

**STRATEGIC CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM
DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

Minutes of Meeting of 15th August, 2018

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

In Attendance: Mrs. C. Sullivan, Policy and Business Development
Officer,
Mr. M. Patterson, Bereavement Services Manager,
Ms. S. Kalke, Project Sponsor and
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Alderman Sandford.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 6th June were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Update on Children's Funeral Charges

The Policy and Business Development Officer provided the Working Group with background information in regard to a Motion, presented to a previous meeting of the Council, relating to the waiving of funeral costs in respect of children under the age of eighteen. The Members were advised of a response which had been received from the Department for Communities (DfC), in respect of the establishment of a regional Children's Funeral, stating that the DfC was researching currently how such a fund, if implemented, would operate.

In response to a question from a Member in respect of the legal determination of a child, the Policy and Business Development Officer referred to the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 as the legislation pertaining to Northern Ireland currently in regard to this issue. The Policy and Business Development Officer highlighted other relevant issues in relation to the Motion, particularly in regard to the fact that the Council provided a regional cremation service and highlighted the cost implications associated with providing a free service to all residents, under the relevant age threshold.

The Working Group was presented with a number of options in relation to the provision of both cremation and burial services, specifically in relation to the waiving of fees for those children resident in Belfast and whether this provision should be extended to non residents also. In respect of burials, the Working Group was asked to consider whether it supported the notion of providing free burial facilities to both residents and non residents or whether it considered that this service should apply to residents only.

After consideration, the Working Group recommended that the cremation and burial service provided by the Council should apply to residents of the City, under eighteen years of age, but that this free burial provision should not extend to the cost associated with the purchase of a grave. The Working Group recommended that the

aforementioned provision should be extended to asylum seekers, subject to the approval of the People and Communities Committee.

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

The Policy and Development Officer provided the Working Group with an update on the process to design and install a permanent memorial to mark Plot Z1 in the City Cemetery. She referred to the high rate of engagement from the public as part of the consultation process, which was due to finish on 31st August, 2018. She informed the Members that, after the consultation process had ended, the responses would be analysed and that a final recommendation on the design of the memorial would be brought to the October meeting of the Working Group for consideration. It was reported also that, as part of the consultation process, a drop-in information session would be held on 23rd August, 2018.

Noted.

Request for Exhumation

The Bereavement Services Manager reported that due to a historical administration error in regard to the interment of an individual at Roselawn Cemetery, it would be necessary to undertake an exhumation following a family request to have the identity of the remains confirmed.

The Working Group, sensitive to the needs of the family and to provide certainty in regard to the identification of the remains, granted authority for the exhumation to be undertaken, subject to the approval of the People and Communities Committee.

Update on Water Infrastructure at Roselawn Cemetery

The Bereavement Services Manager provided the Working Group with an update on the use of water bowsers to manage the disruption to the water supply in Roselawn Cemetery. He stated that following access problems to the water bowsers, extension pipes had been connected to facilitate ease of access to the water bowsers.

Noted.

Update on Headstone Foundations

The Working Group considered a verbal report by the Bereavement Services manager in regard to the maintenance of headstones within the Council's cemetery facilities. It was reported that the Council was obligated to maintain headstones for a maximum period of fifteen years, after which maintenance would be borne by the relatives of the bereaved.

The Working Group expressed concern that responsibility in respect of the foundation of headstones should be time bound and conscience of the additional costs associated with amending this policy, agreed to defer consideration of the matter to allow a report to be brought back outlining the potential costs associated with amending the policy, subject to the approval of the People and Communities Committee.

Use of Memorial Trees at Roselawn Cemetery

In response to information requested by the Chairperson in regard to the use of memorial trees at Roselawn Cemetery, the Bereavement Services Manager confirmed that owing to a lack of available space in the cemetery, the option of purchasing memorial trees for cremated remains was no longer available.

Noted.

New Crematorium at Roselawn

The Chairman, on behalf of the Working Group, requested an update on the process to provide a new crematorium facility at Roselawn Cemetery and was advised that tender documents in respect of the project had been issued and that a design team had been established to oversee the work

Noted.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group agreed that its next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 5th September at 4.30 p.m.

Chairperson