

CREMATORIUM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Prepared in support of a planning application for the proposed development of a crematorium facility with associated parking, access and landscaping at,

GREVATT'S LANE, CLIMPING



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Version: 1

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- i. This report has been prepared on behalf of The Southern Co-op as part of their planning application for the development of a crematorium on land located at Grevatt's Lane, Climping, West Sussex. The purpose of the proposed development is to create a modern crematorium facility in the area, for which a functional need has been established.
- ii. This report is split into two sections. First, an assessment of the quantitative need for additional crematoria in the local area is given. That assessment considers the current level of need in comparison with supply. The second part of the report provides a qualitative assessment of the existing crematoria facilities available locally and the benefits that could be realised from additional provision.
- iii. The assessment identifies that:
 - Existing crematoria facilities within the search area are amongst the busiest in southern England, suggesting that they are subject to heavier demand than average.
 - There appears to be a particular shortfall in capacity in the area around Worthing and Bognor Regis, where demand is only currently met by two existing facilities or by traveling further afield. Therefore, this area would be a reasonable location in which to provide additional crematoria facilities.
 - From a qualitative standpoint, addressing the identified shortfall of crematoria facilities in this area carries with it the advantages of being able to offer people greater choice of where to cremate their loved ones and less time pressure on services that take place.
- iv. Although there are already crematorium facilities within region evidence points to those crematoria being stretched in terms of capacity, which can lead to longer than ideal lead in time for cremation services. The proposed development will offer additional capacity locally, reducing wait times and provide a new, modern and purpose-built facility. The new facility can also be built to up-to-date environmental standards.
- v. The Southern Co-op already offer end of life services in the region and in addition to a network of funeral homes operate crematoria and burial sites. Examples of the latter include The Oaks Crematorium at Barton Road, Havant and Clayton Wood Natural Burial Ground at Hassocks, Sussex. They have a firm understanding of the operational needs of

the proposed facility and are best placed to provide a facility that can meet the needs identified.

- vi. This report forms a part of the wider justification for the proposed development of a crematorium at Grevatt's Lane, Climping, that is set out in the planning application submission. Additional information is provided in the Design and Access Statement, the Transport Statement, Landscape Visual Impact Assessment and environmental studies.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Chapman Lily Planning are instructed by The Southern Co-op to undertake an assessment of the quantitative and qualitative need for additional crematoria facilities in the area around Bognor Regis and Worthing in West Sussex. This report sets out that assessment and is submitted in support of a planning application for the development of a new crematorium on land on the southern side of Grevatts Lane, Climping, West Sussex.
- 1.2 The proposed redevelopment is intended to provide for additional crematoria capacity in the local area and that can provide prompt, dignified and high-quality end of life services for residents in future years.
- 1.3 This report comprises three elements;
- I. A context report on current and future needs for crematoria,
 - II. An assessment of crematoria needs and supply in the local area to the application site, and
 - III. A qualitative assessment of the existing and proposed provision

The Applicants

- 1.4 The Southern Co-op own and operate a network of funeral directors in southern England. In addition to their network of Funeral Director's branches The Southern Co-op also own and operate a crematorium at The Oaks, Barton Road, Havant, Clayton Mount Woodland Burial Ground at Hassocks, Sussex and East Devon Crematorium near Exeter.



Southern Co-op's network of funeral directors' branches in the region

- 1.5 The Southern Co-op is a co-operative and has a purpose beyond profit. Their values and principles support sustainable business practice and they are committed to making a difference in their local communities. They also operate a large network of local convenience stores in southern England.

2. THE APPLICATION SITE

- 2.1 The site is located at the A259 Grevatt's Lane, circa 2km east of Climping in West Sussex. The land has previously been in use for agricultural purposes.
- 2.2 The site is located in a semi-rural location and is surrounded on all sides by agricultural land on what is otherwise a relatively undeveloped space between Bognor Regis and Littlehampton. There are, however, exceptions to that, including a small commercial estate approximately 300m to the east along Grevatt's Lane (seen in the aerial photograph below) and the Jaybelle Grange holiday lodges development approximately 600m further east. The main residential areas of Elmer, Climping and the western edge of Littlehampton lie approximately 500m south, 500m north east and 2.5 km east of the site respectively.



