



Borough of Tamworth

Marmion House,
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CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29 September 2021

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee will be held in **Council Chamber, Marmion House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, B79 7BZ on Thursday, 7th October, 2021 at 6.00 pm.** Members of the Committee are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a long horizontal line that tapers to a point on the right.

Chief Executive

A G E N D A

NON CONFIDENTIAL

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 10)**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of Members' interests (personal and/or personal and prejudicial) in any matters which are to be considered at this meeting.

When Members are declaring a personal interest or personal and prejudicial interest in respect of which they have dispensation, they should specify the nature of such interest. Members should leave the room if they have a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of which they do not have a dispensation.

4 Chair's Update

5 Responses to Reports of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

6 Consideration of Matters referred to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee from Cabinet / Council

7 Forward Plan

Please see the link to the Forward Plan:

<http://democracy.tamworth.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=120&RD=0&bcr=1>

8 Update on Implementation of Housing Repairs Contract (Pages 11 - 14)

(Report of the Assistant Director, Assets)

9 Member's proposal to consider a memorial / reflection area within the Borough (Pages 15 - 24)

(Report of the Assistant Director, Operations and Leisure)

10 Corporate Scrutiny Committee Work Plan (Pages 25 - 26)

To review the Committee's work plan.

Access arrangements

If you have any particular access requirements when attending the meeting, please contact Democratic Services on 01827 709267 or e-mail democratic-services@tamworth.gov.uk. We can then endeavour to ensure that any particular requirements you may have are catered for.

Filming of Meetings

The public part of this meeting may be filmed and broadcast. Please refer to the Council's Protocol on Filming, Videoing, Photography and Audio Recording at Council meetings which can be found [here](#) for further information.

If a member of the public is particularly concerned about accidental filming, please contact a member of Democratic Services before selecting a seat.

FAQs

For further information about the Council's Committee arrangements please see the FAQ page [here](#)

To Councillors: T Jay, S Pritchard, J Chesworth, A Cooper, R Ford, S Goodall, J Harper,
Dr S People and R Rogers

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 24th AUGUST 2021**

PRESENT: Councillor T Jay (Chair), Councillors S Pritchard, J Chesworth, R Ford, S Goodall, J Harper and Dr S People

CABINET Councillor Jeremy Oates

The following officers were present: Andrew Barratt (Chief Executive), John Day (Knowledge, Performance and Insight Co-ordinator) and Tracey Pointon (Legal Admin & Democratic Services Manager)

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors A Cooper and R Rogers

12 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2021 were approved as a correct record

(Moved by Councillor Dr S People and seconded by Councillor J Harper)

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

14 CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair had nothing to update

15 RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no items to report to the Committee

16 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM CABINET / COUNCIL

The Chair reported that there had been no matters referred to the Committee by Council or Cabinet

17 QUARTER ONE 2021/22 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Chair welcomed the Leader of the Council to present the report, the Leader introduced the Chief Executive and the Knowledge, Performance and Insight Coordinator to the meeting for this item which was for the Committee to receive a performance update and financial health check for Quarter 1, prior to the Report of the Leader of the Council being presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 9th September 2021.

The Leader introduced the report and highlighted that:

- Reset & Recovery project is on track and was agreed by Cabinet on 29th July 2021, the budget for which will be requested at full Council on 25th August
- The report details other Corporate projects and members will have noted that Covid 19 is detailed as the reason for slippage with some projects but they are now on track to catch up and deliver.
- Universal Credit figures are detailed in the report in terms of the number of claimants and the number of claimants who are housing tenants. The impact of the end of furlough scheme may have some impact.
- Future High Street Fund project on track. Early Planning applications should start to appear at in the near future.
- Gungate Master Plan included in the report. A report is included on o Cabinet on 9th September involving working with a Partner if this is supported this will have a positive impact on progress.
- Medium Term Financial Strategy –flag to members that on 13th September there is a budget consultation session for members.

The Committee sought clarifications in the following areas:

- Rent arrears of tenants on universal credit have increased from 47% -63%. Leader clarified that universal credit is very sensitive to change. Quarter 1 rent arrears are usually higher as the budget for rent for 52 weeks but rent is collected in 48 weeks and if anyone is in rent arrears they can use the 'rent holiday' weeks to catch up there will always be a slight reduction in rent arrears in Q4.
- Town Centre Project – Police Station on the plans for the building. Owners have had informal discussion with planning team keen to pursue residential use of the site. This would not alter the master plan.
- The process of the sale of the Youth Centre and Tamworth Youth Charity and their stake in the building. The Leader clarified that the agreement was

that the youth centre receipt will be used the provision of youth activities. The Leader will circulate the figures and documents with more details.

