

OFFICER REPORT FOR COMMITTEE

DATE: 12/07/2023

**P/23/0245/FP
MERCIA CREMATORIA
DEVELOPMENTS LTD**

STUBBINGTON

DEVELOPMENT OF CREMATORIUM WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS,
LANDSCAPING AND MEMORIAL GARDENS

“HORSE FIELD”, LAND NORTH OF BRUNE LANE, FAREHAM

Report By

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This application is reported to the Planning Committee in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation given the number of representations received.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 The application site is located to the east of Broom Way and north of Brune Lane.

2.2 The land is broadly rectangular in shape extending to 6.5 acres (2.6 hectares), generally flat and is used for the grazing of horses. The site is open and visible from Broom Way on the western side of the site. The northern edge of the site is well screened by established mature tree planting with Rowner Road beyond running east from Peel Common roundabout. Mature landscaping lines the eastern boundary also. This planting is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Beyond the eastern boundary is the golf course. The southern boundary to Brune Lane is hedged but thinner than the east and north boundaries such that views, especially in the winter months, are afforded into the site.

3.0 Description of Proposal

3.1 The application proposes a new, single chapel, crematorium with access, parking and memorial gardens.

3.2 The access will be taken from Brune Lane into the site. The access and parking area is to the western edge of the site with the building positioned to the eastern side. The proposed memorial garden is to the north of the building.

3.3 The proposal will provide ninety-four parking spaces for visitors plus six staff parking. The main access and parking areas are to be finished with a resin bonded gravel material and curves in form along the western side of the site. Sixty-two formal parking spaces are provided, including six disabled spaces. A further twelve spaces are provided for visitors to the memorial garden (although these spaces are not exclusive to the garden and could be used by any visitor

to the site) in an area to be finished with grasscrete giving a total of seventy-four formal spaces.

- 3.4 Additional areas of grasscrete parking for use in cases of over spill are also provided for. These total twenty further parking spaces with three on the east side of the access entrance, along the verges to the south side of the building (twelve spaces) and along the western edge (left hand side as you enter) of the driveway into the site (five spaces). Including these grasscrete verges gives an overall parking capacity of approximately ninety-four spaces for mourners. A further six spaces for staff are provided for at the rear of the building including two electric vehicle charging bays. Deliveries will be taken in the rear yard.
- 3.5 The building is single storey and is of a contemporary flat, sedum, roof design. The finished height of the chapel itself will be 7m at its highest with lower elements of roof serving the administrative parts of the building and the entrance porte cochere (a roofed structure covering a driveway at the entrance of a building. It provides shelter for people entering or leaving vehicle) are 6m tall with the entrance vestibule just under 4m high. Three flues will project above the roof 3m higher than the finished roof.
- 3.6 The capacity of the crematorium chapel will be 90 seats, but internal folding doors could increase this capacity to 130 if the entrance vestibule is utilised. The Crematorium is designed to have a flow through the building. Visitors would enter the building at the main entrance, through the chapel, and leave to the south through the exit porte cochere through the flower garden.
- 3.7 As well as the sedum roof the building is proposed to be finished with a simple material palette including cedar cladding, stone and steel. Projecting out from the building will be “living walls”
- 3.8 The landscape to the north of the built form will include a formal memorial garden and a drainage swale set within a less formalised part of the garden allowing for a circular walk.

4.0 Policies

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.2 Fareham Local Plan 2037

DS1 Development in the Countryside

DS2 Development in Strategic Gaps

CC1 Climate Change

CC2 Managing Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Systems

NE1 Protection of Nature Conservation, Biodiversity and the Local Ecological Network

NE2 Biodiversity Net Gain

NE6 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

NE9 Green Infrastructure

TIN1 Sustainable Transport

TIN2 Highway Safety and Road Network

D1 High Quality Design and Place Making

D2 Ensuring Good Environmental Conditions

4.3 **Other (non-planning) Guidance:**

The Cremation Act 1902

The siting and planning of crematoria, DoE, 1978

5.0 **Relevant Planning History**

5.1 None

6.0 **Representations**

6.1 Ninety-two comments/objections have been received covering the following matters:

6.2 General points raised:

- There is a need but this is not the right location;
- Green areas are disappearing fast;
- Why can't it be put alongside the new by-pass;
- Too close to residential areas;
- Cannot see how the community will benefit;
- This is a strategic gap and does not need further development;
- The proposal will result in loss of openness and green space;
- Portchester Crematorium is not struggling to meet demand; information from the Portchester Crematorium Joint Committee Development Plan 2023 – 2028 highlights cremations have decreased and a letter from the Crematorium states Portchester is not running at excess;
- Concerns raised in relation to an application P/14/0042/FP (Change of use from grazing land to golf course, including addition of a drainage ditch and earth mounds) apply to the current application;
- The golf club assume wakes will be held there, but people will hire the Lee Community Centre.

6.3 Highways

- An additional exit and use of the roads will cause traffic congestion and backlogs of queues from the roundabout;
- There is no road infrastructure to support the additional traffic;
- The development will increase traffic on this narrow road;
- Broom Way is heavily used with regular accidents;
- Section 5 of the 1902 Act states no crematorium should be constructed within 50 yards of any public highway;
- There is no public footpath to access this road;
- Brune Lane is used regularly by users of the golf club; the access will be close to a blind bend;
- Having invested a large amount of tax payers money on making road improvements, this is a negative step;
- Access should be from Rowner Road;

- There is no footpath along Brune Lane or any land available to construct a footpath, putting pedestrians at risk;
- The Broom Way/Brune Lane junction is subject to flooding;
- There are no bus stops close to the site;
- The traffic data provided is not realistic;
- How can the automatic traffic count be a true reflection on traffic volume when it included a weekend;
- The bus stop is not in use and has no footpath near it, making it unusable

6.4 Environmental

- Fumes and smell expelled to the area when the crematorium is in use;
- Fumes from traffic congestion;
- Children walking to school and using the golf club opposite will not like seeing hearses and mourners;
- Natural drainage is very slow and will make the use of the facility unpleasant;
- The site is prone to flooding;
- Concerns raised by the environmental custodians of the County have not been taken seriously;
- The scattering of ashes in the memorial garden would contaminate groundwater within the site;
- Noise from traffic will not be respectful to loved ones;
- Water and waste from the site once filtered and treated will be allowed to flow into the Alver River when the pond reaches its limit.

