

**STRATEGIC CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM
DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

Minutes of Meeting of 11th March, 2020

Members Present: Councillor Corr, Chairperson;
Aldermen Rodgers and Sandford; and
Councillor Mulholland.

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

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 5th February, 2020 were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Update on New Crematorium Development

Ms. C. Doherty - W. H. Stephens, Mr. P. Linsell - Peter Linsell Management Consultants, and Mr. N. Brennan, Assistant Project Manager, attended in connection with this item and were welcomed by the Chairperson.

The Project Sponsor reported that W. H. Stephens had been appointed as the lead of the project management team and Peter Linsell Management Consultants as the crematorium specialist. The Members were informed that the Design Team included an architect, landscape planner, traffic consultant and crematorium specialist would be appointed in April 2020. The Working Group was informed that it was intended to organise a site visit to a new crematorium facility which would assist in the development of the crematorium facility at Roselawn and also that a meeting had been organised with the planning officers from Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council on 10th March, after which, the Members of the Working Group would be provided with an update in that regard.

Noted.

**Presentation from W.H. Stephens/
Peter Linsell Management Consultants**

Ms. Doherty provided the Working Group with an outline of the roles and responsibilities of the Project Management Team which included, amongst other things, management of the procurement process, the provision of oversight in regard to the overall tasks with the pre-construction, construction and post construction phases and the provision of specialist advice and guidance in regard to the implementation of the project.

The Working Group was provided with information in regard to the delivery of the key project aims including the identification of delivery constraints and the measures which would be required to be implemented to ensure that the disruption and impact for bereaved families would be minimised during the construction phase of the project. The Members were informed that Roselawn Crematorium was undertaking 50% more

cremations per year than the national average and that, according to cremation statistics, was the fifth busiest crematorium in the United Kingdom.

Ms. Doherty provided the Working Group with a proposed design option for the new crematorium, including a proposed repurpose for the existing crematorium which incorporated an outline timescale associated with the completion of the capital project. The Members were informed that the Invitation to tender documentation for the ICT had been issued on 2nd March, 2020 with a return date stipulated of 30th March, 2020. It was reported also that five of the Economic Operators had been invited to tender for the development project and the Working Group was given an outline of the management strategies which would be required following the appointment of the design team.

Mr. Linsell presented the Working Group with plans relating to a number of new Crematorium developments, which had taken place in other parts of the United Kingdom, for comparative purposes. The Members were given an outline of possible design options incorporating a two chapel facility and suggested that it might be useful to visit a number of those facilities to provide the Working Group with a practical example of how such a facility operated and highlight any issues which had arisen during their construction phase.

The Working Group was advised of the need to ensure that the dignity of the bereaved families, in respect of burials /cremations undertaken during the construction phase, was respected. Mr. Linsell informed the Members that the tender process would be determined on the basis of 70% quality and 30% price and that a risk register would be developed as part of the project implementation.

In response to a question from a Member in respect of ownership of UK based crematoria, the Working Group was informed that the majority were public owned and were gas fired. He outlined the commercial benefit of maintaining the proposed Roselawn facility within Council ownership. In response to a further question from a Member, Mr. Linsell stated that it would be necessary to develop a risk register in regard to the proposed development and highlighted issues such as the need to consider traffic flow management and a programme of stakeholder engagement.

The Working Group agreed that it would be beneficial to undertake a site visit to a number of Crematoria in the UK to assess, in greater detail, the issues and problems experienced by those local authorities during the construction phase of their Crematoria. The Members felt that site visits to both Stockton and Westerleigh Crematoria would be beneficial, in that they appeared comparable to the proposed development at Roselawn, subject to the approval of the People and Communities Committee.

The Members thanked both Ms. Doherty and Mr. Linsell for their detailed and informative presentation and they departed from the meeting

Update on New Cemetery Land

The Director of City Services provided the Working Group with an update in regard to the expression of interest process for new cemetery land to meet the future burial requirements for the city. She reminded the Working Group that in July, 2019 ten sites had been assessed initially and that, after further detailed assessment, three sites had been shortlisted for further investigation. She reported further that, following information which had been supplied by an applicant and verified by us in terms of the time frame meant that a fourth proposed site would be required to be added to the shortlist, it was agreed therefore to add this site for further investigation as part of the expression of interest process.

The Director informed the Working Group that the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services continued to collaborate with Lisburn and Castlereagh City

Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Mid Ulster and East Antrim Borough Council in respect of the provision of future burial and cremation services. She referred to the possibility that any future proposals a public consultation exercise might be required, including an equality screening and rural needs assessment as part of that review.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the fourth proposed burial site be accepted as part of the assessment criteria and selected for further investigation, subject to the approval of the People and Communities Committee.

Update on Planning Appeals Commission Submission

The Director provided the Working Group with an update on the planning appeals process associated with the proposed Loughview Cemetery site and reminded the Members that a report in the matter had been presented to the Working Group, at its meeting on 19th March, 2020, regarding the Council's requirement for future burial provision. She stated that it had been agreed, by both the Working Group and the People and Communities Committee, that the Council would provide a factual statement to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) in response to the Loughview application and informed the Members that the appeal hearing date would be held on 5th May, 2020.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the Council submit its submission to the PAC in respect of the appeal in regard to the Loughview application.

Arrangements for Cemetery and Crematorium Tour

The Working Group noted the arrangements to undertake a site visit on 7th April, 2020 to both Roselawn Crematorium and the City Cemetery, subject to the approval of the People and Communities Committee.

Covid-19 Pandemic

The Director informed the Working Group that a meeting of Silver Command would be held, chaired by the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services, the objective of which would be to identify all critical services to ensure that business contingency arrangements could be implemented. The Working Group was advised that the Council would be following guidance issued by the Public Health Agency (PHA) and would implement measures to deal with the increased volume of deaths anticipated, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Noted.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group agreed that its next meeting would be subject to government guidance on working arrangements associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chairperson