



Subject:	Update on Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Development
Date:	12 February 2019
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
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	The purpose of this report is update committee on the key issues discussed at the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group meeting held on 22 nd January 2019.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to; - Approve the minutes and the recommendations from the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group meetings held on 22 nd January 2019.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u> The Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group is a Working Group of the People and Communities Committee which consists of an elected member from each of the political parties.

3.2	The minute from the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group are brought before the Committee for approval.
3.3	The key issues discussed at the 22 nd January meeting were:
3.4	<p><u>Presentation by the National Association of Funeral Directors</u></p> <p>Rev. Dr. Haire provided the Working Group with a very comprehensive presentation on the history of the Bereavement legislation and his concerns regarding out-of-date cremation legislation in Northern Ireland which he reported was causing practical difficulties for bereaved families. He contrasted the situation in Northern Ireland with that in GB where cremation legislation has been revised several times. He reported that the current operating legislation, The Cremation (Belfast) Regulations (NI) 1961 was actually based on principles from the Cremation Act of 1902. His concern is that some of the processes can cause practical difficulties for bereaved families, Funeral Directors and Council Officers in fulfilling their respective responsibilities in organising each cremation. Dr Haire gave the following examples of in his experience of practical difficulties:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The forms require the signature of a Justice of the Peace and none have been appointed since 2002.- The forms require the signature of two Doctors for which the families may have to pay professional fees. This is an added financial burden on NI families which has been removed in GB.- Out-dated legal requirements prohibit the electronic transfer of forms with the result that families and Funeral Directors have to travel across NI to hand deliver hard copies- Both the Brodrick Report in 1971 and the ‘Shipman Inquiry’ in 2008 made strong recommendations that the cremation process be revised. These recommendations resulted in new legislation throughout GB, but not in Northern Ireland.
3.5	Dr Haire concluded that in his professional view bereaved families and citizens in Northern Ireland were not being afforded the same efficient cremation services as in other parts of the United Kingdom. Dr. Haire highlighted the need for the legislation in Northern Ireland to be overhauled and streamlined including the incorporation of electronic digital technology.
3.6	Members were then advised that officials from both the Department of Health and the Department for Communities were working on revised legislation and processes which relate to cremation. Members suggested the following actions (subject to Committee approval) : -

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An invitation be issued to Department of Health officials to present their work on updated processes to the Working Group; - That officers review the current processes recently reviewed in Scotland and request a copy of the revised cremation legislation drafted by Department for Communities; - That a letter be forwarded to both the Department for Communities and the Department of Health, raising the concern highlighted by the National Association of Funeral Directors in regard to the impact that the outdated legislation was having on bereaved families and Funeral Directors and seeking an update.
3.7	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Minute of the Working Group of 22 nd January 2019