



**Glasgow City Council**

**Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods  
City Policy Committee**

**Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director of  
Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability**

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**Item 1**

**11th June 2024**

### **Bereavement Services Update**

#### **Purpose of Report:**

To provide the Committee with an update on NRS Bereavement Services.

#### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Committee note the content of this report.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 NRS Bereavement Services has responsibility for 32 cemeteries and churchyards of which 8 are in regular use. The Service also manages two crematoria: Linn with 2 chapels, and Daldowie which has 3.
- 1.2 Whilst the only statutory requirement in terms of bereavement services relates to the need for the Council to provide a burial ground, there is statutory legislation in place to govern the cremation, interment, and memorial headstone inspection processes.

## **2. Cremation Process**

- 2.1 Glasgow City Council undertake an average of 5,500 cremations per year across Linn and Daldowie Crematoriums.
- 2.2 Regulation/Governance of Crematoria
  - 2.2.1 External Inspection – all Scottish crematoria are normally subject of an annual inspection by the HM Senior Inspector of Burial, Cremation and Funeral Directors. Due to the ongoing development of the Inspectorate, no inspection has been carried in the past year.
  - 2.2.2 Environmental Inspection – in terms of Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (PPC Regs) for Scotland, each crematorium in Scotland is required to operate to a defined permit process. These regulations are governed by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and requires each Cremation Authority to provide reports every six months on emissions. A further element of the PPC Regs requires each crematorium to carry out an independent 'stack' emissions test. This is done to support each crematoriums emissions reporting system and corroborate compliance standards the required standards were met at both sites during 2023. As a result of a cyber attack, the annual inspections have not been carried out by SEPA since 2019. At the time of this report, no date has been set for a future inspection.

## **3. Burial Grounds Process**

- 3.1 Glasgow City Council undertake an average of 1,000 burials per year across our cemeteries.
- 3.2 Regulation/Governance of Cemeteries
  - 3.2.1 Following the implementation of the regulations for the operation of Crematoria in Scotland and as an element of the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016, during 2023/24 the Scottish Government, Burial & Cremation, Anatomy and Death Certification Team introduced the Code of Practice for Funeral Directors. This defines minimum standards for all funeral directors who operate in Scotland. This will be fully implemented in March 2025. Ahead of

this the Scottish Government will appoint Inspectors for Funeral Directors and also Burial Grounds to ensure compliance with all of the relevant legislation.

- 3.2.2 The regulations for cemeteries as part of the 2016 Act are due to be implemented during 2024/25. Whilst these new regulations are likely to have some impact on our cemeteries, these are yet to be defined. There will however be a requirement for each Burial Authority to produce a clear management plan for their cemeteries. The regulations will also introduce a new external inspection regime for all Scottish cemeteries with the addition of Government Inspectors of Burials

#### **4. Service Delivery – Cremation**

##### **4.1 Daldowie Crematorium**

- 4.1.1 A business case was made to refurbish both Linn and Daldowie Crematoria in 2010 and this was approved by council at that time. This refurbishment was to include the upgrade of the cremation equipment, with the addition of mercury abatement, and also the full refurbishment of the buildings including decoration, heating, and electrical elements of these.
- 4.1.2 The installation of the cremation equipment was completed in 2016, with the remaining work at Daldowie completed in 2020. While the purpose of this investment was to ensure the structural integrity and appearance of the crematoria, the addition of the South Chapel at Daldowie has led to an increase of 15% in use of the crematorium.

##### **4.2 Linn Crematorium**

- 4.2.1 The design and specification for the refurbishment of Linn Crematorium are currently being finalised and works are expected to start during July 2024 and be completed by April 2025. As a result of the opening of new crematoria in the local area and the need for refurbishment to the building, the use of Linn Crematorium during the past 5 years has dropped by just over 20%. There is an expectation that this investment will reverse this drop in use of Linn Crematorium and that bereaved families will make greater use of Linn.

##### **4.3 Cremation Equipment Maintenance**

- 4.3.1 In early March 2023, Laplace Solutions was awarded a contract to provide maintenance and repairs to the cremation equipment at Linn and Daldowie for a period of 5 years. This maintenance is essential to ensuring compliance with the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and the conditions of the Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations 2012. This contract has been successfully delivered during the last year.

