

REPORT TO: PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE AND LEISURE, ARTS & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 12 JANUARY 2009

REPORT ON: FUTURE CEMETERY PROVISION IN DUNDEE - SITE PROFILES AND PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

REPORT BY: JOINT REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF LEISURE & COMMUNITIES AND DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION

REPORT NO: 5-2009

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information on the results of a preliminary examination of sites with the potential to contribute to future cemetery provision in Dundee and to make recommendations for further more detailed site investigation work.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee

- a approve the outcome of this examination of future cemetery provision as a reference document for the forthcoming review of the development plan; and
- b agree to remit the Director of Leisure and Communities to carry out a feasibility study and cost estimates to establish the potential for additional cemetery provision north of West Pitkerro Industrial Estate.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Provision for professional fees to undertake the study are available in the Leisure and Communities capital budget 2008/2009 and 2009/2010.

4 BACKGROUND

4.1 Introduction and Sites Assessed

Senior Council officers from the Leisure and Communities and Planning and Transportation Departments met on 20 October, 2008, in order to review progress on future cemetery provision, reconsider site search areas and to review site assessment criteria. The following investigation was reported back to the Chief Executive and Senior Officers on 28 November, 2008 where it was considered that the site North of West Pitkerro Industrial Estate be recommended to this Committee as the preferred site for further investigation.

4.2 Sites with existing and potential future cemetery lairs are:

- Barnhill: 495 for full interment and 104 for cremated remains (ie 3-4 years)
- Birkhill: 1292 for full interment and 380 for cremated remains (ie 6 years)
- Birkhill Extension: 12,000 lairs from 2010 onwards
- Eastern Extension: additional 800 lairs possible

- 4.3 The proposed extension to Birkhill Cemetery already has planning permission and preliminary site investigation work has been carried out therefore this site is excluded from the remainder of this report. The existing proposal to extend the Eastern Cemetery is considered through the revised list of site search areas.
- 4.4 The full list of sites with the potential to contribute to further cemetery provision in Dundee is:
- Whitfield/Kellyfield
 - Monymusk Park
 - Fintry Park
 - Eastern Cemetery Extension
 - (North of) West Pitkerro Industrial Estate
 - Middleton Farm
 - Caird Park (former 9 hole golf course)
 - Arbroath Road Site 1
 - Gillies Park, Barnhill
 - St Saviours Playing Field
 - Arbroath Road Site 2 (recently refused planning permission on appeal)
- 4.5 Assessment criteria including revisions against which all sites were evaluated are as follows:
- Geological profile – rock free or manageable presence of rock
 - Accessibility
 - Operational feasibility – slope or other characteristics.
 - Water table – any known issues
 - Planning considerations
 - Capacity – sites singly or jointly capable of 25 year supply
 - Land value

In view of recent experience additional criteria have been included in the assessment:

- Presence of National Monuments or Historic Buildings.
- Contaminated land status

5 REPORT FINDINGS

5.1 Geological Profile

Little geological information is known for the sites overall. Further exploration work will therefore be required whichever sites come forward however at this stage there is insufficient information to assist in prioritising sites.

5.2 Accessibility

Bus services to and from sites within the built up area are half hourly or better throughout the week, day and night. The exceptions are Monymusk which has no Sunday service and Gillies Park which reduces to an hourly service in the evening and on Sundays.

Bus frequencies for sites outwith the built up area are:

- Fintry Park – (33A Jack Martin Way) hourly Monday to Friday during the daytime.
- (North of) West Pitkerro Industrial Estate – (79 Drumsturdy Road) often only one bus every two hours during the daytime and single service in the evening Monday to Friday only.
- Middleton Farm – (15/17 Berwick Drive) frequent service during the week including Sundays, day and night.
- Arbroath Road Site 1 – (13, 13A, 14, 39 Arbroath Road) frequent service Monday to Saturday during the daytime reducing to hourly in the evening and Sundays.
- Arbroath Road Site 2 - (79 Drumsturdy Road) frequently one bus every two hours during the daytime and single service in the evening Monday to Friday only.

Generally, sites are well served within the built up area. In outlying areas all sites with the exception of Middleton Farm experience some level of reduced service.

5.3 Operational Feasibility

Underground and overground services, the presence of trees and site slope may impact operationally on a number of sites. These aspects will require further more detailed investigation on the selected sites to progress.

The presence of mature and young trees and extent of root systems intrudes significantly into available land at Whitfield/Kellyfield. Development of this site may require a substantial number of trees to be felled.

