
Burial Strategy Update

Culture and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee
October 2023

Burial Strategy overview

Space demand	Evidence and track existing demand
Muslim burials	Assessment of the uptake of graves and ability of faith groups to provide their own spaces
City growth	Using census data to inform our decision making and future death projections
Future provision	Planning the shape of bereavement services in the future
Policy development	Ensuring our policies are robust and reflective of the needs of Leicester's residents
Sustaining Existing Provision	Ensuring the service remains financially viable and is able to perform into the future, recognising the ongoing demand of the service and private sector provision

Context

- The purpose of this slide deck is to summarise the work of the burial strategy which is intended to appraise the demand and options for the council's cemeteries.
- LCC Burial Space Strategy 2014 highlighted that a new cemetery would need to open by 2030 to meet long term burial needs. It is almost 100 years since the last new cemetery was built to serve the city.
- The demand for space across all cemeteries was further qualified in November 2022, following increased demand from the Covid pandemic, with mitigation options identified.
- In the UK 20% of all deaths will involve a burial. However, in Leicester this is higher due to the city's population demographics.
- 1,031 burials & 1,826 cremations carried out in 2022



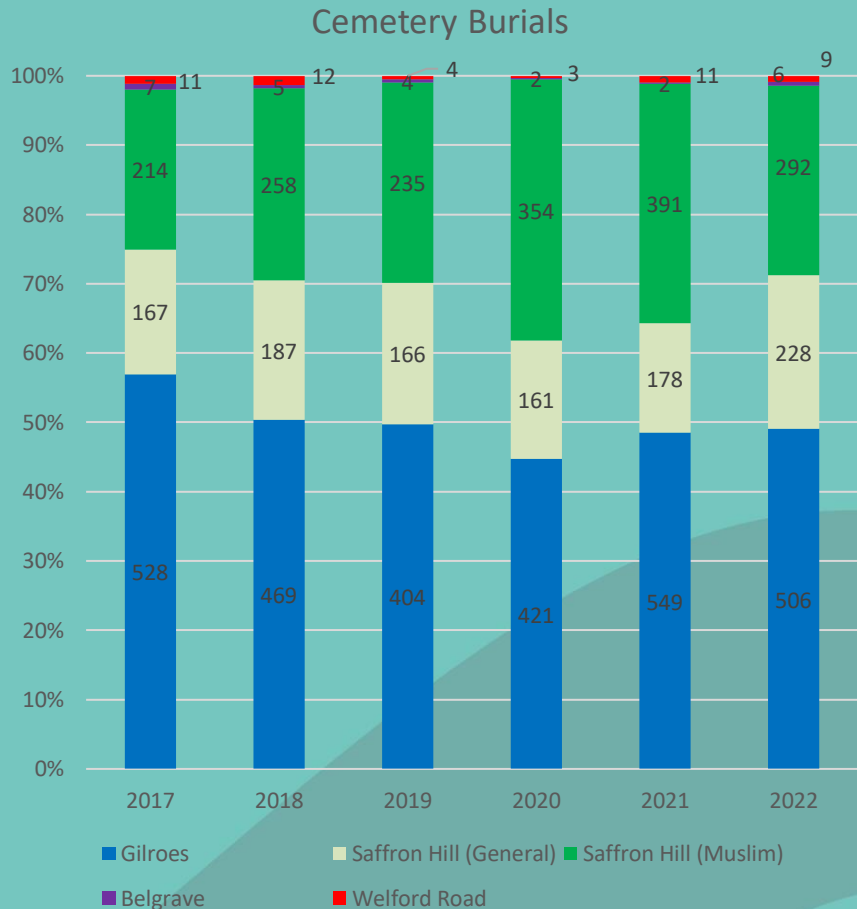
Context

- Muslim and Jewish faiths forbid cremation and are reliant on a burial
- Muslim residents make up 23.5 % of Leicester's population and have grown by 23% since 2011 to over 86,000 (ONS Census 2021). The Jewish community makes up 0.1% of Leicester's population.
- Muslim burial space is particularly in high demand and was forecast to reach capacity by **2025** without mitigating action.
- Projections for non-Muslim burial space was this would reach capacity by **2033**
- Mitigating actions have been taken to rebalance the overall needs for all faith communities resulting in capacity being reached in **2030-31** for everyone

