

Cheshire East Council Cemeteries Strategy



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Draft for Consultation

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
List of Figures.....	3
1.0 Executive Summary.....	4
2.0 Introduction.....	5
3.0 The Council’s cemeteries: demand and capacity.....	6
3.2 Demand	6
3.3 Capacity	10
4.0 Other burial provision: demand and capacity.....	16
4.2 Town and Parish Councils	16
4.3. Parish Churches	18
4.4 Summary of burial provision by Town and Parish Councils and Parish Churches	22
5.0 Demographic context	23
5.2 Population	23
5.3 Age structure	25
5.4 Mortality rates and numbers of deaths	30
5.5 Ethnicity.....	33
5.6 Religious belief	34
5.7 Summary of the Demographic Context.....	35
6.0 Legal Context	36
6.1 Provision and maintenance of cemeteries.....	36
6.2 Maintenance of closed churchyards.....	36
6.3 Optimisation of burial space.....	38
6.4 Purchased (private or family grave)	39
6.5 Unpurchased (public or shared grave)	42
6.6 Re-use of graves	43
6.7 Burial Records.....	45
7.0 Key issues and areas for development	46
7.1 Demand for burial across Cheshire East.....	46
7.2 Capacity for burial across Cheshire East.....	48
7.3 Drive-time catchment mapping and analysis – current situation	54
7.4 Drive-time catchment mapping and analysis – Two principal cemeteries.	63
8.0 Vision, policies and objectives.....	71
9.0 Cemetery Strategy Short Term	72
10.0 Cemetery Strategy Medium Term	73
11.0 Cemetery Strategy Long Term	73

List of Figures

Figure 1: Cheshire East Council cemeteries	6
Figure 2: Total burials in 2016 and 2017	6
Figure 3: Burials by type in 2016 and 2017	7
Figure 4: New and reopened graves in 2017	8
Figure 5: Summary of grave capacity	11
Figure 6: Attractive tree lined avenue adds significantly to character, Sandbach Cemetery	12
Figure 7: Trees planted to enhance cemetery character, Sandbach Cemetery	12
Figure 8: Plots C and D Sandbach Cemetery	14
Figure 9: Space for new graves in Weston Cemetery	15
Figure 10: Other providers – demand and capacity	16
Figure 11: Demand and capacity in Churchyards	19
Figure 12: Churches without churchyards or full or closed churchyards	21
Figure 13: Estimated demand for burial in Cheshire East in 2016	22
Figure 14: Estimated population change 2011 to 2016	23
Figure 15: Estimated population change 2014 to 2039	24
Figure 16: Age structure comparison 2011	25
Figure 17: Age structure comparison 2016	26
Figure 18: Projected change in age structure 2018 to 2039	27
Figure 19: ONS 2014-based projected age structure comparison 2018 to 2039	28
Figure 20: Projection population change 2018 to 2039	29
Figure 21: Five-yearly deaths and death rates in England and Wales 1841 to 2015	30
Figure 22: Deaths in England and Cheshire East in 2016 by quinary age band	31
Figure 23: Projected increase in deaths	31
Figure 24: Deaths in Cheshire East by month 2012 to 2014	32
Figure 25: Minority ethnic group comparison 2011	33
Figure 26: Minority religious belief comparison 2011	34
Figure 27: Deaths by ward in Cheshire East in 2016	47
Figure 28: Estimated capacity in Cheshire East Council cemeteries.	50
Figure 29: Estimated annual capacity in Cheshire East Council cemeteries.	51
Figure 30: Estimated annual capacity in Cheshire East Council cemeteries.	51
Figure 31: Capacity to provide new graves 2018 to 2047	53
Figure 32: Cheshire East cemeteries 15-minute drive-time catchments	55
Figure 33: Cheshire East cemeteries 30-minute drive-time catchments	56
Figure 34: Cheshire East cemeteries 45-minute drive-time catchments	57
Figure 35: Cheshire East cemeteries 60-minute drive-time catchments	58
Figure 36: Drive-time catchment populations 2011	59
Figure 37: Drive-time catchment deaths 2016	59
Figure 38 Drive-time catchment calculated burials 2016	60
Figure 39: Drive-time catchment actual burials and variation from calculated burials 2016	61
Figure 40: 15-minute drive-time catchments for Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield	63
Figure 41: 30-minute drive-time catchments for Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield	64
Figure 42: 45-minute drive-time catchments for Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield	65
Figure 43: 60-minute drive-time catchments for Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield	66
Figure 44: drive-time catchment populations 2011	67
Figure 45: drive-time catchment deaths 2016	68
Figure 46: Comparison of 30-minute drive-time catchments	69

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 In Cheshire East, demand for burial provision is currently met by Cheshire East Council's eleven cemeteries, together with town and parish council cemeteries and churchyards.
- 1.2 The research for this strategy suggests that coffin burial accounts for approximately 16 to 20 per cent of funerals in Cheshire East, with Cheshire East Council's cemeteries accommodating 8.4 per cent of all coffin burials in Cheshire East. (Figure 13 illustrates the calculations that provide these percentage figures)
- 1.3 Ashes following cremation accounted for approximately 59 per cent of total burials in the council's cemeteries in 2017.
- 1.4 Even accounting for projected increases in the number of deaths, there is sufficient capacity within the council's cemeteries overall to meet demand for new graves for over 30 years.
- 1.5 However, individual cemeteries will run out of space for new graves sooner than this. Unless supplemented in some way, this overall capacity will require at least some people to bury their dead further away from their home location than they would currently.
- 1.6 Approximately 90% of the population of Cheshire East currently live within a 30-minute drive-time at funeral speeds of one of the council's cemeteries.
- 1.7 However, approximately 72% of the population of Cheshire East currently live within a 30-minute drive-time at funeral speeds of either or both, of the two largest cemeteries with the most remaining space for burial, Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield cemeteries.
- 1.8 The drive-time catchment analysis suggests that Cheshire East Council might wish to consider Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield as its two principal cemeteries, given their convenient location and existing facilities.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Cheshire East Council commissioned this cemeteries strategy to describe the quantity and location of current provision and to review the options and mechanisms for ensuring appropriate provision for future burials. This required a detailed assessment of both current and future demand and capacity for burial within the Council's cemeteries and a survey of demand and capacity at burial sites provided by others, including Town and Parish Councils and churches.
- 2.2 The strategy is informed by an awareness of the demographic and legal context for the provision and management of burial facilities.
- 2.3 The data used in this strategy originates from a number of sources. Data on demand and capacity within the Council's cemeteries is largely derived from the cemetery records stored within the 'BACAS' Burial and Cremation Administration System. This refers to computer software developed by Clear Skies Software and used by many cemeteries and crematoria to maintain records and to administer funerals. Demographic data originates from the ONS, the Office for National Statistics. Information regarding churchyards is supplied by the Venerable Ian Bishop, Archdeacon of Macclesfield, Minsters and churchwardens. Information regarding town and parish councils is supplied by town and parish clerks. Drive-time mapping and data is supplied by Vectos Limited.
- 2.4 The strategy identifies the steps that are required to enable the provision of sustainable cemeteries and encourages liaison with the other providers to ensure continued provision for burial that meets local need across the whole of Cheshire East.

3.0 The Council's cemeteries: demand and capacity

3.1 Figure 1 lists Cheshire East Council's 11 cemeteries:

Cemetery	Address	Opened	Acres
Alderley Edge	Chelford Road, Alderley Edge SK9 7TQ	1906	4.00
Congleton	Howey Lane, Congleton CW12 4AE	2004	3.18
Crewe Coppenhall	Reid Street, Coppenhall CW1 3DZ	1863	9.44
Crewe Badger Avenue	Badger Avenue, Crewe CW1 3JG	1872	28.65
Crewe Meadow Brook	Minshull New Road, Crewe CW1 3PP	2017	13.20
Knutsford	Tabley Hill Lane, Tabley WA16 0EW	1902	5.00
Macclesfield	Prestbury Road, Macclesfield SK10 3BU	1866	68.00
Nantwich	Whitehouse Lane, Nantwich CW5 6HP	1875	6.30
Sandbach	The Hill, Sandbach CW11 1JJ	1935	5.62
Weston	Cemetery Road, Weston, Crewe CW2 5LQ	1902	1.80
Wilmslow	Manchester Road, Wilmslow SK9 2LE	1907	4.50

Figure 1: Cheshire East Council cemeteries

Source: Cheshire East Council

3.2 Demand

3.2.1 Numbers of deaths and types of burial vary by location and from year to year, as illustrated below in Figure 2 for total burials during 2016 and 2017.

Cemetery	Total Burials		
	2016	2017	Variation
Alderley Edge	47	48	1
Congleton	42	39	-3
Crewe Coppenhall	6	5	-1
Crewe Badger Avenue	204	200	-4
Crewe Meadow Brook	42	78	36
Knutsford	37	42	5
Macclesfield	161	214	53
Nantwich	90	87	-3
Sandbach	58	69	11
Weston	9	18	9
Wilmslow	55	59	4
Totals	751	859	108

Figure 2: Total burials in 2016 and 2017

Source: Cheshire East Council Cemetery Records

3.2.2 On average, every working day there are between 3 and 4 burials of all types across the Council's 11 cemeteries.

3.2.3 There are various types of burials, the most obvious distinction being that between the burial of coffins and the burial of ashes following cremation. Figure 3 below illustrates this distinction for 2016 and 2017:

Cemetery	2016		2017	
	Coffins	Ashes	Coffins	Ashes
Alderley Edge	23	24	17	31
Congleton	17	25	11	28
Coppenhall	2	4	1	4
Crewe	61	143	54	146
Knutsford	27	10	28	14
Macclesfield	63	98	76	138
Meadow Brook	23	19	47	31
Nantwich	44	46	34	53
Sandbach	31	27	46	23
Weston	4	5	7	11
Wilmslow	36	19	29	30
Totals	331	420	350	509
Proportions	44%	56%	41%	59%

Figure 3: Burials by type in 2016 and 2017

Source: Cheshire East Council Cemetery Records

3.2.4 Figure 3 reveals that there is greater demand for the burial of ashes than of coffins.

3.2.5 It is important to note that each coffin or ashes burial does not necessarily require a new grave or new ashes plot.

3.2.6 Family graves are common in cemeteries and churchyards. In the Council's cemeteries new graves can be excavated to accommodate up to 3 coffin burials. In addition, both ashes plots and coffin graves can accommodate a number of ashes burials.

3.2.7 The relative proportions of demand for new and reopened graves often reflect the age of the cemetery:

- Demand for new graves predominates in a new cemetery and it normally takes 10 years or more before the first of these graves containing a single burial is reopened to receive a second family member.
- Where a cemetery has been established for many years, space for new graves gradually diminishes and reopened graves predominate.
- Once there is no space at all remaining for new graves, reopened graves account for all burials. As further years pass, the number of burials declines as family graves become filled and new cemeteries or extensions are developed, if demand for burial is to be accommodated.

3.2.8 Figure 4 below illustrates for 2017 the distinction between the demand for burial in new graves and burial in existing graves, which are reopened to accommodate a further coffin burial.

Cemetery	New	Reopen	New	Reopen
Alderley Edge	8	9	47%	53%
Congleton	11	0	100%	0%
Crewe Coppenhall	1	0	100%	0%
Crewe Badger Avenue	25	29	46%	54%
Crewe Meadow Brook	44	3	94%	6%
Knutsford	18	10	64%	36%
Macclesfield	33	43	43%	57%
Nantwich	24	10	71%	29%
Sandbach	30	16	65%	35%
Weston	5	2	71%	29%
Wilmslow	14	15	48%	52%
Totals	213	137	61%	39%

Figure 4: New and reopened graves in 2017

Source: Cheshire East Council Cemetery Records

3.2.9 Figure 4 illustrates:

- Both Congleton and Crewe Meadow Brook are new cemeteries and new graves predominate.
- Whilst Nantwich is an old cemetery, it has a new extension, which accounts for the higher proportion of new graves.
- Crewe Coppenhall is an old cemetery and has very few burials. However, a very small number of new graves have been accommodated, for example where a tree has had to be removed.
- The other cemeteries have proportions of demand than may be observed at typical operational cemeteries all over the country.

3.3 Capacity

3.3.1 The facilities offered for the burial of ashes vary across the 11 cemeteries and include burial plots and above-ground vaults. The various options all occupy a certain amount of space and, due to the level of demand, the Council will continue to provide space in the cemeteries to accommodate them.

3.3.2 However, coffin burial uses up much more land than any of the various options for ashes and deliverability is also influenced to a much greater degree by ground conditions within each site. This is due to legal and practical requirements relating to the depths at which coffins are buried.

3.3.3 Thus, whilst space for ashes is highly relevant, the key factor in determining cemetery capacity is the space available for new graves for coffin burial.

3.3.4 Cemetery capacity is not as fixed and definitive as might be assumed:

- The size, topography, existing features and design of each cemetery influence how many grave spaces are originally envisaged.
- Ground conditions influence the depths to which graves may be excavated and thus the number of burials that may be accommodated. Ground conditions vary between cemeteries and can also vary to a surprising degree within each cemetery.
- Trees planted when the cemetery is first developed may mature to a significant size and reduce the area available for graves.
- In recent years, there has been a general trend for larger coffin sizes and an increase in the use of caskets, both of which may require larger grave space sizes and thus less graves than originally envisaged.
- It is possible to create 'new' space for graves by using land previously designated for other purposes, such as paths and landscape.

3.3.5 The data in Figure 5 below originate from an analysis of the BACAS databases, grave plans and site visits. Account has been taken of the new graves available in the as-yet unused areas of the recently developed Congleton and Crewe Meadow Brook cemeteries; potential new graves that could be created at the perimeters of sections in Sandbach and Weston cemeteries and the proposed extensions at Alderley Edge and Weston.

Cemetery	Available	Created	Extension	Total
Alderley Edge	322		1,000	1,322
Congleton	792			792
Crewe Coppenhall	0			0
Crewe Badger Avenue	0			0
Crewe Meadow Brook	6,705			6,705
Knutsford	426			426
Macclesfield	2,718			2,718
Nantwich	918			918
Sandbach	115	120		235
Weston	0	26	448	474
Wilmslow	283			283
Totals	12,279	146	448	13,873

Figure 5: Summary of grave capacity

Source: Cheshire East Council Cemetery Records

3.3.6 Figure 5 above shows that it is estimated that 13,873 graves are available for use for coffin burial across nine of the eleven Cheshire East cemeteries.

3.3.7 These estimates take account of the availability of graves originally planned when cemeteries were first designed, but which, however, may now no longer be deliverable, for example due to the growth of trees or the development of crematoria.

3.3.8 In some areas within the cemeteries, it is not feasible to excavate all of the graves originally envisaged without having to remove well established trees and shrubs

that currently enhance the cemeteries. The photographs below at Figures 6 and 7 illustrate such areas.



Figure 6 :Attractive tree lined avenue adds significantly to character, Sandbach Cemetery



Figure 7: Trees planted to enhance cemetery character, Sandbach Cemetery

3.3.9 The combined effect of the trees currently growing in the Council's cemeteries could potentially result in the loss of more than 500 graves that were originally planned on the cemetery maps. Accurately quantifying this impact upon grave availability in cemeteries, particularly the largest at Macclesfield and Crewe, would require extensive site investigations.

3.3.10 It is likely that the development during the 20th century of Crewe and Macclesfield crematoria within the cemeteries, together with their associated extensive Gardens of Remembrance, had the effect of significantly reducing the number of graves originally planned for those cemeteries when they were designed in the nineteenth century before crematoria were introduced.

- Crewe Badger Avenue Cemetery was originally opened in 1872. The crematorium was opened in 1958 on the site of the original cemetery chapels.
- Macclesfield Cemetery was originally opened in 1866. The crematorium was opened in 1960, following the conversion and extension of the original Nonconformist Cemetery Chapel.

3.3.11 Conversely, as space for new graves becomes limited, steps can be taken to create new grave space by using areas not originally designated for the purpose¹. However, there should be careful consideration of aesthetic, environmental and heritage factors, as well as the need to facilitate access to graves, when considering utilising areas not original allocated for burial.

