

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COYCHURCH CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

15 JULY 2022

REPORT OF THE CLERK & TECHNICAL OFFICER

FLOWER COURT FACILITIES

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Joint Committee on the progress of the construction of an extension to the Flower Court facility at Coychurch Crematorium and to request approval to award the Contract resulting from the tender process as detailed in the report.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-

1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county borough.
2. **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** – taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 The buildings of the Crematorium are carefully designed to provide for the ceremonial and sacred aspects of the cremation service and to complement the landscape in which they sit. The Crematorium is an important work by a British architect of international reputation (Maxwell Fry) and is Grade 2* listed. As such, any proposed changes to the scheme must be carefully considered.
- 3.2 The Crematorium is regularly complemented by service users for the high standard of facilities provided and this is evident on the returned service questionnaires. The Flower Court facility, however, is an area that lends itself to

improvement due to its compact layout. It is proving inadequate for the functions it is required to accommodate.

- 3.3 At the meeting on 15th June 2018 the Joint Committee approved the provision of a structural extension to the Flower Court facility by extending the rear of the Crematorium building onto the current grassed area outside the exit doors of Crallo Chapel, in order to address the bottleneck that is created when large congregations file through one set of doors and into the limited narrow corridor space of the Flower Court. Access to the toilet facilities along the same Flower corridor is also impeded. Additionally, the delay that can be caused to the following funeral service as a result of the slow movement of the congregation through this area. The Joint Committee authorised the submission of a feasibility report to be presented to the Joint Committee at its meeting in June 2019.
- 3.4 Architect Mr Jonathan Adams (Percy Thomas Architects, Capita Real Estate and Infrastructure) was placed in charge of the design works. Mr Adams is a Welsh architect particularly known for his landmark buildings in Cardiff and was previously President of the Royal Society of Architects in Wales (RSAW) from 2005 to 2007. His notable projects include the prestigious Millennium Centre in Cardiff Bay, the new headquarters building for the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) in Llandaff and the Sherman Theatre refurbishment in Cardiff.
- 3.5 At the meeting on 14th June 2019, Mr Jonathan Adams gave a detailed presentation of his proposed design of the extension to the Flower Court facility (Appendix 1), which the Joint Committee approved and further authorised the application for planning permission and invitation of tenders in respect of the works to be undertaken. The provision of further funding for the project would be accommodated in the Crematorium's accumulated reserve funds and an estimated amount of £540,000 was included in the 2019/20 budget to accommodate the funding of the construction phase of the project and consultants' fees, subject to further approval by the Joint Committee.
- 3.6 The programme would involve:
- Preparation of detailed drawings.
 - Planning submission/listed building consent.
 - Tender and report back to the Joint Committee for approval.
 - Construction of extension with a view to commencing works within the 2019/20 financial year.
- 3.7 At the meeting on 6th March 2020 the Joint Committee approved the Service Level Business Plan for 2020/21, which included the estimated amount for the project in the 2020/21 budget.
- 3.8 At the meeting on 4th September 2020 the Joint Committee was provided with a further update on the project. Work on the project had progressed:
- **Statutory Approvals:** A full listed building planning application along with a detailed Heritage Impact Statement was submitted in February 2020. Planning Approval, Sustainable Urban Drainage Approval and Building Regulations Approval was provided by Bridgend County Borough Council

(BCBC) in July 2020. Listed Building Consent was granted by Welsh Government on 25th August 2020.

- **Detailed Design:** Architect, Jonathan Adams, was concentrating on the special structural elements, in order to minimise construction risk and to provide the highest possible level of cost certainty before commencement of the contract.
 - **Health and Safety/CDMA Requirements:** Pre-construction health and safety / design risk information had been reviewed - Capita had agreed the format of the Health and Safety File with the Client and included these in the pre-construction information pack. Capita had assessed the relevant skills, knowledge and experience levels of the Design Team.
- 3.9 At the meeting on 5th March 2021 the Joint Committee was advised that the pandemic had impacted upon the timetable and the Joint Committee approved the Service Level Business Plan for 2021-22, which included the estimated amount for the project in the 2021-22 budget.
- 3.10 It was anticipated that a further report would be presented to the Joint Committee in September 2021 to confirm final approval of tenders for the construction phase of the project. The pandemic, along with some procurement issues, unfortunately further delayed this timetable.
- 3.11 At the meeting on 4th March 2022 the Joint Committee was advised that tenders would be invited through E-Tender Wales in March 2022, in accordance with Bridgend County Borough Council's Contract and Financial Procedure Rules. The returned tenders would be checked and verified, and the contract awarded to the most economically advantageous tender, taking into account Technical Quality and Price.
- 3.12 The construction phase works are scheduled to commence early summer 2022.
- 3.13 The estimated budget cost of £550,000 was included in the Crematorium's Business Plan for 2022-23 and the 2022-23 revenue budget and approved by the Joint Committee.
- 3.14 The Joint Committee delegated to the Clerk and Technical Officer the power to approve the acceptance of the most economically advantageous tender, in accordance with Bridgend County Borough Council's Contract and Financial Procedure Rules. Should the tender amount exceed the allocated budget cost then a further report would be submitted to the Joint Committee to confirm final approval of tenders.
4. **Current situation/proposal**
- 4.1 On 18th March 2022 Bridgend County Borough Council invited tenders (Tender No. B783) via an open tender process through E-Tender Wales and an advert on Sell2Wales. The final date for the return of tenders was 17th June 2022 at 12pm. One tender was opened by BCBC's procurement manager and cabinet/committee, in line with procurement guidelines. The invitation to tender contained several quality questions as well as a commercial submission. Capita

