

**SPECIAL STRATEGIC CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM
DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

Minutes of Meeting of 25th November, 2020

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

In Attendance: Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Mr. M. Patterson, Bereavement Services Manager;
Ms. S. Kalke, Project Sponsor;
Mr. J. Parker, Crematorium Officer and
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

Appointment of Chairperson

In the absence of a Chairperson, it was

Proposed by Alderman Rodgers

Seconded by Alderman Sandford and

Resolved- that Councillor Corr be appointed to the position of
Chairperson for the duration of the meeting

(Councillor Corr in the Chair)

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Kyle.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Update on Crematorium Design

Mr. M. Morrow, Ms P. Lavery, K.P.M.G. and Mr. M. Street attended in connection with item and were welcomed by the Chairperson.

The Director of City Services provided the Working Group with an overview in regard to the progress made to date in respect of the design and development proposals associated with the new Crematorium. She referred to discussions which had been held with Lisburn and Castlereagh Council (LCCC) in regard to pre-application discussions, prior to the commencement of the formal planning process. She reported that, following those discussions, it was probable that L.C.C.C. would require an Environmental Statement in respect of the development proposals. She stated that A.E.C.O.M. had been appointed to deliver the development proposals as part of the planning process.

The Director stated that, following a meeting between A.E.C.O.M. and the Council's internal Project Board on a number of design proposals in respect of the new Crematorium, a special meeting of the Working Group was required to discuss the design proposals and form an opinion on which design proposal the Members preferred. She reminded the Members that, depending on the design selected, costings would be

required to be undertaken in respect of the design selected. The Director referred also to the fact that a decision was required in regard to the location of the function room associated with the development proposal and, at some future date, a decision would be required on a possible re-location of staff to the new crematorium facility.

Ms. Lavery provided the Working Group with a detailed presentation on the implications for the design and car parking capacity to facilitate a 2 by 200 seat Chapel capacity. She highlighted the need for additional car parking which was required to facilitate a function room and additional car-parking spaces for Crematorium support staff, should that be a future requirement. She provided the Members with a detailed map, illustrating the potential impact of incorporating the additional car-parking requirement into the development plans to facilitate the additional seating capacity associated with the new 2 chapel facility.

Ms. Lavery referred to the challenges faced by the design team in the development of a scheme which was able to accommodate larger funerals and yet remained sympathetic, in terms of ambience, to those which were much smaller in size. She referred also to the challenges of providing suitable car-parking access to the Crematorium and incorporating that into a suitable landscape setting. The Members were informed of the challenges with minimising overlap associated with different groups of mourners, while ensuring smooth and uninterrupted flow of access to and from the facility.

The Working Group was provided with examples of other Crematorium facilities which incorporated into their design, the capacity to accommodate a 200 seater chapel facility. The Members were provided with three options in respect of the design and capacity requirements associated with the proposed new Crematorium.

Option 1 - 200 seat ceremony room sub-divided for services of less than 100 seat capacity.

Option 2 - 150 seat ceremony room with extension in Entrance Hall providing 50 additional seating capacity.

Option 3 - 160 seat ceremony room with mezzanine providing 40 additional seating capacity.

Ms. Lavery gave the Members an overview of how a function room might be incorporated into the design of the 2 chapel crematorium and the measures which would need to be considered in terms of limiting cross-over of mourners, whilst the 2 chapels were being utilised with the simultaneous use of a function room.

Mr. Street provided the Working Group with some U.K examples, where a café/function room service had been incorporated into the design of the building. He illustrated how car parking had been facilitated to accommodate mourners who were attending the venue including, in some cases, members of the public who were visiting the graves of loved ones.

Ms. Lavery referred to the fact that incorporating a function area on the site, in her experience, tended to cause mourners to remain on site for a longer period of time than would otherwise be the case for a normal cremation slot. She stated further that, in so doing, this had a tendency to encourage congestion at car parking facilities and tended to encourage cross-migration between different sets of mourners. She stated that, in her opinion, this problem had been mitigated when the function area was located away from the main Crematorium building. The Working Group was presented with a number of design options which comprised locating the car park close to the new Crematorium facility and which did not incorporate a function room being located within the main Crematorium building.

The Working Group considered the various development proposals as presented stating that the new plans presented a more comforting and intimate atmosphere for Cremation Services than was available currently at Roselawn, given its age and the volume of cremation services which were taking place presently. The Members expressed the view that any new Crematorium facility should be of sufficient size to cater for the projected future rise in the demand for cremations.

The Members, during detailed discussion on the proposals, affirmed the need for the Crematorium to meet the projected rise in demand for cremation services and that some element of catering services be provided, given the long distances that some mourners would be required to travel to attend a cremation service.

The Members requested that in order for their chosen design option to be operational requested that the Crematorium Officer provide his advice on the option which would meet the operational requirements of the Crematorium staff. The Crematorium Officer stated that, in order to meet projected cremation demands, and to mitigate against the time restraints associated with the removal and installation of additional seats, to meet with the variance in the size of cremation services, he advised that the chosen option should be a fixed, permanent seated arrangement, which could be adjusted rapidly to reflect future capacity requirements. The Cremation Officer stated further that, in his opinion, the selection of option 3, encompassing the mezzanine additional seated option, provided the best solution to meet both the future cremation requirements in terms of numbers and the operational needs to manage those cremation services.

The Crematorium Officer emphasised the importance of ensuring that overlap between cremation services was minimised and, in so doing, the removal of catering and/or function room facilities from the new Chapel facility, would assist in that regard. In regard to a question from a Member in relation to the preferred site of a future Coffee-Shop/Function Room, the Cremation Officer stated that the existing building would be best placed to service that requirement both, in terms of car-parking facilities and to ensure that migration between mourners attending cremation services was minimised. He referred to the possibility of other services being incorporated within the existing building including, Geneology and floral services.

After further discussion, it was

Proposed by Alderman Rodgers
Seconded by Alderman Sandford and

Resolved- that the Working Group agree to the option 3 proposal, incorporating a 2 Chapel facility, with mezzanine extension, providing a 200 seat capacity in each Chapel.

The Working Group agreed also, in principle, that any future coffee shop / function room facility should not be incorporated within the new-build facility but rather should be incorporated with the existing Crematorium, subject to the approval of both the People and Communities and the Strategic and Policy and Resources Committees.

In response to a further question from a Member, in regard to incorporating changing facilities within the new Crematorium, the Director of Property and Projects stated that she would be happy to explore that option. She stated that, as no capital costs in respect of the re-use of the existing building had been included with the original capital costs, there may be a need to secure additional funding to meet any additional capital expenditure.

Chairperson