Aerial view of the site (www.google.co.uk)

- 2.3 The site is flat and greenfield. By reason of its former agricultural use most of the site is free of any significant landscape constraints with the exception of the hedges and trees at the field boundaries. The site has scope for a direct vehicular access from the A259 Grevatt's Lane, in a position that can have good visibility in both directions such that highway safety on the road could be ensured. The landscaping that already exists around

the margins of neighbouring fields and at the edge of the highway is such that the site is well screened in longer distance views.



View of the site as seen from Grevatts Lane (www.google.co.uk)

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The Southern Co-op has identified a need for a new crematorium premises within this area. That conclusion is based upon an assessment of local demographics and the high demand for existing crematoria in the area, discussed later in this report. They therefore consider that there is a functional need for an additional crematorium facility within the area. Following an extensive site search (detailed elsewhere in the application submission) the land at Grevatt's Lane, Climping is considered to be the most suitable option for the proposed use.
- 3.2 It is envisaged that the crematorium building will be situated centrally within the site and comprise a predominantly single storey complex. The layout takes its cue from the Applicant's existing premises at The Oaks Crematorium, Barton Road, Havant, and which was designed to sit within a defined settlement gap. The building would be designed to be unobtrusive in the landscape, achieved through a combination of a low scale design and use of appropriate elevational treatment.
- 3.3 The building will be set well away from Grevatt's Lane by circa 150 metres. To the front of the building a car park will be provided. The main car park will be hard surfaced and provide for circa 100 car parking spaces and 24 cycle parking spaces in total. Around the outside of the car park a driveway will be provided for use of hearses, etc

- 3.4 In addition to the main car park an overflow car park will be provided for an additional circa 60 cars. The overflow car park would only be subject to infrequent use.
- 3.5 It should be stressed that the overflow car park would only be subject to occasional use, because for day to day use the spaces in the main car park would be ample to meet the needs of the development. In the normal operation of the crematorium there would only be one ceremony taking place at a time, and only in busy periods would people be waiting for the following ceremony. The overflow parking would only be needed during those occasions where a service has a particularly large number of guests. Despite that, the Applicant's experience confirms that it is appropriate to make parking provision for such rare occurrences on site rather than be dependent on on-street parking.
- 3.6 Aside from the building and the parking areas the proposals would involve landscaping of the remainder of the site. Such landscaping for the most part would involve low level shrubs and ornamental feature trees. The overall landscaping scheme would be devised to offer mourners a tranquil and attractive landscaped space in which to lay ashes and memorials.

