

Portfolio Holder for Property and Waste



County Hall
Llandrindod Wells
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12 January 2018

For further information please contact

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NOTICE OF INTENDED PORTFOLIO HOLDER DELEGATED DECISION

The Portfolio Holder has received the following report for a decision to be taken under delegated authority. The decision will be taken on **18 January 2018** (i.e. 3 clear days after the date of this note). The decision will be published on the Council's website but will not be implemented until 5 clear days after the date of publication of the decision) to comply with the call-in process set out in Rule 7.37 of the Constitution.

1.	PURCHASE OF LAND ADJACENT TO PRESTEIGNE CEMETERY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A CEMETERY EXTENSION
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CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL
PORTFOLIO HOLDER DELEGATED DECISION
by
COUNTY COUNCILLOR PHYL DAVIES
(PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PROPERTY AND WASTE) AND
COUNTY COUNCILLOR JONATHAN WILKINSON (PORTFOLIO HOLDER
FOR HOUSING AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES)
JANUARY 2018

REPORT AUTHOR: Professional Lead-Environmental Health (Environmental Protection)

SUBJECT: Purchase of Land Adjacent to Presteigne Cemetery for development of a cemetery extension

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Summary

- 1.1 Powys County Council manages a total of 19 cemeteries located across the County.
- 1.2 A recent review of cemeteries confirmed that the existing cemetery at Presteigne has 7 year's capacity remaining.
- 1.3 In light of these findings a Cemeteries Review and Development Project Board (CRDPB) was set up partly to review future burial provision. As part of the project a further review was commissioned and undertaken by The Institute of Cemeteries and Crematorium Management (ICCM) which concluded that there was an urgent need to address diminishing capacity.
- 1.4 Previously, Presteigne and Norton Town Council (PNTC) had requested that Powys County Council (PCC) develop an extension to the Cemetery. However at that time, PNTC were advised that PCC would not invest in additional burial space. Consequently PNTC went ahead and purchased additional land adjacent to the cemetery with a view to them running the site as a burial authority in their own right. PNTC have now indicated that they would prefer that PCC take over the land and develop the cemetery extension themselves.
- 1.5 The purpose of this report is to approve the purchase of the land in question from PNTC and develop a cemetery extension on the land.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 To purchase the land edged red on the plan in Appendix 1 which comprises some 0.4 acres from PNTC for the £47,045.84 which includes certain disbursements costs.
- 2.2 Negotiations have been undertaken by Property Services who confirm that the terms are appropriate.
- 2.9 PNTC has obtained planning permission for the land to develop as a cemetery. There is no requirement to undertake groundwater testing on the site which would represent a significant saving on development costs. However the site would require infrastructure such as roads and pathways and these works are estimated to be in the region of £120,000.
- 2.10 Based on current demand, the area will provide 898 grave spaces which will provide burial space for 112 years. The average annual number of new burials that take place is 8 which based on current burial fees will realise approximately £15,000 per annum. In addition, PCC currently receives a grant from Pryce Williams Trust to manage the cemetery which equates to approximately £8,000 per annum. The grant is payable to the organisation that manages the cemetery.
- 2.11 In summary, if PCC were to proceed with the purchase of the land and subsequently develop the extension the payback on a £170,000 investment is estimated to be 21 years. A business case is attached in Appendix 2.

3. Options Considered / Available

The options available are as follows:

- 3.1. To purchase the land from PNTC for £47,045.84 and develop the cemetery extension at an estimated total cost of £170,000. This would secure burial provision in the area and income for the service to support the maintenance of the Presteigne cemetery and the other 18 cemeteries. The payback period for the investment is estimated to be 21 years.
- 3.2 Not to purchase the land and allow PNTC to develop the cemetery extension as a burial authority. This would mean that the income from the cemetery would reduce by approximately £15,000 per annum in 7 years' time. Additionally it is likely that the grant from the Pryce Williams Trust would reduce or cease as PNTC could be considered the organisation responsible for the management of the cemetery. However PCC would still have to bear the cost of maintaining the

existing cemetery. The current cost of maintain the existing cemetery is approximately £7000 but is set to increase to £14000 in 2018/19 due to an increase in the grounds maintenance contract. However this option would mean that the Council would not incur the capital cost of buying (£47k) and developing the land (£120k) and the associated revenue implications and the capital could be used on other projects.