6.5 Ecology

- Impact on wildlife, including deer and loss of horse grazing;
- Horses on this land are ageing, some sick and undergoing rehabilitation – their wellbeing will be impacted if they are displaced;
- Was the ecological survey carried out at the right time of the year; a point recognised by Hampshire County Council Ecologist;
- Adding lighting will have a negative effect on light sensitive wildlife.

6.6 Fifteen comments have been received in support:

- A great proposal and definitely needed and will support Portchester Crematorium;
- This is a quiet spot, away from built up areas and should not cause traffic problems as the hours that it will operate will be outside busy times;
- The development is good for the community;
- The facility will create jobs;
- It is understood the tenants grazing horses will continue to do so once the crematorium is built;
- As a local funeral director we currently travel in and out of Gosport; having a local crematorium will be beneficial to everyone.

6.7 A letter from Portchester Crematorium Joint Committee has also been received making the following points in relation to the proposal:

- There are a number of factual errors in the application making reference to Portchester Crematorium;
- Service slots are available each day, even at short notice;
- Funeral Directors suggesting Portchester cannot cope with the number of funerals requested is plainly incorrect;
- Direct, or 'Walk through' funerals are held at 8.30 am and do not cause pressure on facilities in the South Chapel;
- Portchester is about to embark upon replacing its present cremators, taking into account the population projections;
- These observations do not imply support or objection to the proposed development.

6.8 The applicant has responded to the third-party objections in a Planning Statement Addendum:

- The number of letters of objection vastly differs in ratio from our pre-application community engagement where the public were in favour of the proposals
- A number of objections refer to increased traffic at peak hours.
- For completeness, it is re-iterated that the new crematorium will have a single chapel only, with planning conditions placed both on the regularity and timing of funeral services (no more than one an hour) and not before 9.30am nor finish after 4.30pm (thus a maximum of 7 services per day). The 9.30am slot would more than likely be a 'direct' cremation service with very few, if any, attendees.

7.0 Consultations

INTERNAL:

7.1 Environmental Health (Contamination): No objection subject to conditions

7.2 Ecology: No objection subject to conditions

EXTERNAL:

7.3 Natural England: No objection

7.4 Hampshire County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority): No objection subject to conditions

7.5 Hampshire County Council (Highways): No objection subject to conditions

7.6 Environment Agency: No objection subject to conditions

8.0 Planning Considerations

8.1 The key considerations in the determination of this application are:

- The principle and need for the development
- Strategic gap
- Landscape and building design
- Highways and parking
- Pollution, climate change and contaminated land
- Flood risk and drainage

- Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain
- Other matters
- Planning balance & Conclusions

The principle and need for the development

8.2 Chapter 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) details how planning can contribute to building a strong and competitive economy.

8.3 For the purposes of the adopted Development Plan the site is within the defined countryside, outside of any defined settlement boundary. The site is also within a Strategic Gap.

8.4 Policy DS1 of the Fareham Local Plan 2037 addresses development within the countryside. The policy is supportive of development in the countryside in certain circumstances. Criterion c) of the policy sets out that development could be supported where it:

“Is for retail, community and leisure facilities, tourism or specialist housing where it can be demonstrated that there is a local need for the facility that cannot be met by existing facilities elsewhere.”

8.5 Within the supporting text to policy DS1 it is sets out that

“...community facilities, including cemeteries, which stand on the edge of the urban area can provide important facilities for the community” (para 3.32).

8.6 Whilst not a cemetery, a crematorium could be argued to be a similar community type use and therefore, subject to understanding the “...local need” for the development, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with part c) of the policy.

8.7 When considering the “...local need” for the development the application is supported with a specific “need assessment”. From this assessment it is set out that there are currently three crematoria serving the area; namely Havant (The Oaks), Hedge End (Wessex Vale) and Portchester. The application notes that Portchester is the fifth busiest facility in England.

8.8 The applicant’s need assessment sets out that “need” is measured by both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Quantitative need focuses on the current and future capacity of existing facilities and the likely future demand for use of this type of facility. Qualitative need, it is set out, focuses on the experience for mourners at the facility and the demand for the holding of funerals at core times, the length of time for each service, the gap between services and the journey time to a facility.

8.9 On this last qualitative indicator, given that there is no facility within the whole of Gosport Borough and the nearest facility is at Portchester, the application sets out that 94% of the proposed facility’s natural catchment population (considered later in this report) would be within a 30 minute drive time of the

facility. Furthermore, given the road infrastructure into the Gosport peninsula and given funeral cortege speeds, the likely drive time to existing facilities may well be in excess of this industry accepted drive time.

