



**Audit Advisory Committee**  
10 January 2018

**Report from  
the Chief Finance Officer**

**UPDATE - Paddington Cemetery Groundworks**

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	N/A
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	N/A
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Appendix 1 is Exempt: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	One (Exempt)
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Michael Bradley Head of Audit & Investigations Email: <a href="mailto:michael.bradley@brent.gov.uk">michael.bradley@brent.gov.uk</a> Tel: 020 8937 6526

**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on further enquiries undertaken since the issue of an investigation report into concerns raised about landscaping works at Paddington Cemetery in 2010; specifically whether works were adequately specified and signed off as required.

**2.0 Recommendation**

2.1 That the Audit Advisory Committee notes the report and considers what additional work may be necessary.

**3.0 Detail**

3.1 This review was undertaken following concerns raised by a Councillor in an email dated 10 November 2017. The email raised concerns about contaminated waste discovered in Paddington Cemetery.

3.2 The Audit and Investigation report that was issued to the Audit Advisory Committee on 5 December 2017 concluded that procurement and certification

procedures within the Cemeteries service were inadequate at the time that work was undertaken. It recommended that management ensure that procedures within the Cemeteries Team to procure contractors and approve goods/services are urgently reviewed to ensure they meet the Council's expectations and that management consider the recommendations in the report from consultants to proportionately mitigate the soil contamination identified.

- 3.3 The report and its findings were welcomed by management who had responded as follows:

“The report concludes that procurement procedures within the Cemeteries service were inadequate at the time that work was undertaken and recommends that management ensure that procedures within the Cemeteries team to procure contractors and approve goods/services are urgently reviewed to ensure they meet the Council's expectations and that management consider the recommendations in from consultants' to proportionately mitigate the soil contamination identified.

The report and its findings have been welcomed by management who have agreed to work to ensure that any deficiencies in the Council's protocols or processes that may still apply are remedied as a matter of great urgency. The Council cemetery operation is now much changed and is out-sourced. It is anticipated that any deficiencies that led to this contamination are now no longer relevant and/or could no longer happen.

Most importantly, the Council has an obligation to give customers complete reassurance that the site can continue to be visited without concern and that it is properly remediated. That is our commitment going forward. The advice to date is that the contamination is very low risk and can be properly contained.

Work to make that happen is underway. A final report is due that will set out options for the Council to cleanse the site. We have also appointed specialist contractors to undertake burials at graves that have previously been used. That satisfies a particular commitment to families wishing to have relatives buried together.”

- 3.4 An update on the subsequent enquiries following the Audit Advisory Committee meeting on the 5 December 2017 is attached as **Appendix 1**.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The final decision on regularising the land at the cemetery will consider costs against potential revenue.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Chief Legal Officer has been consulted on the preparation of the report.

**6.0 Equality Implications**

6.1 None.

**7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

7.1 None.

**Report sign off:**

**CONRAD HALL**  
Chief Finance Officer