

Crematorium Need Assessment

**Two New Crematoria at Grevatts Lane West,
Bilsham, Yapton, West Sussex**

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 This report demonstrates that, whilst there is a compelling quantitative and qualitative need for a single new crematorium at Grevatts Lane West, Bilsham, Yapton, West Sussex, **there is no need for two crematoria at this location and, if both were developed neither would be financially viable.**

1.2 Drive-time catchment analysis using 2017 data on population and deaths indicates that **108,812** people live within a 30-minute drive-time of the proposed two new crematoria at Grevatts Lane West, of which:

- 65,838 people currently living within the 30-minute drive-time of the crematorium at Chichester and 22,703 people currently living within the 30-minute drive-time of the crematorium at Worthing, a combined total of **88,541** people, live within the 30-minute drive-time of the new crematorium and, indeed, will find either of the two new crematoria to be their closest;
- in addition, **20,271** people currently living more than a 30-minute drive-time from any crematorium live within a 30-minute drive-time of the new crematoria.

1.3 In the Essington Planning Appeal decision¹, the Inspector stated that a crematorium operating above 80% of its practical capacity makes it difficult to offer a cremation service that meets an acceptable quantitative standard. On average, Chichester Crematorium is operating at **104%** of its practical capacity and Worthing Crematorium is operating at **90%** of its practical capacity.

1.4 When seasonal variation in numbers of deaths is included, during peak months Chichester Crematorium is operating at **146%** of its practical capacity and Worthing Crematorium is operating at **126%** of its practical capacity.

¹ APP/C3430/W/15/3039163 Land off Broad Lane, Essington, South Staffordshire para 215

- 1.5 Evidence provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) indicates a significant and sustained growth from the present time in the population and numbers of deaths within the UK and in West Sussex.
- 1.6 There is a proven quantitative need now for **a new single crematorium** at Grevatts Lane West and this need will become greater as numbers of deaths significantly increase.
- 1.7 A sample of obituaries reveals an average delay between death and funeral of 18 days at Chichester Crematorium and 20 days at Worthing Crematorium during November 2018. Delays will be much longer during months of peak demand, when there can be 40% more deaths than in an average month.
- 1.8 **A single new crematorium** at Grevatts Lane would be more than sufficient to reduce delays between death and funeral; reduce the funeral journey time for many thousands of people; improve mourners' experience through longer service intervals and reduced congestion at crematoria.

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4. Introduction

- 4.1 In November 2018, I prepared a report assessing the need for a new crematorium located at Grevatts Lane West, Bilsham, Yapton, West Sussex, which was included in material submitted by Landlink Estates Limited as part of a full planning application. I have now been advised that a rival application is to be made the Southern Co-op on a nearby site. This report examines whether there is a quantitative and qualitative need for two new crematoria at this location.
- 4.2 Quantitative need focuses upon the population and numbers of deaths within crematoria catchment areas and the capacity of existing crematoria to accommodate the demand for cremation.
- 4.3 Qualitative need focuses upon the length of time between death and being able to arrange a cremation at a convenient time; the journey time to the crematorium and the experience of bereaved people once they are at the crematorium.

5. Quantitative need for two new crematoria at Grevatts Lane West

5.1 Quantitative need is established by:

- quantifying the population that would be in closer proximity to the new crematorium than to existing crematoria
- examining the current and future capacity for funerals available at existing crematoria.

5.2 Quantifying catchment populations

5.3 The distance considered reasonable for people to travel in a funeral cortège to a crematorium has been considered at a number of planning appeals. A 30-minute funeral drive-time at 60% of normal traffic speeds has been held to be an appropriate basis upon which to establish the quantitative need for a new crematorium².

5.4 Where a Funeral Director's hearse and limousine(s) lead a cortège of mourners' vehicles to a crematorium, travel speeds are often much lower than for normal traffic.

5.5 This is mainly a consequence of drivers trying to keep the cortège together when negotiating junctions so that everybody finds their way to the crematorium and arrives together at the right time for the funeral service.

5.6 Sophisticated computer software enables the identification of travel times by road traffic and its graphical representation as isochrones.

² Appeal Ref. APP/D0840/A/09/2098108 Land at Race Farm, Puggis Hill, Treswithian, Camborne, Cornwall

5.7 For my first report, transport planning specialists Vectos used ESRI ArcGIS 10.4 and HERE software, together with associated ONS data relating to population and deaths in 2017 by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA), to produce isochrones within three different drive-time catchments: 15-minutes; 30-minutes; and 45-minutes. **The very close proximity of the rival Southern Co-op crematorium would result in both sites sharing the same isochrones, drive-time populations and drive-time deaths.**

- Existing provision - the two existing crematoria at Chichester and Worthing
- Proposed provision - the two existing crematoria at Chichester and Worthing, *plus* the proposed crematoria at Grevatts Lane West

5.8 Existing provision

5.9 The image below in Figure 1 illustrates the 45-minute drive-time catchments of the five crematoria serving the wider area, which in turn are affected by the catchments of other crematoria outside of the area. The location of the proposed crematoria at Grevatts Lane West is indicated by the blue circle. It is quite apparent that the catchment area of the proposed crematoria is circumscribed by those of crematoria at Chichester and Worthing.

