preferable with regards to ground water protection.

5 Current Demographics and future needs

5.1 In 2004, it was reported that there was an estimated 12-15 years of burial space at Worting Road Cemetery. However as discussed in 5.2 above and based on current analysis, it is now expected that the cemetery will close to new burials in 8-10 years i.e. 2019-2022¹.

5.2 Locally, there are around 1100 deaths per annum. Of these, 10% choose to use the Worting Road Cemetery for a full burial, with a further 8% opting for cremation, with internment of ashes at Worting Road².³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of deaths recorded</th>
<th>Number of new burials at Worting Road</th>
<th>Number of cremated remains at Worting Road</th>
<th>% of usage of Worting Road against total deaths in the borough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

5.3 On the basis of the borough making provision for zero net migration over the period 2011-2027 (whereby the total number of people moving into the borough equals the number moving out each year), the number of deaths in the Borough is projected to edge towards 1,200 per annum by 2017, and to reach 1,300 per annum by about 2025.

5.4 In line with the rest of the country, the borough has an ageing population, to the extent that nearly all population growth over the next 20 years will occur in

¹ Nationally the percentage of those choosing burial has been 28%, with the remainder choosing for cremation. This has remained quite static for a period of some years.
² Please note that the internment of cremated remains at the North Waltham Crematoria costs a minimum of £1847 as opposed to the current fee of £420 at Worting Road Cemetery.
³ The balance of burials go to churchyards, parish cemeteries or outside the borough boundaries (including green burials)
the 65+ age groups. All of this indicates the continued importance for burial provision, into the future.

5.5 In addition to the anticipated changes in the population, there are a number of other independent factors, which whilst unpredictable, may affect the need or size of burial site provision into the future

- The capacity and availability of burial space within churchyards\(^4\) and parish cemeteries\(^5\), should these close to new burials, further pressure will be on other cemeteries
- Any changes to the demographics of certain faiths, such as those from Muslim and Jewish faiths, who are known to prefer burial, and whose graves may require certain orientation.

5.6 Having consideration for the demographic need, ideally, were the council to choose to provide a cemetery, it would be of sufficient size e.g. over 5 hectares, to allow for variables in requirement and a medium to long term solution.

6 **Legal Requirements**

6.1 There is no legal obligation on Local Authorities to provide burial provision.

6.2 However, recent case law has indicated that removal of a service which has an impact on particular sections of the community must be considered under an Equalities Impact Assessment. A scoping of the Equalities Impact of ceasing to provide a cemetery has indicated significant negative impact on some communities.

6.3 Should Members wish to continue to consider cessation of provision as an option, a full Equalities Impact Assessment will need to be carried out, which will include public consultation.

7 **Cemetery Provision – Market and Partnership Appraisal**

7.1 There are a number of options for service delivery including\(^6\):

7.2 Decide not to provide any future cemetery provision, as no legal requirement to do so (see 7.1 and 7.2 above)

7.3 Enter into a joint venture/partnership with other Local Authorities or Parish Councils (either within or outside the borough) to provide new cemetery provision.

7.4 Hart has passed responsibility to Fleet Town Council, who has advised it is not its intention to create further provision, once the cemetery closes. East

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\(^4\) The Diocese has been unable to provide capacity information to date but have indicated that they envisage churchyards across the town closing 'soon'

\(^5\) Parishes have a range of capacity from 18 to 100 years in their cemeteries meaning no current risk of increased pressure on council owned cemeteries, as a result of closure of Parish Council cemeteries

\(^6\) Please note that, if the council is to provide a new cemetery, which is managed and maintained in-house, there will be an extensive 'transition' period during which time, the staff will need to be available for burials at the new cemetery, as well as the on-going provision of burials into existing plots at Worting Road.
Hants District Council is open to investigating joint options, with capacity below 30 years in Alton. Test Valley has provision for over 100 years.

7.5 Of those Parish Councils responding\(^7\) most advised that in addition to any current cemetery space, they had designated additional land available. Most Parishes have 30 years + capacity and as such, the opportunity to enter into a partnership approach is limited for new cemetery provision.

7.6 Enter into a joint venture or outsource a new cemetery, with a commercial provider.

- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough has outsourced its cemetery and crematorium management to Dignity, who currently run the crematorium at North Waltham.
- However, the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management has advised that with the exception of LB Westminster’s outsourcing of cemeteries (which was ultimately unsuccessful), due to the subsidies usually required for cemeteries, they are not aware of any local authority which has been able to make the outsourcing of cemetery services viable for the a commercial concern without the inclusion of a crematoria (which is income generating).