Provision of burial space

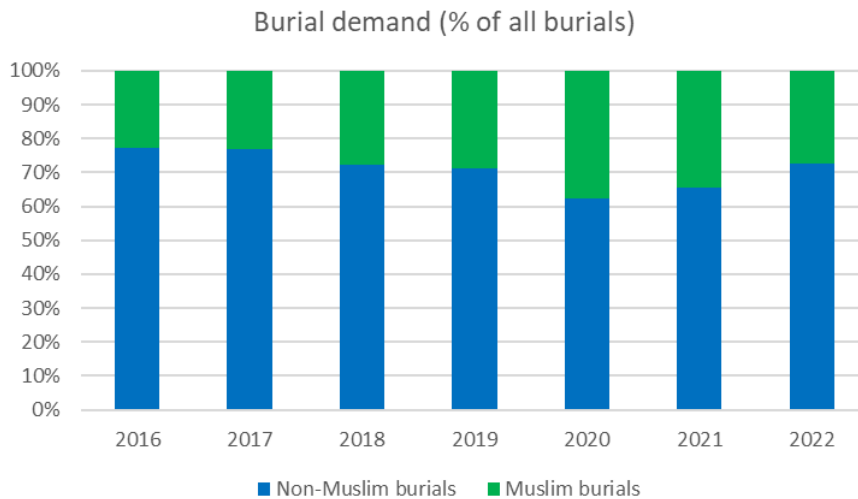
- No statutory duty on local authorities to provide burial space
- Cemeteries are a discretionary service
- Local Government Act 1972
 - s.214(1) Empowers local authorities to act as burial authorities
 - s.214(2) Burial authorities **MAY** provide & maintain cemeteries whether within or outside their area.
 - s.214(6) A burial authority **MAY** contribute to any expenses incurred by any other person in providing or maintaining a cemetery in which inhabitants of the authority's area may be buried
- Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (As amended)
 - Regulates local authority cemeteries
 - Does not apply to private cemeteries

Leicester cemetery burials

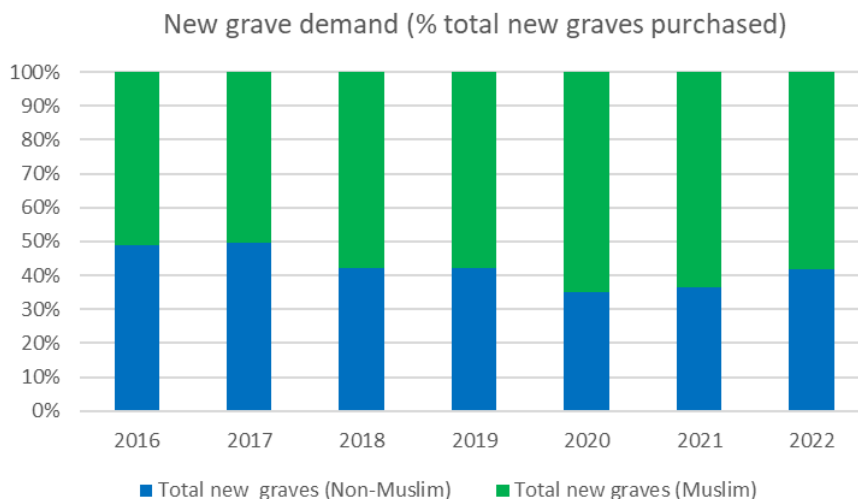


- The council operates 4 cemeteries
- New graves are only available at Gilroes and Saffron Hill cemeteries
- Burials can take place in either a new grave, or in an existing grave with other burials where space allows
- Muslim graves have been dug to accommodate two family burials since 2015. Better uptake required to make efficient use of space