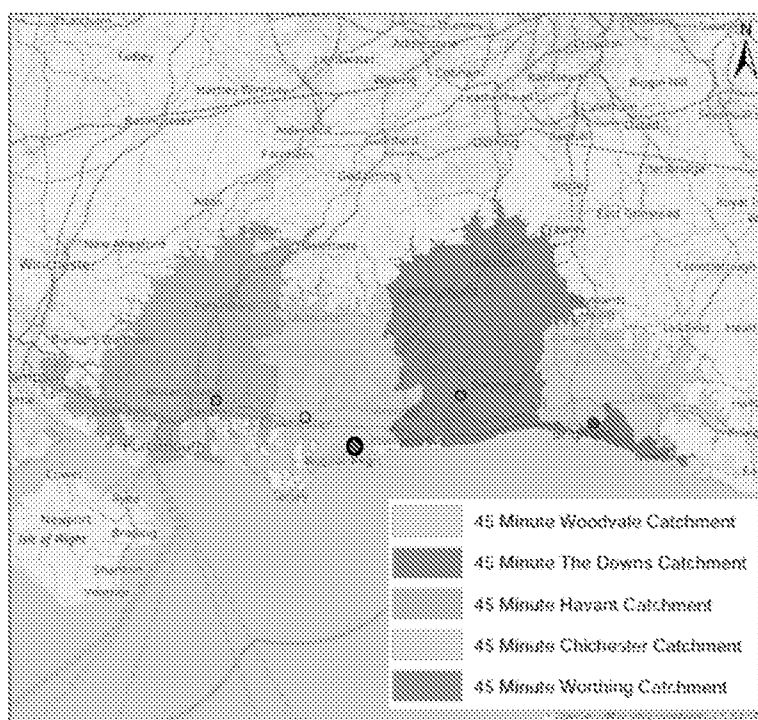


Figure 1: 45-minute drive-time catchments

- 5.10 The images below in Figures 2, 3 and 4 illustrate the 15, 30 and 45-minute drive-time isochrones around the two crematoria currently serving this area. The location of the proposed crematoria at Grevatts Lane West is indicated by the blue circle.
- 5.11 It is important to note that the isochrones for the crematoria beyond Chichester and Worthing are not illustrated. This is simply because, where a death occurs within the catchment area of the proposed new crematorium, bereaved families living locally are very unlikely to travel past existing crematoria to reach more distant crematoria illustrated in Figure 1 above:
- Chichester Crematorium's catchment, as illustrated, is reduced on its western edges, where people live closer to Havant Crematorium.
 - Worthing Crematorium's catchment, as illustrated, is reduced on its eastern side by two crematoria at Brighton and also to the north west by the Surrey and Sussex Crematorium at Crawley and potentially to the north east by the Guildford Crematorium.



Figure 2: 15-minute drive-time catchments for existing crematoria at Chichester and Worthing

