



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17TH SEPTEMBER 2013

SUBJECT: GELLIGAER CEMETERY EXTENSION

REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To respond to a member's request.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 To advise on the implications for the future provision of burial space at Gelligaer Cemetery.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1 The Community & Leisure Services aim in the Service Improvement Plan for 2013/14 in relation to Bereavement Services is:

“To provide a customer focused, sensitively delivered bereavement service and to achieve excellent standards in cemetery management and maintenance”.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 The Authority manages ten municipal cemeteries throughout the county borough and the existing cemetery at Gelligaer has been operational since 1935. During the period 2012/13 there were 26 interments within new graves at the cemetery, however there is a critical need to extend the cemetery to accommodate future burials.

4.2 Members will be aware from reports presented to Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the 21st May and Cabinet on the 4th of June of the discovery of archaeological remains within the proposed extension, including a Roman Road. At Cabinet on 4th June 2013, a further report was requested on the implications for future burial space

4.3 At the time of preparing this report, there are circa 50 new graves available within the existing cemetery curtilage. This will provide around 16 months of burial space, based on current burial rates.

4.4 The proposed extension will be constructed in two phases as outlined within Appendix 1. Phase one, the eastern half of the site would have the capacity to accommodate circa 770 new graves, which based on current burial rates (around 30 per annum) would serve the local community for a further 25 years.

- 4.5 During this time, phase two would be running in parallel on the western half of the site, which would include undertaking the required archaeology work and the subsequent reinstatement of the site for use as a cemetery. It is anticipated that this site would have the capacity to accommodate circa 1090 new graves, which based on current burial rates (around 30 per annum) would serve the community for a further 36 years.
- 4.6 Gelligaer cemetery has served the local community as a municipal cemetery for the last 78 years.
- 4.7 The Authority has recently submitted a formal planning application (11/0772/LA) to extend phase one of the proposed extension, which includes an access road, car parking and internal footpaths.
- 4.8 A separate planning application will need to be submitted for phase two of the extension once the archaeology works have been completed and the land reinstated.
- 4.9 Members should note that if planning permission is not obtained to develop either site, the cemetery will be closed to new burials within the next 16 months. This will place increased pressure on other municipal cemeteries in the locality (e.g. Llanfabon or Brithdir Cemetery), which would mean that Gelligaer residents would not be able to be interred within their locality.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this report, however Religion and Belief is a protected characteristic under Equalities legislation and burial issues are handled sensitively with due regard to the beliefs of the deceased and the bereaved. Well-maintained and accessible cemeteries supports the service aim stated in point 2.1.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A budget estimate of £80K has been received to develop the infrastructure within phase one of the scheme. The extension of the cemetery at Gelligaer currently forms part of the Authority's capital programme.
- 6.2 As noted in paragraph 3.4 above, phase two will not be required for circa 25 years, therefore there are no imminent financial implications.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 All comments of the listed consultees have been taken into account within this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Members are asked to note the importance of developing phase one of the scheme at a budget estimate of £80K as noted in point 6.1 and to the development of phase two of the scheme (as and when required) at a budget estimate of circa £200K (following the removal of the archaeological remains).

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To enable the Authority to continue to provide municipal cemetery provision within the locality.

11. STATUTORY POWERS

11.1 Local Government Act 2000 and Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.

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Sandra Aspinall, Acting Deputy Chief Executive
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Derek Price, Parks & Outdoor Facilities Manager
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Robert Napper, Project Manager
David A. Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh Language)

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Cemetery Extension Boundary