4. THE CONTEXT TO THE APPLICATION

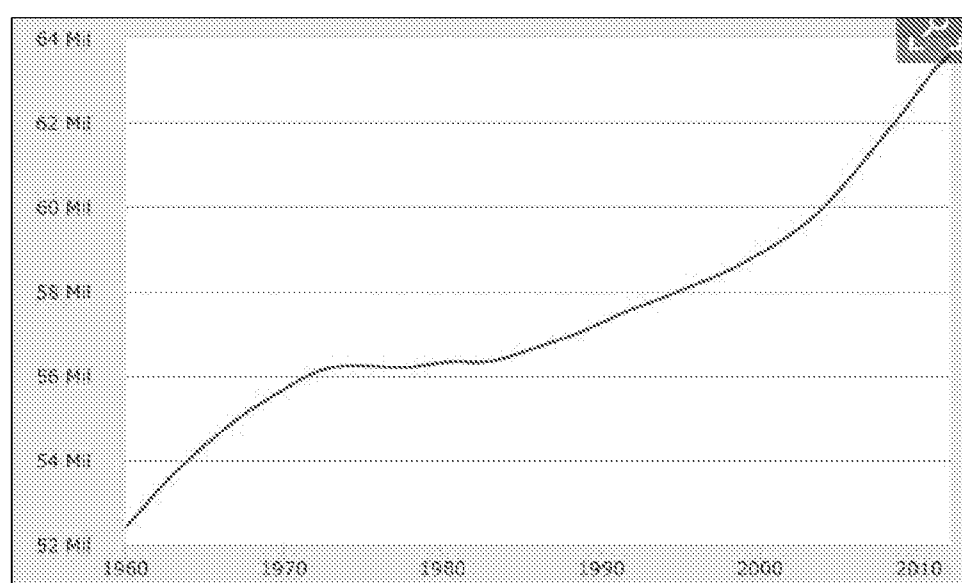
- 4.1 In June 2015 the Office of National Statistics (ONS) published 'Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland'. The data includes information relating to population ageing in the UK. The latest report 'Mid 2017 Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland' also commented on this particular aspect of the UK population. Relevant to this report, the headline matters are set out below;

- *The population of the UK is ageing. Ageing of the population refers to both the increase in the average (median) age of the population and the increase in the number and proportion of older people in the population*
- *The population aged 65 and over has grown by 47% since mid 1974. The number of people aged 75 and over has increased by 89% over the same period and now makes up 8% of the population.*
- *Nearly 12 million UK residents were aged 65 and over in mid 2017, or 18.2% of the population, this is over 2.2 million more than 10 years ago (Mid-2017 Report)*

- *During the last century, there were peaks in the numbers of births after both world wars and a longer baby boom during the 1960s. The cohort of people born just after World War II, are now aged in their late 60s and the 1960s 'baby boomers' are currently aged around 50. As these birth cohorts age further they will contribute to the continuing ageing of the UK population.*

4.2 The national context in which consideration of the proposed development will take place is clearly one of an increasingly ageing population at a national level.

4.3 As a result of longer life expectancies over recent decades, together with other factors such as birth rates and migration, the population of the United Kingdom has increased from 52 million in 1960 to over 66 million today, as shown, as shown in the graph below.



UK Population graph 1960-2010 (Source: www.ons.gov.uk)

4.4 In regard to future population trends, the Office for National Statistics publication *Population Projections: 2016-based statistical bulletin* projects that the UK population will continue to grow, from an estimated 65.6 million in mid-2016 to 69.2 million in mid-2026, and 72.9 million in mid-2041.

4.5 With regards to Arun District Council in particular, data from the Office of National Statistics predicts that the population will increase by a further 9.6% between 2016 and 2026, an additional circa 58,000 people.

4.6 Whilst the population has aged over time there has been a commensurate increase in death rates. Office of National Statistics data for 2017 shows that there were 533,253

deaths registered in England and Wales in 2017, a 1.6% increase from 2016 and the highest number registered annually since 2003. (source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/-/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregistrationsummarytables/2017>). This trend of increasing numbers of deaths varies by both region and local authority. In 2017 of the total number of deaths for the four local authorities of Chichester, Arun, Worthing and Adur, the highest contributor was Arun at 38%, with 25% from Chichester, 24% from Worthing and 13% from Adur. (source <https://www.ons.gov.uk/PopulationProjectionsincorporatingbirthsdeathsandmigrationforregionsandlocalauthorities>). It follows that the number of deaths in the UK each year will continue to increase alongside the increase in the population size, although not necessary at the same rate once factors such as increased life expectancies and migration are taken into account.

