



Policy, Finance and Development Committee	Tuesday, 03 February 2026	Matter for Information and Decision
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Report Title: Cemetery and Burial Strategy (2026 - 2036) (Supplementary)

Report Author(s): Ben Wilson (Head of Neighbourhood Services)

Purpose of Report:	To inform Members of the outcome of the consultation and to adopt the proposed Cemetery and Burial Strategy.
Report Summary:	The report sets out the Council's approach to the provision of burial services over the next 10 years.
Recommendation(s):	A. That the content of the report, appendices and consultation responses be noted; and B. That Committee adopts the Cemetery and Burial Strategy (at Appendix 1).
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Ben Wilson (Head of Neighbourhood Services) (0116) 257 2711 ben.wilson@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Teresa Neal (Strategic Director) (0116) 257 2626 teresa.neal@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Strategic Objectives:	Our Council (SO1) Our Communities (SO2) Our Partners (SO5)
Vision and Values:	Customer & Community Focused (V1)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Reputation Damage (CR4) Effective Utilisation of Assets / Buildings (CR5)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications directly arising from this report. Initial EA Screening (See Appendices)
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.

Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	1. Cemetery and Burial Strategy (2026 - 2036) 2. Cemetery Rules and Regulations (September 2025) 3. Memorial Safety Policy 4. Equalities Impact Assessment

4. Consultation Section: Background Information

- 4.1 The consultation commenced in December 2025 and closed in February 2026 (Over 6 weeks) with 275 responses being received. Of which, the age ranges were:
- 0-18 Years – 0.3% (1)
 - 19-30 Years – 7.2% (20)
 - 31-40 years – 12.7% (35)
 - 41-50 years – 23.3% (64)
 - 51-60 years – 24% (66)
 - 61-70 years – 24% (66)
 - 71+ years – 8.5% (23)
- 4.2 81% of respondents live within the borough and the remaining being a business, community group or they work in the borough.
- 4.3 The consultation was broken down into 3 key areas with 11 questions overall. This was open to all stakeholders including residents, visitors, and businesses, notably funeral directors and stonemasons.

5. Consultation Section: Attendance and Opinion

- 5.1 Question: How often do you visit:
- Daily – 4%
 - Weekly – 25%
 - Monthly – 31%
 - Seasonal – 25%
 - Yearly – 6%
 - Never – 9%
- 5.2 Question: To what extent would you agree that the green space in the cemeteries and/or church yards we manage are well maintained and in good condition?
- Strongly Agree – 14%
 - Agree – 45%
 - Neutral – 26%
 - Disagree – 10%
 - Strongly Disagree – 5%
- 5.3 Questions: To what extent would you agree that facilities and infrastructure (such as benches, chapels, pathways, signage) in the cemeteries and/or church yards we manage are well maintained and in good condition?

- Strongly Agree – 12%
- Agree – 44%
- Neutral – 32%
- Disagree – 8%
- Strongly Disagree – 4%

5.4 Question: Are there any improvements we could make in the maintenance of the cemeteries and/or church yards we manage as a whole:

5.5 52% of respondents did not provide any feedback in terms of the maintenance of the areas. A common theme from the comments was regarding additional bins.

5.6 **Section Outcome:** It is positive to receive so many responses from a wide variety of age groups, and stakeholders. It is also positive that 85% of cemetery users find the areas well maintained, managed and looked after.

5.7 There were some good feedback on maintenance but it is clear that stakeholders would like to see a well maintained, well looked after cemetery and churchyards, of which the strategy has a clear priority to do so. Alignment of the priorities of the wider community to the strategy is key to moving forward and providing appropriate areas for the services available to stakeholders.

6. Consultation Section 3: Cultural Faith and Needs

6.1 Question: Is there anything more than council could do to improve its burial and cemetery offering to minority groups and different faiths?

6.2 This question generated comments from 126, with an even split of people thinking there is suitable provision for faith groups and others thinking there should be more, especially Muslim burials or section that was referenced by 51 respondents.

