

Place Select Committee

A meeting of Place Select Committee was held on Monday, 14th December, 2020.

Present: Cllrs Chris Barlow (Chair), Louise Baldock (Vice Chair), Norma Stephenson (sub for Pauline Beall), Luke Frost, Mohammed Javed, Hilary Vickers, Alan Watson, Bill Woodhead MBE.

Officers: John Angus, Ally Buckton, Dale Rowbotham, Craig Willows (CS&T); Peter Bell, Rebecca Saunders-Thompson, Judith Trainer (MD).

Also in attendance: Gareth Aungiers (Xentrall).

Apologies: Cllr Pauline Beall,

PLA 23/20 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

PLA 24/20 **Minutes**

Consideration was given to the minutes from the meeting held on 16 November 2020.

AGREED that the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PLA 25/20 **Scrutiny Review of Planters in Residential Streets (Task and Finish)**

Consideration was given to the draft final report and recommendations.

The key issues were highlighted as follows:

- Members acknowledged that the review's recommendations provided communities with the opportunity to share their views on, and get involved in, future planter maintenance. Maintenance of planters in the long term was also an important factor of the review.
- Members were informed that the majority of housing developers chose to retain the ownership of the greenspaces on their developments, appointing a private sector company to maintain them.

AGREED that the final report be approved for submission to Cabinet.

PLA 26/20 **Scrutiny Review of Burial Provision**

This was the first evidence session of the scrutiny review of burial provision. Members received an introductory presentation from Council Officers on current levels of burial provision across the Borough.

The main issues were discussed as follows:

- There were 3 open cemeteries in the Borough: Thornaby, Billingham, and Durham Road.
- Thornaby Cemetery was the largest of the three sites. There were

currently around 72 years of burial provision remaining and around 20 years of Muslim burial provision. Potential areas for future Muslim burial provision was also highlighted. At Thornaby, there was also undeveloped land that could be used in the future.

- Billingham Cemetery was the northernmost site in the Borough. There were around 35 years of burial provision remaining. Billingham Cemetery was situated alongside a large wooded area and, if suggested or approved by Members, this could be used in the future to increase the land size of the cemetery.
- Durham Road Cemetery was positioned in the central area of the Borough. Burial provision was only available in the area that had been recently extended and there were around 7-9 years of provision remaining.
- A pilot grave personalisation scheme was still underway at Durham Road Cemetery.
- At present, 80% of residents opted for cremation and 20% of residents opted for burial. The true extent of residents' preference for cremation would not become apparent for several years.
- Provision for the burial of cremated remains was around 43 years at Thornaby Cemetery, 9-10 years at Billingham Cemetery, and around 6 years at Durham Road Cemetery. In Durham Road Cemetery, this provision was in the traditional section, not in the extension, but sections within the extension had been identified for future provision.
- Oxbridge Cemetery was closed for solid purchases of graves. The provision for burial of cremated remains was around 29 years.
- The chapels in Oxbridge and Durham Road cemeteries were utilised by the maintenance teams. Members requested further information on the new location of chapel benches.
- Cremated remains needed to be buried on top of coffins because of the different depths required to inter cremated remains and coffins.
- Above ground vaults and scattering of cremated remains in the garden of remembrance at Stockton Crematorium were also discussed as options.
- Members noted that there was a growing population in south Stockton (for example, in Yarm, Ingleby Barwick, and Eaglescliffe) and burial provision needs in these localities needed to be considered.
- Local Authorities across the Tees Valley charged an individual a double fee for the purchase of burial plot if they lived outside of the Borough. Members would be provided with the figures for purchases by individuals outside of the Stockton Borough.
- There were no options to further extend the site of Durham Road Cemetery. New options would have to be assessed for the central and western areas of the Borough.
- Members agreed that potential new sites needed to be considered.
- Any new sites would need to settle for a 4-year period. This needed to be considered when Members looked at the options for new/alternative sites and the Local Plan.
- Members were informed that they could contact the link officer before the next Committee meeting with any suggestions or comments.

AGREED that:

- 1) the information be noted.
- 2) further information be provided as requested.

**PLA
27/20** **Work Programme 2020-21**

Consideration was given to Work Programme.

The next Committee meeting would be held on Monday 11 January 2021.

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.

**PLA
28/20** **Chair's Update**

The Chair had no further update.