- 4.7 The backdrop to the planning application is therefore one in which it can be expected that the resident population will increase, and linked with that there will be an overall increase in the number of deaths. It therefore follows that either existing crematoriums and cemeteries will need to meet that additional demand or, where capacity does not exist, additional capacity will have to be found.
- 4.8 Whilst the national population has increased and so have the number of deaths our evidence shows that the supply of end of life facilities has not kept pace. Many traditional cemeteries are full, and cremations therefore account for a higher proportion of burials than they once did. Figures from the Cremation Society of Great Britain (www.cremation.org.uk) show that for 2016 there were 459,693 cremations in the UK, of which 417,619 were in England and Wales, this latter figure represents 79.54% of all deaths. This contrasts with 408,876 cremations in England and Wales in 1995, then 71.32% of all deaths. Our analysis shows that the number of cremation services within the crematoria in southern England have increased by 4.1% since 2011.
- 4.9 Across the country many crematoria are, however, older facilities that may be dated or struggle to keep pace with demand. The result is that there is considerable evidence of longer than ideal lead in times for cremation services and condensed service times.
- 4.10 There can be difficulties in identifying suitable sites for new crematoria. They need to be situated close to the existing centres of population and have good transport links.

However, under the Cremation Act 1902 no crematorium can be constructed nearer to any dwelling-house than two hundred yards except with the consent, in writing of the owner, lessee and occupier of that house. Such agreement is difficult to obtain from multiple residential properties and this makes it difficult to identify suitable sites within existing built up areas, there being few sites large enough to provide such a buffer to residential properties. Naturally therefore, sites at the edges of settlements, that are close enough to the settlement to be easily accessible from it but far enough from residential properties to achieve the necessary 'buffer-zone' offer the best opportunities. Such sites are often constrained by planning policy designations such as countryside, green belt or settlement gaps.

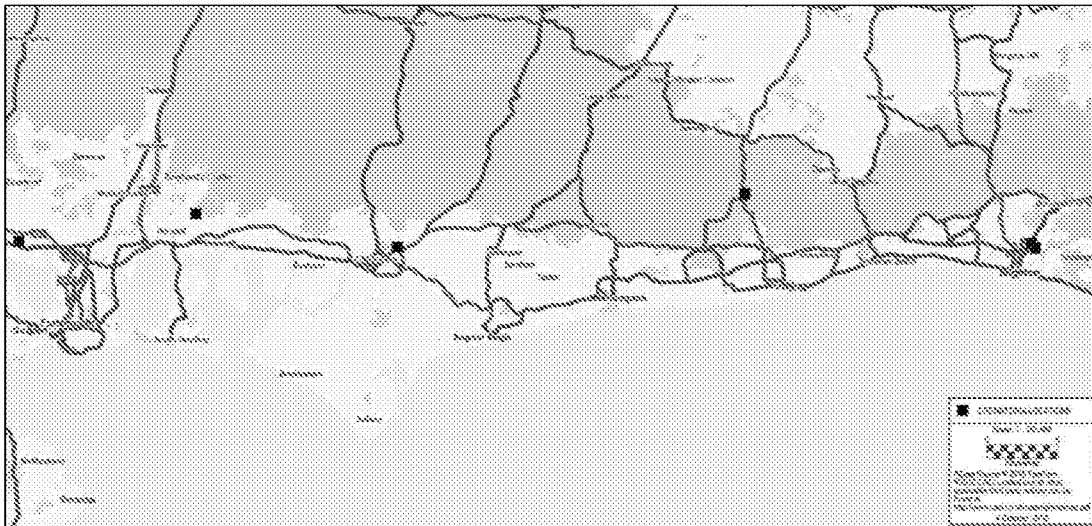
- 4.11 Overall therefore the context to the application is one where the national and regional picture are of a rising population and a commensurate increase in demand for end of life services. That demand needs to be met either by existing facilities or, where sufficient capacity does not exist additional capacity needs to be found.

5.0 QUANTITATIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Existing crematoria in the region

- 5.1 The proposed crematorium, by reason of its position would primarily serve a customer base from Bognor Regis and Littlehampton as well as the surrounding towns and villages.
- 5.2 Existing crematorium facilities in the region are spread out around the main centres of population. Within a 1-hour drivetime by car from the application site there are six existing crematorium facilities, as below
- Worthing Crematorium
 - Chichester Crematorium
 - Brighton and Hove Woodvale
 - Brighton and Hove – The Downs
 - Portchester Crematorium
 - Havant (The Oaks).