4. Preferred Choice and Reasons

- 4.1 The preferred option is for PCC to purchase the land and develop a cemetery extension. This would ensure future burial provision in the area and lessen any additional demand on other Council owned cemeteries nearby. The proposal would secure income for the service in the future to support the maintenance of all Council owned cemeteries. The site would need to be developed prior to the expiry of the planning consent in November 2018.

5. Impact Assessment

- 5.1 Is an impact assessment required? No
- 5.2 If yes is it attached? N/A

6. Corporate Improvement Plan

- 6.1 The decision supports the Vision 2025 priority for Residents and Communities.

7. Local Member(s)

- 7.1 As County Councillor for the Presteigne ward I would like to support Powys County Council in purchasing a piece of land adjacent to the existing cemetery to extend the current burial provision. I believe the cost of the land is reasonable and will easily be recouped.

8. Other Front Line Services

Does the recommendation impact on other services run by the Council or on behalf of the Council? No

If so please provide their comments

9. Communications

Have Communications seen a copy of this report? Yes

Have they made a comment? Communications Comment: The report is of public interest and requires use of proactive news release and appropriate social media to publicise the decision.

10. Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT, Business Services)

- 10.1 Legal- The Professional Lead –Legal supports the recommendation in this report which in the long run will save money and the legal services confirms that they will assist in the legal formalities as and when required.
- 10.2 Finance- The Finance Manager Place and Resources notes the contents of the report, the funding required to purchase the land and complete the works has been submitted as a capital bid which is yet to be approved.
- 10.3 Corporate Property-The Professional Lead-Strategic Property supports the proposal.

11. Scrutiny

Has this report been scrutinised? No

If Yes what version or date of report has been scrutinised?

Please insert the comments.

What changes have been made since the date of Scrutiny and explain why Scrutiny recommendations have been accepted or rejected?

12. Statutory Officers

- 12.1 The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report".
- 12.2 The Head of Financial Services (Acting 151 Officer) notes the comments by the Finance Manager, this proposal can only be progressed if the funding is approved within the budget proposals.

13. Members' Interests

- 13.1 The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If the Portfolio Holder has an interest he/she should declare it, complete the relevant notification form and refer the matter to the cabinet for decision.

14. Future Status of the Report

- 14.1 Members are invited to consider the future status of this report and whether it can be made available to the press and public either immediately following the meeting or at some specified point in the future.

The view of the Monitoring Officer is that:

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
To purchase the land from PNTC for £47,045.84 and develop the cemetery extension at an estimated total cost of £170,000.	To secure burial provision in the area and income for the service for approximately 100 years.

Relevant Policy (ies):	Corporate Asset Policy		
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	Cllr Beverley Baynham
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Nia Wyn Hughes
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	As soon as possible

