

Place Select Committee

A meeting of Place Select Committee was held on Monday, 11th January, 2021.

Present: Cllrs Chris Barlow (Chair), Louise Baldock (Vice Chair), Pauline Beall, Luke Frost, Mohammed Javed, Hilary Vickers, Alan Watson, Bill Woodhead MBE, Andrew Sherris (sub for Cllr Maurice Perry), Ross Patterson.

Officers: Ally Buckton, Dale Rowbotham, (CS&T); Peter Bell, Rebecca Saunders-Thompson (MD).

Also in attendance: Gareth Aungiers (Xentrall).

Apologies: Cllr Maurice Perry

PLA 29/20 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Vickers declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest regarding item 3 – Scrutiny Review of Burial Provision. Cllr Vickers son worked for Middlesbrough Council in the Cemeteries department.

PLA 30/20 **Minutes**

Consideration was given to the minutes from the meeting held on 14 December 2020.

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

PLA 31/20 **Scrutiny Review of Burial Provision**

This was the second evidence session of the scrutiny review of burial provision. Members received a presentation from Council Officers on proposed options for a new burial sites/s.

The main issues were as follows:

- Data on Stockton Crematorium's first year of operation was presented. A total of 1,116 cremations had taken place between 23 September 2019 and 23 September 2020.
- Above ground vaults could accommodate two sets of cremated remains per vault and a memorial plaque could be attached to the front of a vault.
- Families could request to scatter cremated remains within the grounds of the crematorium.
- A map with the proposed locations for a new burial site, or sites, was discussed.
- Location 1 was situated on Yarm Road, adjacent to the existing Preston Cemetery. The land was privately owned and there had been previous interest in selling the land for housing development, although there were no plans for this at present.
- Location 2 was situated nearby and this land was owned by Stockton Borough Council (SBC) but was leased privately. The site was quite large and would be accessible from Durham Lane but further investigation on accessibility would be needed.
- Location 3 was an area of land owned by SBC known as Six Fields. This

was a greenbelt area and a popular walking route.

- Location 4 was a piece of land situated off Darlington Back Lane and Harrowgate Lane. This area would serve more of the central belt of SBC residents. However, house building had increased in the area and it was possible that a nearby landowner wanted to sell their land for house building.
- Location 5 was situated in West Stockton, adjacent to Harrowgate Lane. This was private land but had good transport links. However, the land might have been identified as a potential site for future house building.
- Location 6 was situated adjacent to Blakeston Lane and behind the Stockton Crematorium site. The land was located quite centrally to serve SBC residents and there were public transport links. House building was taking place nearby, but it was not known if house building was planned for this land.
- Location 7 was the former Norton School site. This land was quite a large area and was owned by SBC.
- Location 8 was situated opposite Ingleby Mill Primary School, Ingleby Barwick. This land was privately owned. Further investigation on accessibility and impacts on resident access would be needed.
- Location 9 was a piece of land in the South of Yarm, Green Lane, down from Kirklevington Prison. This land was privately owned. Housing developments were underway in the area, so it was possible that this land might be sold for housing in the future.
- Location 10 was situated east of Thirsk Road, Kirklevington. A further three to four privately owned sites in the surrounding area could be investigated. It was acknowledged that public accessibility and public transport links was an issue in this area. It was also possible that land in this area could be sold for housing.
- Cllr Sherris requested an additional location for consideration. This piece of land was located West of Yarm, in West Leas, opposite the site of the former Tall Trees Hotel. This land was privately owned.
- Research on best practice for cemetery provision had been undertaken. There was only a small amount of guidance on restrictions and regulations. Key advice included ensuring that a new site was not located near rivers or high-water tables.
- Legislation for burial provision was included in the 1852 Burial Act. New burial provision options would have to adhere to current planning regulations.
- Specialist evaluations could be conducted on any sites shortlisted as part of this review. This would include taking soil samples and assessing transport links. Initial work would take six to ten weeks to complete. If a site was deemed suitable, more in-depth investigations could take place.
- Members discussed the sites to be placed on a shortlist for further investigation.
- The size of a site, accessibility, and location within the Borough were all considered to be important factors.
- Location 3 was identified as a desirable area for walkers and a lot of money had been spent to make it so. It was agreed that location 3 would be removed.
- Members were reminded that any site would need five years to settle before burials could take place. This needed to be considered when looking at sites near potential housing developments as this might improve transport links to a new cemetery.
- It was acknowledged that the sites in the Kirklevington area were not located near/on bus routes making it difficult for residents without their own vehicles to visit a cemetery in this area.

- Members highlighted that a planning application by Yarm Town Council for additional burial land had been submitted and rejected on a number of occasions over a period of several years. The site opposite the former Tall Trees Hotel could provide the additional provision needed in the Yarm area.
- It was acknowledged that data on deceased residents who had been cremated at Stockton Crematorium were held by Bereavement Services, but it would require a large amount of officer time to analyse if residents were from the north or south of the Borough.
- Location 5 was identified as a previous option for Stockton Crematorium. Members suggested that crematoriums or cemeteries do not necessarily deter people from purchasing houses nearby.
- Several Members supported provision in the southern area of the Borough.
- It was noted that an SBC owned site would be preferable to reduce Council expenditure on a new site.
- Joint working with Town Councils and Parish Councils was suggested as a means of sharing costs.
- It was recognised that location 7 was in the northern and eastern area of the Borough and it would not be as easily accessible to residents in the south of the Borough as other sites.
- A shortlist of six sites for further investigation was agreed. These were locations 1,2,4,5,8 and Cllr Sherris' request.
- It was agreed that a more in-depth assessment of these locations, and an update on investigations, would be provided to Members at the next Committee meeting.

AGREED that:

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

PLA 32/20 Work Programme 2020-21

Consideration was given to Work Programme.

The next Committee meeting would be held on Monday 15 February 2021.

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.

PLA 33/20 Chair's Update

The Chair had no further update.