

Woodhatch Crematorium

Land West of New Farm Pond Depot, Woodhatch Road

Needs Assessment for a Crematorium in the Borough of Reigate & Banstead

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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Reigate and Banstead Borough Council has recognised the potential to meet the growing requirements of bereaved families within their Borough by building a modern crematorium and remembrance gardens that will stand apart from others provided in the region.
- 1.2 The Council has identified that a large proportion of bereaved families in the Borough will choose cremation when saying farewell to a loved one, as such they must then choose from crematoria provided outside of the Borough, sometimes increasing their travelling time to attend a crematorium that may best meet their needs.
- 1.3 They must choose between crematoria built many years ago with facilities not geared to meet current requirements and designed for a different era where customer needs were very different.
- 1.4 When assessing the need for a crematorium within the Borough the Council has considered the current provision by crematoria situated outside of the Borough. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis has taken place to help identify whether there is a demonstrable need for a further crematorium in the region.
- 1.5 Consideration is given to the current trends in the likely number of deaths in the next 25 years, together with the changing needs of bereaved families. The standards of provision able to be provided at each of the crematoria likely to serve the Borough is also considered. The crematoria considered include Randall's Park Crematorium, Surrey & Sussex Crematorium, Croydon Crematorium and North East Surrey Crematorium, examining if these crematoria are able to meet the growing needs of the bereaved and whether standards will be able to be improved or even maintained over time.
- 1.6 The Needs Assessment explains the technical detail of a quantitative analysis, then continues to identify that three of the existing crematoria serving the Borough are either operating near or in excess of their quantitative standard. This means they are operating beyond an acceptable capacity to be able to consistently provide suitable standards of service to the bereaved. Given that the numbers of deaths in the UK is expected to significantly increase, with a 23% increase in numbers projected by the ONS between 2016 and 2036, if existing crematoria are struggling with capacity at the moment, then they will struggle even more as numbers increase. It appears there is only one way to relieve this and that is by extending the capacity. Reigate and Banstead Council believe they are in the perfect position to be able to extend capacity by providing a modern crematorium whose facilities will set them aside, not only from existing crematoria in the area but from other crematoria being provided across the UK.
- 1.7 Following on from the quantitative standards, the Assessment then considers the qualitative standards, assessing the quality of service being provided to bereaved residents of the Borough of Reigate and Banstead, who have to use the services of the crematoria in the area. It is clear each of the existing services have problems meeting the demand of bereaved families, some have to rely on inadequate 30-minute services, others are showing signs of heavy use, issues with landscape / maintenance and some inevitably impart the feel of 'conveyor belt' services to its users. These sort of problems can only be resolved by spreading the load, increasing capacity and improving choice. With the expected growth in the numbers of cremations in future years, this can only be achieved by the provision of a further crematorium which can provide high quality, modern services; which will, in turn, reduce the pressures on existing facilities and allow

them to provide better standards of service to those families who continue to choose them.

- 1.8 Travel times are accepted by planning authorities as important to bereaved families, who should be within a 30-minute travel time from a crematorium, at cortege speed. Some residents within the Borough of Reigate and Banstead are not within such a travel time of any of the existing crematoria, however, more importantly the lack of choice will mean that many other residents have to compromise on service and potentially travel further to a crematorium that better suits their requirements. For instance, a resident in Tadworth may decide not to use the nearest crematorium at Randall's Park, as they only allow a 30 minute service, so may choose to use Surrey & Sussex Crematorium, which may take over 45 minutes at cortege speed, not using the motorways. An alternative high-quality crematorium in Woodhatch would provide a far better option for such a resident.
- 1.9 It is clear in the assessment that the quality of service provided by existing crematoria, to residents of Reigate & Banstead Borough, is variable and will not always meet the current needs of bereaved residents of the Borough. Capacity is clearly an issue and will only worsen as numbers of deaths increase over the next 25 years, as predicted by ONS. The only existing crematorium where capacity is not an issue is Croydon Crematorium, however, there are numerous access and quality issues that stop the crematorium attracting larger numbers, this is evidenced over a long period of time.
- 1.10 The Needs Assessment demonstrates there is a clear need for a further crematorium in the area, not only to solve the issues surrounding the lack of capacity at existing crematoria, but also to address how such pressures are affecting the standard of service able to be delivered, both now and into the future. It is essential that bereaved families have choice in how they say farewell to their loved ones, that they have the necessary time for a meaningful service, in well maintained surroundings and at a reasonable cost. Currently, two of the existing crematoria charge the very highest fees in the country, one of these for a bare minimum 30 minute service time, recommended as unsatisfactory by national bereavement organisations.
- 1.11 With the capacity and quality of existing crematoria in question, the need for an additional crematoria that will provide high-quality modern standards of service, within a reasonable travel time, at a reasonable price, to meet the growing needs of the bereaved, is compelling.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Reigate and Banstead Borough Council provide a wide range of services for their 148,748 residents, this includes the provision of a burial service, provided at two cemeteries:
 - Redstone Cemetery, Philanthropic Road, Redhill – Opened 1932, provides a wide range of burial options.
 - Reigate Cemetery, Chart Lane, Reigate – Opened 1856, closed for new burials, now only available for burials in existing family graves.
- 2.2 In addition to the burial options available at the above cemeteries, the Council also operate Reigate Garden of Remembrance, designed for the interment or scattering of cremated remains. The Council have managed this site since 1978.

- 2.3 The Council has been a burial authority for over a hundred and fifty years with vast experience in dealing with bereaved families over this period of time. Despite this experience it has been identified that a large proportion of the population of Reigate and Banstead is not adequately served by a crematorium located within the borough and within easy reach of the population.
- 2.4 It is clear, since the establishment of the Council's cemeteries, and even since they began managing the Garden of Remembrance, that cremation has become more popular throughout the UK. In 2018, 78% of those who died in the UK were cremated. If England and Wales were taken separately from Scotland and Northern Ireland figures, then this rises to 81%.
- 2.5 Reigate and Banstead Borough Council have considered their current services to the bereaved are probably only relevant to perhaps 20% of bereaved families and have reviewed the need to extend the bereavement services they provide to ensure a much greater proportion of their residents have access to high quality bereavement care, provided by their local authority. To this end they have considered current cremation services provided by others outside of their borough and believe they will be best placed to provide a more accessible, high quality cremation service for both their residents and others seeking high quality, customer focused funerals.
- 2.6 The Council now seeks to provide a new crematorium and have identified a suitable site off Woodhatch Road, Woodhatch. It is a well-located site providing an opportunity for the Council to provide a facility that will provide the very best of customer focused services to the bereaved, that will meet a clear need for such a provision. This Needs Assessment will set out the reasoning behind such a statement.

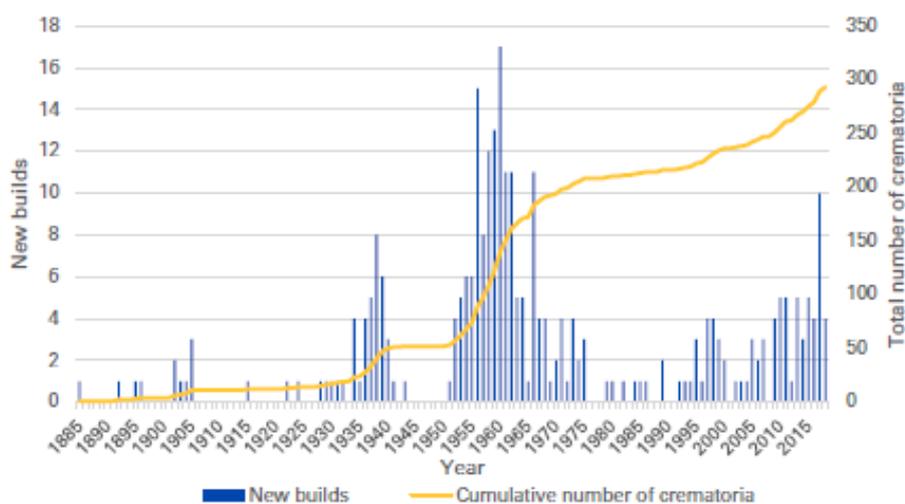
3.0 Cremation History

- 3.1 There is evidence that cremation dates back as far as 3000 BC (Stone Age), where fire was used to dispose of bodies in Europe and the Near East. Somewhere between 2500 and 1000 BC cremation moved to the British Isles.
- 3.2 Cremation was the chief means of dealing with the dead of the ancient world, with the notable exceptions of Egypt, China and Judea. Cremation ensured animals would not disturb the remains.
- 3.3 The first cremators were funeral pyres, using wood to maintain combustion temperatures, however, the combustion quality was poor and was not a pleasant site for most to witness.
- 3.4 Changes began in the 19th Century with the first practical cremation chamber being designed in 1873. The Cremation Society of Great Britain was subsequently formed in 1874. Whilst promoting cremation the Society were unable to convince Government of its suitability at that time, however in 1879, the Society purchased some land in Woking and built a cremator amid strong protests from local residents. In 1882, Captain Hanham asked for two of his deceased family members to be cremated there, but the Home Secretary objected and Hanham cremated his relatives on his own land with his own equipment.
- 3.5 Finally, following an attempt by Dr William Price to cremate his 5-month-old son, then his subsequent arrest, the matter went to Court. At the hearing in 1884 the Judge announced that cremation was legal, as long as no nuisance was caused, and the

Cremation Society offered their services to members of the public at Woking Crematorium.

- 3.6 On 26th March 1885, the cremation of Mrs Pickersgill took place at Woking Crematorium, the first official cremation in the UK. Initially, however, the uptake of cremation services was slow with fewer than 10% of the deaths being cremated. Following World War II, with reducing costs of cremation and growing shortages of burial space, cremation began to increase in popularity, by 1960 around a third of deaths resulted in cremation, by the 1980's around 70% of deaths resulted in cremation. During this period there was a large increase in the provision of crematoria, primarily constructed by local authorities, as shown in Figure 1

Figure 1 – Number of Crematoria in operation in the UK over time



Source: CMA analysis of ICCM information. 10 crematoria directly replacing old crematoria, not counted

- 3.7 Whilst the growing trend for cremation slowed as we moved towards and into the new millennium, it did still increase, despite the reduction in the death rate during this period. As can be seen the growth in crematoria dropped in the 1970's, 80's and early 90's, but with the popularity of cremation continuing, more new crematoria have been provided as we have moved into the new millennium .
- 3.8 In 2018 the number of cremations in the UK was recorded at 481,712, this equated to 78% of all deaths that year.

4.0 Future of Cremation in the UK

- 4.1 In recent years, most new crematoria have been provided by the private sector, providing smaller buildings, often designed with single chapels to cater for between 1,000 and 1,600 cremations per annum to meet more local requirements.
- 4.2 Since the 1970's the population has continued to slowly increase, however, due to advances in medical care, the population has tended to live longer and fewer people died each year, this has kept the death rate lower than that prior to the 70's. Figure 1 shows actual deaths in the UK from 1970 to 2018. The decline in the number of deaths

is clear to see through to 2011. From 2011, however, the death rate has started to increase from 552,232 in 2011 to 616,014 in 2018.