- 8.10 The Assessment suggests that the two types of need interrelate. By means of example, if a facility operates with 30 minute slots as opposed to 45minute or a hour, this will maximise capacity to meet the quantitative need, but may lead to a poorer qualitative experience for bereaved people.
- 8.11 Tackling quantitative need, the application sets out that the demography of the area is such that with better healthcare and lifestyles, people are living longer, but also that in this part of Hampshire there is an ageing population. Furthermore, the need assessment report identifies that there is an upwards trend in statistics in favour of cremation over other methods of burial indicating that this choice along with the ageing population means that there will be future demand for crematoria and that this demand is only set to grow.
- 8.12 The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities states that a population of 120,000 is sufficient to ensure a new facility could be viable. The natural catchment for this site would be all of the Borough of Gosport (circa 83,500 based on data from 2019) as the current nearest facility for this population is Portchester. The catchment would also include the south western parts of Fareham Borough including Stubbington, Hill Head, Titchfield, Warsash, Park Gate together with the southern parts of Fareham Town itself, the application submits that this would give a population catchment of 148,000 people. By 2025, when the facility would likely be open, the population is expected to rise even further. The natural catchment for a facility in the south of the Borough would therefore meet accepted population thresholds.
- 8.13 By comparison, the application summarises that Portchester crematorium has a catchment of over 360,000 (in 2019) residents and is currently serving Portsmouth, the western half of Havant and Waterlooville, Fareham and Gosport.
- 8.14 The technical capacity at a crematorium is not determined simply by the number of cremators it has or the number of cremations it can undertake in any given time. Capacity is properly assessed, according to the submission, by the number of funerals that the chapel can accommodate. The technical capacity therefore is the number of service slots available per day multiplied by the working days in any year.
- 8.15 However, the application makes the case that within the bereavement services sector there are 'core' funeral times in the middle part of the day that are generally preferred by bereaved people. Core service times are the slots that get booked first and often funerals will be delayed for a core slot on a later day rather than have an earlier or later slot outside of the core period; a qualitative indicator for crematoria.
- 8.16 Core period capacity can be increased at a facility for instance by extending the core hours – starting earlier or finishing later – or adjusting the service time from

60 minutes down to 45 minutes or even 30 minutes. The longer the core period and the shorter the service; the higher the potential core capacity. However, this needs to be balanced with the qualitative need at a facility and the experience of those in mourning.

- 8.17 Of course it is not feasible for every slot to be utilised every day and at every crematorium. This could be due to fluctuating death rates or complexities in arranging a time suitable for all parties and at other times there will be high demand where a facility is operating at capacity such as through the winter months. The application makes the case therefore that the 'practical capacity' of a facility has become widely accepted as a meaningful measure of both quantitative and qualitative need for a crematorium.
- 8.18 The application need assessment explains that the 'practical capacity' of a crematorium is eighty percent (80%) of its 'core capacity'. This standard, the application submits, has been well established through appeal decisions and the findings of Inspectors and it is this 'practical capacity' that should establish the need, or otherwise, for the facility. Appeal decisions have held that operating at or above 80% of the 'core capacity' standard is effectively operating above the practical capacity.
- 8.19 Understandably other facilities in the area would see the proposal for a new crematorium as commercial competition. Within representations the Portchester Joint Committee has indicated that their core service times are slightly wider than those initially evidenced in the application Need Assessment such that the conclusions within it on the capacity at Portchester Crematorium capacity are inaccurate. A supplementary statement was provided by the applicant to assess the specific core need at Portchester within the increased core period raised in representation.
- 8.20 The need assessment (and its supplementary paper) in the application identifies that the three other nearby crematoria are all currently operating in excess of this 80% core capacity and that the growing population forecast means that this will only get worse with the associated impact on the qualitative indicator measurement due to increased delay or mourners having to travel further to less convenient facilities.
- 8.21 When considering the population projections within the application the capacity at the three local crematoria are all forecast to only increase and become busier.
- 8.22 Notwithstanding this forecast increase in need and the increase in levels of operating capacity at other facilities, the application also assesses the likely impact of the application proposals upon these three existing facilities in the area once it is open and operational. The application concludes that as a result of cremations diverted to the application site the facilities at Havant and Hedge End would continue to operate in excess of 80% of practical capacity. Portchester Crematorium is the facility most affected. The application submits that whilst the proposal will reduce the level of core capacity working quite significantly at Portchester, this reduced capacity will in turn improve the

qualitative experience of mourners at the crematorium through increasing core slot availability and reducing congestion on site with potential for greater privacy and separation between each group of mourners. Most importantly, the application submits that Portchester Crematorium would remain viable.

- 8.23 The Planning Statement also sets out the site selection process undertaken in order to meet the local need for a facility. It was clear that with The Oaks at Havant and Wessex Vale at Hedge End a site immediately east or west of Portchester would be inappropriate and so directed the search south of Fareham town. This was considered along with the demographics for the area and the socio-economic indicators for Gosport and south Fareham. With specific site locational requirements (see the assessment under DS1 (i) below), the focus was on land south of Fareham and west of Gosport. The two Council brownfield registers were examined and the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) sites from the Local Plan evidence were considered also. On discounting sites allocated for development or with recent appeal history plus the specific locational requirements for a crematorium, the application site was selected.
- 8.24 It is considered that the proposed crematorium has a clearly identified local need for the facility that, when considering the qualitative indicators for a funeral and core capacity, cannot be met elsewhere at existing facilities. As such the proposal is in accordance with criterion c) of policy DS1 of the Fareham Local Plan 2037.
- 8.25 Criterion i) of policy DS1 is also permissible of development in the countryside when an application can:
- “...demonstrate a requirement for a location outside of the urban area”.*
- 8.26 The development plan does not provide for this type of development specifically, however this policy test does allow for the consideration of specific locational requirements where a countryside location is required.
- 8.27 The Cremation Act 1902 still applies today and is clear on the locational requirements for crematoria. The Act requires a crematorium building itself to be beyond 200 yards (182m) from the nearest residential property and beyond 50 yards (45m) from the nearest public highway.
- 8.28 Further advice is set out in the 1978 Department of the Environment (DoE) guidance, ‘The siting and planning of crematoria’, which says that sufficient land should be available to enable a crematorium to operate effectively and to provide appropriate facilities. It explains that new crematorium sites have typically ranged from 2-4 hectares and that it should be a well wooded piece of grounds with natural undulations and that good views are ideal.
- 8.29 These two elderly, but still valid documents, impose a set of criteria which essentially steers the siting of crematoria away from urban locations and into fringe and rural sites. The applicant has indicated that there are many appeal

decisions where Inspectors have given substantial weight to these locational constraints when considering the requirement for a countryside location.

- 8.30 It is considered that in the absence of any more recent guidance on the appropriate location and siting of crematoria, a site outside of the defined settlement boundary is considered, in this case to be acceptable in principle.
- 8.31 In this case it is considered that the principle for the development in the countryside is acceptable and the proposal would accord with both criteria c) and i) of policy DS1.

