

MTRP Proposal - 18/19 and Beyond - Business Case

Service Area	<i>Streetscene and City Services</i>
Unique Reference Number	SS181903
Proposal Title	Review of Back Office Cemetery Operations and facilities in some parks
Version	<i>20/12/2017</i>
Proposal Summary Description	Transfer of cemetery operations and closure of satellite offices, storage areas, changing and toilet facilities in parks and cemeteries. Community asset transfer of facilities where viable. To relocate services and re-let, mothball or demolish buildings and facilities which are surplus to operational requirements in parks and cemeteries.
Impact on Performance	Action will result in savings in rates, repairs, utility costs and overheads. Some short term impact on service performance but long term improvements
Impact on FTE Count	No impact on FTE count
Impact on other Service Areas	No impact on other service areas
Impact on Citizens	Closure of the cemetery office may be unpopular initially however services will be maintained by staff who have moved to the civic centre and via signs on site asking people to make appointments via the telephone
Delegated Decision (Head of Service/Cabinet Member/ Cabinet)	<i>CM</i>
Activity Code	<i>STR2 Cemeteries</i>

Net Savings (£000's)	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	23			

Implementation Costs (- £000's)	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Revenue – Redundancy/Pension				
Revenue – External consultants				
Revenue - Other				
Capital – Building related				
Capital - Other	10			
Implementation Cost - Total	10			

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Current Position

Streetscene Green Services manages parks, cemeteries and other public open spaces for public recreation. Buildings and structures at the sites are used to deliver operational requirements or provide public facilities. Most of these sites and facilities were developed as the city grew during the 19th and 20th century and this infrastructure has historic liabilities and ongoing maintenance requirements linked to age, use, limited investment. It is clear a number of buildings are no longer required to support operations due to changing work methods and service rationalisation. This business case looks at where we can make savings on running and repairing such facilities.

Key external impact will be for people to access services via the contact centre, and eventually look at remote access to information and services. In time this should improve performance and also improve service delivery.

There may be some issues for people accessing the cemetery service initially however their need will be accommodated at the civic centre and at the city contact centre.

Key Objectives and Scope

This would be the first phase in identifying where we can relocate services and re-let, mothball or demolish buildings and structures surplus to operational requirements resulting in savings in rates, repairs, utility costs and overheads. This will include identifying and to examine any opportunity for new lease agreements and community asset transfer. This would include looking at Green infrastructure assets as part of workable management programme, consulted on by our in-house teams and other service areas.

This MTRP will be a first phase, considering built assets, such as toilets, lodges and shelters where these offer opportunities to contribute or affect proposals. Immediate savings would be generated from centralisation of out posted staff from mess rooms and offices on sites, where this could be realistically achieved with minimal service disruption.

One of the changes would be the buildings at St Woolos cemetery.

- Closure of cemetery mess rooms and public toilets (St.Woolos and Christchurch) and relocation of staff operations to Telford.
- Closure of cemetery office and relocation of staff to civic centre/registrars office £15,000.00

Estimated saving in utility costs would be £15,000 in first year. Income generation could improve the position of service moving forward

- Savings on utilities following on the transfer of the Shaftesbury Park changing room to the club for management. £1,500.00
- Closure of the toilets in Coronation Park £1,000.00
- Savings on the maintenance and upgrade on football pitch at Malpas, Darwin Drive by transferring to the West of St. Julian's football club via a Community Asset Transfer £5,000.00

Total saving £22,500.00

Some buildings, such as the toilets at St. Woolos and the

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changing rooms at Coronation Park, have been closed temporarily due to antisocial behaviour which generated a high number of public complaints which could not be contained by staff even during office opening hours. This case would be to formally close the facilities.

