

A paved path leads through a cemetery. On the left, a large, dried, textured structure stands. The path is lined with several headstones, some with flowers placed on them. The background shows a grassy field and some trees under a clear blue sky.

Ellen Millar

Bereavement
Services Manager

South Lanarkshire
Council

Background



South Lanarkshire Council was formed in April 1996 bringing together large industrial towns, market towns, villages, and farming communities creating the 5th largest local authority in Scotland. The authority was made up of areas from 4 previous authorities of Clydesdale District Council, East Kilbride District Council, Hamilton District Council and Glasgow Council.



We operate one crematorium, South Lanarkshire Crematorium in Blantyre. The crematorium opened in September 2006 and this opening was the formation of our Bereavement Services.



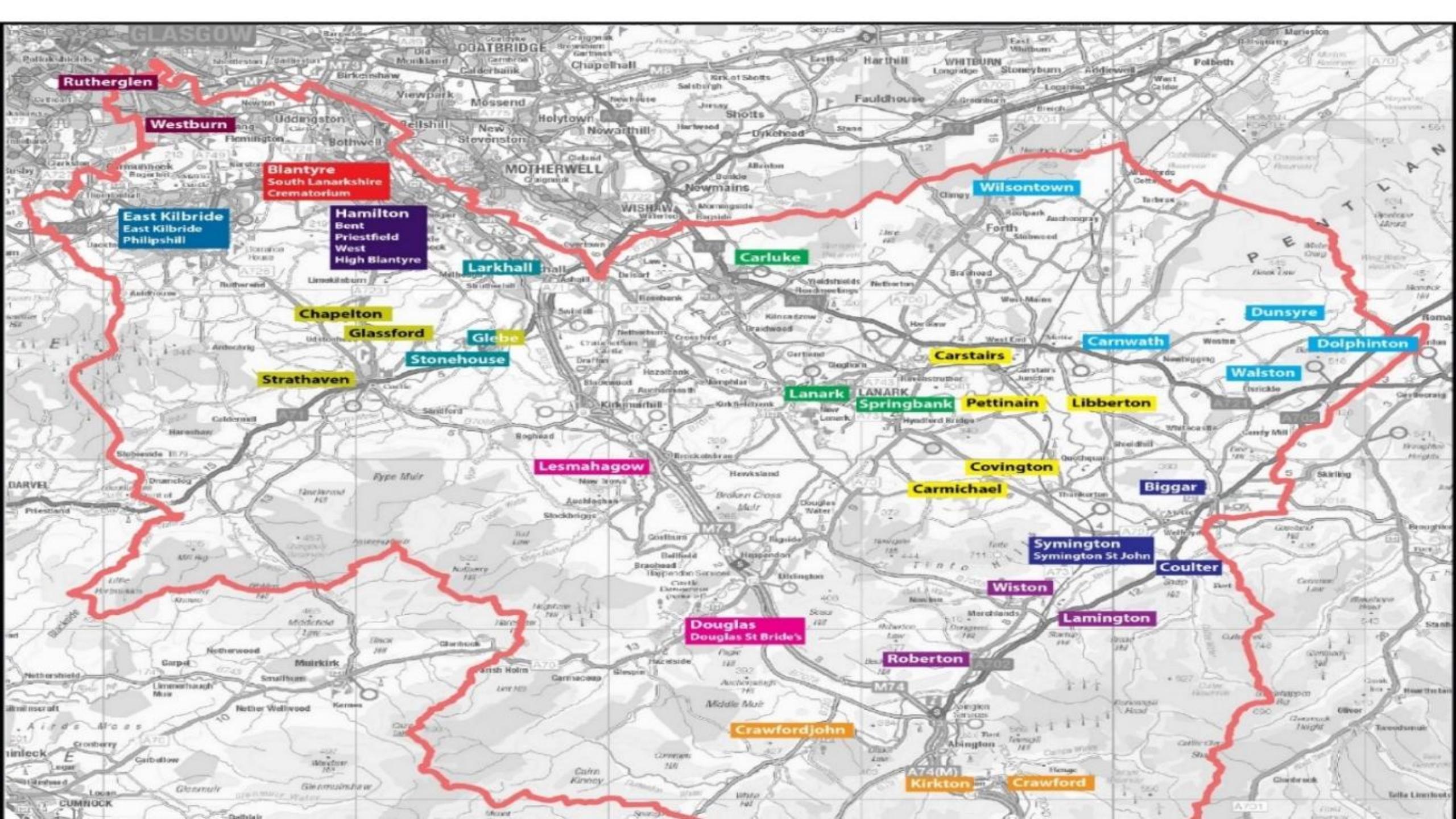
The Council has an area of 684 square miles and a population of 327,430 (as at June 2022).