- Amington Local Centre- this is the area designated on the former Golf Course development. Obligation under 106 agreement that the site is developed out as a local centre within the next 5 years.
- Masterplan and timescales, potential partnership arrangement will drive forward and ensure progression and contribute to the housing allocation. Still looking at a mixed economy with commercial and leisure. Things are progressing. Future High Street Fund is progressing with a deadline of March 2024.
- Customer portal still being tested and as part of the Reset & Recovery the digital access is being enhanced.
- Solway Trading Company, not moving forward the Leader to forward a detailed answer to Committee members
- Future High Street Fund update on the outcome of the college. Due to sensitive information the Chief Executive will forward a detailed answer to Committee members
- Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme figures are 100k more with less claimants is that due to the fact that council tax has gone up. The Leader will provide a response.
- Leader clarified that with Write Off's the Council as exhausted all ways to claim the money back.
- Committee discussed the council's loans and investments. It was agreed that Councillor S Pritchard will contact the Director – Finance and bring response back to the Committee

RESOLVED: That the Committee
endorsed the contents of the report.

(Moved by Councillor R Ford and seconded by Councillor S Goodall)

18 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT FUNDING

This report has been provided in response to a question raised by Corporate Scrutiny Committee in relation to the current Disabled Facilities Grant funding allocation received by Tamworth Borough Council.

The Committee raised the following motion:

That the Committee propose to ask Cabinet to raise the issue regarding Disabled Facilities Grant funding with Staffordshire County Council through County Councillors

(Moved by Councillor Dr S Peuple and seconded by Councillor R Ford)

19 CABINET AND COUNCIL DECISIONS - MARCH 2020 - APRIL 2021

Committee agreed the decisions that have been reviewed by email

20 FORWARD PLAN

No further items were identified from the Forward Plan at this time for consideration by this Committee.

21 CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The committee considered its work plan and updated as follows.

As an update has been requested on the Solway trading company from the Q1 report it was decided to remove this item from the October meeting

DRAFT

Work Plan 2021 – 2022		
TARGET MEETING DATE	SUBJECT	MEETING WHEN ITEM ADDED TO WORK PLAN
24 August 2021	Quarter One 2021/22 Performance Report	
24 August 2021	Disabled Facilities Grant report	June 2021
24 August 2021	Review of Cabinet decisions over previous 12 month period	December 2020
7 October 2021	Housing Repairs & Investment Contract Review	November 2019
7 October 2021	Memorial area	
18 November 2021	Quarter Two 2021/22 Performance Report	
9 December 2021	Customer Portal - post implementation review	November 2020
9 Dec 2021 / 1 Feb 2022	Asset Management update	December 2019
1 February 2022	Quarter Three 2021/22 Performance Report	
10 March 2022	Solway Trading Company Update	
Dates to be agreed		
TBC	Update on corporate prioritisation	August 2020
TBC	Market tender progress Update	August 2019
TBC	Parking Toolkit review	October 2019
Bi-annual updates (March & September)	Solway Trading Company Update	December 2019
TBC	Gungate Masterplan	January 2020
TBC	Ways of working	June 2021
TBC	Joint Waste contract update	June 2021

 Chair

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THURSDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2021

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ASSETS

UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF HOUSING REPAIRS CONTRACT

EXEMPT INFORMATION

Not exempt

PURPOSE

This report provides information to committee on the implementation process for the new housing repairs contracts along with some performance statistics for the first year of the contract.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Committee note the contents of this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The previous repairs contract with Wates Living Spaces came to an end on 31st March 2020 and following a review on the future delivery of the repairs service it was agreed to procure a new 10-year contract and at the same time take the call centre back in house; historically calls had been managed directly by the contractor(s).

Following an EU & PCR compliant procurement process which measured both cost and quality and involved tenants in the selection process the contract for repairs was awarded to Engie.

Engie is a large company employing 17,000 staff within the UK and are engaged in similar contracts within the social housing sector.

Unfortunately, the implementation and commencement of this contract took place against the initial Covid lockdown period but despite this the contract was up and running on 1st April and in a position to deliver a repairs service. Initially the works were limited to Emergency Repairs, Out Of Hours repairs, compliance works and void works but by June 2020 sufficient measures were in place to expand into other categories of work to the point where a full repairs service was being delivered by August.

