

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Places Select Commission – 14 February 2019

Report Title

Update report on the Agreement between Dignity Funerals Ltd and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Shokat Lal, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

All Wards

Summary

This report has been requested to provide an update on the report presented to the Improving Places Select Commission on 26th July 2018

Recommendations

1. That Members note the content of the report.
2. That Members note the progress made in accordance with the performance management framework.
3. That Members agree to receive the annual performance report for 2018/2019 in June 2019.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 – Key performance indicators and service improvement targets that have been met.

Background Papers

Report to Improving Places Select Commission on 26th July 2018.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Not applicable

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Update Report on the Agreement between Dignity Funerals Ltd and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

1. Background

- 1.1 On 1st August 2008, the Council entered into a 35 year contractual agreement with Dignity Funerals Ltd (Dignity) for the provision of bereavement services for Rotherham. This partnership enabled the transfer of significant risks from the Council to Dignity and saw Dignity take on the responsibility for capital works and maintenance of the East Herringthorpe cemetery and crematorium along with the maintenance of the eight other municipal cemeteries located throughout the Borough. The Council retained the risk in relation to cemetery chapels, associated buildings and boundary walls on some cemetery sites.
- 1.2 Since March 2018 the Regeneration and Environment Directorate has been working to improve performance monitoring of the Agreement. The performance management framework was refreshed and regular monitoring and reporting arrangements have been put in place.
- 1.3 This report provides an update on progress made on the recommendations from Members, set out in the Improving Places Select Commission meeting on 26th July 2018 and in advance of the presentation of the annual report at the next meeting in June 2019.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 At the meeting on 26th July 2018, the Improving Places Select Commission set a range of tasks:
 - 2.1.1 That key performance indicators (KPI) and service improvement targets, set out in the performance management framework, should be rated red, amber or green (RAG).
 - 2.1.2 That the Project Liaison Group, as detailed in schedule 8 of the Agreement, should be set up.
 - 2.1.3 That a forum for liaison with multi-faith groups should be established.

2.1.4 That key performance indicators and service improvement targets should be RAG rated in the annual performance report and that detailed reporting against these should be by exception.

2.1.5 That progress on the redevelopment of the chapel at East Herringthorpe cemetery should be reported.

2.2 **Performance Management Framework.** The performance management framework is monitored and monthly performance meetings take place to assess progress and address issues.

2.2.1 The performance management framework has been RAG rated. This indicates whether the indicator or target has not been met, is partially met or is met.

2.2.2 Additionally there are ratings of high medium or low which define the priority given to each indicator or target.

2.2.3 There are a total of 54 key performance indicators: of these two are red, four are amber and forty-eight are green.

2.2.4 There are twelve service improvement targets: of these two are red, one is amber and nine are green.

2.2.5 This report provides an update, by exception, on performance against the performance management framework: only amber and red performance measures are reported.

2.2.6 A table of key performance indicators and performance targets that have been met is shown in Appendix 1.

Number Priority	Key Performance Indicator or Service Improvement Indicator /Evidence /Action
Key Performance Indicators	
8.3 Medium	<p>KPI Provide annual statement on customer satisfaction levels, including a plan for improvements.</p> <p>Evidence Funeral and Cremation Industries Survey results have been published. Link: https://www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/media/2999/time-to-talk-about-quality-and-standards.pdf Dignity has expressed an intention to conduct customer surveys in this in depth way. These will be companywide and not Rotherham specific.</p> <p>Action required The Agreement rates this medium priority; Dignity should expand its survey activity to include customer surveys in, accordance with the Agreement.</p>
9.1 Low	<p>KPI The provision of environmentally friendly burial options.</p>

	<p>Evidence Dignity does not offer environmentally-friendly burial options but would be willing to look into this in the future should appropriate burial land become available.</p> <p>Action required The Agreement rates this low priority; Dignity should take measures to assess likely demand for environmentally friendly burials.</p>
10.2 Low	<p>KPI Secure storage for registers and records conforming to agreed proposals.</p> <p>Evidence Registers are located in main foyer of the Dignity office for reasons of security. Assessments are ongoing to identify a suitable form of fire rated storage. Dignity IT, Property services and the Crematoria Director are currently working together to source a solution.</p> <p>Action required The Agreement rates this low priority; a risk assessment should be conducted to determine an appropriate timescale for provision of a solution.</p>
10.3 Low	<p>KPI Restoration of and redrafting of cemetery plans in line with agreed proposals</p> <p>Evidence Currently records are paper; digitisation of these records is a future plan.</p> <p>Action required The Agreement rates this low priority progress should continue to be monitored via monthly performance meetings.</p>
15.4 Low	<p>KPI Provision of an effective plan for systematic testing of all cemetery memorials in accordance with agreed timescales. Testing protocols and procedures to be in accordance with the Council's policy for the Management of Cemetery Memorials.</p> <p>Evidence A plan in place to start testing and equipment has been obtained.</p> <p>Action required The Agreement rates this low priority, staff training should be completed and a formal plan should be presented by the end of the calendar year.</p>
16.2 Low	<p>KPI Evidence of consultation with, and support, to Friends groups within each cemetery site (where appropriate).</p> <p>Evidence Meetings and email interactions have taken place with the Friends of Moorgate cemetery and there have been email interactions with Friends of Maltby cemetery.</p> <p>Action required The Agreement rates this low priority, records of interactions and outcomes need to be formalised.</p>
Service Improvements	
SI 1	<p>SI Options identifying suitable land for burials will be produced during Spring 2018 and presented to Members to consider future action.</p> <p>Evidence</p>

