

Burial And Cremation (Scotland) Bill – Call for written evidence

Renfrewshire Council response

1.) Whether proposals for the restoration of lairs are appropriate (sections 25 – 37)?

Given the shortage of available burial space and the complications associated with identifying additional sites for cemeteries, Renfrewshire Council would support the proposal for the restoration of lairs. The Bill makes reference to public consultation and accompanying guidance would assist Burial authorities as part of any restoration process. There is a shortage of available burial space within Renfrewshire and as such all available options will require careful consideration.

2.) Whether provisions on the re-use of headstones would be appropriate?

The issue of re-use of headstones is a more complex one. With a lair, the lairholder does not own the lair, instead they are purchasing the right to be interred in the lair, however should they purchase a headstone that is their own property. It may be considered appropriate that lairs which have existing headstones are not brought back into use or they are removed from the lair due to the sensitivities in this regard.

3.) The appropriateness and extent of the roles which should be undertaken by inspectors of burial, crematorium and funeral directors (Part 4)?

Renfrewshire Council is supportive of the proposal to introduce inspectors and agree with the appropriateness and extent of the roles which should be undertaken.

4.) The appropriateness and extent of the proposed regulation of funeral directors Part 5)?

Renfrewshire Council supports the move to regulate the industry and agree that this will improve consistency. At the present time there is no regulatory framework for the industry and this proposal would protect the industry and standardise operating practices.

5.) The extent to which the Bill will address funeral costs and what, if any, further measures the Bill could contain?

It is not clear at this stage how the Bill will address funeral costs. Within Renfrewshire, burial costs are in the lower quartile when compared to costs across all local authorities. As such the burial costs in Renfrewshire generally account for around 20% of the overall Funeral costs. Burial costs are determined at a local level by the burial authority taking into account each authorities own particular circumstances, the other costs associated with funerals will be determined by Funeral Directors.

6.) The appropriateness of the removal of existing provisions restricting the proximity of new crematorium to housing?

There have been significant advances in technologies associated with cremation since the existing provisions restricting proximity were introduced. However, due to the requirements for a sensitive and respectful area within the crematorium where deceased's relatives can pay their respects it is considered that it would be appropriate to retain the existing provisions.