

Phase report

This is the feedback stage, this will be available until 26 October 2025.

How Important is it to you to have a cemetery close to home (within 1 to 5 miles)?

124/124 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Very Important 56.5% (70 choices)



Somewhat Important 31.5% (39 choices)



Not Important 12.1% (15 choices)



Unsure 0% (0 choices)



If a cemetery isn't available near your home, would you be worried about being buried - or burying a loved one - further away?

124/124 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Yes 75% (93 choices)



No 25% (31 choices)



If you answered yes, please explain why?

Respondents overwhelmingly emphasised the importance of proximity and ease of access to cemeteries, both for themselves and for family members. The most common reasons cited were the ability to visit graves regularly maintain and tend lairs and support the grieving process.

Transport difficulties were mentioned repeatedly, especially for those who do not drive or rely on public transport, which was described as inadequate or inconvenient. Respondents highlighted that older people and those with health or mobility issues would be particularly affected by distant cemeteries.

A strong sense of belonging and tradition was evident, with many wanting to be buried in their hometown or near family members. Several responses stressed the importance of keeping families together in death as in life.

Other concerns included the cost and time involved in travelling to distant cemeteries the impact on spontaneous visits and the ability to attend on special occasions or anniversaries. Some also mentioned religious obligations for regular visits.

In summary, respondents consistently prioritised local burial options to facilitate regular visits, maintain family and community ties, and reduce practical barriers such as transport and cost. The desire for burial close to home was linked to emotional wellbeing, tradition, and accessibility for all ages and abilities.



English

What matters most to you in a cemetery? Please rank from 1 (most important) to 10 (least important)

124/124 - Ranking - required

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- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--------------|
| #1 | Local to where I live | #3.7 average |
|----|-----------------------|--------------|
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- | | | |
|----|---|--------------|
| #2 | An attractive setting with shrubs and trees | #4.3 average |
|----|---|--------------|
-
- | | | |
|----|---|--------------|
| #3 | Lairs for coffins and ashes caskets in area of close mown grass | #5.1 average |
|----|---|--------------|
-
- | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|--------------|
| #4 | Water supply within the cemetery | #5.4 average |
|----|----------------------------------|--------------|
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- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|--------------|
| #5 | Accessible by public transport | #5.5 average |
|----|--------------------------------|--------------|
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- | | | |
|----|-------------|------------|
| #6 | Litter bins | #6 average |
|----|-------------|------------|
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- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| #7 | Car parking close to the family lair | #6.1 average |
|----|--------------------------------------|--------------|
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- | | | |
|----|---|--------------|
| #8 | Concrete foundations for headstones already installed | #6.2 average |
|----|---|--------------|
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- | | | |
|----|--|--------------|
| #9 | Lairs for coffins and ashes caskets in wildflower and meadow areas | #6.3 average |
|----|--|--------------|
-
- | | | |
|-----|--|--------------|
| #10 | Strictly enforced limits on the space memorabilia at a headstone can take up | #6.4 average |
|-----|--|--------------|

Do you have any other preferences?

Natural burial options and environmentally friendly practices were mentioned frequently, with requests for natural burials composting bins for organic waste, and a nursery for trees and flowers. Several respondents expressed interest in above-ground burial options, such as mausoleums or wall burials, referencing European examples. The ability to plant trees or have memorial planting at burial sites was also highlighted.

Other common themes included the desire for seating areas regular maintenance of gardens and grounds and ensuring wildflower areas are kept tidy rather than overgrown. Respondents also wanted the ability to pre-purchase plots and to have personal memorabilia at gravesites.

A unique suggestion was the installation of a “letter box to heaven” to support bereaved families, especially those affected by stillbirth. There was also a request to avoid animals on site. Overall, respondents emphasised environmental sensitivity, personalisation, and thoughtful maintenance of the bereavement spaces.

Would you be more likely to choose a burial site that’s environmentally friendly (like a natural or green burial)?

