



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Request for Party Group Briefings – Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Development
Date:	11 August 2011
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Jacqui Wilson, Business Manager Emer Boyle, Policy and Business Development Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The purpose of this report is to request that party group briefings take place on a number of projects, all of which relate to our strategic plans for future burial and cremation facilities in the city.
1.2	Rather than bring separate reports through the committee at different intervals which may not appear to be connected, officers thought it may be more helpful and constructive to hold party group briefings on the range of issues and set the scene for the next year in terms of what is likely to be coming before the committee and the implications of each.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Over the last number of years officers have been working on a clear phased approach to cemetery and crematorium development in the city based on an analysis of data gathered, trend information and the development of a robust plan to meet current and future service requirements.
2.2	The council has a statutory duty, as the burial board for the city, to make adequate provision for the disposal of the deceased.
2.3	A summary of some important facts which set the context for the briefings is outlined below: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The death rate for Belfast is expected to decline over the next 13 years due mainly to the fact that the population is declining. Other factors that have contributed to the declining death rate are improved health and subsequent increased life expectancy.• Cremation rates in Northern Ireland have been steadily rising since 1996 whereas burial numbers have been decreasing.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the 2008 figures approximately 59% (1,528) of cremations are from people living outside of Belfast. • The Belfast residents' cremation numbers plus the number of burials in BCC sites make up approximately 87% of all deaths recorded against Belfast LGD. • Therefore there is on average 13% of deaths in Belfast which are disposed of with no input from BCC. • By 2023 it is possible that cremations could increase to more than 50% of Belfast deaths. • If the trend for cremations were to continue at the rate as predicted, by 2047 it would match that of Great Britain (73%).
2.4	<p>The proposed party group briefings will include :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new cemetery provision/burial land; • crematorium provision; • current pricing structure and affordability issues associated with service development; and • natural burials.

3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> None at this stage however future development will have significant financial implication for the council.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Member and officer time at this stage.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None at this stage.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None at this stage.

5	Recommendations
	Committee is asked to agree that the party group briefings take place on cemetery and crematoria development.

6	Decision Tracking
	A number of reports will be brought to the committee by the Business Manager and Policy and Business Development Manager over the next number of months.

7.	Key to abbreviations
	None.

8.	Documents attached
	None.