Caird Park is affected by a steep gradient particularly towards the northern part of the site potentially affecting both the operation of the site and circulation within it. Large numbers of trees located at Caird Park occupy approximately 50% of the site, these however are grouped together to delineate the old fairways. The amount of available land would be curtailed along the edges of the old fairways by the presence of roots, resulting in longer narrower areas of developable land.

Middleton Farm is affected by overhead electricity lines supported on poles and a pylon which sits within the boundary of the site. The overhead cables cut across the south west corner of the site. Exclusion zones would be required to allow for access and maintenance. Preliminary Engineering assessments also indicate the presence of Scottish water's 350mm diameter pipe network crossing the site centrally from east to west, a 12" asbestos cement Scottish Water pipe crossing the site at the south west corner and a BT cable running from north to south through the middle of the site. No other plant information is available at present.

Arbroath Road Site 1 Preliminary Engineering assessment shows that high voltage electricity cables cross the site in various locations, Scottish Water's trunk main crosses the northern part of the site and BT plant is located outwith the proposed site.

5.4 Water Table

No significant visible signs of drainage problems were noted at the time of survey on most of the sites. Flooding issues may affect Middleton Farm in the south west. St Saviours Playing Field lies in the flood plain. On the selected sites to progress there will be a need to carry out exploratory investigations to determine any water table and drainage issues. There will also be a need to monitor water table levels over a number of years to ensure seasonal knowledge is gathered.

5.5 Planning Considerations

Many of the sites in the built up area are protected as Open Space in the Dundee Local Plan and therefore cemetery use is acceptable in principle. Almost all of these sites are in active use requiring alternative locations to be identified if the use is to continue. These include:

- Eastern Cemetery Extension- relocation of football pitches and alternative allotments.
- Monymusk – relocation of football pitches
- Fintry Park - relocation of football pitches
- Gillies Park - relocation of football pitches
- St Saviours Playing Field - relocation of football pitches

Development is currently proposed on a further two sites:

- Fintry Park – designated as a Principal Economic Development Area.
- Whitfield/Kellyfield – proposed housing site.

These proposed uses give the land an increased value making redevelopment for Cemetery use more expensive.

5.6 National Monuments and Historic Buildings

Although four sites are affected by adjacent National Monuments or Historic Buildings it is considered that the affect is significant at Arbroath Road Site 2 alone.

5.7 Capacity

Five of the sites identified offer a low capacity to provide additional lairs. Consequently they do not provide for adequate provision on their own and would have to be developed as part of a package of sites. Caird Park and the Eastern Cemetery Extension allow a greater level of provision but again may not be sufficient on their own. For economies of scale a single Cemetery site may be the best option with potentially lower annual running costs than multiple sites. West Pitkerro, Middleton Farm and Arbroath Road Sites 1 and 2 all offer provision of 25 years or more.

5.8 Contaminated Land Status

Historical maps reveal no significant development activity on any site, most of which are or were agricultural land.

6 SITE PROFILES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Appendix 1 summarised the performance of the sites against the assessment criteria.

6.1 Whitfield/Kellyfield

- Although allocated as Open Space in the Local Plan, this site is now identified as a potential residential development site in the Whitfield Regeneration Masterplan, its location and setting making it particularly attractive for private development.
- Capacity to contribute to cemetery provision is low, removal of a significant number of trees may be required and the environmental sensitivity to cemetery use may not be adequate.
- Recommend no further investigation work.

6.2 Monymusk Park

- Currently actively in use as a general purpose football pitch in an area where most other open space is restricted to school grounds.
- Low capacity contribution potential.
- Retain as low priority option.
- Recommend no further investigation work.

6.3 Fintry Park

- Although currently still partially in use as a football pitch, this site is located within an area reallocated as a Principal Economic development area in the 2005 Local Plan. This is a potentially high value site with the ability to make a significant contribution to the economic development of the City in the future.
- Re-designation of the site at present would pre-empt the reassessment of economic development land supply in the next local plan. Poor secondary access at present.
- Recommend no further investigation work.

6.4 Eastern Cemetery Extension

- The proposed Eastern Cemetery Extension is allocated as Open Space in the Local Plan as is the Eastern Cemetery itself. Currently occupied by two junior football grounds and allotment gardens.
- The football ground to the north affords a frontage on to the Kingsway East Trunk Road and could have potential for high value development in the future.
- Allotment gardens occupying the central area are very popular and valued by the local community. Redevelopment of this site may necessitate replacement alternative provision in close proximity to the existing site and may prove difficult to accommodate.
- Limited expansion over the football ground to the south may be less controversial.
- Recommend no further investigation work.

