

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

CONSIDERATION OF ISSUES AND OPTIONS ARISING FROM THE CEMETERY GATES PETITION

EXEMPT INFORMATION

No

PURPOSE

To consider various options in response to a petition to reinstate the locking and unlocking of all cemetery gates all year round, before a preferred option is put forward at full Council in September 2012.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to consider all options in order that Cabinet may present a preferred option to full Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2010 Cabinet resolved to stop locking and unlocking all cemetery gates, initially for a 12 month trial period and then permanently provided there were no serious issues arising from this. In April 2012 a petition requesting the reinstatement of the locking and unlocking of all cemetery gates was received by the Council. The petitioner claims that there has been an increase in the number of acts of vandalism at Wilnecote Cemetery and this is a direct result of the gates not being locked. Details of all recorded vandalism both prior and post cessation of locking the gates are attached as **Appendix 1**. It is viewed that the locking of the gates will not prevent access to the cemeteries as some of the boundary fences/shrubbery are currently low enough for individuals to gain access.

Council asked Cabinet to consider various options in response to the petition and to bring back a referred option to full Council in September 2012. The options to be considered are:-

- Option 1** Do nothing, leave gates open maintain the status quo.
- Option 2** Lock/unlock all cemetery gates 365 days a year using a contractor.
- Option 3** Lock/unlock the three cemeteries with vehicular access 365 days a year using a contractor.
- Option 4** Lock/unlock all cemetery gates 365 days a year using existing labour from within Streetscene.
- Option 5** To provide remote opening and closing of cemetery gates, using CCTV Infrastructure and motorised gates.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Options	Annual Cost	Impact of 4 year medium term financial forecast
1	Nil	Nil
2	£20,144	£80,576
3	£12,086	£48,344
4*	£29,523	£118,092
	Capital Cost	
5	£166,250	based on budgeted cost

*These figures include the direct cost overtime for evenings and weekends plus the indirect costs for the estimated loss of productivity through diversion to alternative duties, this will mean that current operational services are reduced in order to meet this requirement. There will be a direct overtime cost to cover evenings and weekends which is estimated to be £19,583 which will need to be funded from an increased budget provision; the additional £9,940 could be carried out by reducing the standard of works elsewhere within the grounds cemeteries and cleansing teams. It is difficult to qualify exactly what this would look like however it is the strong view from Officers that there would be a noticeable reduction in overall service standards elsewhere.

Currently there is no budgetary provision for the implementation of any of these options. Any costs associated with above options will need to be met from the general fund contingency budget.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

There are reputational risks to all presented options and Cabinet is requested to be mindful of these in its consideration of the report.

Under the provisions of The Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (SI 1977/204) it is an offence to be in a Cemetery once it is closed, that is once it is past the published access hours whether or not the gates are locked.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The petitioner has indicated that they would like to become responsible for the locking/unlocking of the cemetery gates; this would therefore reduce the ongoing year on year cost of the above options. It is preferred that this be developed through a 'Friends of Group for the cemeteries' with a view that after a defined period of perhaps 12 months they would take ownership for locking and unlocking of gates.

REPORT AUTHOR

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet report October 2010

Cabinet report October 2011

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – List of all reported complaints since March 2009

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