
Report To:	Environment and Regeneration Committee	Date:	31 August 2017
Report By:	Acting Head of Environmental and Commercial Services	Report No:	ERC/ENV/WR/17.310
Contact Officer:	Willie Rennie	Contact No:	714761
Subject:	Cemetery Development Update		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on progress as regards Cemetery Development in Inverclyde.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The provision of burial lairs is a statutory obligation on local authorities therefore Inverclyde Council is required to continue to provide burial lairs to meet this obligation. There is sufficient burial lair capacity in Knocknairshill Cemetery to meet demand for approximately 4.5 years. Knocknairshill is the only cemetery in Inverclyde which has new lairs available and this has been the case since 1994.
- 2.2 Previous reports to Committee confirmed that unsuitable ground conditions prevented the expansion of both Knocknairshill and Greenock Cemeteries. Most recently, a survey of land adjacent to Port Glasgow Cemetery has also concluded that ground conditions are unsuitable for cemetery expansion.
- 2.3 Land adjacent to both Inverkip and Kilmacolm Cemeteries may be suitable for cemetery expansion; however, it has been confirmed that Inverclyde Council does not own the land in question. Preliminary discussions are ongoing with the relevant landowners. The majority of land surrounding Gourock Cemetery is not suitable for cemetery expansion.
- 2.4 The prospects of other as yet unidentified potential sites for cemetery development will be investigated.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Committee note that further expansion of Knocknairshill, Greenock and Port Glasgow Cemeteries is not feasible due to unsuitable ground conditions.
- 3.2 The Committee note that preliminary discussions are ongoing with the landowners of land adjacent to Kilmacolm and Inverkip Cemeteries about the possibility of the land being sold to Inverclyde Council for cemetery expansion. A further report will advise on the progress of these discussions and of the associated financial implications.
- 3.3 The Committee note the prospects of other as yet unidentified potential sites for cemetery development will be investigated.

Willie Rennie
Acting Head of Environmental and Commercial Services

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The provision of burial lairs is a statutory obligation on local authorities hence Inverclyde Council is required to continue to provide burial lairs to meet this obligation. There is sufficient burial lair capacity in Knocknairshill Cemetery to meet demand for approximately 4.5 years – to 2021, however it has already been confirmed that further expansion of Knocknairshill, Greenock and Port Glasgow Cemeteries is not feasible due to unsuitable ground conditions.
- 4.2 Each local authority must provide one burial ground within the area of the local authority and may provide other burial grounds within that area.

There are six local authority managed cemeteries within Inverclyde in which burials take place.

Inverkip	Gourock	Greenock
Knocknairshill	Port Glasgow	Kilmacolm

- 4.3 Not all land is suitable for development as a cemetery. There are practical considerations such as the presence of rock, the steepness of the site, nearby water courses etc.; and there is a main consideration as regards the potential of pollutants to affect the water environment, groundwater in particular. There are also financial matters for consideration, notably whether land is owned or has to be purchased.
- 4.4 Inverkip Cemetery

Inverkip Cemetery is comprised of two distinct sites separated by Millhouse Road. Old Inverkip Cemetery is to the north of Millhouse Road; it is no longer in use for burials and has not been for a number of years. The more modern part of the cemetery is on the south side of Millhouse Road and is still in use; however, there are no new lairs available for sale. Expansion of Inverkip Cemetery was previously considered in the 1990's and again in 2003, but the option was rejected in favour of development of the Knocknairshill site. The adjacent land is not owned by Inverclyde Council.

4.5 Gourock Cemetery

Based on the ground conditions within the current cemetery, in particular the experience of digging graves at the periphery of the cemetery, it is unlikely that expansion of the cemetery would be feasible. Surface rock, bed rock and wet conditions prevail.

4.6 Port Glasgow Cemetery

Port Glasgow Cemetery has no new lairs available for sale and this has been the case for a number of years. Surveys have confirmed that adjacent land is unsuitable for development as a cemetery

4.7 Kilmacolm Cemetery

Kilmacolm Cemetery has no new lairs available for sale and this has been the case for a number of years. The cemetery is surrounded on all sides by productive arable or grazing land. To the north of the existing cemetery, the land has a gentle gradient rising above the existing cemetery. To the south, the gradients are also relatively gentle and the land would seem on the face of it to be suitable for the development of a cemetery. From analysis of vegetation types and other visual indicators, the sites would appear to be relatively well drained, particularly the arable land. There is some indication of rock close to the surface to the north east.

The land is not owned by Inverclyde Council.

5.0 CURRENT SITUATION

5.1 Potential cemetery expansion is now focussed on Inverkip and Kilmacolm Cemeteries.

5.2 Inverkip Cemetery

Land directly adjacent to the cemetery is for sale at present, some of which may be suitable for cemetery use. Other nearby land, which is not suitable for development as a cemetery, is included in the same sale package. Preliminary discussions have taken place with the land agent and they will continue while it is prudent to do so. A closing date for expressions of interest has been set as 29 August.

