

Report to: Executive Member for Environmental Services

Date: 29th June 2009

Report of: Director of Environmental Services

Report No: EMES/28409

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Report Title: Heaton Cemetery Extension – 1st Stage Works

**Confidential /
Non Confidential:**
(delete as approp)

(Non-Confidential) This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

Purpose:

To seek the approval of the Executive Member for Environmental Services to undertake the Heaton Cemetery Extension stage one works as detailed in the report.

Recommendations:

The Executive Member for Environmental Services is recommended to :

1. Note the overall timescales and costs relating to the new cemetery build.
2. Approve the appointment of George Cox & Sons to undertake the 1st stage earthworks to commence in July 2009.
3. Approve the project funding proposals as set out in the report
4. Approve the submission of further reports relating to future stages of the project.

Decision:

Background Doc(s):

(for use on Exec Rep)

Signed:

Leader / Executive Member

Monitoring Officer

Date:

Summary:

Bolton Council has established the need for additional burial space for the entire Bolton community in future years. It has located a suitable site adjacent to the existing Heaton Cemetery, gained planning consent and secured possession of the site for a new cemetery build. Extensive and necessary preparatory work have been undertaken and physical works

can now be commenced. The first stage of the cemetery construction involves re-profiling the levels across the whole site and installing a 350m retaining wall across the lower boundary of the site. A suitable contractor has been selected to commence the work in July 2009. This report seeks the formal approval to commence the cemetery build work.

1. Background Information.

- a) In February 2005 a presentation was made to the Direct Services and Area Working Scrutiny Committee around Bereavement Services key issues which included specific reference to the need to identify options around the council's future burial space provision over the next 5/7 years.
- b) This was followed by a joint report of the Directors of Commercial Services and Corporate Services to the Executive Members for Direct Services & Area Working and Corporate Services in April 2005 where agreement was given for the Directors to jointly investigate appropriate options to secure future burial grounds for the council.
- c) The focus was to identify and secure additional burial grounds for the entire Bolton community for many years to come. Following extensive discussions, a preferred option was identified from the corporate portfolio in Atkinson's Farm off Overdale Drive Bolton which was held under an agricultural tenancy.
- d) It was originally thought that outline planning permission could be obtained for change of use to a cemetery. However extensive pre planning enquiries carried out by Corporate Property Services completed in January 2006 concluded that outline planning was not sufficient and a more detailed planning permission was required.
- e) A report to the Environmental Services Policy Development Group in July 2006 obtained approval to spend an amount from existing budgets on the extension of the burial grounds project pre planning permission survey works in relation to topographical, wildlife, geographical and hydrology surveys.
- f) In July 2007 a planning application was approved for the development of an extension to the existing Heaton cemetery on the land to the South & South East of Atkinson's Farm, off Overdale Drive, Heaton.
- g) Extensive ground survey research and investigation carried out since the planning approval was granted identified unusual and unexpected complex existing ground water within the site which needed to be addressed and had a major implication for the cost of developing the site as a cemetery extension.
- h) A specialist drainage company (Turftrax Groundworks) who specialise in the development of new cemeteries and cemetery extensions with specific experience of altering groundwater levels was commissioned to carry out the land drainage design scheme work and the enabling earthworks design which was completed in September 2008.
- i) Approval from the Environment Agency (EA) was also necessary to discharge the drains into the River Croal and permissions from Network Rail for cleaning and a condition survey of the culverts which would allow this.
- j) The council also issued a notice to quit on the agricultural tenant and reached a statutory settlement of compensation with the tenant to take possession of the parcel of land needed for the first stage of the cemetery development.

- k) In summary Bolton Council has established the need for additional burial space for the entire Bolton community in future years. It has located a suitable site adjacent to the existing Heaton Cemetery, gained planning consent and secured possession of the site for a new cemetery build. Extensive and necessary preparatory works have been undertaken and physical works can now be commenced.

