

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change

Cemetery Memorial Safety Testing1. Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on progress achieved in relation to the memorial safety inspection programme, to detail the options relating to failed memorials, and any potential financial impact, in accordance with the legislative requirement to carry out memorial safety inspections.

To inform Members of historic memorials within the five working cemeteries that have passed the memorial safety testing but have fallen into disrepair.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1. NOTE the legislative requirement to carry out memorial safety testing and the approach taken by the Council to achieve this outcome.**
- 2. CONSIDER the options in respect of making memorials permanently safe and RESOLVE accordingly, with any additional costs being funded from General Fund Reserves in 2025/26.**
- 3. CONSIDER the options in respect of the potential repair and maintenance of historical memorials within the five open cemeteries and RESOLVE accordingly.**

3. Detail

The responsibility for the overall safety within a burial ground lies with the burial authority (i.e. the Council). The maintenance and repair of any memorial is the responsibility of the memorial owner.

A burial authority is legislatively required to carry out regular inspections on existing memorials, installed prior to 2005, at least once every five-years. Where this inspection programme identifies unsafe memorials the burial authority has a responsibility to ensure memorials are not a danger to visitors and employees in the cemetery. Where possible, in accordance with the guidance provided by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) the burial authority should contact the owner, advise the owner of the safety issue identified as a result of the testing, and ask the owner to make the memorial permanently safe. Usually this is achieved by having the memorial re-fixed by a suitably qualified stone mason. Further detail is provided in **Appendix 1**.

Many historic memorials and kerb set grave spaces have no living family members who tend the grave. This results in memorials naturally deteriorating over time potentially creating a safety issue and affecting the appearance of the cemetery. Further detail is provided in **Appendix 2**.

4. Key Decision

Not applicable.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not applicable.

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

There is no budgetary provision for the cost of the proposals set out in this report. A revenue budget of either £21,000 or £77,000 would be required for the options presented in Appendix 1. A further revenue budget of between £3,000 and £10,000 would be required for the options presented in Appendix 2.

If Members are to approve the proposals, these additional cost pressures would be funded directly from General Fund Reserve balances in 2025/26.

7. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The legal implications are set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

8. Human Resources Implications

Not applicable

9. Union Comments

Not applicable.

10. Climate Change Implications

The climate change implications are contained within the report.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

13. Background Papers

Nil.