

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 1 CEMETERIES

Thursday, 6 July 2017

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Brian Sargeant (Chair), Councillor Vicky Culbard (Deputy Chair); Councillors Alan Bottwood, Culbard and Dennis Meredith

OFFICERS Julie Seddon, Director of Customers and Communities
Mick Tyrrell, Partnerships Manager
Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aziz and Kilbride.

At this point, the Chair advised that Simon Hollowell from Hollowells Funeral Services had accepted the offer to be a co optee to the Panel.

2. DEPUTATIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dennis Meredith declared an interest in this Scrutiny Review as he owns a plot in Kingsthorpe Cemetery. The declaration is for the life of this Scrutiny Review.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2017 as a true and accurate record.

5. PRESENTATION TO SET THE SCENE

Mick Tyrrell presented a comprehensive document to the Scrutiny Panel on various elements regarding cemeteries within the scope of the Review. Mick Tyrrell elaborated upon the information contained within the document.

The Scrutiny Panel made comment, asked questions and heard:

- Duston cemetery was extended in 2016, providing an additional 800 burial spaces.
- The physical maintenance of the roads is the responsibility of Asset Management; Environmental Services funds some of this works.
- The Panel noted that some people plant extra plants, trees and put monuments outside the burial plot which can create problems, there is a need for there to be stricter adherence to the Policy. The Panel asked to have sight of this Policy, along with the fees and guidance.
- There have been some maintenance issues with cemeteries but it was highlighted that it is the owner's responsibility to maintain the grave. Unless there is something dangerous on the grave, the Council cannot maintain the plot.

- People have rights to the burial plots for 99 years.
- There are two cemeteries in the borough with chapels
- Currently funerals do not take place in Northampton on Sundays; there is a limited service on Saturday in exceptional circumstances.
- In answer to a query, Mick Tyrrell advised that permission has to be sought for someone to be buried in the garden of a house. You cannot bury someone on an allotment

6. CORE QUESTIONS

The Scrutiny Panel considered the draft core questions and agreed, that the core questions, as amended, are sent to the expert advisors to provide a response.

AGREED: The core questions, as attached, are sent to the expert advisors to provide a response at future scheduled meetings.

7. SITE VISITS

The Scrutiny Panel agreed that it would undertake site visits to various cemeteries:

- Kettering Cemetery
- Kingsthorpe Cemetery
- Duston Cemetery and
- Towcester Road Cemetery

The Scrutiny Officer would liaise with the Chair regarding a suitable date for the visits to take place in August 2017. The Panel would then be notified of the date, to ascertain which Councillors are able to attend, along with the Chair. The Contracts Manager and the Scrutiny Officer would also attend.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (CIA)

The Community Impact Assessment (CIA) was approved and would be published on the Scrutiny page of the Council's WebPage.

The meeting concluded at 18:55 hours

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY



SCRUTINY PANEL 1 - CEMETERIES

CORE QUESTIONS – EXPERT ADVISORS

The Scrutiny Panel is currently undertaking a review: Cemeteries

To review cemeteries in the Borough, concentrating on:

Maintenance and health and safety requirements

Amenities and facilities

Financial implications

Outcomes required:

- To ensure that the Borough's cemeteries are easily accessible, well maintained with adequate amenities and facilities available for visitors to use.

CORE QUESTIONS:

A series of key questions have been put together to inform the evidence base of the Scrutiny Panel:

- a. Please can you provide details of the maintenance regime and the financial implication of maintenance of the Borough's cemeteries, please explain.
- b. Please can you provide details of the health and safety requirements and the financial implications within the Borough's cemeteries. Please explain.

- c. Please can you provide details of the financial implications around amenities and facilities within the Borough's cemeteries. Please explain.
- d. In your opinion, are the Borough's cemeteries easily accessible? Please provide details. If not, please can you provide suggestions for improvement.
- e. Are you aware of the location and the provision of amenities in the Borough's cemeteries, please provide details.
- f. Do you have any other information you are able to provide in relation to the Borough's cemeteries?