

Preston City Council Cemetery provision update position January 2026

Preston City Council (PCC) have updated our Tier 1 assessment in relation to the Ground Conditions and we now believe that the land is suitable for a cemetery.

PCC have not completed a full needs assessment, however, below sets out the latest figures for years left at our existing cemetery for the different religious areas.

PCC have carried out a recent survey of the Miller Road Cemetery (known as New Cemetery). This is as follows, based on grave sales data, with an average from 22/23,23/24,24/25.

- i. 174 spaces, Roman Catholic - with grave sales per year 29,24,28 = ave 27 graves per year = **6.4 years**.
- ii. 170 spaces, Church of England – with grave sales per year 10,18,10 = ave 13 graves per year = **13 years**.
- iii. 86 spaces, non-conformist – with grave sales per year 5,6,15 = ave 9 graves per year = **9.5 years**. However, there has been in change last year, which is continuing this year, with an increase in the use of non-conformist spaces, so this may affect the number of years left. It could reduce to approx. **6 years**.
- iv. 160 spaces, Muslim Area – Ave of 55 grave sales per year = **3 years** left in Plot 3. There are some areas within the current cemetery that could be developed to Burial ground, but these will come at a cost. PCC may be considering:
 - o Removing the road in Plot 3, which will add another 150 graves.
 - o Developing an area our bushes and trees in our old cemetery, which could add another 190 graves.
 - o Giving a possible total of 500 graves = **9 years**, but none of that is certain and subject to test digs and clearance of land.

In relation to the new proposed Cemetery, PCC have provided the High-Level Feasibility Harrison Report. Please bear in mind that this was completed in 2023 and was based on some designs produced in 2009. The brief for the Cemetery has changed since and will continue to evolve as the council develop the project. Contained within the report are the proposed number of burial plots and the life of the new cemetery. These figures are based on the new cemetery being used, as our only cemetery, therefore as PCC are likely to have

both cemeteries operating at the same time, e.g. use of family graves etc, the actual life span of the proposed cemetery will be longer.

PCC are currently commissioning a business case, and our plans will be updated, based on our current brief for the project.

FILE NOTES/ADVICE NOTES :

Project:	Preston New Cemetery Development Considerations	
Date:	27.06.2023 v1 draft 12.09.2023 v2 21.09.2023 v3	
By:	Claire Halestrap	Project No: 161-10
Circulation:	Chris Hodson PCC	
No	ITEMS	All actions in Bold
1,0	<p>Introduction</p> <p><i>Sub Heading</i></p> <p>1.1 During 2009, HDD (Harrison Design Development Ltd) in partnership with the ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management) were appointed by Preston City Council (PCC), to undertake a feasibility study for developing a New Cemetery for Preston. The sites proposed at the time for the Preston New Cemetery were all adjacent to Longridge Road Crematorium.</p> <p>1.2 A substantial body of work was undertaken at the time and the work progressed as far as the preparation of a Pre-Application Planning Report, titled <i>Preston New Cemetery Longridge Road, Pre-Application– Report, Proposals and Drawings 8 August 2009</i>.</p> <p>1.3 The report went into some depth considering a range of parameters to be considered when developing a new cemetery including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cemetery Requirements • Landownership, Tenure and Easements • Highways, Footpaths, and Rights of Way • Archaeological Considerations • Arboricultural Considerations • Nature Conservation Issues • Landscape and Visual Issues • Hydrological and Hydrogeological and Groundwater Considerations • Reception Facility • Planning Scoping and Planning Policy • Constraints and Opportunities Plan • Concept Design • Outline Costs • Next Steps <p>1.4 Preston City Council (PCC), did not progress the planning application for a New Cemetery on the site in 2009, as additional burial space was found within the existing Preston Cemetery on New Hall Lane. However, PCC are now considering developing a new cemetery for the city</p>	

and have briefed HDD to re-examine the feasibility of developing a new cemetery on land surrounding Longridge Road Crematorium.

