



Report For:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Cabinet 3 February 2020
Part:	Part 1 - Open

**SUMMARY**

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>NEW CEMETERY, PENN ROAD – REQUEST TO INCREASE THE PROJECT BUDGET AND FOR DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO A BUILD CONTRACT.</b>
Cabinet Member: Officer Contact: Direct Dial: Email:	Councillor Graham Peart Nigel Dicker 01494 423701 nigel.dicker@wycombe.gov.uk
Wards affected:	All High Wycombe Town unparished wards and Hazlemere South.
Reason for the Decision:	<p>Wycombe is running out of burial capacity, and the project is needed to meet the legal requirement to be able to provide burials in the High Wycombe Town area.</p> <p>WDC's Cabinet approved an initial budget to build the new cemetery in March 2017 and was informed of a potential outturn cost of £1,679,790. The cost of the works has increased by £253,210 resulting in total revised cost of £1,993,000.</p> <p>Allocated funds to date and final required commitment are as follows: -</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">£404,000 SER commitment (March 2017) £886,000 CIL commitment to date £389,790 Acknowledged requirement (March 2017) <u>£253,210</u> Additional cost to be funded</p> <p>Total: £1,933,000 project cost</p> <p>Options for funding are either from: 1) CIL (in full or in part) 2) Loan from the Council or 3) Special Expenses Reserve (topped up with CIL).</p> <p>The project was granted full planning permission on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and tenders for a build contract were returned in November 2019.</p> <p>Delegated authority is now requested to enter into the build contract for up to £1.933m to ensure final designs are concluded within the budget, without referring back to Cabinet.</p>

<p><b>Proposed Decision:</b></p>	<p><b>That:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>(i) Cabinet agrees to enter into a build contract with the successful bidder to build the new cemetery at Penn Road, High Wycombe;</b></li> <li><b>(ii) delegated authority be granted to the Acting Chief Executive to agree and approve the contract and final designs and sign the build contract on behalf of WDC;</b></li> <li><b>(iii) Cabinet acknowledges and approves the increase in the cost of £253,210, resulting in total project cost of £1,933,000;</b></li> <li><b>(iv) the remaining funding of the project from the Special Expenses Reserve: £143k and CIL: £500k be agreed; and</b></li> <li><b>(v) the £50,000 annual maintenance cost of the new facility be built into the budget setting process.</b></li> </ul>
<p>Sustainable Community Strategy/Council Priorities - Implications</p>	<p><b>Risk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Failing to proceed will risk Wycombe District Council not fulfilling its legal duty and obligation to provide burial areas for its residents within the district.</li> <li>(ii) Not giving delegated authority to enter into a build contract might delay delivery, resulting in increases to the current tender prices, received in November 2019.</li> </ul> <p><b>Equalities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 places a duty (“the public sector equality duty”) on the Council, in the exercise of its functions to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. One of the protected characteristics is religion or belief.</li> <li>(ii) An Equalities Impact Assessment describing steps taken to comply with this duty has been completed and is appended to this report for members to duly consider. (Appendix B)</li> </ul>

	<p>Health &amp; Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Surveys carried out include: topographical, ecological, environmental and geotechnical investigations on the proposed site to ensure it is safe and fit for purpose.</li> <li>(ii) A CDM officer has been appointed and a Pre-Construction CDM file has been prepared Oct 2019.</li> </ul>
Monitoring Officer/ S.151 Officer Comments	<p><b>Monitoring Officer:</b> Subject to procurement and decision making processes being followed, the Council has power under S111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to undertake the development described in this report.</p> <p><b>S.151 Officer:</b> The remaining funding of £643k for this investment will be met from the special expense reserves and local CIL allocation for HWTC. The ongoing maintenance costs will need to be factored into the budget setting process.</p>
Consultees:	<p><b>Penn, Hazlemere, Hughenden &amp; Chepping Wycombe Parish Councils.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Statutory formal Public Consultation was carried out as part of the planning permission awarded for the Cemetery, in September 2019.</li> <li>(ii) Two public consultations were held on 16th and 25th October 2018 in Hazlemere and High Wycombe, when developing the cemetery designs.</li> </ul>
Options:	Options for the location of new cemetery for High Wycombe were considered by HWTC in 4 March 2014. A final site was selected by HWTC on 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2015.
Next Steps:	Sign off cemetery designs, award a building contract for the new cemetery, and start on site.
Background Papers:	<p><b>4 March 2014 HWTC New Cemetery options paper</b>  <b>23 June 2015 HWTC New Cemetery options paper</b>  <b>7 March 2017 HWTC New Cemetery funding paper</b>  <b>13 March 2017 WDC Cabinet paper new Cemetery Funding</b>  <b>4 February 2019 Cabinet Budget papers</b></p>
Abbreviations:	<p>HWTC High Wycombe Town Committee  WDC – Wycombe District Council  CIL – Community Infrastructure Level  CDM – Construction Design Management</p>

## **Background and Issues**

1.0 This report was considered by the High Wycombe Town Committee at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020 and it was recommended that the remaining funding of the project from the Special Expenses Reserve: £143k and CIL: £500k be authorised.

### **1.1 Background and Issues**

1.2 Wycombe District Council is in need of more burial space so that it can continue to fulfil its obligation to provide burial areas for residents. Options for the cemetery location were considered in the HWTC paper in 2014, and a site was selected in 2015.

1.3 Designs were developed and a public consultation took place in October 2018. A further statutory public consultation was carried out in 2019 as part of the planning process, and planning permission was awarded for the new Penn Road Cemetery in September 2019. A general plan of the new cemetery can be found at Appendix A.

1.4 A competitive tender process was undertaken in November 2019 in order to select a contractor. This resulted in tender returns at circa 15% higher than the original budget requirement, set in March 2017. The cost of the project has increased from the estimated £1,679,790 to £1,933,000. The original budget was an estimate only, and the revised requirement reflects inflation between 2017 and 2019 and the current state of the market, i.e. actual costs quoted by bidders in tender returns. Permission is therefore now required to increase the overall project budget by £253,210.

1.5 In the March 2017, HWTC and WDC Cabinet approved the total project budget of £1,679,790. From this approved budget, the funding of phases 1 & 2 for £1,290,000 was agreed at the time. It was also agreed that the remaining funding for phase 3, of £389,790, would be approved at a future date.

1.6 Officers are therefore now seeking authorisation for the use of funds from the Special Expenses Reserve (SER) of £143k and for the use of CIL funding of £500k, to cover the remaining funding requirement for phase 3 and the additional costs revealed by the tendering exercise.

### **2.0 Revenue Costs**

2.1 The new cemetery planning permission requires that *'maintenance arrangements are arranged and agreed before any works commence on site, that might otherwise be left unaccounted for'*. In time, the new cemetery will generate income and this will help offset the costs of burial services and maintenance. However, the March 2017 HWTC and WDC cabinet report noted that the new cemetery will generate a cost to Special Expenses Reserve. This includes grounds maintenance, overheads for buildings, maintenance costs, business rates, repairs, and renewals. With an adjustment for inflation, this additional annual revenue requirement is now estimated to be £50,000 and it is requested that this requirement is built into the budget setting process.

### **3.0 Conclusions**

3.1 HWTC and WDC Cabinet are requested to agree the recommendations above to enable construction to start on the new cemetery at Penn Road.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A: Site Plan, Proposed Penn Road Cemetery.

Appendix B: Equalities Impact Assessment.