4.3 It now seems that this trend may continue. After the end of World War II, for a period from 1946 to around 1964, there was a significant increase in the number of births, often called the 'Baby Boomer' years. Those born during these years are now beginning to die and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) predicts that the death rate is likely to increase steadily over the coming decades.

4.4 In the next 25 years the proportion of the population aged 85 years and over is projected to almost double and despite the low death rate, this will result in more deaths. In 2016 the ONS published National Population Projections indicating an increase in the death rate by 23% from 2016 – 2036. Should these projections prove to be correct, it is estimated that almost 800,000 people in the UK will die in 2036.

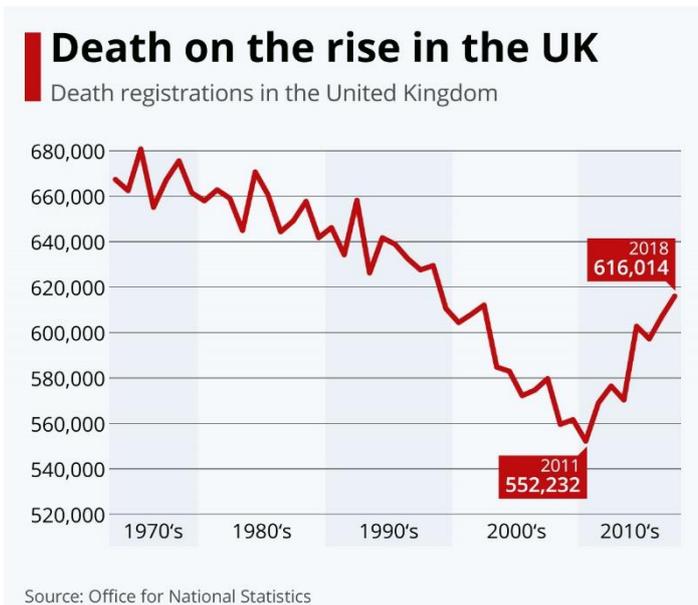


Figure 2 – Deaths in the UK

4.5 Whilst the statistics are unable to indicate whether there will be an increased need for more cremations, the increase in the number of deaths and in the popularity of cremation over burial, suggests this. Given the current position within the borough of Reigate and Banstead, the Council have reviewed the specific need for a crematorium located within their area of responsibility.

4.6 The statistics clearly indicate the likelihood that new crematoria will be required to meet the future needs for cremation across the UK, however, there have been growing concerns about the funeral industry generally and there have been several reports that should be taken account of:

- Competition and Markets Authority – Funeral Markets Study 2019
- Sun Life - Funeral Costs in the UK, Cost of Dying 2020
- Co-op Funeralcare – Burying Traditions: The Changing Face of UK Funerals 2019

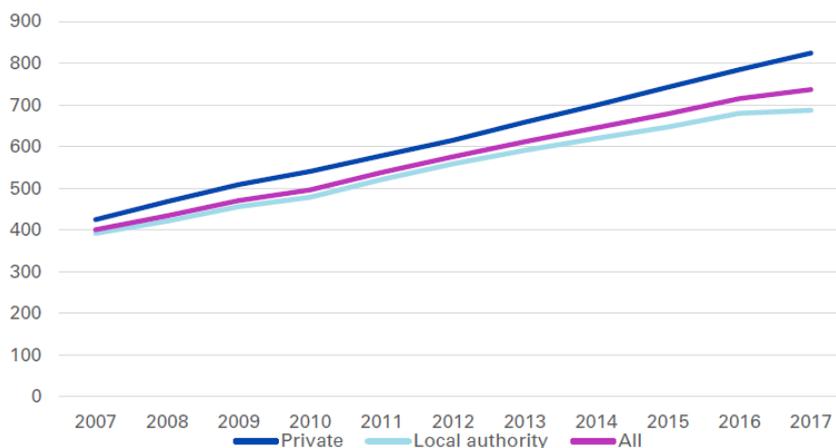
4.7 The above all have some significance in identifying trends and considering the type of cremation services needed by bereaved families as we look to the future of cremation in the UK.

4.8 **The Competition and Markets Authority Funeral Markets Study** - this is probably the most significant of the three. A government led investigation into concerns about the funeral market, particularly regarding cost, above inflation price increases, lack of transparency and sales of funeral packages. This is particularly relevant to Reigate and Banstead, given that their population are primarily served by two crematoria owned and operated by Dignity plc, namely Randall's Park and Surrey and Sussex. The pricing policy of Dignity plc, who operate 46 crematoria across the UK and own many funeral

directing facilities in the area, currently makes them the most expensive cremations in the UK. Bereaved families in Reigate and Banstead have little choice in the way of alternative crematoria unless they wish to travel into South London.

- 4.9 The CMA report shows significant increases in cremation fees, as shown in Figure 3. As can be seen private sector cremation fees are generally more expensive and the price gap between the private and public sector has widened in recent years. In addition to this the CMA state, “The industry averages mask a wide range of fee increases during this time”.

Figure 3 – UK Average basic cremation fee 2007 – 2017 (£'s)

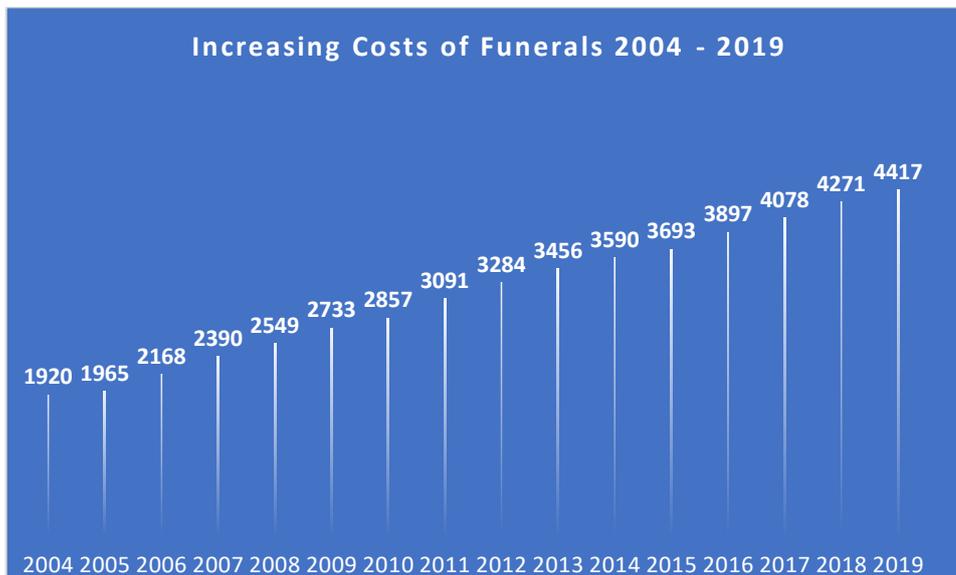


Source: CMA analysis of Cremation Society Data

- 4.10 Whilst currently based on Phase 1 of their investigations, the CMA have stated, “we consider that we have reasonable grounds to suspect that these features prevent, restrict or distort competition in the UK”. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council believe they are ideally placed to provide high quality services at reasonable costs to bereaved families in their borough and beyond and, therefore, effectively extend the range of choice available to the bereaved.
- 4.11 **Sun Life Funeral Costs in the UK - Cost of Dying 2020** – SunLife has been commissioning research into the cost of funerals since 2004. It bases its analysis on an annual survey of 100 funeral directors and an online consumer survey and is believed to be the only source of long-term pricing information in the funerals sector.
- 4.12 Once again Sun Life have recorded an increase in the cost of dying. The overall cost in 2019 was £9,493, an increase of £289 on 2018. This cost of dying includes:
- the funeral – cremation/burial fees, funeral director costs, doctor and minister / celebrant fees £4,417.00
 - send-off – memorial, death & funeral notices, flowers, order sheets, limousines, venue and catering for the wake £2,306.00
 - professional fees – administration of the estate £2,771.00
- 4.13 As can be seen the basic funeral cost, excluding notices, flowers, order sheets and limousines, makes up nearly half the funeral costs. In just one year this has increased by £146.00 with an increase of £2,497.00 since 2004 growing by 230% over 15 years.

The cost of death is beginning to raise serious concerns about affordability. Whilst other options have been made available to the public, such as direct funerals, this does not always allow families to feel they are doing the best for their loved ones. Reigate and Banstead believe the provision of a Council operated crematorium in their borough will help bereaved families, by having a high quality, more affordable cremation service

Figure 4 – Sun Life, The Cost of Death 2004 – 2019 (£'s)



Source: CMA analysis of Cremation Society Data

4.14 **Co-op Funeralcare, Burying Traditions: The Changing Face of UK Funerals** – Co-op Funeralcare are one of the leading funeral directors in the UK and produce annual reports based on feedback from their funeral directors throughout the UK. This year is focused on the provision of services during the Covid-19 pandemic. The 2019 report related to how the needs of the bereaved are changing. The report covers:

- Requests for funerals outside of the traditional religious settings – 77% of Co-op funeral directors report such requests, with a further 11% expect similar requests in future. 51% of families believe more funerals will take place outside of traditional religious settings.
- Personalised funerals – 86% of Co-op funeral directors indicate families are seeking more personalised funerals, with 74% receiving requests for unique tributes with 64% being asked for a personalised coffin and 48% being asked for a personalised vehicle for the funeral.
- Brighter colours – 84% of Co-op funeral directors have received requests for mourners to wear brighter colours and 19% of families have indicated similar wishes with a further 41% saying brighter colours will be worn in future.
- Technology – There is clearly an increasing use of personal music and photographs being used for funerals with 42% of UK adults wanting their favourite music played at their funeral, a 33% reduction in requests for organists, 59% of funeral directors providing support for live streaming of funerals (this has



now significantly increased with limited numbers at funerals due to Covid-19 restrictions) and a further 43% having conducted funerals with video footage.

- Celebration of life – 48% of families said they would want a celebratory style get-together in memory of their loved one

- 4.15 It is clear that one of the major factors restricting the further expansion of services that will meet the ever growing need for families to ‘celebrate’ the life of their loved ones is the type of facilities able to be provided in aging crematoria, designed for the more traditional religious services being provided 50 or 60 years ago. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council are committed to providing a future proofed high – tech facility with grounds designed to provide peaceful gardens for quiet contemplation, rather than for disposal and memorialisation purposes. The crematorium will be designed to facilitate the need for families to provide an appropriate ‘farewell’ to their loved ones and then continue to visit the peaceful gardens located on the site.
- 4.16 Reigate and Banstead Borough Council believe the UK will face an increasing need for cremation, based on ONS projections on the increasing number of deaths in future decades. Based on this there is a clear need for the provision of additional crematoria, particularly, modern crematoria designed to be able to meet the expectations of bereaved families. It is also clear that some existing facilities are already struggling to provide the highest standards now expected by the bereaved, given their size and design limitations. New crematoria will allow pressure to be taken off existing sites and enable a higher standard of service to be provided to all families.
- 4.17 We are committed to providing a crematorium that will allow all the issues raised in the above reports to be integrated into the final design of our building and grounds, providing facilities that will meet the need to provide a personalised service at an affordable cost. In addition, the design will incorporate equipment and systems that will meet and surpass all environmental protection standards. The Council is familiar with the requirements for air quality standards and the need for the provision of a crematorium which will minimise the carbon footprint of the site.

