

# Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Supplementary Agenda No.1

**A meeting of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held on:**

**Date:** 12 June 2025

**Time:** 6.30pm

**Venue:** St George's Centre, Pembroke, Chatham Maritime, Chatham ME4 4UH

## Items

**6 Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Business Management (Pages 3 - 4)**

An additional appendix for Bereavement Services is attached for this agenda item.

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**Date: 9 June 2025**

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## 1. Bereavement Services

### 1.1 Cremation and burial statistics for the last 5 years are as follows

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Total Cremations</b>	<b>Total Burials</b>
2024	1933	342
2023	2056	329
2022	2461	351
2021 (Covid pandemic)	2794	442
2020 (Covid pandemic)	2678	328

- 1.2 The Service saw a large increase in cremations during the pandemic with so many people passing away before their time. Following the unprecedented increase in funerals the following years would naturally decrease, which we have seen.
- 1.3 It is also worth noting that Medway Crematorium worked with Bluebell Cemetery, whilst they built their Crematorium, as Medway and Maidstone shared the cremating of there funerals. This ran from 2020 to 2022 where Medway was cremating on average around 400 (extra) per year
- 1.4 The increase in demand for “Direct Cremations” (a cremation without a funeral service) has continued. With the rising costs of Funerals, I believe this increase is due to financials. The table below highlights the increase in demand.

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Total Cremations</b>	<b>Direct Cremations</b>	<b>%</b>
2024	1933	246	13%
2023	2056	238	12%
2022	2461	645	26% *
2020-21 (Covid pandemic)	5,472	531	10%
2017-19	1992	95	5%

\*Bluebell Cemetery cremations were recorded as “Direct Cremations”

- 1.5 With the new Cremators installed 2018/19 we are now operating at 98.5% abated cremations in 2024. Like all machines there are occasions where there are issues which means we by-pass the abated system. There are also two occasions through the year during service maintenance where cremations need to be reviewed in the by-pass system, hence why this is not 100%
- 1.6 Obitus, the company who supplies Webcasting and Visual Tributes of funerals continue to be popular. In 2024 this has brought in around £30,000 of additional income
- 1.7 Bereavement Services continues to see a large referral rate for Public Health Funerals, receiving 31 referrals in 2024. Through our processes we managed to find families for 6 of the referrals, who then took on funeral arrangements. Through property searches and liaising with Banks the department also managed to recover around £10,000 of costings.