STRATEGIC CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Minutes of Meeting of 3rd August, 2017

Members Present: Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson);
Alderman Sandford; and
Councillor O'Neill.

In Attendance: Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
Mrs. S. Toland, Assistant Director, City Services;
Mrs. C. Sullivan, Policy and Business Development Officer;
Ms. S. Kalke, Project Sponsor;
Ms. T. Slevin, Project Manager;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 26th June were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of Interest were reported.

Update on the Business Case of the Crematorium Development

The Director of Property and Projects reminded the Group that, at its meeting on 26th June, it had considered an options paper outlining the various proposals under consideration for the crematorium development and it had agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that a mix of options 3.1 and 3.3, that is, a new Chapel Crematorium on the Roselawn site and the refurbishment of the existing Crematorium but with variations and scenarios within this, be considered as the Council's preferred choice in respect of crematoria development. The Director outlined the progress which had been made to date in terms of the discussions and meetings with representatives of other statutory agencies in order to progress the matter. He referred to some of the other issues which had been raised by Members in relation to car parking and access and suggested that a special meeting be held in September to which a report would be submitted in relation to some firm proposals regarding the preferred option.

The Group noted the information which had been provided and agreed to this course of action.

Update on the Study Visit to Crematoria in Scotland

The Project Sponsor provided the Members with an update on the study visit that had taken place on 28th June to Scotland to four crematoria. She reminded the Members that the crematoria had been chosen because of their relevance in sizes, demand and operational models. The key recommendations from the study visit were as follows:

- Operating facilities in different locations could cause management issues – more staff were required, it could put additional strain on existing staff and result in diminishing quality of service;
- Strict regulation could help when the service provision was already overstretched – it had to be agreed if there was a (political) will to introduce charges when services ran over their booked times. If so, it needed to be enforced;
- Flexibility of chapel – it was more efficient if you had a chapel that was flexible in design than having several chapels of different sizes;
- Good design was essential for the functionality of the crematorium;
- Thorough planning in advance was essential, looking at all different options. Life cycle and revenue costs had to be taken into consideration and were equally important, if not more than the capital costs as they had a long term impact;
- Functionality of the operation was an important factor to ensure the building was fit-for-purpose, and that the way a service flowed was contributing to the quality of services and the well-being of those attending;
- The provision of adequate car parking as well as how you got there and leave was an important factor for the overall quality of the service that was being provided;
- The key problem with the existing facility at Roselawn was the number and rate of services which were being accommodated within 30 minute slots. It was recommended that the Roselawn development had to take into consideration that it was future proofed, that is, the chosen option had to have the ability to accommodate future changes on procedures and operations;
- Robustness of services was essential especially in the time period of redevelopment. Compared to the Scottish cases Roselawn had no “fall back” option, that is, it had to be operational during the construction phase and had to provide a robust service with minimal disruption;
- In the case of having a refurbished facility and a new facility, it could potentially cause issues with the accommodation of staff and their well-being. Ideally staff accommodation should be on one site and not split; and
- It had been suggested that a new facility would allow for the design and construction to reflect current Best Practice Guidelines for crematoria and therefore deliver best the adequate services required.

The Group noted the information that had been provided and commended the officers on the organisation of the site visit.

Update on Permanent Memorial to mark Plot Z1 in the City Cemetery

The Group considered a report which provided an update on the consultation process of a permanent memorial at Plot Z1, commonly known as Baby Public, the City Cemetery.

The Assistant Director provided the Members with an update regarding the information sessions and consultation exercise in relation to the memorial. Following those meetings, it was the opinion of those involved that the process should be reviewed and the Assistant Director updated in more detail on the agreed actions following the 4th July public meeting and the queries from those attending. A key issue had been the need to realise the desire of those present to have a memorial rather that artwork using the services of a stonemason. Accordingly, she recommended that the Group approve the following next steps:

- Review of the artist's contract;
- Confirmation and agreement of the changed brief for the memorial (based on the most recent consultation and not as previously based on the CAP report);
- Changes to the original business case;
- Start of new procurement process to appoint a stonemason;
- Setting up of a focus group;
- Design proposal for memorial;
- Consultation process (Citizen Space and consultation event);
- Installation of a memorial.

The Group noted the information which had been provided and agreed to the next steps.

City Cemetery Update on Concerns Regarding Anti-social Behaviour

The Group noted the contents of a report which provided an update in relation to anti-social behaviour at the City Cemetery and agreed that officers investigate the costings associated with the possible installation of CCTV at the site.

Memorial Trees

The Group noted an update in relation to the provision of memorial trees at the Roselawn site and agreed that a report on the matter be submitted to the next meeting of the Group.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group agreed that its next meeting be held on Wednesday, 6th September at 4.30 pm.

Chairperson