5.0 Planning a Crematorium – assumptions and planning matters

- 5.1 Before considering the specifics of the Reigate and Banstead area, it is important to identify some of the assumptions that will be used in identifying the need for a crematorium located within the borough.
- 5.2 When assessing the need for a new crematorium, planning authorities have considered both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of current provision in the area being served. This is then applied to the capacity, accessibility and standards of service provided by existing crematoria within the area. This section will consider these quantitative and qualitative aspects in relation to:
- Capacity
 - Catchment areas and drive time
- 5.3 The specific quantitative and qualitative review of current provision follows in Section 5.0

5.4 Measuring Capacity

- 5.4.1 To find what capacity a crematorium has to accept services, it would seem relatively straightforward, consider how many service slots they provide each day (whether this be through one or two chapels), then multiply by the number of operational days in the year. In practical terms, however, this is not quite as straightforward and planning authorities have accepted a calculation that takes account of the 'practical capacity' of a crematorium.
- 5.4.2 Firstly, the length of service time should be established, as some crematoria such as Randall's Park, operate on a 30-minute service time, whilst others may operate on service times as long as 60 minutes. There is little question that if you shorten the service times, you can pack more services into the day, so the quantity is high, but it is likely that the quality of the service provided to the bereaved is significantly affected. One of the most common criticisms of cremation services is that it feels more like a 'conveyor belt' process. With a shorter service there is less time to personalise the arrangements for the family and considerably more likely that the arrival of one set of mourners will overlap the exit of another.
- 5.4.3 The professional organisations of the industry recommend service times of at least 40 - 45 minutes. This allows for the arrival of the cortege, a meaningful service, and the departure of the cortege. From the research carried out by Co-op Funeralcare, families want a more personal, meaningful service, inevitably, this will take more time. The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM), in their 'Charter for the Bereaved' state, "The burial or cremation ceremony should be considered a highly individual and important occasion. Each funeral should arrive and depart without seeing other funerals. To help achieve this standard a minimum service time of 40 – 45 minutes should be an objective".
- 5.4.4 Other professional organisations have made similar comments on service times:
- National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) in their comments included in the Government's report on Crematoria Provision and Facilities 2018, stated, "gradually crematoria are reacting to the belief that the 30 – 40 minute window offered to the bereaved is no longer fit for purpose."
 - Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities, commenting in the same report stated, "we would hope to see funeral service intervals set at around 45 minutes, giving mourners a much more appropriate time during which to say farewell to a loved one."
- 5.4.5 It has become accepted that a 40-minute service time should be the basis of the capacity of a crematorium providing a reasonable service to bereaved families. On this basis, it is possible to hold 12 services per day, at a crematorium operating from 9am to 5pm.
- 5.4.6 A calculation is then required to assess how many days a crematorium is normally open. Considering weekends and bank holidays, the accepted number of operational days per annum is 252 operating days per year. To obtain the **potential** capacity of a crematorium, you could simply take 12 services per day and multiply this by 252 operating days, resulting in 3,024, however, this does not happen in practice, so it is essential to consider the core service times used for funerals, and identify a realistic number of services per annum, based on annualised figures.
- 5.4.7 Most funerals take place between 10.30am and 4.00pm. This avoids mourners travelling during the peak rush hour, keeps the cortege together and avoids potential delays. It also allows funeral directors the necessary time to prepare for the funeral and make

arrangements with the families. The later times are not popular with families as this does not allow any time for a wake, without travelling in peak traffic hours once again.

5.4.8 Planning appeals now recognise that each crematorium has core hours where the majority of funerals take place and they accept that the 'practical capacity' of a crematorium, is found using these core times and results in 8 service times per day or, when multiplied by the 252 operational days per annum, 2016 service times per year. Decisions of the following planning appeals have reinforced this position:

- Cambourne – August 2009
- Swanwick – July 2013
- Halstead – February 2014

5.4.9 This calculation accounts for core times, however, the figure still needs to be refined further, as it is not possible for a crematorium to fill every available core hour service time. Death rates throughout the year vary and should be taken account of. This is now being accepted by planning appeals and planning authorities, aided by significant decisions in 2016 and 2017:

- Judicial Review - Land North of The Lighthouse, Catford Lane, Lambley (Timmins R v Gedling Borough Council & Anor - February 2016). Mrs Justice Patterson upheld the view of the planning officer who applied an annualised figure based on a peak month, which was 20% higher than the average for the year.
- Land off Broad Lane, Essington, November 2017 – The planning inspector stated that parties had agreed the best measure for assessing whether a crematorium was meeting its quantitative standard, was its practical capacity in a peak month. The Inspector further stated, "The Council accepted that operating above 80% of practical capacity places a crematorium under pressure to offer a cremation service that meets an unacceptable quantitative standard"

5.4.10 These two decisions establish and test the principle of the 'Quantitative Standard' for a crematorium. This is 80% of the 'practical capacity', which equates to 1,613 cremations, per chapel per annum.

5.4.11 If a crematorium is exceeding the quantitative standard, it is likely that the bereaved are not receiving the standard of service to be expected. As a result families will begin to experience delays in the availability of core service times, will be forced to accept times outside of the time they may have wanted or the crematorium may be forced to retain service times that are shorter than recommended in order to cope with high demand, creating the impression of the 'conveyor belt' funeral process. This is the position that Randall's Park find themselves in, providing only 30-minute services and unable to extend this to meet national recommendations, due to the demand forced upon them by the lack of a suitable alternative facility. Section 5.0 of this report will consider existing crematoria in the Reigate and Banstead area but generally those crematoria are unable to meet quantitative standards and clash with the needs of bereaved families. Research shows a strong trend of bereaved families seeking to provide meaningful services in celebration of their lost loved ones, at times of their choosing and for a suitable period of time which allows the family to properly celebrate the passing of their loved one.

5.4.12 As cremations continue to increase, more pressure is placed on existing crematoria, some of which are already unable to meet their quantitative standard, resulting in falling standards of service.

5.5 Catchment Areas and Drive Time

- 5.5.1 When assessing an area served by a crematorium it is essential for an analysis of reasonable driving times, from a place of residence to the facility, to be carefully considered. There have now been several planning appeals where the consideration has been given to what constitutes a 'reasonable drive time'. The appeals have considered a range of research on the views of the public regarding an acceptable time for a funeral cortege to travel to a crematorium. A significant majority of respondents believe that journey times over 30 minutes could result in additional anxiety and stress for the bereaved.
- 5.5.2 Planning appeals are also accepting that a funeral cortege journey is not the same as a standard car journey. A funeral cortege is unlikely to use motorways for their journey and will travel at a slower, more respectful speed than an average car driver. The lead car in a funeral cortege also must be aware of the importance for all cars in the cortege to arrive at the crematorium at the same time. This will require waiting longer at junctions and ensuring all cars are kept together. Inevitably, this will result in longer journey times. Such important elements in the development of distinct catchment areas for a crematorium have been considered by planning appeals across the country.¹
- 5.5.3 From the planning appeals it has been established and is generally accepted that a cortege will travel at two thirds the speed of a standard car and should not expect to travel for longer than 30 minutes before arriving at the crematorium.
- 5.5.4 It should be noted that funeral directors do not normally use motorways, so these routes should specifically be excluded from any drive time calculations and definition of catchment areas.
- 5.5.5 This methodology, using 30-minute cortege speeds and excluding motorways from calculations of drivetime, is then utilised to establish the reasonable catchment areas of the crematoria.

6.0 Crematorium Need – Reigate & Banstead and Surrounding Areas

6.1 Assessment of the Current Provision

- 6.1.1 This section will consider existing crematoria in and around the borough of Reigate and Banstead. It will consider:
- Crematoria Currently Serving the Area
 - Capacity of Existing Crematoria
 - Catchment Areas of Existing Crematoria
 - Qualitative Review of Existing Crematoria
- 6.1.2 Currently, there are no crematoria located in the borough of Reigate and Banstead, so residents have little option, should they wish to arrange a cremation service, but to look at crematoria located outside of the Borough.

¹ Including: Westerleigh Group – Land at Broad Lane, Essington
Land North of Castle Eden Brewery
Burgess v OFT

6.1.3 Reigate and Banstead Borough Council have considered how their residents needs are being met by existing crematoria currently being used by their residents. The crematoria primarily providing this service, are as follows:

- Randall's Park Crematorium – Leatherhead
- Surrey and Sussex Crematorium – Crawley
- Croydon Crematorium – Croydon, South London
- North East Surrey Crematorium – Morden, South London

6.1.4 The location of each of the crematoria can be seen in Figure 5 below:

Figure 5 – Map showing location of existing and proposed crematoria

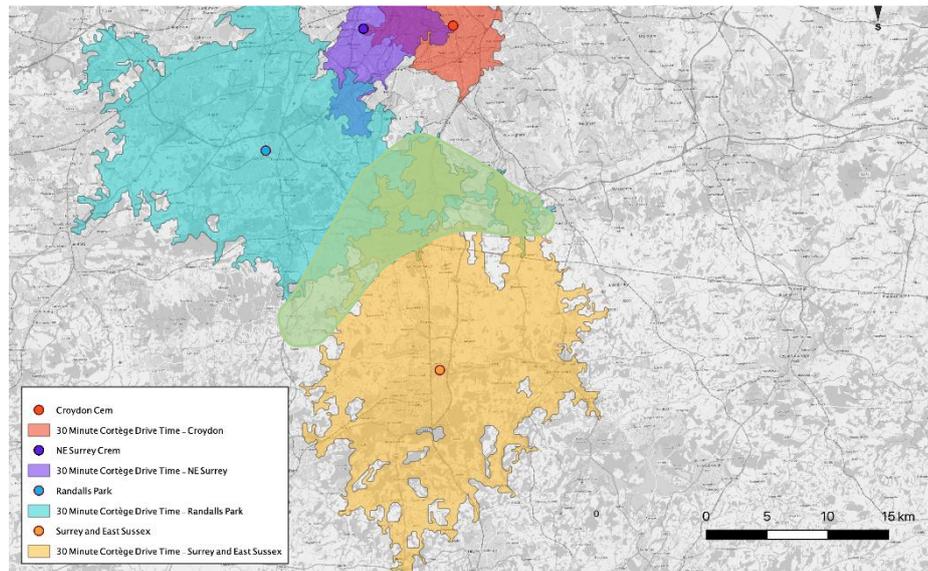


6.2 Catchment Areas of Existing Crematoria

6.2.1 Figure 5 shows the locations of each of the existing crematoria servicing the borough of Reigate and Banstead. It also shows the location of the proposed crematorium on land West of New Farm Pond Depot, Woodhatch Road, Woodhatch. Consideration needs to be given to the drive times and catchment areas of these crematoria.

6.2.2 The isochrones utilised in establishing the catchment areas shown in Figure 6, were unable to exclude the effect of the motorway system. We have, however, compared these to other information available, which remove the motorways from the calculations. From such comparisons, it is clear that by removing the motorways, as these are not generally used by funeral directors, there would be a shrinkage in the catchment areas for Randall's Park and Surrey & Sussex Crematoria. This would leave a significant part of the borough of Reigate and Banstead outside of the 30-minute cortege drive time catchment areas for any of the existing crematoria serving the borough.