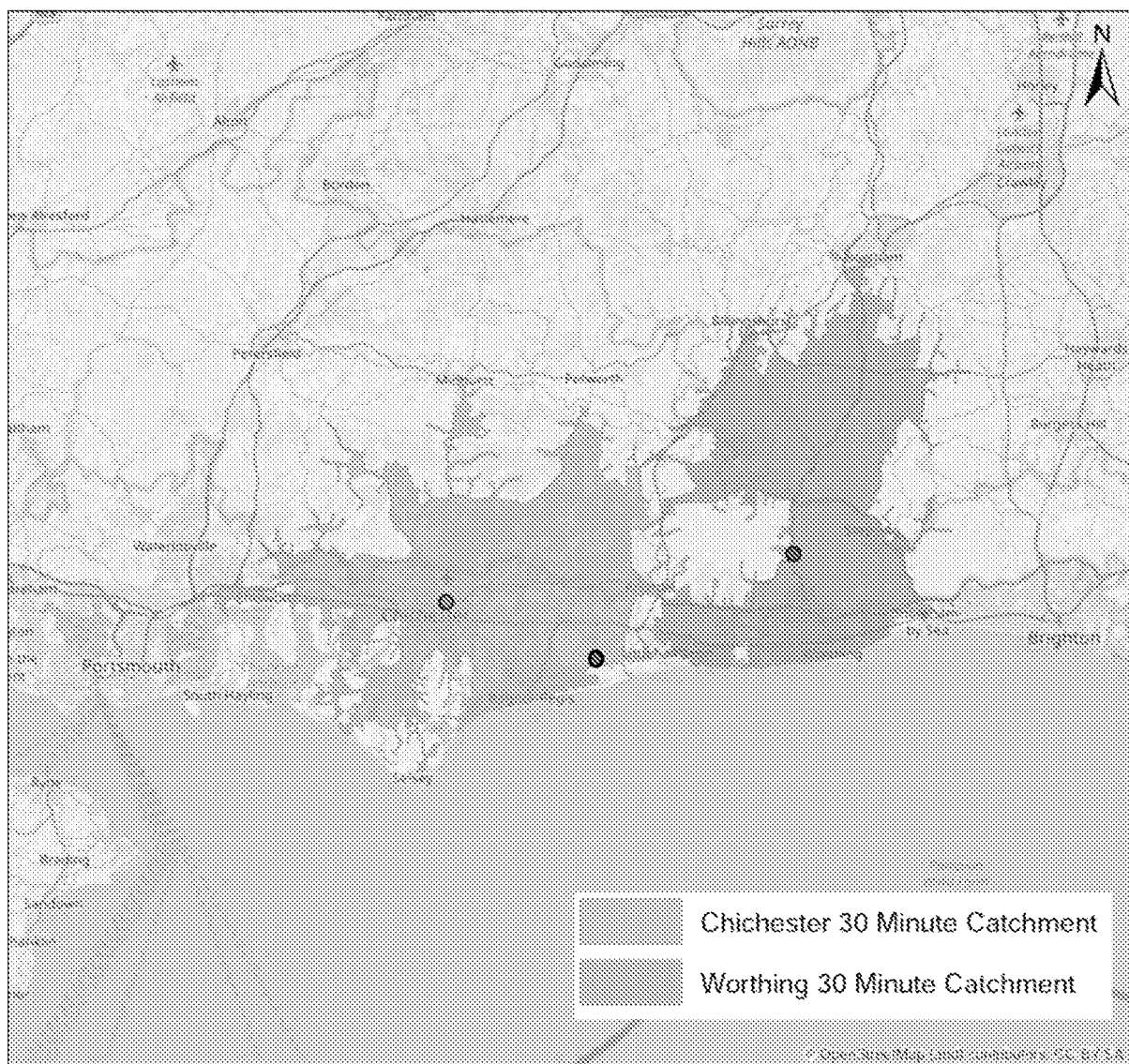


Figure 3: 30-minute drive-time catchments for existing crematoria at Chichester and Worthing

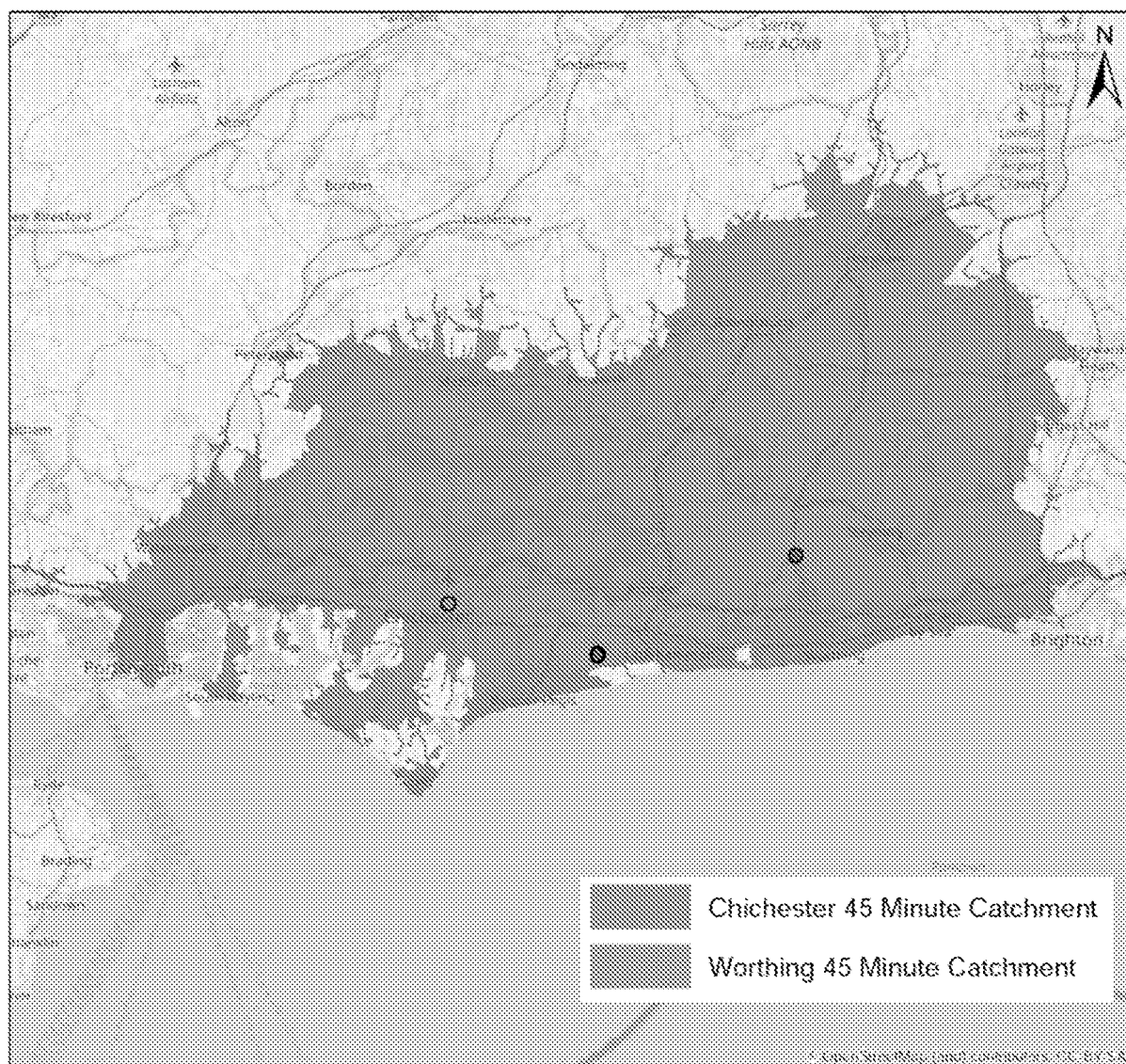


Figure 4: 45-minute drive-time catchments for existing crematoria at Chichester and Worthing

5.12 Proposed provision

5.13 The images below in Figures 5, 6 and 7 illustrate the 15, 30 and 45-minute drive-time isochrones around the two existing crematoria at Chichester and Worthing, together with those for the proposed tow new crematoria at Grevatts Lane West.