3.3.12 The photograph below at Figure 8 illustrates an example of where a limited number of new graves could be excavated in parallel with existing graves, within the grass verges at the edges of existing 'full' areas of Sandbach Cemetery with consideration and ensuring that existing graves would not be driven over.

¹ See legal context section



Figure 8: Plots C and D Sandbach Cemetery

3.3.13 Cheshire East Council has already used this technique to create new graves and space for potential further new graves within Crewe Badger Avenue, Nantwich and Weston cemeteries:

- Prior to the opening of Crewe Meadow Brook Cemetery, a few paths at Crewe Badger Avenue Cemetery were removed to create new space for graves.
- Prior to the opening of the new extension, paths within the original cemetery at Nantwich Cemetery were allocated for new graves, some of which have been used.
- Additional graves and ashes plots have been created either side of the access path at Weston Cemetery. A boundary hedge has also been recently removed to create further space for graves, as illustrated in the photograph below at Figure 9.



Figure 9: Space for new graves in Weston Cemetery

4.0 Other burial provision: demand and capacity

4.1 Provision at the local level

4.1.1 As discussed in the section considering the demographic context, the population of Cheshire East is concentrated around urban areas, but is also dispersed at lower densities across more rural areas. Many of these communities are geographically distant from our eleven cemeteries and they rely on local burial provision. Where there are parish churchyards still open for burials, these may pre-date the establishment of the council's cemeteries.

4.2 Town and Parish Councils

4.2.1 There are 11 Town Councils and 97 Parish Councils within Cheshire East. An email survey of burial provision resulted in a response rate of more than 62 per cent and gathered information regarding burial provision by those councils. Figure 10 below summarises data on annual demand for new graves for coffin burial:

Burial Authority	Burials per year	Capacity in years
Middlewich Cemetery Joint Management Board	30	100
Audlem Burial Board	25	70
Nether Alderley Parish Council	*1	84
Swettenham Parish Council	2	84
Total burials per year	58	

Figure 10: Other providers – demand and capacity

Source: Responses to email survey for this strategy

4.2.2 The figure of *1 new grave at Nether Alderley is an approximate estimate, based upon the size of the population. It can be challenging to precisely quantify demand, as this varies seasonally and from year to year. This is particularly the case where the population and numbers of deaths are relatively small.

4.2.3 These data suggest that approximately 58 coffin burials take place in new graves in these cemeteries each year, which represents 1.5 per cent of all deaths and 15.4 per cent of all coffin burials in new graves in Cheshire East.

4.2.4 In common with larger local authorities, town and parish councils generally charge higher cemetery fees to non-residents. They may also have a policy of not accepting non-resident burials, unless specific links with the community can be evidenced, as a means to prolong the capacity of their cemeteries to meet local need.

4.2.5 Swettenham Parish Council's cemetery rules specify that rights of burial will be granted subject to one of the following conditions being met:

- Resident within the parish of Swettenham at date of death
- Former residents who have left the parish due to retirement, marriage, residential care, but have a strong family link with the parish community.
- Former residents who were listed in the Register of Electors for the parish within the period of 5 years prior to death
- Residents from adjoining parishes who have maintained a strong connection with the parish by way of community involvement.

4.2.6 Nether Alderley Parish Council manages its cemetery through a Burial Board with Regulations that include:

Persons entitled to be buried in the Burial Ground:

- "Parishioners": Persons who are resident within the civil parish of Nether Alderley or who are on the current electoral roll of St. Mary's Church, Alderley.
- "Non-Parishioners": Anyone who lives outside the civil parish of Nether Alderley but within the ecclesiastical parish of St. Mary, Alderley.
- "Non-Parishioners": Anyone who lives outside the civil parish of Nether Alderley but who has lived within the civil parish of Nether Alderley for a period of no less than 10 years at any stage.

- “Non-Parishioners”: Anyone who has been on the electoral roll of St. Mary’s Church, Alderley, for a period of no less than 10 years at any stage.
- “Non-Parishioners”: Anyone who has lived within the ecclesiastical parish area of Great Warford for a period of no less than 10 years at any stage.

4.2.7 Therefore, burial space might be available in parish council cemeteries, but only to local residents.

4.3. Parish Churches

4.3.1 Cheshire East lies within the Diocese of Chester, which includes more than 190 churches, but which extends well beyond the local authority’s boundaries. Using data supplied by the Archdeacon of Macclesfield, an email survey was undertaken of approximately 75 per cent of the 61 churches within Cheshire East recorded as having churchyards in use for burial. This survey identified 35 Church of England churchyards where burials still take place, although some only offer space for the burial of ashes.

4.3.2 Churchyards often serve small local communities and may be hundreds of years old. These factors combine to make it difficult to establish precise figures for average demand for new graves and the number of grave spaces remaining.

4.3.3 Figure 11 below provides the results of the survey:

Deanery	Parish	Church	Coffin burials per year	Capacity in years	Ashes burials per year	Capacity in years
Bowdon	Ashley	St Elizabeth's			4	20
Congleton	Alsager	Christ Church	30	1		
Congleton	Astbury	St Mary's	15	10		
Congleton	Brereton	St Oswald's	2	20		
Congleton	Church Hulme	St Luke's	5	30		
Congleton	Eaton	Christ Church	1	50		
Congleton	Goostrey	St Luke's	5	5		10

Deanery	Parish	Church	Coffin burials per year	Capacity in years	Ashes burials per year	Capacity in years
Congleton	Hulme Walfield	St Michael	1	50		
Congleton	Mossley	Holy Trinity		0	2	5
Congleton	Smallwood	St John the Baptist	2	4		
Congleton	St John	St John	2	5	2	15
Congleton	St Peter	St Peter		0	8	4
Congleton	Warmingham	St Leonards	3	50	2	50
Knutsford	Chelford	St John the Evangelist	3	10		
Knutsford	Lower Peover	St Oswald	5	50		
Knutsford	Marthall	All Saints		50		
Knutsford	Over Peover	St Lawrence	5	50		
Knutsford	Over Tabley	St Paul's		100	1	50
Macclesfield	Bosley	St Mary the Virgin	1	20	1	10
Macclesfield	Gawsworth	St James the Great	2	30	7	
Macclesfield	Henbury	St Thomas	1	10		
Macclesfield	Marton	St James & St Paul	1	50		
Macclesfield	Pott Shrigley	St Christopher's	1	40	2	35
Macclesfield	Sutton St James	St James	3	10		
Macclesfield	Wildboarclough	St Saviour	1	30		
Macclesfield	Windle	St Michael	2	8		
Malpas	Marbury	St Michael and All Angels	2	15	2	20
Nantwich	Acton	St Mary	6	75	6	400
Nantwich	Baddiley	St Michael	1	50		
Nantwich	Burleydam	St Mary & St Michael	1	50		
Nantwich	Crewe Green	St Michael & All Angels		100		
Nantwich	Haslington	St Matthew's Haslington		100		
Nantwich	Leighton-cum-Minshull Vernon	St Peters	6	100	3	
Nantwich	Wistaston	St Mary the Virgin	12	20	15	20
Nantwich	Wrenbury	St Chad	9		5	
Total burials			128		60	

Figure 11: Demand and capacity in Churchyards

Source: Responses to email survey for this strategy

- 4.3.4 The data in Figure 11 are estimates and simplify a complex situation. Some churchyards listed have no space for coffin burials and only bury ashes. Others have only a few years' capacity remaining for coffin burial, whilst others seem to have low demand and enough space to last "about 100 years".
- 4.3.5 The survey suggests that approximately 120 coffin burials take place in new graves in these churchyards in Cheshire East each year, which represents 3 per cent of all deaths and 31.9 per cent of all coffin burials in new graves in Cheshire East. There are likely to be some additional burials occurring in the 15 other open churchyards.
- 4.3.6 The churchyard with the highest level of demand is Christ Church, Alsager. However, there is no scope for an extension of the churchyard. If this demand is to be met elsewhere, it will affect capacity at other sites.
- 4.3.7 Whilst some churches do not have a burial ground at all, some churchyards are full for coffin burial and others are both full and formally closed by Order in Council, as listed below in Figure 12:

Deanery	Parish	No Burial Ground	Full	Closed
Congleton Deanery	Alsager St Mary Magdalene	1		
Knutsford Deanery	Alderley Edge	1		
Knutsford Deanery	High Legh	1		
Macclesfield Deanery	All Saints	1		
Macclesfield Deanery	Macclesfield St John	1		
Macclesfield Deanery	Prestbury	1		
Macclesfield Deanery	St Barnabas	1		
Middlewich Deanery	Moulton	1		
Middlewich Deanery	Northwich (Castle) Holy Trinity	1		
Middlewich Deanery	Northwich (Winnington) St Luke	1		
Middlewich Deanery	Sandiway	1		
Nantwich Deanery	Crewe All Saints and St Paul	1		
Nantwich Deanery	Crewe Christ Church	1		
Nantwich Deanery	Crewe St Barnabas	1		
Nantwich Deanery	Crewe St Peter	1		
Nantwich Deanery	Doddington	1		

Deanery	Parish	No Burial Ground	Full	Closed
Nantwich Deanery	Shavington	1		
Nantwich Deanery	Weston	1		
Congleton Deanery	Elworth		1	
Congleton Deanery	Holy Trinity Mossley		1	
Congleton Deanery	Sandbach		1	
Congleton Deanery	St Stephen		1	
Congleton Deanery	Swettenham		1	
Knutsford Deanery	Alderley		1	
Knutsford Deanery	Wilmslow		1	
Macclesfield Deanery	Hurdsfield		1	
Macclesfield Deanery	St Peter		1	
Nantwich Deanery	Coppenhall		1	
Nantwich Deanery	Crewe St Andrew with St John the Baptist		1	
Knutsford Deanery	Knutsford St Cross			1
Knutsford Deanery	Knutsford St John the Baptist			1
Macclesfield Deanery	Macclesfield St Paul			1
Macclesfield Deanery	St Michael & All Angels			1
Middlewich Deanery	Middlewich			1
Nantwich Deanery	Audlem			1
Nantwich Deanery	Wybunbury			1

Figure 12: Churches without churchyards or full or closed churchyards

Source: Archdeacon of Macclesfield

4.4 Summary of burial provision by Town and Parish Councils and Parish Churches

4.4.1 Currently, surveys indicate that town and parish councils and parish churchyards account for approximately 178 coffin burials in new graves per year.

4.4.2 In 2016, there were 3,961 deaths of residents in Cheshire East. Using the typical ratio of 60 per cent of burials taking place in new graves and 40 per cent in reopened family graves, Figure 13 below provides estimates to summarise the demand for coffin burials and the proportion of deaths they represent in Cheshire East:

Provider	New	Reopen	Total	% of Deaths
Churchyards	120	80	200	5.0%
Town and Parish Councils	58	42	100	2.5%
Combined	178	122	300	7.5%
Cheshire East	198	133	331	8.4%
Totals	376	255	631	15.9%

Figure 13: Estimated demand for burial in Cheshire East in 2016

Source: Responses to email survey for this strategy and Cheshire East Council Cemetery Records

4.4.3 Figure 13 suggests that town and parish council cemeteries and churchyards combined undertake only slightly less burials than Cheshire East Council. This underlines the important role these cemeteries and churchyards fulfil in meeting local needs for burial.

5.0 Demographic context

5.1 Factors influencing demand for burial space

5.1.1 Demand for burial space is influenced by a series of interlinked demographic factors:

- Population
- Age structure
- Mortality rates and numbers of deaths
- Ethnicity
- Religious belief

5.1.2 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes demographic data at both national and local authority level, with the most definitive data contained within the Census 2011. Some of these data are periodically supplemented by estimates, the latest available on population being the mid-2016 estimates. The ONS also produce projections into the future and the latest available at local authority level are the 2014-based Subnational Population Projections.

5.2 Population

5.21 Figure 14 below compares the estimated population change in Cheshire East and England as a whole between the definitive Census 2011 and the ONS 2016 mid-year estimates:

	Census 2011	Mid-2016	2011-2016	
Cheshire East	370,127	376,700	6,573	1.8%
England	53,012,456	55,268,100	2,255,644	4.3%

Figure 14: Estimated population change 2011 to 2016

Source: Census 2011 table KS101EW and ONS table SAPE19DT8 population estimates

- 5.2.3 These figures indicate that the population of Cheshire East has increased during this period, but at less than half the rate as England as a whole.
- 5.2.4 As with other local authority areas, the population density is variable across Cheshire East with higher densities around urban centres. These include Congleton, Crewe, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Sandbach and Wilmslow.
- 5.2.5 At the time of the Census 2011, the population density in Cheshire East was only 3.2 persons per hectare, compared with 5.2 across the six unitary authorities in the North West and 4.1 in England as a whole.
- 5.2.6 These average figures conceal great geographical variation. Based upon ONS mid-2016 population (experimental) estimates, ward population densities in Cheshire East range from 0.4 persons per hectare in Wrenbury, to 73.5 in Crewe South.
- 5.2.7 Figure 15 below compares the ONS 2014-based subnational population projections for Cheshire East and England as a whole. It is important to note how the ONS produces these projections:
- 5.2.8 “The projected local authority population for each year is initially calculated by ageing on the population for the previous year, applying assumed local fertility and mortality rates to calculate the number of projected births and deaths, and then adjusting for migration into and out of each local authority. Assumed levels of fertility, mortality and migration for each local authority are **derived from observed values during the previous 5 or 6 years**. The projections are then constrained to the 2014-based national population projections for England.”²

	2014	2039	2014-2039	
Cheshire East	374,200	406,200	32,000	8.6%
England	54,316,600	63,281,500	8,964,900	16.5%

Figure 15: Estimated population change 2014 to 2039

Source: ONS Table 2 2014-based Subnational Population Projections

² ONS Statistical Bulletin ‘Subnational population projections for England: 2014-based projections’ released 25th May 2016

5.2.9 These ONS 2014 trend-based projections suggest that the population of Cheshire East will increase through to at least 2039, but at approximately half the rate as England as a whole.

5.3 Age structure

5.3.1 Figure 16 below compares the age structure of Cheshire East and England as a whole at the Census 2011:

Age band	Cheshire East	England	Variation
0 to 4	5.5%	6.3%	-0.8%
5 to 7	3.3%	3.4%	-0.2%
8 to 9	2.1%	2.2%	-0.1%
10 to 14	5.8%	5.8%	0.0%
15	1.2%	1.2%	0.0%
16 to 17	2.5%	2.5%	0.0%
18 to 19	2.3%	2.6%	-0.3%
20 to 24	5.0%	6.8%	-1.8%
25 to 29	5.1%	6.9%	-1.7%
30 to 44	19.5%	20.6%	-1.2%
45 to 59	21.4%	19.4%	2.0%
60 to 64	7.1%	6.0%	1.2%
65 to 74	10.3%	8.6%	1.7%
75 to 84	6.4%	5.5%	0.9%
85 to 89	1.7%	1.5%	0.3%
90 and over	0.9%	0.8%	0.1%

Figure 16: Age structure comparison 2011

Source: Census 2011 Table KS102EW

5.32 Figure 17 below compares age structure using the ONS mid-2016 estimates:

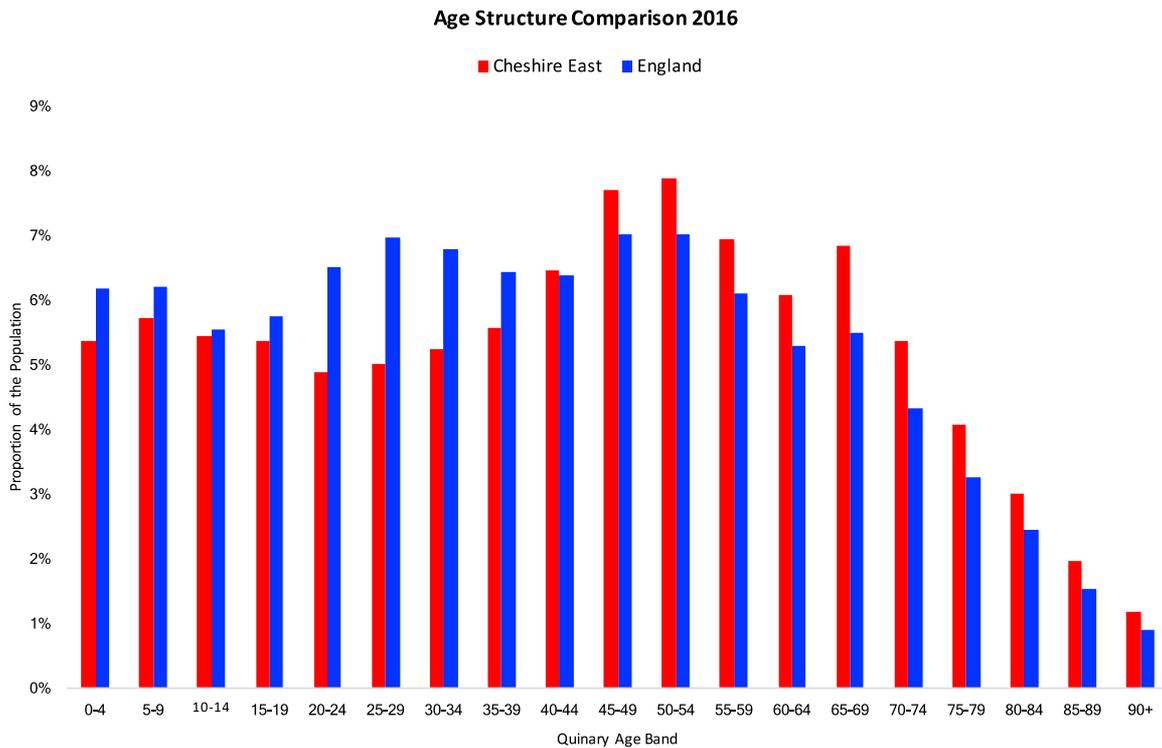


Figure 17: Age structure comparison 2016
Source: Census 2011 Table KS102EW

5.33 Figure 17 clearly indicates that Cheshire East has a generally older age structure than England as a whole.

5.34 As with other local authority areas, urban areas in Cheshire East tend to have the highest proportion of younger people and rural areas the highest proportion of older people.