The next slide will show the locations of the cemeteries and crematorium and demonstrates the geographical area that the authority covers.



There are 55 cemeteries within the local authority, for which we provide operational works. These include churchyards, small rural cemeteries, and large urban cemeteries. Within the 55 cemeteries, there are 2 cemeteries which are privately owned and for which the Council carries out excavation works required for burials.



Data Analysis

Although there was an awareness of the changing dynamics of our services an analysis had never been carried out.

Therefore, the starting point was to understand how the burial and cremation demands have changed over the years, what did they look like in the past, what the present looked like and what the future projection looked like.

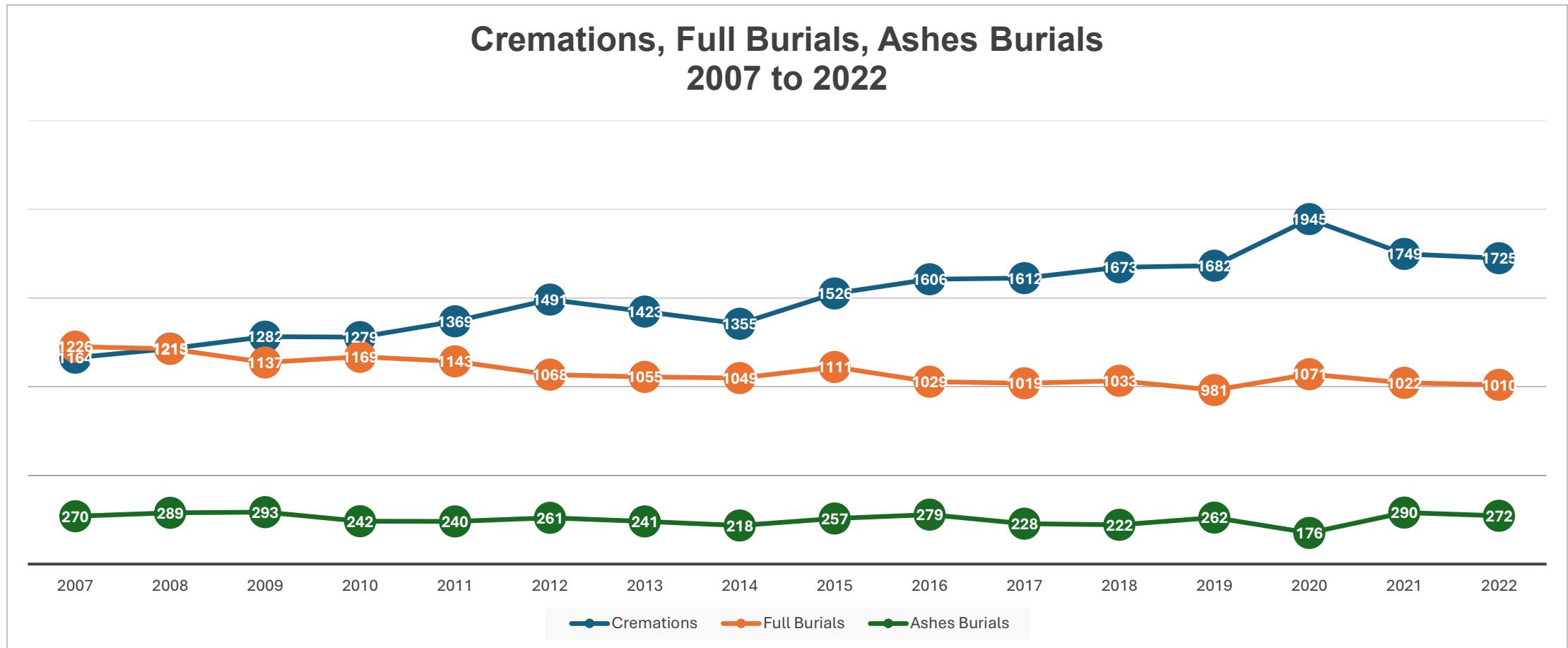
Using the starting year of 2007 which was the first full year the crematorium had been operating we were able to:

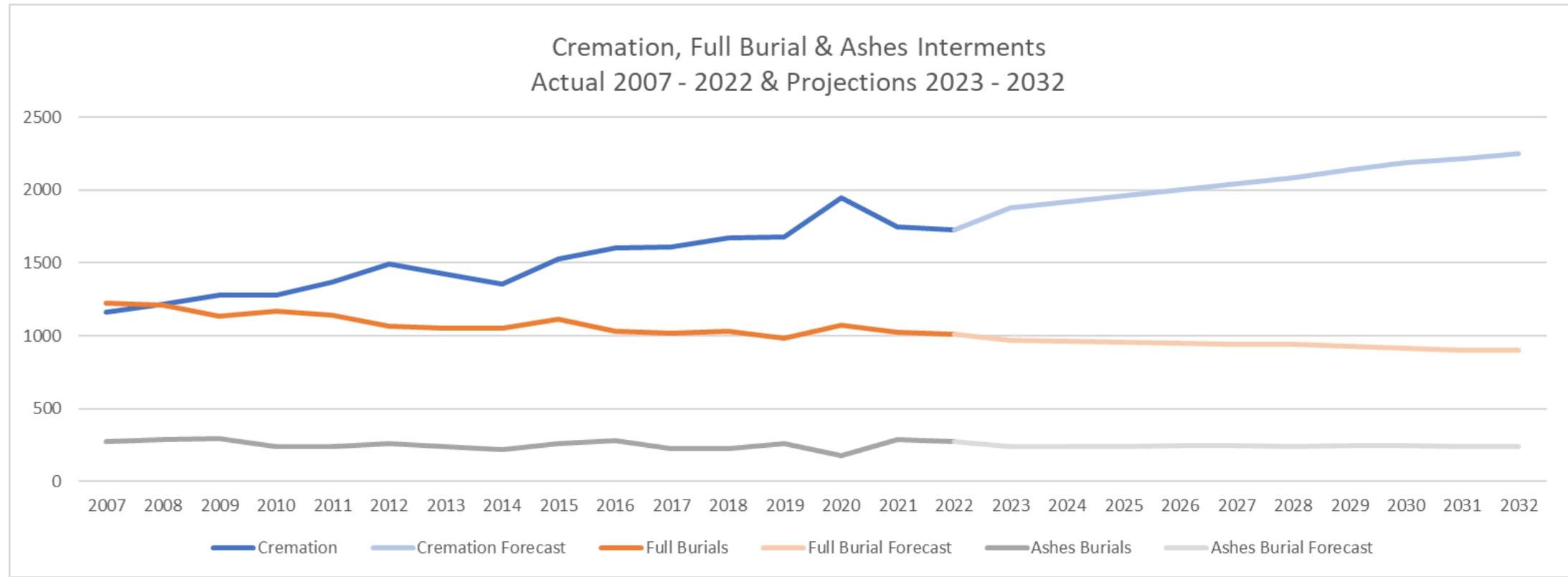
Demonstrate the changing requirements of the community between burials and cremations and the trend of declining burial requirements and the increase of cremation numbers.

Analyse the uptake of our differing cremation service times

The following slide demonstrates the decline of burial requests and the increase in cremation over the period 2007 – 2022, along with the changing requests in ashes only burials.

