



Subject:	Minutes from the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group
Date:	8 th April 2025
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services
Contact Officer:	Seamus McBride, City Protection Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="text" value="3"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the matters noted at the recent Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group held on 2 nd April 2025
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	That the People and Communities Committee agree the following recommendations from the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group.
2.2	Members of the working group agreed all reports presented to the meeting on 2 nd April 2025.
2.3	Approve the minutes from the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group meeting held on 2 nd April 2025 including the following recommendations.
2.4	Approve the decision to allow the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to erect an additional seven headstone markers
2.5	Approve the decision to sympathetically repair and restore all 41 headstones and monuments damaged by the Storm Éowyn.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Operational Update</u> Members of the Working Group noted the Bereavement Services operational update. The updated Scale of Charges for financial year 2025/2026 was communicated with all stakeholders and commenced on 1st April.</p> <p>Members of the Working Group agreed to recommend that the People and Communities Committee would approve the request from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission permission to erect seven additional standard headstone markers. There is no expense to the Council and as CWGC is a registered charity, it is recommended that the memorial application fees are not applied.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Damage to Cemeteries caused by Storm Éowyn</u> Members were reminded that a red weather warning had been issued by the Met Office for Friday 24th January and that the Council's Emergency Management Team had made the decision to postpone and reschedule all burials and cremations booked for that day. Bereavement Staff worked throughout the weekend to ensure all funerals were completed in the following days.</p>

3.3	<p>Members were advised that the storm had caused widespread damage to buildings and trees across Northern Ireland, including the uprooting of 70 large landscape trees, and 87 memorial trees across the Council's Cemeteries. 41 headstones and monuments were damaged, 32 of these damaged by fallen trees. The Working Group were reminded that the maintenance of headstones and monuments was the responsibility of grave owners, however, given the circumstances, the Council has agreed to sympathetically repair headstones damaged by the storm.</p> <p>Working Group agreed to recommend that the People and Communities Committee would agree to the sympathetic repair and restoration of the 41 headstones and monuments which had been damaged by Storm Éowyn.</p> <p><u>Burial Provision Update</u></p> <p>Members of the working group agreed the update on burial provision. Members were updated on a stock take of existing burial provision which has taken place. Members were advised that Bereavement Services has written to the Department of Justice to confirm a revision and reduction in the pandemic planning stock of graves held by Council. Members agreed to arrange site visits to potential new burial sites where these can be accommodated.</p>
4.0	Finance and Resources Implications
4.1	It is estimated that the total cost to repair all 41 headstones and monuments may be in the region of £70,000. These costs will be confirmed as repair works are completed.
5.0	<p>Appendices</p> <p>Minutes from Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group on 2nd April 2025</p>