

Meeting of the Cabinet – 6th January 2020

Joint Report of the Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Legal

Urgent Amendment to Capital Programme

Purpose of Report

1. To propose an urgent amendment to the Capital Programme.

Recommendation

2. That additional expenditure of £1m on the Stourbridge Crematorium project be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 4.

Background

Urgent Amendments to Capital Programme

3. In normal circumstances, the Cabinet makes recommendations to the Council to make amendments to the Capital Programme. However urgent amendments may be referred to the next ordinary meeting of the Cabinet for decision provided that the timescales permit. The Cabinet will consider the reasons why an item is urgent and cannot be the subject of a recommendation to the Council. The Council will be informed of the decisions taken by the Cabinet.
4. Stourbridge Crematorium
Stourbridge Crematorium currently operates with two cremators which are past their intended operational life. As a result, due to the age of the machines, parts are becoming increasingly difficult to source by the servicing company and there are only a small number of crematoria in the country that still operate this type of cremator. It is inevitable that at some point in the future, parts for the cremators will break down and ultimately they may not be able to be replaced, resulting in an inability to cremate at Stourbridge Crematorium. In short, the cremators need to be replaced with more modern equipment. New cremators are more efficient and will allow for larger coffins to be cremated where necessary.



In February 2018, Cabinet approved a project with an estimated cost of £1m. Initially, surveyors believed the project would be similar to the cremator upgrade which took place at Gornal Wood Crematorium in 2012. However, during site investigation inspections it became clear that to accommodate the new longer and larger cremators, an extension to the building will be required. Additional roof supports, insertion of steel members and work to the flue and chimney are all needed. Furthermore, work to the structural opening to allow coffins to transfer from the chapel to the crematory area is needed. Surveyors found that the existing electricity supply is inadequate to operate the new cremators and associated equipment; therefore a full rewire is required throughout the building. In addition, considerable work is required to the gas supply to ensure full compliance. Finally, surveyors discovered that the roof is in poor condition and will therefore need replacing.

In addition to the essential above-mentioned work, it is proposed to undertake further structural work to increase chapel capacity, something members have been keen to see carried out due to the small current capacity. Increasing the chapel capacity will allow up to 30 additional mourners to be seated and is considered to be an important aspect of the project.

The additional cost of all these works is approximately £1m. Costs of repaying prudential borrowing of this amount will be met from Treasury budgets. It is proposed that this additional expenditure is approved and included in the Capital Programme. Approval is required at this point in order that an order can be placed with the contractor and works can proceed in the spring/early summer so that the service is disrupted as little as possible.

Finance

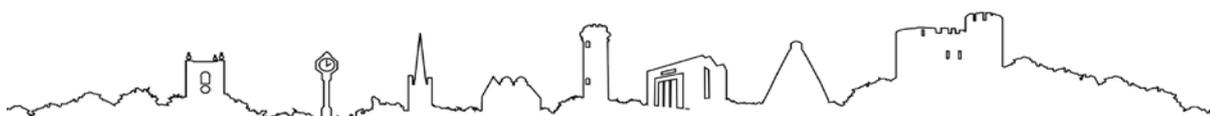
5. This report is financial in nature and information about the individual proposals is contained within the body of the report.

Law

6. The Council's budgeting process is governed by the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and the Local Government Act 2003.

Equality Impact

7. The proposals in this report comply with the Council's policy on Equality and Diversity. They do not have any direct implications for children and young people.



Organisational Development / Transformation

8. The proposals in this report do not have any direct organisational development / human resources or transformational implications.

Commercial / Procurement

9. Procurement of the new cremators will be carried out in compliance with standing orders. As the new cremators will be slightly larger in design than the current cremators, this will allow the crematorium to accept particularly large coffins, something the service is currently unable to do.

Health, Wellbeing and Safety

10. The process for charging a coffin (physically moving it into the cremator) will be safer as an automated coffin charge machine is being procured as part of this project.



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