
REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 28 JANUARY 2009

PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT

REPORT FROM HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: FINAL BRIEF FOR THE EXTENSION OF HALL ROAD CEMETERY

1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 That the final brief is agreed as providing the detailed information on the form and proposed development of the extension to Hall Road Cemetery subject to final design decisions and Planning permission.

2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 This report provides the details that ensure Members have sufficient information to assess the content of the proposed development of the Hall Road cemetery extension prior to the planning application being made. It indicates what work is to be done, how the cemetery will develop and the methodology for ensuring that maximum use is made of the site and that the long term safety of the site has been thoroughly considered.
- 2.2 A previous report to the Executive Board on 27 November 2007 set out the objectives for the cemetery and the key elements that define a welcoming cemetery. This report builds on those objectives and sets out what will be developed to meet them.

3 OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 It is clear that, in order to provide a welcoming environment, any proposed extension works should start at the main entrance. The following list of improvements are suggested for incorporation into the project. The majority are considered necessary, although some (points 6 and 15) are optional. They are all perceived as important elements of the cemetery to build on its current status:-
1. New improved external signage, potentially with a name to help differentiate from the Rochford Parish Lawn Cemetery run by Rochford Parish Council.
 2. New entrance gates, preferably in wrought iron/steel with brick piers to provide a more substantial appearance to what will be a much larger cemetery. This will provide long term maintenance benefits bearing in mind this cemetery is providing capacity for the next 30-40 years.
 3. Realigned carriageway from the entrance to provide a clear flow to the new extension and to parking for both the new and existing cemeteries.

4. Refurbishment of the existing toilet facilities to provide two disability friendly toilets with a common ramp approach. Some external improvements to the building to provide an improved appearance.
5. Provision of more discreet parking to the existing cemetery. Four spaces have been identified.
6. Provision of parking to the new cemetery as necessary. Four spaces have been identified.
7. Provision of new spinal access road through the extension to be built in two stages as the use of the cemetery progresses. The first stage will enable the top section and approximately one half of the remainder to be used.

This partial road will spread the cost of development well into the future and ensure that there will not have to be road rebuilding when the whole site is finally required.

8. Sufficient on-road and designated parking to allow for large funerals to be accommodated.
9. A footpath link across a new feature bridge to provide pedestrian access between the two cemeteries. This bridge could have a roof over to provide some shelter within the site for visitors.
10. A water supply with taps at various locations, and waste cages for flowers etc. as the graves are tidied.
11. Sufficient footpaths to provide good disability access around the site.
12. A sound methodology for ensuring that headstones remain safe in the longer term (i.e. 30-40 years) and to enable the grass areas between the graves to be maintained as a lawn cemetery. This is likely to be a ground beam system that is currently being used in a neighbouring Authority. However, the beam top will be at ground level to reduce its impact. This system also keeps graves in straight lines thereby improving the effectiveness and long term capacity of the land. The layout of the graves as shown follows the topography of the site with each line being on a level contour. Such a system will need to be costed and recharged to grave owners.
13. A clear system for area differentiation and grave numbering to make finding plots easier.
14. Allocated space for woodland burials, and areas for the interment of ashes.
15. Improvements to the compound to ensure that the contractor has the facilities required for a modern cemetery.

16. The setting aside of an area on the site so that arisings from grave and beam excavation will be retained and reused on site to obviate the need for tipping.
- 3.2 A plan is attached at appendix A to illustrate the proposed layout. This would indicate an approximate life of 20/25 years for the first phase of the cemetery at a burial rate slightly higher than that at present.
- 3.3 The above list and layout are still subject to planning approval. This report is intended to maximise the opportunity for Members to debate the elements that will go into the cemetery extension.