5.3 Kilmacolm Cemetery

The adjacent land owner has been contacted with a view to making some land available for cemetery expansion. At the time of writing this report, a response from the land owner is still awaited.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

6.1 Financial Implications

The sum approved for cemetery development is £1.5m, this level of funding was appropriate at the time since it related to development costs of land already in the ownership of Inverclyde Council. Now it has been confirmed that the Inverclyde Council owned land earmarked for cemetery development is unsuitable, other land will have to be purchased. Dialogue with the owners of land adjacent to Inverkip and Kilmacolm Cemeteries has commenced; and the prospects of other as yet unidentified potential sites will be investigated. At the time of writing this report, the costs associated with the purchase of potential sites is yet to be established. A further report will be brought to Committee to advise of progress in identifying land suitable for cemetery development, and the associated financial implications with the intention that this issue is addressed as part of the current budget consideration.

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend £'000	Comments
Capital	Cemetery Development	2017/19	1,500	For noting only as this cost has already been approved by committee 12 January 2017.

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Revenue		2018/19			These costs will be included in a future report to committee.

6.2 Legal

In terms of the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016, Inverclyde Council has duties and powers in connection with the provision of burial grounds and lairs within its area. There are no other specific legal implications arising from this report.

6.3 Human Resources

There are no human resources issues arising from this report.

6.4 Equalities

There are no equality issues arising from this report.

6.5 Repopulation

There are no repopulation issues arising from this report.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

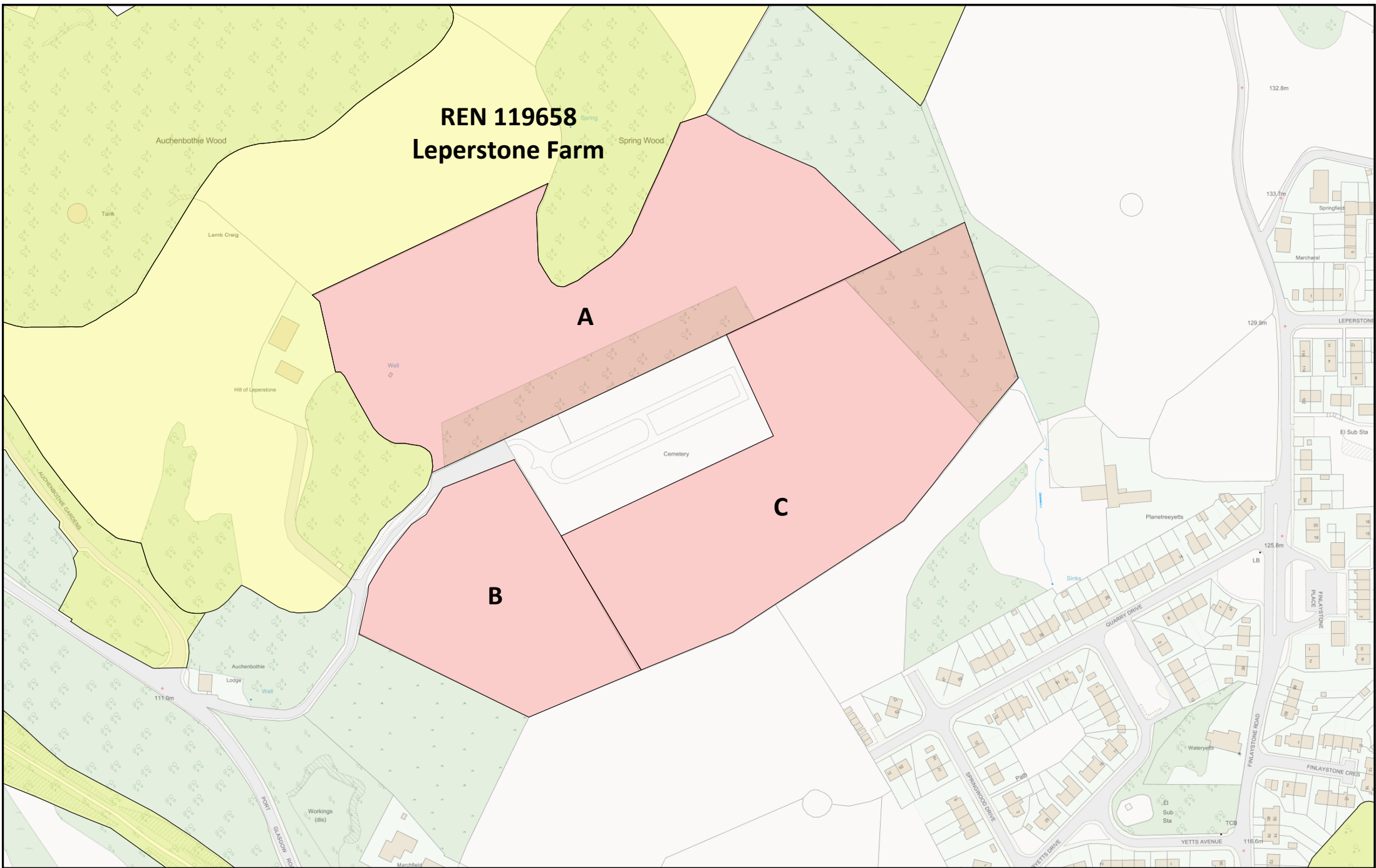
7.1 Planning was consulted as regards the potential use of land adjacent to Inverkip and Kilmacolm Cemeteries.

