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| Subject: | Hove Cemetery Toilets | | |
| Date of Meeting: | 8 October 2019 | | |
| Report of: | Executive Lead Officer Strategy Governance & Law | | |
| Contact Officer: | Name: | Paul Holloway | 01273 292005 |
| | Email: | paul.holloway@brighton-hove.gov.uk | |
| Ward(s) affected: | Hangleton & Knoll; | | |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for provision of a new gender neutral wheelchair accessible toilet facility in the grounds of Hove Cemetery, on the north side of the Old Shoreham Road refurbishing an existing surplus building.
- 1.2 Proposals are made based on representations made to the Local Authority by a community group with representatives from the Reform and Liberal Synagogues and local Funeral Directors, with guidance provided to the group from Citizens UK

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the request for a new gender neutral wheelchair accessible toilet facility on the north side of Hove cemetery be agreed subject to the funding being approved as part of the 2020-21 budget process.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Brighton & Hove City Council's Environment Transport and Sustainability Committee (ETS) agreed to the closure of a number of toilet facilities across the city as part of budget savings proposals in 2012.
- 3.2 Members approved recommendations for these savings to be made from the City Clean budget at this time. Toilet facilities in 2012 did not include a wheelchair accessible provision.
- 3.3 City Clean were responsible for a separate male and female facility, located on the north side. After closure there was some significant vandalism to the building
- 3.4 Representations were made to the ETS Committee in 2016, proposing for a toilet facility to re-open,
- 3.5 Members of the ETS Committee rejected the proposals to open a new facility. A budget costings report for the refurbishment of the existing building to be fully accessible was provided by the Council's Property Technical Access Manager in March 2017 (see Appendix 1)

- 3.6 The estimated cost of utilities, cleaning and maintaining this toilet once reopened is estimated to be £0.004m per annum.
- 3.8 A local community group who are keen to see the disabled toilet reopened have offered to fundraise to make a contribution towards the refurbishment costs and they are also willing to participate in the cleaning of the facility which would reduce these costs..

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The nearest gender neutral wheelchair accessible toilet facility for visitors to the cemetery on the north side, is situated on the south side of the main Old Shoreham Road. This requires a fairly long walk and there is also the need to cross the busy main road.
- 4.2 The toilet facility currently available on the south side is a gender neutral, wheelchair accessible facility.
- 4.3 Those attending burials on the north side, where there is currently no toilet facility, can often be elderly and have mobility issues. This has been one of the major points raised by the community group in their attempts to ensure a new toilet facility is opened to provide accessible facilities on the north side of the cemetery.
- 4.4 The north side of Hove cemetery currently has around 90 burials a year. The north area of Hove cemetery will continue to have space for burials for at least a further 8 years, if burial rates remain consistent with current frequency of burials.
- 4.5 Whilst a budget costings analysis report was provided in 2017, the Council's Property and Design Team, which includes the Technical Access Manager, can provide a further detailed survey, design drawings and updated costs for such a facility if requested. This would incur a fee.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 This matter has been raised by a community group from the Reform and Liberal Synagogues, alongside local Funeral Directors and with Guidance from Citizens UK.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Whilst not a statutory requirement, the provision of a gender neutral wheelchair accessible toilet facility on the north side would certainly benefit mourners and other visitors to the north side of the cemetery, who are currently faced with a fairly long walk and having to cross a busy main road.
- 6.2 Anyone else passing the cemeteries would also be able to use the facility when the cemetery is open.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The cost of refurbishment is expected to be in the region of £0.025m, and there will also be annual maintenance costs. There is currently no budgetary provision for these costs, so there would need to be identification of extra funding or savings elsewhere for the proposal to be accommodated within the 2020/21 budget.

Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld

Date: 25/09/19

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The provision of toilet facilities in cemeteries, is not a statutory requirement, but the provision of the facility will support the Council's equalities objectives by making the cemetery more user friendly to the elderly and disabled people.

Lawyer Consulted: Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorgis

Date: 24/09/2019

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 The council is required to have regard to its public sector equality duties (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) in the exercise of its functions. The provision of an accessible facility is considered to advance equality of opportunity to persons who share a relevant protected characteristic, including to people with some impairment types and the parents of young and/or disabled children. Engagement with the community has indicated that a new gender neutral wheelchair accessible toilet would greatly improve facilities for all mourners and other cemetery visitors and passers by at times when the cemetery is open

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 The cemetery area on the north side is very much a working cemetery and will continue to have burial space for at least another 8 to 10 years, based on current burials.
- 7.5 Mourners and other cemetery visitors to this area, would therefore benefit from any new facility being opened. Passers-by and cemetery staff would also benefit from a facility located on the north side.

Any Other Significant Implications:

Public Health Implications:

- 7.6 Additional gender neutral wheelchair accessible toilet facilities will ensure provision of toilets for visitors to the north side of Hove Cemetery, supporting wellbeing of cemetery visitors.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Costings report from the Council's Technical Access Manager

Background Documents

None