

Committee:	Date:
Port Health and Environmental Services Committee	23 May 2016
Subject: Open Spaces Business Plan 2015– Year end progress report.	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces Report author: Gerry Kiefer, Open Spaces	For Information

Summary

This report provides a year end update on progress against the sections of the Open Spaces Business Plan 2015 – 2018 which relate to the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium.

The Cemetery and Crematorium division has generally performed well against its performance indicator targets retaining Green Flag and Green Heritage awards and Gold in 'London in Bloom'. However the changing religious diversity of the seven neighbouring Borough's has likely influenced the underachievement of the 'market share of burial and cremation' targets.

Of those people surveyed at the Cemetery and Crematorium as part of the Department's '60 second survey', eighty-one per cent of respondents rated the Cemetery and Crematorium as very good or excellent.

The latest budget position is that the Cemetery and Crematorium overachieved its budgeted income target by £384k.

There has been no change in the risk status which was reported in January 2016.

Recommendation:

- Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

1. Background

- 1.1. The Open Spaces Business Plan 2015/16 – 2017/18 was approved by the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee on 5 May. From a Cemetery and Crematorium perspective the business plan recognised the Cemetery and Crematorium's role as both an open space and a local authority function.

2. Performance Indicators

- 2.1. A number of performance indicators were set within the Business Plan that related the open space element of the Cemetery and Crematorium. In addition there were a number that related to specifically to the Cemetery and Crematorium. The information below shows that most of the performance targets have been achieved.

Open Space performance indicators

Performance Indicator	Target for 2015/16	Full year achievement
Preserving the ecology and biodiversity of our sites	Green flags awards	Green Flag Award retained.
	Green heritage awards	Green Heritage Award retained
	London in Bloom awards	Gold Award in the Large Cemetery category.
Customer satisfaction	Completion of one hundred, 60 second surveys for each site	100 surveys completed.
Developing our staff	1.5% of direct employee costs to be spent on training	0.37%

- 2.2. One hundred people completed the '60 second' survey. In response to the question; 'how would you rate the cemetery overall?' 49% of the respondents stated it was excellent, 32% very good and 18% good.
- 2.3. The 'developing our staff' measure does not take into consideration training that staff may receive that has no financial cost. A total of £7,291.35 was spent on 'charged for' training. This is equivalent to approx. £119 per Full Time Employee (FTE) based on 61.5 FTE's. As advised previously this measure does not include training from various forms of in-house and on-line training, mentoring and shadowing that has no financial cost.

Cemetery and Crematorium Specific Indicators

Performance Indicator	Actual 2014/15	Target 2015/16	Progress to November 2015	Actual Year End
Market share of cremations	22.02%	23%	21.3%	20.2%
Market share of burials	7.2%	8%	8.3%	6.9%
Income compared to income target	£4,593,562	£4,357,000	£3,090,410 equivalent to 71% of target.	£4,741,052 Financial position at 28 April.
Percentage of cremations using the new fully abated cremator	50% due to a gas failure in January and February 2015	60%	61.5%	62%

- 2.4. The Performance Indicators for 'market share of cremations' and 'market share of burials' did not achieve the annual target. Both targets are measured in relation to the total deaths in the seven neighbouring Boroughs'; Newham, Redbridge. Tower Hamlets. Waltham Forest, Hackney, Havering and Barking & Dagenham. The reduction in market share of cremations, officers believe reflects a shift in religion of the populations in the seven neighbouring

Boroughs; with a larger proportion of the Boroughs populations being Muslim. Officers recognise that the local Muslim population's preference is for burial and not cremation and that this is preferred within a Muslim cemetery rather than a non-denominational cemetery. The table below shows that there has been a gradual decrease in market share of both burials and cremations in the last four years.