Figure 5: 15-minute drive-time catchments for crematoria at Chichester, Worthing and Grevatts Lane West



Figure 6: 30-minute drive-time catchments for crematoria at Chichester, Worthing and Grevatts Lane West

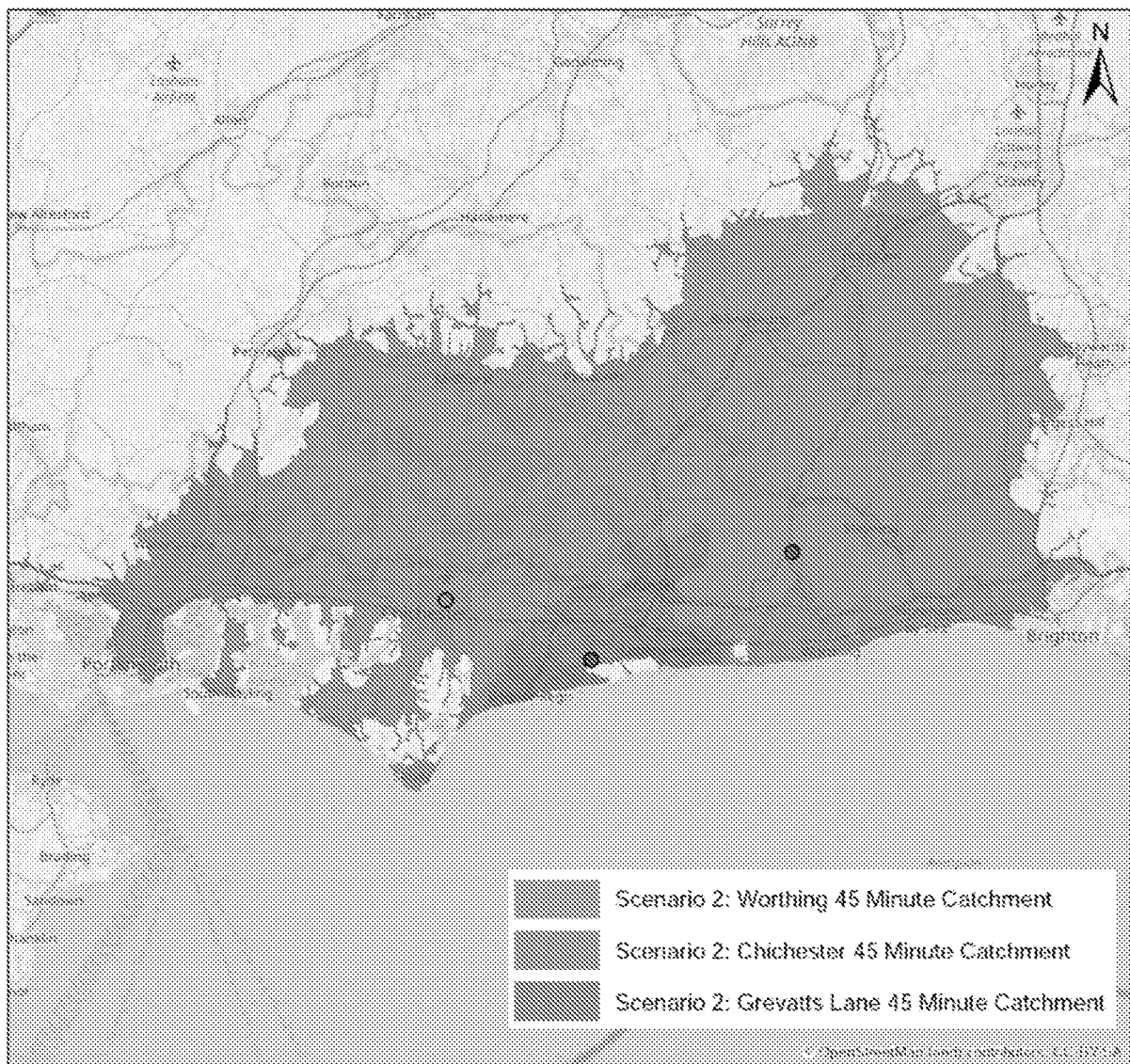


Figure 7: 45-minute drive-time catchments for crematoria at Chichester, Worthing and Grevatts Lane West

- 5.14 The tables below at Figures 8, 9 and 10 illustrate the catchment populations and numbers of deaths in 2017 for both the current and the proposed provision of crematoria.

Crematorium	Population			Deaths		
	15 Mins	30 Mins	45 Mins	15 Mins	30 Mins	45 Mins
Chichester	45,408	154,161	415,712	462	1,917	4,484
Worthing	18,426	225,863	466,180	205	2,739	5,197
Totals	63,834	380,024	881,892	667	4,656	9,681

Figure 8: Population and deaths within drive-time catchments of existing crematoria provision

Crematorium	Population			Deaths		
	15 Mins	30 Mins	45 Mins	15 Mins	30 Mins	45 Mins
Chichester	45,408	88,323	346,793	462	1,064	3,598
Worthing	18,426	203,160	420,048	205	2,415	4,542
Grevatts Lane West	48,240	108,812	115,051	563	1,478	1,541
Totals	112,074	400,295	881,892	1,230	4,957	9,681

Figure 9: Population and deaths within drive-time catchments of proposed crematoria provision

Crematorium	Population			Deaths		
	15 Mins	30 Mins	45 Mins	15 Mins	30 Mins	45 Mins
Chichester		-65,838	-68,919		-853	-886
Worthing		-22,703	-46,132		-324	-655
Grevatts Lane West	48,240	108,812	115,051	563	1,478	1,541
Totals	48,240	20,271		563	301	

Figure 10: Variation in population and deaths from existing to proposed crematoria provision

- 5.15 Figure 7 clearly shows that the catchments of the proposed crematoria at Grevatts Lane West are circumscribed by those of Chichester and Worthing and therefore the figures for the catchment population and deaths in Figures 9 and 10 are unaffected by more distant crematoria and fully represent those within the drive-time catchments.