6.5 (North of) West Pitkerro Industrial Estate

- This is an extensive site offering full potential to meet additional cemetery capacity requirements.
- Investigations have not revealed any ancient or historic sites within this location as was the case with the site further to the east.
- Access is relatively poor, however, with only a very limited service along Drumsturdy Road (79). The nearest city bus service is currently along Baldovie Road (9 / 10 Sainsbury's).
- No known problems with site conditions.
- Recommend prioritising site for further investigation.

6.6 Middleton Farm

- This is an extensive site offering full potential to meet the additional cemetery requirements.
- Initial investigations reveal potential problems in the south west corner of the site relating to utilities, overhead power lines and underground water supply pipes. Given the size of the site, it may be possible to amend the boundaries to eliminate these.
- Good access with regular city bus services along Berwick Drive (15, 17).
- Recommend prioritising site for further investigation.

6.7 Caird Park

- Former 9 hole golf course now no longer in use. Site forms part of the Caird Bequest which may preclude use of the site as a cemetery. This is an extensive site with full potential to constitute long term cemetery provision.
- It is well located with good access via city bus services along Claverhouse Road (9, 10, 11, 12) and Old Glamis Road (19).
- Some difficulties with the site in terms of operational issues with its current layout which is not ideal and has considerable tree coverage. However these issues can be overcome and possibly even eventually used to advantage.
- Recommended as priority site to be held in reserve.

6.8 Arbroath Road Site

- Extensive site offering full potential to meet additional cemetery requirements.
- No restrictions relating to Scheduled Ancient Monuments identified within the site.
- No other known problems with site conditions.
- Bus access relatively good at peak times, restricted in the evening and Sundays. Alternative vehicle access from Balmossie Brae should be considered to avoid use of residential access roads. Country bus service (13, 13a, 14, 39 Arbroath Road).
- Recommend prioritising site for further investigation

6.9 Gillies Park, Barnhill

- Some site preparation work would be required in relation to contours.
- Low capacity contribution only. Would need to be part of a package of sites.

- Retain as low priority option.
- Recommend no further investigation work.

6.10 Former St Saviours HS Playing Field

- Future use of the school site is still under consideration. Currently identified as part of the replacement proposals for Kingspark School.
- Playing fields are still in use and compensate for the loss of facilities elsewhere. Would therefore require to be replaced themselves. Part of site intrudes into Dighty Wildlife Corridor.
- Low capacity contribution only. Would need to be part of a package of sites.
- Southern area prone to flooding, water table would require close examination and monitoring.
- Recommend no further investigation work.

6.11 Arbroath Road Site 2

- High presence of National Monuments.
- Extensive site offering full potential to meet long term cemetery requirements.
- Access is relatively poor, however, with only a very limited service along Drumsturdy road (79). No known problems with site conditions.
- Recommended as priority site to be held in reserve.

7 CONCLUSIONS

A wide variety of sites have been examined including locations both within the urban area and in the countryside on the urban fringe. Sites within the urban area are generally allocated for open space purposes at present as would be expected. Those on the urban fringe tend to be less well accessed in terms of public transport.

Of the sites recommended for further consideration it was considered that;

Middleton Farm	Had significant service constraints that would affect the development of the site, has a relatively high water table and the slope of the site would present operational difficulties.
Arbroath Road Site 1	While previously highlighted in an earlier site search, considerable housing development had taken place in recent years in very close proximity which was likely to result in substantial objection to this proposal.
Arbroath Road Site 2	Presence of national monuments has been tested at recent planning inquiry and found to represent significant constraints on development of the site overall.
Caird Park	Had substantial tree cover, presented significant operational difficulties with regard to its ground contours and may be problematic to access.

**West Pitkerro
Industrial Estate (North)**

The site is generally non-undulating, gently sloping to the west and would be relatively straightforward to develop.

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that West Pitkerro Industrial Estate (North) be identified as the most appropriate location for future cemetery purposes and that detailed site investigation work be carried out here to confirm its suitability in physical terms.

8 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. A copy of the Study has been forwarded to the SEA Gateway for their consideration. The report contributes to the aims of sustainability.

9 CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Head of Finance and Assistant Chief Executive have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 There are no background papers associated with this report.

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19 December 2008

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