Percentage market share	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Cremations	22.7%	22.5%	22%	20.2%
Burials	7.4%	7.4%	7.2%	6.9%

- 2.5. 2015/16 income has been overachieved against target by approximately £384k (9%) based on budget position as of 28 April 2016. This is an increase of £147k on 2014/15 actual. In 15/16 the fees and charges increased by 5.5%, however there has been a decrease in the number of burials and cremations, particularly over the last three months of this financial year, potentially due to the mild winter. Therefore whilst the income budget profile was exceeded it was not as great as it may have been assumed, based on last year's actual and the increase in fees and charges. This reinforces the unpredictable nature of burials and cremations and that an annual targeted increase, both financial and numerical is challenging.

Table showing total number of burials and cremations this and last year.

	2014/15	2015/16
Cremations	2,809	2,516
Burials	896	866

Programmes and Projects

- 2.6. The Cemetery and Crematorium will benefit from two of the Open Spaces Programmes: the energy efficiency programme and the fleet and equipment review programme. The Shoot and burial records online programmes are specific to the Cemetery and Crematorium. An update on each is given below together with an update on the café and florist shop tendering.
- 2.7. **Energy Efficiency Programme** - In January 2016 the cemetery and crematorium achieved its aim of using waste heat from mercury abatement to heat the modern crematorium service chapels, and although it is too early to provide figures of the savings made the Cemetery and Crematorium is effectively no longer using gas boilers to heat the chapels during normal operation of our abated cremator and saving money on the cost of cooling the waste hot water. This project was achieved under budget at £27k.
- 2.8. **Fleet and Equipment Review Programme** –The cemetery superintendent is a member of this Programme Board. The fleet and equipment has been assessed across the Department and surplus items identified and marked for disposal.
- 2.9. **Shoot project** - Whilst the discharge of final planning conditions in relation to ground water and Equality Assessment requirements is still awaited, work

continues in the preparation and soft landscaping of the site and procurement of hard landscaping features and access. This work will continue for the next two years.

- 2.10. **Burial records online** – An opportunity outline is being developed with IT and work is underway with external consultants to finalise a way forward.
- 2.11. **Café and Florist** - As reported to this committee in March 2016 the café and florists in the Cemetery and Crematorium were tendered in late 2015 and Members agreed the recommendation to award two leases which will expire on 31 March 2019. The florist is currently providing services under a tenancy at will whilst City Surveyors complete the new lease with the tenant. The café is currently closed and a draft lease has been issued to the new café tenant and the City Solicitor is awaiting their comments.

3. Corporate & Strategic Implications

- 3.1. The delivery of the Open Spaces Business Plan 2015/16 – 17/18 will support the City of London's strategic aim "to provide valued services to London and the nation" and the Key Policy Priority of "maintaining the quality of our public services whilst reducing our expenditure and improving our efficiency".

4. Implications

- 4.1. **Risk** - Risks at the Cemetery and Crematorium continue to be monitored and managed. There have been no changes to the status of existing risks which were reported to Members in January 2016 and will be reported again in July 2016.
- 4.2. **Finance** - A saving of £106k was the target for the Cemetery and Crematorium as part of the Department's SBR savings. This was already built into the budget profiles and has been achieved in 2015/16. An additional SBR saving of £56k is required in 2016/17 and £51k in 2017/18. These savings will be achieved through the generation of additional income. This has been built into the 2016/17 budget profiles.
- 4.3. The local net risk budget for the Cemetery and Crematorium showed an overall net saving of £434k. In addition to this, the total recharges from other services and total City Surveyors R&M risk is lower than budgeted. Therefore across all risks, the Cemetery made a surplus of £44,305. This balance will be moved into the Cemetery Reserve Fund.

	Net Budget	Net Actual
Local Risk	-£1,617,000	-£2,051,378
Recharges from other services	£1,514,000	£1,489,704
City Surveyors R&M risk	£691,000	£516,985
Total Net position	£588,000	-£44,305

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The Cemetery & Crematorium has performed well in relation to the majority of its performance indicators and the relevant Programmes and Projects are progressing as planned.

Background Papers:

- Open Spaces Business Plan 2015/16-17/18 - PHES Committee, 5 May 2015
- Open Spaces Business Plan – April to November 2015 progress report.
PHES Committee, 19 January 2016

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