

**TITLE OF REPORT: Surplus Declaration of the Saltwell Park Bottom Depot, Saltwell Road South, Gateshead**

**REPORT OF: Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance**

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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to the former Bottom Depot at Saltwell Park being declared surplus to the Council's requirements.

### **Background**

2. The land and buildings, which are shown edged black on the attached plan ('the subject property'), have formerly been used as a depot for grounds maintenance purposes within Saltwell Park. Operational service has been relocated to smaller alternative buildings within the park and the subject property is therefore no longer required for service delivery
3. The subject property has however been identified as suitable accommodation for the provision of a funeral service by Regent Funeral Services.
4. Regent Funeral Services is a company owned by Gateshead Council but is independently run by a highly experienced local funeral director. It has been established to provide a full seamless cost effective funeral service for residents of the Borough.

### **Proposal**

5. It is proposed that the subject property be declared surplus to the Council's requirements to facilitate the grant of a lease to Regent Funeral Services.

### **Recommendations**

6. It is recommended that Cabinet declare the subject property surplus to the Council's requirements.

For the following reason:-

To manage resources and rationalise the Council's assets in line with the Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan.

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### Policy Context

1. The proposed surplus declaration supports the overall vision for Gateshead as set out in Vision 2030 and in particular creating conditions for economic growth.
2. The proposed declaration will also accord with the provisions of the update of the Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan 2015 – 2020. In particular, the rationalisation of the estate through the disposal of an uneconomic asset.

### Background

3. The land and buildings which are shown outlined in black on the attached plan have been previously used as a grounds maintenance depot for Saltwell Park ('the subject property'). The subject property was acquired and is currently held by the Council for recreational purposes pursuant to the Public Health Acts 1875 – 1925.
4. The subject property became too large for operational requirements and alternative vacant properties were identified within the park as suitable. The service has now relocated and the subject property is vacant.
5. The subject property is considered suitable for the delivery of the funeral service by Regent Funeral Services.

### Consultation

6. In preparing this report consultations have taken place with Leader, Deputy Leader and Ward Councillors for Saltwell who have raised no objections to the proposal.

### Alternative Options

7. The option of retaining the subject property has been discounted as no identified alternative service use for the accommodation from across the Council. Placing the property on the market has also been discounted as no suitable alternative accommodation could be identified for the funeral service.

### Implications of Recommended Option

#### 8. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** - The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that there are no financial implications arising from the surplus declaration.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** - There are no implications arising from this recommendation.
- c) **Property Implications** - The future disposal of the subject property will result in a reduction in the Council's overall property portfolio thus reducing operational costs.

9. **Risk Management Implication** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation.
10. **Equality and Diversity** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation.
11. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation.
12. **Health Implications** - There are no implications arising from this recommendation.
13. **Sustainability Implications** - There are no implications arising from this recommendation.
14. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no implications arising from this recommendation.
15. **Area and Ward Implications** –.Saltwell in the Central area.
16. **Background Information** - None