Comparison burial & new grave needs

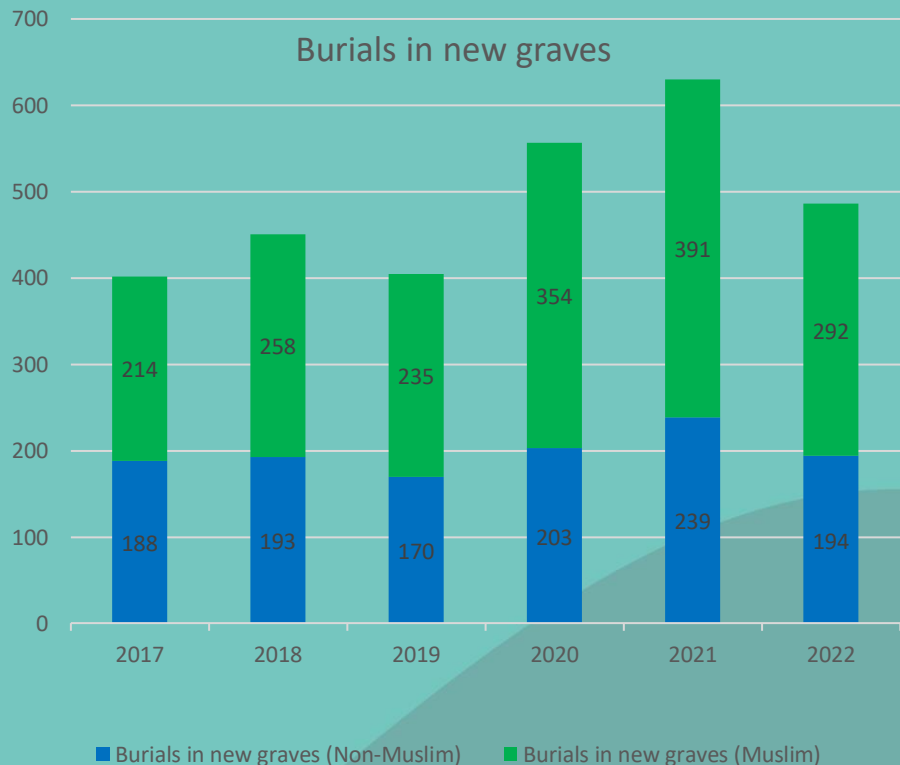


- Demand for Muslim burials is on average 25% - 30% of all burials per year



- Demand for Muslim new graves is on average 50% - 65% of all new graves per year

New graves – point of need



- New graves (point of need) are graves purchased requiring an immediate burial at the time of purchase
- Risk that demand for burials in new graves exceeds supply of available graves
- High demand for new Muslim graves
- Directly related to death rate

Risk 1: New graves (point of need)

- Risk: High demand for new Muslim graves at point of need vs reducing supply
- Mitigation measure
 - 1a) Increase burial space allocated for Muslim graves at Saffron Hill Cemetery
- Mitigation impact
 - Creates 800 new Muslim graves
 - Reduces non-Muslim capacity by the same number, however additional supply available at Gilroes Cemetery

Re-allocated graves



The map is reproduced from 'Saffron Hill Cemetery Survey' material with the permission of Leicester City Council. The map is the property of Leicester City Council. Leicester City Council is not responsible for any errors or omissions. Leicester City Council is not responsible for any damage or loss of any kind arising from the use of this map. Leicester City Council is not responsible for any copyright infringement. Leicester City Council is not responsible for any other legal liability. Leicester City Council is not responsible for any other legal liability.

SAFFRON HILL CEMETERY - SECTION MAP

Date: 16/04/18
Scale: 1 : 1 850
Paper Size: A3
By: CM

Leicester City Council
Neighbourhood & Environmental
Services
Standards & Development



