

## Activity Planning -2012-2022 Ten Year Plan Strong Communities - Cemeteries

### The main matter that the Council is being asked to consider is....

- Maintaining the existing levels of service for the Cemeteries activity.

#### 1. Council direction

The direction provided to staff by the Council in December 2010 was that to retain existing levels of service with regards to the Cemeteries activity.

#### 2. What the activity does

The Council is responsible for the maintenance and management of 13 cemeteries across the District. Of these, seven are open and six are disused.

It should be noted that a new cemetery for the Mercury Bay area is currently being planned for Kaimarama, approximately 6km south of Whitianga.

Within these cemeteries, a range of assets maintained by Council can be grouped into the following categories: fences, furniture, pavement, signage and structures.

#### 3. What the legislations says

Whilst there is no statutory requirement to provide cemeteries, the Burial and Cremations Act 1964, defines Council's role as to provide cemeteries where sufficient provision is not otherwise made. Furthermore, Council has a statutory obligation to maintain closed cemeteries.

#### 4. Proposed activity objective

The proposed activity objective for the cemeteries activity is:

*Provides internment facilities that meet the needs of the community*

NB: this is the same as the objective stated in the 2009-2019 Ten Year Plan.

#### 5. How this activity currently would contribute to the Council Outcomes

The activity will contribute to the achievement of the Council Outcomes as follows:

Council Outcome	The Cemeteries activity...
A prosperous district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not directly contribute to this outcome</li> </ul>
A liveable district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps provide a local sense of place and historical heritage'</li> <li>• Supports the community through the provision of a community amenity.</li> </ul>
A clean and green district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not directly contribute to this outcome</li> </ul>

The Coromandel Peninsula Blueprint places expectations on the Cemeteries Activity to protect existing culturally sensitive sites including wahi tapu and to provide Cemetery services for the wellbeing of the community – a place where generations can live work and enjoy.

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### 6. Things to be aware of

- The Council is not the only provider of cemeteries in the District. The District has a number of Maaori urupa and private cemeteries.
- The Burial and Cremations Act 1964 is currently being reviewed. Amendments may have an impact on how cemeteries are managed.

### 7. A word from our community...

- The 2010 community prioritisation survey shows that "Provision and looking after of cemeteries" is ranked 18th out of the 27 activities surveyed.
- In the 2010 community survey, overall 52% of residents and non-resident ratepayers were satisfied with cemeteries, including maintenance.
- Staff understand that there are new and different demands emerging for the interment options provided by the Council. Some of these more "non traditional" interments include eco-burials (burials with no chemicals and natural coffins), garden plots, family ash plots and so on.
- Staff also are aware that the customer values all cemeteries being available for visiting 7 days a week, 365 days a year. It is also desirable for all open cemeteries to be available for interment during daylight hours, 7 days a week, 365 days of the year.

### 8. Strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats

- A strength is that there is space for burial and ash interment in each community board area for at least 50 years.
- There is an opportunity to increase user fees. This could have a two-fold effect. Firstly, it may influence the customer to go outside the District for cheaper interment options to be found at other Councils. This kind of trend would increase the subsidy on cemetery operation currently funded by rates. Secondly, raising fees would likely drive down demand, resulting in long term maintenance savings (less of the undeveloped portion of the cemeteries being developed).
- There is the opportunity to diversify the services offered to include options such as eco-burials and natural burials, family ash plots and garden plots to meet a changing demand.
- There is an opportunity to delay the development of the Mercury Bay cemetery for a number of years to realise a short-term reduction in expenditure.

### 9. Proposed levels of service options

The proposed levels of service for cemeteries are as follows:

Level of Service	This means...
I have convenient access to a cemetery in my local area.	Having at least one open cemetery in each community board area.
Cemeteries in my community are maintained appropriate to the setting and as a mark of respect for the deceased.	Current maintenance is to be in line with community expectations and outcomes, and continues with the same level of service as held currently.  The overall cost of provision is likely to continue at existing levels. Costs to the ratepayer may be lowered if the maintenance specification is lowered, however, this may no longer be an acceptable level of service.

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### 10. How is this activity managed?

With exception to a number of private cemeteries, the Council manages all public cemeteries on the Peninsula. In all cases except Colville (open) and Tararu (disused) the Council directly owns the assets associated with the cemeteries activity. Cemeteries are managed and controlled at a District wide level, with input from community boards. Maintenance services are provided by way of contract with specific maintenance requirements set in accordance with the level of service statement.

### 11. What do we currently spend on this activity?

As a proportion of Council's annual budget for the 2011/2012 year, the Cemeteries activity represents approximately 0.49% of total spend.

<b>2011/2012 Draft Annual Plan</b>	
Operating Expenditure (excluding internal interest cost)	\$0.49m
Capital Expenditure	n/a
<b>Total budgeted spend for Cemeteries for 2011/2012</b>	<b>\$0.50m</b>
Total Budgeted spend for Council for 2011/2012	\$100.97m
Total percentage of budget spent on Cemeteries	0.49%
<b>2009-2019 Ten Year Plan</b>	
Operating Expenditure (excluding internal interest cost)	\$6.21m
Capital Expenditure	\$1.23m
<b>Total budgeted spend for Cemeteries for 10 years</b>	<b>\$7.44m</b>
Total Budgeted spend for Council for 10 years	\$1,295.64m
Total percentage of budget spent on Cemeteries	0.57%

### 12. How this activity is funded, and why.

The Cemeteries activity is currently funded as follows:

*Funding rationale summary as outlined in the 2009-2019 Ten Year Plan*

The provision of well-presented cemeteries as public open spaces is a very important factor in our respect for the dead. There are District-wide benefits in the prestige value of having well kept and pleasant burial places. There are also various cultural benefits to the community at large. Many members of the community are interested in discovering more about their ancestors and history, and local cemeteries and their records are often an important source of specific genealogical information, as well as more generic social history of the District.

*The funding mechanisms used for operating expenditure are:*

General Rates	UAGC	Targeted Rates	Fees & Charges	Grants & Subsidies
	60-79%		20-39%	

*The funding mechanisms used for capital expenditure are:*

Develop. &/or Financial Contribution	Borrowing	Asset Sales	UAGC	Depreciation	General Rates	Targeted Rates	Fees & Charges	Grants & Subsidies	Lump Sum Contribution
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		

## **Activity Planning -2012-2022 Ten Year Plan Strong Communities - Cemeteries**

Staff recommend no changes to the current funding policy for the Cemeteries activity.

### **13. Staff recommendation**

With regards to the Cemeteries activity, staff recommend:

- Maintaining existing levels of service for the Cemeteries activity
- In light of the Council's direction to align the annual rates increase to CPI, delaying the development of the Mercury Bay cemetery for a number of years.
- No changes to the current funding policy for the Cemeteries activity.