7.2 Legal and Property Services was consulted as regards the estimated scope and cost of the proposed works.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 The Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016.

SEPA Land Use Planning System GU32 version 4, 20/09/2016: Guidance on Assessing the Impacts of Cemeteries on Groundwater.



**REN 119658
Leperstone Farm**

A

B

C

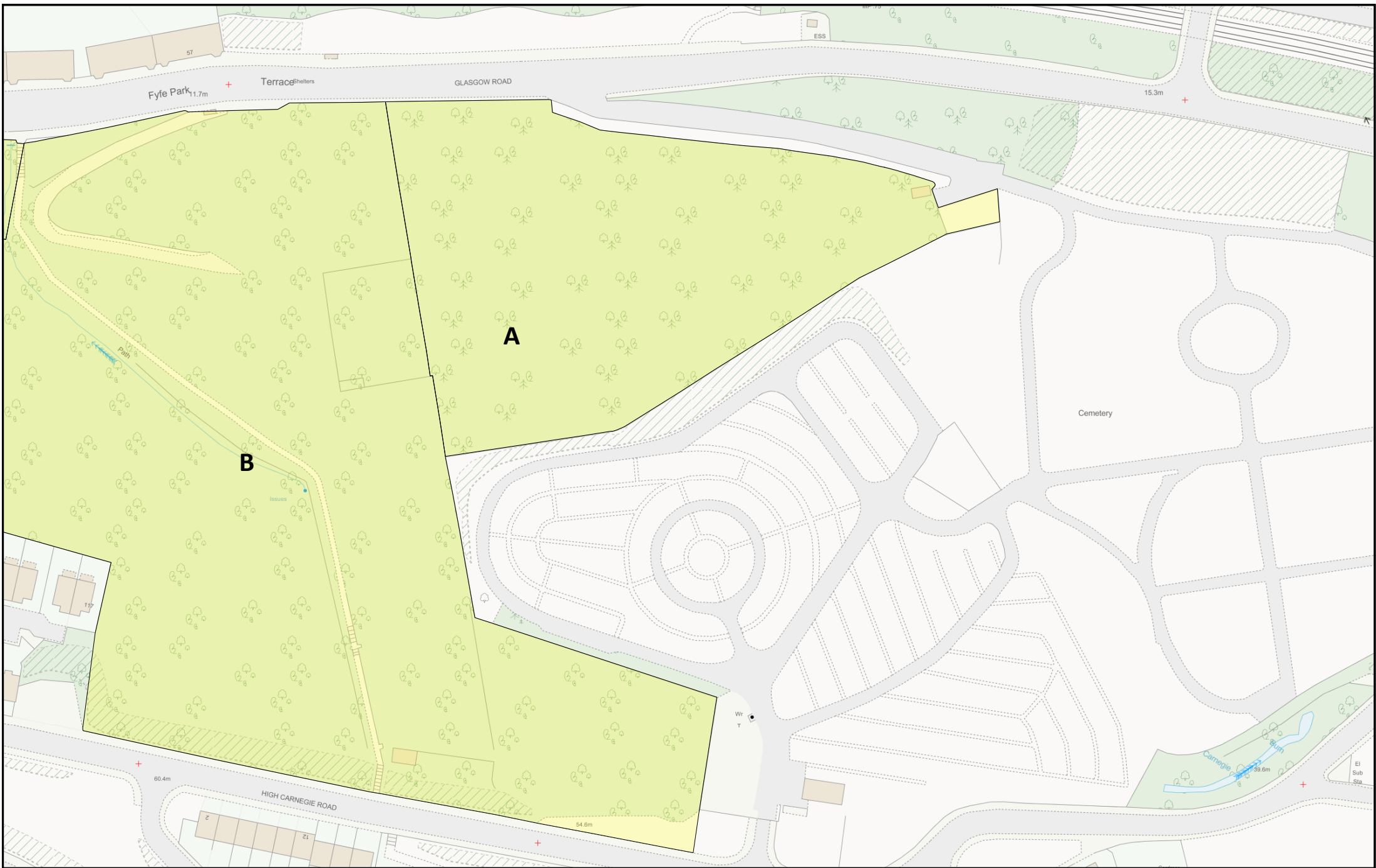