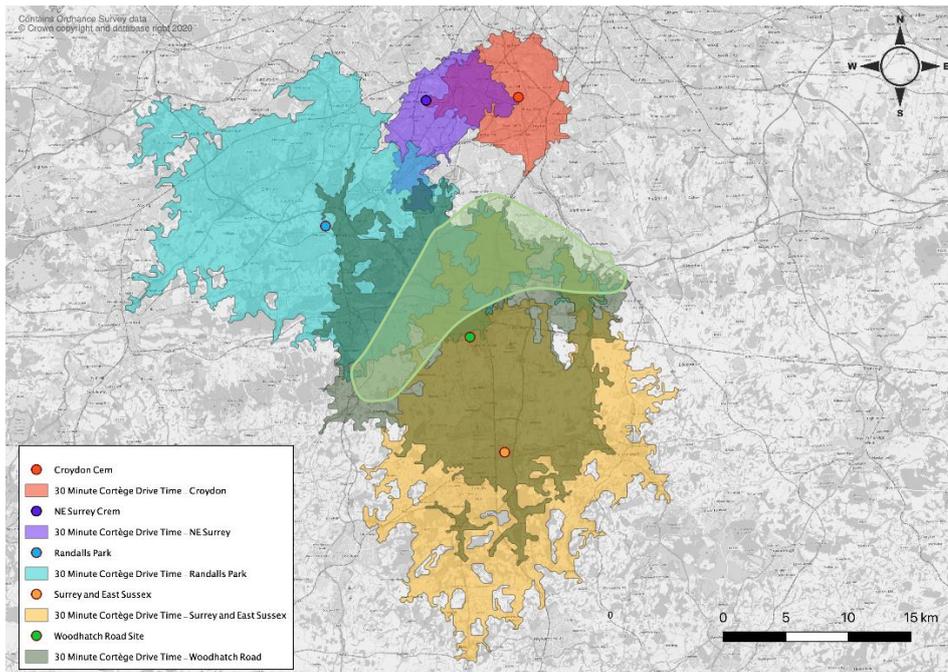
Figure 6 – Catchment Areas of Existing Crematoria (based on 30-minute cortege drive times...motorways included)



- 6.2.3 The areas of interest affected by the inclusion of the motorways in the drivetime analysis are identified in green in Figure 6. The isochrones utilised, with the motorway information, show the extended catchment areas for Randall’s Park and Surrey & Sussex crematoria. The area shown in green indicates the approximate areas artificially extended due to the influence of the motorway network and therefore the areas where residents currently reside outside of the 30 minute cortege drive time of either of the two existing crematoria.
- 6.2.4 This has relevance for Reigate and Banstead Borough Council as many of the residents within the area identified in green are their residents, who could benefit greatly from a crematorium that is more local to them. However, all residents, whichever Borough they may live in, will benefit from a more local crematorium, more than this they will benefit from a greater choice of service. Whilst some may prefer an older, more traditional type of facility, it is clear from research, such as that carried out by Co-op Funeralcare in 2019, that there is a growing trend away from the traditional and towards more modern options to celebrate a persons life rather than mourn their death. A new facility will provide both the choice of new against traditional also, for many, it will provide a more convenient option. Finally, a new crematorium will potentially allow bereaved families to choose a less expensive option to crematoria currently charging the highest fees in the UK.
- 6.2.5 Figure 6 clearly identifies why the majority of residents in the borough of Reigate and Banstead, and surrounding areas, are compelled to choose either Randall’s Park or Surrey & Sussex crematoria, both these having the most expensive fees in the UK and provided by Dignity plc. Whilst some to the north of Reigate may be tempted by the lower fees charged by either NE Surrey or Croydon, Figure 6 identifies the likely influence of South London traffic, as the 30-minute cortege drivetime catchment areas are significantly smaller. Drivetimes into such crematoria could be difficult, even in off peak hours. Further to this, the qualitative standards of these two crematoria and the fact they both lie within poorly maintained cemeteries, may further affect any decision to use either of these options.
- 6.2.6 The provision of a new crematorium on land West of New Farm Pond Depot, Woodhatch Road will provide an essential additional option for bereaved families. Currently, Reigate

and Banstead residents have a realistic choice of either Randall's Park or Surrey & Sussex crematoria, if they are wanting to provide the best option available for their loved ones. They are, therefore, forced to choose between one of two most expensive crematoria in the country and, at times, this choice is restricted further as Randall's Park is subject to flooding at times.

Figure 7 – Catchment Areas of Existing Crematoria + Woodhatch
(based on 30-minute cortege drive times...motorways included)



6.2.7 The provision of a crematorium in Woodhatch will provide that essential additional option, a modern crematorium providing a high quality of service at a reasonable price, provided by the local authority. Figure 7 shows Woodhatch crematorium and its 30-minute cortege speed catchment area. Catchment areas are, once again, affected by the isochrone used, this includes the catchment area for the proposed Woodhatch crematorium the northern, southern, eastern and western edges of the catchment area, where intersected by the motorways, need to be reduced, even with adjustments the crematorium covers the areas, previously outside of the existing crematoria catchment areas. Importantly, for the vast majority of the borough of Reigate and Banstead, it provides the option of a modern, high quality service for residents, at a price that will be decided by Council Members elected from the borough. It is generally accepted that the funeral plays an important role in dealing with grief and there have been a number of notable pieces of research regarding funerals, and the effect of restricting funerals has on the mental health of the bereaved, some of these specifically related to the effect of the current pandemic². Choice of a final resting place or the location of the crematorium for a final goodbye is therefore an essential requirement for bereaved families.

6.2.8 Figure 6 indicates that there is currently many residents of the borough of Reigate and Banstead and surrounding areas, without access to a crematorium within a 30-minute

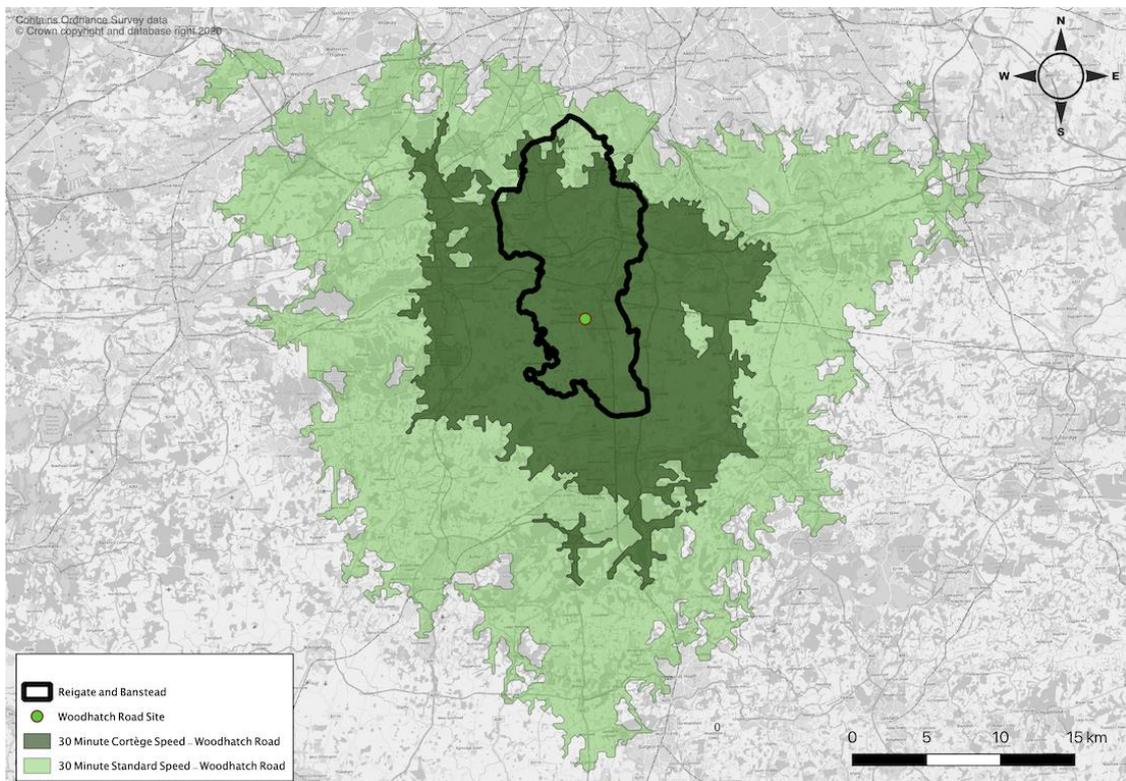
² How Funeral Practices Impact Bereaved Relatives' Mental Health, Grief and Bereavement. A Mixed Methods Review with Implications for COVID-19, Alexander Burrell. Lucy E. Selman July 2020. The Good Funeral: Toward an understanding of funeral participation and satisfaction. Death Studies 35(8), 729-750 O'Rourke, Spitzberg, Hannawa (2011)

drive. Figure 7 shows how the provision of a crematorium in Woodhatch would resolve this problem. In addition to solving an access problem, the provision of a crematorium at Woodhatch provides the vast majority of residents in the Reigate & Banstead borough with a much-needed choice of crematoria.

- 6.2.9 Currently, choice for residents of the borough is restricted to two crematoria set within the confines of very old cemeteries in the South of London, well outside the 30-minute cortege drivetime for most of the borough; or one of two highly priced crematoria, one of which is operating well outside of the quantitative standards (by 34%) and is subject to occasional flooding, the other is reaching its quantitative standard (7% within) with evidence of a very busy site.

Figure 8 – Catchment Areas of Woodhatch

(both 30-minute cortege drive times and standard drive times ...motorways included)



- 6.2.10 Figure 8 shows Woodhatch crematorium and its potential catchment areas, using both a 30-minute cortege speed drive time catchment and a 30-minute standard drive time catchment. This clearly identifies that most of the borough of Reigate and Banstead lies within the 30-minute cortege drive time catchment area and very easily lies within the 30-minute standard drive time catchment area. This will provide both easier access and improved choice of the type of service residents want to receive from their crematorium of choice.

- 6.2.11 We have primarily considered the 30-minute cortege speed driving times when developing catchment areas of crematoria, as these have been considered as reasonable by planning authorities and planning appeals across England and Wales. Funeral Directors in parts of the country, however, do report that where standards at a particular crematorium exceed the standards of their competing crematoria, then families have stated to them that they are willing to travel up to 10 minutes further to ensure they can provide the very best 'send-off' for their loved ones. A modern high quality

crematorium with grounds that both blend with the surrounding countryside and provide peaceful areas for families to quietly remember their loved ones, will undoubtedly meet needs that are currently not fulfilled by existing crematoria in the area and the 30-minute standard drive time could very easily be the true catchment area of the new crematorium at Woodhatch.

