

Appendix 1

Progress Overview

Table 1 provides a RAG status overview summarising progress to date across all 20 recommendations. Further detail is provided in the Appendix, setting out a comprehensive update on the progress of each individual action.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20				

Table 1: Overview of progress on Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations

Progress review (Detail)

- To allow the construction and maintenance of cemetery memorials and memorial gardens on leased grave plots in borough cemeteries, up to a maximum length of one metre from the headstone plinth and of the equivalent width as the headstone at its base. These must be bounded by an kerbset installed by a registered stonemason (or an agreed alternative, if signed off by the officers deemed appropriate by Cabinet), and subject to agreement on the materials used, the absence of any prohibited items, and an agreed plan of action should any issues arise. The outside of the kerbset should be in alignment with the headstone at its base.**

The proposed sign-off process for memorials has been agreed and will follow an approach consistent with that used for headstone applications. Fees and charges associated with this process are currently being developed and will be presented to Cabinet for consideration and approval as part of the September 2026 report.

Work in relation to kerbsets is ongoing in consultation with the Friends of Broxtowe Cemeteries, with a focus on identifying suitable options from those available through stonemasons. This includes agreeing consistent specifications, such as dimensions and height, to ensure that kerb sets are both practical and in keeping with the character and environment of the cemetery.

- To therefore permit the installation of kerbsets on grave plots in Borough cemeteries, subject either to official installation by Council staff, or a suitable standard of installation and maintenance that does not unduly interfere in grounds maintenance. It is advisable that any kerbing fitted to a grave should bound the outer limit within which memorial items are permitted, up to a limit of one metre, with the width being the same as that of the headstone at its base. Any kerbset that is not officially installed must be signed off by the relevant Council officers.**

It has been agreed that Council staff will not undertake the installation of kerbsets. However, families wishing to install their own kerbsets, where they do not wish to appoint a stonemason, will be permitted to do so within defined parameters. A list of suitable kerbset specifications, including agreed boundaries for dimensions and height, has been developed and will be formally set out within the revised Rules and Regulations to be presented to Cabinet in September 2026. Throughout this process, the working group has been mindful of the potential costs associated with kerbset installations and has sought to ensure that the approach remains accessible and affordable for families. To support this, a proportionate application process will be introduced, including a minimal fee to cover sign-off and compliance checks. In addition, there will be a requirement to review and approve existing memorial garden areas currently in situ to ensure they align with the updated Rules and Regulations.

- 3. To consider delegating authority to the Head of Legal Services, in collaboration with the Leader or Deputy Leader and any other officers as deemed appropriate, to review the drafting and agreement of any future Cemetery Rules and Regulations and interment forms that detail that grave owners must abide by the Cemetery Rules and Regulations. Their agreement should ensure that these are legally enforceable, clear to all parties, and does not impede the Council in meeting its health and safety obligations.**

This is in progress. As part of this work, the Friends of Broxtowe Cemeteries have been invited to review the existing rules and regulations. While not a specific requirement of the original recommendations, this additional step has been included to support a more collaborative and inclusive approach. They have been asked to highlight any areas that may be unclear or difficult to understand, enabling these to be addressed as part of the revised drafting. This will help ensure that the updated Rules and Regulations are clear and accessible.

- 4. All new graves (plots leased or dug since new Rules and Regulations take effect) should be permitted to maintain a memorial of up to one metre as stipulated in recommendations above, while older graves will be permitted to maintain memorials of more than one metre and up to a maximum length of the length of the grave plot, where these are already in place. When such older graves are reopened, they must then revert to 'the one metre rule', only maintaining memorials of up to one metre after this reopening. Any such memorials over one metre in length must still be at or below the width of the headstone at its base and bounded by an appropriate and agreed upon kerbset.**

This will be formally incorporated within the revised Cemetery Rules and Regulations to be presented to Cabinet in September 2026. It should be noted that a related amendment has subsequently been identified and captured through a later recommendation, namely that reopened graves will no longer be required to revert to the previous one-metre rule. This change will also be reflected within the new rules and regulations.

- 5. The owners of any graveside memorials outside of those allowed under these new rules (i.e. where older graves with pre-existing memorials do not revert to 1m in length following a reopening, are too wide, or feature prohibited items, or where new graves have memorials of >1m, etc.) should be offered time and assistance to reorganise their memorials, after which time their memorials should be removed in accordance with the new regulations. Support may include notification of the grave owners that their memorial items may need to be cleared and storage of such items for a specified period of time.**

The group has agreed that, while the new Rules and Regulations will come into force following approval by Cabinet, any formal enforcement programme will not commence until Spring 2027. The approach to implementation will be phased and managed on a cemetery-by-cemetery basis, with the overall programme expected to take approximately 18 months to complete. As part of this process, grave owners will be contacted directly to ensure they are fully informed of the changes. A reasonable and sensitive timeframe will be provided to allow families to make any necessary arrangements or adjustments in line with the updated requirements.

