

**STRATEGIC CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM  
DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

**Minutes of Meeting of 6th June, 2018**

Members Present: Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson);  
Alderman Sandford; and  
Councillor O'Neill.

In Attendance: Mrs. S. Toland, Assistant Director, City and  
Neighbourhood Services.  
Mrs. C. Sullivan, Policy and Business Development  
Officer,  
Mr. M. Patterson, Bereavement Services Manager, and  
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

**Election of Chairperson**

The Working Group sought nominations to fill the vacant position of Chairperson and it was:

Moved by Alderman Sandford  
Seconded by Councillor O'Neill and

Resolved - that Alderman Rodgers be appointed to the position of Chairperson for the period ended on the date of the Local Government Elections in May, 2019.

Alderman Rodgers accepted the appointment and thanked the Members for their nomination.

(Alderman Rodgers in the Chair.)

**Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 2nd May were taken as read and signed as correct.

**Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

**Update on Permanent Memorial to mark  
Plot Z1 in the City Cemetery**

The Policy and Business Development Officer provided the Working Group with an update on the progress to design, produce and install a permanent memorial at Plot Z1 in the City Cemetery. She reported that the Focus Group had met with the sculptor, had provided an input into the process and that its suggestions had been incorporated into the design of the memorial.

She advised the Members that the next stage of the process would involve a wider consultation exercise which would be undertaken during July and August, involving the Council's standard communication channels. She reported further that it was anticipated

that the findings of the public consultation exercise would be presented to the October meeting of the Working Group.

The Working Group considered the proposed memorial design and agreed that it was a fitting tribute to the bereaved families which reflected the sensitivities around the subject area. The Members agreed that to include a plinth at the base of the memorial might attract anti-social behaviour and that it would be preferable if the memorial was erected without a stone plinth. The Working Group commended the officers on the work they had undertaken to date, in the provision of a fitting and sensitive memorial to acknowledge the loss of those bereaved families whose babies were interned in Plot Z1, in the City Cemetery.

Noted.

### **Update on Children's Funeral Charges**

The Bereavement Services Manager provided the Working Group with an update in relation to children's funeral charges in respect of a Motion which had been referred to the People and Communities Committees by the Council, at its meeting on 1st May, 2018. He reported that the Motion had proposed to waive all funeral and cremation charges for those children under eighteen years of age. The Assistant Director, in response to a question from a Member, advised the Working Group that clarification was required to establish the appropriate age limit to qualify for these proposed changes

The Director reminded the Working Group that the People and Communities Committee was due to consider the Motion in more detail at its meeting scheduled to be held in August, 2018. She highlighted the fact that the situation was complicated further in that Belfast City Council was the sole provider of cremation services within the province. She stated that the Children's Funeral Fund was introduced only in England and Wales by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and that the respective authority in Northern Ireland is the Department for Communities. The Director, in response to clarification requested by the Members in regard to the age criteria, agreed to seek guidance from the City Solicitor and agreed also to write to the Department for Communities in respect of how the matter of a Children's Fund might be progressed.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided

### **Headstones**

The Director provided the Working Group with a verbal update on the Council Policy to secure headstones which had previously been found to be unstable and unsafe. She stated that it was necessary to revise the current policy, particularly in cases where headstones were found to be unstable but not necessarily unsafe, and that Legal Services would be consulted.

Noted.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group agreed that its next meeting be held on Wednesday, 15th August at 12.30 p.m.

Chairperson