124/124 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

No 56.5% (70 choices)



Yes 43.5% (54 choices)



What would you like to see in a natural or green burial site that's different from a traditional cemetery?

56% of respondents indicated they would not choose a natural or green burial. In contrast, 43% expressed a preference for natural, woodland, or meadow-like burial sites, emphasising less formal, less regimented layouts compared to traditional cemeteries. Many wanted sites with trees, wildflowers, and shrubs, but with some maintenance to avoid an overgrown appearance. The idea of burial options involving trees — such as tree pod burials or planting remains beneath a tree — was mentioned repeatedly.

Environmental sustainability was a key concern: respondents wanted minimal environmental impact, use of biodegradable or eco-friendly coffins (such as wicker), and avoidance of chemicals like formaldehyde. There was also support for banning plastics and artificial flowers.

Several respondents preferred small or natural grave markers (like plaques or simple markers), rather than large gravestones or artificial memorabilia. Some also wanted the option for ashes to be scattered in woodland areas with places to sit and reflect.

A minority of responses preferred traditional cemeteries and expressed scepticism about changing established practices. Others simply supported having the option for green burials available locally.

Other individual suggestions included vertical structures water cremation as an option and ensuring permanent plots. There were also comments about ensuring the site supports biodiversity and allows wildlife to roam freely.

What types of memorials would you like the Council to offer?

124/124 - Multiple choice - choose many - required

Benches with nameplates 66.1% (82 choices)



Tress with nameplates 58.1% (72 choices)



Wall plaques 57.3% (71 choices)



Ashes stored in special structures 50% (62 choices)



Other - Please describe 7.3% (9 choices)



If space was available in an older part of a cemetery, would you be okay with being buried there — or arranging for a loved one to be buried there?

124/124 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Yes 57.3% (71 choices)



I don't mind either way 31.5% (39 choices)

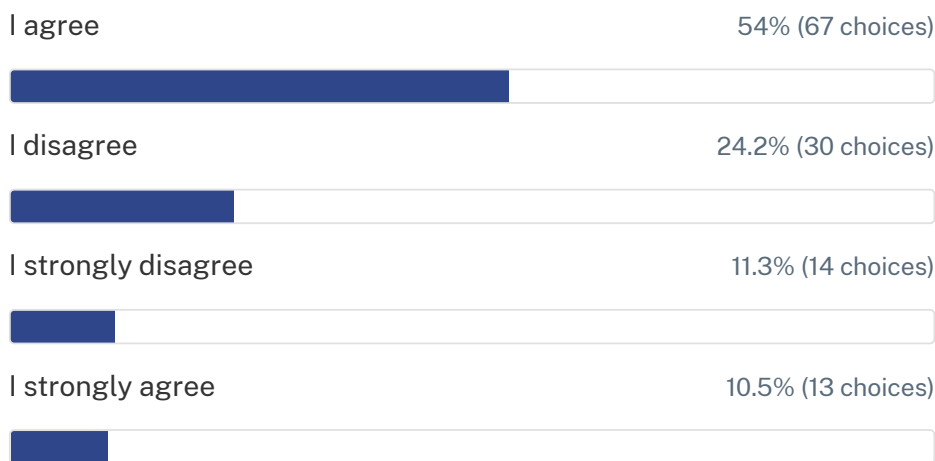


No 11.3% (14 choices)



Each year the Council sets the level of fee to be charged for burials and cremations. When a new lair is purchased a lair fee is charged along with an interment fee. If the family already own the lair only the interment fee is charged. When a person is cremated, there is a cremation fee. In addition to these fees the person arranging the funeral will also incur costs charged by their funeral director. These costs can range widely and will depend on how elaborate the funeral is. In 2024 the Council's fees for a new lair and interment was approximately 40% of the cost of an average funeral, and approximately 24% of the cost of an average cremation. In the future it is anticipated the cost of running its bereavement service will continue to rise along with increased costs in developing new cemeteries. This means that there will be an increase fees associated with cremations and burials. The Council is proposing that costs associated with the management of the cemeteries and crematorium are covered by the lair, interment and cremation fees. This will support the financial sustainability of its bereavement service.

