

TITLE: ECDC Bereavement Centre Project Quarter 2 update

Committee: Finance & Assets Committee

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1.0 Issue

1.1. To update on the Bereavement Centre Project progress.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1. Members are requested to note the information provided in Bereavement Centre Build Project Dashboard in appendix 1 (Exempt Agenda Item 20) and Strategic Plan appendix 2.

3.0 Background/Options

3.1. Council approved the Full Business Case for the Bereavement centre on 20 February 2024.

3.2. Since this approval, a procurement was carried out to appoint an external project design team (DT). The project DT, appointed for the Design and Build, commenced work on 10 June 2024. In addition to the external DT, internal governance arrangements have been agreed. (appendix 3). This consists of an internal Monthly project steering group that has been set up. This board will monitor the overall progress of the project, manage risks and ensure it remains on track and to budget.

3.3. Other internal project teams (Service Set Up Project Team) have also been convened, they will be responsible for items such as procurement and contracting arrangements, completing the legal and regulatory requirements to operate a Bereavement Centre, setting up the appropriate processes to run a new department and managing comms and customer engagement.

3.4. As detailed in the project governance overview regular highlight reports are provided to the Corporate Management Team and Leader of the Council and an embedded assurance programme has been agreed.

4.0 Conclusions

4.1. This report covers activity from 10 June to 3 September and the following activities have been completed:

- a) A strategic plan has been developed (appendix 2) and the first Summary Project Dashboard (appendix 1 – Exempt Agenda Item 20) has been completed.

- b) A RIBA Stage 3 Design review process commenced and will conclude 4 October 2024.
- c) Internal governance arrangements set up – Project initiation underway.
- d) Review of planning conditions, and commencement on time critical elements (e.g ecology surveys).
- e) Stage 1 Embedded Assurance meeting held with Auditor.

4.2. The RIBA Stage 3 Design review includes items such as:

- a) Further surveys required to finalise stage 3 such as acoustic and fire surveys.
- b) An update to the building design due to changes in legislation (e.g requirement to provide a Changing Places facility).
- c) A recently updated draft cost plan was produced and reported to the Monthly Steering group (July 2024). The updated plan takes into account inflation and actual build costs from similar projects.
- d) New ecology consultant report obtained to inform design and build programme.

4.3. Build costs cannot be finalised until a full procurement exercise has been completed. Following the completion of the RIBA Stage 3 design review, planned for 4 October 2024, another draft cost plan will be produced and will be reported to the next scheduled committee.

4.4. The implication of the new draft cost plan (July 2024) is that there is a predicted overall increase in costs, largely made up of a gap in the projects contingency budget and an increase in build costs. Please see exempt appendix 1 for further details.

4.5. The project team are considering a range of options to either mitigate costs or reduce the overall build cost for the draft end of Stage 3 cost plan. The options appraisals will be brought back to committee for decision, along with the updated cost plan. Options being considered at this stage are:

- a) Reducing the scope of the project
- b) Phasing the project
- c) Identifying additional grant funding for green infrastructure elements
- d) Value engineering
- e) Identifying additional Council funding sources

4.6. The overall Design and Build project is considered to be at Amber Status. The Service Set Up project is considered to be at Green Status.

5.0 Additional Implications Assessment

5.1 In the table below, please put Yes or No in each box:

Financial Implications NO	Legal Implications NO	Human Resources (HR) Implications NO
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) NO	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) NO	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) NO

6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Bereavement Centre Build Project Dashboard [Exempt – Agenda Item 20]

Appendix 2 – Strategic Plan

Appendix 3 – Internal Project Governance

7.0 Background documents

Council 20 February 2024 – Agenda item 13 and 20 (Exempt Appendices)

Planning Application approved documents for 21/01216/F3M