

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO CABINET**

Cabinet
08 November 2022

Report Title: Additional space for cremated remains burial at Bradwell and new Cemetery and Crematorium Regulations

Submitted by: Executive Director - Commercial Development & Economic Growth

Portfolios: Environment and Recycling; Finance, Town Centres and Growth

Ward(s) affected: All but specifically Bradwell

Purpose of the Report

To outline progress in allocating needed additional space for the burial of cremated remains for those families wishing to remain in Bradwell and to consider the new Cemetery and Crematorium Regulations.

Recommendations

That;

1. The Cabinet approve the Cemetery and Cremations Regulations, with the Executive Director - Commercial Development & Economic Growth authorised in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling to make minor amendments as necessary.
2. The Cabinet approve the principal to extend the burial area of Bradwell crematorium into the open space off Chatterley Valley, retaining public access to an area to be planted with trees contributing to the Council's carbon capture.
3. The Cabinet agree to the principal of external consultants developing a new scheme layout and that the Executive Director - Commercial Development & Economic Growth is authorised in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling to agree the plans to submit a planning application.

Reasons

To ensure the Council can continue to offer burial of cremated remains at Bradwell and that the cemeteries and crematorium are effectively managed through up to date regulations ensuring that respectful cemeteries are available.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Council provides a range of services to meet the cremation and burial needs, this is through the Crematorium at Bradwell and a range of cemeteries across the Borough. The provision of services need to meet the needs and wishes of the deceased and their loved ones but also provide a respectful service to all users. The regulations were first adopted in 1965 and it is appropriate that the Council reviews these to take into account current service user expectations.
- 1.2 The current service provision is very traditional based around cremation and burial, with memorial based around the traditional granite headstone / plaque or purchase of memorial tree/ shrub.

1.3 The Council has recognised that Bradwell burial grounds are at capacity with Cabinet approval given in 2021 to extend the burial grounds onto the adjoining public open space. Whilst this extension is progressing approximately 100 additional burial spaces for cremated remains have been commissioned through the provision of some spaces in the shape of leaves around the edge of the petal garden. These spaces will accommodate families currently waiting to bury their loved ones remains.

1.4 Previously the Council had a masterplan produced to identify the area being developed as part burial space and part housing development. This proposal was not taken forward as the decision was taken to retain some open space instead of developing housing. The adjoining open spaces is approximately 6.77ha of which Cabinet have previously approved approximately 2.64ha to be used for the crematorium burial space.

2. **Issues**

2.1 The Council has a clear approach to support the Sustainability Strategy, as part of this there is a clear objective to support the development of carbon capture through the planting of trees. The open space site at Bradwell is ideal for the planting of further trees and plans need to be formed to ensure that planting maximises environmental benefits and supports local resident usage of the open space.

2.2 To ensure the Council has a well designed burial area a competitive tendering process is being undertaken to secure suitably qualified and experienced consultants. The consultants will develop plans to identify formal layout of burial spaces in the area nearest the Cremator, leaving open space for a possible future car park extension. The proposals for consultation will propose boundary treatments (railings/hedges/gates), footpaths, drainage, hard and soft landscaping and associated minor structures. The plans will also seek to support a range of memorialisation options to meet resident's wishes. The market is continuing to evolve, whilst many people wish to have a traditional funeral and long term headstone, others are seeking direct cremations with short term smaller name plaques. Regardless of the choice of memorialisation the choice of flowers continues to be popular and all future options need to consider how flowers can be laid in an appropriate manner for those leaving the flowers and the visitors to surrounding graves.

2.3 The existing children's play area will be retained.

3. **Proposals**

3.1 Providing good quality cemeteries and cremation services is important to local residents and the Council needs to ensure our offer and management of our sites meets resident's expectations. The new regulations will set out to our site users what is expected from them and in turn what they can expect. Consultation on the draft regulations will be undertaken through an 8 week consultation period. Responses will be considered and any amendments can be made as necessary prior to them being used.