Strategic Gap:

- 8.32 Policy DS2 of the local plan addresses development within a strategic gap and limits development that would affect the integrity of the gap either physically or visually with the aim of the policy to avoid coalescence of settlements
- 8.33 Strategic Gaps are established planning tools designed, primarily, to define and maintain the separate identity of settlements; Policy DS2 is not a landscape protection policy. It states that:

“In order to prevent the coalescence of urban areas and to maintain the separate identity of settlements... Development proposals will not be permitted where they significantly affect the integrity of the gap and the physical and visual separation of settlements or the distinctive nature of settlement characters”.

- 8.34 The gap between Fareham, Stubbington and Lee-on-the-Solent is currently effective in maintaining the separate identity between the settlements. It is accepted that there are parts of the gap, such as the Solent Airport at Daedalus, that do not form a tract of undeveloped countryside in the same way that other parts of the Strategic Gap do.
- 8.35 This site falls within the gap, outside of a developed area such as the Airport. Development here needs assessment to ensure that the gap continues to function effectively and the development would not lead to the erosion of the gap to such a degree that there would be a resultant coalescence of settlements.
- 8.36 The application is supported with a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) which assesses the impact of the development upon the strategic gap but also the landscape impact more generally; a matter considered later in this report.
- 8.37 Specifically regarding the strategic gap, the LVA sets out that the application proposals will have limited impact upon the visual and physical separation of the settlements at Bridgemary and Lee-on-the-Solent. The new building occupies a very small area of land within the Strategic Gap, is set to the eastern side of the site and will appear as an individual and separate structure suited to the countryside. It will not appear as an extension of the nearby settlements. The total area of landscape proposed as part of the application occupies 75%

of the site area providing good opportunities to help soften the new built form and increase overall woodland coverage within the local area.

- 8.38 Officers do not consider that the impact of the proposal and the visual presence of the building and associated infrastructure in the gap will significantly affect the integrity of the gap or have the effect of visually or physically causing settlements around the strategic gap to coalesce. The proposal is considered to accord with policy DS2 of the Local Plan.

Landscape and building design

- 8.39 Policy DS3 requires development in the countryside to have regard to and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Development proposals need to have particular regard to the intrinsic landscape character, the setting of the landscape and key views, the role of the landscape for the setting of buildings and as part of the ecological network. The Policy also seeks to ensure that regard is had to natural landscape features such as trees and hedgerows.

- 8.40 The site falls within the Woodcot/Alver Valley Landscape Character Area (8) of the Fareham Landscape Character Assessment (LCA).

- 8.41 The LCA then breaks the Character Area into local character areas and puts the site within Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA) 8.2b. LLCA8.2b sets out that the site

“...retains an essentially rural, pastoral character that is susceptible to change and would be significantly affected by the introduction of permanent built development. The area is physically and visually detached from other built form by the strong surrounding woodland framework and significant development would appear as an isolated area of built land within open countryside”.

- 8.42 The LCA continues that the “...potential for development is low”. Therefore, the site is classed as a landscape sensitive to change.

- 8.43 As referred to above, the application is supported by a LVA which further considers the proposals in the context of the LCA.

- 8.44 The application submits that the proposal is not “significant” and that the Landscape Character Assessment has been written in the instance that a larger scale development than that proposed could potentially take place here. The LVA purports that the application is not a “significant development” and that instead the proposal is relatively small scale. Furthermore, the applicant’s LVA suggests that the LCA was written prior to the construction of the IFA2 Converter Station which, the LVA intimates, would lead to a change in the sensitivity of this landscape and that the IFA2 building has a strong influence on the surrounding landscape affecting its sensitivity to further change.

- 8.45 The LCA accepts that the local landscape character area 8.2b is generally visually well contained apart from the western boundary (along Broom Way) but this could be mitigated by additional planting to close this gap.
- 8.46 The LVA sets out that the western edge of the site is proposed with new hedgerow and tree planting to address the extent of visual exposure along the western edge. This will help mitigate the visual exposure of the LLCA but also helps to filter views of the building itself and the wider landscape. The application makes the case that with the green roof and living walls, coupled with a palette of materials that are sensitive to the landscape yet robust and contemporary at the same time; that the proposal would assimilate itself into the landscape. Photomontages are included as part of the LVA to demonstrate this point.
- 8.47 Officers do not consider the proposal is a “significant development” in the context of the Fareham LCA. The building design is modern and contemporary. The applicant’s aim is to create a civic, community building which is modern, light and airy (in contrast to older Crematoria). The relatively limited, single storey, height of the building, together with the use of sedum-covered flat roofs ensures that the building will be viewed in the context of the much higher tree line in the background.
- 8.48 The use of natural materials enables the building to blend-in with both existing and proposed landscaping. The site’s degree of natural screening on three sides already means that views of the building itself would largely be glimpsed through vegetation and the proposed landscaping to the west will help fill the gap along the western boundary. Officers conclude that given the limited scale of the building that some form of development could take place here in this area of LLCA 8.2b without demonstrable harm to the character of the countryside. The size, design and siting of the building coupled with its material palette will help it to naturally blend-in to the landscape.
- 8.49 The other features associated with the building such as footpaths and parking are to be suitably landscaped and with the use of materials such as resin bonded gravel for the parking areas rather than a more urban tarmac solution the proposal is considered to be sympathetic to the rest of the rural design approach taken for the site. The proposed brick wall and entrance gates are recessed into the site behind the existing Brune Lane frontage hedgerow that is to be retained, other than the short length to be cleared to form the access. The proposal is considered to be acceptable and compliant with policy DS3 of the adopted local plan.

Highways and parking

- 8.50 A large number of the representations have expressed concern at the traffic impact of the site. Third party comments refer to the existing levels of traffic on Broom Way without further traffic adding to the volume on the road. Reference is also made to the suitability of the Broom Way / Brune Lane junction as well as the site access itself onto Brune Lane.

8.51 Policy TIN1 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that

“...New development should reduce the need to travel by motorised vehicle through the promotion of sustainable and active travel modes, offering a genuine choice of mode of travel”.