Service Type Analysis





Projection

Using the produced data of declining burials and increasing cremations we looked at the projection over a 10 year period. Following the national trends, we can see the forecast of continuing decline of burials and increase of cremations.

Data Usage

- On-going land provision is becoming more difficult to source as available land use changes for community requirements and the ability of land to be used for burials. The cost of providing new cemeteries have a huge financial impact for Local Authorities. Therefore, using the data produced allowed consideration to be given to achieving maximum land use throughout the Council area whilst maintaining our legal obligation to provide burial ground, including:
 - Stop selling right of burial in advance of burial to protect ground for on-going burials
 - Using our legislative and procedural powers actively seek to reclaim burial ground for which the right of burial has been purchased in advance and where no interments have taken place in the last 40 years.
 - Creating catchment areas for our cemeteries which gives a larger service area for the communities.
 - Look at the boundaries of our existing cemeteries for potential areas to extend.
 - Data produced for unused lairs allowing for more detailed analysis of each cemetery to investigate any ground which may have been left unused previously for various reasons:
 - Insufficient depth recorded previously for full burial could be ashes only ground
 - Missed ground for operational reason (i.e. leaving space in adverse weather conditions)
 - Memorabilia at ground preventing the opening of graves.

Catchment areas of South Lanarkshire (Urban)

	Hamilton/ Blantyre	East Kilbride	Cambuslang /Rutherglen	Strathaven	Larkhall/ Stonehouse
Bent	East Kilbride	Rutherglen	Chapelton	Glebe*	
Priestfield	Philipshill	Westburn	Glassford	Larkhall	
West	Philipshill extension (1117)		Strathaven	Stonehouse	
			Glebe*		
TOTAL NEW LAIRS AVAILABLE	1772	1208	323	241	247
AVERAGE NEW LAIRS	122	68	37	10	31
LIFE EXPECTANCY	14.52	17.76	8.73	24.10	7.97

Catchment areas of South Lanarkshire (Rural)

Clydesdale						
Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E	Group F	Group G
Carnwath	Carluke	Carmichael	Biggar	Douglas	Lamington	Crawford/Kirkton
Dolphinton	Lanark	Carstairs (2)	Coulter	Lesmahagow (2)	Roberton	Crawfordjohn
Dunsyre	Springbank	Covington	Symington (2)		Wiston	Elvanfoot
Walston		Libberton				Leadhills
Wilsontown		Pettinain				
TOTAL NEW LAIRS AVAILABLE	250	371	69	179	170	164
AVERAGE NEW LAIRS	10	25	6	8	27	3
LIFE EXPECTANCY	25.00	14.84	11.50	22.38	6.30	54.67
						49.00

