

Report on	Cemetery Administration and Management Update
Date of Meeting	14 th January 2020
Reporting Officer	Terry Scullion, Head of Property Services
Contact Officer	Terry Scullion, Head of Property Services

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	This report is to seek Members approval on the updated Draft Council's administration of burials in relation to Cemetery Management including Rules, Regulations and Memorial Safety.
2.0	Background
2.1	Members will recall at the November 2019 Environment Committee meeting a draft paper on the Cemetery Management including Rules, Regulations and Memorial Safety was approved for further consultation, subject to an amendment in relation to section 2.12 of the document in appendix 1 in relation to 'all religions and none'.
2.2	At Council in November 2019 members asked for the draft to return to Committee to reconsider section 2.3 of the document in appendix 1 in respect of the latest permitted entry time on Sunday.
2.3	A subsequently request has been raised in respect of section 3.3 of the document in appendix 1 in respect of the temporary or permanent use of hardwood memorials.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The draft document highlighted the following issues:</p> <p>a) Interment Hours (see section 2.12 of the document in appendix 1) During winter hours the latest permitted entry time for an interment is 14:30. In summer it's 3.00pm.</p> <p>Due to the timing of local Sunday Church services it has been requested that the latest arrival time on a Sunday only should be extended to 15:00 throughout the year, including the winter period.</p> <p>This is feasible, however due to the lack of lighting in the cemeteries, and the drop in natural light at this time of year there are increased health and safety pressures for both visitors and staff, especially if the funeral arrives</p>

	<p>late. The burial cost to Council is also likely to increase, in relation to staff and the need for temporary lighting based on risk assessment during the late winter period.</p> <p>b) Non-Christian burials (see section 2.12 of the document in appendix 1) The wording in relation to 'Non-Christian' burials has been reviewed following discussions with other Councils and Council's Equality Officer. The section has been amended as follows:</p> <p><i>'All religions and none</i></p> <p><i>Council will accommodate all religions and none. It will aim to accommodate requests for special burial arrangements to meet the needs of particular faiths.'</i></p> <p>It is the responsibility of the family or funeral director to notify Council of any special requests associated with religious traditions that the deceased party may have E.g. burial direction.</p> <p>c) Grave Memorials/Permits (see section 3.3 of the document in appendix 1)</p> <p>The draft document states the following in relation to memorials:</p> <p><i>'All memorials and headstones must be made of stone or other non-perishable material such as granite. Temporary hardwood memorials can be erected but only for the six months from the date of burial, after this period Council staff will be instructed to remove it'.</i></p> <p>Members to advise on extending the duration of time (e.g. 12 months) that perishable memorials (e.g. hardwood crosses) remain after a burial; or advise if they wish to treat them as permanent memorials through an application process and payment of a fee in line with the scale of charges.</p>
3.2	<p>The next step is to afford the staff trade unions an opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed document, before presenting it to Council's Policy and Resources Committee for approval with a proposed implementation date of 1st April 2020, subject to Committee and Council meeting schedules.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	<p>Financial: Development of the rules and regulations is within existing resources. Limited budget is available in year for roll out of the Memorial Safety Programme.</p>
	<p>Human: Staff time in the administration of burials, cemetery inspections including training of operatives, and managing third party contractors working in the cemeteries.</p>

	Other client service support through Council's Marketing and Communications, Legal Services and Health and Safety teams.
	<p>Risk Management:</p> <p>This is a risk of injury to staff, contractors or visitors should an unstable headstone or memorial fall, or injury from access to a site, including liability issues associated with maintaining a work area not under the responsibility of Council, or where a maintenance agreement does not exist.</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>No adverse impact on any equality group has been identified and positive impacts will be minor. See appendix 2 for equality screening document.</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>No adverse impact as it is not specific to both rural or urban burials grounds and cemeteries within the District. See appendix 3 for rural needs assessment.</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are requested to note the content of the report and advise on the matters raised in section 3.1 for approval to present the contents of the draft documents to Council's Policy and Resources Committee for Policy approval.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 - Mid Ulster District Council Cemetery Management Policy incorporating Rules, Regulations and Memorial Safety
6.2	Appendix 2 – Cemetery Equality Screening
6.3	Appendix 3 – Cemetery Rural Needs Assessment
6.4	Reference: Environment Committee 12 November 2019; Cemetery Administration & Management Update; Report and associated Minute