

**TITLE: ECDC Bereavement Centre Project Quarter 3 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 the Bereavement Centre Project Dashboard in Appendix 1 (Exempt).

**3.0 Background/Options**

3.1. Council approved the Full Business Case for the Bereavement Centre on 20 February 2024 and a Project Design Team were appointed in June 2024.

3.2. Since this time the Design Team (DT) have undertaken a review of the existing Bereavement Centre design and engaged technical specialist to refine the structures and landscaping. This has included input from landscape design, mechanical, electrical and public health specialists, civil and structural engineering, geological, ecology, acoustics and fire consultants.

3.3. The project has now moved from RIBA stage 3 to RIBA stage 4

**4.0 Conclusions**

4.1. This report covers activity from September 2024 to January 2025. The following activities have been completed and where surveys have been completed there has been a positive de-escalation of risks associated with the build:

- a) Draft internal audit report received and reported to Audit Committee 19 November 2024: The report identified a good level of assurance across the management of the project. Two areas were flagged for action relating to securing support for future procurement and production of an internal resourcing plan.
- b) Badger Survey and Tree Survey has been completed. Confirmation that no badgers are present on site.
- c) Ground conditions and environmental survey has been completed. No reported red flags or issues for the geotechnical report, confirmation received that only a very limited amount of contamination in the soil identified in a small area of the site. Confirmation that foundations can be a slab, rather than piling.
- d) Survey for drainage and utilities connections on site has been completed

- e) Initial stages of ECDC procurement support contract have been undertaken (as per audit recommendation)
- f) Finalisation of the Bereavement Centre layout and structure
- g) Commencement of the Procurement for the main contractor to undertake the build of the Bereavement Centre.

4.2. Following a review of the options for the Council to procure the main Contractor for the build, the best overall route to market for the Council was via the Procure Partnership Framework.

4.3. The framework was selected as it provides the following benefits:

- a) Access to a broad range of approved and vetted Tier 1 (national) and Tier 2 (regional and local) construction companies.
- b) The framework has a transparent pricing structure with fixed percentage overheads and prelim costs.
- c) A two stage procurement process. Stage 1 expression of interest whereby contractors are able to access detailed information to provide an initial proposal based on framework fixed costs. Stage 2 - The preferred supplier is then brought onto the project early in the procurement to refine the costs and opportunities for value engineering beyond what the DT has already identified. The 2 stage process will also reduce the amount of risk contingency built into the project by the contractor as they will have access to detailed confidential information to base their costs on. And all elements of the cost plan are shown individually to allow the DT team to interrogate and bench mark them.
- d) The framework provides for a 12% social value return from the project and the framework provider undertakes management for the delivery and evidencing of the activity to ensure it is captured at the local level.
- e) The overall timeline for the procurement process is reduced compared with other frameworks and the open market route.
- f) The framework is able to evidence that it is achieving a 1-2% saving on the project costs when compared to an open market tender exercise.
- g) Zero costs to use the framework, and there are no costs/no obligation if the Council decide not proceed with the project at the end of the Stage 2 procurement.

4.4. The procurement timeline is as follows:

Activity	Deadline
Expressions of interest	20 December 2024
Stage 1 conclusion (EOI)	24 January 2024
Preferred Bidder identified	27 January 2024
Stage 2 conclusion (final cost submitted)	4 April 2025
Anticipated start on site	16 June 2025

4.5. The new procurement timeline brings the potential 'start on site' date forward by around 4 weeks. This will have an overall benefit on the project deliverability and costs.

4.6. If the final tender costs are within budget the contractor would be able to be appointed and start on site in May 2025. However, if the final tender costs are higher than is currently budgeted for then further approval is required by full Council to take the project forward. Currently, the final tendered costs are due to be considered by Council on 22 May 2025.

**5.0 Additional Implications Assessment**

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

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

**6.0 Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Bereavement Centre Project Dashboard [Exempt]

**7.0 Background documents**

Council 20 February 2024 – Agenda item 13 and 20 (Exempt Appendices)  
 Planning Application approved documents for 21/01216/F3M