



Report of the Chief Democratic Services Officer

Member Management Committee

Date: 20th February 2007

Subject: Working Group on Muslim Cemetery Provision

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. Decisions of the Executive Board and Council have determined that a non partisan working group be established to examine the feasibility of setting up a Trust for the Muslim part of the Harehills cemetery and further feasibility studies for other sites.

This report recommends the member representation for the Working Group as the first step in progressing the matter.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

To consider member appointments to a working group to be established to examine the feasibility of setting up a Trust for the Muslim part of the Harehills cemetery and further feasibility studies for other sites.

2.0 Background Information

The Executive Board on 13th December 2006 considered a report on cemetery provision in East and North East Leeds as part of the review of the Cemeteries and Crematoria 50 Year Strategy. The Board resolved, with regard to Muslim cemetery provision, that a working group be established and that the Member Management Committee determine the member representatives on the group.

Following a White Paper debate at the Council meeting held on 17th January 2007 the following resolution was passed:

RESOLVED – That this Council, noting the sensitivities surrounding the issue of burials, affirms that party politics should have no role to play in this issue. Council therefore welcomes the recent Executive Board decision to establish a non partisan working group to examine the feasibility of setting up a Trust for the Muslim part of the Harehills cemetery and further feasibility studies for other sites

3.0 Main Issues

The Council resolution effectively identifies the terms of reference for the proposed Working Group and the Executive Board decision charges the Member Management Committee with the establishment of the informal working group.

As the working group will need to incorporate representation of Muslim community interests, plus officer representation from various departments, it is proposed that the number of member appointments to the group be kept to a minimum. To this end it is suggested that the Labour, Liberal Democrat, Morley Borough Independent and Green Groups each appoint 1 member. The Executive Member (Leisure) is the Conservative Group nominee and as this matter is within the Leisure portfolio it is proposed that he chairs the group.

Following the appointment of the elected members to the group it is proposed that an initial meeting be held to consider advice from the Director of Learning and Leisure and such other officers as appropriate as to:

- community interest appointments to be incorporated into the group which will ensure appropriate and comprehensive representation of the Muslim community
- an appropriate work programme for the group within the parameters of the Council decision.

4.0 Conclusions

The first steps identified in this report will secure a compact member core for the working group as the foundation for an initial meeting which will clearly define the appropriate inputs, goals and timescales.

5.0 Recommendations

- (a) That member appointments to the working group on Muslim Cemetery Provision be Councillor J Procter (Chair) and one Whips' nominee from each of the Labour, Liberal Democrat, Morley Borough Independent and Green Party Groups.
- (b) That the Director of Learning and Leisure be requested to progress the work of the group in the terms of this report.