8.52 Development can be permitted by this policy where it

a) Contributes to the delivery of identified cycle, pedestrian and other non-road user routes and connects with existing and future public transport networks (including Rapid Transit), giving priority to non-motorised user movement; and

b) Facilitates access to public transport services, through the provision of connections to the existing infrastructure, or provision of new infrastructure through physical works or funding contributions; and

c) Provides an internal layout which is compatible for all users, including those with disabilities and reduced mobility, with acceptable parking and servicing provision, ensuring access to the development and highway network is safe, attractive in character, functional and accessible.

8.53 Local Plan Policy TIN2 permits development where

“There is no unacceptable impact on highway safety, and the residual cumulative impact on the road network is not severe”;

8.54 The policy also requires that the impacts on the local road network are mitigated for by measures that would avoid/reduce the need to travel, promote active travel or public transport and provision for any necessary enhancements to the local network to mitigate the proposal.

8.55 The proposed site access is off the north side of Brune Lane. The third party comments suggest that the location of the access in this location is dangerous and unsafe given the narrowness of the lane, the volume of traffic using it, the poor visibility to the east and the close proximity of the junction of Brune Lane with Broom Way.

8.56 A small section of hedge clearance is required to facilitate the access which is approximately 88m from the junction of Brune Lane with Broom Way to the west. To the east of the proposed access Brune Lane does turn to the south however this bend in the road is in excess of 60m away.

8.57 To enable two way movements into the site the plans indicate a slight widening of Brune Lane is required to reach a width of 5.5m (up from between 4.5 - 4.8m). This can be achieved as part of the site access design which has a simple T-junction onto Brune Lane with a 5.5m wide access road (narrowing to 4.5m in width within the site) along with suitable visibility splays.

- 8.58 The applicant has undertaken an Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) on Brune Lane and the results of this count have informed the access arrangement and proposed visibility splays. Sweep path analysis shows that the two family cars can utilise the access unhindered as well as pass on Brune Lane. The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the principle of the site access in this location or its design.
- 8.59 A lot of third party comments have challenged the suitability of the Broom Way/Brune Lane junction to accommodate the traffic from the proposal. A large number of comments refer to existing congestion on Broom Way and that traffic for the facility will be caught in this congestion and add to the existing peak time volume of traffic.
- 8.60 The proposed development of a single chapel crematorium is intended to provide services between 09:30 and 16:30 Monday to Saturday. It is understood that these services would be held in 60-minute time slots and arranged to avoid, where possible, overlapping of traffic to the site. Operationally there would be an approximate 15-minute window either side of the service within that hour slot which allows for arrivals and departures before and after the service. The majority of services will take place outside of the peak periods for traffic on the local highway network. Five attended funerals are due to be provided per day, with a maximum of 7 on any one day.
- 8.61 The Highway Authority comments accept the data in the application that on average the number of vehicles attending a funeral for a single chapel facility is between 15-20, over a day it is estimated that 80-105 total trips would be had, this includes trips made by staff and deliveries.
- 8.62 The Brune Lane ATC results detail that there is capacity in the road network in the off peak periods such that the additional twenty trips per hour, outside of the morning and evening peak periods, will not be to the detriment of the safe operation of the highway network. The Highway Authority has considered that the trip generation calculations proposed by the development are acceptable and the proposal would accord with policy TIN2.
- 8.63 Within the site, on the northern side of the existing tree belt, a proposed footpath is proposed to run from the facility west to Broom Way. This path will facilitate pedestrian access whilst retaining the established landscape edge to Brune Lane. The proposed path terminates just to the north of the Brune Lane/Broom Way junction in a location that is currently informally used as parking for the users of the stables and horse fields. A replacement parking area is to be provided for horse owners inside the main site access from Brune Lane. The Broom Way crossing location is opposite one of the new access points to the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Park (QEIIJP) meaning the site would link up with other green infrastructure and also the existing pedestrian/cycleway that runs north to south on the west side of Broom Way.
- 8.64 At the request of the Highway Authority a further ATC was arranged along Broom Way to measure gaps in the traffic flows and to establish if a simple

dropped kerb crossing to the west side of Broom Way / QEIIPJP was suitable and adequate for pedestrians looking to cross Broom Way.

- 8.65 The gap analysis results indicate that during the times that the crematorium is open that there are suitable gaps in the traffic to accommodate the crossing of both lanes of Broom Way by pedestrians. The data shows that the only delay occurs during the afternoon peak period however this is after the final service of the day would have taken place.
- 8.66 A third party has undertaken their own analysis of the ATC gap crossing data. This representation suggests that a number of the vehicles on Broom Way are travelling too fast, or too close to cars in front and therefore the volume of traffic is unsafe for the crossing proposal.
- 8.67 This third party analysis has been shared with the Highway Authority. After a review of the analysis undertaken, the Highway Authority consider the provision of a dropped kerb, un-controlled, pedestrian crossing across Broom Way to be safe and suitable for pedestrians against the latest guidance. The information was reviewed by Hampshire's Road Safety Audit Team who also deemed it to be acceptable.
- 8.68 The facility is one whereby there is no locally set parking standard. The Government guidance (the Siting and Planning of Crematoria, DoE, 1978) requires that parking capacity should be at a ratio of one space for every three seats in the chapel. As set out above in paragraph 3.3 there are in excess of ninety spaces provided when the areas for overspill parking are included plus parking for staff. With the chapel planned to accommodate 90 seats, the parking exceeds the 1978 government guidance. Even on occasion where the chapel could open the bi-fold doors to the entrance vestibule and waiting areas for larger funerals, the maximum number of seats would be 130. Even for these occasions and allowing for the growth in car ownership, Officers consider there to be adequate parking provision.
- 8.69 The submission sets out that once fully operational the facility would hold up to five attended services per day. The funeral services are proposed to be offered at 60-minute intervals as detailed above at paragraph 8.60. The applicant makes the submission that parking surveys undertaken at completed crematoria have shown that attendees arrive over a 15-minute period before the service and stay around 5 minutes afterwards. As such, with hour slots there will be predominantly one funeral party on site at any one time. Where there is some overlap between one party leaving and another arriving, there remains adequate parking provision on site to meet this. The parking provision is considered by Officers to be acceptable.
- 8.70 As a result of the proposed crematorium operating outside of the morning and afternoon peak traffic times, the proposed access onto Brune Lane and the access route to the facility utilising the Broom Way/Brune Lane junction is considered to be acceptable. The provision of the footpath to Broom Way will ensure that there is a sustainable travel options for both those attending a service at the chapel but also for staff or those visiting the memorial gardens.