2. New Cemetery Build

- a) The creation of a new cemetery follows an ordered procedure as follows:
- Levelling and earthworks to obtain desired topography
 - Installation of deep and/or surface water drainage and water supply
 - Construction of roads, buildings and any other structures
 - Landscaping of the site to establish tree planting and grassed sward
- b) Attached to the report are appendices which illustrate the outcomes of the preparatory work in terms of the proposals related to the:
- Phased site design (Appendix 1)
 - Enabling earthworks design (Appendix 2)
 - Complete Drainage design (Appendix 3)
- c) A phased approach to the development is required to establish the required balance between meeting customer needs and sensibly managing the capital and revenue implications of the build.
- d) The overall timescales relating to the project are as follows:
- Summer 2009: Commence earthworks.
Once the earthworks are complete the experts advise a period of at least 12 months for the land to settle before further works are undertaken.
 - Summer 2010: Commence main drainage works.
 - November 2010: commence civil works.
 - April 2010: commence cultivation and seeding (dependent upon above starting time)
 - Winter 2011 commence structure planting.
 - 20011/12 commence burials on the site.

3. 1st Stage: Levelling & Earthworks

- a) The first stage of the cemetery construction involves re-profiling the levels across the whole site and installing a 350m retaining wall across the lower boundary of the site. The provisional estimate for this work was circa £350k.
- b) In March 2009 contract drawings and specifications were sent out and tenders invited for the first stage earthworks from the 4 contractors on the Framework Contract for Highways works.
- c) The tenders were returned on 17 April and all the bids were within the provisional estimate for the work. In the period to 15 May all contractors were interviewed to go through the tender and ensure they are clear about the specification in terms of quality/price.

- d) As a result of this process, highways recommend George Cox & Son to carry out the work at a price of £270k. The contractor is available to commence work in the first week of July 2009 and the work should take between 8 to 12 weeks to complete (weather dependant).
- e) The construction works will be project managed by officers in the Highways Design & Construction Team.

4. Funding

- a) The capital implications for the overall development of the site are i.r.o. £2m. It is anticipated that around £900k is needed for full Phase 1 of the development.
- b) Prudential borrowing of up to £879k has been approved for the scheme in 2009/10.
- c) The cost of the 1st stage earthworks is £270k plus £15k for United Utilities to divert the overhead electric cable plus a suggested contingency of £15k which is a total of £300k.
- d) Spend to date on preparatory works and agricultural tenant compensation is £52k.
- e) This makes a total project spend of £352k. Repayments on the total cost of the initial borrowing requirement will have to be met from the Bereavement Services Revenue account.
- f) Finance colleagues are currently considering the total period over which the prudential borrowing will be required to repaid and will advise in due course. For the purpose of the following estimate they have suggested we use a repayment period of 50 years.
- g) If £352k is borrowed in 2009/10 then the repayments in 2010/11 will be £7,040 plus annual interest on the whole (currently 5.2%) which is a further £18,304 which is £25,272 for a full year.
- h) The revenue implications of the borrowing will need to be considered in the 2010/11 budget round. Careful consideration needs to be given to the finance arrangements for the project in terms of the significant borrowing requirement and the ongoing revenue implications.
- i) The new cemetery will not yield a burial revenue stream until 2011/12 by which time the income stream will be absorbed by the annual maintenance and security costs of the site.
- j) There are also other Bereavement Services strategic considerations this financial year in terms of the council response to the government requirement to reduce mercury emissions from cremators by 2013 and our risk management strategy in relation to memorial safety, both which may require a significant amount of future investment.

5. Recommendations

The Executive Member for Environmental Services and the Executive Member for Strategy & External Relationships are recommended to:

1. Note the overall timescales and costs relating to the new cemetery build.
2. Approve the appointment of George Cox & Sons to undertake the 1st stage earthworks to commence July 2009.
3. Approve the project funding proposals as set out in the report
4. Approve the submission of further reports relating to future stages of the project.