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**Democratic Services Section
Chief Executive's Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**

1st March, 2019

MEETING OF People and Communities Committee

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following item(s) will also be considered at the meeting to be held at 4.30 pm on Tuesday, 5th March, 2019.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

3. **Committee/Strategic Issues**

- (a) Minutes of Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group (Pages 1 - 8)

8. **Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

- (a) Motion - Million Trees (Pages 9 - 10)

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Subject:	Update on Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Development
Date:	5 th March 2019
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is update committee on the key issues discussed at the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group meeting held on 25 th February 2019.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	That the People and Communities Committee:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approve the minutes and the recommendations from the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group meetings held on 25th February 2019.

3.0	Main Report
	<p data-bbox="272 206 421 237"><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p data-bbox="165 309 1458 495">3.1 The Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group is a Working Group of the People and Communities Committee which consists of an elected member from each of the political parties. The minutes from the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group are brought before the Committee for approval.</p> <p data-bbox="272 566 1067 598">The key issues discussed at the 25th February meeting were:</p> <p data-bbox="165 663 976 694">3.2 <u>Update on Revisions to Memorial Management Policy</u></p> <p data-bbox="272 719 1458 1153">The Memorial Management Policy was agreed by Council in 2016 and was presented to the Working Group again to approve revisions, which reflect good practice elsewhere. The Bereavement Services Manager explained that a key element of the revised policy centred around the introduction of a three stage categorisation for memorials incorporating unsafe, unstable and safe. Members were reminded that aside from a British Standard (BS 8415:2018), the Memorial Management Policy is the most effective means of ensuring the quality of work of Monumental Sculptors who are contracted by families to work in our cemeteries. The Working Group agreed to adopt the revised policy subject to People and Communities approval.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1218 936 1249">3.3 <u>Update on Memorial Safety Inspection Programme</u></p> <p data-bbox="272 1274 1458 1659">The Working Group was provided with an update on the Memorial Inspection Programme which began in April 2016. Inspections have been completed in Balmoral Cemetery, Shankill Graveyard and Clifton Street Graveyard. 11,000 headstones have been inspected in Roselawn. In response to a fatal accident report from Glasgow. The Council undertook a 'risk zoning' exercise which placed the old City Cemetery as the highest priority for inspections. Inspections are now focused on sections in City Cemetery which contain large historic monuments built in the 1800s, and where necessary engineering specialist advice and support may be required.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1724 857 1756">3.4 <u>Update on New Commonwealth War Graves</u></p> <p data-bbox="272 1780 1458 1960">Members were reminded of our partnership with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, in that the Commission have built and maintain around 800 memorials and monuments across all our cemeteries. Recent research has identified the unmarked graves of two casualties of WW1 who died later, from their injuries. The Commission has applied to</p>

	<p>mark these graves with a headstone, one in Dundonald and one in City Cemetery. Given that the Commission is a not-for-profit organisation, that there are no interested families, and that these cases are going to be extremely rare, Members were asked to approve waiving of headstone application and work-permit fees, totalling £32 in each case. The Working Group recommended that these fees be waived in these specific circumstances, subject to the approval of the People and Communities Committee.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Any associated costs will be borne within operational budgets</p>
3.6	<p><u>Equality / Good Relations Implication or Rural Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Minutes of the Working Group of 25th February 2019</p>

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**STRATEGIC CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM
DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

Minutes of Meeting of 25th February, 2019

Members Present: Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson);
and Councillors Corr and O'Neill.

In Attendance: Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Mr. M. Patterson, Bereavement Services Manager; and
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

Apology

An apology for inability to attend was reported on behalf of The High Sheriff of Belfast, Alderman Sandford.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd January, 2019 were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Update on Revisions to Memorial Management Policy

The Bereavement Services Manager provided the Working Group with an update on the Council's Memorial Management Policy and Memorial Safe Working Practice, which had been agreed in 2016. The Members were presented with a revised draft of that Policy which incorporated three additional elements, namely:

- i. An application process to erect memorials in Council owned cemeteries;
- ii. A permit process to manage the construction work undertaken by monumental sculptors; and
- iii. A five year rolling inspection programme in respect of existing memorials.

The Working Group was informed that Council staff continued to monitor the implementation of the policy and evaluate best practice in other local authorities, to ensure that the policy was effective and fit for purpose. The Bereavement Services Manager informed the Working Group that, following agreement of the policy by Members, it was his intention to invite Memorial Sculptors and Funeral Directors to attend a workshop to update them on changes to the policy.

The Members agreed the recommendations contained within the report and raised a number of related items for follow up and discussion. The Chairperson referred to instances where grave surrounds had been broken in order to re-open graves and the fact that the cost of remedying the damaged surrounds resided with the family/owner of the grave. He stated that he had received information that indicating that other local authorities had successfully reopened graves without the need to break the joints in the grave surround.