Real Estate and Infrastructure was instructed to carry out a qualitative and quantitative tender evaluation. The combined Quality and Commercial Scoring is as follows:

RANK	Tender Sum (£)	Corrected Tender Sum (£)	Commercial (Price) Weighting 40% (400 Points)	Technical Quality Weighting 60% (600 Points)	Total Weighting Score
1	£1,269,956.74	No corrections	400.00 (40%)	480 (48%)	880 (88%)

4.2 The most economically advantageous tender, taking into account Quality and Price, was submitted by South Wales Contractors Ltd in the sum of £1,269,956.74.

4.3 The Tender Review Report produced by Capita is attached at Appendix 2, which includes a recommendation to engage South Wales Contractors Ltd as the successful tenderer to draw the process to a close.

4.4 It is recognised that the commercial sum for the project is substantially higher than the estimated budget amount originally provided by Capita in the feasibility report of June 2019 and that there has been one tender submission. The architect, Mr Jonathan Adams, has provided a number of reasons and reassurances for the current status of the project:

- **Impact of the Pandemic:** The project was placed on hold in 2020, following the first Covid-19 lockdown. The Capita Design team was working on the detailed design stage, in particular the main timber and steel parts of the structure, which depended greatly on the input of specialist suppliers and manufacturers, all of which closed down. The UK construction industry effectively came to a standstill and the project failed to progress for well over a year because there were no suitable manufacturers or suppliers available to work with. The design team began working with specialists again in 2021 in order to finalise the design of the timber roof structure, including the construction of a prototype frame. It was anticipated that these specialists would also submit a tender for the project, but their staff resource issues prevented this.
- **Procurement Challenges:** The project is not a conventional building. Its bespoke design has been tailored to the unique character, history and listed building status of the Crematorium. The design has few standard components, so the accurate execution of the details and good quality workmanship is crucial.

The Crematorium must remain operational throughout the construction works, requiring work hours to be limited to avoid disruption to funeral services. The positioning of the construction site directly adjacent to Crallo Chapel and the existing Flower Court demands special care to ensure public safety. These constraints are specific to the Crematorium and add significant risk for the contractor.

The scale, high quality and challenging site constraints, all taken together, have the effect of making the project unattractive to potential bidders from outside the South Wales area, as they would incur additional costs that would represent a significant percentage of the contract value, especially as their supply chains are also likely to be geographically remote.

Having conducted a search, Capita concluded that tender submissions would be low in number and received from firms with prior knowledge of the Crematorium site. Consequently, although unusual to receive one tender, it is not unexpected.

- **Tender Received:** The tender received is a strong submission. The contractor has invested much time and effort into fully understanding the detailed specifics of the design information to ensure that their pricing is comprehensive and accurate. They have given careful consideration to the sequence of works and, because they have successfully completed several projects at the Crematorium already, they have a better understanding of the constraints and the risks of the site than any other bidder could have.

Their previous experience of working at the Crematorium and providing the highest standards of workmanship meant that they scored highly on the quality section of the tender. It is Capita's view that they would most likely be recommending them as the preferred contractor even if more tenders had been received.

- **Price Inflation:** The project was presented to, and approved by, the Joint Committee over three years ago. The design progressed through RIBA Design Stage 3 and was awarded Planning Consent and Listed Building Consent in summer 2020, along with a positive endorsement of the design from the Conservation Officer. However, the project was then on standstill due to the pandemic lockdown.

As the construction industry in the UK started to re-mobilise towards the end of 2021, the cost of construction immediately began to rise rapidly and significantly right across the industry due to acute shortages of both materials and labour. The rate of inflation is unprecedented. In the year to September 2021, for example, the cost of timber rose by 80% and the cost of steel by 60%. The situation has not improved, and the rate of construction cost inflation remains well in excess of RPI inflation. The price in the tender submission therefore includes what is, understandably, a very cautious risk allowance.

