

To: Cabinet
Date: 13 September 2023
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Delivery of a New Burial Space

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision
Key decision:	No
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Councillor Mike Rowley, Scrutiny Committee Vice Chair
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Deputy Leader (Non-Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks
Corporate Priority:	Support Thriving Communities
Policy Framework:	Oxford Local Plan 2036
Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.	

Appendices	
Appendix A	Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

Introduction and overview

1. The Scrutiny Committee met on 05 September 2023 to consider a report concerning the Delivery of a New Burial Space. The report, which is due for Cabinet consideration on 13 September 2023, recommends that Cabinet grants project approval for the delivery of a new publicly accessible greenspace and burial meadow on land owned by the Council off Oxford Road towards Horspath, including approval of the scheme; submission of a planning application to South Oxfordshire District Council; Phase 1 delivery budget; required Property and Legal procedures to deliver the scheme; and delegated authority to the Executive Director (Development) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks to approve changes to the scheme. The report further seeks a Cabinet recommendation to Council for the approval of a capital budget of £2.4m for delivery of the scheme; and recommends the delegation of authority to:

- The Executive Director (Development), in consultation with the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer and the Head of Law and Governance to enter into any related agreements and contracts to facilitate the scheme in terms of construction and operation; works details; and budget changes for the Council owned land, including agreeing the fees and charges as detailed in Appendix 6 to the report, which is exempt from publication; and
 - The Executive Director (Development), in consultation with the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer, Head of Law and Governance and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management to agree the final heads of terms and enter into the necessary transactions set out in Appendix 4 to the report, which is exempt from publication, together with any other ancillary agreements, contracts and notices that may be required to facilitate the scheme.
2. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Munkonge (Deputy Leader (Non-Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks), Ian Brooke (Head of Community Services), Carri Unwin (Regeneration Manager) and Emma Gubbins (Corporate Asset Lead) for attending the meeting to answer questions.

Summary and recommendations

3. Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Deputy Leader (Non-Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks introduced the report. Land in Oxford City Council's existing cemeteries was running out and comprehensive searches had been undertaken to identify a suitable new burial site. The Council had identified a suitable site, proposals for which were set out in the report.
4. The Committee asked a range of questions, including questions relating to the lifespan of the burial site, duration of burial plot leases, equalities impact assessment relating to the impact on certain faith communities, best practice within other local authority burial sites in areas such as Bradford and Birmingham, financial implications, the relationship between the Council and ODS, site design and information contained in the confidential appendices.
5. In particular, the Committee noted the importance of the ongoing conversations being held with a number of stakeholders, including faith leaders, the Interfaith Forum and Oxford Preservation Trust and agreed that it was vital to the success of the proposed project that this dialogue continued. During discussion, the Committee expressed a desire for Members to be kept informed of progress in relation to the project, including the information contained in the confidential appendices, with any confidential information being marked as such upon circulation.

Recommendation 1: That the Council continues to facilitate open dialogue and communication with stakeholders in order to help ensure the success of the proposed project, with all Members being kept informed of progress as the project develops.

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