During the first 12 months of the contract Engie attended to 13,978 repair calls and completed works to 323 void properties. Right first time rates have been recorded at 94% and satisfaction, which is recorded monthly, has been between 90% & 97% with complaints averaging at fewer than 8 per month. Across the suite of Key Performance Indicators that are measured as part of this contract performance has been consistently high.

Across the construction industry there have been issues with the materials and labour supply chain; to date Engie has been able to continue delivering services due to their established supply chain links.

Performance in relation to gas servicing has been consistently high since the start of the contract and has been fully compliant with the Council's servicing and access policy. There have been 3841 services completed, 3791 repairs carried out and in excess of 200 boilers installed. Despite Covid access rates have remained high and tenants have worked alongside the call centre and contractor to facilitate access.

Due to changes in the way sheltered housing schemes were operated during the initial Covid lockdown periods Engie were engaged to undertake regular Health & Safety checks within the sheltered housing schemes, this was done to ensure that the schemes remained compliant and allowed the scheme managers to concentrate on providing support to residents.

For any Public Sector contracts consideration has to be given as to how the contract can deliver Social Value, a number of elements were built into the contract during the procurement phase, due to Covid it has not been possible to deliver all of these as many would require social interaction, however despite this Engie have managed to deliver a number of local projects including some local activities at Christmas, the creation of 4 apprenticeships, the progression of 9 people into employment opportunities, 4 pre-employability workshops and a total Social Value investment of £304,000.

Looking forward Engie are working with us to develop and publish a series of 'How To' videos that will provide information to tenants on how to carry out basic DIY tasks for those repairs that fall outside the Repairs Policy.

Despite being new to the Council and starting up during the initial Covid lockdown period the Call Centre has proven to be highly effective in receiving, diagnosing, logging and deploying repairs calls. The call centre was also instrumental in ensuring gas servicing rates remained high as they were making calls to tenants in advance of service visits to ensure that Covid Safe measures were in place. In addition to dealing with the incoming repairs calls the call centre has provided an invaluable service in capturing tenant feedback following a repair, this feedback is of a more qualitative nature and is collected in addition to the more quantitative KPI data. This feedback is shared regularly with contractor and repairs team as a mechanism to drive improvements.

Our own repairs team have continued to work on site throughout overseeing the delivery of the contract, ensuring that voids are completed and ensuring that the Council remains compliant in relation to gas servicing and fire risk assessments.

Moving forward we will look for improvements in overall service delivery and performance; we will look to implement more of the Social Value measures that were set out in the contract however it should be noted that it is anticipated that there will continue to be pressures on the supply and cost of both materials and labour for the foreseeable future and this is something that we will have to continue to monitor.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None – this report provides an update only

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

None – this report provides an update only.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATION

None – this report provides an update only.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None – this report provides an update only.

REPORT AUTHOR
Paul Weston – Assistant Director Assets

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Corporate Scrutiny Committee

7th October 2021

Report of the Assistant Director, Operations and Leisure

Member's proposal to consider a memorial / reflection area within the Borough to include benches, trees planted areas and appropriate memorials

Exempt Information

None

Background

Following a review of parts of the Cemetery Regulations by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee in 2020/21, officers were requested to explore the potential of a new memorial area for Tamworth residents to pay their respects to their departed loved ones.

Recommendations

That Scrutiny members:

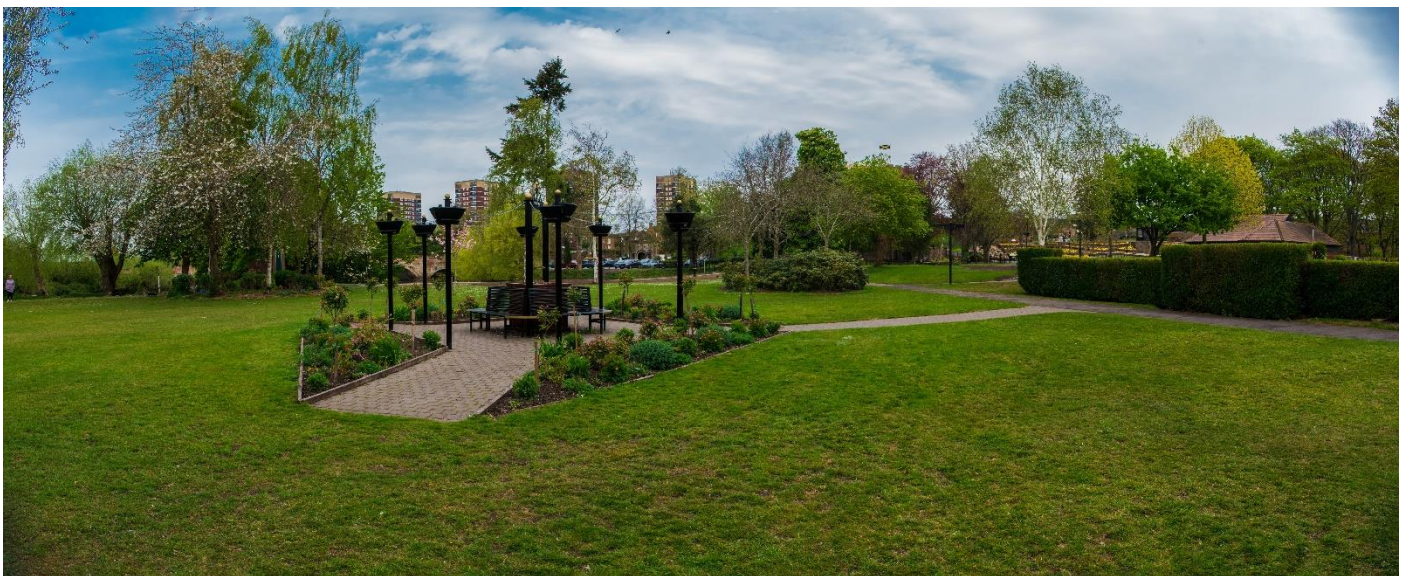
1. Consider the options as detailed within the report
2. Give consideration to a formal consultation process associated with members preferred option, and if necessary Members make subsequent recommendation(s) to Cabinet for further consideration and approval

Current Status and Issues Influencing the Recommendations

- The Council currently operates a Memorial Scheme which offers memorial bench locations within Wigginton Cemetery as well as in the towns other cemeteries in Glascote, Wilnecote and Amington. These designated areas offer space where people can request and pay for a memorial plaque which is fixed to a granite bench. Since the Memorial Scheme was established in 2010 there has been very little take up of it in Wigginton or the other cemeteries that offer the same option.
- The issues surrounding the personalisation area is that people's grief, and loss, is an extremely personal and emotive matter.
- There are no other Council owned recognised and/or dedicated gardens/areas of remembrance within the Borough.
- TBC's Cemetery Regulations do not permit memorial benches tree or plaques on any Council site within the Borough due to the space required to site them, the potential for vandalism and the areas available for such items not being in the direct location of a loved ones grave.
- The Council's public open spaces are heavily used and therefore increases greatly the opportunities for vandalism (dedicated trees benches and plaques can be quite a sensitive issue when damage occurs).

Potential options within the Borough or local area to either enhance or create memorial / remembrance areas