5.35 Based upon ONS mid-2016 population (experimental) estimates, the proportion of people aged 65 years and over ranges by Ward from only 9 per cent in Leighton (Crewe) to 32.2 per cent in both Poynton East and Pott Shrigley. The greatest concentrations of older people are generally in the northern half of the Cheshire East area.

5.3.6 Figure 18 below uses data from the ONS 2014-based population projections to illustrate projected changes in the age structure of Cheshire East between 2018 and 2039:

Cheshire East				
Age band	2018	2039	Change	Change
0-4	19,900	19,800	(100)	-0.5%
5-9	21,700	21,000	(700)	-3.2%
10-14	21,600	22,100	500	2.3%
15-19	19,200	21,200	2,000	10.4%
20-24	17,400	17,700	300	1.7%
25-29	19,900	19,700	(200)	-1.0%
30-34	19,800	20,000	200	1.0%
35-39	21,400	19,800	(1,600)	-7.5%
40-44	22,100	22,600	500	2.3%
45-49	27,900	24,900	(3,000)	-10.8%
50-54	29,700	24,000	(5,700)	-19.2%
55-59	28,000	23,600	(4,400)	-15.7%
60-64	23,400	22,400	(1,000)	-4.3%
65-69	23,300	26,200	2,900	12.4%
70-74	23,400	27,600	4,200	17.9%
75-79	16,100	25,100	9,000	55.9%
80-84	12,200	19,100	6,900	56.6%
85-89	7,700	14,500	6,800	88.3%
90+	4,800	14,800	10,000	208.3%
All ages	379,700	406,200	26,500	7.0%

Figure 18: Projected change in age structure 2018 to 2039

Source: ONS Table 2 2014-based Subnational Population Projections

5.3.7 These ONS trend-based projections suggest a further ageing of the population during this period, with significant increases in the proportions of people aged 70 years and over.

5.3.8 Figure 19 below compares these changes in the age structure of Cheshire East, indicated by the ONS 2014-based projections for the period 2018 to 2039, with those for England as a whole:

Projected Change 2018 to 2039		
Age band	Cheshire East	England
0-4	-0.5%	4.1%
5-9	-3.2%	0.6%
10-14	2.3%	10.1%
15-19	10.4%	19.6%
20-24	1.7%	7.7%
25-29	-1.0%	4.5%
30-34	1.0%	3.2%
35-39	-7.5%	-3.4%
40-44	2.3%	12.3%
45-49	-10.8%	4.5%
50-54	-19.2%	-3.0%
55-59	-15.7%	1.8%
60-64	-4.3%	7.0%
65-69	12.4%	21.6%
70-74	17.9%	26.5%
75-79	55.9%	60.9%
80-84	56.6%	58.9%
85-89	88.3%	80.5%
90+	208.3%	177.4%
All ages	7.0%	12.9%

Figure 19: ONS 2014-based projected age structure comparison 2018 to 2039
Source: ONS Table 2 2014-based Subnational Population Projections

5.3.9 Figure 20 below provides a further comparison of these ONS 2014-based projections for changes in population and age structure between 2018 and 2039:

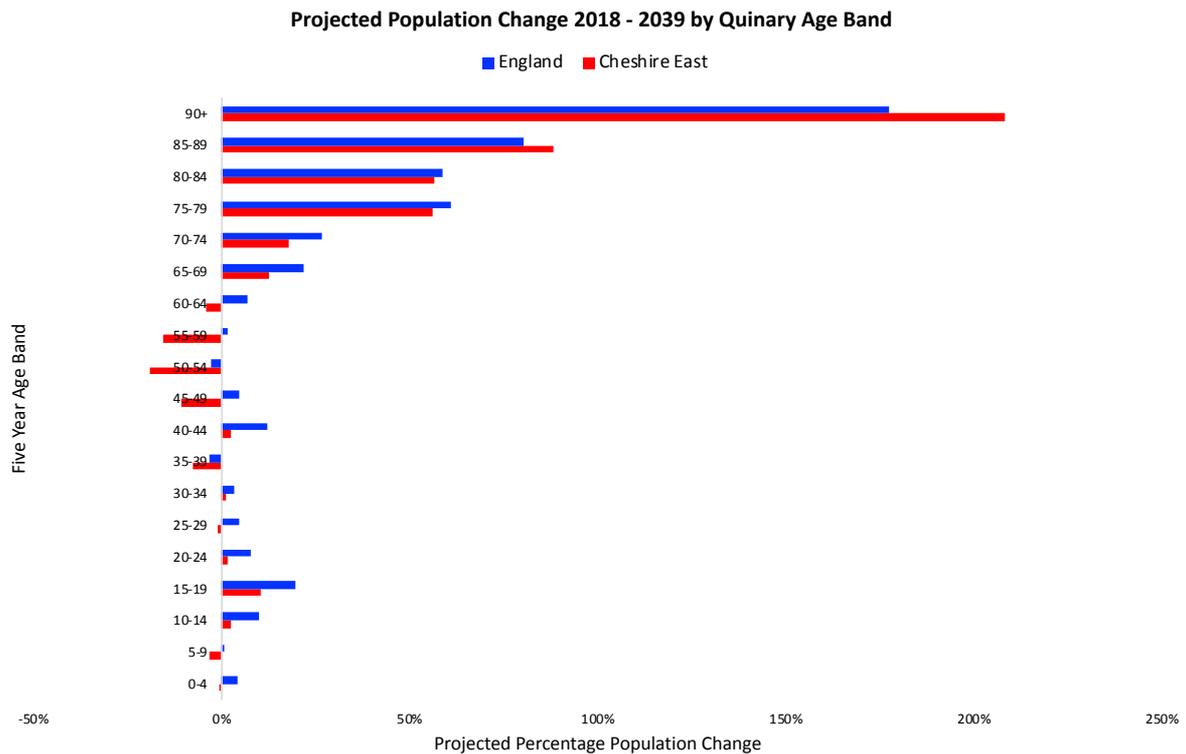


Figure 20: Projection population change 2018 to 2039
 Source: ONS Table 2 2014-based Subnational Population Projections

5.3.10 The ONS 2014-based projections clearly indicate significant ageing of the population of Cheshire East during the period 2018 to 2039.

5.4 Mortality rates and numbers of deaths

5.4.1 Death rates and numbers of deaths fluctuate over time, as illustrated for the whole of England and Wales in Figure 21 below:

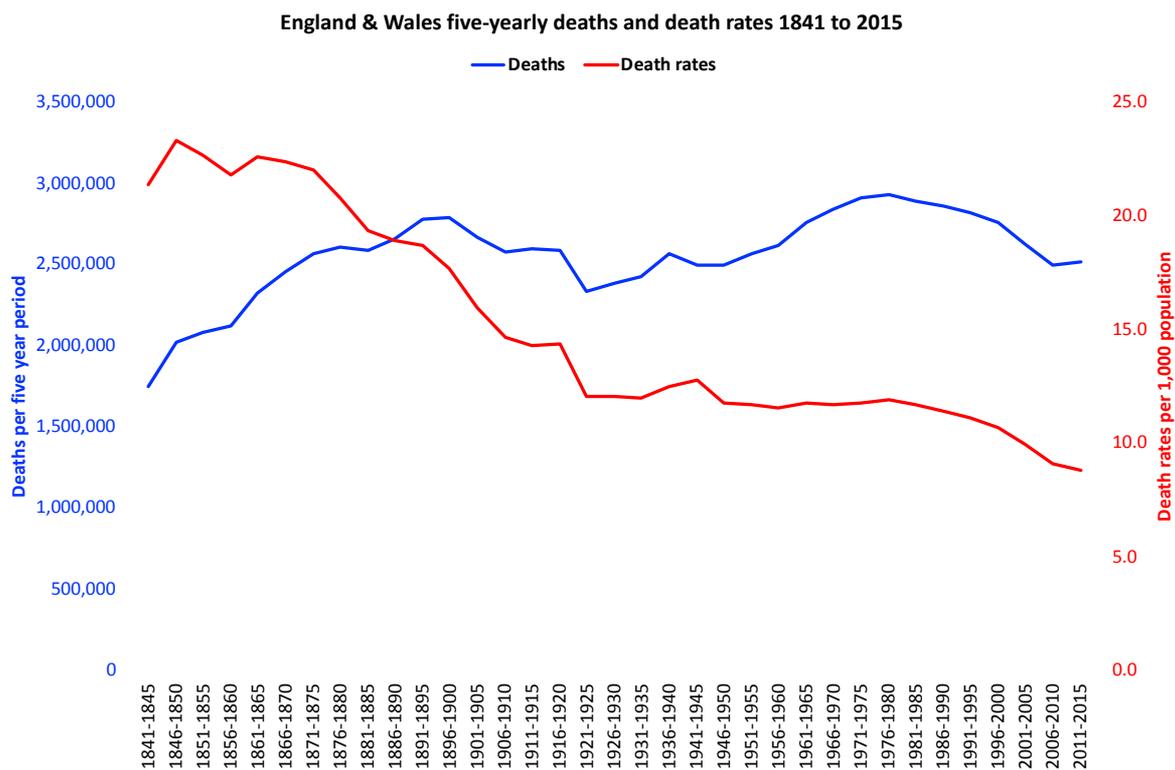


Figure 21: Five-yearly deaths and death rates in England and Wales 1841 to 2015

Source: ONS Table 10 Deaths Registered in England and Wales 2012

5.4.2 It can be seen that the crude death rate (the number of deaths per 1,000 of the population) has declined significantly since the mid 19th century and that numbers of deaths have declined since a peak in the late 1970s. The context for these changes includes increasing population numbers, better healthcare and general improvements in living standards.

5.4.3 The benefits in terms of longevity are particularly experienced by the ‘baby-boomers’, the post-war generation born between 1945 and 1955. Since 1955, with the exception of 1976, the annual number of births in the UK has exceeded the annual number of deaths. This is referred to as ‘Natural Change’ and this has played a major part in the increase in the UK population, combined with net migration.

5.4.4 Figure 22 below compares the proportions of deaths in 2016 in Cheshire East and England by five-year age band.

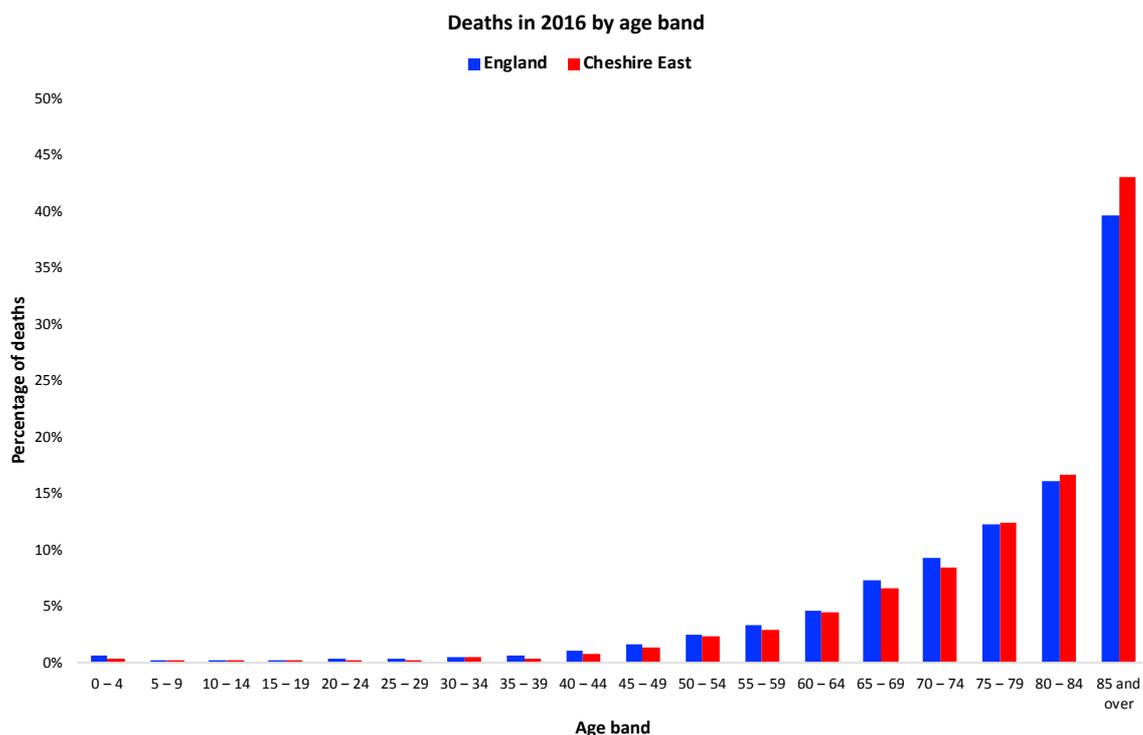


Figure 22: Deaths in England and Cheshire East in 2016 by quinary age band
Source: ONS Table 2 2014-based Subnational Population Projections

5.4.5 By comparison with England as a whole, Cheshire East has a higher proportion of deaths in the 80 years and over age groups, reflecting the older age structure of the population. It is reasonable to assume that, as the population ages further there will be more deaths than at present. Figure 23 below compares the projected change in the numbers of deaths in Cheshire East and England as a whole:

	Actual deaths in 2016	Projected deaths in 2039	Change
Cheshire East	3,961	5,000	26.2%
England	490,791	584,600	19.1%

Figure 23: Projected increase in deaths
Source: ONS Table 5 2014-based Subnational Population Projections

5.4.6 Figure 24 below illustrates the seasonal variation in deaths, as observed in Cheshire East over the 3-year period 2012 to 2014:

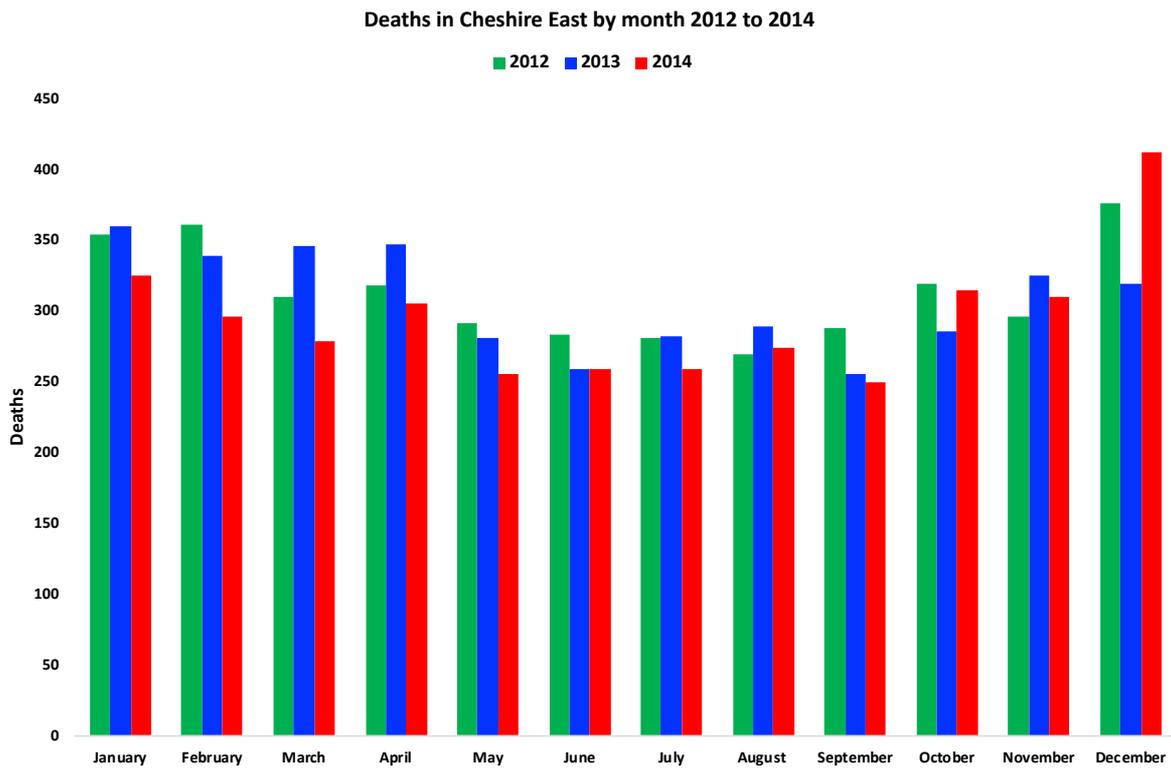


Figure 24: Deaths in Cheshire East by month 2012 to 2014

Source: ONS Daily deaths by local authority, England and Wales, 2010-2014 occurrences

5.4.7 This seasonal variation in deaths will be reflected in numbers of burials in the Council’s cemeteries, placing the greatest demand upon resources during the winter months.

5.5 Ethnicity

5.5.1 Ethnic origin is often associated religious belief and with preferences for burial or cremation. For example, in general terms, people of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin are likely to be Muslim and so require burial, whereas people of Indian origin are more likely to be Hindu and so require cremation.

5.5.2 Using data from the Census 2011, Figure 25 below compares ethnicity in Cheshire East and England as a whole. It is important to note the exclusion of the majority white British group.

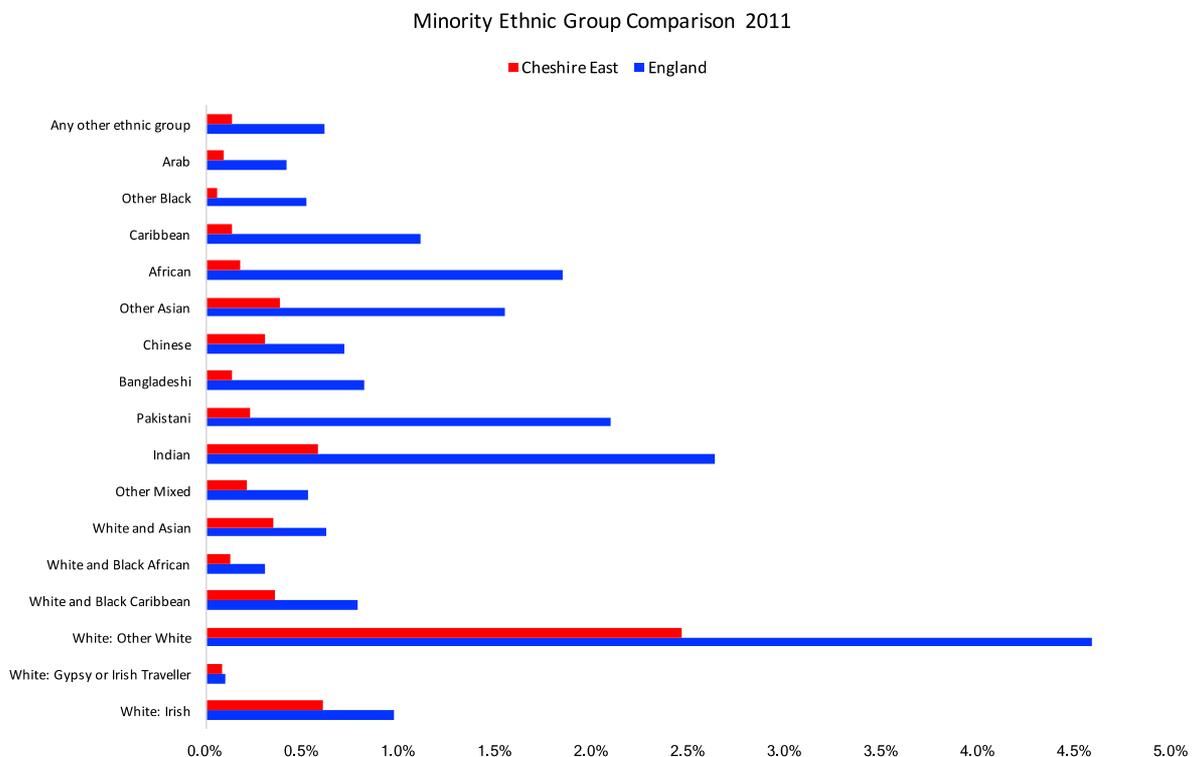


Figure 25: Minority ethnic group comparison 2011

Source: Census 2011 Table KS201EW

5.5.3 It is clear that the population of Cheshire East is far less ethnically diverse than England as a whole.

5.5.4 This suggests that preferences for burial and specific types of burial are likely to be less pronounced in Cheshire East than in England as a whole.

5.6 Religious belief

5.6.1 Religious belief can play a significant role in people's choice between burial and cremation. Actual practice is subject to the degree of commitment to the religious belief concerned, cultural influences and the impact of mixed marriage.

5.6.2 Using data from the Census 2011, Figure 26 below compares minority religious belief in Cheshire East and England as a whole. It is important to note the exclusion of the majority Christian group.

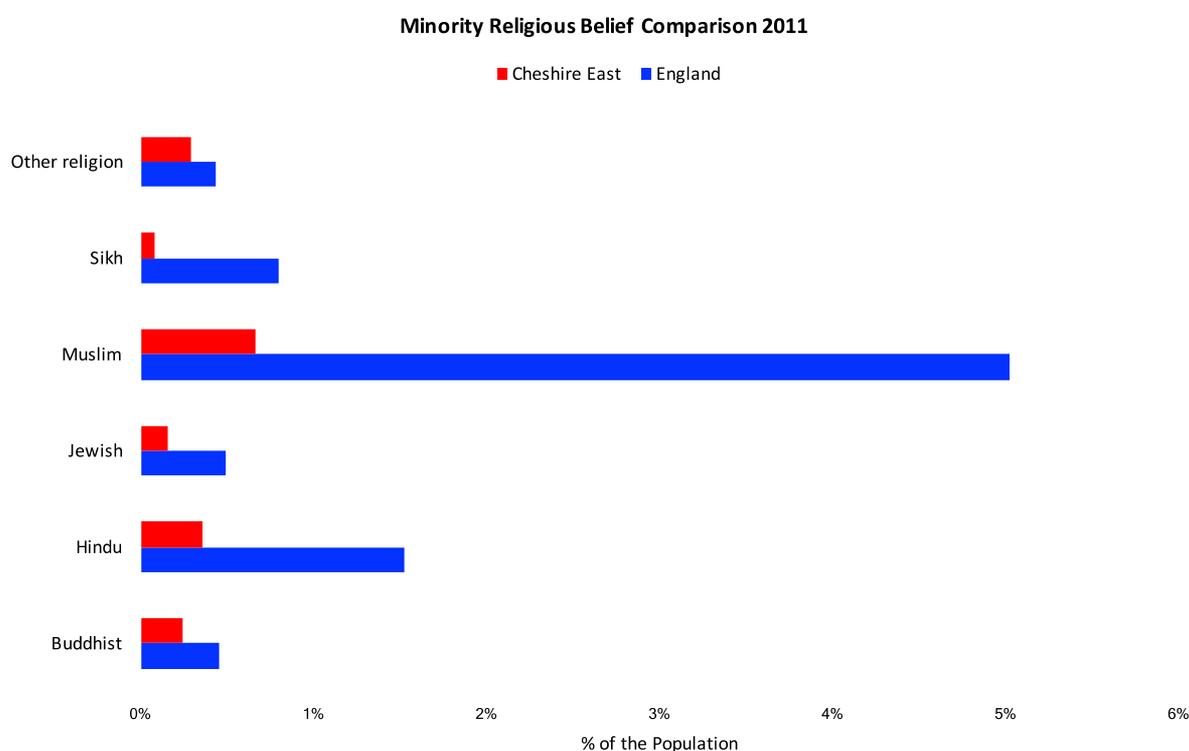


Figure 26: Minority religious belief comparison 2011

Source: Census 2011 Table KS209EW

5.6.3 It can be seen that religious belief amongst population of Cheshire East is less diverse than that of England as a whole.

5.6.4 Like ethnicity, this suggests that preferences for burial and specific types of burial based upon religious belief are likely to be less pronounced in Cheshire East than in England as a whole.

5.7 Summary of the Demographic Context

- 5.7.1 The population of Cheshire East increased by an estimated 1.8% between 2011 and 2016. ONS trend-based projections suggest an increase of 8.6% between 2014 and 2039. Whilst this is approximately half the comparable rates of increase for England as a whole, it suggests that numbers of deaths may be expected to increase, with a consequent impact upon the provision of burial space.
- 5.7.2 Cheshire East has an older age structure than England as a whole, with generally higher proportions of older people living in more rural areas. The ONS projections suggest a further significant growth in the proportion of people in Cheshire East aged 70 years or more through at least until 2039. The projected growth in the proportion of people in Cheshire East aged 80 years or more is greater than that for England as a whole.
- 5.7.3 The statistical link between age and mortality suggests that, although many people are living longer than previous generations, numbers of deaths may be expected to rise significantly during the next 20 years, with a consequent impact upon the demand and provision of burial space.
- 5.7.4 In spite of medical advances, improvements in healthcare and increased longevity, the number of deaths remains highest during the winter months.
- 5.7.5 The population of Cheshire East is much less diverse than England as a whole in terms of ethnicity and religious belief. The result is that preferences for burial generally and specific types of burial based upon these two factors may be less evident in Cheshire East than in other areas.

6.0 Legal Context

6.1 Provision and maintenance of cemeteries

6.1.2 Cheshire East Council is a burial authority by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended. The Council provides and manages its cemeteries within the framework of the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO), as amended.

6.1.3 The provision of cemeteries is not a statutory duty. However, LACO places various statutory duties upon local authorities in relation to cemeteries that they already provide, include the duty to “keep the cemetery in good order and repair, together with all buildings, walls and fences thereon and other buildings provided for use therewith”³.

6.2 Maintenance of closed churchyards

6.2.1 The Local Government Act 1972 also places duties upon local authorities, in certain circumstances, in relation to Church of England churchyards. Where a churchyard has been formally closed under the Burial Act 1853 by Her Majesty by Order in Privy Council, the duty to maintain the churchyard automatically falls upon the Parochial Church Council. However, the Parochial Church Council may serve a written request upon a relevant local authority, normally the Parish Council, to take over the maintenance of the churchyard. Within 3 months of the service of the original request, the parish council may in turn pass the responsibility to maintain the churchyard to the next relevant level of local government, including district councils and unitary authorities.

6.2.2 The level of maintenance required in a closed churchyard is specified in the Local Government Act 1972 s.215(1):

³ Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 article 4(1)

- 6.2.3 “... the parochial church council shall maintain it by keeping it in decent order and its walls and fences in good repair.”
- 6.2.4 Where, under s.215(2), the PCC serve a request on the relevant local authority to take over the maintenance of the churchyard there is a duty imposed:
- 6.2.5 “... the maintenance of the churchyard shall be taken over by the authority on whom the request is served ...”
- 6.2.6 The local authority becomes responsible in lieu of the parochial church council for the maintenance of the closed churchyard and thus the local authority is under a statutory duty to maintain the closed churchyard to the same standard as that required by s.215(1) of the PCC, i.e.
- 6.2.7 “in decent order and its walls and fences in good repair”.
- 6.2.8 The Ministry of Justice confirm this in its document ‘Churchyard Closures: Frequently Asked Questions’:
- 6.2.9 What level of maintenance by a local authority is required?**
- 6.2.10 The churchyard should be kept in decent order and its walls and fences in good repair, in the same way that the parochial church council is required to maintain it.
- 6.2.11 The following is a helpful extract from ‘Legal Opinions Concerning the Church of England’, published by Church House Publishing, London.⁴

⁴ The opinion is copyright The Central Board of Finance of the Church of England 1997 and The Archbishops' Council 1999.

6.2.12 “The justification for the provision of section 18 of the Burial Act 1855 and the way in which it has led to the transfer of the responsibility for closed churchyards to local authorities was not intended to confer any privilege upon the Church of England, but was a recognition of the fact that until the Burial Acts of 1852 and 1853 churchyards or additional churchyards were the only burial places available, apart from commercial cemeteries and a few denominational burial grounds belonging to trustees.

More important, churchyards were (as they still are) the common burial places of the parishioners of any denomination and none. As the churchyard was available for the whole community, and in the first half of the 19th century had sometimes been provided, or extended, by means of a compulsory church rate, it was considered reasonable that when it was closed in the interest of the community, the expense of keeping it in decent order should be reimbursed to the churchwardens from what was then the poor rate.

6.2.13 On that basis, it was for the local authority, which succeeded to the functions of the overseers, to reimburse the PCC, which succeeded the churchwardens in this regard.”

6.3 Optimisation of burial space

6.3.1 Cemeteries do not simply contain graves, but also have roads, paths, buildings and landscaping. Grave spaces are usually laid out in a grid pattern to make the most efficient use of the remaining space, but since Victorian times wide grass borders are often left adjacent to roads to enhance the aesthetics of the cemetery, as exemplified at Sandbach Cemetery. In modern times, the combination of narrow cemetery roads and a lack of care by some drivers can lead to vehicles passing over these verges.

- 6.3.2 LACO empowers local authorities to lay out cemeteries in any manner they see fit and it is quite usual to see changes in to the original layout over time as cemeteries are progressively extended to meet continued demand for burial.
- 6.3.3 Where space for new graves becomes exhausted, it is not uncommon for areas originally designated for other purposes, such as landscaping and paths, to be used to provide space for more new graves. Whilst this may appear to be a logical response to the need for burial space, it can have negative consequences including visual impact, access and the potential future re-use of graves.
- 6.3.4 The allocation of sections to specific religious affiliations, including Church of England, Roman Catholic, non-conformist and Muslim can sometimes lead to a situation, where relatively low levels of demand leave one group with significant capacity when space is limited on other sections. In these circumstances, it may be appropriate to re-allocate some of the remaining space amongst the groups with limited capacity.

6.4 Purchased (private or family grave)

- 6.4.1 When a person purchases the exclusive rights in a grave, it enables them to decide who may be buried in the grave and this is normally family members. No-one may be buried in the grave and no memorial may be erected upon the grave without the registered owner's written consent. It does not, however, grant them ownership of the land itself and the local authority retains ownership of all the land in its cemeteries.
- 6.4.2 From their first establishment in the mid-nineteenth century, whilst it was lawful to grant exclusive rights for any period, it became standard practice to grant exclusive rights in perpetuity, i.e. forever.
- 6.4.3 From 1974, the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1974 limited the periods for which rights may be granted to a maximum of 100 years. This does not apply

retrospectively, and any rights granted prior to 1974 in perpetuity are still legally valid.