- 1.5 This file note reviews the work undertaken in 2009 and considers changes since the writing of the 2009 Pre-Application report and the feasibility of developing a new cemetery adjacent to the crematorium. It should be read together with the 2009 report, including drawing No 024-01-02 Constraints Plan and 024-01-10 Layout Plan. It is envisaged that the Pre-Application Report will be re-written to take account of new and revised site surveys and investigation work, current guidance and legislation, and updated client's requirements.
- 1.6 Key considerations for updating each report section are outlined below:

2,0 Cemetery Development Considerations

Burial Requirements

- 2.1 PCC will have to review their cemetery requirements and issue a formal brief. The brief will consider the size of the new cemetery, infrastructure requirements eg storage, maintenance yards, shelters, seating, access and circulation, infrastructure requirements (water, power). Potential cemetery requirements and changes since 2009 are listed below.
- 2.2 The annual rate for burial in 2009 was given as 300 per year, today's burial rate may be lower than this circa 250 burials per year.
- 2.3 Muslim burials are to be included in the New Cemetery; previously Muslim burials were to remain in the existing cemetery. Muslim burials in Preston are at double depth and, orientated facing Qibla, when laid on their side on their right shoulder. Muslim burials are in coffins.
- 2.4 Cremated remains burials should be included on the new site.
- 2.5 Lawn burial with head-to-head plot arrangements is preferred, as PCC considers that arrangement easier to manage.
- 2.6 Water and electricity are to be provided to the site.
- 2.7 PCC are no longer considering using the land immediately to the south of the existing crematorium as an extension, land to the south was suggested as a woodland burial area.
- 2.8 Noted that some authorities are looking at reducing environmental impact of burial, and considering alternatives to concrete rafts and large headstones.

Landownership Tenure and Easements

- 2.9 PCC to check that the land remains on an annual grazing right and if so what the notice periods for rescinding the right are.
- 2.10 Updated utilities information to be obtained and liaison undertaken on required offsets for burial from sewers. Information to be added to the constraints plan.

Highways, Footpaths, and Rights of Way

- 2.11 HDD would like to consider remodeling the existing crematorium car park (circular area), to provide separate access for the cemetery and the crematorium, as an alternative to the access through the trees shown on the 2009 Layout Design (024-10-10). Reason-the trees are large mature specimens and provide important screening for the crematorium from the industrial area. A road through the area would require felling a number of significant trees. The trees were not accurately surveyed in 2009, they have also grown considerably. The industrial estate has also expanded.
- 2.12 HDD noted that the crematorium and the proposed new cemetery should share the same entrance point. This is important as those attending services often don't distinguish between cemetery and crematoria and could easily arrive at the wrong entrance. Once in the entrance the cemetery and crematorium traffic should be separated. Cemetery and crematorium traffic can leave by separate entrances if that is required to enable circulation to work.
- 2.13 PCC would like to consider accessing the site from the crematorium access road and exiting through the industrial estate possibly via Roman Way adjacent to Wander Woods.
- 2.14 A quote has been obtained for providing a Travel Plan and Pre-Application and Scoping inputs into highways arrangements. Highways consultant will require appointing, to work alongside the landscape architect to develop the access and egress for cemetery staff , funerals and visitors.

Archaeological Considerations

- 2.15 The archaeology report submitted in 2009 will require updating as a Heritage Statement in line with NPPF framework. The Historic Environment Record requires checking to see if there are any changes since the 2009 report.

Arboricultural Considerations

- 2.16 A tree survey was not undertaken in 2009. A tree survey is required to support a planning application, relevant guidance is, BS5837 2012 Trees in relation to Construction. A topographical survey will be required before the tree survey can be undertaken.
- 2.17 2009 Layout plan illustrates a new access road through the trees to the north of the crematorium. This area contains several mature trees. An alternative access road should be considered by PCC as the trees should be retained. A detailed survey of these trees is required.
- 2.18 Root Protection zones should be added to the constraints plan.

Nature Conservation Issues

- 2.19 Ecology reports were undertaken in 2009, these will require re-doing. It is known that there are newts on site. Newt surveys will be required and it is likely that mitigation will be necessary. It is also likely that there will be other protected species on site.
- 2.20 PCC need to check that the proposed development site has not previously been used as a newt receptor site.
- 2.21 BNG will be required for all Planning applications from November 2023. To achieve Biological Net Gain (BNG), it is likely that offsite Biological enhancements may be required. Biological Offsetting is providing habitat on another site 'offsite' to compensate habitat loss on a development site.
- 2.22 Red Carr woods are designated as an SSSI

Landscape and Visual Issues

- 2.23 No Landscape Assessment was undertaken in 2009. It is possible that PCC planning will request a Landscape Appraisal or potentially a full LVIA will be required. LVIA guidelines are now at 3rd Edition 2013.