The crossing of Broom Way will link up with other sustainable travel infrastructure and green infrastructure. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with policy TIN2 of the Borough Local Plan.

Pollution, climate change and contaminated land

8.71 Policy CC1 of the Local Plan promotes development that minimises the need to travel. The policy is also supporting of development that uses sustainable drainage systems, has efficient methods of water use and building design that is sustainably sourced and operated.

8.72 Policy D2 seeks to ensure that development does not

“...have an unacceptable adverse environmental impact, either on neighbouring occupants, adjoining land, or the wider environment”.

8.73 In this case the chapel is designed to optimise natural light and in turn minimise energy use. The Planning Statement sets out that, for example,

“...the full-height glazed chapel window faces north in order to avoid solar gain, natural ventilation.... design and construction of the building envelope, namely walls, floors, roof, windows and doors will target levels of thermal insulation and air tightness above and beyond 2022 Building Regulations minimum standards”.

8.74 The Statement continues

“The building will also feature full LED lighting, low water use sanitaryware and A+ rated electrical appliances, whilst smart metering will be installed to allow the Operator to accurately assess how energy is being consumed, and therefore minimise energy consumption. Rainwater capture will likewise minimise the use of water – for both the building’s grey water requirements, and the site’s landscaping”.

8.75 Reference is also made above to the detail of the building design with the sedum roof and “living walls” which further enhances its sustainability.

8.76 Furthermore the proposal will ensure protection of existing trees and landscape features, will include the procurement of building materials from sustainable sources and the Construction Environmental Management Plan will seek to minimise construction waste that cannot be recycled. Officers consider that proposal complies with policy CC1.

8.77 In addition the application documents make the case that whilst the majority of mourners attending a funeral typically travel by car, it is often the case that families will car share. In this case, the location of the facility is such that journey times for those within the already described population catchment would have a shorter drive time than to Portchester. This could help reduce carbon emissions through reduced travel distances.

- 8.78 With regards to the operation of the building, the facility will benefit from the latest cremator technology, with cremators that can accommodate bariatric coffins; a size of coffin that Portchester Crematorium is unable to accommodate the application identifies. The cremators will either be electric or gas fired; this is still a point to be determined by the applicant. However, the current pollution abatement technology is to be implemented and the facility is operated under an environmental permit. Given the locational requirements within the Cremation Act relative to the nearest neighbouring property, plus the extraction technology, the proposal is considered to accord with policy D2.
- 8.79 Given the proximity of the site of Solent Airport and the historic uses undertaken at the airport, the application is supported with a contaminated land statement and an unexploded ordinance (UXO) statement. The first document identifies the site is clear of contamination. The UXO statement concludes that there may be very small risk of encountering “fall to earth” munitions given the relationship of the land, geographically, to the former military airport.
- 8.80 The Council’s Environmental Health Officers have reviewed the two documents and are content with the findings subject to recommended conditions.

Flood risk and Drainage

- 8.81 Third party letters and images depict the site as being susceptible to flooding or even under water.
- 8.82 The application site is located in flood zone 1 and is therefore outside of the flood plain. The Environment Agency records within the application Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) indicate that the site is located in an area of the lowest risk of river or surface water flooding.
- 8.83 Some of the third party letters include photos and a video of pooling water on the site. The FRA has mapped the current surface water flows across the site. The FRA illustrates that the proposal will utilise a sustainable urban drainage system in the form of a swale. This is designed in the lowest part of the site and will enable surface water to be collected on site, retained and attenuated to run-off at the greenfield rate.
- 8.84 There is no available public sewer connection in close proximity to this site. It is therefore proposed that the foul water discharge from the Crematorium buildings will be treated on site using a proprietary foul sewage package treatment plant. This treatment plan will manage on site foul water. Third party comments have suggested that chemicals and foul waste would enter the River Alver to the east. The surface water drainage system, as described above, will be managed with controlled discharge to the Alver not the waste water. The treatment plant will manage all the waste water through a system of filters and drains. It is intended that the filtered water will be discharged to the subsoil by a dedicated infiltration soakaway. A consent to discharge in this way will be needed from the Environment Agency.

- 8.85 Policy CC2 of the Local Plan directs development to the sites with the lowest risk of flooding through reference to the national sequential test and exception test process. In this case neither test is applicable given the location of the site in flood zone 1, which is sequentially the best site in terms of the lowest flood risk such that an exception test is not required. The development will manage its own surface water on site with the runoff rates no worse than the current greenfield rate.
- 8.86 The application is considered to comply with the requirements of policy CC2. The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has reviewed the submission and the supplementary documents such as the SUDS Maintenance Plan. No objection is raised by the LLFA subject to conditions.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 8.87 Policy NE1 of the Local Plan permits development where (amongst other things):
- “...local sites of nature conservation value are protected and enhanced, reflecting their status in the hierarchy of nature conservation designations” (criterion a)*
- 8.88 Whilst the site is a grazed paddock, it is directly adjacent to Lee-on-Solent Golf Course SINC, which has fragmented acid grassland and heathland habitats. Acid grassland is a recognised Priority Habitat so the impact of the change in character of the application site needs to be fully understood. Priority Habitats are those which have been deemed to be of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity.
- 8.89 In order to accord with policy NE1 The applicant was, therefore, requested to provide further information to the submitted ecology survey to establish if the presence of any Priority Habitats should be discounted or if there were indicators of habitat species on the site that needed to be incorporated into the scheme and the landscape design. Until this exercise was completed the new landscaping and habitat creation could not be fully developed or considered.
- 8.90 Further botanic surveys were undertaken by the applicant in April and June 2023. The surveys found that the grassland is not species rich throughout and strongly grass-dominated. None of the grassland is sufficiently herb rich to qualify as Priority Habitat either as Lowland Dry Acid Grassland or Lowland Meadows.
- 8.91 In planning the future ecological enhancement and habitat creation measures the design now takes into account the condition of the identified grassland. The June survey visit concluded that the site is of Moderate or Good condition. There is an opportunity, therefore, to increase the herb richness and herb cover on site through the landscaping scheme design and management, which would achieve an overall net gain (see the following paragraphs).

