

**Title:** Draft Cemeteries Plan for Consultation

**Section:** Strategic Planning

**Prepared by:** Yvette Kinsella (Principal Advisor)

**Meeting Date:** 10 October 2018

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Legal     Financial     Significance = low

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## Report to **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES Committee** for decision

### SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval to consult on the draft Cemeteries Plan (the Plan), prepared under the Community Facilities Strategy umbrella.

The Plan includes:

- key issues and opportunities affecting the demand for and supply of cemetery services
- proposed objectives and policies for delivery of cemetery services
- suggested key actions to support improvement in delivery of cemetery services.

The Plan suggests the following key changes in approach:

- review how we fund cemetery services and who pays
- provide for more diverse burial preferences including natural and eco burial
- improve overall amenity at cemeteries consistent with them being important social and heritage spaces
- extend cemetery services to include heritage and genealogy research and tourism.

Current funding provided through the 2018-2028 Long Term Plan will be insufficient to implement all of the proposed actions and further resourcing will need to be secured through the next 2021-2031 Long Term Plan.

Council officers will seek feedback from primary stakeholders involved in the Plan's development as well as the wider public. Subject to the Committee's approval, officers aim to publicly notify the plan from Thursday 11 October 2018.

The decisions or matters in this report are considered to be of **low** significance in accordance with the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Community Development & Services Committee:

1. Notes the contents of this report.
2. Approves the release of the draft Cemeteries Plan for public consultation from 11 October to 2 November 2018.

Authorised by:



Keita Kohere  
**Director Transformation & Relationships**

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**Keywords:** cemeteries, community facilities strategy

## **BACKGROUND**

1. The Cemeteries Plan sits within the wider policy framework of the Community Facilities Strategy (CFS). The CFS provides an integrated approach to developing a cost-effective and sustainable network of community facilities in Tairāwhiti over the next 20+ years.
2. The CFS's development has been divided into three work areas:
  - Strategic Framework: the 'front end' of the CFS with the vision, strategic goals, investment framework and priority actions.
  - Major Facility Plans: plans for major community facilities (aquatic facilities, arts facilities, parks and open spaces, play spaces, sports facilities).
  - Core Council Facility Plans: plans for Core Council Facilities (art in public places, cemeteries, public conveniences, street trees and gardens) where Council is the lead organisation providing and driving the activity.
3. Most of the CFS was approved by Council in January 2018. This included the strategic framework, major facility plans and the Street Trees and Gardens Plan.
4. There are three Core Council Facility Plans under the CFS programme to be developed:
  - Art in Public Places
  - Cemeteries
  - Public Conveniences.
5. A report and discussion papers for each of these plans were tabled at the Community Development & Services meeting on 7 February 2018 (report 18-047). At that time, the intention was to consult on the draft plans in February so decisions could be fed into Council decisions on the 2018-28 Long Term Plan (LTP). The consultation was not progressed due to staff commitments to other aspects of the LTP development.
6. In July, staff recommenced work on these plans. A draft Cemeteries Plan has now been prepared and is ready for public feedback.

## **DRAFT CEMETERIES PLAN**

7. The draft Cemeteries Plan provides the strategic direction for provision of public cemetery services in Tairāwhiti for the next 20+ years.
8. The draft Cemeteries Plan is aiming to meet community expectations for cemetery services at a price the community can afford.
9. The key issues and opportunities in the provision of cemetery services in Tairāwhiti are:
  - cemetery services need to be affordable and financially sustainable
  - Council needs to respond to changing community preferences in burial options
  - Council needs to improve design of cemetery spaces and have consistent standards
  - Council needs to plan for cemetery services in the wake of large scale disasters
  - there is potential to extend cemetery services into heritage and genealogy.

10. The proposed objectives in the draft Cemeteries Plan are as follows:

Network Planning and Provision	Effective Management
<p>By 2030, Tairāwhiti will have a network of public cemetery facilities across the region that are fit-for-purpose, affordable and accessible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meets community needs for a range of options for burial where there is a compelling demand or need</li> <li>is provided in the most cost-effective way</li> <li>meets the needs of the whole region regardless of socio-economic status and ability.</li> </ul>	<p>Cemetery facilities in Tairāwhiti will be actively managed to balance affordable and practical levels of service for cemeteries with customer demands including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encouraging high levels of use and enjoyment for the community</li> <li>minimising operational and maintenance costs</li> <li>meeting best practice health and safety and requirements.</li> </ul>

11. The priority actions suggested in the draft Cemeteries Plan are to:

- improve service experience of crematorium facilities at Taruheru Cemetery
- complete design masterplan for all cemeteries
- review how we fund cemetery services
- assess opportunities for eco-burials, natural burials and kahu whakatere
- install ash berms in high-use rural cemeteries
- install on-site water sources in rural cemeteries
- complete extension of business continuity plan (disasters and emergencies)
- investigate feasibility of a heritage trail between Makaraka and Taruheru Cemeteries
- upgrade office building at Taruheru Cemetery to facilitate customer service
- develop digital services to support genealogical research
- develop user-friendly guidance and info about cemetery services and processes.

