
REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 20 JUNE 2012**PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT****REPORT FROM HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES****SUBJECT: PET MEMORIAL AREA, CHERRY ORCHARD COUNTRY PARK****1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 That a pet memorial area is constructed within Cherry Orchard Country Park as detailed in this report.
- 1.2 That a capital allocation of £25,000 is made in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

2 FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE No: 05/12**3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) identifies the proposal to create a pet memorial park to provide a service for residents within the district and surrounding areas. This service will compliment the range of other memorial services currently being developed by the Woodlands and Open Spaces team, namely the provision of memorial benches and memorial trees.
- 3.2 It is proposed that this memorial area will be located within Cherry Orchard Country Park within close proximity to the car park adjacent to Cherry Orchard Way, for ease of access. This facility is intended only to accommodate the internment of ashes.
- 3.3 Following an on-site assessment, it is considered that the garden should be a fenced area informal in design, with an emphasis on enhancing its wildlife and amenity value and be reflective of the character of the Country Park. It will comprise approximately 2.5 hectares to accommodate future demand, but will be designed to allow for quiet reflection by pet owners.
- 3.4 The location of the memorial area was primarily influenced by the need to avoid waterlogged areas that could present a higher risk of contamination, proximity to the car park and avoidance of the popular thoroughfares. (Appendix 1)

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 An initial consultation has been undertaken of the Town and Parish Councils, who offer marginal support. Other alternatives considered include a full pet crematoria and burial service – this was deemed inappropriate as it would represent a considerable capital investment and consequent provision of revenue budget in terms of additional staff and grounds maintenance. The

market has high barriers to entry as most custom is generated by referral from a vet. The burial service would require a high level of resourcing due to the need to collect and store deceased pets for burial on a seven day a week basis and the need to obtain an Environmental Permit from the Environment Agency.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The scheme is relatively low in cost and we have been unable to find any comparable examples to say whether this project will be a success or not and generate any income for the Council.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the financial outlay and, hence risk, will be reduced through the development of an informal 'natural' area that will require lower maintenance costs.

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The informal nature of the development and the supporting policy of not allowing the siting of ornate headstones should minimise the potential for vandalism. Cherry Orchard Country Park has a low recorded incidence of vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There is low risk of contamination of interred remains contaminating the water table, no Environmental Permit is required for the proposed arrangement.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The physical establishment of the memorial area and its consequent marketing and promotion will require a capital investment of approximately £25,000. This scheme was included in the MTFs but no specific capital allocation has been made.
- 8.2 There is no revenue budget for staffing or other on-going maintenance at present allocated for this project. There will be an on-going revenue requirement of approximately £2,500. This is to ensure that maintenance of the garden is to an acceptable standard and for on-going marketing.
- 8.3 A re-assessment of priorities within the Woodlands & Open Spaces team would allow for staff time to be allocated to the delivery and promotion of the service.
- 8.4 Income generated through the service provision would provide a contribution towards off-setting the ongoing revenue costs. It is thought that if a suitable demand for the service is generated, that the service cost will be negated.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

SMT Lead Officer Signature: _____

Head of Environmental Services

Background Papers:-

None.

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