- 6.2.12 Using the 30-minute cortege speed (including motorways), the population calculated within the catchment area is 383,253, this is a higher calculation than the same catchment area for Surrey & Sussex crematorium, whose catchment population is calculated at 338, 086 and are currently carrying out an average of 3,007 cremations per annum. If one considers that some funeral directors may be willing to travel a little further to provide a higher quality of service for their clients the 30-minute standard drive time catchment area expands the total population in that area to 1,007,275. Of course it is realised that many within the extended catchment area will continue to use more local crematoria, but it is clear that some may be willing to travel for the additional time to experience a better quality of service. Interestingly, the 30-minute cortege speed catchment for Croydon crematorium has the largest catchment population of 767,204 but carries out the lowest number of cremations. Randall's Park has a catchment population of 610,323, which is probably why it carries out an average of 2,165 cremations per annum, through only one chapel.
- 6.2.13 Of course, the potential catchment areas for the proposed Woodhatch crematorium site will overlap the catchment areas of existing crematoria to some extent, however, this is good. The arguments in this report will show there is a need for an additional facility to not only relieve the growing pressures of the increase in the numbers of deaths predicted over the next 25 years, but also to provide real choice for the residents of Reigate & Banstead and surrounding areas. Choice will help raise the quality of all services and will have the potential to bring prices down. A known concern expressed in the interim CMA report.
- 6.2.14 In the following section the current capacity of the existing crematoria serving the borough of Reigate and Banstead and surrounding areas, are examined and considered against the expected rise in the number of deaths.

6.3 Capacity of Existing Crematoria

- 6.3.1 The catchment areas are important in identifying how residents of Reigate and Banstead and surrounding boroughs can more easily access a crematorium of their choice. Currently some residents have no choice, other than to travel further than the 30-minute drive to one of the existing crematoria. As with any other service provided to the public, a service should be accessible and allow families to make a choice.
- 6.3.2 When making a choice of a crematorium, an important element is the quality of the service and whether the crematorium can meet the needs of the bereaved family. To begin looking at this one must look at whether the crematorium has the capacity to provide the type of service that might be expected from the family.
- 6.3.3 Section 4.4 of this report considered the practical and quantitative capacity of a crematorium. In summary, if a crematorium is unable to meet the Quantitative Standard, as has been previously outlined, then this is likely to result in:
- *Delays in being able to reserve a service time of choice* – in their response to the Government's 'Review of Crematoria Provision and Facilities' published in April 2019 the NAFD stated, " ...they do not believe there are sufficient crematoria in

England to satisfactorily service current demand, leading to the bereaved having to wait longer for their preferred service time.

- *Being forced to accept a service outside the core times* – whilst accepted that many crematoria may have times available for cremation, planning appeals have accepted the need for consideration of providing families and funeral directors with the times of their choice to allow services to meet with the needs of the bereaved.
- *Crematorium being unable to provide service times of an acceptable length* – this results in families feeling rushed, unable to provide a meaningful service for their loved one and part of a ‘conveyor belt’ system.

6.3.4 The table below shows the main crematoria around the Reigate and Banstead area and considers the average number of cremations they have carried out over the past 3 years. Two of these crematoria show they are already operating over the Qualitative Standard, suggesting that this is already causing some delays and occasions where families may have to book outside of their preferred time. In particular, Randall’s Park is already 34% outside of the quantitative standard, managing to deal with current demand by providing a 30-minute service time, significantly below the standards recommended by the national organisations representing the industry, to allow families to meet their increasing need to provide a meaningful ‘celebration of life’ service for their loved one.

Crematorium	Average cremations 2016 - 2019	Quantitative Standard	Percentage of Quantitative Standard
Randall's Park	2,165	1,612	134% - 34% over the standard
Surrey & Sussex	3,007	3,224	93% of standard
Croydon	1,731	3,224	53% of standard
NE Surrey	1,918	1,612	119% - 19% over the standard

6.3.5 Of the remaining two crematoria, Surrey and Sussex crematorium is only 7% away from reaching capacity and given the likely increases in the number of deaths in the forthcoming years will soon reach its quantitative capacity if another facility is not provided in the near future. Further to this, the grounds of Surrey & Sussex are showing critical signs of capacity, with gardens crammed with memorialisation and damage to grassed areas due to high numbers of vehicles. This is further discussed in Section 5.4 of this report.

6.3.6 This leaves Croydon crematorium, which seems to be operating well within its capacity, however, questions do need to be asked why this might be, when competing crematoria such as Randall’s Park and NE Surrey are both operating beyond their quantitative capacity. Reasons for this may be identified in the qualitative reviews of each of the crematoria detailed in section 5.4.

6.3.7 These four crematoria have averaged 8,821 cremations between them each year, over the past three years and it is estimated that Randall’s Park and Surrey & Sussex have been responsible for the majority of cremations from the Reigate and Banstead area, with some attracted to NE Surrey based on the high prices of the aforementioned crematoria, their fees being the highest in the country, in line with their operator’s (Dignity plc) pricing policies. Randall’s Park and Surrey & Sussex Crematoria are amongst a group of 10 Dignity plc crematoria charging the highest fees in the country, with a fee of £1,070.00 per cremation. The significantly lower fee of £650.00 at NE Surrey, undoubtedly attracts some additional custom, however, the question must be asked as

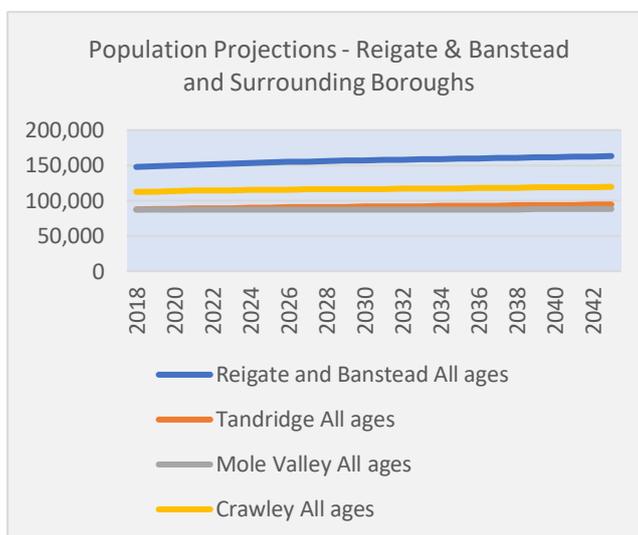
to whether the fees leave sufficient for ongoing investment into the service and again, this may be answered in section 5.4 of this report.

6.4 Population and Deaths

6.4.1 It is a fact that two of the existing crematoria serving the borough of Reigate and surrounding areas exceed their quantitative standard, Randall's Park does this by only providing 30-minute services. One further crematorium is only 7% away from exceeding the quantitative standard. It is important, when considering the need for a further crematorium, to consider whether any potential growth in the surrounding population and particularly any growth in the number of deaths, will have an impact on such facilities.

6.4.2 Over the next 10 years, the UK's population is expected to grow by around 4.9%, with England's projected growth to be slightly higher at 5.0%. There will also be an increasing number of persons aged 85 years and over, this age group projected to almost double over the next 25 years.

Figure 9 – Population Growth Reigate & Banstead and Surrounding Boroughs



Source: Office for National Statistics

6.4.3 Figure 9 shows the likely increase in population in Reigate & Banstead and surrounding boroughs. For the period from 2018 – 2043, the expected increase in population in England is 9.59%, whilst in Reigate it is predicted to be very close to the national figure, at 9.61%. Tandridge is expected to increase by 7.61%, Crawley by 5.84% and Mole Valley by only 1.29%.

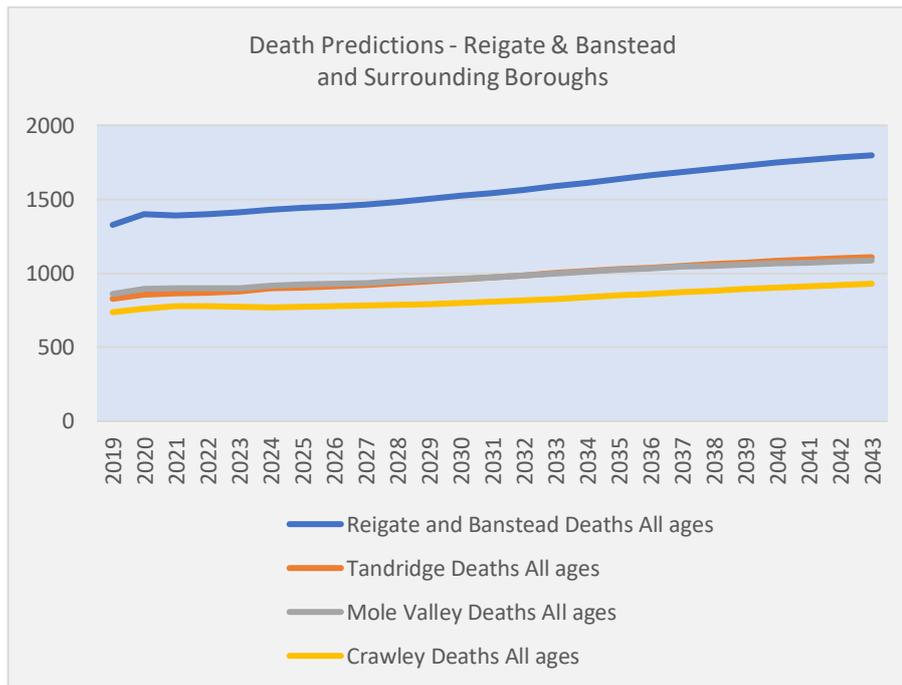
6.4.4 Local authorities in the region are preparing for the increases in population by addressing the need for housing. Across the surrounding catchment areas, including Tandridge Borough Council, London Borough of Croydon, London Borough of Sutton, Mole Valley District Council, Epsom and Ewell Borough, the Councils are seeking to deliver at least 53,000 dwellings up until 2036 based on the housing need figures outlined in adopted Development Plans.

6.4.5 Whilst population figures are expected to grow, the percentage growth over the next 25 years remains in single figures. On the other hand, remembering the impact of the 'baby

boomer' years the predicted increases in the number of deaths in the region are significantly higher.

- 6.4.6 Figure 10 provides ONS predictions for the number of deaths in Reigate & Banstead and adjacent boroughs from 2019 to 2043. The predictions for Reigate & Banstead show more than a 35% increase in deaths, whilst Tandridge predictions indicate a 34% increase and both Mole Valley and Crawley show around a 26% increase in the number of deaths, all above the UK average

Figure 10 – Deaths in Reigate & Banstead and Surrounding Boroughs



Source: Office for National Statistics

- 6.4.7 Given that three of the four existing crematoria are already exceeding or near to their quantitative capacity it is inconceivable that existing provision can deal with increases in the number of deaths in the region without having a significant effect on the quality of service it is able to provide to the bereaved. Add to the growing trend for families to seek a more meaningful 'celebration of life' for their loved ones, as already recommended by national organisations, a 30-minute service, as still being provided at Randall's Park, is not adequate.

6.5 Qualitative Reviews

- 6.5.1 In the provision of any service provided to the public there must be competition to drive costs down and drive the quality of service up. When the service being provided is so important it can impact on the mental health of bereaved families for years to come. The provision of real choice is, therefore, essential.
- 6.5.2 Of course, if the development of a new crematorium is to be within the Green Belt, there is an onus to clearly demonstrate special needs for the construction of a building and infrastructure that may have an effect on the rural nature of the area. The rising population figures and increasing death figures can be evidenced, as has been done earlier in this report and this will undoubtedly place additional pressures on the existing

crematoria serving the area, if something is not done then bereaved families will not receive the service they deserve.