Cemetery

Land Ownership Enquiry

Land adjacent to Kilmacolm Cemetery

Sections A, B and C

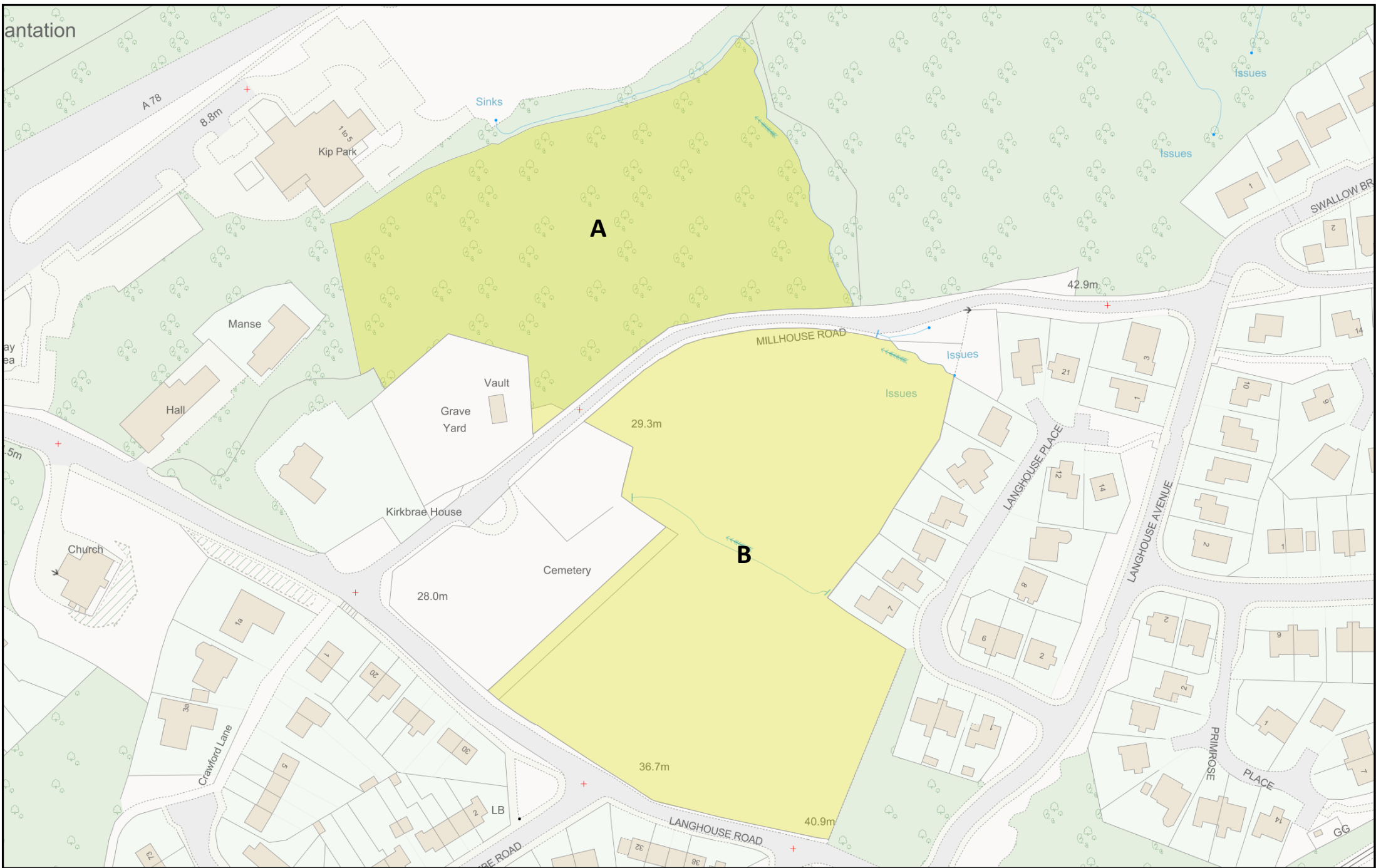
Not Owned by Inverclyde Council



Land Ownership Enquiry

Land adjacent to Port Glasgow Cemetery

Section A not owned by Inverclyde Council
 Section B owned by Inverclyde Council



Land Ownership Enquiry

Land Adjacent to Inverkip Cemetery

Sections A and B not owned by Inverclyde Council