- 5.16 However, as noted above at 5.11, the catchment populations and deaths for the crematoria at Chichester and Worthing are actually less than those shown in Figures 6 and 7, due to the impact of the proximity of other crematoria outside of the immediate area.
- 5.17 Figures 9 and 10 illustrate that the population living within a 15-minute drive-time of either crematoria at Chichester or Worthing would remain closer to these crematoria than to the proposed new crematorium at Grevatts Lane West.
- 5.18 Figures 9 and 10 illustrate that **108,812** people live within the 30-minute drive-time of the proposed new crematoria at Grevatts Lane West, of which
- 65,838 people currently living within the 30-minute drive-time of the crematorium at Chichester and 22,703 people currently living within the 30-minute drive-time of the crematorium at Worthing, a combined total of **88,541** people, live within the 30-minute drive-time of the new crematoria and, indeed, will find the new crematoria to be their closest;
 - in addition, **20,271** people currently living more than a 30-minute drive-time from any crematorium live within a 30-minute drive-time of the new crematoria.
- 5.19 The area of residence and numbers of the population that will benefit through proximity to the new crematoria are identified in the table below at Figure 11.
- 5.20 The table illustrates the findings of the drive-time catchment analysis, which identified that the proposed crematorium at Grevatts Lane West will serve the majority of the population of Arun District Council. People living in neighbouring local authority areas are closer to existing crematoria.

	Arun District Council Population					
	Current Provision			Proposed Provision		
Crematorium	15 Mins	30 Mins	45 Mins	15 Mins	30 Mins	45 Mins
Chichester	6,556	81,541	85,998	6,556	15,703	17,079
Worthing	2,575	40,008	63,437	2,575	17,305	17,305
Grevatts Lane West				48,240	108,812	115,051
Totals	9,131	121,549	149,435	57,371	141,820	149,435

Figure 11: Population of Arun District Council within current and proposed crematoria catchments

5.21 108,812 residents of Arun District will be within 30-minutes' drive-time of the proposed new crematoria at Grevatts Lane West, which will be closer to them than any other crematorium.

5.22 115,051 residents of Arun District will be within 45-minutes' drive-time of the proposed new crematoria at Grevatts Lane West, which will be closer to them than any other crematorium.

5.23 Capacity at existing crematoria

5.24 The theoretical maximum number of funerals that each crematorium can accommodate is readily calculated using the number of funeral slots available per day. This is the 'technical capacity' of a crematorium.

5.25 However, it is widely accepted and understood that there are core times generally preferred by bereaved people and these times are the ones most likely to be booked first. Core times at crematoria lie between 10.30am and 3.30pm. If a core time is not available on the day of choice, people will often select a later day to be able to hold the funeral at the time that suits their particular circumstances.

5.26 The number of core times available is the 'practical capacity' of a crematorium.

- 5.27 The importance of core times was referenced by the Inspector at a crematorium Planning Appeal in Derbyshire, when he stated:
- 5.28 *“The 4 existing crematoria have technical capacity when looking at their operation over any particular year but the fact that Chesterfield crematorium, for example, has plenty of availability in the summer months, or at 1630 hours on a winter’s afternoon is of little comfort or use to those needing to book a funeral at the busiest time of the year at a time of day that would actually allow friends and family to attend. The technical capacity of the 4 crematoria does not bring people who currently live beyond a reasonable distance to a crematorium any closer to that crematorium. Plainly, there is a quantitative and qualitative need in this case”.*³
- 5.29 Crematoria may have a single chapel or two, or even three, chapels. They also vary in the length of service interval and duration offered.
- 5.30 The funeral service interval is distinct from, and longer than, the funeral service duration. The funeral service interval allows for the time taken by mourners to enter and leave the chapel. As a generalisation, crematoria allow five minutes for the entry of mourners and a further five minutes for their exit. Thus, a service interval of thirty minutes is only sufficient for a funeral service duration of twenty minutes.
- 5.31 The length of funeral service interval offered at UK crematoria is now generally longer than commonly offered in the past, partly as a result of the guidance provided by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM). The ICCM’s ‘Charter for the Bereaved’ sets minimum standards and targets to achieve. A target for funeral intervals is:
- 5.32 *“Charter members should increase the minimum time allocated for funeral services to 40 or 45 minutes wherever possible.*

³ APP/M1005/A/12/2188880 Land east of Derby Road, Swanwick, Derbyshire para. 31

The burial or cremation ceremony should be considered a highly individual and important occasion. Each funeral should ideally arrive and depart without seeing other funerals; neither should they be delayed by the late arrival of other funerals. To help achieve this standard, a minimum service time of 40 or 45 minutes [as in e) above] should be an objective.'

- 5.33 The table in Figure 12 below illustrates the services times commonly available at crematoria with a single chapel, reflecting different lengths of service interval offered and the core service times.

Interval Between Funerals				
30 Mins	40 Mins	45 Mins	60 Mins	
Funeral Start Times				
Single Chapel				
09:30	09:30	09:30	09:30	
10:00	10:10	10:15	10:30	
10:30	10:50	11:00	11:30	
11:00	11:30	11:45	12:30	
11:30	12:10	12:30	13:30	
12:00	12:50	13:15	14:30	
12:30	13:30	14:00	15:30	
13:00	14:10	14:45	16:30	
13:30	14:50	15:30		
14:00	15:30	16:15		
14:30	16:10	17:00		
15:00	16:50			
15:30				
16:00				
16:30				
17:00				
Per Day				
Total slots	16	12	11	8
Core slots	11	8	7	6
Per Month				
Total slots	336	252	231	168
Core slots	231	168	147	126
Per Year				
Total slots	4,032	3,024	2,772	2,016
Core slots	2,772	2,016	1,764	1,512
Core slots	68.8%	66.7%	63.6%	75.0%

Figure 12: Technical and Practical (Core) Capacity at single chapel crematoria

- 5.34 The significant differences between 'technical capacity' and 'practical capacity' are readily apparent, with 'practical capacity' ranging from 64% to 75% of 'technical capacity'.
- 5.35 The table in Figure 13 below illustrates the services times commonly available at crematoria with two chapels, reflecting different lengths of service interval offered and the core service times.

