

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

4th December 2025

An Extraordinary meeting of the Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel was held on Thursday, 4th December 2025 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall Nuneaton.

Present

Councillor J. Sheppard (Chair)

Councillors: J. Collett, J. Gutteridge, P. Hickling (substitute for Councillor B. Saru), S. Markham, B. Pandher (substitute for Councillor M. Walsh), C. Phillips, C. Smith, and R. Roze.

Apologies: Councillor B. Saru and M. Walsh (Vice-Chair)

PART I – PUBLIC BUSINESS

EL21 Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED that the declarations of interest are as set out in the Schedule available to view on the website. Additional declarations of interest were declared as follows:

Councillor J. Gutteridge declared that he had requested copies of the background papers from the Assistant Director – Recreation and Culture, and that he knew the representative from Nuneaton Muslim Society in attendance at the meeting as he had been in contact with him on other matters.

Councillors C. Phillips and J. Sheppard also declared an interest by way of having previously had contact with the representative from the Nuneaton Muslim Society on other matters.

EL22 Lawn Burial Provision

The Strategic Director – Public Services presented the report to the panel for consideration.

SPEAKERS: Councillor Steve Hey

Daniel Devall (Devall's Funeral Directors)

Yaseen Ahmedabadi (representative from Nuneaton Muslim Society)

The following points were raised and summarised below:

- A panel member raised concerns regarding the £3M detailed in the report, a detailed breakdown on how the funds will be raised and how will it be spent is needed. In addition, in respect of the Desktop Study, it does not give enough information. The panel would need direction before spending funds, a site visit may be useful. The Strategic Director (SD) – Public Services responded that the £3M was an estimate of capital costs, no further action has been taken until the panel give a steer of priorities.
- A panel member queried if land owned by Warwickshire County Council (WCC) had been investigated. The SD – Public Services responded that the Council had a call for sites as part of the Borough Plan, but none came forward and if the panel wish officers could approach WCC and Arbury Estate. Officers had also looked into Eastboro Way but it was not suitable due to the closeness of the site to the water table and potential pollution.

- A Panel member queried the £3M, if it were to be spent on Marston Lane, how many extra plots would that give us. The Capital Projects officer advised that it would be different to say how many plots, the design would be completed in stages, but it would have 20/30 years' worth of burial land.
- A panel member raised that this is a critical situation, each cemetery gives a certain degree of detail but not full picture re: what are further plans, the £3M is a rough estimate, when was this done as prices can change with inflation, what about neighbouring areas and WCC? The SD-Public Services advised that they can look at other WCC sites but are seeking options with parishes as well.
- A panel member supported colleagues on more information being required as there is limited green space. The member queried what happens to sport spaces and land with the diocese and Arbury estate. The panel will need to know the implications and effects of any recommendations made. The SD – Public Services responded that for the grass pitches they would look for mitigation and discussions are ongoing. In the Local Plan – Marston Lane is already identified for future burial space. The Diocese want to discuss paddock land but currently they only have a lease for the land.
- A panel member asked if any religious requirements would be stipulated that come with any land acquired and what the costs would be for people to reserve plots; would this bring in any money to offset costs. A detailed breakdown of the £3M would be useful.
- A panel member raised that at Audit and Standards Committee held on 25th November, the council was owed rent for cremation and requested that this continues to be pursued.
- A panel member asked if any money is made on costs or any commercial offerings. The SD – Public Services responded that the fees and charges document will be reviewed as part of the budget setting process.
- A panel member asked if the income from fees and charges covers the costs of maintenance. The Parks and Greenspace Manager advised that the service was not cost neutral.
- A panel member raised that residents want to be buried in the area they live and that land should be provided within the Borough.

RESOLVED that

a) Information be provided on the following and brought back to the next meeting of Environment and Leisure OSP:

- On the Bucks Hill 26-29 graves site (including financial information) to establish if it is a viable site,
- Further breakdown of the £3M estimate for Marston Lane,
- Officers with members to site visit cemeteries to identify spaces,
- Urgent discussions to be had with Arbury estate, WCC and any other organisations in respect of other parcels of land we could acquire.
- Include Mr Devall and Mr Ahmedabadi to receive their thoughts and observations on burial spaces
- Income received on existing services and how much the services are costing the Council.