

Minutes

RESIDENTS, EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

21 March 2019

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge



	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Wayne Bridges (Chairman), Michael Markham (Vice-Chairman), Allan Kauffman, Heena Makwana, Stuart Mathers, Paula Rodrigues, Jan Sweeting, Steve Tuckwell and Devi Radia (In place of Vanessa Hurhangee)</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Paul Richards (Head of Green Spaces, Sport and Culture), Dan Kennedy (Deputy Director, Housing, Environment, Education, Performance, Health & Wellbeing) and Neil Fraser (Democratic Services Officer).</p>
64.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Hurhangee and Tony Little. Councillor Radia was in attendance as Councillor Hurhangee's substitute.</p>
65.	<p>DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
66.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT ANY ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items were marked as Part I and would therefore be considered in public.</p>
67.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting. It was highlighted that Tony Little's attendance at the meeting had been omitted from the minutes.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2019 be approved as a correct record, subject to the correction to attendance as above.</p>
68.	<p>PAST REVIEW MONITORING - REVIEW OF REGULATIONS AND BYELAWS RELATING TO CEMETERIES AND BURIAL GROUNDS WITHIN HILLINGDON (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Council's Head of Green Spaces, Sport and Culture, Paul Richards, provided the Committee with an update on the implementation of actions resulting from the earlier review into regulations and byelaws relating to cemeteries and burial grounds.</p>

The Committee was informed that the recommendations that resulted from the previous review had been implemented, though had been revised over the past few years to include the Ghurkha burial area at Cherry Lane Cemetery, changes to the purchase of Exclusive Right of Burial regulations (back to 100 years, from 30), the Muslim area at West Drayton Cemetery, and changes to when Christmas memorials were removed (now removed in March).

Hillingdon now had three Green Flag Awarded Cemeteries; Northwood Cemetery, Cherry Lane Cemetery and West Drayton Cemetery. The Crematorium also had a Green Flag. As well as Green Flag awards, the Council had also been awarded Small Cemetery of the Year for West Drayton Cemetery. The Green Flag Award process had maintained management plans for each of the sites, and these were available to view and download from the Council website under the heading 'Green Flag management Plan'.

Anti-social behaviour at the sites occurred on occasion, though the main issue was the perception of certain mourning practices (such as holding a celebratory event to mark a death) being seen by some as disrespectful. Recent concerns of potential vandalism at Northwood Cemetery, with flowers being removed or cut off, were found to be due to grazing Muntjac deer. To address this, the Council was reviewing options for fencing and cattle grids. CCTV was to be introduced at Cherry Lane and West Drayton following concerns over theft from cars and maintenance yards.

Regarding the cemetery regulations, these were distributed to all funeral directors, who manage the funerals. Directors ask that all families sign a form to say that they have read the regulations and agree to uphold them. These include regulations over memorials, which have now been standardised with regard to size and design. Health and Safety regarding size remained a key consideration.

All cemeteries were maintained in-house by Green Spaces, with the administrative support provided by colleagues in Business Support. In line with one of the recommendations to Cabinet, Green Spaces had investigated the potential for machinery to process clay from the sites, but unfortunately there was no machinery available.

A toilet had been installed at West Drayton Cemetery and, following a break-in that resulted in major repair work, now awaited cleaning before being opened to the public. Toilet facilities were available on request at Northwood Cemetery, and options were being reviewed for the other sites. A shelter had been installed in the new extension at West Drayton Cemetery.

The Arch at Hillingdon & Uxbridge was still under hoarding to make it safe. The Council had explored possible uses and funding for the building, though none had been successful so far. A Grounds Maintenance team had also been established at this cemetery, reducing travel time and increasing the efficiency of the team.

To ensure future resiliency, an extension area had been created at West Drayton Cemetery to ensure the Council could offer residents their cemetery of choice. The Muslim area in this cemetery was now in use, and it had been agreed with the Muslim community to lay this section like the rest of the cemetery, (i.e. as lawn sections with concrete beams), to enable headstones to be installed.

A woodland burial continued to be offered via West Drayton Cemetery, though current interest was limited.

Proposed enhancements to Cherry Lane Cemetery included new fencing, extensions to the path network, and improved drainage. Expansion plans for Northwood Cemetery were to be considered. Paths at Harmondsworth Cemetery had been re-laid.

Members asked a number of questions, including:

What was being done to address concerns over the perceived disrespect resulting from different mourning practices?

This remained difficult, as often the issues arose from a lack of understanding of different cultures and traditions. The Council was helping residents understand that in most cases the issue was not one of disrespect, but was due to a different approach to the marking of death.

Had any modelling been done to assess capacity requirements for cemetery sites in future years?

Modelling had been carried out, which had forecast that burials and cremations would increase in line with an expanding borough population. However, this had not been the case, as many chose to use services outside of Hillingdon. To support this choice, an unattended funeral service was now offered at Breakspear Crematorium. In an effort to address future capacity issues, expansion work at several sites was being considered.

Could residents reserve burial plots in advance?

The pre-purchase of plots was now limited to a plot + 1 (i.e. the adjoining plot), and must be purchased by the family, rather than an agent or representative.

Regarding the re-laying of paths of Harmondsworth Cemetery, were these wide enough for wheelchair access?

Yes, paths were designed to be wheelchair accessible. However, there were issues with residents driving cars on grass, particularly at Northwood Cemetery, and so parking provision was being reviewed.

What was being done to address litter in and around cemeteries?

The Ground Maintenance team were now managed by Green Spaces, and worked closely with the Street Cleaning team to address such issues. The team routinely cleaned up the sites but welcomed any notification of issues to be addressed.

How was the Council engaging with the 'friends of cemeteries'?

Previously, the Council had regularly engaged with these groups, but once the issues raised by the groups had been addressed, contact was required less. Site staff did continue to engage with the groups on site.

Members highlighted their disappointment that the most recent Remembrance service at West Drayton Cemetery had not included flower displays. Officers shared this disappointment, and advised that this was due to difficulties with planting flowers to bloom in that period of the year. Improvements were being looked at for future years.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

69.	<p>REVIEW INTO PAYMENT MODERNISATION ACROSS KEY RESIDENT SERVICES - DRAFT FINAL REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>The Committee considered the draft final report into payment modernisation across key residents services, and endorsed the report to be taken forward to Cabinet. The Committee agreed that the clerk, in conjunction with the Chairman, be delegated authority to make any final amendments to the report.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the final report be endorsed for submission to Cabinet, subject to the clerk and Chairman agreeing any final amendments.</p>
70.	<p>SELECTING A NEW REVIEW TOPIC - REVIEW B (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Consideration was given to potential future review topics. Suggestions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with young people and the development of youth services • Recycling and fly-tipping <p>Members requested that the engagement with young people and the development of youth services be looked into as the potential next topic.</p>
71.	<p>CABINET FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.</p>
72.	<p>MULTI-YEAR WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>Consideration was given to the work programme for 2019 and beyond. Suggested items for addition to the programme included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop kerb enforcement • Council strategies for recycling within flats. <p>RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.05 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Neil Fraser on 01895 250692. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.