



Subject:	Strategic Cemetery & Crematorium Provision - Update
Date:	12th May 2015
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Claire Sullivan, Policy and Business Development Unit 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
1.1	Belfast City Council as part of its approach to cemetery and crematorium development has been engaged in a process to identify a site for development as a new cemetery for a number of years. Decisions around this process were brought to the previous Council's Parks and Leisure Committee for consideration.
1.2	At its meeting in October 2104 the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed that we commission a review of our current burial policy. We are also currently undertaking an economic appraisal around the options for future cremation provision
1.3	The purpose of this report is to update Members on these pieces of work and to inform them that a workshop will be held on Thursday 18 th June (2-4pm), at which the findings and recommendations of the review of the Council's burial policy and the economic appraisal around options for future cremation provision will be presented.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to note the progress that is being made in relation to these projects and to advise that a workshop is planned to consider the findings and recommendations of the review of the Council's burial policy and the economic appraisal around options for future cremation provision.

3.0	Main report
3.1	<p data-bbox="260 152 419 181"><u>Background</u></p> <p data-bbox="260 203 1453 636">Members may be aware that the Council has been undertaking a process to identify a potential cemetery site for a number of years and several sites have been considered and rejected for a variety of reasons including soil conditions and location. The most recent site that was considered was a site at Dundrod which came to the Council through an expression of interest exercise which the Council initiated. A number of studies had been undertaken in relation to the site at Dundrod and these have identified several potential issues and constraints to developing the site as a cemetery. A report outlining these issues and constraints was brought to the Parks and Leisure Committee in September 2014 and they were asked to agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="379 656 1321 887">(i) That given the constraints and issues that have been identified with the site at Dundrod, and the costs required to carry out the further investigations, that it is agreed that this site would not provide good value for money and therefore is no longer considered viable for development as a potential cemetery; and <li data-bbox="379 907 1262 1037">(ii) To recommend that a review of the current burial policy be undertaken and to refer this to the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration. <p data-bbox="268 1057 850 1086">After discussion, the Committee agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="379 1106 1267 1236">(i) negotiations continue with the site owner or agent to ascertain whether or not a smaller portion of the site at Dundrod could be utilised for burial lands; <li data-bbox="379 1256 1267 1440">(ii) a workshop be held early in the new year, at which all the information previously submitted to the Committee in relation to burial sites be presented to enable the Members to review the current burial policy and the provision of crematoria; and <li data-bbox="379 1460 1321 1541">(iii) an updated report be submitted to the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. <p data-bbox="260 1615 1398 1695">A report was then brought to the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in October 2014 and</p> <p data-bbox="260 1715 1442 1899">‘After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and the decisions of the Parks and Leisure Committee endorsed at the Committee’s recommendation regarding the holding of the workshop in the New Year and agreed that a review of the current burial policy be undertaken.’</p>

<p>3.1.1</p>	<p><u>Review of burial policy</u></p> <p>Following the Committee’s decision a process was undertaken to commission consultants to undertake the review of the current burial policy. The last review of the Council’s burial policy was undertaken in 2010 and it identified at that time that the Council required a site of 72 acres, in addition to what was available in other cemeteries to provide it with sufficient burial capacity for a 50 year period. This review also scored a long list of 12 sites that had been identified as potential sites in an earlier piece of work to rank their suitability for development as a 72 acre cemetery site.</p> <p>The first stage of the review is an analysis of relevant statistics, current burials and cremation rates and trends, the up to date position re burial land in neighbouring areas and benchmarking and best practice. Based on this analysis a recommendation will be made on what the Council’s burial policy should be i.e. the number and size of cemeteries required to service Belfast up until 2065.</p> <p>If following this analysis it is recommended that the Council’s burial policy is changed, the original long list of sites and the Dundrod site will be assessed to see if they are potentially suitable based on the revised size. An assessment will also be carried out to see if there are any other potentially suitable sites that were previously ruled out due to size.</p>
<p>3.1.2</p>	<p><u>Crematorium provision</u></p> <p>Members should also note that we are currently undertaking an economic appraisal around the options for future cremation provision. Members will be aware that there is a growing trend for cremation and that the City Of Belfast Crematorium at Roselawn is working well beyond design capacity and there are a number of deficiencies which are hampering the effective delivery of dignified cremation services.</p>
<p>3.1.3</p>	<p><u>Workshop to discuss findings and recommendations</u></p> <p>A workshop has been organised for Thursday 18th June, to which will all Members will be invited, at which the findings and recommendations of both pieces of work will be presented. Members will be asked for their views and comments and these will be incorporated into the final reports. The final report will then be brought back to Committee in August for Members’ approval. The proposed agenda for the workshop is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome and context setting 2. Presentation of the findings of the Review of the Council’s Burial Policy 3. Presentation of the findings of the Economic Appraisal on Option for Future

	<p>Cremation Policy</p> <p>4. Discussion and feedback from Members on findings and recommendations</p> <p>5. Summary and Close</p> <p>The consultants who have undertaken both pieces of work will be in attendance at the workshop to present their findings and recommendations and to take questions.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.2 The development of a new cemetery and the redevelopment of the crematorium are currently Stage I emerging projects in the Council's capital programme.</p> <p>There are no asset implications at this stage although the final phases of the project will inevitably increase the Council's land ownership and associated liabilities.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>3.3 There are currently no equality or good relation implications however this will continue to be reviewed as the project is developed.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	None