- 4.5 In addition to the observations by the architect, the Joint Committee is further advised that South Wales Contractors regularly win competitive tender construction projects/works with BCBC, demonstrating their reliability to provide high quality workmanship and competitive pricing. For example, they were the winning contractor for the internal reconfiguring and refurbishments of the Civic Offices, have carried out various civil engineering works for the Highways Department, carried out internal building works inside nursing homes (in particular during the pandemic) and endless construction works within schools. In relation to Coychurch Crematorium, they have carried out a vast number of building projects won on competitive tender, including the extension of the

Waiting Room facility and installation of new disabled toilets, the reconfiguration and refurbishment of the Flower Court toilets and the toilets adjoining Coity Chapel, the provision of the new road infrastructure and car park in the new land extension, and most recently were awarded the tender for the external lighting project, completed July 2021. They have demonstrated very high standards of workmanship at competitive costs and an ability to work around the crematorium while it remains operational, and with timely efficiency.

- 4.6 The Flower Court extension will provide the first structural improvement/addition to the Crematorium since it opened in 1970 and will vastly improve the bereavement experience at the facility. Not only will it resolve the current bottle neck and assist with the movement of mourners through the building, it will also provide a safer means of evacuation and a large, pleasant, covered open space from which mourners can disperse after a funeral, away from the toilet corridor and with an additional door opening to the rear of Crallo chapel. The problems associated with the existing flower court corridor have been further highlighted during the recent pandemic, when the confined space meant that it could not be utilised during the period of restrictions, requiring mourners to pass straight through to the outside road area, regardless of weather conditions.
- 4.7 The extension will also provide an opportunity to put right the wrongs of the past, by removing the current plastic side to the existing flower court corridor, which was installed prior to the listed building status of the Crematorium and does not complement the high standards of architectural design provided by Maxwell Fry, and replacing it with a high end designed facility using the very best of natural materials.
- 4.8 The 50th anniversary of the opening of the Crematorium occurred during the height of the pandemic in 2020. Such an improvement to the building would provide a befitting way to mark the occasion and demonstrate the Joint Committee's recognition that the Crematorium is now more heavily utilised, with over 80% of the local population requiring cremation and with larger congregation sizes, and consequently showing that it is addressing the needs of modern times, by investing in the Crematorium's future expansion and embracing its listed building status rather than being constrained by it.
- 4.9 As a result of the increased death rate during the pandemic, the Crematorium provided 308 additional cremation services in 2020 and an additional 262 in 2021 compared with 2019. This created almost £400,000.00 of additional income in cremation fees and a substantial amount more in revenue from the sale of memorials.

YEAR	CREMATIONS	ADDITIONAL CREMATIONS	COST PER CREMATION	ADDITIONAL INCOME
2019	1625			
2020	1933	308	£696.40	£214,491.20
2021	1887	262	£707.50	£185,365.00
TOTAL		570		£399,856.20

Although the tender cost for the extension is higher than that anticipated in 2019, the project provides a befitting way of investing that additional income in a manner that improves the bereavement experience for future generations, in recognition of the sadness that has facilitated it.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 None.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

7 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The wellbeing goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of wellbeing goals/objectives as a result of this report.

8. Financial implications

8.1 £550,000 for the project is already included in the Crematorium's Business Plan for 2022-23 and accommodated in the 2022-23 revenue budget. The additional £719,957 will be transferred from the Crematorium's accumulated surplus/reserve funds. The Report of the Treasurer presented to the Joint Committee on 15th July 2022 confirms an accumulated balance of reserves of £3,179,607 at 31 March 2022. This would be reduced to £2,459,650 and is considered a sufficient level to maintain and protect the service in light of unknown demands or emergencies.

9. Recommendations:

9.1 The Joint Committee is recommended to approve the Tender from South Wales Contractors Ltd in the sum of £1,269,956.74 and to award the Contract to this contractor.

9.2 The Joint Committee delegates to the Clerk and Technical Officer the power to approve the final terms of the Contract in consultation with Bridgend County Borough Council's Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, Human Resources and Corporate Policy and thereafter arrange for the execution of the Contract on behalf of the Joint Committee.

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CLERK AND TECHNICAL OFFICER
COYCHURCH CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE
15 JULY 2022**

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Background Papers:

Flower Court Facilities Report to the Joint Committee 15th June 2018,
Business Plan Report to the Joint Committee 8th March 2019,
Flower Court Facilities Report to the Joint Committee 14th June 2019,
Business Plan Report to the Joint Committee 6th March 2020
Business Plan Report to the Joint Committee 5th March 2021
Business Plan Report to the Joint Committee 4th March 2022
Flower Court Facilities Report to the Joint Committee 4th March 2022
Report of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee 15th July 2022