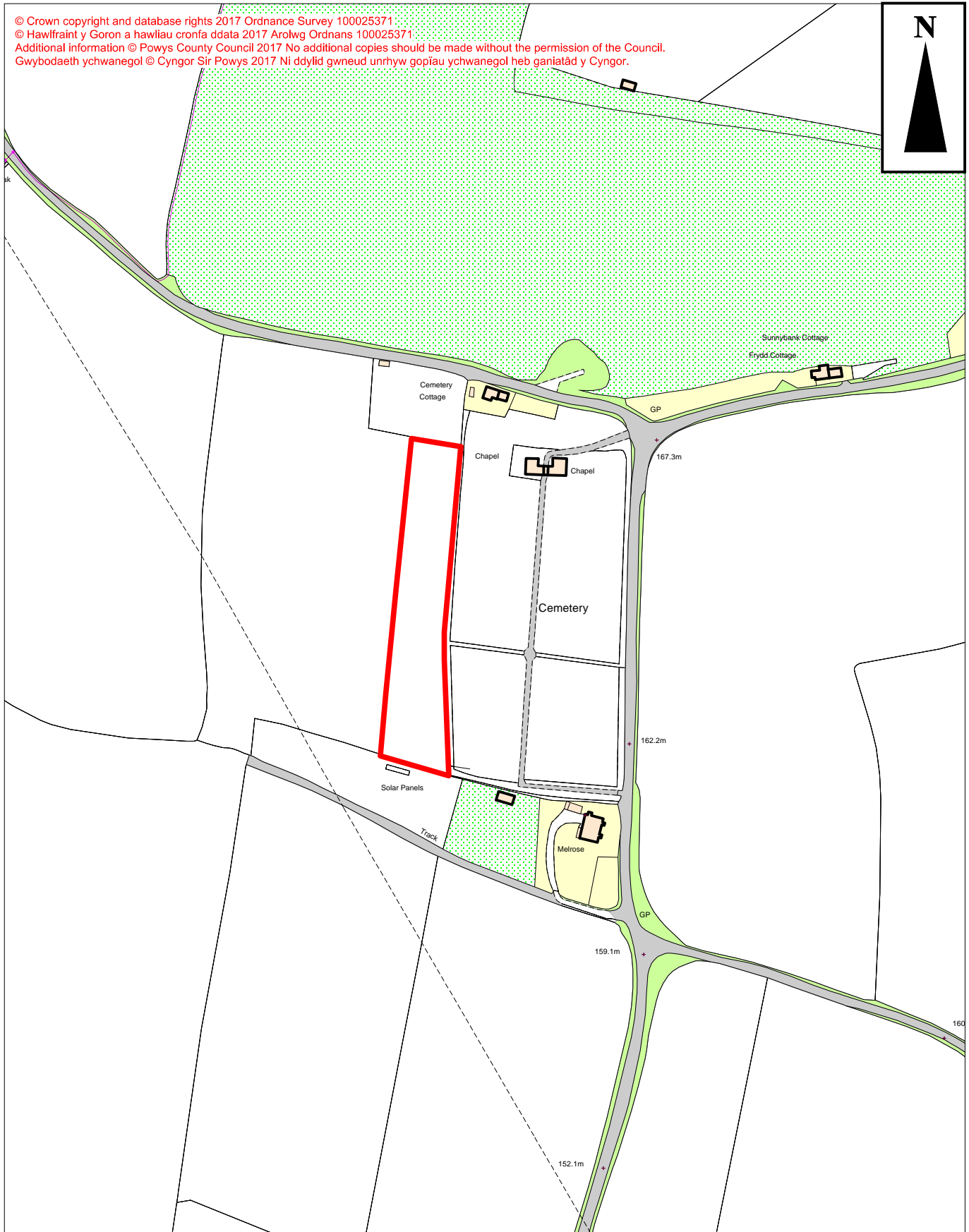
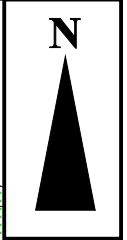
Contact Officer:	Nia Wyn Hughes
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Background Papers used to prepare Report:

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT TEMPLATE VERSION 5

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Title: Purchase of land adjacent to Presteigne cemetery for the development of an extension to the existing cemetery

