



Report of the Director of Leisure Services and the Director of Development

Executive Board

Date: 13th December 2006

**Subject: REVIEW OF THE CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIA 50 YEAR STRATEGY:
CEMETERY PROVISION FOR EAST AND NORTH EAST LEEDS**

Electoral Wards Affected:
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Specific Implications For:
Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/>
Community Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/>
Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/>

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In
(Details contained in the report)

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 At the meeting of the Executive Board on 22nd March 2006, members considered the strategy for future cemetery provision in the City and, in respect of East and North East Leeds considered the following options:

- provision of a large cemetery (46 acre/19 hectares cemetery at Whinmoor),
- provision of a medium size cemetery by proceeding with phases 1 to 3 of the Whinmoor proposal,
or
- provision of small cemeteries.

It was agreed that in pursuit of the option for small cemetery provision that the following be undertaken:

- (a) That negotiations take place with Leeds Federated Housing Association (LFHA) on the acquisition of the Brander Mount (now Green View Mount) site adjacent to Harehills Cemetery and that a feasibility study be undertaken on its development as an extension to Harehills Cemetery as a Muslim burial site.
- (b) That the feasibility of the Whinmoor Grange site as a small cemetery be examined taking account of the possible need to co-locate such a facility with

replacement Red Hall facilities (the Nursery, Parks East Leeds Depot and Red Hall sports pitches).

(c) That the Section 299 agreement with the Killingbeck developer and the Secretary of State for Health be renegotiated with a view to developing a 5acre/2ha cemetery within the allocated greenspace provision for the site.

(d) That a further report be brought to the Board on this matter by September 2006.

1.2 Current Capital Provision

The Learning and Leisure Capital Scheme for the East Leeds Cemetery, Scheme No. 23293, has available funds of £176.1k in 2006/07 and £325k in 2007/08.

2.0 CURRENT POSITION

The current position regarding each of the actions from the previous report are as follows:

2.1 Harehills Cemetery

Negotiations with LFHA regarding the acquisition of Green View Mount (formerly Brander Mount) have yet to reach agreement on gross land value because the land was originally transferred from the City Council at nil value to Leeds Partnership Homes, subject to a covenant that its use should be restricted to social housing. LFHA wish to sell the land at what they consider to be market value, but are willing to enter into discussions with the Council around a land exchange within the Leeds district. Feasibility work has been commissioned to establish the cost of removing the large areas of existing hard surface from roads and removal of foundations and utility services. If terms cannot be agreed by sale or exchange an option exists to compulsorily purchase the site. This site could provide a potential Muslim cemetery of 2.5acres/1ha which at predicted mortality rates will last for 22 years.

2.2 Killingbeck (Site A)

Subject to a satisfactory Highways Statement regarding access to the site from Foundry Lane, this site could provide a potential Muslim cemetery of 9 acres/3.8 ha., which at predicted mortality rates would last for 72 years. Approximately 30% of this site is owned by the Council. Work needs to be undertaken to re-negotiate the S299 Agreement with the Killingbeck developer and the Secretary of State for Health to secure the remaining 70%. Feasibility work has been commissioned to determine the suitability of this site as a small cemetery and to determine the effects of development on the adjacent Wyke Beck flood plain.

2.3 Killingbeck (Site B)

Council owned land to the west of Site A could provide a 3 acre/1.2 ha. cemetery within the allocated greenspace provision for the Killingbeck development, which for muslim burials could last for 25 years. Although smaller than Site A, this land is terraced and is also closer to the flood plain. A Highways Statement would be required to determine the feasibility of access from Foundry Lane.

There is evidence of an archaeological feature (ridge and furrow) which may affect the future development of the land.

It is doubtful that this site will receive Environment Agency approval because of its proximity to the Wyke Beck flood plain, and it is therefore recommended that this is not pursued as an option.

2.4 The Muslim community have advised that the rate of burials versus repatriation will increase by a projected 3.5% each year. Calculations to determine the operational life of each of the sites outlined above i.e. 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 have taken this increase into account. The base line figure for calculations is 34 burials in 2003 which is consistent with previous cemetery capacity forecasts. Actual burials in the period 2003-2006 have been in line with the predictions, outlined above.

2.5 The Muslim Community, through their local representatives, have requested that the City Council establish a working group to examine the feasibility of setting up a Trust to run the new part of the Cemetery. It is recommended that such a group be established with the Member Management Committee determining the political representation.

2.6 Whinmoor Grange

As a site, Whinmoor Grange can accommodate either a large, medium or small cemetery, alongside a range of other facilities that may at some point in the future, be re-located from the Red Hall site.

The Highways improvement works and screen planting work have been completed, and the feasibility works were completed prior to this.

2.7 The report to Executive Board on 22nd March 2006 included consideration of the development potential of Red Hall playing fields and nursery land, and the potential to co-locate some of these facilities at Whinmoor Grange.

