

Progress update regarding the new crematorium project including business case decisions regarding access road and second chapel option

Appendix 6 – Summary of public consultation

1. Introduction

- 1.1** As set out in the main body of the Cabinet report a public consultation on the concept designs for the new crematorium has taken place.
- 1.2** This report describes the public consultation process and sets out its results. Other consultation undertaken is described in section 8 of the Cabinet report.

2. Approach to consultation

- 2.1** The consultation was based on the current concept designs including the proposals for access roads and the construction of a second new chapel made in the main Cabinet report.

- 2.2** Information boards were displayed:

- in the waiting room at the Cemetery and Crematorium and in the foyer of the Municipal Offices from Monday 27 February to Wednesday 1 March
- on the council's website from Friday 24 February to 10 am on Thursday 2 March

The boards are included as Appendix 7 to the *Cabinet* report.

- 2.3** A public drop-in session was held at the Municipal Offices from 2.30 pm to 7.30 pm on Wednesday 1 March. 43 visitors attended and discussed the options with members of the programme team including the Cabinet Member, the Director of Environment and the Bereavement Services Manager; and representatives of the lead contractor (Willmott Dixon), the architects (Roberts Limbrick) and the project manager (Pick Everard).

- 2.4** The public consultation was promoted through:

- A press release supported by briefings to and interviews with press and radio
- Advertisement at the Municipal Offices and the Cemetery and Crematorium
- Advertisement on the council's website and on Cotswold District Council website
- Frequent social media prompts
- Leaflets delivered to around 600 of the households closest to the Cemetery and Crematorium
- Leaflets distributed at other public and stakeholder events
- E-mails to main stakeholders – funeral directors; ministers, representatives of faith groups, celebrants and organists

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- E-mails to CBC members; Prestbury Parish Council members (via CBC ward members); relevant Tewkesbury Borough Council ward members and Southam Parish Council members.
- Communications with CBC staff and the Tewkesbury planning team

2.5 All those consulted were invited to complete a questionnaire, available in paper form at the meetings and the places at which plans were displayed and also available electronically on the council's website.

3. Consultation Results

3.1 A summary of the results is set out below:

- There were 84 responses to the questionnaire in total, 55 on-line, 29 on paper
- 46% of responses judged the design proposals as '5 star' (out of 5), whilst 91% awarded 3 stars or more
- 74% agreed with the suggested approach to access roads
- 87% agreed with the proposal that a second new chapel should be constructed

3.2 Of those 70 respondents who included their postcodes, 69 were from Cheltenham with a significant bias towards the localities closest to the site of the Cemetery and Crematorium.

3.3 9 respondents identified themselves as connected to a bereavement service or business.

3.4 Overall Design

3.4.1 Respondents were asked to award up to 5 stars to the overall design. 83 respondents gave a clear response.

	Number of stars				
	1	2	3	4	5
Number of respondents	2	6	14	23	38
% of respondents	2	7	17	28	46

3.4.2 Respondents were asked what they liked about the designs. Typical comments were:

- "The natural and traditional use of the local materials"
- "Traditional barn structure but internally light and airy. Garden around building."
- "They are modern but stylish and sit well within the crematorium grounds sufficiently away from the current chapel so as not to offend that architectural style"
- "Design is good for the location as it is unobtrusive. Various sizes of rooms in a good feature. It gives a lovely peaceful space in a country location. I think people

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will be very impressed.”

3.4.3 Respondents were asked how the designs could be improved. Typical comments were:

- “The floral display area and remembrance area for the second chapel could be more significant, it appears much smaller than the main chapel facilities”
- “The size of the main chapel appears so large (we know you sometimes need a place for a huge crowd) but by and large the main one that we now have makes it more personal. It looks awful to go to a funeral where it appears hardly anyone is there. Would there be coloured glass in the windows, instead of it looking like a factory and cold. Put love and heart into it”
- “Make more welcoming and comfortable far too 'barn like”
- “Use of some colour for interior design - glass (subtle) in "dovecote" windows.”