	Interval Between Funerals							
	30 Mins		40 Mins		45 Mins		60 Mins	
	Funeral Start Times							
	Chapel 1	Chapel 2	Chapel 1	Chapel 2	Chapel 1	Chapel 2	Chapel 1	Chapel 2
	09:00	09:15	09:00	09:20	09:00	09:15	09:00	09:30
	09:30	09:45	09:40	10:00	09:45	10:00	10:00	10:30
	10:00	10:15	10:20	10:40	10:30	10:45	11:00	11:30
	10:30	10:45	11:00	11:20	11:15	11:30	12:00	12:30
	11:00	11:15	11:40	12:00	12:00	12:15	13:00	13:30
	11:30	11:45	12:20	12:40	12:45	13:00	14:00	14:30
	12:00	12:15	13:00	13:20	13:30	13:45	15:00	15:30
	12:30	12:45	13:40	14:00	14:15	14:30	16:00	
	13:00	13:15	14:20	14:40	15:00	15:15		
	13:30	13:45	15:00	15:20	15:45	16:00		
	14:00	14:15	15:40	16:00				
	14:30	14:45						
	15:00	15:15						
	15:30	15:45						
	16:00	16:15						
	Per Day							
Total slots	15	15	11	11	10	10	8	7
Core slots	11	10	8	8	7	7	5	6
	Per Month							
Total slots	315	315	231	231	210	210	168	147
Core slots	231	210	168	168	147	147	105	126
	Per Year							
Total slots	3,780	3,780	2,772	2,772	2,520	2,520	2,016	1,764
Core slots	2,772	2,520	2,016	2,016	1,764	1,764	1,260	1,512
Both Chapels Combined	7,560		5,544		5,040		3,780	
	5,292		4,032		3,528		2,772	
Core slots	70.0%		72.7%		70.0%		73.3%	

Figure 13: Technical and Practical (Core) Capacity at twin chapel crematoria

- 5.36 Chichester Crematorium has a single chapel and offers 45-minute service intervals, commencing at 9:30am, with the last funeral commencing at 5.00pm.
- 5.37 Worthing Crematorium has two chapels and offers 40-minute service intervals, commencing in one chapel at 9.00am and the other at 9.20am, with the last services commencing at 3.40pm and 4.00pm respectively.
- 5.38 Both crematoria also accept 'direct cremations', i.e. with no funeral service, in addition to their standard funerals. Chichester allocate 8.00am, 8.15am and 8.20am for such funerals. Both offer funerals on Saturdays and Chichester also offers funerals on Sundays; in all cases at higher fees than Mondays to Fridays.
- 5.39 Figure 14 below illustrates in terms of available slots the technical capacity (total weekday slots) and practical capacity (core slots) of these two crematoria. These are based upon 252 working days per year, Mondays to Fridays excluding public holidays.

		Chichester	Worthing
Per day	Total slots	11	22
	Core slots	7	16
Per month	Total slots	231	462
	Core slots	147	336
Per year	Total slots	2,772	5,544
	Core slots	1,764	4,032

Figure 14: Technical and Practical available capacity at Chichester and Worthing crematoria

- 5.40 Figure 15 below illustrates the levels of technical and practical capacity at which these two crematoria operated during 2017.

Crematorium	Cremations in 2017	Total slots	Technical capacity	Core slots	Practical capacity
Chichester	1,838	2,772	66%	1,764	104%
Worthing	3,626	5,544	65%	4,032	90%

Figure 15: Technical and Practical capacity levels in 2017 at Chichester and Worthing crematoria

- 5.41 These calculations involve dividing the total number of cremations in 2017 by the standard funeral slots available in a year and take no account of seasonal variation in demand. The importance of catering for seasonal fluctuations in demand for cremations was referred to by the Inspector at a Planning Appeal in Kent:
- 5.42 *“A number of objectors have questioned the Appellant’s evidence of need, referring to the statements by existing operators of crematoria at Tunbridge Wells, Medway and Eltham that they are currently operating below capacity. While it may be that over a period of a year, there are untaken slots which are theoretically available, this doesn’t take account of seasonal fluctuations in mortality which affect levels of demand.”*⁴
- 5.43 Recovering Planning Inquiry in South Staffordshire involving two proposed new crematoria, the Secretary of State endorsed the Inspector’s views that practical capacity must be measured in the peak month of demand.
- 5.44 *“All parties agree that Bushbury Crematorium in north Wolverhampton, on any assessment, is under significant pressure. The parties agree that the best measure for assessing whether a crematorium is meeting a quantitative standard is its practical capacity in a peak month. In 2015 Bushbury operated at about 115% of practical capacity in a peak month. **The Council accepts that operating above 80% of practical capacity places a crematorium under pressure to offer a cremation service that meets an acceptable quantitative standard.**”*⁵
- 5.45 On this basis alone, both Chichester and Worthing crematoria are operating above practical capacity and there is a need for a single new crematorium at Grevatts Lane West. The need for the single new crematorium will increase as numbers of deaths in the catchment area increase.

