



Subject:	Bereavement Services Improvement Report
Date:	21 April 2015
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Fiona Holdsworth, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Services Officer Sharon McCloy, Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager

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 The purpose of bringing this to committee is to: i) obtain approval to re-instate the memorial tree scheme. ii) Consider proposals in relation to the Roselawn Cemetery bus service iii) Seek Committee approval for a consultation process to erect a memorial at the baby public plot at the city cemetery
2.0	Recommendations Memorial Tree Scheme Roselawn Cemetery It is proposed that the following recommendations are taken: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The existing landscape avenue trees in Sections E, D, R, W and Y numbering approximately 200 are numbered and released as Phase 1 of a new memorial tree scheme.• That resources are allocated to access to opportunities for the development of small pockets of identified ground which cannot be used for burial ground in the new cemetery developments in Sections Y and Z and that these areas are then can be developed and planted out with trees to be sold as memorial trees. Roselawn Cemetery Free Bus Service for Older People <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is proposed that the Roselawn Cemetery Free Bus Service for Older People is

	<p>withdrawn on Tuesdays due to the very low numbers of users as evidenced by Appendix 2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is proposed that the Roselawn Cemetery Free Bus Service for Older People continues on Fridays only, the popularity of which is evidenced in Appendix 3. <p>Memorial at Baby Public Plot in City Cemetery</p> <p>Members are asked to agree that a consultation process is undertaken on the options for a memorial at the Baby Public Plot and that the findings are brought back to Committee for consideration.</p>
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Main report</p>
	<p>Memorial Tree Scheme at Roselawn Cemetery</p> <p>The memorial tree scheme that existed at Roselawn Cemetery was extremely popular, there are currently over 13,000 memorial trees on site. Since its termination in 2010 when the last remaining trees were sold, the staff on site have continued to receive requests from bereaved families for memorial trees. Also elected members have also received requests for the memorial tree scheme to be re-introduced.</p> <p>If the scheme is to be re-introduced it is recommended for maintenance reasons that the new memorial trees are not planted in large copses with a bark surface, but instead planted in grassed areas. The bark chipping of copses results in high ground maintenance costs with the copses receiving weed control sprays twice a year and re-barking required every 2-3 years.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The landscape avenue trees are already planted. The financial implications are the purchase of tree numbers at £1 each, the cost of administration and income from the burial of cremated remains.</p> <p>With regards to the landscaping and planting costs of the recently developed burial ground in the cemetery – Sections Y and later Section Z – plans are in development. The initial ground development will be carried out by the existing gardening team with the aid of seasonal gardeners over a period of 8 – 10 months; however their current grounds maintenance programme such as grass cutting and weed control on site receives priority. It is anticipated that all costs will be the proposed charge for a memorial tree of £460.</p>

Equality or Good Relations Implications

None

Roselawn Cemetery Free Bus Service for Older People

Disability Action was engaged to provide a twice weekly service to Roselawn cemetery as they had funding to provide a transport service for older people within their local area of the City. The cost to Belfast City Council to hire this service from Disability Action was £2,700 per year.

A timetable was published by Belfast City Council and circulated widely around community centres, leisure centres, Older Person's Forum, Welcome Centre, and City Hall reception – See Appendix 1.

Disability Action has informed Belfast City Council in March 2015 that from 1 April because of the cessation of funding from the Department for Regional Development they no longer have the resources available to provide the service.

On Tuesdays the Roselawn Cemetery Free Bus Service for Older People departs in rotation from 4 pick-up points in the city. There has been a reduction in the number of users using this service on Tuesdays and the users from the West and Shankill Pick-up point represent the largest user group.

On Fridays the service is still popular as Appendix 2 evidences.

As an Interim measure Belfast Bus Company (who has the Council tender for coach hire services), has been hired to provide a twice weekly service 1 April 2015 – 30 June 2015 pending a decision on the future of this service by Committee.

Financial & Resource Implications

The cost to hire the Disability 15 seater Bus for a twice weekly service was £ 2,700 per year.

The interim 3 month hire of a 16 seater bus from the Belfast Bus Company for a twice weekly service is £1,946.44. For a full year the cost will be £7,785.76. This is an additional expenditure of £5,085.76. If approved this additional cost will have to be found out of the Roselawn Cemetery budget as no provision has been made in the 2015/16 estimate for this additional expense. Other planned site expenditure will need to be reviewed to identify

savings.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

As the Roselawn Cemetery Free Bus Service operates for Older People, the total withdrawal of this service would have an equality implication. Therefore the recommendation is that the service continues but provided on Fridays only.

Memorial at Baby Public Plot in City Cemetery

Members will be aware that there is a section in the City Cemetery that has been used for the burial of babies who were still born or died shortly after birth, and which the hospital or social services have taken responsibility for the burial. Whilst the Council has records for all the babies who are buried within this plot no one individual owns specific graves and therefore there are no individual headstones or memorials. The last burial in the plot was in 1996. There are memorial trees at the edges of the plot and these have been bought by families of the babies buried within the plot. However there were only a limited number and these are no longer available to purchase.

The Council has received a request that a permanent memorial be placed to mark the Baby Public plot and the babies who are buried within it. As this is a very sensitive and emotional issue it is proposed that a consultation exercise be undertaken to gather views from the relevant stakeholders on the type of memorial that should be erected. Members will be aware that consultation was recently undertaken around an arts piece in the City Cemetery as part of a funding application to the Arts Council. The development of this project has involved cross community consultation and engagement and the consultation targeted a wide range of individuals and organisations including the relatives of those buried in the cemetery, staff, visitors, local schools, youth groups, history groups, community, political and religious organisations and arts and cultural organisations. The process used was based on best practice and it is proposed that this methodology be adapted and used for the consultation around the memorial for Baby Public.

Members should note that there is currently no budget available for the erection of a permanent memorial at the Baby Public plot and that until a design is chosen we are not in a position to estimate the cost.

Financial & Resource Implications

Based on previous experience it is estimated the cost of the public consultation will be in the region of £5,000 which can be met from current Departmental resources. There is

	<p>currently no budget available for the erection of a permanent memorial at the Baby Public plot.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>The consultation on a memorial for the Baby Public Plot at the City cemetery will be undertaken in line with the Council's Equality Scheme.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – Bus Timetable April 2014 – March 2015</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Table showing the number of users from the 4 pick-up points on Tuesdays April 2014 – February 2015.</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Table showing the number of users on Fridays April 2014 to February 2015.</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Interim Timetable April 2015 – June 2015.</p>