- 6.4.4 Apart from in London, local authorities have no powers to extinguish exclusive rights of burial during the period for which they were granted, whether in perpetuity or for a specified period. This procedure is correctly termed 'reclamation' when, as in London, it involves the use of legal powers to extinguish exclusive rights of burial that are otherwise still operative.
- 6.4.5 As a consequence of the lack of these statutory powers outside of London, there are many thousands of graves in cemeteries throughout England and Wales in which sufficient space remains for further burials to be undertaken without any disturbance of original burials, but this space cannot be used except with consent of the original owner of the exclusive rights or their successor.
- 6.4.6 The only exception is where the exclusive rights were purchased 75 years or more ago, but never actually utilised. This occurs when a person buys the exclusive rights in a grave as a means of reserving it for future use, but then does not use the grave.
- 6.4.7 There may be many such reserved graves where exclusive rights have been purchased before 1943 and the graves have never been used. Using powers contained within LACO, the Local Authority may extinguish these old, unused rights so that the space in such empty graves may be released for use today. This requires the local authority to serve 6 months' notice of its intention to extinguish the rights. The original owner (or their successor) may object and retain the ownership of the rights.
- 6.4.8 Where the exclusive rights have been granted for a specified time, LACO empowers the local authority to extend this period at any time, provided that the maximum permitted period of 100 years is not exceeded.

- 6.4.9 The majority of cemeteries granted rights in perpetuity up until 1974. However, some authorities had already started granting rights for fixed periods as early as the 1960s.
- 6.4.10 Where the rights have been granted for 100 years, from say 1960, cemeteries will not have to face the process of renewing rights at their expiry until 2060. After such a long period of time, the original owner of the rights will themselves have died and it is quite likely that it will not be feasible to contact any living relatives with an interest in renewing burial rights in an old grave.
- 6.4.11 Crewe Corporation stopped granting exclusive rights in perpetuity in December 1960, with the last Deed of Grant being number 3062 issued on 7th December 1960. Deed number 3063, issued on 4th January 1961, was the first granting the rights for 40 years. The Deed had an indorsement stamped on the rear stating that the purchaser had the option of renewing the rights, in whole or in part, during the last 5 years of the rights period.
- 6.4.12 At its meeting on 16th October 2008, Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council resolved to extend the period of rights to 100 years and to apply this extension retrospectively to all exclusive rights granted since Deed number 3063 in 1961.
- 6.4.13 Some local authorities are reducing the periods for which they now grant rights down to 75 years, 50 years or even as low as 25 years, but at the same time they offer a choice of period and various options to periodically extend the period such as Kettering where the rights were increased to 99 years.
- 6.4.14 It is important to note that perpetuity rights never expire. Where rights granted for a specified period expire and are not renewed, the original purchaser or their successors no longer have any rights in the grave and the rights revert to the local authority. LACO empowers the local authority to remove any memorial on an expired grave.

6.4.15 Where there is sufficient depth remaining above the original burials in a grave in which the rights have expired, the local authority may undertake new burials above them and sell the exclusive rights in this remaining space to a new purchaser.

6.4.16 This offers some scope for optimising space in old cemeteries in the long term. However, a high proportion of graves will have been used for their full quota of burials and will have no depth remaining above old burials. Under current legislation, it would be illegal to disturb the original burials to make space for new burials.

6.5 Unpurchased (public or shared grave)

6.5.1 A public grave is one where no-one has purchased the exclusive right of burial. The local authority may use the grave at any time for the burial of unrelated people, whose relatives cannot afford, or do not wish, to purchase any exclusive rights. It was standard practice in many cemeteries to excavate public graves to a greater depth than private graves to accommodate as many burials as possible. Such graves in large city cemeteries may contain 20 or even more burials and cover significant areas of land.

6.5.2 Demand for burial in public graves declined during the later 20th century in inverse proportion to rising levels of disposable income. They are now mainly used for burials undertaken by local authorities and health authorities under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984, where no-one else takes responsibility for the disposal of a body.

6.5.3 Space remaining above burials in old public graves can provide valuable space to help meet current demand for burials. Provided that the requirements in LACO for minimum depths of burials can be met, there are no legal or ethical reasons why a local authority may not sell the exclusive rights in the depth remaining in old public graves.

6.6 Re-use of graves

- 6.6.1 Across the UK, there is a growing awareness of the unsustainable way in which cemeteries are managed. As cemeteries fill up, the solution is to create new cemeteries, leaving the old ones to decline through lack of income.
- 6.6.2 This is an inevitable consequence of the system created by the Victorians to meet a burial space crisis, caused by a rapid increase and urbanisation of the population and epidemics of cholera, which led to demand overwhelming supply in urban parish churchyards.
- 6.6.3 In seeking to rectify the situation at that time, the Victorians invented a solution that has created huge negative implications in the present. The Victorians not only enabled the formal closure of churchyards and the creation of new cemeteries, but also introduced the concept of granting burial rights in perpetuity and introduced legislation that prohibits the disturbance of human remains.
- 6.6.4 Whilst parish churchyards have met local burial needs for centuries by the re-use of graves, this is not an option in cemeteries where exclusive rights of burial and prohibitions on disturbance exist. Land becomes locked up and unavailable for further burials.
- 6.6.5 Legislation applies to London local authorities⁵, which goes a little way towards enabling the re-use of graves. New legislation in Scotland is addressing this matter there. However, there appear to be no signs of new legislation forthcoming, that would enable local authorities in England to extinguish exclusive rights and re-use old graves.
- 6.6.6 The term 're-use' refers to the disturbance of old burials in order to make space for new burials. It requires specific legal permission, without which it is illegal.

⁵ The Greater London Council (Various Powers) Act 1976 and the London Local Authorities Act 2007

- 6.6.7 It is possible to obtain faculty permission from the Chancellor of the diocese to enable the re-use of old public graves in consecrated areas. This has already been successfully implemented at the City of London Cemetery and by the London Borough of Enfield at Edmonton Cemetery. The issue of a faculty cannot be guaranteed, but the likelihood is increased by adequate preparation for the faculty application process.
- 6.6.8 This option is not practicable for individual or small groups of graves and requires a reasonable number of public graves located within a defined area and which have not received a burial for 75 years or more.
- 6.6.9 In practice, the grave is reopened to sufficient depth for two new burials. If remains of the uppermost original burial are uncovered during excavation they are removed and reburied in a communal grave nearby. The remaining original burials are left undisturbed.
- 6.6.10 Since the faculties were issued to the two London local authorities mentioned above, s.25 of the Burial Act 1857 has been amended and a faculty could now authorise the exhumation of old burials and their replacement at a lower depth within the same grave.
- 6.6.11 It is important to note that the faculty jurisdiction of the Church of England does not override statute law and separate statutory powers are required to enable exclusive rights of burial to be extinguished. Such powers do not currently exist for local authorities outside of London.
- 6.6.12 Currently, re-use of old graves in Cheshire East could only occur under faculty relating solely to old public graves on consecrated land.

6.7 Burial Records

- 6.7.1 Since the 16th century, it has been a requirement for vicars to maintain a register of baptisms and marriages, and also burials in parish churchyards. The Parochial Registers Act 1812 required the Burial Register to be kept separately and prescribed its basic form and required all burials to be consecutively numbered. The Act also required a copy to be made of the entries in the Register to be sent annually to the Registrar of the Diocese.
- 6.7.2 When cemeteries first developed in the 19th Century, they followed this established pattern of keeping records of all burials. The Burial Act 1853 required the Register to be in the same format as a church Burial Register and, again, a copy of the entries to be sent annually to the Registrar of the Diocese. The Burial Act 1857 emphasized the importance of the Burial Register by making it a felony to wilfully damage, destroy or make a false entry in it.
- 6.7.3 The Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO), as amended by the Local Authorities' Cemeteries (Amendment) Order 1986, is the legislation currently applicable to the registration of burials and the recording of the sale of exclusive rights.
- 6.7.4 LACO was the first legislation to prescribe in some detail the content of the records. The 1986 amendment enables the keeping of the statutory cemetery records on computer.

7.0 Key issues and areas for development

7.1 Demand for burial across Cheshire East

7.1.2 In 2016, cremation accounted for an average of 79 per cent of funerals in England and Wales. There thus remains a significant 21 per cent of the population, who chose burial for their dead. This proportion is expected to remain at around current levels in the foreseeable future.

7.1.3 ONS 2014-based projections for Cheshire East indicate both a growth and ageing of the population, together with an increase of 26.2 per cent in the numbers of deaths by 2039. This suggests that demand for burial in Cheshire East will grow over the next twenty years.

7.1.4 However, in Cheshire East, only 8.4 per cent of deaths in 2016 resulted in a coffin burial in one of the Council's cemeteries. Evidence gathered for this cemeteries strategy suggests that at least a further 7.6 per cent of deaths resulted in a coffin burial in cemeteries provided by town and parish councils and in parish churchyards.

7.1.5 Whilst the Council operates a total of 11 cemeteries, these account for only 52.3 per cent of coffin burials within Cheshire East. This indicates a preference for local burial provision and a high level of its availability.

7.1.6 Cheshire East has a relatively low population density, with higher densities of population concentrated around urban areas. Demand for burial follows a similar distribution, as illustrated overleaf in Figure 27, a map of Cheshire East showing deaths by ward in 2016

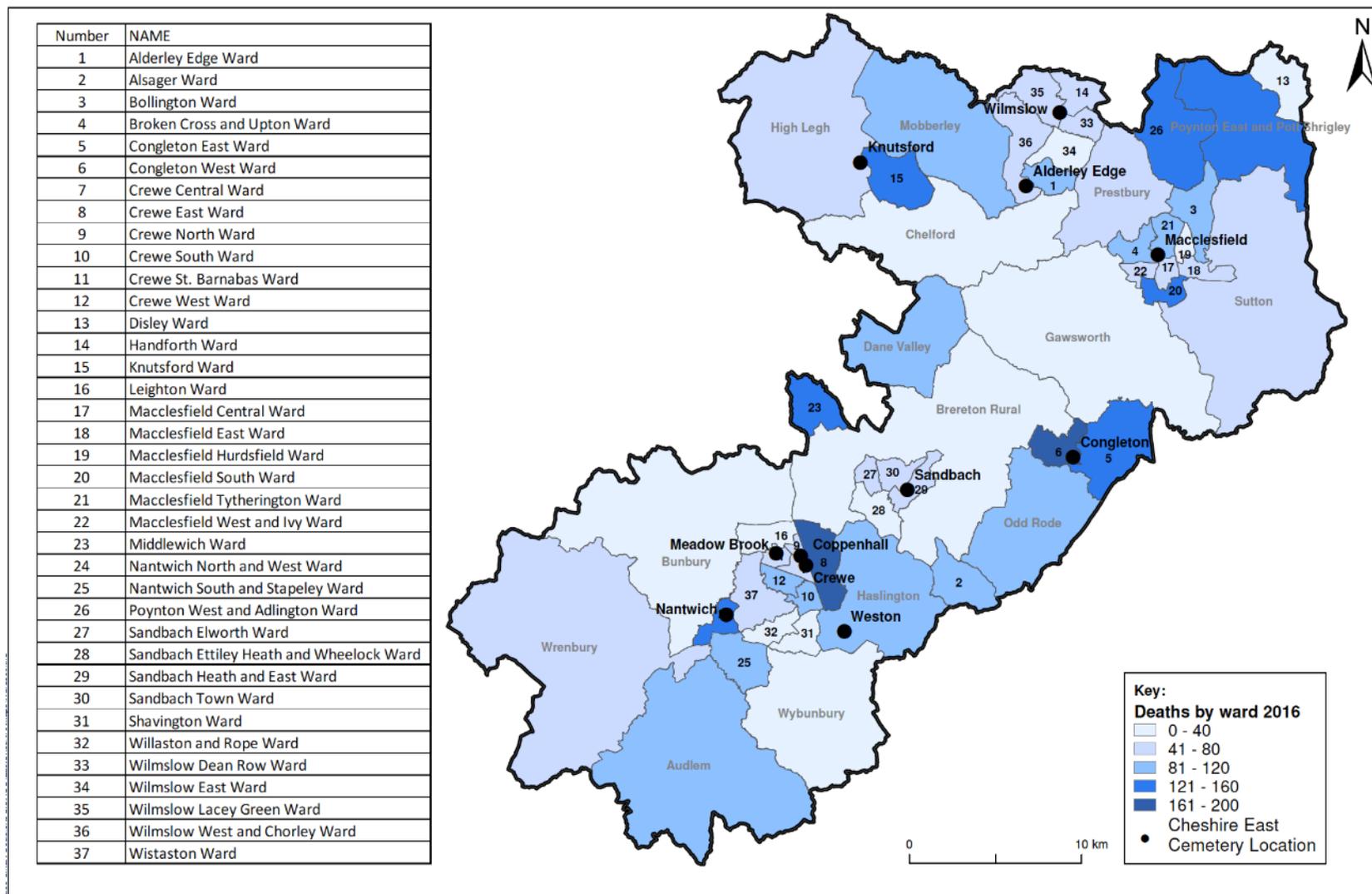


Figure 27: Deaths by ward in Cheshire East in 2016

7.2 Capacity for burial across Cheshire East

- 7.2.1 The local needs for burial provision in Cheshire East are in general currently being met through a combination of providers.
- 7.2.2 The analysis of Cheshire East Council's cemeteries, combined with surveys of town and parish councils and parish churches, suggests that whilst there generally appears to be sufficient provision for new graves, supply in some areas is limited.
- 7.2.3 In terms of its own cemeteries, Cheshire East Council could use a combination of optimisation of existing space for new graves, and the extension of cemeteries where space is lacking in order to maintain the availability of new grave spaces.
- 7.2.4 The optimisation of existing space within the cemeteries would require careful consideration of its impact upon access to graves, both new and existing.
- 7.2.5 It is important to have a clear understanding of the potential capacity within each cemetery. This would be best achieved by confirming the existence of empty and available graves within each section of each cemetery, including Crewe Coppenhall and Crewe Badger Avenue where no capacity is currently thought to exist. The checking of the cemetery grave plans and records against the situation on the ground would provide the most accurate information. 'Available' in this context means that they have not been formally reserved by individuals for future use.
- 7.2.6 The impact of trees, shrubs and other features upon new grave space deliverability could then be assessed, along with the costs and benefits of selective removal of these features.
- 7.2.7 The potential to deliver new grave space within the existing cemeteries in areas not currently designated for burial could also be explored. It would be important to

ensure that any space thus identified is deliverable on a cost-effective basis, as well as being acceptable in aesthetic, environmental, cultural and heritage terms.

- 7.2.8 The capacity at Wilmslow Cemetery could be significantly enhanced by overcoming the adverse ground conditions on Plot 3, which prevent its use for coffin burials. Without detailed site investigations, it is not possible to be certain whether the challenging ground conditions might be overcome.
- 7.2.9 One option to create new burial space could be to install concrete burial chambers, either below or above ground level. This would require an assessment of ground conditions by the supplier of the chambers to ensure their long-term stability. It would also require liaison with the Environment Agency to confirm the acceptability of the proposal in terms of any impact upon groundwater-
- 7.2.10 Concrete burial chambers are popular amongst certain groups, particularly people from the Caribbean and Italy, but can also have a more general appeal. They are more expensive to provide than standard earth graves and this is normally reflected in the price charged to bereaved families. It would therefore be appropriate to undertake consultation to ascertain whether burial chambers would be an acceptable option to the local community.
- 7.2.11 Figure 28 below combines data for estimated capacity with levels of demand for new graves in 2017 to provide indicative figures for years of continued capacity. Figure 28 assumes that demand at Crewe Coppenhall and Crewe Badger Avenue would be met locally at Crewe Meadow Brook.