- 6.5.3 The need for families to have facilities that are local to them is paramount and the information provided in 5.2 demonstrates that some parts of both the borough of Reigate and Banstead and surrounding areas have families travelling further than the recommended 30-minute drive time to the crematorium. This needs to be addressed.
- 6.5.4 Further to the pressure of increasing demand, to families outside of reasonable drive times to a crematorium, it is sensible to consider the capacity of existing crematoria and three of the four existing crematoria are operating either outside of the qualitative standard accepted by planning authorities and planning appeals, or are very near to operating outside of such standards. As demand increases, the service they are able to provide can only stray further outside of acceptable standards and this will inevitably have a detrimental effect on the quality of service they are able to provide. So, the question must be asked regarding the quality of service to the bereaved, does it affect the need for a new crematorium in the area?
- 6.5.5 The following is a qualitative review of the existing crematoria serving Reigate & Banstead and surrounding areas and whilst subjective in some respects, a situation has developed in the region where the lack of choice of a crematorium has affected the quality of service being provided to residents of the area and the cost of such services. Taking Croydon as an example, whilst their cremation fee of £857.00 is significantly below Randall's Park and Surrey & Sussex, they have good capacity to accept more funerals, however, due to problems with standards, access and other issues raised later in this section, they are unable to provide a service that meets the needs of the bereaved and are severely restricted by the site and its location. Additional capacity cannot be considered if the restrictions of the site means the developing needs of the bereaved for a meaningful service cannot be met. Clearly, Croydon crematorium has been unable to meet such needs for some considerable time as their cremation figures have remained relatively static for the past 10 years or more.
- 6.5.6 This confirms the importance of the quality of service when bereaved families are making decisions about the best way to celebrate the life of loved ones they have lost.

6.6 **Qualitative Review - Randall's Park**

- 6.6.1 Randall's Park Crematorium is operated by Dignity Crematoria Ltd and carries out around 2,165 cremations per annum (3-year average). It has only one chapel and adjoins the cemetery, although the cemetery is distant enough not to impact on the crematorium unless the wrong entrance is used. The building was opened in 1961 and is typical of crematoria built around that time, although the crematorium buildings present as a slightly muddled range of different architectural styles due to the additions to the buildings over time
- 6.6.2 Unfortunately, the crematorium adjoins the River Mole on its southern boundary and there have been several incidents of serious flooding in 2013, 2014 and 2019/2020. In March of this year the crematorium had still not opened, forcing families to other crematoria and placing pressure on services already at, or over, quantitative capacity.

- 6.6.3 Cremation services are available Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, however, service times are only 30 minutes. This is necessary given that relatively high numbers of cremations being carried out through a single chapel. As previously identified, 30-minute service times are now considered to be too short for a meaningful service, as this also has to allow for families to enter and exit the chapel, leaving only 20 minutes or so for the actual service. 30-minute services also result in congestion around the crematorium, particularly in the car parking area where those attending an outgoing and an incoming funeral may be competing for space, creating a sense of busyness and confusion that is not conducive to a site wishing to provide grounds for quiet contemplation.



- 6.6.4 The chapel is reasonably presented but only seats 72, this can present a problem on larger funerals. It does have a Wesley audio/visual system with a conservative sized video screen and the ability to webcast and record services.
- 6.6.5 The site generally maintains an appearance of openness, however, the old walled garden has been extensively used as a garden of remembrance for the placement of memorialisation. It is now becoming overpopulated with memorials and feels somewhat



'cluttered', again distracting from an area that should be provided for quiet contemplation. The range of memorials available is extensive, however, this is becoming detrimental to the landscape and is now overflowing into the areas around the crematorium.

- 6.6.6 There is little doubt that the number of funerals carried out at Randall's Park creates the impression of a 'conveyor belt' funeral process and does not meet the needs of the bereaved. The compression of services onto 30-minute 'slots' also means car parking facilities may be less than adequate during peak periods. The large numbers competing for limited service times during peak times will mean delays to the availability of service times or families having to accept times that may not be ideal for the family. Further to this, parts of the site are not conducive to quiet contemplation.
- 6.6.7 This level of service would not be the first choice for most bereaved families, it has become acceptable due to the lack of choice provided locally. This demonstrates the need for a new cremation service, provided locally, that will better meet the needs of the bereaved. It has been evidenced elsewhere in the country that where better provision has been made in a new crematorium then this helps drive up service standards at existing crematoria. Recently, a new crematorium provided with impressively landscaped grounds and high-tech audio-visual system with two 86" video screens and noticeably higher standards of care for funeral directors and families alike, has resulted in changes in standards at nearby crematoria. This can only provide better standards of service for the bereaved throughout the region.

6.7 Surrey and Sussex Crematorium

- 6.7.1 Surrey and Sussex Crematorium is operated by Dignity Crematoria Ltd and carries out around 3,007 cremations per annum (3-year average). The building was opened in 1956 and, like Randall's Park, is typical of crematoria built around that time. As such, the provision for the bereaved is both cramped and dated and there appears to be little investment to modernise such spaces as waiting areas. The two chapels, however, are modern and maintained to a good standard.



- 6.7.2 It has two chapels, the larger, St Richard's Chapel, caters for approximately 134 mourners, seated, but has additional standing room to take it to a maximum capacity of 200. There is a waiting room for this chapel, however, it has only 10 seats. The second chapel, St Michael's Chapel, has 54 removable seats. This too has a dedicated waiting room with 11 seats.



- 6.7.3 Both chapels are equipped with audio /visual systems and two screens in each chapel, together with an organ. There are webcasting facilities and facilities to record the services. Both chapels have attractive modern stained-glass windows, however, the design does provide the chapels with a church-like feel.



6.7.4 Surrey & Sussex is the only one of the competing crematoria not set in the grounds of a cemetery, however, whilst the site is well wooded, it feels a little cramped and is packed full of a wide range of memorialisation.



6.7.5 Cremation services are available Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm with service times of 45 minutes. The 124 car parking spaces are provided in two car parks, one with 91 spaces and the other with 33. This is a reasonable amount of car parking space, in line with guidance from the FBCA. However, at peak times there may be a service taking place in both chapels and gaps between services are effectively only around 20 minutes apart. Once again, the feeling that families are part of a 'conveyor belt' funeral process will be prevalent



funeral process will be prevalent

6.7.6 The site feels very cramped during peak periods and there is evidence of parking taking place in unauthorised spaces on the site, damaging soft landscaped areas. This is not conducive to providing the high standards of service sought by bereaved families.



6.7.7 With such high numbers of funerals, even with two chapels, Surrey & Sussex are just 7% off exceeding the quantitative standard and, even now at peak times, it is likely that there will be insufficient service times to meet the demand. This will potentially cause delays to funerals and may result in families having to accept times that do not really suit them. Certainly, as demand increases with the increase on the number of deaths in future years, the crematorium will find it difficult to meet the needs of bereaved families, without the provision of a further crematorium in the region.

6.7.8 The memorial marketing policies of crematoria like Surrey & Sussex, means large numbers of memorials are often sold to bereaved families, often in perpetuity. This results in excessive memorialisation, with every part of the grounds being crammed with a wide range of memorial options. Once again this is not conducive to a site originally designed for quiet contemplation.



6.8 Qualitative Review - Croydon Crematorium

6.8.1 Croydon crematorium is a local authority owned crematorium carrying out around 1,731 cremations per annum (3-year average). It has two chapels located next to a large car park in the grounds. The West Chapel is a more traditional design and has seating for 80 people on wooden pews. The second chapel, the East Chapel, whilst still a little dated it is of a more modern design and can accommodate a larger congregation of 130 people.



6.8.2 Cremation services are available Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm and then Saturdays between 9am and 11:45am. However, with two chapels service times can effectively be

only 20 minutes or so apart and access to this relatively small crematorium site can become congested during peak times.

- 6.8.3 Access to the site from Thornton Road means you pass the public mortuary, slightly distracting for those mourning the death of loved ones.

The entrance is then unmarked and together with the abandoned offices behind, provide a rather unwelcoming introduction to the site



- 6.8.4 Access through the gates is single file, due to the width of the gates. Add to this that the access is off the extremely busy Thornton Road, then even during quiet times, this can result in queuing traffic. During peak times significant delays could be expected, particularly as those entering and those exiting must wait until opposing traffic have passed through the gates. Generally, traffic appears to be a major problem in the immediate area around Thornton Road.



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- 6.8.5 Once in the rather compact area immediately surrounding the crematorium, it is reasonably well maintained but has large unsightly flower storage areas and limited opportunity for memorialisation.



- 6.8.6 Maintenance of some of the hard landscape is still a problem and whilst there has been some investment in the site, in the form of relatively new office accommodation, little consideration has been given to matching the red brick of the existing buildings. The crematorium does have a green flag award for the site, but it sits within a cemetery that has much lower standards of maintenance.



- 6.8.7 The traffic problems at the Thornton Road entrance might force traffic to access or exit the site through the Mitcham Road entrance, but there does not appear to be any formal one-way system which might help reduce congestion.



- 6.8.8 Whilst the Mitcham Road entrance has a similar single file traffic situation, it leads out on to a slightly quieter road. An internet search can take one to the Mitcham Road entrance and you are then forced to enter the crematorium through some extremely poorly maintained areas.



- 6.8.9 The lower standards of maintenance in the cemetery area and unsightly gates are a poor introduction to the facility if you enter from this direction.

- 6.8.10 Croydon Crematorium is the one site which has reasonable capacity to accept more funerals, however, the site has access problems, has traffic problems in the general area surrounding the crematorium, the cemetery grounds are poorly maintained, the crematorium is located on a compact site with a large flower storage area and buildings that look unmatched and dated. All of this is not conducive to providing the bereaved with the best of experiences upon visiting the site, despite reasonably good standards of landscaping once in the crematorium area.



- 6.8.11 This is clearly a major problem that has not been addressed over the past ten years, as the number of cremations per annum has changed very little. It is reasonable to expect that the service is unlikely to change greatly in future years and due to the poor levels of service then bereaved families will continue to seek services provided at other crematoria in the region.

6.9 Qualitative Review - North East Surrey Crematorium

6.9.1 North East Surrey Crematorium is operated by a Joint Crematorium Committee, made up of three local authorities, Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth Councils. The crematorium carries out around 1,918 cremations per annum (3-year average). This significantly exceeds the quantitative standard, by almost 20%. At peak times, this places pressure on core time services, inevitably resulting either in delays or bereaved families accepting service times that do not really suit them, outside of core times.



6.9.2 The entrance and access drive appear impressive upon the initial approach to the site. The long tree lined drive has a single chapel at the end of it, however, the impressive entrance is let down by the poor standards of maintenance and close association to the existing cemetery.



6.9.3 The chapel has been refurbished, however, it remains very church like in appearance both inside and out and has formal seating for a total of 80 people. The exposed rear of the chapel presents a very poor impression of the site with poorly maintained fencing around a service yard and fencing on the roof of the building attempting to hide ancillary equipment for the cremation and filtration process.