Members discussed further the need to ensure quality of work by professional contractors including Monumental Sculptors, who were contracted to work on Council sites by families or Funeral Directors. The Bereavement Services Manager reminded Members that, a British Standard (BS 8415:2018) described best practice in memorial construction. The Bereavement Services Manager stated that the approval of the Council's Memorial Management Policy, which allowed for non-compliant memorial sculptors to be de-registered, was the most effective means of ensuring the quality of workmanship in this area, given that the industry is self-regulated. A Member suggested that further training sessions in respect of Monumental Sculptors could be beneficial and recommended that an article be published in City Matters advising the public on relevant questions to ask, prior to purchasing a headstone or memorial

The Working Group agreed to adopt the revised policy, subject to the approval of the People and Communities Committee.

Update on Memorial Safety Inspection Programme

The Bereavement Services Manager referred to the circumstances surrounding the fatality which had occurred at a graveyard in Glasgow, including the recommendations contained within a report following that fatality.

The Working Group was provided with an update on the Memorial Inspection Programme undertaken within Council owned cemeteries which had commenced in September, 2016. He stated that, as part of the Memorial Inspection Programme, inspections at Balmoral Cemetery, Shankill Graveyard and Clifton Street Graveyard had been completed, with a total of 11,000 headstones being inspected at Roselawn Cemetery. The Members were informed that the inspection programme had identified 900 memorials at Roselawn Cemetery which had been deemed to be unsafe, and 2,100 which were considered to be unstable. He reminded the Working Group of the Council policy to band unsafe headstones considered to be unsafe, including measures to contact grave owners in respect of unsafe headstones.

The Bereavement Services Manager stated that Belfast City Council managers and staff had been trained in managing the safety of large historic monuments and had been provided with the necessary expertise to inspect free-standing monuments, up to 2.5 meters high. The Working Group was advised that monuments, which were above that height or attached to another structure, required the expertise of a Structural Engineer. The Working Group was informed that the Council had applied a system of risk zoning in respect of its graveyards and cemeteries, following the recommendations contained within Glasgow report. The risk zoning exercise had identified that the City Cemetery as the highest priority for inspections. He stated that inspections were ongoing currently in the sections containing large historic monuments which were constructed in the 1800s. He stated further that where necessary, engineering specialist advice and support might be required and that Members would be kept updated should remedial work impact on revenue budgets.

Noted.

Update on New Commonwealth War Graves

The Working Group was provided with background information by the Bereavement Services Manager in respect of the establishment of The Commonwealth War Graves Commission. He reported that the Commission had constructed and maintained 791 headstones in Council owned cemeteries, including a 'Cross of Sacrifice' in both Dundonald and the City Cemetery. He referred to the high standards of workmanship undertaken by the Commission including the use of Kilkenny Limestone to

construct its headstones and the fact that the Commission used the services of an approved sculptor, registered by the Council. The Working Group was informed that an application had been received by the Commission in respect of two additional war dead, who had died from their wounds after the First World War. He stated that it was proposed that one of the headstones would be erected in the City Cemetery and the other in Dundonald Cemetery. The Bereavement Services Manager advised the Working Group that, the cost associated with the erection of a headstone was an application fee of £16, and a permit fee of £16. He stated further that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission was a not-for-profit organisation and that it was proposed that the Council waive the aforementioned fees, given that there was no survivable relatives and that it was unlikely that many similar cases would be identified in the future. Members recommended that the waiver should apply only to Commonwealth War Graves Commission applications in respect of historic cases when there was no family identified to take responsibility for the deceased.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided and recommended that both the memorial application fee and permit fee be waived, given the specific circumstances outlined, subject to the approval of the People and Communities Committee.

New Crematorium Facility at Roselawn

The Chairperson requested that the Working Group be provided with regular updates, including progress on the planning application, in respect of the new crematorium facility at Roselawn.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group agreed that its next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 19th March at 4.30 p.m.

Chairperson

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Subject:	Motion – Million Trees
Date:	5th March, 2019
Reporting Officer:	Sara Steele, Democratic Services Officer
Contact Officer:	Sara Steele, Democratic Services Officer

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Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To bring to the Committee’s attention a Motion regarding Million Trees, which will be presented to the Council at its meeting on 4th March.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the Motion and take such action thereon as may be determined.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The following motion regarding Million Trees, which will be proposed by Councillor Heading, and seconded by Councillor Long, will be presented to the Council at its meeting on 4th March:</p>

3.2	<p>“The importance of trees to the ambience, amenity and beauty of cities and to the wellbeing of their citizens is universally recognised, as is the role they play in promoting public health by combatting the air pollution that is linked to a range of medical conditions including asthma, heart and lung diseases, and early onset Alzheimer’s.</p> <p>Cognisant of these benefits, and consistent with this Council’s commitment to transform the way in which post-conflict Belfast is perceived by its citizens, potential investors, and visitors from home and abroad, the Council agrees to position Belfast as a leading sustainable, green city, by facilitating the planting of at least a million trees in Belfast over the next fifteen years.”</p>
3.3	<p>In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the Motion was referred without discussion to the People and Communities Committee.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	None