These are shown on the plan below;



Positions of existing crematoriums in and around West Sussex

- 5.3 Of the above six facilities Portchester ranks as the busiest of all 54 in southern England (excluding London) handling an average of 3,659 cremations each year between 2011 – 2017 (Source: Cremation Society of Great Britain). Worthing is at no.3 in that list, handling an average of 3,113 cremations each year over the same period. Both of these crematoria therefore operate under high levels of demand.

Catchment area of the proposed crematorium

- 5.4 In undertaking an assessment of current and future need for crematoria it is necessary to define a catchment area for the study. A catchment zone will often reflect local geography, as it recognises that people do not wish to travel large distances to attend end of life services. Therefore, within densely built up areas, catchment areas may be quite localised, whilst in more rural locations, or where there is a single large town with smaller population centres surrounding it, a wider catchment area using local authority boundaries is often used.
- 5.5 It is the Applicant's experience that relatives of the deceased will wish to hold their cremation services as close to home as possible. That serves to minimise travel distance on the day, avoiding worries of traffic etc resulting in missed service times. It also helps to ensure that as many friends and family can attend as possible, and also enables easy future visits for those who elect to scatter ashes in the gardens of rest.
- 5.6 The above view is corroborated by a planning appeal in respect of a proposed crematorium at Eastleigh wherein the Inspector, in allowing the appeal concluded that;

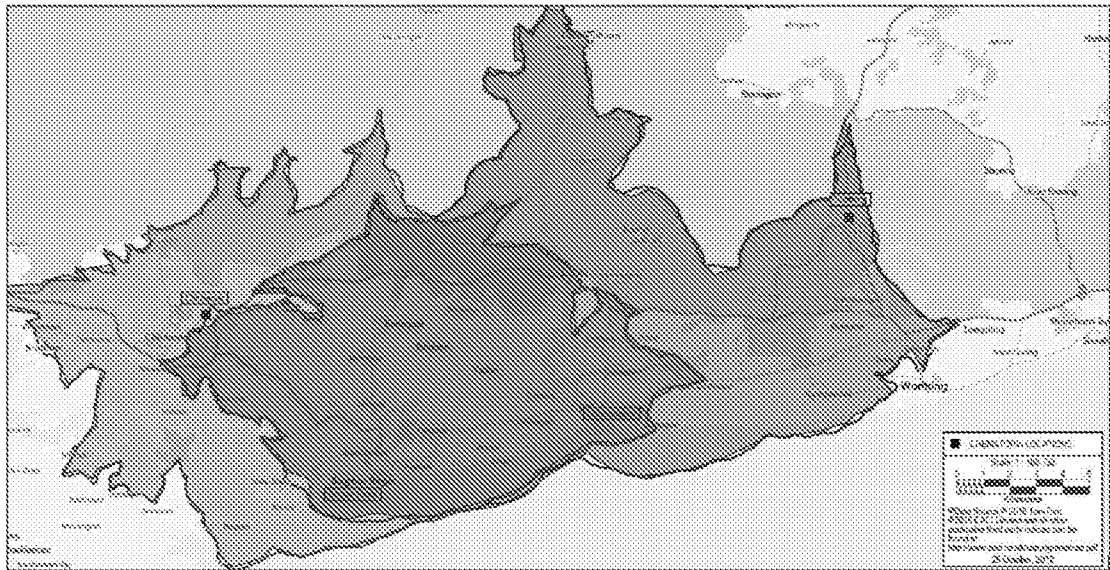
A copy of that appeal decision is attached as appendix A.

5.8 A more reasonable drive time is considered to be 25 minutes, which allowing for small delays for traffic means a one hour out and back journey. A 25-minute drivetime from the site is shown below. It can be seen that the existing crematoriums at Chichester and Worthing fall at the edge of that catchment area.



