

Finance & Customer Services

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Please Contact:
Ashleigh Wilford

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24th December 2025

Mr Azam
Sent via email

Dear Mr Azam,

Questions raised at Improving Places Select Committee on 16 December 2025

Thank you for submitting your questions regarding the Improving Places agenda on 16 December 2025. I have addressed each question in turn as follows:

Council Report Questions

- **Section 2.5:** *Is Valley View part of the long-term strategic expansion of Herringthorpe Cemetery?*
The land in the area known as Valley View at East Herringthorpe is part of the cemetery land. It is for Dignity, as contracted operational managers of the site, to ensure the land is developed and brought into operation as part of their strategic plan.
- **Section 2.0:** *Can the Council confirm that a Pathologist is available to undertake a review of the report five days a week?*
The South Yorkshire (Eastern) District Coronial jurisdiction has two pathologists. Wherever there is a case that needs to be expedited, these are always accommodated as soon as possible every day of the week.
- **Section 2.0:** *As part of the metrics, can you add the following KPIs?*
 - *% of reports reviewed and submitted to the Coroner's Office the same day as autopsy for expedited requests*
 - *% acceptance of report by Coroner's Office*The KPIs are contractually set between all parties. This request will be taken to the next performance meeting for consideration.

Independent Review Action Plan Questions

- **SIP Point 1, Sub 1.2:** *Can the Council Share a copy of this digital guidance?*
The digital guidance referred to in this SIP is collated and owned by the Rotherham Hospital, not the Council. The Council inputs necessary information for its own service areas only. Therefore, we recommend you contact the Chaplaincy Service for a copy of that information. Information relating to Council services is available on our website and a PDF will be produced as agreed during the meeting in the New Year.
- **SIP Point 3, Sub 3.6:** *is not needed, we already have engagement with Dignity and formal meeting is what is required, with all parties.*
The recommendation aligns with other cemeteries and engagement across Rotherham for a Friends Group. As part of all customer engagement strategies, which are reviewed, this will be considered giving due regard to all aspects.
- **SIP Point 4, Sub 4.5:** *paperwork to be submitted by 3pm. As a SIP why can't we undertake burials 365 days a year, other councils provide this service. Outside of this SIP where is all of this documented?*
This is documented within the Dignity contract and related Dignity processes. The burial service operates 362 days per year due to essential interdependencies with other services, staffing limitations, and the need to uphold health, safety, and equality obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010.
- **SIP Point 9, Sub 9.1:** *can you confirm correct dates when compared with Point 3 sub 3.1?*
Correct dates for the Muslim Bereavement Liaison Group Meeting are confirmed to be: 12/02/2026, 28/05/2026, 13/08/2026, and 12/11/2026.
- **General SIP:** *Why are certain tasks red when due date isn't until 31/12/2026?*
Tasks appear red when not started and are reviewed throughout the year, upgraded to amber when in progress and green when complete.

Yours sincerely,

A Wilford

Ashleigh Wilford

Superintendent Registrar and Bereavement Services Manager