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437 Community and Recreation (Parks and Cemeteries Services)
Sub-Committee, Monday, 28th November, 2005

City Cemetery – Future Use of Gate Lodge at Whiterock Road

The Head of Parks and Cemeteries Services reminded the Sub-Committee that the former Parks and Amenities Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 7th September, 1999, had agreed that a development brief be prepared and interest sought by public advertisement for the Gate Lodge located at the Whiterock Road which was an integral part of the City Cemetery. At that meeting, the Members had agreed also that the Estates Manager be requested to:

- (i) develop a brief for the City Cemetery Gate Lodge, the adjacent buildings and a former service yard on the Whiterock Road which would incorporate community and business development elements; and
- (ii) develop a method of assessing the proposals received which would:
 - (a) provide investment to initiate the rejuvenation of the local community;
 - (b) restore the Gate Lodge and adjoining buildings and service yard in a sensitive manner which respected the architecture and nature of the immediate surroundings;
 - (c) result in a project which would benefit the enhancement in the area;
 - (d) encourage visitors from both sides of the community; and
 - (e) develop activities to address the anti-social behaviour in the area.

At a subsequent meeting held on 9th May, 2000, and following a public advertisement, the Sub-Committee had agreed to proceed with a lease to the Whiterock/Westrock Residents' Association, subject to completion of an appropriate agreement to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services.

The Head of Parks and Cemeteries Services reported that, for various reasons and despite significant efforts, the Whiterock/Westrock Residents' Association had not been in a position to finalise and agree a specific proposal. The Gate Lodge and the nearby buildings continued to be a major eyesore and attracted significant anti-social elements and therefore it was necessary for the area to be tidied up at the earliest opportunity. He pointed out that currently there was a shortage of storage facilities within the City Cemetery and it was felt that part of the nearby defunct service yard could be utilised for this purpose. Bearing in mind the desire to link the use of the building with the activities in the City Cemetery but, at the same time being cognisant of the difficulty of funding a partner for this purpose, he suggested that a new brief be developed and advertised as had been previously, subject to a relaxation of those issues in relation to the City Cemetery. The brief would be amended to indicate that it would be the Council's desire that a scheme associated with the restoration of the Gate Lodge would be welcomed. He reported that the key assessment criteria of submissions would include:

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- (a) the provision of investment to assist the regeneration of the local community;
- (b) the restoration of the Gate Lodge, adjoining buildings and service yard on the Whiterock Road in a sensitive manner which respected the architecture and nature of the immediate surroundings; and
- (c) whilst not an obligatory requirement, the Council would welcome proposals which would be cross-community in nature and develop activities which would address anti-social behaviour within the City Cemetery.

Accordingly, he recommended that the Sub-Committee agree that the City Cemetery Gate Lodge situated on the Whiterock Road be advertised on the property market on the basis of the above-mentioned proposals.

The Sub-Committee adopted the recommendation.