

Board/Committee:	Community Board
Date of meeting:	Wednesday 8 th September 2021
Title:	Gosport New Cemetery
Author:	Head of Streetscene
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

To update the Board on the progress of the New Cemetery project, approve the recommendations of the Cemetery Task and Finish Group and proceed with the reappointment of Cemetery Development Services (CDS) as technical consultants for this scheme which would culminate in the submission of a planning application for the scheme.

Recommendation

That the Community Board:

- i) Notes the progress of the Gosport New Cemetery project.
- ii) Approves in principle the recommendations of the working group for the proposed new cemetery site.
- iii) Approves that Officers should now proceed with the reappointment of Cemetery Development Services (CDS) as technical consultants for the scheme culminating in the preparation of a detailed planning application for the scheme; and
- iv) Approves the request for an exemption to the Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) (Section 3) to enable the direct appointment of CDS as technical, design and cost advisers for this scheme through to the planning application phase at a cost of £35,150.

1.0 Background

1.1 Gosport Borough Council (GBC) commissioned CDS through the Cemetery Task and Finish Group (Working Group) in February 2019 to undertake a detailed feasibility study and options appraisal for the new cemetery requirements for Gosport.

1.2 Ann's Hill Cemetery which was originally opened in 1885 under the provisions of the Burial Act of 1853 is currently running out of available space with an anticipated shelf life of less than three years.

1.3 GBC is a Burial Authority by virtue of s.214 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 and provides and manages its cemetery at Ann's Hill Road, Gosport under the provisions of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977. There is no statutory duty to create new cemeteries, but burial authorities have a

duty under the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 to maintain their existing cemeteries.

2.0 Report

2.1 The New Cemetery requirement for Gosport was initiated in 2018 outlining the requirements and considerations for a New Cemetery as well as potential sites for consideration. A Working Group was inaugurated to review options in conjunction with CDS and the recommendation was to proceed with the Grange Lane site as the best option. A New Cemetery would potentially have a life span of about 175 years.

2.2 The Working Group accepted the recommendations of the options appraisal and feasibility report in principle but due to COVID 19 restrictions and its attendant effect on operational matters, the group was unable to meet to validate the preferred option formally.

A series of public consultations involving key stakeholders and statutory consultees for this scheme will take place as part of the formal planning phase.

2.3 Further advice has been received from the local policy planning team and a review of the feasibility study has been undertaken internally to understand the scope of the required works up to planning application. The required programme and costs including any relevant disbursements, is currently estimated to be about £115,000.

The breakdown of these costs are as follows ;

- CDS Professional fees – design and cost management - £35,150
- Preparation and Briefing phase including groundwater risk assessment and flux modelling, preliminary ecological appraisals and Environmental Agency pre-application consultation fee-£10,200
- Concept design phase including geotechnical survey and soakage reports , Highway access statements and Geophysical Surveys- £29,100
- Spatial Coordination phase including Land Visual Impact Assessment, Transport Statements, Contamination Risk Assessments and Flood Risk Assessments- £40,500

These disbursements will be subject to GBC's procurement VFM criterion which requires three quotes within the benchmarked rates.

2.4 A formal planning application will be the next major milestone and we will need to appoint technical consultants to assist in the delivery of the scheme up to this milestone.

2.5 It should be noted that the surveys and reports to be commissioned for the proposed site are required to validate the recommendations made during the feasibility stage and also mitigate any unknown risks which may restrict the viability of Grange Lane as an option.

2.6 A period of 24 weeks has been allowed for all the relevant surveys and reports that would take this scheme through to the planning application phase including any proposed public consultations and stakeholders engagement.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 The Gosport New Cemetery scheme is an important and integral facet of GBCs’ corporate and developmental objectives as detailed in the Local Plan 2011-2029. The delivery programme would need to align with the local planning policy to ensure coherence with future public engagements on the matter.

3.2 In addition, subsequent scoping and associated works would fall within the remit of our internal project management resources and the proposed reappointment of CDS.

3.3 The rationale justifying their reappointment includes not only the need for continuity on the scheme but also their commitment to making any future developments carbon neutral which aligns with GBC’s climate change strategy.

3.4 A cost benchmarking exercise has been carried out on their cost estimates to ensure VFM.

3.5 A further report will be brought back to the Community Board prior to a formal planning application being made.

Financial Services comments:	The current project estimate is within the agreed budget for the scheme up to the planning application stage.
Legal Services comments:	Contained within the report
Equality and Diversity:	Due regard to all protected characteristics and relevant stakeholder groups must be evidenced during consultation with feedback informing any amendments needed in final design.
Climate Change implications:	The final design must give due regard to climate change implications and demonstrate how carbon neutrality will be achieved.
Crime and Disorder:	Not Applicable
Service Improvement Plan implications:	Not applicable
Corporate Plan:	The New Cemetery is an important aspect of GBC’s corporate plan as evidenced in the local plan 2011-2029.
Risk Assessment:	There is a risk register for this scheme and all project related risks are assessed and monitored to ensure a coherent mitigation strategy is in place.

Background Papers:	None
Appendices:	None
Report Author/Lead Officer:	Cyril Okolie – Capital Programme Manager