



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Disposal of Human Tissue
Date:	9 June 2011
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Jacqui Wilson, Business Manager

1. Relevant Background Information

At the last Parks and Leisure Committee the implications in relation to the budgeted estimated provision for 2011/12 for the cemetery and crematorium service in light of the decision made in March 2011 regarding fees and charges was presented. At this meeting a member raised an issue regarding the burial of retained human tissue.

2. Key Issues

At Parks & Leisure committee on 10 February 2011 members agreed to omit charges for families for the cremation of a stillborn child or a child less than one year of age at the time of death.

A separate issue was subsequently raised about the disposal of retained human tissue at the meeting in March 2011.

In a recent case, at the request of the coroner, a sample of human tissue had been held back from burial. Thereafter, the deceased person's widow had been charged a fee to reopen the grave after already paying for the burial. A view was expressed by Members that this was unfair and that sensitivity and discretion should be used in such cases. It was suggested that authority be delegated to the Director of Parks and Leisure to waive this additional grave opening fees where he considered the circumstances surrounding retained human tissue warrant such a decision.

3.	Resource implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> There have been approximately 12 cases of burial/cremation of human tissue by families in the last financial year so the financial implications are limited.</p>
4.	Equality and good relations implications
	<p>An equality impact assessment of the scale of charges within the service was previously carried out and all issues were addressed at that time. No changes have been made to the principles underpinning their rationale.</p>
5.	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked to agree to the Director of Parks and Leisure being granted delegated authority to waive fees regarding the disposal of retained human tissue after assessment of the circumstances surrounding individual requests.</p>
6.	Decision Tracking
	<p>Price to be waived by Director of Parks & Leisure on a case by case basis.</p>
7.	Key to abbreviations
	<p>None.</p>
8.	Documents Attached
	<p>None</p>