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centre of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton. The plan reveals that for residents of Bognor Regis it is only Chichester Crematorium that is accessible within the preferable 25 minute drive time, whilst for Littlehampton it is only Worthing Crematorium that is accessible in the same time. The residents of both towns therefore only have one crematorium within a reasonable driving distance, and this, it is considered, represents a lack of choice. Whilst people do have the option of driving further afield if they wish, it is not considered reasonable to expect them to do so as a matter of course.



25 minute drive time contour map based on Bognor Regis (blue) and Littlehampton (red)

The existing crematorium facilities within the catchment area

- 5.10 Both Worthing and Chichester Crematoriums are busy sites in comparison with others in southern England. Statistics from the Cremation Society of Great Britain for 2017 show that Worthing Crematorium was the third busiest crematorium in the UK by the overall number of cremations undertaken that year (3,626). By the same measure Chichester Crematorium is less busy, handling a total of 1838 cremations in 2017, but that still makes it amongst the more intensively used crematoriums in the country.
- 5.11 Turning to the cost of cremations, figures from the Cremation Society of Great Britain for 2017 show that out of 284 crematoriums in the UK Chichester Crematorium had the joint highest fees of all for that year, at £999. Worthing Crematorium fees are stated to be £795, and these figures compare with a national average fee for that year of £735.70.
- 5.12 On the basis of the observations set out in paragraphs 5.8-5.11 the following conclusions may therefore be drawn;

- Residents of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (and the surrounding villages) have limited choice of crematoriums within reasonable driving distances from their homes. Whilst some may choose to travel further distances to crematoria beyond our study area it is not reasonable to expect them to do so as a matter of course.
- For those residents that do not wish to travel beyond the study area, their choices are the very busy crematorium at Worthing (3rd busiest crematorium in the UK in 2017), or comparatively expensive crematorium at Chichester (joint most expensive crematorium in the UK in 2017).

5.13 It should be noted that our comments above are based solely upon a comparison of the costs and number of cremations at the Worthing and Chichester Crematoriums in comparison with others in the UK. No comment is made, nor any doubts expressed on the quality of both facilities or the customer experience that they provide.

5.14 In terms of possible options for expansion of the existing crematoriums at Chichester and Worthing, our study does not seek to review that in detail. However, it is notable that Chichester Crematorium is within the built-up area of the city and is constrained by built development on all sides. Worthing by contrast is in a more rural location but in the South Downs National Park which may make significant expansion difficult. We therefore conclude, albeit at a fairly high level, that the scope to expand either site may be considered to be limited.

Future demand on crematorium capacity in the study area

5.15 Data for Population change for local authorities in England between mid-2016 and mid-2026, published by the Office for National Statistics, estimates a total of 56,959 deaths in the four local authorities of Worthing, Arun, Adur and Chichester between mid-2016 and mid-2026, or an average of 5,696 deaths each year. By contrast, the two crematoria within that area, Worthing and Chichester, between them held a total of 5,464 cremations in 2017. Therefore, it is clear that there is already significant demand which can be expected to increase in coming years.

5.16 The future additional demand may or may not be able to be met by the existing facilities, and whilst it is of course the case that people have the choice to travel to crematoria further away if they wish, to do so does not represent a sustainable solution, and nor, in our opinion, should they be obligated to do so.

- 5.17 It has already been stated that Worthing Crematorium is the third busiest in the UK measured by the number of cremations held in 2017. It may be therefore that for that facility in particular the scope to meet additional demand in the future would be difficult, to meet.

Conclusions in respect of quantitative need for the proposed development

- 5.18 It is clear, on the basis of the above assessment, that for residents of both Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (and the surrounding towns and villages) that there is little choice in terms of crematoria. It is further clear that of the choices that do exist Worthing is a very busy crematorium and Chichester comparatively expensive. In addition, our research has confirmed that the demand for cremations will grow in this area over future years (in line with the rest of the UK), that will place additional demands on the existing facilities unless additional capacity is provided. On that basis therefore, we conclude that there is a clear quantitative need for a new crematorium in this location.

6. ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITATIVE NEED FOR THE PROPOSED CREMATORIUM

Factors of qualitative need

- 6.1 As has already been noted, existing crematoria provision in this area is located at Worthing and Chichester. Both Crematoria are very busy, with Worthing in particular being one of three busiest in the south of England
- 6.2 Based on the Applicant's considerable experience of managing crematoriums and funeral director's homes, they well understand that where a crematorium reaches operation capacity there is a resultant impact on users. The industry standard is that cremation services should be circa 45 minutes in duration, which is intended to give mourners sufficient time to carry out an unhurried and dignified event for their loved ones. Where a crematorium is particularly stretched however, services can sometimes be of lesser duration in order to cope with demand.
- 6.3 It is preferable for one cremation service to have ended and for mourners to have completely cleared the building before the next event starts. If that does not occur and

queues form outside the result can be a feeling of being rushed. Many crematorium operators seek to guard against that by providing waiting rooms for mourners arriving prior to their scheduled service, but it is a difficult issue to avoid completely.

- 6.4 As well as shorter cremation services a further consequence of crematoriums being overstretched can be a longer wait time for services. Whilst appointments can normally be found at the start and end of the day at fairly short notice it is important to understand that funerals rarely take place at the start or the end of the day. This is due to factors such as preparation time needed by funeral directors on the day of the funeral, the need to allow sufficient travel time for mourners travelling from further afield, the wish to avoid rush hour traffic – particularly for the funeral cortege, and the tradition for there to be a wake after the service. As a result therefore, the large majority of funerals take place between the hours of 10.30am and 3.30pm.
- 6.5 In addition, and in recent years there has been an increasing trend for people to wish to take more control of funeral arrangements and create a unique event to celebrate the memory of the life lost. This means that in practice many services now run to the full 45 minutes or even longer where they are permitted to do so. Not only do operators need to provide the space and facilities to enable that to happen, but they also need to plan schedules allowing sufficient time for overruns when they occur.
- 6.6 The Southern Co-operative seek to offer clients with the maximum flexibility possible in terms of the type of service they desire and to aim for the very highest levels of customer service, at all times putting the wishes of the bereaved at the forefront. They aim to provide a more empathetic service than other crematoria that are not privately owned and less able to provide similar flexibility.

Potential benefits from addressing qualitative needs in the case of the application proposals

- 6.7 The clearest benefit of the proposed development will be to avoid the need for people to travel to existing crematoria further afield. The quantitative need for a new crematorium in this location has already been established, and this development will offer greater choice and convenience to users.

- 6.8 The high demand placed on the existing crematoria at both Worthing and Chichester has already been noted, and the provision of a new crematorium will help to better spread demand, easing pressures on those existing facilities, reducing wait times for services and offering greater scope for services to be of the duration requested by mourners rather than dictated by schedules.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 It is clear from the analysis given in this report that there is an increasing number of older people in the catchment area projected over the coming years, and that death rates have increased in line with both the increase in the size of the population generally as well as the older age profile. ONS data confirms that the number of deaths is increasing, and our own analysis has revealed a commensurate increase in demand for cremations. Despite that, the number of crematoria has not kept pace with demand.
- 7.2 It is clear that the increasing demand for crematorium services within the Bognor Regis and Littlehampton areas cannot reasonably be expected to be accommodated in the existing crematoria at Chichester and Worthing. There is therefore clear and functional need for an additional crematorium to be provided and which can address the shortfall in provision.
- 7.3 The additional crematorium will increase consumer choice as well as being a more sustainable solution than residents having to travel excessively long distances. Therefore, the proposals constitute sustainable development, which is supported under the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018).