124/124 - Multiple choice - choose one - required



Please note any comments you have on this proposal?

Over 64% of respondents indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, suggesting broad overall support.

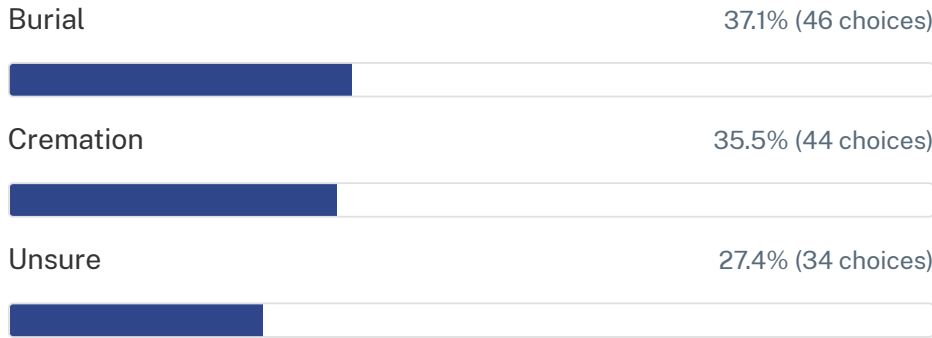
Nearly a fifth of those who took part in the consultation left comments and the primary theme of these related to concerns about the high and increasing cost of funerals and related services. Some felt these charges were already unaffordable, and placed significant financial strain on grieving families.

There was a strong call for more affordable or cheaper options, particularly for those on low incomes. Some of those responding sought more transparency and detail about how costs would be affected by the proposal.

Some suggestions for cost-saving or alternative approaches include considering vertical burial structures as used in other countries and introducing burial walls for ashes to reduce expenses.

Is it your preference to have a Burial or Cremation?

124/124 - Multiple choice - choose one - required



Please state why (including whether this is based upon your religious belief)?

Cost and environmental concerns were the most frequently mentioned factors influencing respondents' preferences. Many preferred cremation or natural/woodland burials due to lower expense and reduced environmental impact. Several respondents expressed a desire for more environmentally friendly options, such as natural burials or water cremation.

Family considerations were also common: some wanted to be with family in existing lairs or make things easier for relatives by choosing cremation or allowing them to decide. The flexibility of cremation (e.g. scattering ashes in meaningful places) was also valued.

Personal preference and non-religious reasons were cited frequently, with some simply stating it was their choice or that they had no strong religious beliefs influencing their decision. A few respondents mentioned spiritual or religious motivations, including Christian beliefs against cremation.

Some respondents were undecided, citing factors like cost and location. A minority expressed a desire for more natural or alternative options (such as water resolution or being "with the worms").

Overall, the main trends were a preference for environmentally friendly and cost-effective options, consideration for family arrangements, and a mix of personal and spiritual motivations.



English

Is there anything else you would like to share about your preferences or expectations for burial sites?

Respondents most frequently emphasised the importance of burial sites being permanent and undisturbed, with several expressing strong opposition to the removal or disturbance of graves for future burials. Many also highlighted the need for burial grounds to be kept tidy, neat, and respectfully maintained on a regular basis.

There was a notable desire for the ability to purchase or reserve plots in advance, particularly to keep families together. Concerns were raised about the loss of land to housing developments and a call for councils to secure land for future cemetery use.

Sustainability and alternative options were also mentioned, with support for eco-burials, direct cremation, and innovative methods such as water resolution, which were seen as more environmentally friendly and potentially less costly. The high cost of funerals was criticised.

Accessibility was another concern, with calls for better public transport links to cemeteries to allow regular visits, especially for older people. Some respondents wanted more choice over burial or cremation types rather than location.

Other comments included requests for council workers to dress respectfully at funerals a preference for serene and traditional settings rather than modern designs and a few expressing indifference to arrangements after death.