Cemetery	Available graves	Demand in 2017	Capacity in years
Alderley Edge	1,322	11	120
Congleton	792	14	59
Crewe Coppenhall	0		0
Crewe Badger Avenue	0		0
Crewe Meadow Brook	6,705	62	108
Knutsford	426	15	29
Macclesfield	2,718	33	84
Nantwich	918	28	33
Sandbach	235	26	9
Weston	474	4	135
Wilmslow	283	16	18
Totals	13,873	206	67

Figure 28: Estimated capacity in Cheshire East Council cemeteries.

Source: Cheshire East Council Cemetery Records

- 7.2.12 However, the ONS 2014-based projections illustrated at Figure 23 indicate a 26.2 per cent increase in deaths in Cheshire East for the period between 2016 and 2039. The tables below at Figures 29 and 30 illustrate revised estimated numbers of graves remaining at each cemetery, when the percentage projected change in deaths for each year to 2039 is applied to the annual demand for new graves at each cemetery. This provides a more realistic understanding of future capacity.
- 7.2.13 For the purposes of this illustration, it is assumed that once capacity is no longer available at Sandbach, it would be accommodated at Crewe Meadow Brook, and similarly demand at Wilmslow would be met at Alderley Edge.
- 7.2.14 Crewe Badger Avenue and Crewe Coppenhall are omitted through having no capacity for new graves. Estimated capacity at the proposed extensions at Alderley Edge and Weston are included.

	Alderley Edge	Congleton	Crewe Meadow Brook	Knutsford	Macclesfield
2018	322	792	6,705	426	2,718
2019	314	781	6,635	408	2,685
2020	306	770	6,565	390	2,652
2021	298	759	6,493	372	2,618
2022	290	747	6,421	353	2,584
2023	281	736	6,349	335	2,550
2024	273	725	6,276	316	2,516
2025	264	713	6,202	297	2,481
2026	256	701	6,094	277	2,445
2027	247	689	5,986	258	2,409
2028	238	677	5,875	238	2,373
2029	229	664	5,761	217	2,335
2030	220	652	5,648	197	2,298
2031	211	639	5,531	176	2,260
2032	201	626	5,413	155	2,220
2033	192	613	5,294	133	2,181
2034	182	600	5,172	111	2,141
2035	172	586	5,048	89	2,100
2036	162	572	4,921	66	2,058
2037	134	558	4,794	43	2,016
2038	106	544	4,664	20	1,973
2039	76	529	4,531	0	1,930

Figure 29: Estimated annual capacity in Cheshire East Council cemeteries.

Source: Cheshire East Council Cemetery Records

	Nantwich	Sandbach	Weston	Wilmslow	All Cemeteries
2018	918	235	474	283	12,873
2019	894	205	469	269	12,660
2020	870	175	464	255	12,447
2021	845	144	459	241	12,228
2022	821	113	454	226	12,009
2023	796	83	449	212	11,791
2024	771	51	443	197	11,566
2025	745	19	438	182	11,342
2026	720	0	433	167	11,092
2027	694	0	427	152	10,862
2028	667	0	422	137	10,626
2029	640	0	416	121	10,384
2030	612	0	410	105	10,142
2031	585	0	405	89	9,895
2032	556	0	399	72	9,641
2033	528	0	393	55	9,388
2034	498	0	387	38	9,129
2035	468	0	380	21	8,864
2036	438	0	374	3	8,594
2037	408	0	368	0	8,320
2038	376	0	361	0	8,044
2039	345	0	355	0	7,762

Figure 30: Estimated annual capacity in Cheshire East Council cemeteries.

Source: Cheshire East Council Cemetery Records

- 7.2.15 The data for remaining capacity in Figures 29 and 30 suggest that there is sufficient capacity overall to meet demand for new graves for a considerable period, even beyond 2039, albeit that during this time Sandbach and Wilmslow cemeteries will become full and demand will switch to alternative locations.
- 7.2.16 Figure 31 below illustrates the potential future availability of new grave spaces in the Council's cemeteries that currently have space for new graves. The chart incorporates demand rising to 2039 in line with the ONS 2014-based projections and then continuing to rise at 2 per cent per year. The chart also includes demand switching from one cemetery to another as and when capacity is fully utilised.

Capacity to provide new graves 2018 to 2047

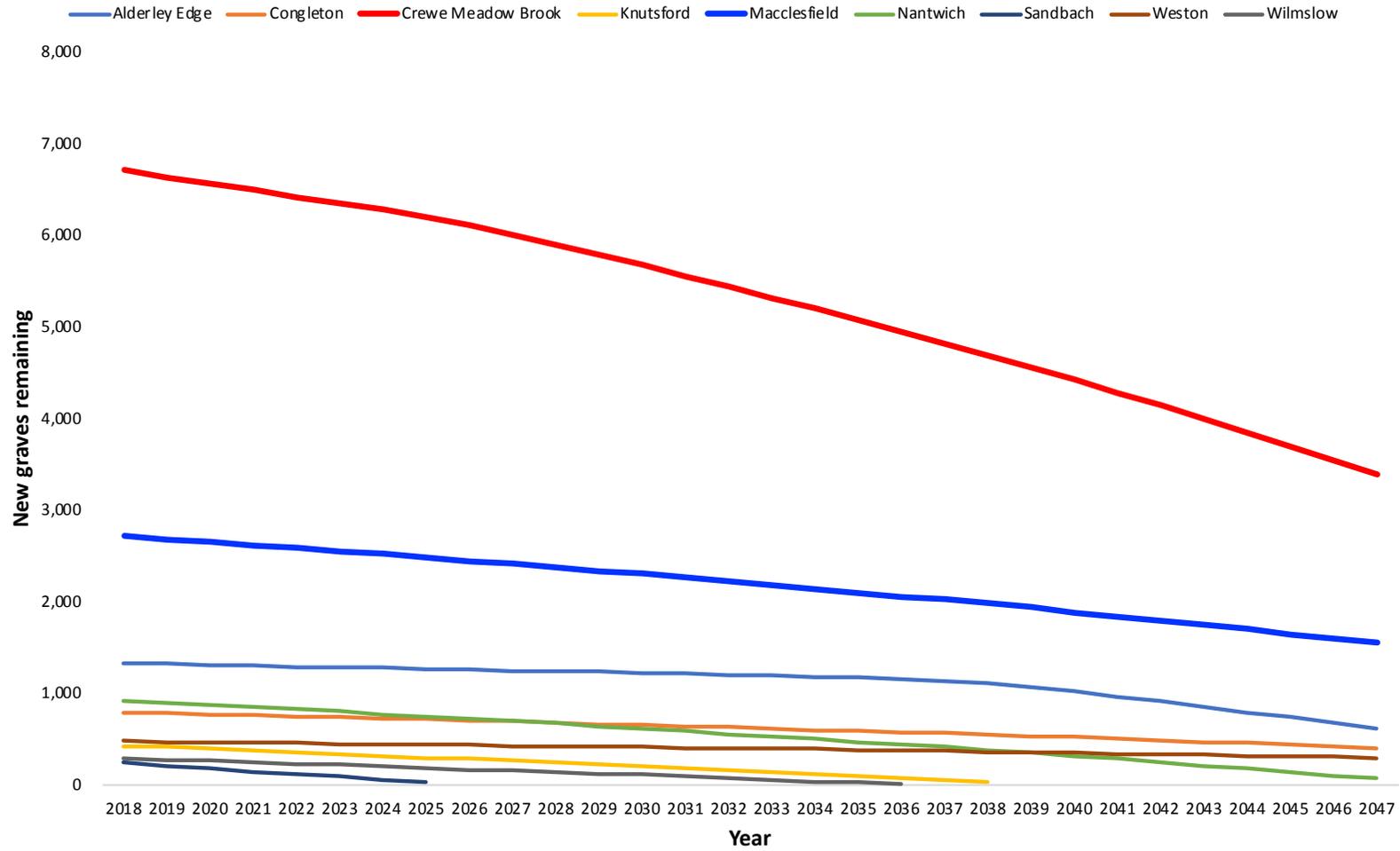


Figure 31: Capacity to provide new graves 2018 to 2047

Source: Cheshire East Council Cemetery Records

7.3 Drive-time catchment mapping and analysis – current situation

- 7.3.1 A key factor influencing most people's choice of cemetery or crematorium for a funeral is its location relative to the people who will attend the funeral, and there is a general preference to minimize travel times.
- 7.3.2 Drive-time mapping is a tool that facilitates an understanding of catchment areas, populations and numbers of death.
- 7.3.3 Sophisticated computer software enables the identification of travel times by road traffic and its graphical representation as isochrones. These are irregular coloured shapes plotted on a map showing all of the geographical areas that are within pre-defined drive-times of selected locations.
- 7.3.4 Where a Funeral Director's hearse and limousine(s) lead even a short cortège of mourners' vehicles to a cemetery, travel speeds are often much lower than for normal traffic.
- 7.3.5 This is mainly a consequence of drivers trying to keep the cortège together when negotiating junctions so that everybody finds their way to the cemetery and arrives together at the right time for the funeral service.
- 7.3.6 The computer software accounts for varying travel speeds depending upon the roads within the search area and for this report has also accounted for the generally lower speeds achieved by funeral vehicles. The use of drive-time catchment mapping, using travel speeds of 60% of normal traffic, has been accepted at numerous Planning Appeals as being a valid approach to defining crematoria catchments. There is no reason why this approach is not applicable to cemeteries.

7.3.10 Figure 33 below illustrates the 30-minute drive-time catchments:

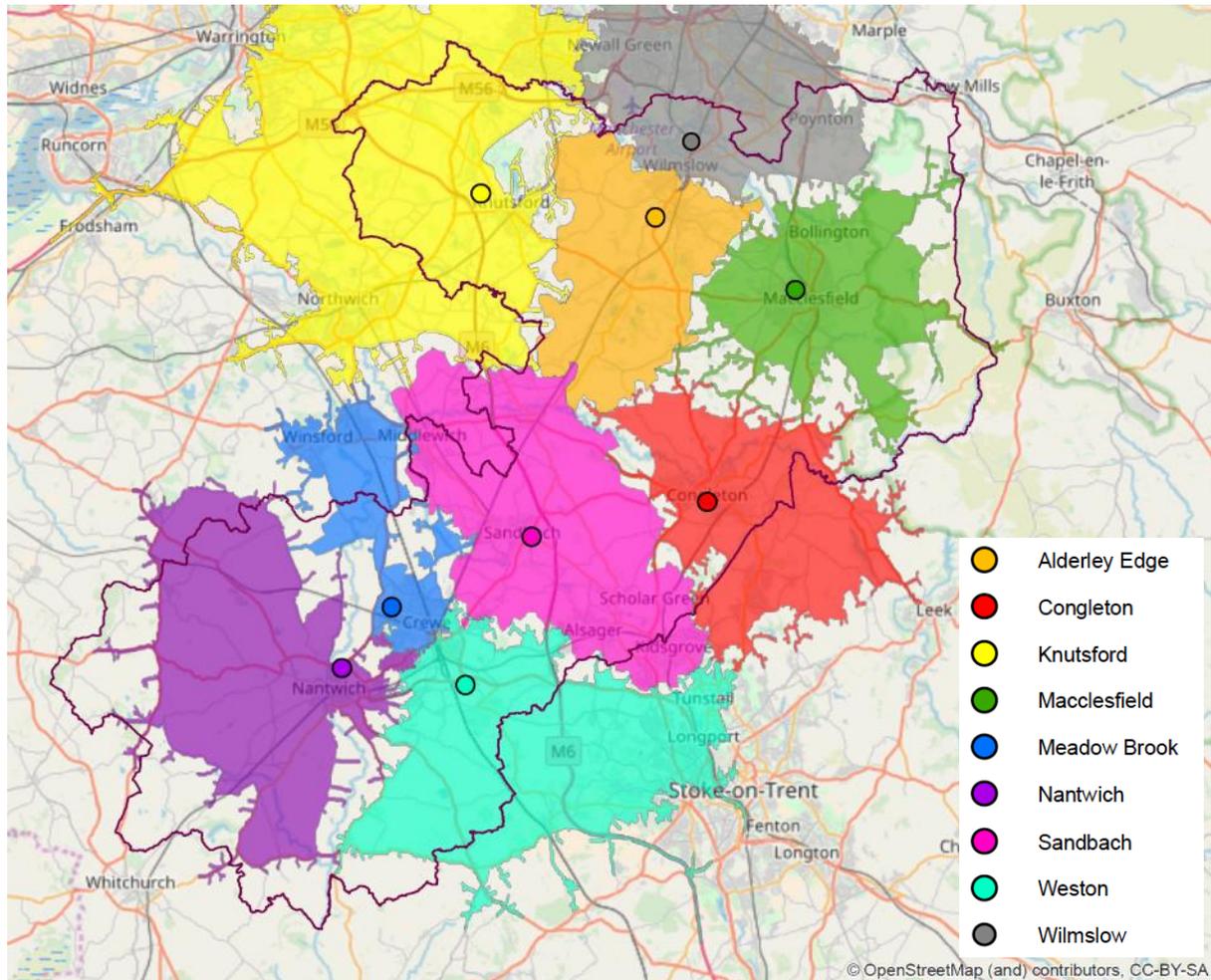


Figure 33: Cheshire East cemeteries 30-minute drive-time catchments

7.3.11 It can be seen that, as the drive-time increases to 30 minutes, most of the catchments extend beyond the boundary of Cheshire East.