Option 1 .- Jubilee Garden- Kendricks Lawn Castle Grounds



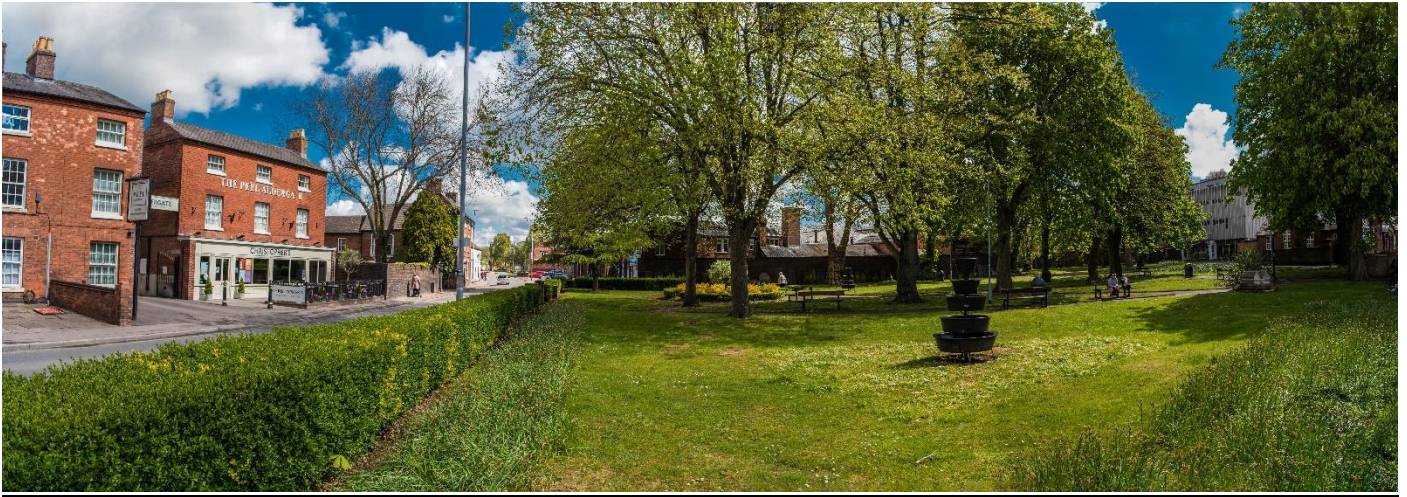


- **Pros for memorial garden / reflection area to be located in the Castle Grounds**
 1. Good central location
 2. Easily accessible
 3. Lovely views of the river and Castle
 4. Well known location
 5. Heavily visited and regularly used

- **Cons for memorial garden / reflection area to be located in the Castle Grounds**
 1. Very high footfall
 2. Not a peaceful / tranquil environment for people to reflect and remember loved ones
 3. High probability of vandalism and anti-social behaviour
 4. The main focus on this area is currently for play and outdoor activities

Option 2 - Area at Corporation Street Town Centre

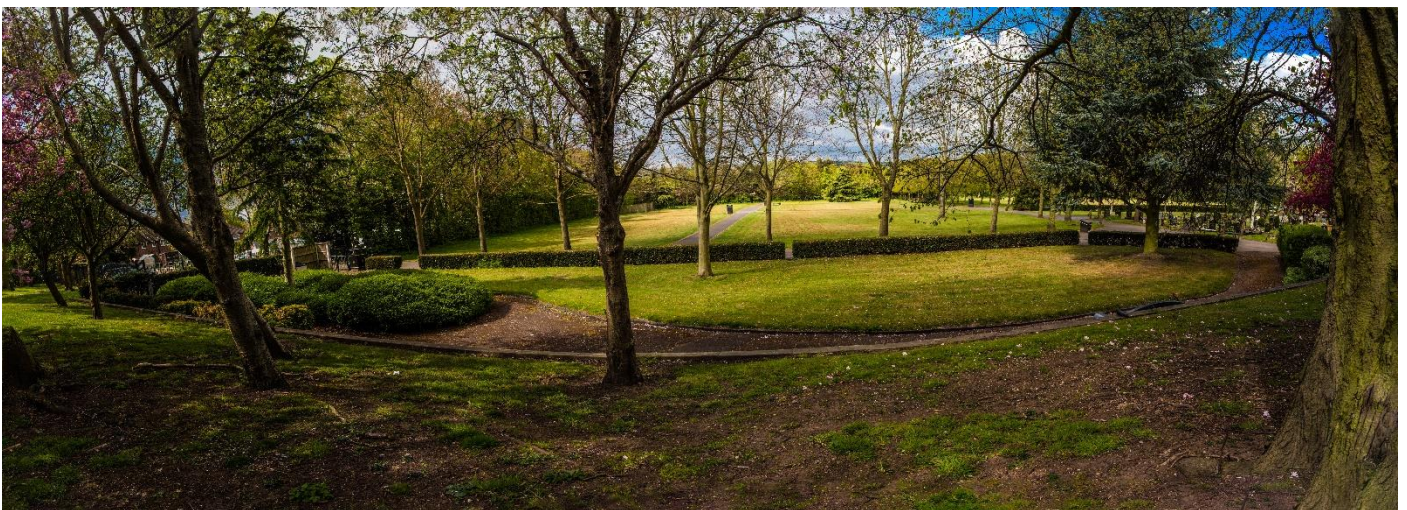




- **Pros for memorial garden / reflection area to be located at Corporation Street Town Centre**
 1. Easily accessible
 2. Good central location
 3. The area is in within TBC's ownership
 4. Situated on one of the main entrances to the town

- **Cons for memorial garden / reflection area to be located at Corporation Street Town Centre**
 1. Very high footfall
 2. May have to exhume existing bodies in order to facilitate
 3. Uncertainty with regards to future town centre development
 4. Not a peaceful / tranquil environment for people to reflect and remember loved one
 5. High risk of theft and vandalism

Option 3 - Garden area within Wigginton Cemetery





- **Pros for memorial garden / reflection area to be located within Wigginton cemetery**
 1. Peaceful and tranquil environment
 2. The area is consecrated ground
 3. The area is within an existing cemetery therefore covered by all the existing cemeteries regulations and legislation.
 4. The area has room for expansion and development
 5. Easy access
 6. Limited parking available

- **Cons for memorial garden / reflection area to be located within Wigginton cemetery**
 1. There may not be the uptake from families to remember a loved one in an area away from where their loved one is buried.
 2. Non-central location, and away from other cemeteries

Option 4 - National Memorial Arboretum (NMA)

An alternative solution to siting a memorial area could be to direct members of the public to the National Memorial Arboretum. The Arboretum offers many different types of memorial/reflection areas for families and is currently developing a new memorial woodland.