⁴ APP/G2245/A/13/2210128 Land south of Orchard Barn, London Road, Halstead para. 23

⁵ APP/C3430/W/15/3039163 Land off Broad Lane, Essington, South Staffordshire para. 215

- 5.46 Figure 16 below illustrates seasonal variation in deaths during 2017 by reference to the average deaths per month compared with the highest number of deaths, which in this year occurred during January.

	Average	Highest	Variation	
England	41,574	53,675	12,102	29.1%
Adur	62	85	23	36.9%
Arun	183	262	79	43.4%
Chichester	124	170	46	37.5%
Worthing	122	173	51	42.2%

Figure 16: Seasonal variation in deaths in 2017

- 5.47 The average variation in deaths in the peak month across the West Sussex authorities is **40%**. This figure is used to calculate peak month cremations and capacity in Figure 17 below.

Crematorium	Average monthly cremations	Peak month cremations	Core slots available	Peak month practical capacity
Chichester	153	214	147	146%
Worthing	302	423	336	126%

Figure 17: Peak month practical capacity levels in 2017 at Chichester and Worthing crematoria

- 5.48 In the Essington Appeal decision⁶, the Inspector stated that a crematorium operating above 80% of its practical (core) capacity makes it difficult to offer a cremation service that meets an acceptable quantitative standard. The context makes it clear that practical capacity is calculated using the total number of cremations, not purely those that take place at core times.

⁶ APP/C3430/W/15/3039163 Land off Broad Lane, Essington, South Staffordshire para 215

5.49 Viability of a new crematorium

5.50 The capital costs of a new crematorium are significant, as illustrated in Figure 18 below:

Year built	Location	Private Sector or Local Authority	Approximate Cost
2016	Wellingborough	Local Authority	£6,500,000
2016	St Asaph	Private Sector	£4,250,000
2015	Waveney	Private Sector	£4,000,000
2015	Countesthorpe	Private Sector	£4,000,000
2015	Abingdon	Private Sector	£4,000,000
2015	Amber Valley	Private Sector	£4,800,000

Figure 18: Capital costs of building a crematorium (Cremation Society of Great Britain)

5.51 The operational costs are also significant, as illustrated in Figure 19 below:

Operational costs summary	Cost
Operational cost - personnel	162,500
Operational cost - non-personnel	152,000
Total annual operational costs	314,500

Figure 19: Illustrative operational costs

5.52 Figure 9 above indicates that there were 1,541 deaths in 2017 within the 45 minute drive-time catchment of a new crematorium at Grevatts Lane West. Applying the average cremation rate for England and Wales in the same year, 80%, indicates that a new crematorium could expect 1,232 funerals per year. However, a new crematorium generally takes five or more years to attract all of the cremations within its catchment area.

5.53 Two new adjacent crematoria would each attract approximately half of the funerals from within the catchment area. At Grevatts Lane West, each crematorium would likely attract only 616 cremations per year.

- 5.54 The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities' (FBCA) 'Recommendations of the establishment of crematoria' (2016 edition) states:
- 5.55 ***Single Authority.*** *Local authorities with a population of 120,000 or more would be in a position to provide and manage a crematorium with a reasonable expectation of operating on a sound financial basis after the initial years of repayment of capital and associated loan charges.*
- 5.56 *Broadly speaking, crematoria undertaking 1000 or more cremations per annum are most likely to be viable, although there are a number of crematoria, mainly serving rural or island communities, undertaking fewer than this.*
- 5.57 An estimated 616 cremations each per year would mean that both new crematoria would not be financially viable, whereas a single new crematorium undertaking 1,232 funerals would be viable.

6. Qualitative need for two new crematoria at Grevatts Lane West

6.1 Qualitative need is established by considering the impact upon bereaved people of the ability of crematoria to meet quantitative need:

- availability of preferred slots, leading to delays between death and the funeral
- journey times to crematoria
- congestion at crematoria

6.2 Availability of preferred slots

6.3 *Anecdotal evidence from funeral directors who use the cremation service offered at Bushbury indicates that an acceptable qualitative standard is also not being met. In this regard funeral services are taking longer than is acceptable to arrange at times to suit bereaved families and funeral directors are advising some families that earlier services could be arranged at crematoria further away than is generally regarded to be acceptable. The substandard quantitative offer at Bushbury is adversely affecting the crematorium's ability to offer a quality service to bereaved families.*⁷

6.4 *"Further, the overtrading has led to unacceptable delays between the date of death and date of cremation. Analysis undertaken by Dignity (and unchallenged by any party to the inquiry) shows that average waiting times between date of death and date of cremation are materially longer than either Telford or other crematoria in the area. This is a very clear qualitative deficiency which has resulted from the quantitative overtrading."*⁸

⁷ APP/C3430/W/15/3039163 Land off Broad Lane, Essington, South Staffordshire para. 215

⁸ APP/C3430/W/15/3039163 Land off Broad Lane, Essington, South Staffordshire para. 128

6.5 *“Of greater concern is the evidence submitted indicating the delay between death and funeral. ... While these delays can only be partly explained by Coroner delays or similar, this presents substantial evidence of pressures on the capacity at Penmount [Crematorium] to meet the qualitative needs of such a large population.”⁹*

6.6 A number of factors contribute to delays between death and funeral. These include the process of registration of the death; involvement of the coroner; requirement for an autopsy; personal circumstances of the family members (e.g. outside the UK due to holidays or residence); and availability of the Funeral Director and Officiant.

