

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

MEETING, 1ST DECEMBER, 2009

Present – Councillors R. Silvester (Vice-Chairman), Hollick, Peel, A. Walsh, J. Walsh (as deputy for Councillor Higson) and D. Wilkinson.

Also in Attendance

Mr. M. Cox	-	Director of Environmental Services
Mr. J. Kelly	-	Head of Highways and Engineering Development Services
Mr. T. Higson	-	Principal Road Safety Officer
Ms. L. Kennon	-	Assistant Head of Civil Contingencies
Mr. K. Roberts	-	Head of Division
Mr. J. White	-	Manager/Registrar – Crematorium and Cemeteries
Mrs. S. Bailey	-	Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Higson, Hornby and Ibrahim (Chairman).

Councillor R. Silvester in the Chair.

27. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Policy Development Group held on 10th November, 2009 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

Further to Minute 25, members felt that it was important to counter claims made in the Bolton News regarding the issue of parking enforcement notices which were unfounded and misleading.

28. CIVIL CONTINGENCIES: EMERGENCIES UPDATE (APRIL, 2009 – PRESENT)

A report of the Director of Environmental Services was submitted which updated members on emergencies for which the Council had activated parts of its emergency response arrangements since April, 2009.

The report detailed the incidents and the extent of response provided. Although none of the emergencies had been declared as major incidents, various aspects of the Council's emergency management arrangements had been activated on a regular basis.

Members considered the report and felt that it would be useful to obtain feedback from people affected by the incident.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

29. PERMANENT MEMORIAL TO PEOPLE KILLED IN ROAD CRASHES

Further to Minute 5 of the meeting of this Policy Development Group held on 13th July, 2009, the Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which put forward options and guidance on a preferred location for a permanent memorial to people killed in road crashes in Bolton and the type of memorial to be introduced.

Members were reminded that, at its meeting on 13th July, 2009, the Group endorsed the protocols for dealing with roadside tributes and memorials placed on the highway at the scene of a fatality and agreed that a consultation exercise should take place to establish views on the introduction of a permanent memorial in Bolton.

In this regard, the report detailed the results of the consultation exercise which had sought to obtain views on:-

- the location of a memorial – two potential locations had been identified, Queen's Park or Bolton Parish Church; and
- the type of memorial – trees, commemorative plaque or sculptured art.

From the responses received, the majority of those consulted preferred a tree as the choice for a permanent memorial. The report also provided details of the financial costs for various options and indicated that £26,000 had been allocated from the Highways and Engineering Capital Programme for a memorial. Members' views were sought on their preferred options.

Following consideration of the report, members discussed at length the various options and it was felt that, on balance, the preferred location was Queen's Park on the frontage and that the memorial should consist of a small group of Acer Rubrum trees combined with a hard standing containing an inscription protected by some form of railings.

Other considerations would need to be given to parking arrangements and maintenance of the monument.

Other suggestions included allowing members of the public to purchase a tree to plant in and around the area.

It was agreed that the Executive Member for Environmental Services be recommended to:-

- (i) approve a permanent memorial to people being killed in road crashes being introduced in Queen's Park at the preferred location, as shown at Appendix A to the report, and that the memorial consist of a monument with protective railings, semimature trees (acer rubrum) and a hardstanding, possibly inlaid if appropriate; and
- (ii) that protocols for maintaining the memorial to keep it clean, safe and tidy be developed and implemented once the memorial is in place.

30. BEREAVEMENT SERVICES STRATEGY – KEY ISSUES NO. 1

Further to Minute 19 of the meeting of this Group held on 6th October, 2009, a report of the Director of Environmental Services was submitted which set out key operational issues for consideration as part of the development of an overarching Bereavement Services Strategy.

In this regard, the report identified a number of issues in various operational areas of the Council's cemeteries and crematorium and put forward suggested ways of improvement for the consideration of members. The operational issues were as follows:-

- a) cemetery opening and closing times – it was proposed to introduce earlier summer and winter closing times;
- b) dogs and dog fouling – it was suggested that signs requesting that dogs be kept on a lead and no fouling be placed throughout the cemeteries with a notice that failure to comply could lead to prosecution;
- c) memorialisation on graves – problems with buildouts as they did not comply with the written rules and caused grounds maintenance problems;
- d) disused cemetery chapels – Heaton, Tonge and Astley Bridge chapels were in a poor state of repair;
- e) grounds maintenance – potential for the introduction of a lawning programme in older sections of cemeteries;
- f) crematorium service times – proposals to increase length of services to 45 minutes to provide a better quality of service; and

- g) repair and maintenance of Overdale Drive – proposals to use slippage from £50,000 memorial safety management capital monies to undertake repairs to Overdale Drive.

Members discussed the various issues and options at length and made comments and suggestions in each operational area, as follows:-

- that cemetery opening and closing times should be amended, in accordance with those detailed in the report;
- that signs warning dog owners that dogs should be kept on a lead at all times and that dog fouling will be a prosecutable offence should be erected in all cemeteries;
- that, in relation to memorials on graves in existing areas, where there was active usage, the current practice should be retained. However, in the new or extended cemeteries extensions, the written rules should be enforced. It was also felt that consultation should take place with the interfaith groups on potential layout of any future plots;
- that, in old cemeteries where there was little or no activity, officers should look at options for the introduction of a lawning policy and report them back to this Group;
- that service times at Overdale Crematorium should be extended to 45 minutes to allow a better quality service for customers, with the option to return to 30 minute intervals if the need arose in the future;
- that, in respect of the chapels at Heaton, Tonge and Astley Bridge, members felt that alternative usages should be reexamined, particularly with specialist users to establish if there was any interest. Another option was to demolish the chapels to a low level and create a memorial garden in the remains; and
- members agreed, subject to the approval of the Executive Member for Environmental Services, to the utilisation of slippage in £50,000 capital monies, originally assigned to manage memorial safety, for the repair of Overdale Drive.

It was agreed that the suggestions and comments of members on the various operational issues be further examined by officers.

(The meeting started at 10.00 a.m. and finished at 11.30 a.m.)