The 25-acre extension to the 150-acre woodland has been launched to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the centre of remembrance.



Groundworks for the new memorial woodland are planned to begin in early 2022, ahead of a habitat creation and tree planting effort supported by the National Forest Company. It is hoped that public access to the woodland will begin in 2023.

- **Pros for memorial garden / reflection area to be located at the NMA**
 - 1 Peaceful and tranquil environment
 - 2 Bespoke grounds with a proven track record in this field
 - 3 Longevity assured
 - 4 The area has room for expansion and development
 - 5 Plenty of parking
 - 6 Secure site
 - 7 No entrance fee
- **Cons for memorial garden / reflection area to be located at the NMA**
 1. There may not be the uptake from families to remember a loved one in an area away from where their loved one is buried.
 2. Out of the borough location and away from other cemeteries
 3. May be considered impersonal
 4. Car parking charges apply

Risk Implications

The public desire for a memorial area or garden of remembrance is currently unknown, and to date, there has been no public consultation on the matter. The current uptake of the Memorial Plaque Scheme is little or non-existent which leads officers to believe that there is a significant risk in pursuing any new memorial area within Tamworth further without public consultation.

Should member wish to pursue the Wigginton option (Option number 3) then, the increased footfall from visitors may require additional car parking. The current car park is small, has limited capacity and is accessed through a housing area. Expansion is not possible in the vicinity of the current car park which serves both the cemetery and the local allotments. The car park is already subject to excessive daily use in term-time from parents collecting their children from the school, resulting in many parents frequently parking within the cemetery at peak times. For options 1 or 2 the Councils current town centre car parking facilities would need to be used.

Financial Implications

There are associated financial implications for options 1, 2 and 3 as detailed below. However with regard to option 4 there are no financial implications to the borough council.

The delivery of the memorial / reflection area's detailed as options 1, 2 or 3 within the Borough will require capital investment and this would need to be identified prior to commencement of the project as there is currently no revenue funding available within the service area to deliver this.

All of the memorial areas if sited within the borough would also require an ongoing revenue budget to ensure it is maintained both safely and to public expectation.

The costs below do not include any expansion to Wigginton Road cemetery car park, which could only be undertaken with the loss of cemetery land.

Options 1,2 and 3	Estimated Cost
Design	£2,500
Construction	£4,000
Landscaping and materials	£19,500
Project management	£5,400
CCTV*	£50,000*
Ongoing maintenance pa	£2,500

TOTAL £83,900

Option 4 has none of the above associated costs.

Project management resource for either option 1,2 or 3 could be met from existing officers however, this would impact on other areas of work not being completed. External project management would negate this. Planning permission would be required for all internal options and it is anticipated the project would take one month to complete subject to all materials being available and weather conditions being favourable.

Currently, the area within options 1 and 2 have limited CCTV coverage, whilst the area in option 3 has no CCTV; therefore to protect these potential memorial areas further, consideration to the installation of CCTV would be required through further capital investment to improve community safety and reduce vandalism and nuisance issue in the area.

*In addition consideration will need to be given to installing CCTV to all cemeteries should this go ahead in ensure consistency and transparency across similar sites. The cost for this would be in addition to the figure above at approx. £50k per site.

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Corporate Scrutiny Work Plan

Work Plan 2021 – 2022		
TARGET MEETING DATE	SUBJECT	MEETING WHEN ITEM ADDED TO WORK PLAN
7 October 2021	Housing Repairs & Investment Contract Review	November 2019
7 October 2021	Memorial area	
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TBC	Gungate Masterplan	January 2020
TBC	Ways of working	June 2021
TBC	Joint Waste contract update	June 2021

TBC	Reset & Recovery Workstreams	
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Upcoming Corporate Scrutiny Committee Meetings
7 October 2021
18 November 2021 (Q2 QPR)
9 December 2021
1 February 2022 (Q3 QPR)
10 March 2022