

 Executive –November 2011		Agenda Item No. 7
Title	Leamington Cemetery Extension	
For further information about this report please contact	Richard Hall Head of Environmental Services 01926-456700 Pam Chilvers Bereavement Services manager richard.hall@warwickdc.gov.uk	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	n/a	
Background Papers	None	

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	No
Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken	No
Impact Assessments not required – although an EIA might subsequently be applicable for any specific initiative resulting from an approval of this funding request	

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Deputy Chief Executive		Bill Hunt
Head of Service		n/a
CMT		
Section 151 Officer		Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer		Andy Jones
Finance		Jenny Clayton
Portfolio Holder(s)		Cllr. Coker
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Final Decision?		Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report brings forward a proposal to commit funds for the construction of suitable access roadways etc so that previously allocated land can be used to extend the burial area in Leamington Cemetery.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Executive support the works for the extension of Leamington Cemetery.
- 2.2 That, as part of the 2012/13 Budget setting in February 2012, capital expenditure and financing is included within the Council's 2012/13 Capital Budget, with the revenue implications included in the 2012/13 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 In planning ahead for Bereavement Services the provision of sufficient burial space has been a consideration. It has been known for several years that additional land for burials would be needed at Leamington Cemetery and land for this purpose has been retained at the southern end of the site. This issue has been identified in service planning for 2010-11 and 2011-12.
- 3.2 If the site is not developed we will run out of burial space at Leamington cemetery, depending on a number of factors, within the next 1-3 years.

4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 As part of the Council's planning for the future the land referred to has been reserved for this purpose.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 A figure of approximately £168,000 has been quoted by our Building Surveyors to construct a roadway access into the site. This would give access to land which would allow for burials to take place beyond the foreseeable future (i.e. more than 20 years). Concrete bases (plinths) on which headstones can be fixed would also be constructed, along with ground works to prepare the site. This has all been allowed for within the figure of £168,000.
- 5.2 There will be some additional revenue costs relating to grounds maintenance, estimated at below £2,000 per annum, although this figure will be subject to review as part of the major contracts renewal from 2013. The current repair and maintenance budget should be able to accommodate this cost.
- 5.3 The Capital Investment Reserve (CIR) currently has an unallocated balance of around £1.5m, excluding the £1.2m that was allocated as part of the 2011/12 Budget setting towards possible expenditure coming out of the review of the Council's corporate assets in Leamington. If the CIR is used to finance this project, provision will need to be made to reimburse the CIR from the General Fund in future years. Over a ten year period, taking into account the opportunity cost of investment interest, it will amount to around £20,000 per

annum additional expenditure on the General Fund. This will increase the level of savings that the Council will need to find in future years.

- 5.4 The requirement to replenish the CIR is in accordance with the Council's agreed policy on debt repayment. It is possible for the CIR not to be replenished, in which case the cost to the General Fund from reduced investment interest will be around £4,000 per annum (based on current interest rates). In addition, consideration will need to be given to how this may impact on the funding of future capital schemes.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 If the Council is to continue to provide land for burials and interment of cremated remains, this land, or an alternative plot of land (not yet identified or designated) would have to be used.
- 6.2 The possibility of making use of the land in phases, to minimise the initial outlay, has been considered. The option proposed uses only one third of the available area and would provide for 550 burial plots. It would be possible to reduce the initial cost by providing sufficient plinths for two year's burials and then to construct one or two plinths each year as required.
- 6.3 Reducing the level of choice for the types of grave and not having any ground dedicated to specific faith groups, coupled with removing the facility to purchase for future use would extend the time for burials taking place in a new grave within the existing development to approximately 9 years. It should be noted that removing the facility to purchase for future use would reduce the annual income by approximately £32,500 and reducing the choice is likely to cause complaint from various faith groups.
- 6.4 Approximately 1.5% of burials take place in graves where the exclusive right of burial has not been issued. The cemetery regulations currently allow a 5 year period before the remaining space can be reclaimed by the council and used for burial of someone unrelated. It would be possible to remove this regulation so that either unpurchased graves can be used straight away for unrelated deceased, or that the choice of burial in an unpurchased grave is ceased, however given the relatively few graves being used in this way each year it would not impact on the lifespan of the cemetery to worthwhile extent and would adversely impact the poorest families who have the opportunity to save up to purchase the grave in those 5 years.
- 6.5 Legislation permits the use of any remaining space (i.e. where a grave was dug to accommodate 2 or 3 burials but only 1 burial has taken place) when the grant of exclusive right of burial expires – this will only be applicable for graves purchased after 1st April 1965 and cannot therefore begin until 2015, or in the case of rights issued in perpetuity (as was the case before 1st April 1965) if those rights have not been exercised within a 75 year period.
- 6.6 Theoretically, using existing ecclesiastical legislation it would be possible to exhume deceased from their current position, deepen the grave for them to be re-buried and thus re-use the space for new burials. This could only take place in the consecrated sections of the cemetery and would require faculty permission from the bishop. It should be noted that faculty application fees are currently £169.80 with no guarantee of permission being granted as this would be a precedent being set by our district. The common law equivalent of this