- 8.92 Following the additional vegetation surveys, the applicant has amended the landscaping scheme and seed mix to reflect the species on site and around the site borders. The landscape design is now considered appropriate and complementary to the existing conditions on site such that the proposal accords with policy NE1. Furthermore, the recommendations in the Ecology Appraisal in relation to protected species such as reptiles, nesting birds are appropriate and will ensure their protection. There is no objection to the proposal from the Council's ecologist.
- 8.93 The crematorium proposal is a development type whereby policy NE2 Biodiversity Net-gain is engaged. Following the extended botanical surveys undertaken as described above the baseline inputs to the Defra metric have been accurately recorded. The outcome of the metric demonstrates a 16.86% biodiversity net gain and a 154.87% gain in hedgerow units. The proposal is considered to accord with policy NE2.
- 8.94 A lighting plan is included with the application. This specifies that low level (1m tall) bollard lights are to be used in the parking areas and wall mounted downlighters on the building. No lighting is proposed beyond the formal memorial garden and around the SUDs meadow walk area. The lighting design has been informed by ecological guidance to ensure that the lighting, when in use in the winter months, avoids any adverse impact on bats using the site and surrounding landscape. However, notwithstanding this design approach, the finer detail of the lighting is to be secured by planning condition and approved prior to the installation on the site.

Other Matters

- 8.95 As described above, a new parking area is proposed inside the site after accessing the site (at the western edge) for parking to be used by horse owners that will continue to have horses grazing the land between the site and Broom Way.

Planning Balance & Conclusions:

- 8.96 The NPPF sets out that the aim of the planning system is to deliver sustainable development. The Framework identifies three objectives that together comprise sustainable development. These three strands are economic, social and environmental objectives.
- 8.97 The Planning Statement with the application indicates that the facility would generate four full time jobs and the crematorium would likely use local services once operational to further support other local businesses. During construction the proposal would provide approximately forty construction employment opportunities and once open and operational there could be indirect local benefits to the hospitality services through provision of wakes.
- 8.98 The above report sets out the "...local need" for the facility but considering the qualitative indicators for cremation, the proposal offers a much more local and convenient facility in what will be a modern, high quality sustainable building

available to the local community. The facility would provide a greater choice of facility serving all faiths and denominations and is thus has social benefits.

- 8.99 The application, as set out above, would reduce the overall travel time for a large amount of the catchment population. Furthermore, as a result of the additional botanical surveys undertaken the proposal would provide a number of environmental benefits to the area including substantial biodiversity net gain. A Sustainable Urban Drainage system will ensure that run off rates are no worse than the current run off rates and the modern cremator technology and extraction equipment will ensure that there are no harmful emissions.
- 8.100 Whilst the concerns of third parties are noted, the traffic impact has been fully considered along with the implications for surface water drainage and flood risk. It is considered that the proposal meets the Framework's aspirations for sustainable development and is in accordance with the provisions of the development plan. In such circumstances the presumption is in favour of the development and the application should be approved without delay.
- 8.101 Officers consider the proposal to be acceptable and recommend that planning permission is granted subject to conditions as set out below.

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION, subject to the following conditions:

01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before three years from the date of this decision.

REASON: To allow a reasonable time period for work to start, to comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and to enable the Council to review the position if a fresh application is made after that time.

02. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following drawings/documents:
- Drawing 1636-17A Location Plan
 - Drawing 1636-18A Scheme Design: Block Plan
 - Drawing 1636-19B Scheme Design: Site Plan
 - Drawing 1636-20A Scheme Design: Floor Plan
 - Drawing 1636-22A Scheme Design: Landscaping Plan
 - Drawing 1636-23 Scheme Design: Boundary Treatments
 - Drawing 1636-24A Scheme Design: Elevations (1 of 2)
 - Drawing 1636-25A Scheme Design: Elevations (2 of 2)
 - Drawing 1636-26 Scheme Design: Pedestrian crossings on site
 - Drawing 1636-28A Scheme Design: Floor & Block Plan Overlay
 - Drawing 22050-D01 Rev F Proposed Vehicles & Pedestrian Access off Brune Lane
 - Drawing 22050-D02 Rev F Proposed Vehicles & Pedestrian Access Dimensions
 - Drawing NJC-001 Proposed Access
 - Drawing D48375/PMU/A

REASON: To avoid any doubt over what has been permitted.

03. Cremation/funeral services shall only operate between the hours of 09.30 to 16.30 hours Monday to Saturday and shall be scheduled to a frequency not greater than one service per hour. There shall be no services on a Sunday or recognised bank or public holiday.

REASON: in the interest of the safe operation of the local highway network

04. No development shall take place until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall set out the strategy and detailed method statements in respect of the following:

- a) Construction Traffic Management (to include the details of haul roads, co-ordination of deliveries and plant and materials and the disposing of waste resulting from demolition and/or construction so as to avoid undue interference with the operation of the public highway, particularly during the Monday-Friday AM Peak (0800-0900) and PM Peak (1630-1800) periods);
- b) Site Office location;
- c) Contractor parking areas for use during construction;
- d) Areas for loading and unloading;
- e) Construction lighting details;
- f) The storage of materials and construction waste, including waste recycling where possible;
- g) The storage and dispensing of fuels, chemicals, oils and any hazardous materials (including any hazardous soils);
- h) The proposed measures to minimise adverse impacts to neighbouring properties caused by noise, vibration, odours;
- i) The proposed maintenance and aftercare of the site;
- j) The provision of road and wheel cleaning facilities, including any required drainage;
- k) Dust and dirt control measures;
- l) measures to avoid impacts on the designated sites, retained habitats and trees.