Aerial Views



On Site



Cremation Service Type

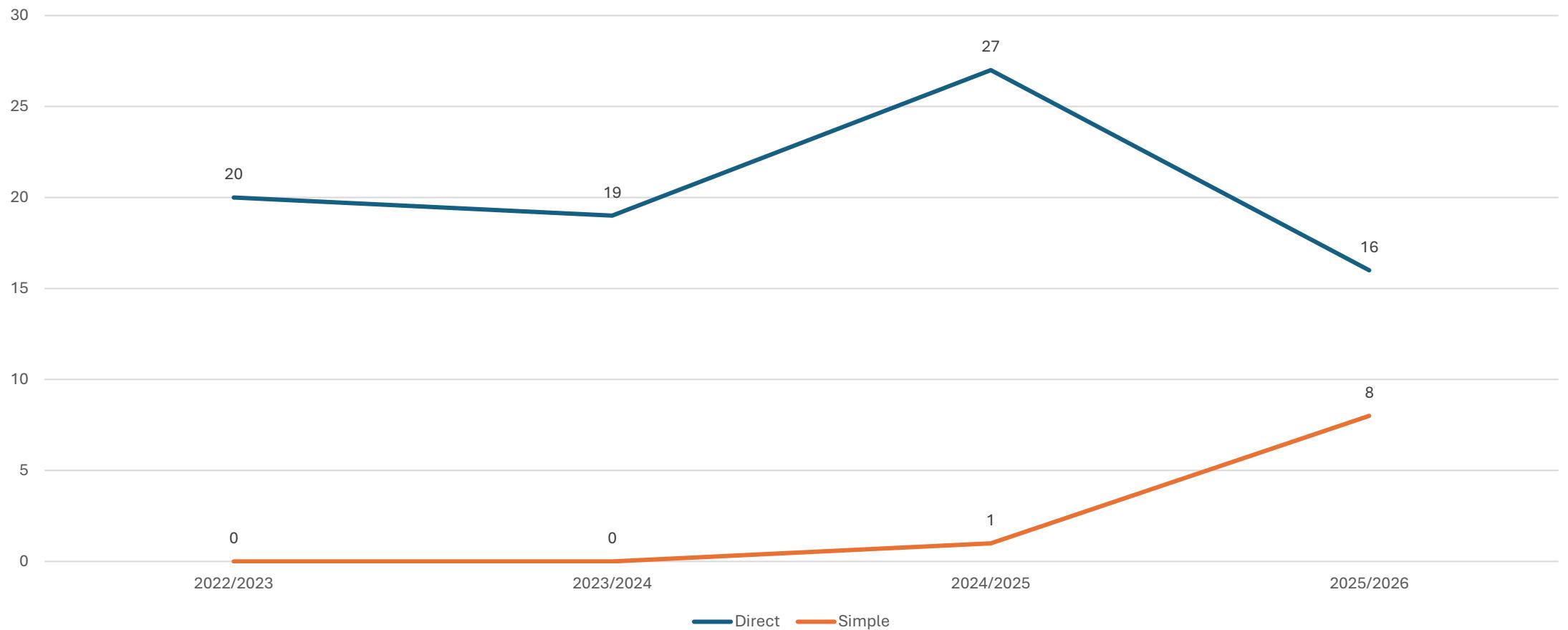
There were 3 different types of services offered at the crematorium and we looked at the uptake of each service type and this provided the following data:

Service Type	% of uptake (2022)
• Full services (1 hour slot)	80%
• Half Services (30 minute slot)	22%
• Direct Cremation (no attendance)	5%

This data showed the direct cremation slots which are timed at 8am and 8:15am were very low in uptake. It was proposed to change the format of the services offered at 8am and 8:15am to allow for an additional option:

- Retain the direct cremation (no mourners, or tributes) and lower the cost assisting with the financial burden faced by families.
- Create an additional option of a simple service to include entry and exit music, a poem or short eulogy, and a maximum of 10 mourners.
- These options are now being offered at the same time of 8am and 8:15am on the usual first come first served basis. These changes are being monitored currently to determine level of interest and take up of the additional options. It is hoped these changes will enhance the crematorium service provision and increase revenue. This will be continually monitored to ensure it is working for the bereaved and the Local Authority.

