

Environment & Regeneration Select Committee

A meeting of Environment & Regeneration Select Committee was held on Monday, 12th February, 2007.

Present: Cllr Mrs J Beaumont (Chairman), Cllr D Cains, Cllr J A Fletcher, Cllr A Larkin, Cllr W Noble, Cllr R Rix, Cllr Mrs B Robinson, Cllr F G Salt and Cllr B Woodhead.

Officers: M.Chicken, S.Daniels, A.Gibson, M.Robinson, J.Robins (DNS); N.Hart, J.Trainer (LD).

Also in attendance: No other persons were present.

Apologies: Cllr Leckonby, Cllr Mrs Norton, Cllr Walmsley.

1027 Draft minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2007.

Consideration was given to the content of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2007.

CONCLUDED that the minutes be forwarded to Council for consideration.

1028 Street Lighting - Action Plan.

Consideration was given to progress made against the Street Lighting Action Plan since the completion of this Committee's scrutiny review.

The Council's Head of Technical Services advised that more progress would be made once the outcome of staffing restructures was complete; and further work would be done to confirm actual timescales for completion of tasks.

CONCLUDED that progress against the Action Plan be noted, together with the action reported necessary to make further progress against the Plan.

1029 Review of Cemeteries and Memorials - Evidence from :- Jayne Robins - Registration and Memorials Manager - Alternative Burial Options Mike Chicken - Environment Project Manager - Environment Issues

Consideration was given to the following presentations of evidence to assist the Committee's review of Cemeteries and Memorials:-

-Alternative Burial Options-Registration and Bereavement Manager

-Environmental Issues-Environment Project Manager

The Registration and Bereavement Manager provided details of the proposed Future Development of Cemeteries and in particular how choice may be extended to include 'Green' burials, Woodland burials; and how Civil Funeral and Memorial Ceremonies offer an alternative to the more formal traditional funeral ceremony. With regard to the latter, it was noted that discreet efforts were being made to publicise the availability of this service, but that the full commitment of funeral directors to this was required.

The choices available regarding coffins and the type of material they are made

from, were noted including the 'standard', 're-usable' and 'green' products, as well as the more ostentatious. Consideration was given to how this Authority might adopt and encourage use of the alternative options, including the Authority having its own 'small stock' of available coffins.

The Committee was advised of the choice of graves/depth policy, and the consequence on this of the fact that over 70% of deaths now involved a cremation based funeral. Details were also provided of the current legal position regarding the re-use of graves and members suggested that further consideration should be given to exploring the potential re-use of graves sold in perpetuity where rights may be cancelled after 75 years, and providing no previous internments have taken place; and for Reserved graves with space for further internments pre 1969, starting with those over 100 years old. The results of a sample study of space available in unpurchased graves at Durham Road, Oxbridge Lane and Thornaby Cemeteries was also provided.

The Environment Project Manager summarised the implications surrounding cremation and burials in terms of the following environmental issues; and provided possible mitigation in each case:-

- Land Use
- Transport
- Use of Chemicals
- Emissions to Air
- Emissions to Water
- Emissions to Land
- Energy Used (excluding transport)
- Resources used

Details were requested regarding the service offered in respect of private woodland burials.

CONCLUDED that the presentations be noted, along with the further evidence requested regarding the re-use of graves and the private woodland burial service.