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

6th February, 2017

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, 7th February, 2017.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

- (d) Minutes of the Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Development Working Group (Pages 1 - 8)
- (a) Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Cemetery Subsidy (Pages 9 - 18)
- (c) Balmoral Bowling Club (Pages 19 - 22)

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Subject:	Update on Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Development
Date:	7 February 2017
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department Claire Sullivan, Policy and Business Development Officer

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 to report to committee on the key issues discussed at the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group meeting held on 3 February 2017.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the minutes and the recommendations from the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group meeting held on 3 February 2017.
3.0	Main report
3.1	The Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group is a Working Group of the People and Communities Committee which consists of an elected member from each of the political parties.
3.2	The minutes from the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group are brought before the Committee for approval.
3.3	The key issues discussed at the 3 February meeting were:

3.4	<p><u>Update on Economic Appraisal of Future Cremation Facilities</u></p> <p>Members noted the update provided which included that a consultant had been appointed to develop a business case and an outline of the next steps.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Update on the New Tender Arrangements for the Café at Roselawn Crematorium</u></p> <p>Members noted the update provided which included confirmation that the provider was aware that the café was situated within the waiting area and that since the new contract had been awarded it has been used as an overspill for two very large cremations. A price comparison of the current menu with the previous menu was also provided.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Update on Cemetery Offices Opening Hours</u></p> <p>Members noted that immediate steps have been taken to ensure that Dundonald Cemetery opening hours are adhered to as per previous agreement at Committee and agreed that a review of bereavement administration provision would be reported back to the Working Group by April 2017.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Memorandum of Understanding with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council</u></p> <p>Members were updated on the discussions that have taken place with LCCC regarding the arrangements put in place to provide a subsidy for former Lisburn and Castlereagh residents in relation to burial charges. Members agreed that the Bereavement Administration team would manage the LCCC subsidy scheme and that the fees outlined would be recharged to LCCC and the agreement would be subject to an annual review.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Discussions with Neighbouring Councils re Future Cremation and Cemetery Provision</u></p> <p>Members granted approval for discussions to take place with neighbouring Councils in relation to new cremation and cemetery approval, including identifying potential opportunities for joint working.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implication</u></p> <p>The new crematorium facility is currently a Stage 2 – Uncommitted project on the Council's capital programme.</p> <p>There are no asset implications at this stage although the final phases of the project will increase the Council's land ownership and associated liabilities.</p>

3.10	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> There are currently no equality or good relation implications in relation to the capital projects however this will continue to be reviewed as the projects are developed.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Copy of the Minutes of the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group’s meeting on 3 February 2017.

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**STRATEGIC CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM
DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

Minutes of Meeting of 3rd February, 2017

Members Present	The High Sheriff, Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson) Alderman Sandford and Councillors McCabe and O'Neill
In Attendance	Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources; Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services; Mrs. S. Toland, Assistant Director; Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director; Ms. J. Wilson, Business Manager; Mrs. C. Sullivan, Policy and Business Development Officer; and Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 5th December, 2016 were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of Interest were reported.

**Update on Economic Appraisal
of Future Cremation Facilities**

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services provided the Working Group with an update on the future cremation facilities for Belfast. It was reported that the majority of party briefings in the matter had been held and that the Strategic Investment Board was in the process of evaluating the various options under consideration. It was reported that a Business Plan detailing the preferred option would be presented to the Working Group in May, 2017.

The Director of Finance and Resources highlighted the importance of undertaking a costing exercise associated with the various proposals under consideration and of the need to calculate the capital finance charges in relation to the development of the preferred option. He reminded the Members that the proposal to construct a new cremation facility was a stage 2, uncommitted proposal in the Council's capital programme and provided the Working Group with a list of steps which required to be implemented prior to the selection of a contractor to commence the work.

Noted.

**Update on the New Tender Arrangements for
the Café at Roselawn Crematorium**

The Assistant Director outlined the new tender arrangements which had been put in place in regard to the operation of the Café at Roselawn Crematorium. The Members were reminded that the new tender arrangements for catering services at the crematorium

related to the period from 4th January, 2017 till 31st March, 2020. She highlighted the fact that the café was located in the waiting area of the crematorium and that mourners would be given priority access to the waiting area in situations where a large number of guests were in attendance. In response to a Member's concern that mourners were being asked to move out of the waiting area to facilitate customers of the café, she assured the Member that any such instances would be fully investigated. The Working Group was provided also with information on the favourable pricing policy of the new café provider and confirmed that pricing had been a key element of the tender evaluation process.

Noted.

Update on Cemetery Offices Opening Hours

In response to concerns by Members in respect of operational staffing, specifically in relation to Dundonald cemetery, the Business Manager provided the Working Group with a copy of a Bereavement Administration report which had been presented to the former Parks and Leisure Committee at its meeting in March, 2013. It was reported that the staffing levels in respect of the Dundonald cemetery were currently being adhered to. She did however refer to a number of staffing issues from October 2016, including sickness absence and redeployments, and acknowledged that the opening hours of the cemetery office at Dundonald had not been strictly adhered to. She stated that flexible staffing arrangements had been put in place to ensure that appropriate levels of customer care could be maintained, across the range of Council cemetery sites. She provided an assurance to Members that, during this period, all funeral services had been staffed adequately to meet customer requirements.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services recognised the need for improvement on how information was communicated to Members and provided an assurance that the opening hours of the cemetery would be restored to those which had been agreed previously. The Members were advised also that a report on the provision of bereavement administration would be brought back to the Working Group by April, 2017 for its consideration.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Memorandum of Understanding with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

The Director provided the Working Group with a background report, which had been presented to the Transition Committee on 29th January, 2015, regarding subsidy arrangements in respect of burial charges attributable to the former Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (L.C.C.C.) residents. He reminded the Members that it had been agreed that the Council would continue to treat former (L.C.C.C.) ratepayers as non-resident in respect of burial charges but that a subsidy would be made to Belfast City Council in respect of the differential in charges. He highlighted the advantage to those residents affected, in that the administration associated with the implementation of the subsidy would be undertaken by the Council and that the former (L.C.C.C.) residents would be charged at the reduced rate.