Options considered

1. Retain outsourced cemetery service and parks facilities

- no savings
- increased costs of utilities and maintenance for buildings and playing fields over time
- toilets and outbuildings damaged following antisocial behaviour and the buildings have to be policed and locked by staff
- people can visit the offices without appointments to receive search information for genealogy and other purposes.
- No online system available at present.
- Workforce has access to facilities on site during the day
- Workforce has to travel across city to other sites and to depot for tools, vans etc.
- Cemetery records and ledgers are not protected in a building which has been a target for break-ins. If these historic records are stolen or damaged this would be a significant loss for Newport.
- Tools and equipment stored in unsafe buildings on site resulting in break-ins

2. Move cemetery admin into central location

- operational staff make single journey from depot to cemetery
- savings on utilities etc of outlying buildings
- staff time saved by not having to undertake searches for the public or open and close toilets etc.
- Benefits would mean manpower for cemeteries are interchangeable with grounds and other services.
- All tools, vehicles etc will be available at a central point for safety and servicing.
- Easier to monitor workload and outputs from a central location

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- Empty premises can be commercially let and generate further income.
- More resilience for the service if the physical and administrative operations are brought in with other operations.
- Protection of physical ledgers which can be moved to Gwent archives
- All communications will go through contact centre and can be cross checked and monitored through CRM.
- Workforce may need access to facilities on site.
- Epilogue system needs to be fully complete and the records data made available online for searches to be undertaken remotely.
- Lack of staff presence within cemetery may be unwelcome by public

Recommended Proposal/Option

Option 2 as this will realise a saving of £22,500 immediately and offer greater resilience and options for income generation in the future.

Required Investment

The investment cost identified as £10,000 will be for completing the GIS survey of the gravestones to enable grave location data to be GIS/CAD plotted and be accessed via Epilogue. This will then allow for a full data upload of the cemetery records onto an online system to enable the public to access searches remotely. We are currently undertaking a pilot study of mapping the graves sample areas.

This in turn may lead to a bigger digital project

High Level Milestones and Timescales

Moving staff and resources began in early 2017 and will be completed by April 2018 to realise the full in year saving

Key Risks/issues

Risk Description	Risk Score (as per matrix below)	Mitigation Measures
May not be able to move staff in timely manner to realise full year saving.	1	Due to outcome of audit report some of the administration function is being moved to the civic centre now.
Higher costs involved with making search data	2	Capital bid will be made to complete the project

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remotely accessible		
Public dissatisfaction with dealing in cemetery matters at civic centre or city contact centre	2	Possible move to the Registrar's office may be considered at a later stage
Lack of communication between separated cemetery admin and ops functions could lead to errors	2-3	Outcome of this would be a serious issue however likelihood would be low if communication is set up correctly

Specific linkage with Future Generation Act requirements

Integration –

This proposal will increase opportunities and savings for the service area and enable funds to be reinvested within the assets. The income generation will allow us to continually improve and, where of historical significance, to conserve and protect the buildings, making an investment in the future of the assets and the sites within which they are located.

If successful ongoing improvement will increase revenue over the years and is linked to ensuring resilience and protecting green space areas.

Long Term

Costs associated with servicing aging buildings and redundant amenity buildings are passed onto third parties. Some of these buildings are important cultural assets especially where these are located in historic parks and gardens, or protected with listing in their own right such as buildings in St. Woolos.

Income generation can be used to offset future maintenance costs.

Asset transfer can benefit user groups

Prevention –

Changing use of buildings which are occupied prevents vandalism and theft, protecting assets located in very public areas. Limits the council liabilities if buildings are maintained by others or simply removed.

Collaboration - some buildings are listed structures or in historic settings.

Over time the uses of these buildings will move from residential to commercial as the authority is no longer a housing provider.

Changing facilities which are no longer needed provide potential venues for antisocial behaviour. Removing them benefits other park users

Asset transfer benefits the clubs and can enable additional funding to be secured

Involvement –

Parks' friends groups and user groups will be supportive of this proposal to protect the historic fabric of the Newport Parks and cemeteries.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment

Yes