## **5. Other Bereavement Services Issues**

### **5.1 Unauthorised Memorials**

- 5.1.1 The increase in the number of unauthorised memorials such as fences, rails, solar lights, etc., continues to be an issue in cemeteries and crematoria. The presence of these can impede the ground maintenance and, when these are no longer tended, can make the crematoria and cemetery grounds appear unduly untidy. Bereavement Services management will be reviewing the Management Rules and working with support agencies, key stakeholders and organisations such as the Association for Public Service Excellence, to produce a process to effectively manage these unauthorised memorials.
- 5.1.2 The removal, and storage for collection of unauthorised memorials has begun in the Gardens of Remembrance in the grounds of Daldowie Crematorium. At the moment only memorials which have not been tended for a prolonged period and new memorials are being removed. Public notices advising visitors of this have been placed in and around the grounds.
- 5.1.3 The implementation of a process to sensitively deal with unauthorised memorials in the cemeteries will be considered as part of the public consultation process required in the review and creation of updated management rules for cemeteries.

### **5.2 Dogs in Crematoria and Cemeteries**

- 5.2.1 Dog walking in GCC crematoria and cemeteries is permitted if dogs are retained on a short lead (less than 2m) and that owners clean up any mess left by their dogs. In most cases owners follow these guidelines, however, a minority of dog owners and some commercial dog walkers choose to ignore the management rules. This can cause considerable distress to bereaved families.
- 5.2.2 Bereavement Services officers are currently working with our Community Enforcement colleagues to assess the scale of the issue pertaining to non-compliance by dog owners and will implement measures to reduce this should it be required. As part of this process the management rules will be reviewed to consider further restrictions or the possibility of excluding dogs, other than support dogs, from our crematoria and cemeteries.

## **6. Cemetery Capacity**

- 6.1 The works to extend the capacity of the Linn Cemetery Extension, which incorporates the Islamic Burial Section, was completed in the late summer 2023 at a cost of £220k.
- 6.2 This phase provides an additional 700 lairs which will provide an estimated capacity for 3 to 4 years.
- 6.3 Plans to develop this site further are to be considered later in 2024.

- 6.4 While it should be noted that the service has capacity for burials at our locations across the City, an assessment of the total future capacity of all GCC cemeteries is being reviewed, this is expected to be completed by the end of 2024.
- 6.5 In addition, Bereavement Services Management continue to meet on a regular basis with representatives from respective faith groups to ensure we effectively address the specific service requirements.

## 7. Headstone/Memorial/Wall Inspections with Burial Grounds

- 7.1 The Memorial Inspection Programme to assess the condition of all the memorial headstones within GCC Cemeteries continues to be carried out by staff. The process has now been further developed to include a more robust method of managing the safety of larger memorials, monuments, and structures as well as an assessment of all exterior and interior walls in and around our cemeteries.
- 7.2 Since 2015, all memorials in GCC Cemeteries have been assessed and action taken, either to make safe or repair, where necessary. This programme ensures that over a five-year period every memorial in our cemeteries are inspected on at least one occasion. The process to carry out memorial inspections follows the Scottish Government guidance in the published ***Burial Ground Memorial Safety: Local Authority Guidance***. The latest statistics show that a programmed 20,567 memorials were inspected during 2023/24, which represents 100% of the memorials due for inspection during this period. Of these none failed to meet the inspection standard requiring immediate attention and 1,528 were deemed to require a re-inspection within the next 12 months.

## 8. Resource Implications

*Financial:* None.

*Legal:* None

*Personnel:* None

*Procurement:* CPU is progressing a permanent arrangement for the maintenance of the cremation/abatement plant.

### **Council Strategic Plan:**

Grand Challenge 3: Fight the Climate Emergency in a just transition to a net zero Glasgow.  
Mission 2: Become a net zero carbon city by 2030.

## **Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:**

*Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-2025*

Generally supportive of the stated outcomes.

*What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?*

EQIA screenings have been undertaken for the refurbishment projects.

Multi faith groups are supported and their needs and expectations met by service delivery.

*Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio economic disadvantage.*

Services are available to financially excluded individuals via Public Health Burials and direct services.

## **Climate Impacts:**

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

Contributes to our energy and carbon masterplan and commitment to the Net Zero heat via renewables by 2030.

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

## **Privacy and Data Protection impacts:**

No impacts have been identified as part of the activity to date

## **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 It is recommended that Committee note the content of this report.