
Shire Lodge Cemetery Extension

For Members of the Committee to agree the drawdown of reserves to fund the additional cost of extending Shire Lodge Cemetery.

1. Relevant Background Details

Corby Borough Council's Shire Lodge Cemetery is approaching capacity and current projections suggest that it has between 18 months and 2 years of spare burial capacity.

APSE Solutions undertook a feasibility report in Feb 2019 to look at CBC's bereavement services and following an in-depth site search, case study and key stakeholder engagement identified an extension to the Shire Lodge Cemetery as the most appropriate location to offer new burial space. An indicative cost analysis was provided for an extension and chapel of £1.74million.

Planning permission has been granted to extend the existing cemetery into playing fields to the West of the existing cemetery and layout the new cemetery as a lawned cemetery. (See Appendix 1) In addition to the cemetery extension it is proposed that a new welfare building is provided with a link to the Rockingham Triangle car park and refurbishment of existing public facilities at the site entrance. There is a long-term aspiration to construct a chapel of rest. The plans are sympathetic to this aim and allow for a new car park extension to the East of the existing cemetery.

As a result of the encroachment onto playing fields, additional pitches have been brought into use across the Borough and an enhanced wildlife corridor is planned between the cemetery and existing houses to the South.

New rules and regulations will also be drafted and enforced to ensure that the new extension remains as a lawn cemetery.

The proposals provided for circa 25 to 30 years of additional capacity.

2. Report

Capital funding of £750,000 for 2019/20 was approved for the cemetery extension with no provision for a chapel.

In securing planning permission, in addition to the expected design and feasibility fees, additional fees were incurred to address concerns over restrictive covenants on the land, service diversion and opposition from Sport England on the loss of playing fields. Spend to date is £99,500, with committed planned support costs of £120,000, for contract administration, service diversions and project management, providing a construction budget of circa £530,000.

A tender process for delivering the works was undertaken and despite sign posting to local contractors we received just 4 valid bids. They are as follows:

1. Tender One - £1,684,000
2. Tender Two - £1,764,000
3. Tender Three - £2,312,000
4. Tender Four - £2,495,000

This therefore leaves a large shortfall of £1,154,000 against Tender 1. Officers have considered various options for revising the scope of works for the project and based on the tender prices received, estimated the project value of each, as below.

3. Options to be considered (if any)

Option One – Review scope of works against available budget of £530,000 and re-tender. Based on lowest tender bids it is likely to result in a scheme that simply provides an extension into the playing fields involving a new perimeter fence, some access roads and paths and limited planting both within cemetery and wildlife corridor. As the cemetery extends over time costs would need to be budgeted to extend the roads and paths as the cemetery fills up.

Option Two (preferred) – Approve the additional funding of £570,000 from general reserves to deliver the core requirements of the scheme and re-tender. Based on lowest tender bids this will involve delivering most of the planned works in Appendix 1, except for the car park extension to the East of the existing cemetery.

This is officers preferred option as it delivers the additional burial space and site facilities but removes the car park extension which was primarily to service a possible new chapel. Additional parking has been provided on-site by retaining the access link from Rockingham Triangle additional overflow car parking is provided. In addition, further value engineering of works will be undertaken to lower the specification for hard and soft landscaping for the cemetery extension and consider alternative procurement methods for soft landscaping.

Option Three – Approve the additional funding of £870,000 from general reserves to deliver the core requirements as per Option Two above but will continue to provide the car park extension to the East of the existing cemetery and re-tender. Based on lowest tender bids this will also involve value engineering the solutions with the aim of delivering most of the planned works in Appendix 1.

Option Four - Approve the additional funding of £1,235,000 from general reserves to deliver the current scope of works and specification and re-tender. There will be some simple value engineering of the requirements, such as rationalisation of landscaping provided but in the main this will see delivery of the scheme and specification as originally tendered.

4. Issues to be taken into account

Policy Priorities

Members set out as a policy priority within their 19/20 Capital programme agreed by OCPC to deliver an extension to the existing cemetery at Shire Lodge, Rockingham Road to provide additional burial capacity within the Borough for the next 25-30 years.

Financial

The Committee is requested to consider approving the additional funding of £570,000 from reserves to add to £750,000 of original budget to provide a working capital budget of £1,320,000.

Subject to the Committee's determination of this report, the report will be referred to the Shadow Executive Committee of the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority under the agreed notification protocol. It is for the sovereign council to determine this matter, however given the amount of the proposed budget increase, and this increase being in addition to the agreed Capital Programme, a notification referral is required.

Risk

The Future Northants Programme have approved delivery of the original scheme however whilst we will be able to award a contract this financial year works may not commence on-

site until the new financial year and there is a risk the new S151 officer for North Northants might not agree continued funding.

Works will take place during normal working hours; therefore, the contractor will be required to provide safe working conditions and method statements ensuring the safety of visitors.

Legal

The Council ensures all legal documentation such as contracts are in place before any work commences.

If the works are not approved the Council would be in breach with each of the community groups.

Performance Information

All works will be supervised by the Council to ensure the work is completed correctly. Warrantees will also be required.

Best Value

The specification for the works will be reviewed with a view to reduce the costs to deliver core requirements for the increased total scheme budget of £1,320,000. A further push with local contractors will also take place to encourage them to tender for the works directly.

Human Rights and Equalities

An equality questionnaire has been completed, which had a positive impact with no need to complete a full equality impact assessment. The Councils Service Level Agreements require organisations to have either adopted an equal opportunities policy/procedure or have an equality statement. Activities offered must not discriminate or refuse participation by any members of the community.

Sustainability

Wherever possible the use of plastics will be reduced, and trees and shrubs will be native and from sustainable sources.

Community Safety

As per above the contractor will be required to provide safe working conditions and method statements ensuring the safety of visitors.

5. Conclusion

Shire Lodge Cemetery is approaching capacity and current projections suggest that it has between 18 months and 2 years of spare burial capacity and a solution is required to provide additional space for the next 25-30 years.

6. Recommendations

The Committee: -

- (i) approve the funding of £570,000 from Council reserves to allow officers to re-tender works to extend the cemetery based on Option Two being the preferred way forward.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 – Proposed Site Plan

Appendix 2 - Equality Questionnaire

External Consultations

None

Officer to Contact

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