7.7 Manage the cemetery in-house but outsource the maintenance (either directly, or through partnership/framework agreements with other Local Authorities/Parish Councils)

8 Comments from the Housing and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

8.1 The Committee made the following comments

a) That Members support the principle of continuing to make cemetery provision, when Worting Road reaches capacity.

b) The proposed next steps as set out in 9 (timeline 10)\(^8\)

   a. Members would like the opportunity to propose potential locations for a new cemetery.

   b) The site criteria and scoring regime as set out in Appendix 1 should be amended to reflect the following

   a. An additional criteria should be added to cover both the tranquillity and the context of the site, considering the sensitivity of adjacent land uses

   b. An additional criteria should be added to cover ease of access by public transport as well as cycling and walking

   c. Car parking availability should be included in the criteria

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\(^7\) Parishes known to have cemeteries include Old Basing, Oakley and Deane, Tadley, Sherborne, Whitchurch, Kingsclere and Overton. Please note that Overton has 15 years capacity.

\(^8\) Please note, the next steps and timeline are reproduced in this report in 10 and 11
d. Mandatory/show stoppers should be included in the criteria

e. A wider range of scoring should be used to evaluate the criteria and weighting the scoring should be considered

f. Green burial sites should be looked at as an option

d) The Committee disagreed that the criteria of alternative use value of the site should be included and feel that planning policy should not be considered in the potential consideration of a site at this stage.

a. The Committee supported the continuation of feasibility work on the provision of cemetery space adjacent to the existing crematorium, to include discussions with Dignity (management of the crematorium) and the adjoining land owner to assess whether such an option is workable in principle.

8.2 Whilst officers warmly welcome the Committee’s comments which add new criteria to the appendix, the suggested deletion of the alternative use value and planning gives rise for concern.

8.3 In seeking future land provision for a cemetery, the council is acting not as landowner or local planning authority, but as a service provider. In these circumstances, the likely cost of purchasing land (particularly if there is ‘hope’ value on the land for a more profitable use) or the likelihood of gaining planning approval are material considerations to be weighed against the other criteria.

9 Further Feasibility Work to be carried out

9.1 As set out in the report to the Housing and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it is suggested that in moving forward, the council should

   a) Further investigate the opportunities presented at Homesteads and Old Common Road.

   b) Investigate what other land may be available, within the relevant time period, for future cemetery provision, based on the draft criteria as set out in full in Appendix 1.

9.2 The site criteria (seen in full in Appendix 1) include an analysis of:

   - Site size – including overall area, capacity for graves, soil suitability and biodiversity issues
   - Title – including land ownership, title restrictions, legal agreements and wayleaves
   - Planning and highways issues such as open space designations, planning policy constraints, rights of way and accessibility.
   - Conflicts of interest such as level of formal and informal community use
   - Costs and Infrastructure including land acquisition costs, on site and off site infrastructure costs

9.3 Initial analysis using the draft criteria would suggest much of the land within the town/on the town borders are too small to be viable, are mainly used for
formal recreational or are within the SHLAA/or are likely to attract other forms of valuable development.

9.4 However, an initial analysis of council owned land would point towards a number of additional sites which might be identified including Carpenters Down, Popley, Old Down Kempshott, Beggarwood Park, Kempshott and Tewkesbury Road, Popley

9.5 To identify the potential limitations or constraints on future cemetery provision, it is suggested that further feasibility work is carried out to identify all possible sites and that these are analysed based on the criteria as set out in Appendix 1, subject to approval by Cabinet.

9.6 Notwithstanding this suggested approach, due to the potential synergies, informal discussions have taken place with Dignity who manages the Crematorium and the owner of the farmland adjacent to the site. The owner has confirmed that he would be prepared to consider, in principle, the terms for the sale of land to the council and the quantum necessary for the council to implement a suitable burial programme. This might include an option to purchase land while feasibility studies are on-going in respect of other site options.

10 Draft Outline Timetable

<table>
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<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project team analyse sites based on Member approved criteria</td>
<td>Autumn/Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report output of analysis to Members</td>
<td>Spring 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Consultation</td>
<td>Spring/Summer 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report to Members on outcomes of Consultation seeking agreement on a way forward.</td>
<td>Summer 2012</td>
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