Hydrological and Hydrogeological and Groundwater Considerations

- 2.24 Groundwater is a critical factor, for all proposed cemetery developments, burials must not pollute groundwater. Unfavourable (shallow) groundwater conditions are likely to indicate that the Environment Agency will consider a site unsuitable for burial. The Environment Agency has set out a groundwater position statement and guidance for managing and developing cemeteries <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cemeteries-and-burials-prevent-groundwater-pollution>. Burials should not be into standing water, within 10 meters of a field drain/ditch/pond, 30 meters of a stream, 50 meters of a spring and 250 meters from a potable water supply.
- 2.25 The proposed burial rate is 250 per year which automatically classifies the site as High Risk, in its potential to pollute groundwater. Due to the High burial rate it is probable that the EA will require 12 months groundwater monitoring on site.
- 2.26 4 cable percussion holes and 9 window samplers were undertaken in 2009. All of which except 1 didn't strike water. The only water strike was at approx. 9.5 m. Whilst a new scheme of investigation will now be required (due to the new industrial estate areas being built and the length of time since the investigations were undertaken), it is not expected that the results will be greatly different. This means that the site appears to be suitable for burial in respect of distance to below ground depth of groundwater. Information from the new boreholes will be

used to update the constraints plan if necessary. Whilst the Site is High Risk it had Low Vulnerability in previous study.

2.27 A quote for groundwater investigations has been provided.

2.28 No trial pits were dug in 2009. It is recommended that a series of trial pits are dug to observe the make up of the ground and how well graves stand up on the site.

2.29 The site is at Very Low Risk of flooding so it is unlikely that a Flood Risk Assessment will be required, but this will need to be confirmed by the LPA.

2.30 A SAB application will be required. Following a review of the 2010 Flood and Water Management Act Schedule 3, Sustainable Drainage Systems will become mandatory for new developments in 2024. Schedule 3 provides a framework for the approval and adoption of drainage systems, an approving body (SAB), and national standards on the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of SuDS. Also, it makes the right to connect surface water runoff to public sewers conditional upon the drainage system being approved before any construction work can start.

Planning Scoping and Planning Policy

2.31 Early liaison with PCC planning should be undertaken if possible and/or a new pre-application developed.

2.32 Development will need to accord with NPPF

2.33 The Preston Local Plan 2012-26 (Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (DPD) was adopted on 2 July 2015 and covers the period 2012 to 2026. Site Designated as Managed Greenspace and Open Countryside. Red Scar woods are an SSSI.

2.34 Planning applications after November 2023 will be required to show Biological Net Gain.

2.35 From 2024 a SAB application will be required.

2.36 EIA screening opinion should be sought.

Constraints and Opportunities Plan

2.37 2009 Constraints Plan will require review and updating, in light of new survey information, and the development of the site over time.

Concept Design

2.38 2009 Concept Design was produced without a topographical survey. The concept illustrated that site A, could potentially provide 5660 burial spaces. Assuming full utilization of double

depth burials and a burial rate of 250 per year. The proposed extension may potentially provide burial space for 40-45 years.

2.39 The Concept Design requires progressing to Developed Design. A topographical survey will be required in order to prepare a developed design.

Outline Costs

2.40 A cost estimate for consultancy costs to get the project to planning are provided with this file note. It should be noted that the figures are cost estimates for budget purposes only.

2.41 Based on cemetery developments of similar size undertaken in the area previously and allowing for inflation, it is estimated that the capital works for a scheme similar in nature to the 2009 Concept Plan, would be approximately £2 million. It would be possible to phase a scheme to fit a budget.

3,0 Conclusion and Next Steps

3.1 The work undertaken in 2009 suggested that the proposed new cemetery could potentially provide 5660 burial plots (including the natural burial area). Having reviewed the information collated in 2009 against current Environment Agency Guidelines it remains the case that the site has the potential to provide up to 5660 new burial plots or 4405 excluding the natural burial southern area.

3.2 4405 burial plots at a burial rate of 250 per year, assuming full utilization of double depth burial plots, would provide burial space for the City for approximately 35 years.

Next Steps

3.3 All of the work undertaken in 2009 will require review, updating and in most cases re-doing. Further survey and design work will be required to support a planning application. Briefs have been prepared for progressing the required survey and investigation work.

- Liaison with PCC to confirm brief for the new cemetery
- Commission Topographical survey
- Commission Hydrological survey desktop, window sampling and trial pits
- Scoping work with Local Planning Authority to discuss the proposal
- Commission, ecology, arboricultural and archaeological surveys
- Commission highways and transportation work
- Refine/update Constraints Plan

- Develop Masterplan Concept to Developed Design, indicating the number of burials achievable on site. Design will show spatial arrangements materials for construction. Masterplan suitable for a planning submission and not construction.
- Provide a cost estimate for the outline design
- Submit a Pre-Planning Application to PCC planning.
- Respond to Pre-App, write briefs for and commission any further works required, collate information.
- Prepare Planning Application