6.9.4 As this is a crematorium developed from an old cemetery chapel, then there is very little in the way of official parking provision, other than some poorly marked bays off the cemetery roads. Visitors have no option but to park on the roadways, which, at times, can cause some congestion, particularly if there is any overlap between the funeral parties. Signage and associated maintenance around the cemeteries are very poor and appears to display a lack of investment in the site. Instead of good quality litter bins near to the crematorium building, there are prominent blue skips, designed to keep costs down rather than provide an ambient atmosphere for the bereaved families that visit the site to grieve for their lost loved ones.



6.9.5 Cremation services are available Monday to Friday 9.20am to 4.40pm at 40-minute intervals at a cost of only £650.00, which does provide a low-cost option for those that want it, however, the quality of the service provided undoubtedly suffers, evidenced in the poor quality of the maintenance throughout the site and the lack of areas that could be considered to encourage peaceful contemplation. Even areas designed for the provision of memorialisation are



poorly maintained and do not provide the type of image that should be expected by bereaved families seeking a suitable memorial for their loved ones.

- 6.9.6 The book of remembrance and other internal memorialisation is housed within an impressive remembrance building, providing a good standard of memorialisation within the building. Unfortunately, once outside, whilst there is a reasonable range of memorial options, their maintenance is generally poor and does not provide an acceptable ambience.



- 6.9.7 Generally, the site does not appear welcoming and it has open access around the chapel where standards of maintenance are extremely poor. Bereaved families are spending a significant amount on a funeral, even if the cremation fee is relatively low, they still want to provide the very best for their loved ones. This site does not reflect the high standards required of a crematorium and is an example of why another facility is required to provide a higher standard of service at a reasonable cost, that may just encourage other services to improve their own standards of delivery.



- 6.9.8 NE Surrey crematorium may have a relatively low cremation fee, however, it exceeds the quantitative standard, resulting in delays or booking outside of core times during peak periods of the year. Further to this, the restraints of the site mean there is no escaping from the close proximity of the cemetery. However, all this is further compromised by the lack of investment or care of the site.
- 6.9.9 Both local authority owned crematoria are based in very old cemeteries and are restricted by the constraints of their sites. They are also demonstrating a lack of investment in the service, particularly the cemeteries in which they are based. They do not appear to meet the high maintenance standards that bereaved families deserve.
- 6.9.10 The remaining two crematoria primarily serving Reigate and Banstead are operated by Dignity plc, both of which have the highest fees in the country yet are still unable to provide the highest standards of service for a variety of reasons.

6.10 Summary of Existing Facilities

- 6.10.1 There is no doubt that significant areas of the borough are not being served by existing facilities as demonstrated above. Even those currently being served by the existing facilities are not being provided with suitable standards of service. Grieving families are suffering delays during peak periods, are attending sites that are overcrowded with other families attending funerals, with their vehicles and, in some cases, with the memorialisation they have purchased. It appears some sites are failing to re-invest in the facility, as a result, standards of maintenance on some sites can be extremely poor. Finally, at least one site suffers from levels of congestion outside of the crematorium and poor access through single file gates. This can cause delays and frustration to families and funeral directors alike.
- 6.10.2 All the existing crematoria are facing an increase in the number of deaths in forthcoming years and the residents in the area will need an additional facility able to provide high

quality modern facilities and standards of service. This will ensure all crematoria in the area can better meet the growing needs of the bereaved to be able to provide a meaningful service and adequate memorialisation for loved ones they have lost. There is a need for a crematorium that provides a modern functional building, combined with landscaped grounds that fit with the Green Belt and provide a quiet, peaceful area for families to contemplate and celebrate the lives of their loved ones.

7.0 Woodhatch Crematorium

- 7.1 Woodhatch crematorium has been designed to meet the growing needs of the bereaved and to relieve the pressure on current facilities as the predicted number of deaths in the area continue to rise.
- 7.2 Driven by the clear need for an additional cremation facility, but conscious of its placement within the Green Belt, the building is designed as a single storey building blending into the surrounding landscaping, with all other elements of infrastructure minimised. This will ensure the delivery of a functional crematorium with peaceful gardens of remembrance, but in keeping with its surrounds and encouraging good access in and around the site.
- 7.3 The crematorium has a single chapel as it is designed for around 1,000 to 1,600 cremations per annum. This ensures it meets the quantitative standard and is not 'over designed' for the likely demand, this also means the site is more likely to blend into the surroundings and has less impact on the Green Belt.
- 7.4 Reigate & Banstead Borough Council officers have strong opinions on, not only meeting all environmental legislation, but exceeding these requirements. At this point the Council is considering all options to reduce the environmental impact of such a development, working to ensure BREEAM 'Very Good' is achieved as a minimum. This includes:
- Latest technology to ensure full flue gas abatement to PG5/2 (12) and better
 - Photovoltaic panels for maximising solar energy
 - CO2 emissions/renewables assessed under BREEAM
 - Heat transfer to utilise waste heat developed from flue gas abatement system
 - Water consumption assessed under BREEAM
 - Construction works and materials to meet environmental excellence standards. All to be assessed under BREEAM
 - Environmentally sustainable methods of construction. Sustainable construction will be assessed under BREEAM
 - Landscape design using native hybrids and wild-flower meadows to attract a wide range of local fauna. All to be assessed under BREEAM
- 7.5 The Co-op Funeralcare report on funeral trends, published in 2019, clearly shows that families are seeking to provide more meaningful services designed to celebrate the lives of loved ones they have lost. National guidance indicates that services should be at least 40-45 minutes in length as the 30-minute services, as provided by Randall's Park crematorium, does not facilitate this established need of bereaved families.
- 7.6 Woodhatch is designed to facilitate the needs of bereaved families and will have:
- 60-minute services to allow families sufficient time to arrive, hold a meaningful service and depart without feeling rushed

- Latest technology audio / visual systems in chapel and all associated buildings / rooms. Additionally, there will be outdoor speakers for larger services
- Hi-spec, extra large video screens to display family videos and photographs
- Comfortable family room for private discussions with families
- CCTV for both security and the provision of webcam services for bereaved families
- Service recording options
- Moveable seating to allow different seating arrangements to meet family requirements
- Facilities for tea and coffee making for families and funeral directors
- Memorialisation options more in keeping with a rural type of location

7.7 The Council will ensure that the service is highly customer focused and will arrange for the necessary training to achieve this. With the combination of a high quality functional crematorium that fits with the surrounding landscape, the peaceful gardens of remembrance and the ability for bereaved families to have the funeral they would wish for their loved ones; it is expected that this will be the ideal facility to meet the needs of the bereaved, as identified in this report.

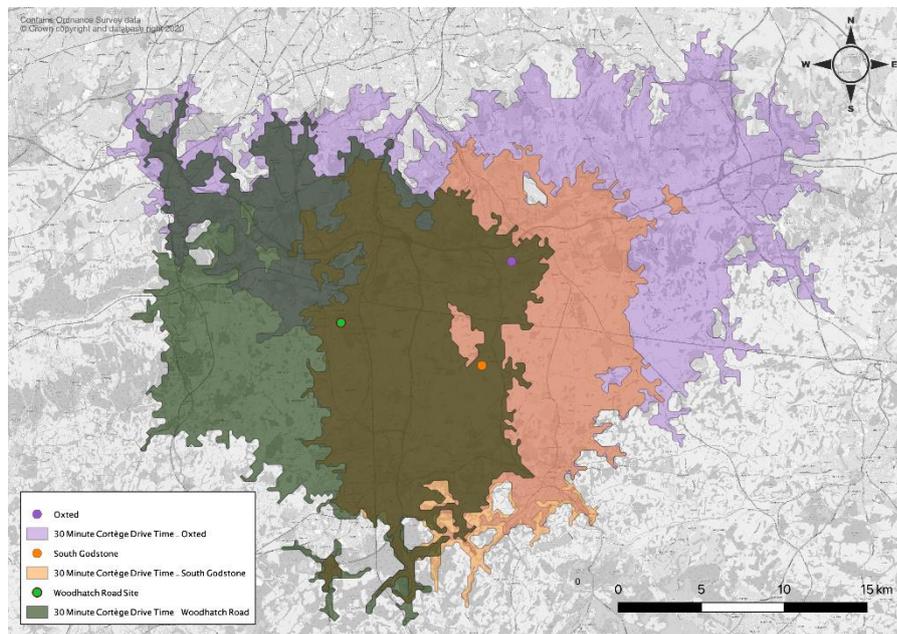
8.0 Alternative Sites

8.1 There have been two planning applications made for the development of a crematorium in the adjoining borough of Tandridge. The first in South Godstone and the second in Oxted. Both these crematorium applications have been refused as they have been assessed to constitute an inappropriate development in the Green Belt, causing significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt and an encroachment of development into the countryside. It has been decided that no very special circumstances exist to clearly outweigh the harm by reasons of inappropriateness and other identified harm.

8.2 These applications have been considered by Tandridge Borough Council based on their specific locations and the characteristics of their development. The detail of the applications has then been weighed against both national and local planning policies, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) as well as the Council's Core Strategy and Tandridge Local Plan. This means any decisions of Tandridge Borough Council are very specific to the two sites they have recently considered. As such, no significant weight can be given to these two decisions, other than the matters concerning national policy and legislation, when assessing the site at Woodhatch.

8.3 Specific comments have been made in the Tandridge officer's reports, regarding permitted schemes at Oak Tree Farm, London Road, Sevenoaks, Mabledon Hospital, Darenth and Gravesend (20130923). None of these are considered as having any material impact on the catchment area of the proposed Woodhatch crematorium as the sites, even those that may be developed in line with their current permissions, will have catchment areas with minimal impact on the proposed Woodhatch site, some of which would involve families passing very close to much nearer crematoria to arrive in Woodhatch. As can be seen the catchment area for the proposed Woodhatch site lies considerably further to the West than the two sites recently considered by Tandridge.