	<p>This is outstanding.</p> <p>Action required</p> <p>An options paper should be produced for presentation to the Project Liaison Group on 7th May 2019. Progress should be reported to the Improving Places Select Commission at the meeting in June 2019.</p>
SI 7	<p>SI</p> <p>It is proposed that options to provide communal memorial benches are considered to reduce costs.</p> <p>Evidence</p> <p>Benches have been sourced and locations identified</p> <p>Action required</p> <p>The cost of a plaque on the communal bench needs to be identified and should be provided at the February 2019 performance meeting.</p>
SI 11	<p>SI</p> <p>It is proposed to ensure that periodic liaison meetings take place with Funeral Directors, starting in January 2018, to inform progress of the Agreement with Dignity.</p> <p>Evidence</p> <p>Meeting have not taken place</p> <p>Action required</p> <p>An invite will be sent to Funeral Directors, before April 2019, proposing a date for meeting and requesting agenda items.</p>

2.3 **Project Liaison Group.** The group has been established, the first meeting took place on 27th November 2018. Meetings are planned quarterly throughout 2019.

2.3.1 The group is positively moving forward a proposal for a pilot to extend the latest burial time, from 15:00 to 18:30, at East Herringthorpe cemetery between 1st April 2019 and 30th September 2019.

2.3.2 Future meetings will consider:

- additional burial space at Masbrough cemetery
- a review of the Memorial Masons' Registration Scheme
- a refreshed Equality Analysis.

2.4 **Multi Faith Involvement.** The Superintendent Registrar has joined the Rotherham Faith and Community Leaders Forum and has attended two meetings, on 13th November 2018 and 22nd January 2019. Bereavement Services were items for discussion at both meetings. The forum agreed that this is a useful arena in which to involve multi faith and community leaders in discussion relating to bereavement services. Progress reports and new issues identified for discussion will be included on the agenda of future meetings.

2.5 **Annual Performance Report.** A draft report has been received and this was the focus of the performance meeting on 17th January 2019. The final document will be submitted by 6th April 2019 and will be presented to the Improving Places Select Commission in June 2019.

2.5.1 As requested by the Improving Places Select Commission, the performance management framework elements of the annual performance report will be RAG rated.

2.5.2 Detail on the performance management framework will be reported by exception.

2.6 East Herringthorpe Chapel. Extensive renovation works were completed on time and the chapel has been open for services since October 2018.

2.6.1 Open events were held for Members, Funeral Directors, Ministers, Celebrants and other key partners to view this much improved facility. The events were well attended, with many positive comments about the new facility.

2.6.2 A Christmas memorial service was held on 1st December 2018. This was intended for, but not exclusive to, those who had attended services in the temporary chapel during renovation works. The event was well attended and well received.

2.6.3 An Easter memorial service will be held on 28th April 2019. The chapel will be officially re-opened by the Mayor of Rotherham at the start of this event.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 This is an update report and Members are asked to note progress made.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 This is an update report and there is no proposal for consultation.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 This report is for information only, no decision is requested.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)

6.1 This report introduces no additional financial or procurement implications.

7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)

7.1 There are no specific legal implications introduced by this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 This report introduces no specific implications in relation to Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 Issues relating to Faith burials are being addressed via the Project Liaison Group.

10.2 The Equality Analysis will be refreshed, as reported in 2.3.2 above and will be progressed via the Project Liaison Group.

11. Implications for Partners

11.1 This report introduces no additional implications for partners or other Directorates.

12. Risks and Mitigation

12.1 Risks relating to the Agreement are monitored via the performance management framework.

12.2 Financial risks are monitored via the Council's annual review of the finance model.

13. Accountable Officer(s)

Polly Hamilton Assistant Director, Culture Sport and Tourism.

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive		Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Dermot Pearson	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Human Resources (if appropriate)		Click here to enter a date.
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)		Click here to enter a date.

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