The development shall subsequently proceed in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interest of managing the construction process so as to avoid impact on the highway network and to ecological and arboricultural receptors and in the interest of the amenities of the area.

05. No development shall take place on site (including site set up and ground preparation works) until:

- (i) An intrusive site investigation and an assessment of the risks posed to human health, the building fabric and the wider environment has been undertaken and the results submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The intrusive site investigation shall be taken at such points and to such a depth as the LPA may stipulate.
- (ii) Where the intrusive site investigation and risk assessment reveals a risk to receptors, a strategy of remedial measures and detailed method statements to address identified risks shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. It shall also include the nomination of a competent person to oversee the implementation of the measures.

REASON: To ensure that any potential contamination of the site is properly taken into account before development takes place. The details secured by this condition are considered essential to be agreed prior to the commencement of the development on the site to ensure adequate mitigation against land contamination on human health.

06. No development shall take place above damp proof course (DPC) until samples and specifications of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To secure the satisfactory appearance of the development.

07. No development hereby permitted shall take place beyond damp proof course (DPC) level until details of the finished treatment of all areas to be hard surfaced have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details and the hard surfaced areas shall be completed prior to the first use of the building and shall subsequently be retained as constructed.

REASON: To secure the satisfactory appearance of the development

08. No development shall take place related to the permitted building on site until the access, including the verge crossing has been constructed and lines of sight of 2.4 metres by 50 metres provided in accordance with Drawing 22050-D02 Rev F "Proposed Vehicles & Pedestrian Access Dimensions". The lines of sight splays shown on the approved plans shall be kept free of any obstruction exceeding 600mm in height above the adjacent carriageway and shall be subsequently maintained so thereafter.

REASON: To provide satisfactory access and in the interests of highway safety.

09. No development shall take place until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on the principles within the Flood Risk Assessment Rev. B, has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details should include:

- a. A technical summary highlighting any changes to the design from that within the approved Flood Risk Assessment Rev. B.
- b. Infiltration test results undertaken in accordance with BRE365 and providing a representative assessment of those locations where infiltration features are proposed
- c. Detailed drainage plans to include type, layout and dimensions of drainage features including references to link to the drainage calculations.
- d. Detailed drainage calculations to demonstrate existing runoff rates are not exceeded and there is sufficient attenuation for storm events up to and including 1:100 + climate change.
- e. Confirmation that sufficient water quality measures have been included to satisfy the methodology in the Ciria SuDS Manual C753.
- f. Exceedance plans demonstrating the flow paths and areas of ponding in the event of blockages or storms exceeding design criteria.

The development will be carried out in accordance with the approved details

REASON: In the interest of managing surface water from the development

10. The crematorium and memorial garden hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the car and bicycle parking spaces have been provided within the site in accordance with the approved site plan (Drawing 1636-19B Scheme Design: Site Plan). Parking areas shall be retained for the permitted purpose there after.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety.

11. The crematorium and memorial garden hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the new east to west footpath and Broom Way crossing point have been provided in accordance with the details shown on drawing 22050-D02 Rev F "Proposed Vehicles & Pedestrian Access Dimensions".

REASON: In the interests of highway safety.

12. Details for the long term maintenance arrangements for the surface water drainage system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the first occupation of any of the dwellings. The submitted details shall include;

- a) Maintenance schedules for each drainage feature type and ownership;
- b) Details of protection measures

The Surface Water Drainage System shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In the interest of managing surface water from the development

13. The crematorium and memorial garden hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until:

- The agreed scheme of contaminated land remedial measures pursuant to condition 05 have been fully implemented.
- Remedial measures shall be validated in writing by an independent competent person as agreed with the LPA and these validation details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- The validation is required to confirm that the remedial works have been implemented in accordance with the agreed remedial strategy and shall include photographic evidence from during construction and as built drawings.

REASON: To ensure that any contamination at the site is properly addressed

14. If during development contamination or unexploded ordinance not previously identified is found to be present at the site then all work in the affected area shall stop. No further work at the affected area shall be carried out (unless first agreed in writing with the local planning authority) until a remediation strategy detailing how this affected area will be dealt with has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The development shall recommence only in accordance with the remediation strategy as approved in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure that any contamination at the site is properly addressed

15. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the measures detailed within the submitted Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment (Ecosupport, June 2023) and Section 6.0 'RECOMMENDATIONS' of the Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecosupport, June 2023).

REASON: in the interest of preserving the onsite and adjacent ecology.

16. No works shall take place (including demolition, site clearance and ground preparations) until a landscape implementation and long term management plan is first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The landscaping shall be delivered in accordance with the implementation programme and managed thereafter in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To ensure that at least 10% net gains for biodiversity are secured for at least 30 years and to ensure that the landscaping scheme is maintained adequately to ensure it establishes on the site.

17. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years from first planting, are removed, die or, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced, within the next available planting season, with others of the same species, size and number as originally approved.

REASON: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a standard of landscaping.

18. Prior to the installation of any operational lighting on the site, a scheme of permanent external lighting shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include a layout plan with beam orientation and extent of light scatter and a schedule of the equipment design (luminaire type, mounting height, aiming angles and luminaire profiles).

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To ensure lighting does not materially harm the area or impact upon protected species

Then:

DELEGATE authority to the Head of Development Management to make any necessary modification, deletion or addition to the proposed conditions

9.0 Background Papers

- 9.1 Application documents and all consultation responses and representations received as listed on the Council's website under the application reference number, together with all relevant national and local policies, guidance and standards and relevant legislation.

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL



Horse Field
Land North of Brune Lane and East of Broom Way
Scale 1:2,000

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