3.2 Through considering this report it is acknowledged that there is a continuing need for burial and memorial space at Bradwell and the plans to deliver the extension to meet current and future needs. By developing the plans for the extension the Council will be able to seek planning permission and resident views on the proposals.

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

4.1 For many people having their loved ones cremated at Bradwell means they wish to have them buried or a memorial at Bradwell, rather than another cemetery. Progressing the extension is

important to ensure residents can have an opportunity to remain in Bradwell. The extension will provide burial space for cremated remains for over 40 years.

5. **Options Considered**

5.1 The Council could continue to offer burial of cremated remains at the other cemeteries once there is no further burial or memorial space at Bradwell.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 The Council has a duty, both fiduciary and operationally to utilise its assets for the benefit of the community.

6.2 The rules and regulations are made under the local government act 1972 (LGA 1972) and the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO (1977) and are where appropriate, subject to the provisions of the said Act and Order and any consent or other requirements specified in the said Act or Order.

6.3 The Council has previously consulted upon the disposal of the site in line with the Asset Management Strategy. Further consultation on the layout design of the burial site will be undertaken and this will be followed by Planning permission being sought.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 The cemeteries and cremations seek to meet the needs of all our residents. The burial area in the new extension will not be consecrated to enable any resident to be buried regardless of religious belief.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 It is estimated that up to £50,000 is required to cover the fees for commissioning consultants to design a scheme, prepare and submit a planning application and any associated reports. These costs are being met from the Capital Programme following the mid-year review.

8.2 It is proposed to fund the work from the capital programme on the basis that future sales of burial plots will cover the infrastructure costs. As part of the design of the extension phasing of the plots will need to be planned to ensure that the costs can be spread of the forthcoming years in line with the space utilisation and as far as practicably possible the income from the sale of the burial plots. It is important to note however that the initial extension will require some investment so that paths onto the site can be developed to enable site users to access the new plots. These costs will need to be established as part of the scheme design and will need to be budgeted for as part of the Council's Capital Programme for 2023/24 onwards.

8.3 Through the Council's Sustainability commitment there is a planned programme of tree planting, the costs of the trees on the open space will be met through the existing tree planting budget.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 Overall local residents want to have a local site whereby they can bury their loved ones remains and have memorials that meet their wishes, there is a risk that there will be community objections to the extension however the consultation on the proposals and the planning application process will seek to address any major concerns.

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 The planting of trees will contribute to the Council's Sustainability Strategy and carbon capture. The provision of bereavement services supports all residents wish to use these services.



11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 The report is referred to in the Forward Plan as it affects more than one ward.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 12th September 2018 – Asset Management Cabinet report
Cabinet 11th November 2020 That;

1. The Masterplan to extend Newcastle Crematorium and to redevelop the remaining Council owned land off Chatterley Close is received.
2. The scheme to extend the grounds of the Crematorium is approved in principle.
3. The Executive Director - Commercial Development & Economic Growth is authorised to consult with appropriate stakeholders on the proposals in accordance with the Asset Management Strategy 2018-21 and to report the results to a future meeting of the Cabinet.
4. The Executive Director - Commercial Development & Economic Growth is authorised to engage consultancy support to prepare a hybrid planning application for the extension to the crematorium grounds (full) and, subject to the outcome of the consultation with stakeholders, residential development to the remainder of the site (outline).
5. Subject to a detailed financial analysis, the scheme to extend the crematorium grounds is funded from the capital receipt gained from the sale of the remaining land for development.
6. The Head of Operations is authorised to engage consultancy support to prepare an outline business case for an improved memorialisation offer in the crematorium grounds with a view to generating increased revenue and provision of £14,000 is made available for this support in the General Fund Capital Programme/Borough Growth Fund in 2020/21.

Cabinet on 9th June 2021:

That Cabinet

1. Consider the comments received following consultation with appropriate stakeholders along with observations received from the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny (FAPS) Committee
2. Agree to allocate space for the Crematorium extension and direct officers to look at options to finance the associated extension scope of works

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Proposed Cemetery and Crematorium Regulations 2022

14. **Background Papers**

14.1 None.