

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Port Health and Environmental Services Committee	13th May 2014
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Public</b>
Extending Burial Space at the City of London Cemetery (The Shoot)	
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
Director of Open Spaces Department	
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>In March 2012 your Committee received a report from the Director of Open Spaces setting out a medium term burial plan for the City of London Cemetery. The report set out lawn burial provision for the next 10 years using space within the existing lawns landscape and the intention to develop options to identify further burial space following the City's Corporate Project Procedure.</p> <p>The work to identify further burial space has now reached 'Options Appraisal' stage and has been approved by The Project Sub-Committee.</p> <p>This report seeks your committee's approval to use the Cemetery Reserve Fund in order to carry out the necessary landscaping and infrastructure works and create a lawn burial area for a further 3,000 graves, thus providing the cemetery with a further ten to fifteen years of lawn burial space.</p>	
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	
<p>It is therefore recommended that your Committee approve the following;</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approve the development of the 'shoot' area for lawn burial as described in this report and the attached appendix (1)</li> <li>2. Agree to allow the cemetery and crematorium service to use its reserve fund to achieve point one above.</li> </ol>	

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. The City of London Cemetery was opened in 1856 'as a work for posterity as well as the present generation' to provide for the whole spectrum of the City population, rich and poor. The site continues to serve the City as well as North-East London and has now received over 500,000 burials.
2. Although no longer the choice of the majority of the population, burial is still the chosen method of disposal of 25% of London's dead and last year the cemetery carried out 891 burials.
3. In a report to your Committee in March 2012 the need for more lawn burial space was highlighted, with only 10 years of available space for this 'the most popular burial option' remaining. The superintendent was tasked with developing options for further lawn burial provision to ensure availability of this popular choice until existing lawn graves that had not received a burial in over 75 years become available for reuse.
4. The Superintendent has been working on project proposals to provide further lawn burial space since March 2012 and in November of that year submitted a proposal to the City's Corporate Project Board and Project Sub-Committee recommending a way forward by re-developing an area of the cemetery (known as 'the Shoot') that had been previously used for the storage and disposal of green waste and spoil from Grave-digging.
5. This proposal was approved and a project board was set up to develop the options and costs of landscaping and using the shoot area, and in April of this year the project was considered and approved by Project Sub-Committee at Gateways 3/4 (Options evaluation stage). The intended funding for this project, subject to Committee approval, is the cemetery and crematorium Reserve Fund.
6. The creation of a Reserve Fund was agreed by your Committee in 1999 when it was agreed that; 'all surpluses that were made by the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium be transferred into a reserve at year-end and that interest be paid on such cash balances'. It was further agreed that; '10% of all the reserve fund balance be transferred per annum to the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium revenue account at year-end to off-set maintenance costs, the percentage levels be regularly reviewed on a bi-annual basis and any change thought necessary reported to committee accordingly'.

### **Current Position**

7. At present, the balance of the cemetery and crematorium reserve fund is £528,000 and the cemetery service has not used any transfers from the fund to off-set maintenance costs since 2007-2008.
8. Lawn burial is currently the choice of 85% of all families selecting a new grave at the City of London Cemetery and equated to 287 new graves and £787,675

of income in 2013/14. But with less than 10years provision of lawn graves left this income stream is at risk.

9. The reclamation and reuse of graves is in use at the cemetery but only in areas designated for traditional style graves (those with a memorial covering the full length of the grave) and due to the heritage value and listed status of the site lawn memorials are not permitted in these areas. Lawn graves will not become available for reclamation and reuse until 2032. Therefore the need for further lawn burial space is becoming acute and in order to achieve its aim of being completely self-funding the cemetery needs to ensure that it can continue to offer the burial options that people want.
10. The costs involved in the development of this project proposals are currently being met by the cemetery and crematorium local risk budget, and to date those costs are £23,000. However the cost of completing this project cannot be met from the cemetery local risk budget and further funding is required.
11. Discussions are on-going with regard to planning approval and consents are being sought from the Environment Agency, The London Borough of Newham and English Heritage.

### **Options**

12. The option for redevelopment of the 'Shoot' area agreed at Project Sub Committee in April (attached as appendix 1) has a total cost of £504,000, within the present balance of the reserve fund, and will provide space for 3,000 new lawn burials. This investment would achieve income in excess of £14,000,000 over the life of the site and ensure lawn burial provision for 10 to 15 years after 2022 as well as off-set future maintenance costs.
13. Your Committee could choose not to agree for the cemetery reserve fund to be used to develop the 'Shoot' area for lawn burials. In which case, as other sources of funding are unlikely, the cemetery will run out of new lawn graves in 8 to 10 years. This is likely to have a significant impact on the total income for the site as the purchase of new lawn graves and subsequent burials achieves an income of over £750,000 per year.

### **Proposals**

14. It is therefore proposed that your Committee approves the development and completion of the 'Shoot' area for lawn burial and agrees for the Cemetery and Crematorium to use the Reserve fund to achieve this.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

15. The efficient and effective management of the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium supports the local community and protects, promotes and enhances the local environment in accordance with the City of London Corporation's Community Strategy.

## **Financial Implications**

16. The planning and development stages of this project will be met from existing local risk budgets. However, the delivery of the 'shoot' as a lawn burial area will require additional funding which can only be met by the current cemetery reserve fund.

## **HR Implications**

17. The development and delivery of this project will be managed from existing resources from within Open Spaces Department.

## **Legal Implications**

18. Under section 214 of the Local Government Act 1972 the City of London Corporation may provide and maintain a cemetery. The Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 provides that subject to its provisions, a burial authority may do all such things as they consider necessary or desirable for the proper management, regulation and control of a cemetery.
19. The City of London Corporation is not legally required to offer burial provision but is required to 'keep the cemetery in good order and repair, together with all buildings, walls and fences thereon and other buildings provided for use therewith'. A burial authority also has powers under the 1977 Order to enclose, lay out and embellish a cemetery in such manner as they think fit, and from time to time improve it.

## **Conclusion**

20. In conclusion, the City of London Cemetery will have exhausted its current provision of new Lawn Graves by 2022. The Superintendent has highlighted a further area, within the existing cemetery landscape, that can be made suitable for this type of burial. The cost of creating this new burial area estimated at £504,000. The Cemetery and Crematorium Reserve Fund currently has a balance of £528,000. If agreed and the works are completed, new burial provision at the cemetery will be guaranteed for the foreseeable future.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Options Appraisal – Extending Burial Space at the City of London Cemetery (The Shoot)

### **Background Papers:**

Cemetery Reserve Fund Report 19<sup>th</sup> May 1999

Cemetery and Crematorium Medium Term Burial Plan Report 13<sup>th</sup> March 2012

### **Gary Burks**

Superintendent & Registrar,  
City of London Cemetery and Crematorium  
Open Spaces Department

T: 0208 530 9831

E: [gary.burks@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:gary.burks@cityoflondon.gov.uk)