The Working Group was provided with an outline of the potential financial benefits, arising to the Council, in respect of this arrangement and the fact that a Memorandum of Understanding, implemented from April, 2017, would be reviewed after a ten year period.

The Working Group agreed, subject to the approval of the People and Communities Committee, that the Council enter into an arrangement with Lisburn and

Castlereagh City Council from April, 2017, to implement subsidy arrangements in respect of cremations and burials affecting former (L.C.C.C.) residents.

Discussions with Neighbouring Councils
Re Future Cremation and Cemetery Provision

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services requested authority from the Working Group to engage with other neighbouring councils in relation to new cemetery and cremation provision. He highlighted the potential benefits of joint working in pursuit of the objective and reminded the Members that, in December, 2016, the Working Group had agreed the recommendation within stage 2 of the Review of Burial Policy permitting officers to engage with neighbouring Councils to explore potential joint working opportunities.

He stated that it was his intention, subject to the permission of the Working Group, to write to neighbouring Councils, outlining the Council's current position in regard to both cremation and cemetery facilities and how those local authorities might assist the Council in meeting the future demands of burials and cremations. The Director stated that he would bring back a report, to a future meeting of the Working Group, on any progress which had been made in respect of those discussions.

The Working Group granted the authority sought, subject to the approval of the People and Communities Committee

Chairperson

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6
of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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Subject:	Leasing of Balmoral Bowling Green to Balmoral Bowling Club
Date:	7 February 2017
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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	Members are reminded that Committee recommended to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that Council should enter into a lease agreement with Balmoral Bowling Club for the Council owned bowling green adjacent to a bowling pavilion owned by Balmoral Bowling Club. This recommendation was subsequently agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources committee.
1.2	Members are reminded that this asset was transferred to the Council from Castlereagh Borough Council on 1 April 2015, as part of Local Government Reform. It consists of a bowling green with well-established perimeter planting and flower beds. Balmoral Bowling Club was established in 1943 and has played at Belvoir Bowling Green since 1981. The Club entered into a 99 year lease with Castlereagh Borough Council from 1 November 1994 in respect of the land on which the pavilion is situated, subject to the payment of 5 pence per annum, if demanded. The club subsequently constructed the pavilion and changing rooms on this land. This leasehold interest also transferred to the Council from Castlereagh Borough Council in April 2015.
1.3	The terms of the initial agreement reached with Balmoral Bowling Club were on the basis of a 25 year lease, subject to the payment of an initial annual rental figure of £500, subject to five yearly rent reviews.

1.4	<p>However, Balmoral Bowling Club has subsequently raised some concerns over the current condition of the green. A recent inspection by a Turf Management consultant has confirmed that whilst radical work is not required, a programme of good turf husbandry and a sound maintenance programme will be required over the next three years to bring the green up to an acceptable standard.</p>
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to terms within the lease arrangement to include a maintenance programme delivered by Council staff for a period of 3 years with an agreed specification and associated costs to bring the bowling green up to standard. After this 3 year period, responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of the bowling green will rest with the tenant, Balmoral Bowling Club, for the remainder of the term of the lease.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>It was clear from the outset that the surface of the bowling green was in need of improvement and that a programme of work had not been established by Council to do this. Cost of maintenance was estimated at £20k per annum.</p>
3.2	<p>The cost of upgrading the bowling green from its current condition to a pristine playing surface was not known however a recent inspection by a Turf Consultant has provided an outline of works to be undertaken over a three year period. The works do not constitute 'major surgery' but will require a programme of good turf husbandry and grounds maintenance.</p>
3.3	<p>An agreed bowling green maintenance specification between the Council and Balmoral Bowling Club will form part of the lease agreement between the parties. Balmoral Bowling Club has requested that the standard of the bowling green is significantly improved prior to the club taking on full maintenance arrangements.</p>
3.4	<p>Committee is asked to agree that the terms of the lease includes a specified three year maintenance and improvement programme to be delivered by Council staff with clear time scales and deliverables within the current maintenance budget. Thereafter the ongoing maintenance of the bowling green will rest with the tenant for the remainder of the term of the lease.</p>

	<p>Financial & Resource Implications</p> <p>3.5 The Council will benefit from a rental income of £500pa together with significant savings from ongoing maintenance costs, should the lease to Balmoral Bowling Club be put in place.</p> <p>3.6 A specified maintenance programme will be delivered over a three year period to improve the standard of the green. The cost is estimated at £20k per annum which is currently allowed for in the grounds maintenance budget. The savings will therefore be realised from year 4 of the lease.</p> <p>Human Resources</p> <p>3.7 At year 4 of the Lease agreement Council grounds maintenance staff resources will be reallocated undertaking other duties due to additional sites which transferred under Local Government Reform.</p> <p>Equality or Good Relations Implications</p> <p>3.8 There are no known Equality or Good Relations implications.</p> <p>Asset and Other Implications</p> <p>3.9 Officers from the Council's Estates Management Unit and Legal Services will be involved in finalising lease agreement in respect of this asset.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None

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