7.3.13 Figure 34 below illustrates the 45-minute drive-time catchments:

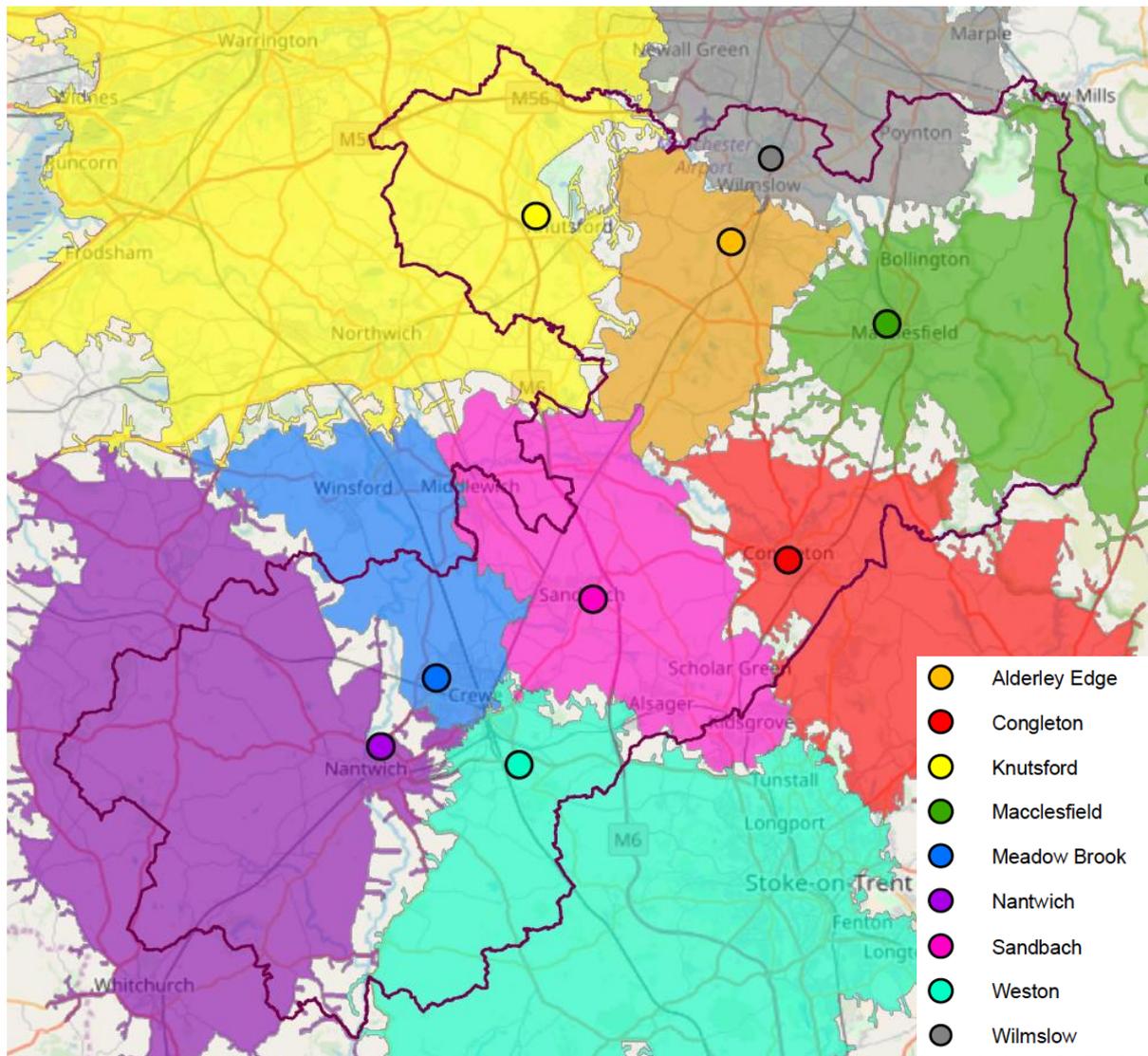


Figure 34: Cheshire East cemeteries 45-minute drive-time catchments

7.3.14 Figure 35 below illustrates the 60-minute drive-time catchments:

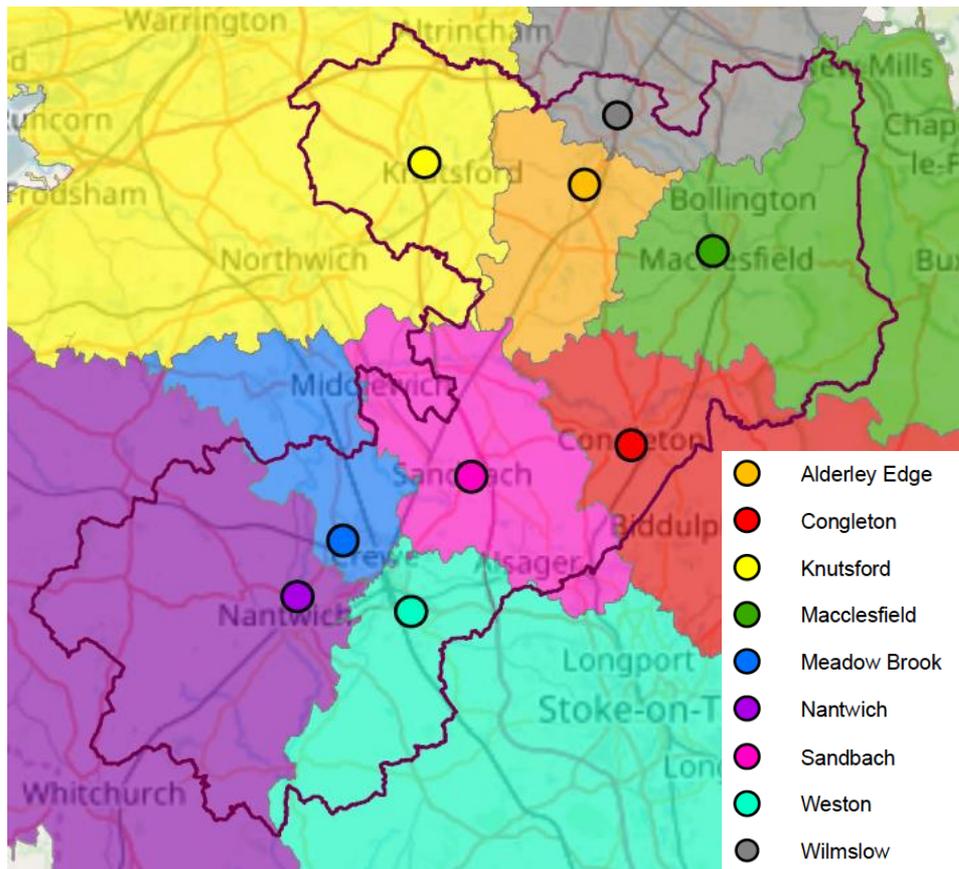


Figure 35: Cheshire East cemeteries 60-minute drive-time catchments

7.3.15 The isochrones illustrated in Figures 32 to 35 provide a useful visual representation of the geographical extent of the catchment area of each cemetery, on the basis that people would normally choose the closest cemetery.

7.3.16 The computer software does not only identify geographical catchment areas, but also generates data on population and deaths within each drive-time catchment.

7.3.17 The data are based upon Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level, which are geographical areas used by the ONS for statistical purposes and contain an average of 1,500 people. The population data is taken from the Census 2011, as being the most accurate and the data on deaths relates to deaths occurring in 2016, the most recent data available at LSOA level.

7.3.18 Figure 36 below illustrates the population of Cheshire East within each drive-time catchment around each cemetery with new graves available:

Cemetery	Population in 2011 within each drive-time catchment			
	15 Mins	30 Mins	45 Mins	60 Mins
Alderley Edge	16,096	23,298	23,298	23,298
Congleton	24,992	26,482	26,482	28,529
Knutsford	15,209	16,790	16,790	20,366
Macclesfield	56,890	62,402	67,667	67,667
Crewe Meadow Brook	43,480	43,480	46,348	46,348
Nantwich	24,372	30,886	34,847	40,063
Sandbach	34,769	66,501	66,501	66,501
Weston	25,408	27,733	29,458	29,458
Wilmslow	21,633	36,227	37,475	42,813
Totals	262,849	333,799	348,866	365,043
% of population	71%	90%	94%	99%

Figure 36: Drive-time catchment populations 2011

Source: Drive-time computer software

7.3.19 Figure 37 below illustrates the numbers of deaths in Cheshire East 2016 within the various drive-time catchments of each council cemetery:

Cemetery	Deaths in 2016 within each drive-time catchment			
	15 Mins	30 Mins	45 Mins	60 Mins
Alderley Edge	207	279	279	279
Congleton	297	323	323	334
Knutsford	166	173	173	209
Macclesfield	582	656	708	755
Crewe Meadow Brook	422	422	456	456
Nantwich	313	400	443	476
Sandbach	370	680	680	680
Weston	239	252	274	274
Wilmslow	188	418	433	516
Totals	2,784	3,603	3,769	3,979
% of deaths	70%	91%	95%	100%

Figure 37: Drive-time catchment deaths 2016

Source: Drive-time computer software

7.3.20 Figure 13 above indicates that total coffin burials in Cheshire East Council cemeteries during 2016 totalled 331. This total represent 8.4 per cent of deaths in Cheshire East in that year.

7.3.21 Figure 38 below applies this overall 8.4 per cent figure to the deaths in 2016 within each drive-time catchment illustrated in Figure 37. This enables the calculation of the potential number of burials that might be expected at each cemetery from its respective drive-time catchment:

Cemetery	Calculated Burials (8.4% of deaths within each drive-time catchment)			
	15 Mins	30 Mins	45 Mins	60 Mins
Alderley Edge	17	23	23	23
Congleton	25	27	27	28
Knutsford	14	15	15	18
Macclesfield	49	55	59	63
Crewe Meadow Brook	35	35	38	38
Nantwich	26	34	37	40
Sandbach	31	57	57	57
Weston	20	21	23	23
Wilmslow	16	35	36	43
Totals	234	303	317	334

Figure 38 Drive-time catchment calculated burials 2016

Source: Drive-time computer software

7.3.22 Figure 39 below illustrates for each drive-time catchment the variation between actual and calculated burials, i.e. the actual burials in Cheshire East Council cemeteries in 2016, as recorded in the council's cemetery records, as opposed to the numbers of burials calculated at 8.4 per cent of deaths occurring, which are identified by the specialist software within each drive-time catchment. Note that burials at both Crewe Badger Avenue and Crewe Coppenhall are included within Crewe Meadow Brook:

Cemetery	Actual Burials 2016	Variation between actual and calculated			
		15 Mins	30 Mins	45 Mins	60 Mins
Alderley Edge	23	6	0	0	0
Congleton	17	-8	-10	-10	-11
Knutsford	27	13	12	12	9
Macclesfield	63	14	8	4	0
Crewe Meadow Brook	86	51	51	48	48
Nantwich	44	18	10	7	4
Sandbach	31	0	-26	-26	-26
Weston	4	-16	-17	-19	-19
Wilmslow	36	20	1	0	-7
Totals	331	97	28	14	-3

Figure 39: Drive-time catchment actual burials and variation from calculated burials 2016

Sources: Actual Burials - Cheshire East Cemetery Records;

Calculated Burials - Drive-time computer software

7.3.23 Figures 38 and 39 are based upon applying the average 8.4 per cent of deaths across Cheshire East that resulted in a coffin burial in the Council's cemeteries in 2016.

7.3.24 Overall, there is only a difference of 3 between the total number of actual burials recorded (331) and the calculated number (334) within a 60-minute drive-time of the combined council's cemeteries.

7.3.25 A 30-minute drive-time has been recognised at a number of planning appeals as a desirable industry standard. Figures 38 and 39 illustrate that, overall, there is only a difference of 28 between the total number of actual burials (331) and the calculated number (303) within a 30-minute drive-time of the council's cemeteries.

7.3.26 The variation between calculated and actual figures within the shorter drive-times is likely to reflect the availability of alternative burial sites offered by other providers within the area concerned.

- 7.3.27 Crewe Meadow Brook appears to attract significantly more burials than might be expected from the calculations.
- 7.3.28 This may be due in part to the inclusion of actual burials at Crewe Coppenhall and Crewe Badger Avenue within the figure for actual burials at Crewe Meadow Brook. The drive-time catchment mapping and associated data reflect the current situation, where new graves are not available at Crewe Coppenhall and Crewe Badger Avenue. If these two cemeteries could still offer new graves, their drive-time catchments would extend into that shown for Weston.
- 7.3.29 The lack of new grave availability at Crewe Coppenhall and Crewe Badger Avenue is likely to lead people to choose Crewe Meadow Brook as their closest alternative. The extent to which this happens will only become clear from actual figures for demand in 2018 and future years.

7.4 Drive-time catchment mapping and analysis – Two principal cemeteries.

7.4.1 This section considers in isolation the two main urban areas, Crewe and Macclesfield, to examine the potential full extent of their catchments. Unlike the drive-time analysis for all nine cemeteries, the catchments have been allowed to merge, identifying areas which fall within an equal travel-time to either cemetery.

7.4.2 Figure 40 below illustrates the 15-minute drive-time catchments for Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield:

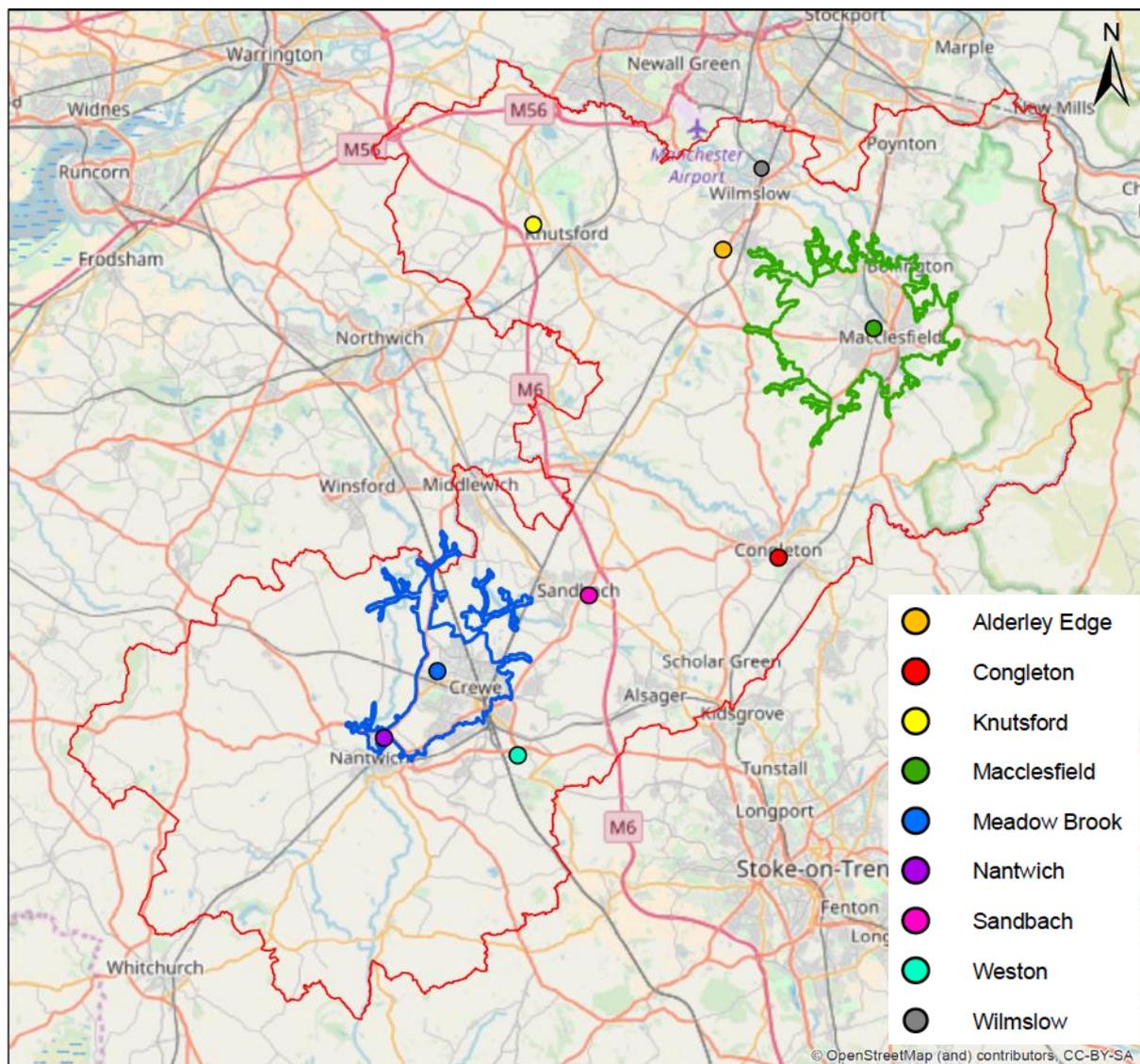


Figure 40: 15-minute drive-time catchments for Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield

7.4.4 Figure 42 below illustrates the 45-minute drive-time catchments for Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield:

