

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
21 MARCH 2017**

**PART 1**

**AGENDA ITEM No.**

**21**

**TITLE OF REPORT: PROPOSED CREMATORIUM AT WILBURY HILLS CEMETERY –  
INTERIM REPORT ON BUSINESS CASE**

ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
SERVICES

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS: COUNCILLOR L. NEEDHAM AND COUNCILLOR T. HONE

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report confirmed that the recommendations and reasons for recommendations would follow and accordingly this addendum confirms those details as follows.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That officers be authorised to progress and submit an outline planning application for the development of a crematorium at Wilbury Hills, such authorisation to include taking all steps required for a successful grant of permission.
- 2.2 That the project is allocated a budget of £30,000 to cover external consultants and other costs associated with the planning application.
- 2.3 That the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council be authorised to carry out further negotiations to finalise the structure and detail of any potential agreement with the Proposed Operator, subject to Cabinet providing final approval in due course.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 As a site already dedicated to the burial and remembrance of the deceased Wilbury Hills has significant potential to be developed further to provide a full profile of options for burial or cremation. This has already been identified as a community need with several sections of the community making enquiries with regards the development of a Crematorium at Wilbury Hills.
- 3.2 The initial information received from the marketplace indicated that development of a Crematorium is viable for North Herts District Council (NHDC). Compared to the original business case, the development of a facility at Holwell has impacted upon the financial returns of this project in the short term.

- 3.3 Cremation is a more popular choice than burial and trends suggest that cremation will continue to increase in popularity in the future. It is therefore strategically important for Wilbury Hills to be able to offer cremation services in order to continue as a viable facility in the future.
- 3.4 The proposed arrangement in the form of a land disposal will allow the Council to benefit from a lessee's expertise and experience which should, in turn, help ensure the crematorium is designed, situated and managed appropriately.
- 3.5 The proposed approach being recommended is that the Council obtains planning permission in order to provide a greater degree of certainty of delivery which should in turn help secure the best return for the Council. In order to maximise the success of this project it is important that construction begins as early as possible in order to maximise market share and to this end, planning permission needs to be obtained as quickly as possible given the presence of the alternative facility currently in development. Progressing planning permission would also demonstrate the Council is committed to this project and would still allow the alternative options set out at 4.2 and 4.3 below to be pursued if necessary.