Figure 11 – Catchment Areas of Recent Planning Applications Compared with Proposed Woodhatch Site (based on 30-minute cortege drive times...motorways included)



8.4 The relatively new facility, Wealden Crematorium, Horam, Heathfield, will have no significant effect on the numbers of bereaved families using the proposed Woodhatch crematorium, so has not been included in the qualitative assessments of existing crematoria. However, it should be noted that there may be some affect on Surrey and Sussex crematorium albeit limited. Consideration has been given to Wealden Crematorium and the potential effect it may have on the numbers of cremations carried out by Surrey & Sussex. The standard drive time between the two crematoria is 48 minutes on the fastest standard drive time route, and the cortege speed is only two thirds the speed. The overlap of cortege speed catchment areas will be minimal. Consideration must also be given to the more rural nature of the area between Surrey & Sussex crematorium and Wealden crematorium and when added to the minimal overlap of catchment areas, it is expected that the effect on Surrey & Sussex crematorium, as far as capacity is concerned, will be limited. Given the growth in the number of deaths predicted in Reigate and Banstead in the next 25 years, if a further facility is not provided in the borough, Surrey & Sussex crematorium will have to continue to cater for increasing numbers of cremations to the detriment of all its users.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 This Needs Assessment sets out the very special circumstances that clearly identify that the proposed development of a crematorium would be for the public good, it will provide the community with an additional cremation service that will ease current pressures on existing facilities that currently serve the borough of Reigate and Banstead and surrounding areas. The following facts relating to the current position of cremation services in the area are indisputable:

Current Position	Implications	Future	Comment
<p>Quantitative standards:</p> <p>Two crematoria currently serving the community are already exceeding their quantitative standard.</p> <p>Randall's Park is already 34% over the quantitative standard and fails to meet national recommendations for the length of the funeral service</p> <p>One further crematorium is very near to exceeding its quantitative standard</p>	<p>All three crematoria near or exceeding the quantitative standards are showing signs that high usage is affecting the quality of services they are able to deliver (see below).</p> <p>Due to the pressures on the service Randall's Park have been unable to extend their service times in line with national recommendations. This is a significant restriction to bereaved families being able to provide a meaningful funeral for their loved ones and can impact on their own mental health</p>	<p>The number of deaths is predicted, by ONS, to substantially increase over the next 25 years. Unless an additional facility is provided, these crematoria will fall further outside of the quantitative standard and the quality of service to bereaved families will worsen.</p>	<p>The provision of an additional facility will make a significant difference in easing the pressure on existing crematoria. This will result in a better service for all bereaved families, whatever crematorium they choose to use.</p> <p>The benefit to the community on this point alone, could be considered a very special circumstance that outweighs the harm to the Green Belt.</p>

Current Position	Implications	Future	Comment
<p>Qualitative standards:</p> <p>Two local authority crematoria lie within very poorly maintained cemeteries.</p> <p>Croydon crematorium has significant problems attracting bereaved families, as can be identified by the relatively static cremation numbers over the past 10 years whilst capacity is available. Traffic, access and maintenance standards are likely to contribute to this and, given past history, are unlikely to change.</p> <p>Randall's Park crematorium, suffers from congestion during peak times, enhanced due to the 30-minute services. Parts of the site are already congested with memorialisation and the site occasionally floods, resulting in closure. Despite this, their cremation fees are the highest in the UK.</p> <p>Surrey & Sussex carry out an average of 3,007 cremations per annum. Inevitably, during peak times this results in a cross-over of funerals arriving and departing at the same time, high volumes of traffic and complaints about 'conveyor-belt' funerals. In addition, there is evidence of damage to the landscape through intensive use. There also appears to be limited investment in parts of the site, despite their cremation fees also being the highest in the UK.</p>	<p>Evidence of poor-quality maintenance is particularly obvious at NE Surrey, where the crematorium lies centrally within a poorly maintained cemetery, bereaved families may be affected by an apparent lack of care in the grounds. Low cremation fees may be the main attraction to the use of this site.</p> <p>Croydon has a better standard of maintenance immediately around the crematorium, but cemetery standards, access and local traffic conditions are poor. Qualitative standards are important to bereaved families who will not use an unattractive site that is difficult to access</p>	<p>The number of deaths is predicted, by ONS, to substantially increase over the next 25 years. Unless an additional facility is provided, these crematoria will be placed under further pressure and it is likely that qualitative standards will continue to fall, rather than improve.</p> <p>Unless specific improvements are made to the Croydon facility and the road network beyond, little change is likely to take place</p>	<p>The provision of an additional facility will make a significant difference in easing the pressure on existing crematoria and should allow them to provide a better standard of service for all bereaved families, whatever crematorium they choose to use.</p> <p>In particular, Randall's Park may be able to extend their service times and other crematoria could consider other improvements to their sites.</p> <p>The improved standards of service for the community could be considered a very special circumstance that outweighs the harm to the Green Belt.</p>

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Current Position	Implications	Future	Comment
<p>Travel times:</p> <p>The area highlighted in green in Figures 6 & 7 is expected to be outside of the 30-minute drive time at cortege speed, excluding the influence of using motorways, which, generally, funeral directors will not use.</p> <p>Much of this area lies within Reigate and Banstead, significantly disadvantaging those bereaved families in this area</p>	<p>Residents of Reigate & Banstead have no crematorium within the borough with the split of catchment areas this forces them to choose from existing crematoria, normally the crematorium nearest to them.</p> <p>To the North of the split, the bereaved are compelled to attend Randall's Park where the standards of the site are more conducive, However, there is more likelihood of meeting other funerals and the site appearing busy, particularly at peak times as they only have 30 minute services and are already 34% over the quantitative standard</p> <p>A large percentage of residents of the borough of Reigate and Banstead are already compelled to utilise a crematorium whose quantitative and / or qualitative standards are poor. Further to this, many lie within an area outside of the reasonable 30-minute cortege drive time of any of the existing crematoria.</p>	<p>The number of deaths is predicted, by ONS, to substantially increase over the next 25 years. Unless an additional facility is provided, these crematoria will fall further outside of the quantitative standard and the quality of service to bereaved families will continue to worsen.</p>	<p>The provision of an additional crematorium will make a significant difference in ensuring a cremation service is within a 30-minute cortege drive time for all residents of Reigate and Banstead.</p> <p>Once again this ensures an improved standard of service for any bereaved family within the borough, whichever crematorium they choose to use to travel to.</p> <p>This additional benefit to the local community, adds to the very special circumstances that helps outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.</p>

Current Position	Implications	Future	Comment
<p>Quality of service:</p> <p>The qualitative reviews of the existing crematoria indicate a range of problems with the quality of service delivery as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two local authority crematoria set within cemetery grounds with low standards of maintenance • Quantitative standards that have implications on delays, appropriate choice of service times and length of service. All reduce the quality of service • Evidence of memorialisation dominating parts of the landscape at the two Dignity crematoria • Experience of funerals arriving and departing at around the same time, due to 30-minute service times at one site and two chapels at another...in addition to the quantitative standard issues. This gives the impression of a conveyor-belt funeral process. Often quoted by families as the one element in the quality of the service that is difficult to accept • Evidence of damage to parts of the landscaping due to heavy use • Evidence of a lack of investment in parts of the crematorium, or in the grounds. • All four crematoria are dated and there is limited opportunity for significant modification to fully meet trends moving away from religion and traditional based services, 	<p>Most families want to provide the very best of 'send offs' they are able to afford. There is evidence that current trends are towards providing a funeral that is considered more a celebration of life</p> <p>More than ever families want to come away from a funeral feeling 'that was just what he/she would have wanted'.</p> <p>This is extremely difficult to provide if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the grounds and parts of the built environment are of a poor standard or feel cluttered with headstones or other memorialisation. • there is insufficient time to provide a meaningful service. • there are clashes with other funerals, taking the 'special' feeling away and replacing it with the feeling more alike to a 'factory' service. • There have been problems with delays and unavailability of suitable service times 	<p>The number of deaths is predicted, by ONS, to substantially increase over the next 25 years. Unless an additional facility is provided, these crematoria will fall further outside of the quality of service expected by bereaved families. Their growing expectations of being able to provide a meaningful service will not be met as delays will increase, availability of the service times families want, will become more restricted and the physical standards of the site will continue to worsen.</p> <p>With expectation not being met and families feeling they have 'failed' their loved ones, this will affect their ability to grieve their loss and can have affects of both mental and physical health, as has been evident during the current pandemic.</p>	<p>The provision of an additional facility will make a significant difference in easing the pressure on existing crematoria and should allow them to provide a better standard of service for all bereaved families, whatever crematorium the family may choose to use.</p> <p>A new crematorium can be designed to modern standards to meet the developing needs of the bereaved for more personal services using music, photographs and video footage of the deceased in a celebration of life.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to ensure the quality of service provided to around 8,821 families per annum can be improved by the provision of an additional cremation service. The provision of improving services, instead of worsening services may have significant effects on all such families.</p> <p>Such improved standards of service for the community could be considered a very</p>

Current Position	Implications	Future	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff do not have time to make the family feel special <p>If families are denied the ability to grieve in the way they had hoped. The service will fail to meet their expectations, and this can have effects on an individual's health.</p>		<p>special circumstance that outweighs the harm to the Green Belt.</p>
<p>Customer choice:</p> <p>The stark fact is that, for residents of the borough of Reigate & Banstead and surrounding areas, there is a choice of four crematoria, however:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three of the crematoria are near to or exceeding their quantitative standard, affecting the level of service they are able to provide The fourth has capacity, but bereaved families, for a variety of qualitative reasons, will not choose this option Two of the crematoria lie within poorly maintained cemeteries leading to families feeling they are not providing the 'best' of service for their loved ones. Feeling they may have been forced to take the 'cheap' option cremation fees at these two locations are lower than the Dignity crematoria. The two Dignity plc crematoria are very busy crematoria meaning potential feelings of a 'conveyor-belt' funeral process 	<p>Research has shown the trend for families wanting a more modern celebration of life. Wanting high quality services for the high costs they have to pay.</p> <p>Currently, a bright modern, environmentally friendly, customer focused option is not available to the bereaved and families only have a forced choice between facilities... none of which is ideal.</p> <p>Families feel unable to provide the type of service that their loved ones would have truly wanted, and some will feel they have failed in some way as their</p>	<p>The number of deaths is predicted, by ONS, to substantially increase over the next 25 years. Unless an additional facility is provided, these crematoria will fall further outside of the quantitative standard and the quality of service to bereaved families will continue to worsen.</p> <p>More and more families will have no real option to provide the meaningful service they would like to provide, as there will be no crematorium able to provide such an option within the constraints of the pressurised position they will find themselves in as the demand</p>	<p>The overlap of the catchment areas is actually a good thing, as long as this means that families have a better choice of cremation services and that within that provision there are options for a cremation service that will meet their expectations.</p> <p>Some will want a traditional type of service, some will want their loved ones laid to rest with relatives previously cremated or buried at existing crematoria / cemeteries, some will be happy to accept the 'bustle' of a busy crematorium, some will want a low cost funeral, with no fuss and the choice of location will matter very little. Others will want a modern 'celebration of life'</p>

Current Position	Implications	Future	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All crematoria have areas where memorialisation that dominates the landscape, whether this be in the form of headstones in an unkempt cemetery, or a conglomeration of 'personal gardens' within a bounded garden space or expanding to other parts of the crematorium. 	<p>expectations have not been met.</p>	<p>for services continue to increase</p>	<p>type of service with more modern choices of memorialisation and a more peaceful environment. This is what real choice is about</p> <p>Such improved levels of choice within the community could be considered a very special circumstance that outweighs the harm to the Green Belt.</p>

9.2 The above sets out the reasons that a new cremation service is needed, highlighting the implications of the current position and identifying the potential for the position to worsen for bereaved families in Reigate & Banstead and surrounding areas, if an additional facility is not provided. These arguments highlight the need for an additional crematorium and, whilst all will be done to ensure the development has the minimum of impact on the Green Belt, it is believed the current and ongoing needs of the community does overcome the potential harm the development may cause to the character of the Green Belt, specifically, the site and surrounding area on which the crematorium is to be developed.

9.3 The well-being of the residents of Reigate & Banstead and surrounding areas is paramount to Reigate & Banstead Borough Council who strongly believe that there is a need for a low impact, environmentally friendly, high quality, customer focused cremation service for their residents and the residents of surrounding areas. Such a facility will provide the necessary choice for the bereaved and the ability to have an hour-long service for their loved ones that can be truly meaningful to those left behind. Not only would the choice of such a cremation service benefit those who choose the proposed crematorium at Woodhatch, but it would relieve the pressure on all other crematoria in the area and allow them to provide improved services to the bereaved, which in 25 years could be upwards of 11,000 families per annum, given the current predictions on the number of deaths in the area.