

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

23 September 2015

MAGDALEN HILL CEMETERY

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR POLICY AND PLANNING

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RECENT REFERENCES:

WTF222 – Magdalen Hill Cemetery Extension - 28 July 2015

CAB2714 - Magdalen Hill Cemetery Extension - 9 September 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Cabinet considered the Magdalen Hill Cemetery extension on 9 September 2015 and the report they received (CAB2714 refers) is set out in Appendix 1. The minutes of this meeting are set out in Appendix 2.

This report includes additional financial information on the implications for the Town Forum's budget. A verbal report will be given at the meeting on site access as requested by Cabinet and as referred to in the minutes of that meeting.

The Forum is asked to consider if it endorses Cabinet recommendations.

At its meeting on 14 September 2015, The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the decision of Cabinet and decided not to call the matter in for review.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the Magdalen Hill Cemetery Extension Scheme be proceeded with including the Metal Railing option and additional cost of archaeology, subject to any comments that the Forum wishes to raise.
- 2 That Forum considers whether, when fees and charges are reviewed in the 2016/17 budget process, options to increase charges should be considered to address the impact of the scheme on the Town Account budget.

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

23 SEPTEMBER 2015

MAGDALEN HILL CEMETARY EXTENSION

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR POLICY AND PLANNING

DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Cabinet considered the Magdalen Hill Cemetery extension on 9 September 2015 and the report they received (CAB2714 refers) is set out in Appendix 1. The minutes extract, referring to this issue, are set out in Appendix 2.
- 1.2 An extension to Magdalen Hill Cemetery received planning consent in April 2015 and it is hoped to start construction on site during the autumn.
- 1.3 The extension is urgently required in order to provide new burial plots.
- 1.4 The scheme has recently been subject to a tendering exercise which has shown that the cost for the construction works and associated landscaping is in excess of the capital budget which was set several years ago.
- 1.5 This report sets out the additional funding which is likely to be required to enable the scheme to proceed. The Town Forum considered this matter in July and agreed in principle to support the scheme and associated additional costs. At that stage it was envisaged that the budget requirement was estimated at £175,000, subject to tendering. However, the tendering process has demonstrated that additional budget provision is required archaeological work, a constrained site access and the cost of metal railings.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

2 COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND PORTFOLIO PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 2.1 Extending the Magdalen Hill Cemetery has been a priority in the Portfolio Plans for a number of years. Successful completion of the project is needed to meet the needs of the community, as well as ensuring a high quality environment

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 3.1 The financial appraisal in Appendix 3 shows the increased capital requirement from the existing £135,000 in 2015/16, to £240,000 in 2016/17. This capital requirement is proposed to be financed from the Major Investment Reserve with the Town Account receiving an annual financing charge over the life of the asset.

- 3.2 Appendix 3 also shows the revenue consequences of the two options of either 'do nothing' (option 1) or 'build the new 'extension' (option 2). Option 2 build the new extension has a forecast net cost saving of approx. £50k per annum over Option 1 due to the substantial loss of income as a consequence of Option 1.
- 3.3 The recommended Option 2 creates a forecast full year net cost increase of approx. £30k per annum compared with the existing Cemetery budgets.
- 4 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES
- 4.1 The budget estimates include a contingency for unforeseen site conditions.
- 4.2 There is a risk of a shortage of burial plots within a short period of time, should the proposed extension not be implemented.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Tenders received include Exempt Information and are not therefore disclosable background documents.

APPENDICES:

- Appendix 1 CAB2714 - Magdalen Hill Cemetery Extension - 9 September 2015
- Appendix 2 Cabinet Minute extract of 9 September 2015 meeting referring to the Magdalen Hill Cemetery Extension
- Appendix 3 Financial Appraisal

Appendix 2Extract of Minutes for Cabinet Meeting 9 September 2015 - MAGDALEN HILL CEMETERY EXTENSION(Report CAB2714 refers)

The Assistant Director (Policy and Planning) advised that since the Report was produced, further archaeology had been discovered on the site which required an additional £20,000 of expenditure (increasing the total of the supplementary estimate required to £105,000). The Chief Operating Officer advised that as the amount of the supplementary estimate was above £100,000, it was subject to consideration of call-in by The Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

One Member queried whether access to the site of the extension being gained from Alresford Road rather than through the existing cemetery, possibly might reduce costs involved? The Assistant Director explained that there were practical difficulties in achieving this but agreed it could be examined further. The Chairman requested that this be reported to the Winchester Town Forum at its meeting on 23 September 2015.

Cabinet also debated the merits of using iron railings for the eastern boundary of the extension, as opposed to less costly post and rail fencing, with differing views being expressed. It was noted that iron railings would last longer and, on balance, were favoured by the majority of Cabinet.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Power addressed Cabinet and in summary emphasised the shortage of burial spaces in Market Towns and suggested a District-wide report should be prepared.

The Chief Operating Officer clarified that it was the responsibility of individual parish councils to provide burial sites in their parish.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the full cost and benefits of an extension would be met by the Winchester Town Account and consequentially, Cabinet should take account of the Winchester Town Forum's views on the proposals.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

That subject to any comments from the Town Forum and the decision not being call-in by The Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. That the preference be for iron railings to be used for the scheme along its east boundary (as set out in Section 3 of the report) which will in turn help to define the overall character of the cemetery extension.
2. That approval be given under Financial Procedure Rule 7.2 for a capital budget supplementary estimate of £105,000 in 2015/16 in addition to the current Capital Budget of £135,000 to enable the Extension to be constructed.
3. That approval under Financial Procedure Rule 6.4 be given to release the total scheme funding (£240,000) to enable the scheme as shown in Appendix 1 to the report to be constructed during the autumn.
4. That the Assistant Director (Policy and Planning) be authorised to let a contract for the project in accordance with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules, and in consultation with the Leader, to take into account any points raised by the Town Forum within the budget made available in 2 and 3 above.