## ASSESSMENT of SIGNIFICANCE

Criteria	This Report	The Process Overall
The effects on all or a large part of the Gisborne district	Low	High
The effects on individuals or specific communities	Low	Medium
The level or history of public interest in the matter or issue	Low	Low
Inconsistency with Council's current strategy and policy	Low	Low
Impacts on Council's delivery of its Financial Strategy and Long Term Plan.	Low	Low

12. The decisions or matters in this report are considered to be of **low** significance in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy as the Plan is at the consultation stage. The consultation will inform Council's final decisions on the direction and content of the Plan.

13. Overall the proposed changes in the draft Cemeteries Plan would be classed as low to medium significance. Further consultation would likely be required on some of the actions particularly the review of fees and charges.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

14. The draft Plan is part of the wider CFS programme of work. The CFS is a large project with a significant number of stakeholders involved. It has had extensive engagement throughout its development particularly around the front end of the CFS – the vision, strategic goals and investment framework.
15. To date, there have been several opportunities for the general public to feed into the draft Plan:
- community surveys (at the A&P Show 2016)
  - stakeholder meetings
  - consultation on the front end of the Community Facilities Strategy in 2017.
16. Staff are planning the following consultation on the Plan:

ACTION	TIMING
Meetings with primary stakeholders re the draft plan	2 October
Draft released and notice of 3-week submission period	11 October
Media release	11 October
Website (draft plan and online sub form)	11 October
Posters at cemeteries and key public places	11 October
Option to request a hui	11 – 25 October
Facebook campaign	15 – 26 October

## CONSIDERATIONS

### Financial/Budget

17. The direct cost of preparing all of the three Core Council Facility Plans is \$20,000. Staff time spent on the draft Cemeteries Plan is estimated at about 1,200 hours.
18. Council has already budgeted \$45,000 for capital renewals for fencing in the 2018-28 Long Term Plan. Council also committed \$50,000 in 2018/19 for the upgrade of the Taruheru Crematorium building.
19. There is insufficient budget to implement the full Cemeteries Plan and further resourcing will need to be secured through the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan. Some of the actions around heritage trails and promotion may be able to attract funding from external sources.

### Legal

20. The Local Government Act 2002 defines the purpose of local government (section 10) as:
- (a) *to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and*
  - (b) *to meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses.*

21. Core services are defined in section 11A as:

*network infrastructure; public transport services; solid waste collection and disposal; the avoidance or mitigation of natural hazards; libraries, museums, reserves, recreational facilities, and other community infrastructure.*

22. Key considerations in the draft plans are to ensure delivery of community infrastructure that is efficient, effective, appropriate to present and anticipated future circumstances and the most cost-effective for households and businesses.

## POLICY and PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

23. Council's 2015-2025 Long Term Plan identified a number of actions that aim to improve the provision of parks and community recreation infrastructure and services.

24. These actions have been pulled together under the Community Facilities Strategy to ensure an integrated and comprehensive approach to planning for facilities. The implementation of the Community Facilities Strategy is an important strategic challenge for the 2018-2028 Long Term Plan.

25. The policy framework in each of these plans will also be crucial to guiding Council actions and creating clarity for the community around what we will and will not do.

## RISKS

26. There are three key risks associated with consultation on the draft Cemeteries Plan.

RISK	DESCRIPTION	MITIGATION
Time lapsed	Lots of time has passed since initial pre-engagement on this Plan. Stakeholders may have forgotten the original key messages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-engage with primary stakeholders before the Plan is released publicly.</li> <li>Prepare communications plan with clear key messages.</li> </ul>
Raised expectations	There is a while before the next long term plan when new funding needs can be considered by Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare communications plan with clear key messages.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder alienation	Lack of information or inaccessible information so people not aware. Misinformation if people don't have accurate information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare comms plan that has clear key messages and allows sufficient time for meaningful engagement.</li> </ul>

## NEXT STEPS

Date	Action/Milestone	Comments
10 October	CD&S Committee approves Draft Cemeteries Plan or consultation	
11 October	Draft Cemeteries Plan publicly notified	
28 November	CD&S Committee recommends Council adopt Cemeteries Plan	

## APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Draft Cemeteries Plan