6.7 However, a key factor contributing to delays between death and funeral is the availability of the family’s preferred date and time for the funeral at the crematorium.

6.8 Figure 18 below illustrates data on days between death and funeral obtained from 89 obituaries published online by the Chichester Observer and Worthing Herald for deaths occurring between 14th October and 19th November 2018.

		Days between death and funeral		
Crematorium	Obituaries	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Chichester	32	10	29	18
Worthing	57	8	68	20

Figure 20: Days between death and funeral

6.9 This sample of 89 obituaries suggests average delays of two to three weeks between death and funeral. The sample included 30 funerals at Chichester and 54 funerals at Worthing, which all took place during November 2018. Deaths in November 2017 across the West Sussex catchment area averaged only 1.3% more than average deaths over the whole year, whereas deaths in January averaged 40% more. It is clear that delays between death and funeral during periods of high demand will be extended beyond the two to three weeks’ delays during periods of average demand.

⁹ APP/D0840/A/09/2098108 Land at Race Farm, Puggis Hill, Treswithian, Camborne para. 35

6.10 Journey times to crematoria

- 6.11 This report has previously quantified the need for a new crematorium at Grevatts Lane West by reference to journey times, using drive-time catchment mapping software.
- 6.12 Minimising travel time also has qualitative impacts upon the bereaved, Funeral Directors and those officiating at funerals.
- 6.13 There is great variation in the way people arrange funerals, influenced by personal, social, cultural, religious, financial and other factors. The secularisation of society has affected the level of attachment people may have to their local church and many people no longer live within the same communities as previous generations of their families.
- 6.14 However, funerals are still widely regarded as important events requiring the attendance of family, friends and others who knew the person who has died. Statistically, the probability is very high that a funeral will result from the death of someone of senior years, who has spent a lifetime building up a network of contacts, many of whom will be local to where they live and work. It is entirely logical therefore that this group of people would wish to gather together for the funeral in a location that is convenient for most of them.
- 6.15 By their nature, funerals are emotional events signifying the end of many different relationships with a single person and a change in the relationships that those still living have with each other. Enduring unnecessarily long journeys, often involving traffic congestion and the challenges of keeping a group of vehicles together, is altogether undesirable for a group of mourners on their way to the crematorium for an emotional life event.

6.16 Congestion at crematoria

6.17 The number and types of vehicles attending funerals at crematoria varies and inevitably there are occasional funerals of some-one who was young and/or particularly well-known where access and parking space is insufficient to cope. However, the more common situation where the site is congested occurs where vehicle numbers per funeral are modest, but there are too many funerals on site at the same time.

6.18 This situation arises all too frequently for a number of reasons, the main ones being:

- A funeral arrives at the crematorium either too early or too late
- A funeral takes too much or too little time at the crematorium

6.19 Funeral Directors take pride in arriving at the correct time at each of the various locations that may be involved in a funeral, including the crematorium. However, there are sometimes factors outside of their control, or which could not reasonably be foreseen, which can advance or delay the time when they arrive at the crematorium gates. A funeral can involve a series of events each involving different people, who can have a cumulative impact upon the schedule of the particular funeral. For example, the funeral service held at the church prior to a committal service at the crematorium can last less or more time than expected, influencing the time of arrival at the crematorium.

6.20 If there are other funerals taking place around their particular funeral slot, the arrival of one group of mourners early or late can easily result in vehicles and mourners from different funerals becoming mixed up. This is particularly prevalent at crematoria such as Southampton with more than one chapel.

- 6.21 If a funeral service at the crematorium lasts longer than allowed for within the service slot, the mourners leave the chapel late. Where there is a funeral immediately following theirs, which is a common situation, that group of mourners will have had difficulty finding somewhere to park the cars as the car park is still occupied by the cars belonging to mourners of the overrunning funeral. They will have to queue outside the chapel entrance waiting for their funeral service to start late because the other group of mourners are still inside the chapel.
- 6.22 This situation can easily have a knock-on effect on all of the subsequent funerals in the day at a busy crematorium. It can be quite common for funerals to be running behind schedule and for there to be a tangible atmosphere of congestion and tension after a morning funeral falls out of match with the schedule.
- 6.23 This all too easily has a qualitative impact upon the experience of bereaved people. Similarly, Funeral Directors delayed by one funeral face challenges in minimising the impact that this has on their ability to undertake the other funerals they have arranged for the same day.
- 6.24 The essence of a funeral is that it is centred upon a unique individual and the distinct group of people that were familiar enough with that person to attend their funeral. This uniqueness is fatally compromised by congestion and delay, or rush, at the crematorium and the sense that one is simply travelling on a 'conveyor-belt' through the crematorium funeral experience.
- 6.25 A new single crematorium at Grevatts Lane West will offer 60-minute funeral intervals. Even if all 5 core slots in a day were booked, this generous interval time will minimise the possibility of congestion occurring at a single crematorium with one chapel. People will be able to arrive, park, enter the building, experience the funeral and leave the site with a sense that they are the only people on site and the only funeral that day. This will have a memorable impact upon their experience of the death of the person they knew.

- 6.26 The provision of a new crematorium at Grevatts Lane West will not only have a positive impact upon those bereaved people who use its facilities. Each funeral that takes place at the new crematorium will free up time and space at Chichester and Worthing crematoria, enhancing their qualitative provision. Even if the operators of other crematoria make no changes to the quality of their provision, people will have an improved experience at their sites through reduced congestion.
- 6.27 These significant qualitative improvements are applicable to a single new crematorium and bereaved people would gain no additional qualitative improvements through their being two new crematoria is such close proximity.