Leicester
City Council

Re-allocate section M to Muslim graves

New graves – in reserve



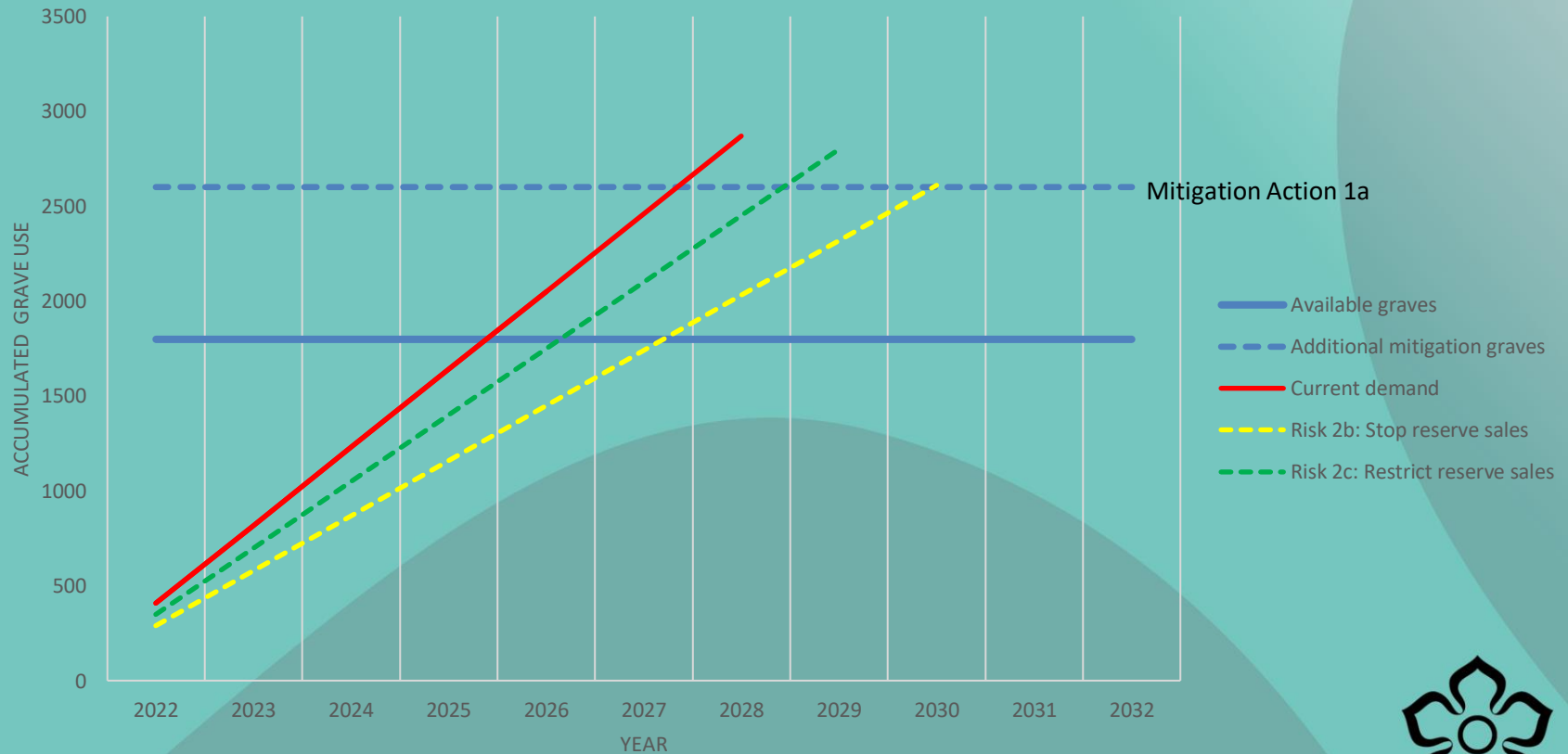
- New graves (in reserve) are graves purchased for future use and without an immediate burial. Can often be decades before first burial takes place
- Indirectly related to death rate
- Reduces availability of graves at point of need
- Not permitted by many burial authorities
- Significant increase in Muslim purchases

Risk 2: New graves (In reserve)