legislation is currently only applicable to London boroughs; therefore, dedicated and multi-denominational land would be excluded.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 The Council is required to provide plots for burial and interment of cremated remains. The need to provide land has been factored into planning over many years and sufficient land has been set aside. For example, as recently as two years ago, work was carried out to ensure that sufficient burial space will be continue to be available at Warwick Cemetery for the foreseeable future.
- 7.2 Leamington cemetery is the largest and most frequently used cemetery in the district, carrying out approximately 110 burials and 33 burials of cremated remains each year.
- 7.3 Determining when additional burial space is required is dependent on a number of factors. These include not only the death rate but the layout of the burial area and allowing for the needs of different faith groups. Whilst the ratio of new graves compared to re-opening of family plots varies significantly each year, on average 78 new full size graves are used each year.
- 7.4 There are 4 sections with available space for new graves offering bereaved families a choice based on the style of memorial permitted and the religious denomination of the deceased. There are only 5 new back-to-back style graves available, this choice will run out in 2011 as the annual demand in 2010/11 was 46. There are 240 Roman Catholic traditional style graves available, approximately 28 are used each year, with a further 8 being reduced to smaller sized plots that will not accommodate a full sized adult burial due to coffin sizes increasing in recent years. The current trend also shows an upward trend for families purchasing exclusive rights of burial for future use on the Roman Catholic section. As the number of graves in this section reduces it is expected this trend will further increase. The Church of England area has 18 usable graves, which could be expected to last a further 4 years.
- 7.5 The layout of the burial area has a significant impact on the maintenance and resource demands into the future. For example cutting grass around individual plots can be very time consuming and adds to the contract cost. By providing concrete plinths the cutting of grass is made more efficient and, as it allows for the secure fixing of headstones, it reduces the cost and safety issues in the long term.
- 7.6 The estimated income generated (all be it over a 50 year period) from granting exclusive right of burial, subsequent burials and issuing of memorial permits for graves in the proposed extension is approximately £1,397,000
- 7.7 Based on a 50 year grant of exclusive right of burial, the corresponding revenue cost directly associated with the proposed extension of providing the burial service would be £350,933 and an increase in the existing grounds maintenance commitment would be a further £88,072. It should be noted that these costs are based on the grounds maintenance charges in the current contract which expires in 2013.

- 7.8 Additional grounds maintenance costs to establish boundaries, particularly dense shrubbery between Whitnash Primary school boundary to act as both visual screening and noise abatement.

Annualised Average burial data (based on usage trends in 2010/11 & 2011/12)

New grave allocations										Re-open existing family plots	
Adult RC	Adult CE	Adult Multi-denomination	Ashes, babies & ½ graves	Un-purchased adult	Un-purchased babies	PFU Adult RC	PFU Adult CE	PFU Adult Multi	PFU Ashes & ½ graves	Adult	Ashes & ½ graves
15	4	20	13	3	4	13	0	23	4	33	11

Available new grave spaces (As at 10/10/2010)

Denomination/style	Number of graves available	Estimated date choice will cease
Multi-denominational /back to back	5	2011
Roman Catholic / Traditional	240	2015 (increasing demand due to PFU & b-2-b graves not being available)
Church of England / Traditional	18	2015
Multi-denominational / Traditional	382	2019
Muslim / Traditional	47	2040
Multi-denominational / Babies & ½ graves / back to back	39	2020
Church of England / cremated remains	630	2048