3.5 Access Routes

3.5.1 Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the suggested approach to entrance and exit routes (as set out in recommendation 1 to Cabinet). Of the 80 clear responses 59 (74%) were in favour and 21 (26%) not in favour.

3.5.2 Those not in favour were given the opportunity to state why. A number of responses focussed on the Bouncer's Lane entrance, or the proposed entrance route through the crematorium. Typical comments were:

- “The existing narrow entrance from Bouncers Lane is unsuitable for incoming and outgoing traffic. The opportunity should be taken to create a new independent exit, perhaps using the old farm lane behind Ladysmith Road which runs parallel and adjacent to the existing entrance drive.”
- “The entrance route should not be arching via blackberry fields but should use the more direct route, left to right road to the south, passing just north of the existing chapels. This would mean more privacy for the existing housing. It has also been suggested screening the blackberry field area with trees but this would cause undue extreme loss of light and outlook.”
- “A very long entrance proposed when a more direct route is available.”
- “I am retired and have lived on the immediate Bovis estate boundary directly opposite the chapel for nearly 25 years. I am strongly opposed to any proposal which drives all crematorium traffic directly past my back garden (which I use extensively).”

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- 3.5.3** Respondents were asked which route for construction traffic they favoured. Three alternatives were set out on the boards. A clear preference was stated by 27 respondents.

Possible construction route	Preferred by
Through cemetery	2
Along southern boundary of cemetery	9
Along southern boundary of cemetery but with link to Imjin Rd along western side of sports field.	16

3.6 Second Chapel

- 3.6.1** Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the proposal to construct a second chapel (recommendation 4 to Cabinet). 73 (87%) were in favour, 11 (13%) against.

- 3.6.2** Those in favour were influenced by the opportunity to think long-term, the disruption of additional building once the new facility is operational and the avoidance of coffin transportation. Typical comments were:

- “Despite the extra expense, it seems better to do it now and get the construction work over and done with.”
- “Better than a piecemeal solution”
- “Makes financial sense and also ensures that the logistics of "processing" the coffins goes smoothly.”
- “The cemetery and crematorium has to become more commercially focussed, new privately owned services have been proposed recently. The Council will need to position itself in the strongest position in an increasing market place.”

- 3.6.3** Those not in favour most often referenced the beauty of the existing chapels. Typical comments were:

- “There is nothing wrong with the South Chapel. Many of us have said our goodbyes to loved ones in the South Chapel and for this reason I oppose any proposed change of use.”
- “The second chapel looks like it has been added on; squeezed in as an afterthought. The current south chapel with a little spruce is ideal. It feels intimate and serene. As the name suggests, it is not a dark, cold chapel even when the sun is not out, but when it does, it lifts the spirits. If funeral party is small, you don't feel as if you are rattling within the south chapel. But of course there are times when a larger chapel is required and so a new purpose built chapel is great, but don't lose the heritage of the site.”
- “I believe the public should have the choice of the traditional chapel, as well as the new one”
- “Unnecessary extra expense. £1m could be spent more wisely.”

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4. Summary

- 4.1** A wide-ranging consultation on the current conceptual designs has taken place in order to gauge views on the designs and allow modifications before they are included in a planning application. Views will also inform the decisions requested from Cabinet and Council in March 2017.
- 4.2** These views should be considered alongside the other stakeholder responses recorded in the main body of the Cabinet report.
- 4.3** It is clear that support for the designs, the proposed approach to access roads and the construction of a second chapel is widespread.
- 4.4** The number of clear responses to the choice of construction traffic route was low, but indicated a clear desire that the existing cemetery should not be used and a majority in favour of using Imjin Rd.
- 4.5** Nonetheless, there are minorities who expressed different views. These views will be taken into account and considered as potential modifications to the plans.