- 6. The list of items prohibited on graveside memorials is to be reviewed and agreed, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the Friends of Broxtowe Cemeteries and other cemetery users and bereaved families. The list should then be strictly adhered to by all grave owners and clearly enforced by grounds staff to safeguard against health and safety concerns. An exception should be made for a small amount of additional decoration on birthdays (for 14 days after the deceased's birth date) and Christmas (until 4 January).**

Following consultation with the Friends of Broxtowe Cemeteries, a comprehensive list of prohibited items has now been developed, which is set out in **Appendix 2**. This has been the result of a highly collaborative process, with the group demonstrating a clear understanding of, and support for, environmental considerations associated with certain materials and items. Their input has been invaluable in shaping a balanced and sensitive approach, and their ongoing support is acknowledged and appreciated.

In relation to seasonal and commemorative decorations, arrangements for Christmas will remain unchanged, with wreaths permitted during the festive

period and removed towards the end of January. Clear signage is in place to ensure cemetery users are aware of these arrangements.

Further work is underway to consider additional commemorative occasions, including Mother's Day, Father's Day, wedding anniversaries, anniversaries of passing, Chinese New Year, and other religious festivals. This aspect is still being finalised.

- 7. Planted flowers, trees or shrubs should not be permitted in graveside memorials, due to the unsettling effects that roots can have on headstones and other features. Where planted vegetation is present, grave owners should be contacted and asked to pot them. If this is not done within an agreed timespan, any such planted features should be removed.**

This will be formally incorporated within the revised Cemetery Rules and Regulations to be presented to Cabinet in September 2026. In terms of implementation and enforcement, this will follow the phased approach as outlined in Recommendation 6.

- 8. To consider, in consultation with any officers, the Friends of Broxtowe Cemeteries, and any other stakeholders as appropriate, new messaging to grave owners and cemetery visitors informing them of the changes to Cemeteries Rules and Regulations and how this may affect them, such as in relation to adjacent burials, among other areas. Consideration should be given to communications stating that the Council wishes to work with visitors to manage any new health and safety and accessibility dynamics that may arise from new regulations and that visitors are duly informed of these by entering any borough cemetery. Input should be sought from Communications, Bereavement Services and Health and Safety to ensure accuracy and consistency.**

This recommendation remains in progress. Updated messaging will be developed alongside the finalisation of the revised Rules and Regulations. This is likely to include the introduction of new signage and/or information boards within cemeteries to support clear communication with visitors. In developing this approach, the Council will work collaboratively with relevant internal departments, including Communications, Bereavement Services, and Health and Safety, as well as with the Friends of Broxtowe Cemeteries, who provide a valuable link to residents and cemetery users.

- 9. Grave owners should be given a copy (paper or electronic) of the Council's Cemeteries Rules and Regulations upon signing their interment form, where this is not already the case.**

Funeral directors already provide relevant information to families on behalf of the crematorium. Building on this, a process is being developed to ensure that, once contact details for the person responsible for the burial have been identified, they will be issued with a follow-up email from the Council. This communication will include key information relating to the burial process, including a copy of the Cemetery Rules and Regulations, to ensure that families are fully informed and have received the necessary guidance at an appropriate stage.

- 10. To consider making available any additional funding necessary to implement changes to cemetery management and grounds maintenance procedures which are required to work around any memorials that will remain under the new rules, i.e. changes to shift patterns, procurement of different grass-cutting, soil boxes or other equipment, etc. This would need to be subject to specific approval by Cabinet where there would be budget implications. Use of the Council's apprenticeship scheme should be considered if it is deemed necessary to take on additional staff.**

This recommendation is currently in progress. Grounds Maintenance is currently trialling a range of new equipment, including battery-powered machinery to replace fuel-based alternatives, with the aim of reducing vibration and improving health and safety for the Cemeteries Team. In parallel, work is underway to introduce an electronic HAV's monitoring system to replace the existing paper-based process, enabling more accurate and efficient data recording.

Consideration is also being given to the introduction of dedicated compliance roles within the crematorium to support the increased administrative requirements associated with memorial applications and approvals, and to provide a clear point of contact for this process. This is being explored alongside the current arrangements for memorial testing, which are undertaken by an external contractor, with the potential to bring this function in-house to ensure greater control and minimise costs. A further report will be presented to Cabinet once these elements have been fully developed and finalised.