The Director of Development has advised that the Council owned land at Red Hall is allocated for development in the Revised Unitary Development Plan (RUDP), but for the following reasons capital receipts will only be generated from disposal in the medium to long term. Therefore there is no immediate pressure or funding to relocate existing uses.

i) **Red Hall Playing Fields**

The playing fields extend to 21 acres (8.50 hectares) and are allocated for Business Park purposes in the UDP, which was first published in draft in 1991 and formally approved in 2001. Part of the Council's Whinmoor site has been reserved so the playing fields can be relocated two years in advance of any disposal for development. However there has been no evidence of demand for new office development at Red Hall over this period due to the availability of much better located Business Parks with motorway accessibility and planning consents, for example at Thorpe Park, Garforth and in the Aire Valley.

Furthermore some part of the site may be required for the East Leeds Orbital Route in conjunction with the East Leeds Extension. A detailed highways study would be needed to establish this requirement as part of the master planning for the East Leeds Extension, the timing of which is referred to in the following paragraph.

Offices would be the key element of a Business Park and this allocation needs to be seen in the context of recently introduced national planning policy which now adopts a town centres first approach to ensure the vitality of existing centres. A recent

employment land study has also suggested that there is an ample long term supply of employment land in the district, which brings into question whether the Red Hall land is required for this purpose. However this would need to be considered as part of a review of the location and supply of employment land and in the context of the East Leeds Extension proposals through the Local Development Framework process. In this event the earliest date for development of this greenfield land would be 2012, but it could be much later if there is a continuing supply of brownfield land and RUDP phase two housing sites would also be brought forward earlier in preference on planning grounds.

ii) Red Hall Nursery land

Part of the Red Hall nursery land (6.40 acres / 3.59 hectares) was previously allocated for residential use in the UDP (H4:6). Therefore that part is separate from the East Leeds Extension and falls within phase two of the RUDP housing land release, which could theoretically be released for development between 2008 -12. However this is likely to be deferred due to the continuing supply of brownfield land and because it will need to be developed along with the above playing field land, through which the necessary new access would need to be constructed from Wetherby Road.

The remaining 27.50 acres (11.14 hectares) of land is in operational use by the nursery and Parks depot. It is allocated in the RUDP as part of the East Leeds Extension, which is in phase 3 of the RUDP housing land release. This could theoretically be released for development from 2012, although the actual date will be deferred until the supply of brownfield land and RUDP phase two housing sites are exhausted.

Therefore at the appropriate time in the future a decision on relocation of the nursery and depot will be necessary. A site of twenty five acres would be required and this could be accommodated within the proposed site layout at Whinmoor, although other alternatives would also need to be evaluated.

3.0 PRESSURES AND TIMESCALES

- 3.1 Given the time taken to plan for and develop cemetery sites, it is essential that a decision is taken to proceed with one or more of the options outlined above, as there is a pressing need for burial space in North East Leeds. Garforth Cemetery has seen a large increase in burials due in part to lack of suitable space at Harehills, from around 17 burials per annum to the current 40+ per annum. When the current extension was built in 1996 it was anticipated that the space would last for 35 years, however due to the continuing pressure on Garforth there are plans to extend the cemetery during 2007.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 It would seem appropriate at this stage to continue with feasibility studies at the two sites mentioned in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.2. The feasibility studies will look at ground conditions, impact on surrounding environments and highways impact. Therefore, should it transpire that the Green View Mount site, for whatever reason, is not suitable for an extension to Harehills Cemetery, the feasibility work on the Killingbeck site will have been completed, enabling a decision to be taken without further delay.

5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Resources totalling £80,000 are required at this stage to fund site investigation and feasibility studies at Green View Mount, Killingbeck Site A and further issues at Whinmoor Grange Farm. This funding is available within the existing Whinmoor Capital Budget No. 23293.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that:

- a) Negotiations continue into the acquisition of Green View Mount and extension of Harehills Cemetery, and that £40,000 is realigned from the current capital scheme to fund site investigation and feasibility studies.
- b) An option appraisal and feasibility study into the suitability of Killingbeck Site A is undertaken and that £40,000 to undertake this work is allocated from the current capital scheme. The areas of investigation to include access to Foundry Lane, negotiations with the Killingbeck developer and the impact on the adjacent flood plain.
- c) The Whinmoor Grange site should accommodate a 5 acre cemetery which will allow for burials in North East and East Leeds for the next 25 years.
- d) A working group be established to examine the feasibility of a Trust for the Muslim part of the Cemetery, and that the Member Management Committee determine the members representatives on the group.
- e) Officers to report back to Executive Board on completion of the feasibility studies for Green View Mount, Killingback Site A and Whinmoor Grange to confirm the course of action to be taken.