



**Corporate Policy and
Resources Committee**

Thursday, 14 January 2021

Subject: Crematorium Garden of Remembrance and Landscaping

Report by:	Assistant Director of Commercial and Operational Services
Contact Officer:	Cara Markham Commercial Development Manager cara.markham@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose / Summary:	For Members to agree a capital investment for landscaping works at Lea Fields Crematorium.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Members agree that;

- a) Approval for a capital investment budget and subsequent expenditure is given in order to implement the work detailed in the Landscaping strategy set out in section 2
- b) In light of the estimated costs, delegated authority be granted to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the chairman of Corporate Policy and Resources committee to spend the capital budget with 20% +/- tolerance. Any additional funding required which falls outside of these parameters will be reported to the committee for further consideration.

Public Interest Test:

The Proper Officer has determined in preparing this report that paragraph 3 should apply to Appendix 2 of this report. The view on the public interest test was that while he was mindful of the need to ensure the transparency and accountability of public authority for decisions taken by them in relation to the spending of public money, disclosure of the information would give an unfair advantage to tenderers for commercial contracts.

This information is not affected by any other statutory provision which requires the information to be publicly registered.

On that basis it was felt that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. Members are asked to consider this factor when excluding the public from the meeting.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The Council has a legal duty under the Cremations Act 1902 (England and Wales) Regulations 2008, Disposal of ashes, section 30; any ashes retained by a cremations authority must be decently interred in a burial ground or in part of a crematorium reserved for ashes, or scattered there.

Financial : FIN/111/21/TJB

This proposal brings forward an element of the whole site Phase 2 ground works as detailed in the report to this Committee in December 2018.

An external consultant has been engaged on designing the site plan to ensure future expansion requirements, the cost of which was £13.5k funded from the project investment budget.

The scheme will require approval of a capital budget and subsequent expenditure funded from the Property Asset Reserve. A 20% +/- pricing contingency will be applied due to early estimated costs not having been market tested, with any variations above 20% being subject of a further committee report.

At present there are 46 sets of ashes waiting to be strewn at the Crematorium. It has been estimated that 15% of the cremations taking place each year will keep the ashes at the crematorium. In 2021/22, this is forecast to be around 75 sets of ashes and anticipated to increase each year up to 105 by 2024/25.

There is a potential to generate a further £55 each time there is a strewing of cremated remains from elsewhere.

It is also anticipated that the strewing area would also encourage secondary spends and generate further income for the Council.

The revenue implications of the project were built into the base budgets for the Crematorium, due to the original business case figures being based on the landscaping (including strewing area) being completed. Income for secondary sales is budgeted at £46.6k in 2021/22 and will be affected if the project doesn't proceed.

The maintenance of the grounds are currently being incorporated into the contract as the 1 year period of cover under the construction contract comes to an end.

Staffing : None from this report

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

The gardens will be accessible by all and meet all necessary disability regulations.

Data Protection Implications : None from this report

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities: None from this report

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations: None from this report

Health Implications: None from this report

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report :

Risk Assessment :

If Members do not agree, it may damage the reputation of the Crematorium and have a negative impact on the market share.

The project has timeline constraints - needs to be delivered in line with a Spring delivery timetable

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

x

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

x

Executive Summary

Lea Fields is a state of the art crematorium that has been welcomed by residents. In order to enhance the offer, a Remembrance Garden that offers a fit for purpose designated strewing area is required.

The Remembrance Garden would elevate the reputation and desirability further, ensuring that Lea Fields meets the needs and expectations of the community and residents.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Stage one of the development of the crematorium was completed in Jan 2020, culminating in the official opening of the facility in February. The wider landscaping of the facility was programmed to happen as part of Stage 2 and as reported to this Committee in December 2018.
- 1.2 The crematorium management have identified an urgent need for an area on site for strewing cremated remains. Additionally, there is a vision for the long term potential development of the site with complementary facilities i.e. additional chapel, tea room, garden and remembrance areas.
- 1.3 Provision of an area for strewing ashes is a legal requirement of the Cremation Act 1902 - **The Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008, Disposal of ashes section 30** states any ashes retained by a cremation authority must be decently interred in a burial ground or in part of a crematorium reserved for ashes, or scattered there.
- 1.4 Families and friends of the deceased can currently scatter ashes at Lea Fields, but the garden area isn't yet fit for purpose and makes administration of location in the register difficult. The area that was initially set aside is not appropriate due to its sloped nature and it isn't private enough for a Garden of Remembrance.
- 1.5 Landscaping was reduced quite significantly during value engineering of the initial project to bring down overall costs. Initially, it was agreed that the full landscaping work would be completed around year 6-8, once the facility was able to cover its own costs; however to date there are 46 remains awaiting strewing, which has driven the project to be considered sooner than anticipated.
- 1.6 Plinckie Landscaping Ltd were commissioned in April 2020 to develop a Landscape Strategy to cover the next ten years, taking into account the above requirements, and were to provide a design for the strewing area as an immediate output, suitable for procuring a landscape works package to create the strewing area. The outputs from the work undertaken by Plinckie Landscaping are listed below;

