



**Committee: Prosperous
Communities**

12th September 2017

Subject: Crematorium Development

Report by:

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Purpose / Summary:

To update Members with regard to the current progress with the Crematorium development project and to set up a Member working group to provide direction on services provided to the local community.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1) That Members note the progress with regard to the crematorium development
- 2) That Members agree to receive periodic updates on progress and set up a working party to provide direction on the range of services to be offered to the local community.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The Council has the legal power to develop and operate a crematorium service. In order to develop the crematorium all relevant statutory approvals will be sought including planning, building control, construction regulations and health and safety crematorium related standards.

The provision of crematoria services is regulated by The Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008.

An option to purchase the land has been secured, with completion of the purchase due after a successful planning application. There are a range of milestones within the option agreement and these have been incorporated into the project plan. The timescales allocated build in sufficient contingency to ensure the Council can mitigate any risk and hit the agreed timeline.

Financial : FIN/64/18/TJB

In June 2017 Corporate Policy and Resources Committee approved a capital development budget of up to £6.1 million plus 10% tolerance.

The Crematorium is a viable project that will contribute to the future sustainability of the Council over the long term.

Staffing :

During the development phase the design and build capital project is being undertaken by external providers. The Council has recruited a Senior Project Officer to support the project who will work closely with external project advisers with specialist knowledge of crematoria development. Regular project team meetings are in place to monitor progress and reports are provided to Entrepreneurial Board.

The staffing structure for operation of the facility is based on a small team of three to carry out day to day operations. The manager and assistant will be required to have certain qualifications in order to operate the facility and will be recruited externally.

The completed facility will be added to the Council's Property Register and maintained by the Council's Property and Assets team as part of their routine property inspection and maintenance programme.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

None arising from this report.

Risk Assessment :

The development of a crematorium is a significant investment for the Council and a major capital project. In addition to this the operation of a crematorium is a completely new business area for the Council. To mitigate the risks a full risk assessment has been produced for the project and identified risks are being proactively managed by the Senior Project Officer and project team.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

None in relation to this report.

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

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

Key Decision:

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

Yes

No

1 Background

- 1.1 In 2016 the Council developed a feasibility study and full business case which demonstrated both a community and commercial need for a crematorium to be developed. The aspiration was for the facility to be of modern 'flagship' design which would be attractive to users and would incorporate gaps in supply such as the ability to accommodate over-size coffins. The facility should also have a wide range of complimentary gardens to provide memorial opportunities.
- 1.2 In June 2016 Members of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee considered the commercial business case and agreed a total capital budget of £4.013 million to support the development of the facility plus a 15% tolerance.
- 1.3 In June 2017, following revision of the of both the business case and receipt of more detailed costings, Members of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee agreed a total development budget of £6.1 million plus 10% tolerance and RECOMMENDED that Prosperous Communities provide policy direction on the design of the facility and the services being offered to the community.
- 1.4 To date this project has been dealt with on an exempt report basis due to the commercial sensitivity around the project. However, the Chairs of both this Committee and Corporate Policy and Resources have been receiving updates on progress.

2 Progress to Date

- 2.1 Since December 2016 the project has developed at pace. The project has been fully scoped out and a full project plan developed which demonstrates the necessary stages and gateway decisions needed in order to bring the crematorium development to fruition. Regular project updates are provided to the Entrepreneurial Board and the Council have also identified the necessary staffing resources to ensure successful delivery of the project. This includes independent peer review resource.
- 2.2 Following a rigorous site appraisal the Council have secured an option to purchase a piece of land on the boundary between Lea and Knaith to facilitate development of a crematorium.
- 2.3 External consultants Faithful & Gould have been appointed along with Architects, Structural Engineers and Mechanical and Electrical Engineers. Officers have been working closely with the Architects to ensure that the designs approved both match the original aspirations captured in the business case and remain affordable.

- 2.4 Concept designs and a cost plan have now been approved and work has begun to complete the developed design ready for the planning application submission.
- 2.5 A range of surveys have been undertaken to confirm the viability of the site identified and the project timelines have had to be re-visited in light of the presence of great crested newts on the site.

3 Future Project Milestones and Actions

- 3.1 Full developed designs are currently being worked up and are due to be received by the end of September.
- 3.2 A Planning Consultant has been engaged to ensure that ecological issues are dealt with appropriately in terms of the planning application submission and determination, and to also advise on the range and content of community consultation planned.
- 3.3 As a result a scheme of community consultation events have been planned and these include:
 - a) An initial meeting which has already taken place with local Funeral Directors, Clergy and Celebrants to test out the operational flow of the concept design. The feedback from this meeting has been incorporated into the agreed concept design.
 - b) During early September meetings have taken place with Gainsborough Town Council, Lea Parish Council and Knaith Parish Council in order to share plans and the rationale for development.
 - c) A mass community consultation event is planned for the 19th September, the first hour of which will be a VIP hour for all Members of this Council together with Members of all town and parish councils. The general public will be invited in thereafter. Feedback will be analysed to form the final developed design required for planning
- 3.4 Officers are keen to submit the planning application as soon as possible as there is a risk that a private crematorium operator will see the business opportunity and seek to develop a private facility in or around Gainsborough. In light of this it is planned to submit the application by the 13th October although this cannot be determined until July 2018 when a mitigation plan can be submitted regarding the great crested newts.
- 3.5 It is envisaged at this stage that construction will commence in around January 2019 and the facility will be completed by January 2020.
- 3.7 The construction of the facility is just one aspect of the operation of the crematorium and other actions will include staffing and recruitment, marketing the facility, deciding what services and packages will be offered.

4 Recommendation

4.1 It is hereby **RECOMMENDED** that Members:

- 1) Note the progress with regard to the crematorium development.
- 2) That Members agree to receive periodic updates on progress and set up a working party to provide direction on the range of services to be offered to the local community.