4 OTHER SALIENT INFORMATION

- 4.1 Before any planning application can be submitted a number of surveys are required. These are an arboricultural survey identifying which trees are suitable to remain, and an ecological survey to identify any flora/fauna that would need additional protection. Both surveys have now been completed.
- 4.2 The ecological survey indicates no major problems. Issues that have been identified around wildlife habitat have been incorporated into the proposed layout.
- 4.3 The arboricultural survey indicates little in the way of major tree management, with some trees to be removed and others protected during works on site.
- 4.4 The planning application, if successful, will enable the cemetery to open from 2012.
- 4.5 Consultation will need to be carried out with local stonemasons on the method chosen for ensuring the stability of the new headstones. The proposed approach has been used locally so no major issues are envisaged.
- 4.6 It is considered that, at this stage, the cemetery should be non denominational, i.e. a municipal cemetery. With the potential need to take into account all faiths now resident in this country, the introduction of separate areas could lead to an early requirement to use the whole cemetery and have implications for what is a small cemetery extension.
- 4.7 Consideration has been given as to whether there should be a dedicated children's section. Such sections are evident in some larger cemeteries. However, research identifies that, on balance, children should be buried along with adults. Research also identifies that there has been no demand for a separate children's area in Rochford District Cemeteries. Elsewhere, such designated areas have proved problematic in terms of management and visual impact.
- 4.8 Although there is no current building providing for short services at times of burial or the interment of ashes, Members may wish to consider whether it would be desirable to provide for a structure at this cemetery. One is shown

on the proposed layout gap, but it need not be provided. If such a building was introduced, costs would be in the region of £250,000- £350,000, depending on size and design. This would include space for hearses, and for people to gather outside the building prior to arrival of the hearse. Such a building would need to be considered as a potential future budget bid and an associated business case developed. To allow some flexibility in respect of a decision for this building the layout of graves will be as identified on the plan. This leaves the space for the building at a later stage should Members wish.

- 4.9 In terms of project timescale, the items identified later in the report under paragraph 8.4 will be implemented in 2009/10 through one contract for Civil Engineering works and landscaping. The detailed programme will be provided by the contractor as part of the tender return. This implementation is subject to planning approval being gained early in 2009. A revised project timescale is set out in Appendix B.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no risk implications foreseen at this stage as the ecological and environmental surveys have identified no problems that should impede the proposed development.
- 5.2 The existing cemetery will reach capacity by 2012.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no known environmental implications at this moment, as the site has already been given Environment Agency approval.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Costs for the identified elements of the works are based on current contract rates and should provide a sound basis for estimating.
- 7.2 This project is funded through the Council's Capital Programme. Current surveys are funded from the 2008/09 Capital Budget, which is not expected to be fully expended.
- 7.3 The Capital Budget can be carried forward to 2009/10 along with the budget allocation for 2009/10.
- 7.4 The total cost of the scheme is estimated at £535,000 which is already in the Capital Programme with the expenditure profile follows:

2005/06	-	£	2,850	actual
2006/07	-	£	119,888	actual
2007/08	-	£	4,408	actual
2008/09	-	£	10,000	estimate

2009/10 - £250,000 estimate

2010/11 - £147,854 estimate

- 7.5 The costs for proposed expenditure for 2009/10 have been broken down into more detailed elements and are shown below:

Roads and Drainage	-	£130,000
Footpaths	-	£ 54,000
Footbridge estimated	-	£ 10,000
Water Supply estimated	-	£ 6,000
Entrance Gates/signage	-	£ 20,000
Ground works	-	£ 10,000
Contingencies	-	£ 20,000
Total	-	<u>£250,000</u>

- 7.6 Costs for works in 2010/2011 are broken down as follows:

Toilets upgrade	-	£ 30,000
Tree Works	-	£ 5,000
Improvements to compound	-	£ 10,000
Construction of ground beams	-	£ 50,000
Miscellaneous works	-	£ 52,854
Total		£147,854

- 7.7 Works proposed in 2009/10 that are key to the cemetery opening in 2012 are the redesigned access; construction of the new access road to the second roundabout; the new entrance gates; new signage and services across the site and setting out the ground beam to support the headstones for, say, five years potential use.

- 7.8 In terms of grounds maintenance and based on rates in the current contract, maintaining the additional area of the cemetery would be in the order of £20,000 per year. Revenue costs would be incurred from 2011/12 to allow a year of maintenance before the cemetery opened. Provision for the additional revenue costs has been included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

- 7.9 The building suggested in paragraph 4.8 is not part of the current financial planning of this project and would need to be the subject of a future funding bid.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The proposals will be subject to planning consent and environmental controls that will be applicable to the development.

SMT Lead Officer Signature: _____

Head of Legal Services

Background Papers:

Ecological Report

Arboricultural Report

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If you would like this report in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.

Phase 1

PROPOSED EXTENSION

Phase 2

farmland



EXISTING CEMETERY

HALL ROAD

ROCHFORD PARISH
CEMETERY

PROPOSED EXTENSION of HALL ROAD CEMETERY PROPOSED LAYOUT

SCALE 1 : 500

BB

September 2008

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