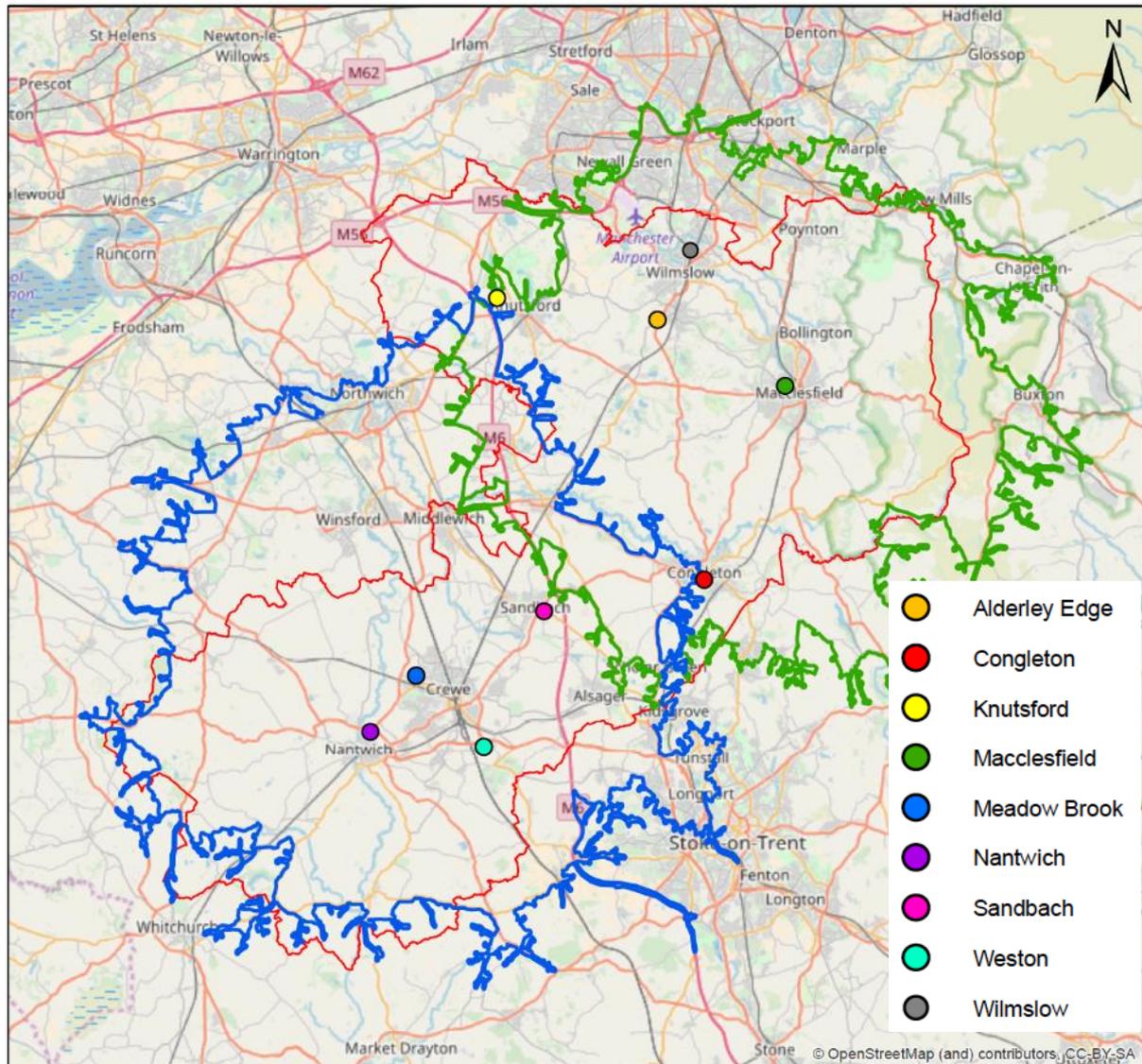


Figure 42: 45-minute drive-time catchments for Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield

7.4.5 Figure 43 below illustrates the 60-minute drive-time catchments for Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield:

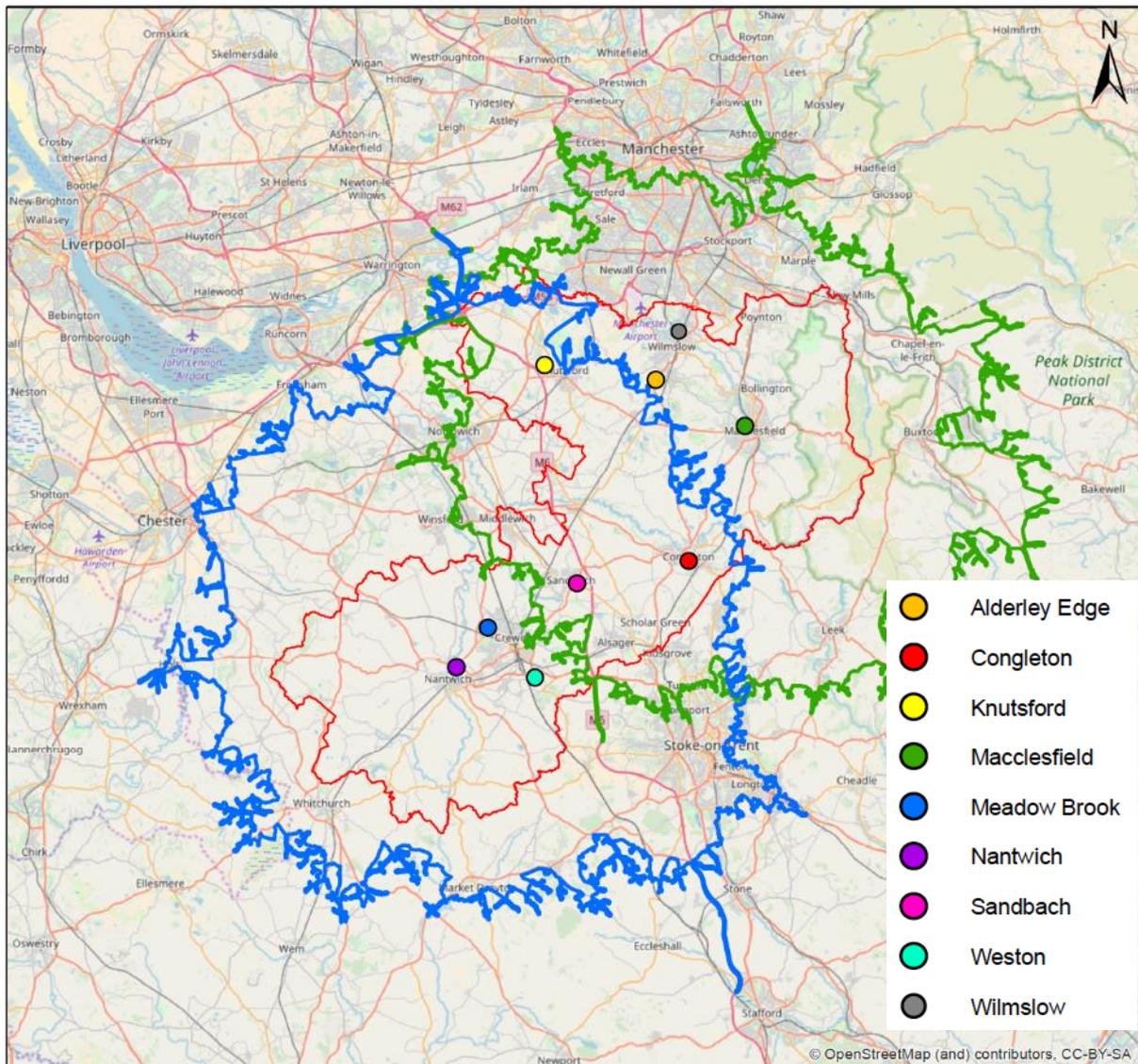


Figure 43: 60-minute drive-time catchments for Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield

7.4.6 Figure 44 below illustrates the population of Cheshire East in 2011 within the drive-time catchment around each cemetery, including any overlap between catchments. The percentages refer to the proportion of the total population of Cheshire East residents within each catchment:

Cemetery	Population			
	15 Mins	30 Mins	45 Mins	60 Mins
Macclesfield	54,455	124,600	193,507	251,499
	14.7%	33.7%	52.3%	67.9%
Crewe Meadow Brook	59,602	140,686	185,553	238,071
	16.1%	38.0%	50.1%	64.3%

Figure 44: drive-time catchment populations 2011

Source: Drive-time computer software

7.4.7 The isochrones illustrated in Figure 41 reveals that there is no catchment overlap within a 30-minute drive-time of each site. Figure 45 suggests that 265,286 people, 71.7 per cent of the population of Cheshire East in 2011, lived within a 30-minute drive-time of either one or both of these two cemeteries.

7.4.8 In comparison, Figure 36 illustrates that there were 333,799 people, 90 per cent of the population of Cheshire East in 2011, who lived within a 30-minute drive-time of one of the Council's nine cemeteries.

7.4.9 It is perhaps surprising that the current nine cemeteries include within a 30-minute drive-time only 68,513 more residents of Cheshire East in 2011 than just the locations of two of these same cemeteries. This is likely to be a reflection of the relative population densities and travel times in the various locations.

7.4.10 Figure 45 below illustrates the numbers of deaths in 2016 of Cheshire East residents within each drive-time catchment around each cemetery, including any overlap between catchments. The percentages refer to the proportion of the total of deaths of Cheshire East residents in 2016 within each catchment:

Cemetery	Deaths within each drive-time catchment			
	15 Mins	30 Mins	45 Mins	60 Mins
Macclesfield	552	1,403	2,138	2,748
	13.9%	35.4%	54.0%	69.4%
Crewe Meadow Brook	598	1,428	1,946	2,483
	15.1%	36.1%	49.1%	62.7%

Figure 45: drive-time catchment deaths 2016

Source: Drive-time computer software

7.4.11 Figure 45 suggests that 2,831 deaths, 71.5 per cent of deaths in the population of Cheshire East in 2016, were of residents within a 30-minute drive-time of one or the other of these two cemeteries.

7.4.12 Figure 46 below superimposes the separate 30-minute drive-time catchment isochrones for Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield from Figure 41 over the 30-minute drive-time catchment isochrones for all nine cemeteries to enable a visual comparison:

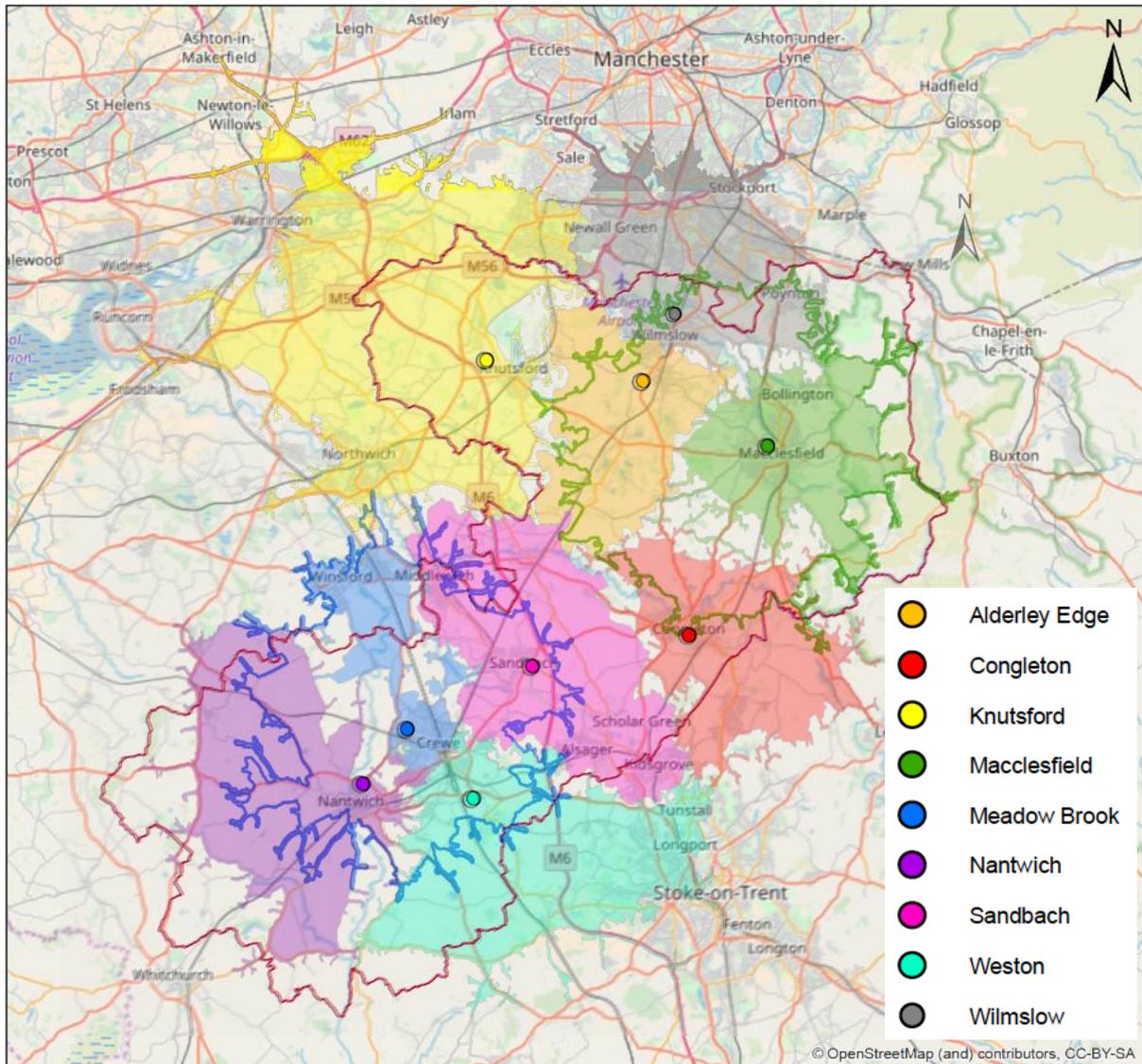


Figure 46: Comparison of 30-minute drive-time catchments

7.4.12 Figure 46 reveals the catchment areas of the individual cemeteries where they extend beyond the 30-minute drive-time catchments of Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield.

7.4.13 Knutsford seems to be entirely beyond the 30-minute drive-time catchments of Macclesfield. Knutsford Cemetery is owned by Knutsford Town Council.

7.4.14 It is important to recognise that the drive-time catchments of town and parish council cemeteries and parish churchyards are not illustrated.

7.4.15 The drive-time catchment analysis suggests that Cheshire East Council might wish to consider Crewe Meadow Brook and Macclesfield as its two principal cemeteries and continue to operate and maintain their other cemeteries.

8.0 Vision, policies and objectives

- 8.1 The vision is to ensure that the quantitative and qualitative needs of the people of Cheshire East for burial are met, by working with other providers, both existing and potential, to enable this provision to be located in proximity to the population, which is often widely dispersed across Cheshire East's 1,166 square kilometres.
- 8.2 The vision requires an awareness of levels of demand and capacity and their distribution, to seek to meet those needs through developing appropriate provision in terms of location and type of burial facilities.
- 8.3 The key policy is for Cheshire East Council to focus its long-term burial provision in two principal cemeteries in Crewe and Macclesfield, whilst continuing to operate and maintain the other cemeteries. The future management of the seven cemeteries outside of these two main conurbations, and the development of additional provision, could better meet local needs by being the responsibility of town and parish councils.
- 8.4 A policy of optimising burial space in existing cemeteries, sensitive to aesthetic, heritage and access considerations, would maximise the period during which each cemetery will be able to offer new graves.
- 8.5 A policy on an appropriate fee structure for exclusive rights of burial agreed with reference to supply and demand that could cover a range of exclusive rights that benefits both the bereaved and the Council, would provide greater flexibility and sustainability.
- 8.6 Exclusive rights of burial could be offered with a range of periods, such as 25, 50 and 75 years, a range of renewal options, such as five or ten years, and priced accordingly. The shortest period would be offered at the lowest price and would benefit those unable to afford the longer periods. It would enable them to subsequently renew the exclusive rights at affordable rates if they so wished. This would be a more appropriate way to provide equality of opportunity than a single price.

9.0 Cemetery Strategy Short Term

9.1 The strategic management of the cemeteries requires ready access to reliable data, which will be provided by:

- Consolidation of the three separate BACAS databases.
- Inclusion of mapping of graves in BACAS for all cemeteries.
- Confirm ability of BACAS to produce management statistics suited to the specific needs of Cheshire East Council.
- Provision of resources, including training in the use of the mapping program, to identify graves in each section of each cemetery that are empty, available and deliverable.
- Audit of data held within BACAS to ensure accuracy.

9.2 Review periods of exclusive rights, extension periods and pricing structure.

10.0 Cemetery Strategy Medium Term

- 10.1 Research potential solutions to overcoming difficult ground conditions at Wilmslow Cemetery.
- 10.2 Progress the development of the extension of Weston Cemetery.
- 10.3 To consider, where appropriate, the transfer of existing facilities or working to set up a trust for future cemetery provision where there is a desire to provide more local provision over and above Cheshire East's principal provision.

11.0 Cemetery Strategy Long Term

- 11.1 Cheshire East Council to continue to manage the two principal cemeteries at Crewe and Macclesfield, providing burial facilities that are sustainable, through a combination of the measures already taken in the short and medium term.
- 11.2 Continue to consider the transfer of existing facilities and or the creation of trusts for future cemetery provision, where appropriate, (as 10.3 above).
- 11.3 The short-term actions relating to BACAS will provide ready access to accurate and reliable data and associated mapping will enable the Council in the long-term to:
- Optimise the use of land already available within existing cemeteries.
 - Continue liaison, co-operation and appropriate degrees of joint-working, with town and parish council and churches to ensure continued burial space provision to meet local need.