- a. Create landscape strategy which will include an outline sketch proposal for the whole site to encompass future development and strewing area.
- b. Provide design package, i.e. drawings and specification that will enable procurement of the strewing area
- c. Allow for site visits sufficient to supervise the construction of the strewing area
- d. Allow for client consultation meetings (online) and site visits necessary to complete the requirement
- e. Allow for any discussion needed with WLDC planning department to ensure that the design and strategy meets local planning requirements
- f. Make any application needed to WLDC planning department for the strewing area. WLDC will pay the planning application fee.
- g. State overall cost including itemised costs for site visits and meetings (per meeting / site visit and total costs)
- h. Once completed the strategy and design package will be the property of WLDC to use in an ongoing basis for planning and implementing future use of the site

2. Plinckie Landscaping Report

- 2.1 The landscape strategy is now close to completion, and a detailed design for the Remembrance Garden has been created. Phase 1 of the landscaping will be carried out on the land closest to the building.

The area will consist of hard landscaping and soft landscaping, with details in the Stage 3 Report submitted by Plinckie Landscaping.

As illustrated below in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1



The area for development is from Book of Remembrance chapel to the woodland boundary as highlighted in Figure 1.

2.2 The strategy future-proofs the site for development should there be a need for a second chapel, entrance or additional facilities in years to come as the population in the local area grows.

Figure 2 below shows the long term design plan for the site:

Figure 2



3. Evidence of need

- 3.1 Lea Fields is a fully operational Crematorium that provides funeral services to local residents, however the grounds around the building remain untouched as wild fields. A Remembrance Garden for loved ones to scatter remains and purchase memorials on site would complete the Lea Fields offer to residents, and is particularly significant in Covid-19 times as many have missed funerals due to restrictions.
- 3.2 The Garden will allow families to build a legacy at Lea Fields and become a preferred choice throughout the generations of a family, helping to embed the Crematorium into the community.
- 3.3. To date, Lea Fields hold 24 remains that require strewing, it is also believed that local funeral directors are also holding 22 remains that would like to be strewed at Lea Fields.
- 3.4 The Council has a legal duty under the Cremation Act 1902, The Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008, Disposal of ashes, section 30; any ashes retained by a cremation authority must be decently interred in a burial ground or in part of a crematorium reserved for ashes, or scattered there. The strewing area should be fit for purpose, a place pleasant area within the grounds for grieving visitors.

4. Cost – see Appendix 2 (Exempt)

5. Income

- 5.1 Remains strewed at Lea Fields that have been cremated on site will not be charged, however to strew remains from another facility there will be a charge of £55.00.
- 5.2 There is an annual income target for sales of memorials and the Book of Remembrance entries. Without the landscaping and strewing area, it is difficult to promote secondary sales; the completion of the landscaping will encourage family and friends to purchase memorials and return to Lea Fields to pay their respects.
- 5.3 Income expectations from secondary spend are detailed below, it is important to consider that this will not be new income, it is already in the business plan for the site:

Revenue	Year One 21/22	Year Two 22/23	Year Three 23/24	Year Four 24/25	Year Five 25/26
Income	£71,500	£76,400	£82,200	£85,700	£86,800
Expenditure	£24,900	£26,200	£28,600	£30,100	£30,600
TOTAL	£46,600	£50,200	£53,600	£55,600	£56,200

6.0 Risks

- 6.1 To leave the grounds as they are will have no impact on the ability to deliver funerals at Lea Fields, however it may impact on the number of families choosing the facility as their preferred option when making funeral arrangements which will have a significant impact on Lea Fields market share.
- 6.2 Nearby facilities at Lincoln and Scunthorpe have established grounds which currently gives them a competitive advantage.
- 6.3 There currently families waiting to strew remains at Lea Fields, to deny this request will have a negative impact on the reputation of the Crematorium.