

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 23 May 2022

Title: St Mary's Church Boundary Wall

Contact Officer: Operations & Estates Advisor - John Hickman

Background

The Council commissioned a structural report on St Mary's boundary wall in December 2019 as the wall appeared to be in very poor repair in some areas, the final report was received in April 2020. The northern wall was highlighted as requiring urgent repair where two car accidents had damaged the wall and piers. These works have been undertaken and completed since the report was issued.

The report noted that overall, the walls do need repair but apart from the localised areas of collapse then, they were structurally stable. The report recommends the following actions on the southern and western walls.

The southern wall is reported as being in a reasonable condition but with a large amount of ivy growth and damaged capping's that require removing and replacing respectively.

The western wall is the longest and requires the most amount of work, repairs are required on two collapsed sections towards the southern end of the wall, and it is crucial that ivy growth and vegetation are removed from the core of the wall. It is also critical that the tree stumps and other large vegetation are carefully removed as this will cause instability to the wall if allowed to remain and regrow.

The report provides a table of long-term and short-term recommendations and priorities for the maintenance/repair of the wall.

An annual sum was also agreed in 2019 by council to be set aside for the expected repair works to St Mary's boundary wall.

Current Situation

A faculty application has already been started with the Diocese of Oxford for the boundary wall repairs, once the council agrees works to be carried out at this time and contractors selected for the works, the remaining information can be provided to the Diocese to gain the faculty for the work to be undertaken. Further faculties will be required for any other works required after any initial works recommended by council are carried out.

The Operations and Estates Advisor has met with several companies regarding quoting for the repairs to this wall, contractors were requested to provide quotes for the Priority 1 short term recommended works that were required but also to provide costing separately where it made monetary sense to carry out the long-term recommendations whilst carrying out the short-term repairs.

The Operations and Estates Advisor has provided relevant quotes separately and a breakdown of quotes to make comparison easier for councillors in an appendix to this report.

Contractors that have quoted have all quoted differently however it is clear that costs to carry out the priority 1 short term repair works will be substantial.

Contractor 1 has provided a quote to carry out all short term works regardless of priority to both the western & southern wall with each section of the wall costs separated out as in the list of recommendations and priorities.

Contractor 2 has provided a quote to carry out all short and long term works regardless of priority on the western wall only, with each section of the costs separated out as in the list of recommendations and priorities. There is also an additional allowance for 20m of copping stones.

Contractor 3 has provided a quote for all recommended works to southern, western, and northern walls with short-term and long-term works costed separately.

Contractor 4 has provided a quote for the western wall only splitting it into 3 separate areas and covers both short-term and long-term recommendations. There is also an additional allowance for additional stone.

Contractor 5 has provided a quote for all recommended priority 1 works both short-term and long-term recommendations. Risk assessment and method statement at additional cost if chosen for the work.

Contractor 5 has also missed pricing an area of the wall selected at 60m-70m an updated quote to include this area will hopefully be provided in time to include in this report.

Contractor 6 has quoted for priority 1, 2 & 3 works including both short-term and long-term recommendations. Additional amounts would also need to be allowed if required for Plant/Fencing although the works team may be able to provide this/ Scaffold/Welfare.

The Council should also agree to remove the existing tree growth from the wall and the use of Biochemical treatments of vegetation growing from the wall to prior to works commencing in order to prevent regrowth of the vegetation within the wall once the wall repairs have been completed. If suitable Biochemicals are not available, then a herbicide will be required instead.

It should also be noted that there will be additional costs for Arboriculturist to remove large trunks/roots and to carry out stump grinding works. Any Treatments of vegetation and any asbestos removal should any be found.

Dependant on works selected to be carried out access to the Henry Box school grounds to undertake the relevant works on their side of the boundary wall and an agreement made with the school regarding the school's iron railings, wall and tree stump require removal and repair respectively.

The Operations and Estates Advisor would advise that due to the sums involved, the Council concentrates on the initial repairs to the wall in the following areas of the Western Wall 10m – 30m and 50m – 80m initially, with other areas being undertaken at later dates when funds are available.

The Operations and Estates Advisor has provided a separate break down of quotes for these areas to make comparison easier for the specified areas.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

The use of biochemicals can have a harmful effect on the environment if not used in line with current legislation and spraying procedures.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Carrying out high priority 1 works will reduce councils' liability for any injury to members of the public should any of the high priority areas collapse at any time.

Financial implications

- As shown on appendix's provide separately to this report.
- The Council has an EMR towards this work which currently stands at £35,000

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Area of works that should be undertaken initially Priority 1 Short Term or other recommendation.
2. Selected contractor to carry out selected works contractor 1,2,3,4,5 or 6.
3. Removal of existing tree growth from wall and Biochemical/Herbicide for treatment of tree stumps and vegetative growth from the wall prior to commencement of works.