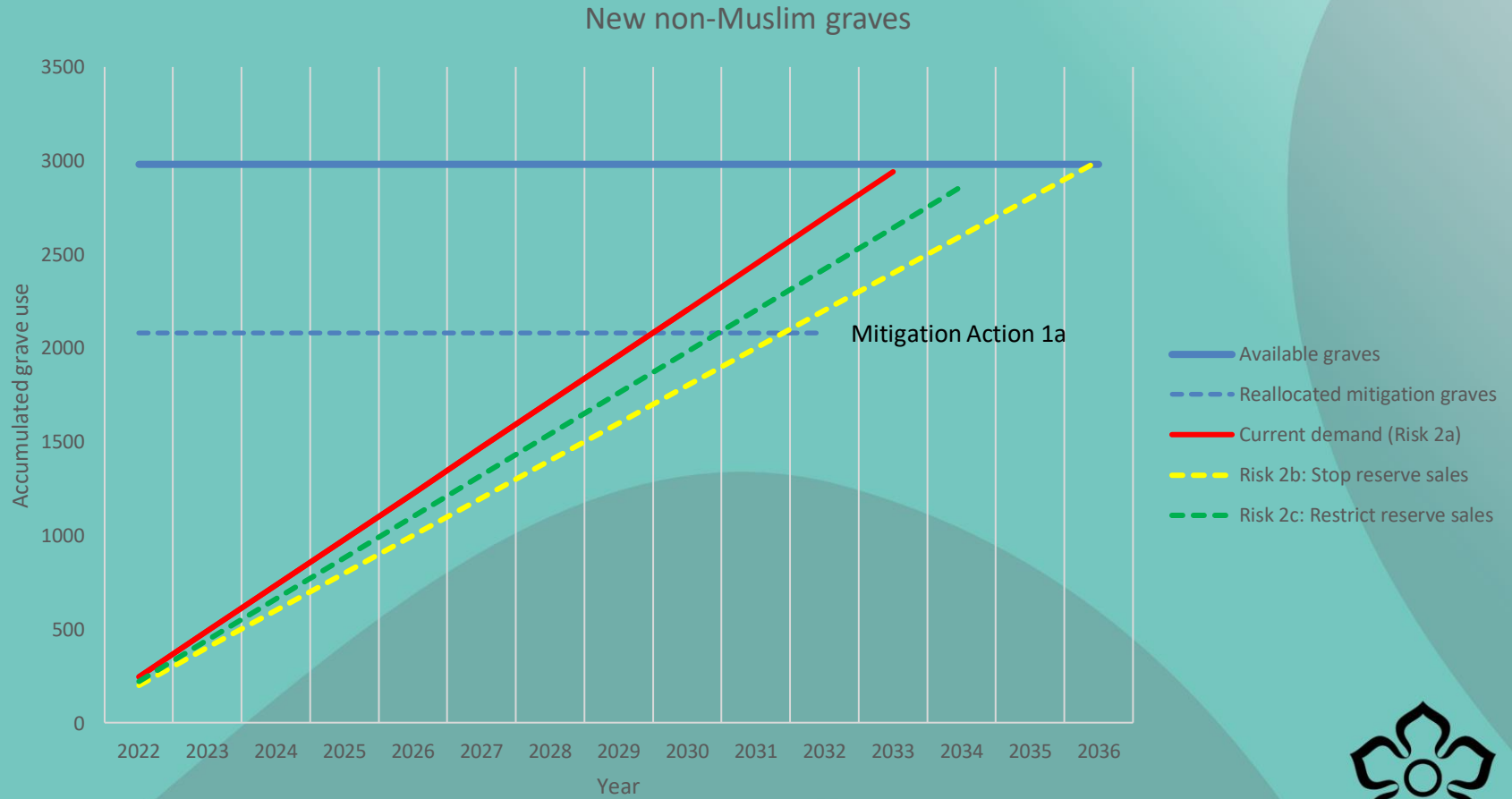
- Risk 2: High demand for new graves purchased in reserve without a burial
- Mitigation measures
 - Review options for graves in reserve & publish new policy
 - 2a) Do nothing
 - 2b) Stop sales of all graves in reserve
 - 2c) Restrict sales of graves in reserve
- Mitigation impact
 - Options B and C increase the availability of space for new graves at the point of need

Muslim grave projections

New Muslim graves



Non-Muslim grave projections



Policy change (Grave Sales)

- Focus group meetings arranged with faith representatives to inform a policy change for the sale of graves in reserve
 - Leicester Council of Faiths
 - Muslim community stakeholders
 - Leicester Hebrew Congregation
- General support to restrict graves sales to meet short term burial needs
- Equality Impact Assessment completed
- Reserve grave sales stopped in April 2023
- The change in policy has increased availability of burial space in the short-term to meet immediate burial needs

Future burial space

- Work to identify a new cemetery site has started, but no confirmed site at present
- Focus on opening a new cemetery site before 2030
- Potential sites need to consider:
 - Site availability
 - Local Plan commitments
 - Planning constraints
 - Environment Agency restrictions
- Potential new Muslim cemetery
 - Meeting held with representatives from organisations who have expressed interest in self-building a Muslim cemetery
 - Aspirational plans. No site secured
 - Unlikely to provide additional burial space in the short term, but may provide longer term capacity if built

Review of legislation

- Law Commission for England and Wales commenced a review of all burial and cremation legislation in December 2022
- Recognition that current legislation is outdated and not fit for modern bereavement needs
- Growing shortage of burial space identified nationally
- Bereavement sector organisations lobbying for a change in legislation to allow the re-use of old graves for new burials