

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2021**

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT (Chair) Margaret Greer, Birsen Demirel, Mahmut Aksanoglu, James Hockney and Derek Levy

ABSENT Susan Erbil, Lee David-Sanders and Elif Erbil

STATUTORY CO-OPTTEES: *1 vacancy (Church of England diocese representative), vacancy (other faiths/denominations representative), Mr Tony Murphy (Catholic diocese representative), Alicia Meniru & 1 vacancy (Parent Governor representative) - Italics Denotes absence*

OFFICERS: Doug Wilkinson (Director of Environment & Operational Services), Sue McDaid (Head of Registration Services and Health & Safety), Peter Robinson (Assistant Head of Service – Client Services), Claire Johnson (Head of Scrutiny, Governance & Registration Services) Clare Bryant (Governance Manager)

Also Attending: Councillor Nesil Caliskan, Leader of the Council, Councillor Guney Dogan, Cabinet Member for Commercial Services), Councillor Joanne Laban (Leader of the Opposition and Councillor Thorp.

**1
WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

Councillor Greer (vice chair in chair) welcome all members and officers to the Committee.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lee David Sanders Councillor Peter Fallart attended as a substitute, Councillor Elif Erbil who Councillor Hass Yusuff attended as a substitute, and Councillor Susan Erbil.

**2
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Yusuf declared that he represents the ward that Sloemans Farm is in.

**3
CALL IN: NEW CEMETERY PROPOSAL SLOEMANS FARM BURIAL GROUND**

Councillor Laban introduced the call in and made the following key points:

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- It was felt that the proposals for the cemetery focused on income over provision for burial space
- Sloemans Farm has not had a proper use for a number of years
- The Sloemans Farm site only came third in the assessment for burial space provision
- The report does not consider that the Council is not required to provide burial space.
- Transport links to Sloemans Farm are inadequate – there are no direct bus routes, pavements to walk would need to be resurfaced/created, there is a lack of street lighting for residents.

Councillor Caliskan responded by making the following points:

- A technical assessment was completed and found that there was a need for additional burial space in the borough
- A soft consultation of residents found there was a demand for additional burial space in the borough
- There is a moral obligation to meet the needs of deceased residents in the borough which is important to their loved ones
- The first two sites in the assessment conducted have been marked to be used for agriculture.
- The proposed burial site will be subject to receiving the appropriate planning permissions which would require a transport plan to be proposed.
- The current lease on the site has come to an end so it is a good time to redevelop the site

Members of the Committee then asked the below comments and questions:

- Using Sloemans Farm as a burial ground will provide for residents in decades to come.
- All residents in the borough have a need for burial sites
- There was a level of reassurance by the references in the report which relate to Firs Farm. It was noted that Firs Farm wetlands would not have been included as a burial site if it was selected.
- It was questioned by planning permission was not granted before the decision was. Advice from legal was sought before the decision was made by Cabinet. There is a cost of resources to seek on advice on planning.
- By meeting the need for burial sites in the borough it reduces the need for other afterlife provision requirements in the borough.
- Concerns were raised about risk management in relation to transport facilities and street lighting by the proposed site.
- It was asked why it was important for local authorities to own and manage after life provisions. Councillor Caliskan advised that that Sloemans Farm is already owned by the Council, so to find a site outside of the borough would be an additional expense as this would have to be brought/leased. Enfield Council have a large amount of experience in managing cemeteries.

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- Concerns were raised about the amount of distance from Crews Hill Station to the site. Transport for London have not placed a bus stop near the site currently as there is no need for one. This would change if there was a burial site there. There is a long lead in time for this proposal which would allow footpaths and road conditions to be improved.
- There would be the option to lease the remainder of the site to farmers, or to expand the burial site.

Councillor Laban summed up that there was a need for acknowledgement from Transport for London that they would be willing to provide a transport link as not all residents of the borough have access to cars.

Following a vote the original item was confirmed.

Councillor Greer thanked officers and members for their attendance and participation.

4 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted as 25 November 2021.