- 11. The feasibility of implementing a 'cooling period' of seven days or more before the signing of the interment form by grave owners should be evaluated. This would be a period in which grave owners are able to contact the Council, enquire about and potentially reconsider whether they would like to sign their interment forms assenting to the Rules and Regulations, allowing them time to properly comprehend all of the conditions while in a state of grief, though this must of course occur before and not delay interment. This may also function as an improved accessibility measure for mourners with dyslexia, ADHD etc., who may struggle to digest the form in full when they are first presented with it.**

Once burial arrangements have been confirmed and contact details have been provided by the funeral director, the Council will issue an email directly to the grave owner. This will provide sufficient time for them to review all relevant documentation, including information supplied by both the funeral director and the Council, ensuring they are fully informed and able to consider any decisions before proceeding.

- 12. Grave owners should be contacted again before they are able to commission an official memorial – such as a headstone – to ensure that they are still cognisant of the Rules and Regulations and appreciate what they may and may not construct. The possibility of having them sign a document again at this stage to reiterate this should also be investigated.**

Arrangements relating to contact prior to the commissioning of a formal memorial, such as a headstone, are already well established, with grave owners required to submit an application for approval before any installation can take place. This approach will continue under the revised framework, and will be extended to include other memorial elements, such as kerb sets (both installed by a stone mason or by the grave owner), which will be subject to a similar application and sign-off process. This ensures that, at each stage, grave owners are fully aware of the requirements.

- 13. The Council should investigate alternative possibilities to facilitate residents' mourning at Borough cemeteries, such as the creation of designated memorial gardens where more significant, personalised memorials are permitted, or augmented reality/VR offers, such as has been implemented at the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum, especially where this would be helpful in managing accessibility or health and safety concerns.**

This recommendation is currently being explored. A range of options for designated memorial areas is being considered, including concepts such as a memorial tree similar to that provided at the crematorium, where individuals may commemorate loved ones through plaques or hanging ornaments. At this stage, no final decisions have been made, with further work required to assess the suitability, practicality, and sensitivity of these approaches.

- 14. The Council should investigate the possibility of helping to offer or signpost cemetery visitors to bereavement counselling services as part of its communications with residents on this issue.**

The provision of support through signposting will be implemented as part of the new approach, following approval of the recommendations by Cabinet in September 2026. As outlined previously, once the Council is provided with the contact details of the grave owner via the funeral director at the point of booking,

a follow-up email will be issued. In addition to including the Cemetery Rules and Regulations and relevant guidance, this communication will also signpost individuals to a range of support services to assist them during their bereavement, ensuring that families are made aware of appropriate help and resources at an early stage.

- 15. To consider requesting that Bereavement Services should work closely with local funeral directors to understand their processes and procedures, if it would not duplicate work and as and when resources allow. The Council's Cemeteries Team should also consider the creation of a working group or bi-monthly catch-up meeting between themselves and local funeral directors to discuss any issues regarding communications with grave owners. This may help improve co-ordination and understanding of the Rules and Regulations and allowable memorial features among grave owners.**

This recommendation is already in place. The Bereavement Services Team maintains regular meetings and ongoing engagement with local funeral directors to discuss operational matters and address any emerging issues. These established arrangements will continue, and funeral directors will be fully briefed and updated once the revised Rules and Regulations have been approved.

- 16. To consider, in consultation with officers as appropriate, investigating the co-ordination of forms of funding for those that cannot afford funeral costs, such as helping those who cannot afford one to purchase a headstone. Monies from metals extracted during cremation should also be considered for this purpose, in collaboration with the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM), as required.**

This recommendation has been considered in the context of the metal recycling scheme operated by the Bereavement Services Team. While this scheme generates funding, its use is restricted and the monies must be directed towards bereavement-related charities. As such, it cannot be used to directly support the provision of headstones. Cabinet may wish to consider the creation of a discretionary fund to assist those unable to meet the cost of a memorial; however, this may present practical challenges in terms of administration and demand. By way of context, the cost of a basic headstone is typically in the region of £2,000, meaning that any limited funding provision would support only a small number of cases. Given the current cost of living pressures, demand for such support could be significant.

- 17. The formation of a working group, composed of Members, Officers, and any other stakeholders as considered appropriate, that will work to implement all new measures arising from any Cabinet resolutions on these recommendations, in a robust and compliant manner.**

A working group of officers has been established following the February Cabinet meeting to support the delivery of the agreed actions. The group meets on a fortnightly basis to review progress and coordinate activity across the work programme. As part of this process, there has also been ongoing engagement with the Friends of Broxtowe Cemeteries, with their input sought to help inform and shape the development of the proposals.

18. Any reopened graves would not be required to revert to the one metre stipulation.

This matter will be addressed within the revised Cemetery Rules and Regulations, where it will be clearly set out that any reopened graves currently in use will not be required to revert to the one-meter rule.

19. To undertake consultation with concerned individuals and groups regarding the number of celebration/memorial days.

This recommendation is currently in progress and is being considered as part of the work outlined under Recommendation 6.

20. New memorials to comply with the one-metre rule.

New memorials will be required to comply with the revised one-metre rule. This has been agreed and will be clearly set out within the updated Cemetery Rules and Regulations.