6.3 **Section Outcome:** The strategy is designed to be inclusive of all faith groups and support the wider community in offering appropriate opportunities to all. It is important to keep the areas of the cemeteries available to all, but without being exclusive by creating areas designed for only 1 faith group. Given it is open to all, it would be important to allow for burials to be in the relevant position to allow for alternative faiths to purchase plots. This matter will be considered by operational staff when selling and allocating plots in the future.

7. Consultation Section 4: Future Planning

7.1 Question: We are anticipating that new regulations will give permission for graves over 75 years old to be re-used for new burials, if traceable family members also do not object. Would you be supportive of the reuse of graves in these circumstances, increasing capacity in the borough?

- Yes – 21%
- Maybe 22%
- No – 57%

7.2 Question: Are you supportive of the council identifying and allocating suitable land for this purpose?

- Yes – 85%
- Maybe 12%
- No – 3%

- 7.3 **Section Outcome:** There is a clear acceptance that to enable a long term use of the current cemeteries and to not run out of space, something needs to be done, either re-use of graves or use of alternative land. The majority of respondents did say they would prefer to not reuse graves, but an overwhelming majority would like the strategy to include the option to look at suitable land alternatives to increase capacity and ensure a long-term solution is in place.

8. Consultation Section 5: Memorial Safety

- 8.1 Question: To what extent are you aware of the Council's procedure for inspecting and managing unsafe memorials?
- Very Aware – 6%
 - Aware – 16%
 - Neutral – 23%
 - Unaware – 40%
 - Very Unaware – 15%
- 8.2 Question: Do you have any concerns about the safety or condition of memorials?
- 8.3 Respondents referenced that only where there is a risk should work be done to headstones and memorials, which is in keeping with the proposed Memorial Safety Policy. There were also feedback that can be taken in to account with the operational management of the sites, of which will be passed on to the service area to review and consider.
- 8.4 **Section Outcome:** The memorial safety policy and strategy are in line with the feedback from the consultation. Only where there is a risk to health would headstones be laid down or removed and this would be in conjunction with the family of the deceased, and respect, dignity and pride in the graves is to be maintained.

9. Consultation Section 6: Open Feedback

- 9.1 Question: Are there any additional services or improvements you would like to see, and any other comments or suggestions?
- 9.2 Feedback in consultations are invaluable, and there was a clear theme in the open feedback section, including:
- Ensure the cemeteries are inclusive of all faiths
 - Improve basic visitor facilities (toilets where feasible, bins, benches)
 - Raise grounds-maintenance standards and resolve kerb/grass layout issues
 - Address security and antisocial behaviour
 - Improve accessibility and wayfinding
 - Strengthen communication and on-site management presence

10. Consultation Section: Overall Feedback & Outcome

- 10.1 Respondents are highly engaged with many providing detailed and emotional responses showing great passion for the cemeteries and churchyards.
- 10.2 Respondents deeply value the cemeteries within the borough and want them protected, enhanced, and kept accessible. There is significant positive feedback on the current state of the cemeteries but important to note that the priorities of the strategy are in line with the results of the consultation.

- 10.3 The Council's proposed strategy, that has a strong ethos of maintenance, security, and appropriate future planning for long term capacity for burials was heavily expressed in the responses, with a sway of identifying alternative land, than the reuse of graves, however there is a risk to depending solely on new land, as previous investigations in to this were unable to find appropriate land to use and would have time constraints.
- 10.4 Increasing maintenance, biodiversity, protecting the heritage and supporting wider community and faith groups are clear outcomes of the consultation, of which the strategy is aiming to deliver.
- 10.5 In summary, the strongest messages from the consultation are:
- Provide adequate provision for all faith groups
 - There was a strong opposition to reuse of graves
 - Improved accessibility for users
 - Better maintenance, especially paths, benches and bins
 - There was a strong acceptance of identifying alternative land for cemeteries and burials
 - Security, Anti-social behaviour and safety were mentioned
- 10.6 General tone of the consultation is supportive and passionate of the burial strategy and respondents consistently emphasise that the cemeteries should be inclusive well-maintained areas, and that they are essential for supporting people in their health and wellbeing, especially whilst commemorating loved ones, of which the Strategy is aiming to achieve. There are some operational elements that can be fed into the operations of the staff that oversee the cemeteries, and a distinct need to ensure the facilities are utilised and offered to all faith groups and the wider community.