Service Area:	<i>Environmental Health- Environmental Protection</i>	Date: Prepared by:	10 th November 2017 Nia Wyn Hughes
Requirement	<p><i>Presteigne and Norton Town Council (PNTC) have purchased land adjacent to the existing cemetery in order to develop an extension to the existing cemetery which has only 7 years capacity remaining. PNTC have taken this action having been advised previously that Powys County Council (PCC) would not invest in any additional burial sites. The recently established Cemeteries Review and Development Board (CRDB) is currently reviewing its policy with respect to investing in additional burial space and Presteigne is one of 3 sites currently under consideration.</i></p> <p><i>PNTC have suggested that it would be willing to sell the land to PCC (provided all costs associated with the sale are covered) in order for it to operate the extension as well as the existing cemetery as the relevant burial authority. PNTC are requesting a total of £47,045.84 for the sale of the land.</i></p>		
Background	<p><i>PCC currently manages 19 cemeteries across the County and as such operates as a burial authority. A recent review of cemetery capacities illustrated that there is considerable disparity in the amount of space available within these cemeteries. At some there is over 100 years capacity while at others namely Hay on Wye, Presteigne and Machynlleth, there is less than 10 years capacity remaining. The recently established CRDB is currently considering future provision at these sites. PNTC has taken steps to address the diminishing capacity at the cemetery and have bought adjacent land with a view to becoming a burial authority. In this circumstance, they would manage the new site whilst PCC would operate the existing site unless PNTC was minded to take over the existing site as part of the Community Asset transfer scheme. The implications for PCC would be that it would have to continue to maintain the site with little scope for income generation due to the limited number of graves remaining. This site will eventually fill and then be “closed” while receiving no income, the Council would still be responsible for the cost of its long term maintenance.</i></p> <p><i>PNTC have bought the land having been previously advised that PCC would not invest in additional burial ground. Recently however, PNTC have indicated that they would be willing to sell the land to PCC in order to develop and operate the cemetery extension.</i></p> <p><i>PNTC are requesting £47,045.84 for the sale of the land which has planning permission which expires in November 2018. There is no requirement for groundwater testing which represents a significant saving in development costs. However the site would need infrastructure such as roads, paths and fencing/hedges which would require planning approval. These costs are estimated to be in the region of £120k.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of additional maintenance costs, the additional cost of cutting the grass based on the current contract would be approximately £2k. Other works would include hedge cutting etc. which can’t be quantified at this time.</i></p> <p><i>The site measures 4000m². Based on a grave space measuring 3.34m² and allowing 25% of the space for roads and paths it is estimated that the additional land will provide 898 grave spaces. Based on current demand of 8 graves per annum, the land will provide burial space for 112 years.</i></p> <p><i>The current cost of a single grave (inc. registration, excavation, exclusive right of burial and headstone) is £1740.55 and a double is £1902.55. Based on the average over the last 5 years of 3 singles and 5 doubles, the projected annual income is £14,734.40.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, Powys CC currently receives a grant from Pryce Williams Trust for the maintenance of the cemetery which equates to approximately 8k per annum.</i></p>		

<p>Solutions</p>	<p><i>There are 2 solutions to the problem of diminishing capacity at Presteigne cemetery:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. That PCC do not purchase the land from PNTC and that they manage the site as a burial authority. In doing so they would be responsible for managing the cemetery extension and receive all the fees for burials in that area. This would leave PCC to manage the existing cemetery which has very few plots remaining therefore limiting future income. Additionally it is likely that income from Pryce Williams Trust would reduce or cease</i> <i>2. PCC could purchase the additional land to develop an extension. This would secure future burial provision in the area and additional income for over 100 years.</i> 	
<p>Preferred Solution</p>	<p><i>The preferred option is Option 2, to purchase the land from PNTC and develop the extension securing future burial provision in the area. The cost of the project is likely to be in the region of £170k. Additional ongoing maintenance costs would be in the region of £2k. The projected annual income based on current rates (inc. grant from Pryce Williams Trust) is in the region of £23,000. Planning approval has been secured without the requirement to undertake groundwater testing. It is not known whether soil testing has been carried out to ensure that the ground is suitable although it is located immediately adjacent to the existing site where there are no known problems. Given that planning permission has been granted, the timetable for development would be dictated solely by the infrastructure works which it is envisaged could be completed within 12 months. This would mean that additional burial space would be available before the current site reaches capacity.</i></p>	
<p>Cost/Benefit Analysis</p>	<p><i>Based on the projected income annual of £14,734.40 less the grave digging costs of £4,803.02 and the additional maintenance expenditure of £2,000 the payback period of the £170,000 capital purchase cost would be 21 years.</i></p>	
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p><i>It is recommended that the land is purchased from PNTC for the development of a cemetery extension. Planning permission has already been secured and the only additional costs would be the development of site infrastructure. The additional land would generate income beyond the 7 years that the existing site will provide. This income will also help support the maintenance of other cemeteries which have lower demand.</i></p>	
<p>Signatures</p>	<p>Proposed by (Requisitioner)</p> <p>Nia Wyn Hughes</p> <p>Date: 10th November 2017</p> <p>Commercial Services Team</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Date:</p>	<p>Authorised by (Service Head)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Date:</p>