Direct and Simple Service Types



Cemetery Investment



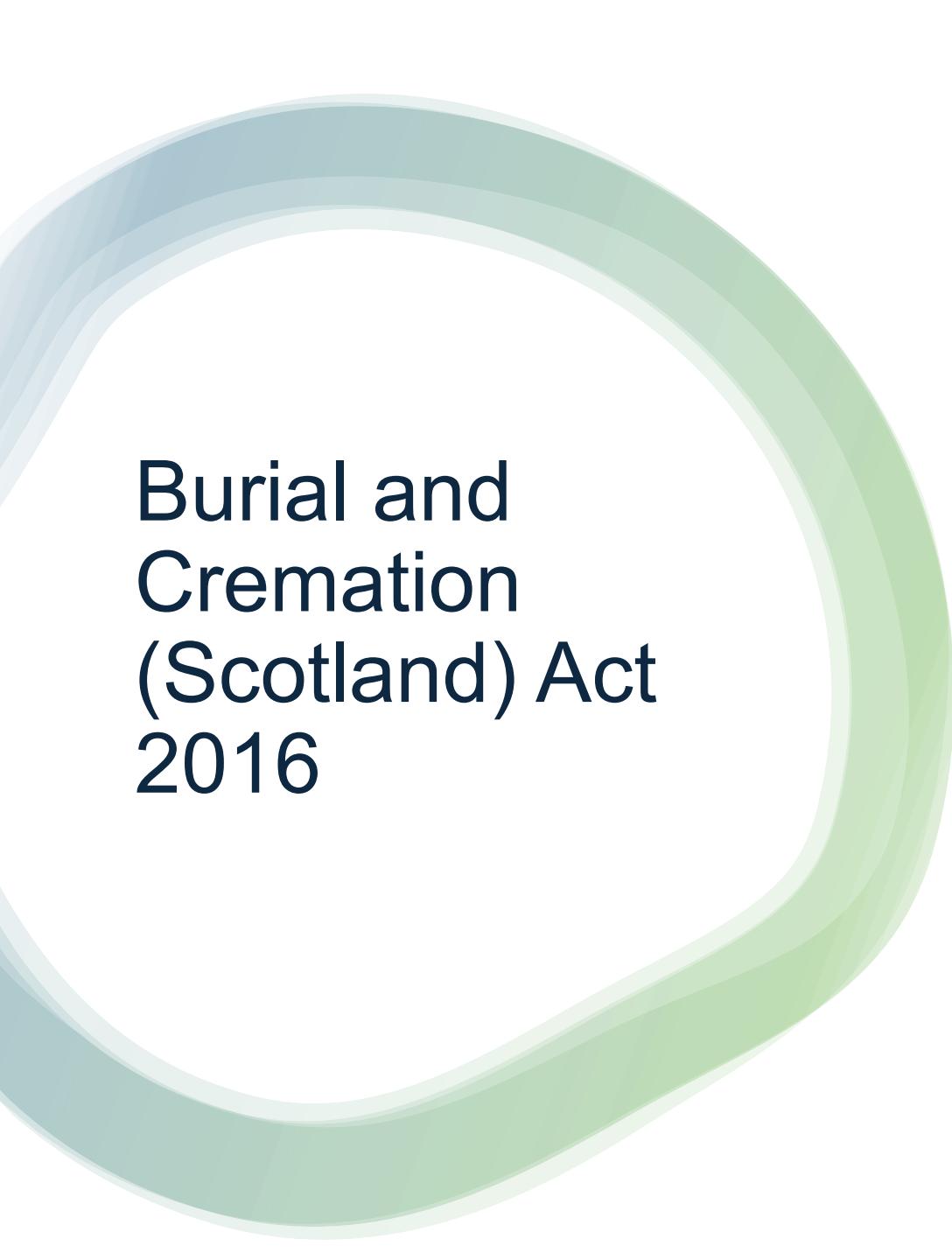
Crematorium Investment



IT Investment

- We are transitioning to a new IT system which will help with
 - Headstone inspection programme
 - Improved database holding additional information
 - Business Continuity (cloud based system)
 - Mapping
 - Improved reporting
 - On-line family searches (resource saving)





Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016

- The Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016 was introduced to modernise and consolidate the laws surrounding burial and cremation in Scotland some of which has introduced:
 - Standardisation of Procedures: The Act introduced consistent procedures for burial and cremation across Scotland, replacing various local practices with a unified approach.
 - Improved Record-Keeping: New requirements for keeping detailed records of burials and cremations help ensure transparency and make it easier for families to trace relatives' resting places.
 - Introduction of lease period for burial rights (25 years, from 1st March 2026).
 - Introduction of Inspection Regimes: Burial authorities and cremation authorities are now subject to regular inspection to ensure compliance and high standards.
 - Reuse of Burial Grounds: The Act allows for the reuse of certain burial plots under strict conditions, helping to address the shortage of space in cemeteries.
 - Introduction of Burial Management Plan (From 1st March 2026)
 - Introduction of a Funeral Director Code of Practice (From 1st March 2026)