

CEMETERIES MEMORIAL SAFETY PROGRAMME 2011-15
INSTITUTE OF CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE ON THE
MANAGEMENT OF MEMORIALS

Submitted by: Head of Operations – Roger Tait

Portfolio: Culture and Active Communities

Works Attended: All

Purpose of the Report

To inform Cabinet of guidance on the Management of Memorials issued by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM)

To compare the Council's current procedure for the management of memorials with the ICCM guidance

To seek the approval of Cabinet to endorse the Council's current procedure for the management of memorials and to continue to apply it to the forthcoming approved 5 year programme of memorial inspection and testing in the Borough Council's cemeteries

Recommendations

(a) That the ICCM guidance on the Management of Memorials be noted

(b) That the Council's current procedure for the management of memorials be endorsed and applied to the forthcoming approved 5 year programme of memorial inspection and testing in the Borough Council's cemeteries

Reasons

The Council has a legal and statutory duty to ensure the safety of visitors, contractors and staff within its cemeteries.

1. **Background**

1.1 Cabinet considered a report on the Cemeteries Memorial Safety Programme 2011-15 on 20 July 2011.

It was resolved:

(a) That Cabinet review the completed Cemeteries Memorial Inspection and Safety Programme and consider a follow on rolling programme to re-inspect all memorials over a five year period.

(b) That the underspend from the 2005-10 programme be rolled forward to meet the costs of year 1-4 of the new 5 year programme and that provision of £10,000 be made in the General Fund Capital Programme for year 5 (2015/16).

(c) That long-term provision be made in the General Fund Revenue Programme to meet the cost of the inspection and safety programme from 2016/17 onwards.

2. Issues

- 2.1 Subsequent to the report being considered by Cabinet, the ICCM issued updated guidelines on the Management of Memorials.
- 2.2 A copy of the guidelines is available on request.
- 2.3 Your officers have reviewed the guidelines and compared them to the Council's current approved procedure for memorial inspection and testing.
- 2.4 The Council's procedure aligns very closely with the ICCM guidelines, with the exception of the following minor differences:
 - (a) Inspection Process:- Memorials up to 500mm in height. The ICCM Guidelines suggest a full visual test and hand test.
- 2.5 The Council's current procedure allows for a visual test only unless obvious signs of deterioration and/or movement are evident in which case a hand test is carried out on memorials within the main burial areas (these are small in number). The cremated remains grave memorials are not inspected as they are all dowelled to a concrete slab and there are no separate component parts, therefore the risk of failure is minimal.
- 2.6 Book type memorials are all hand tested and any found to be unsafe are fitted with a temporary support if possible, but if not laid flat on a wooden frame.
 - (b) ICCM Guidelines categorise Memorials over 500mm into three criteria: 500mm to 1.5m, 1.5m to 2.5m and over 2.5m.
- 2.7 The Council's current procedure differs slightly from the ICCM guidelines as follows:-

ICCM Guidelines recommend a visual, hand and/or mechanical test for memorials between 500mm and 2.5m in height and an inspection by a structural engineer for memorials over 2.5m in height.

The Council's current procedure for memorials between 500mm to 2m in height consists of a visual and mechanical test carried out by trained memorial inspection officers in the Bereavement Services team. The mechanical test ensures consistency of loading across all memorials tested.

Memorials over 2m in height are inspected by the Council's Structural Engineer.

The Council's current testing procedure is more stringent in employing the structural engineer at a lesser height of memorial which your officers feel is necessary as there is a higher potential impact of damage and/or injury if larger memorials fail.

From experience of previous inspections it is observed that the structural engineer's expertise is required at the current agreed stage of 2m in height. This view was also supported by the independent structural engineer's report from the initial memorial inspection programme.

- (c) Priority of Actions – The ICCM recommends 3 classifications of priority:

Priority 1 – immediate action is required to make the memorial safe or to stop the public accessing the memorial. This could be the permanent removal of the hazard or the temporary making safe of the memorial.

- Priority 2 – the memorial is not an immediate danger to the public but is not fully stable and will therefore, need to be monitored every 12 months to assess any further deterioration of the memorial.
- Priority 3 – the memorial is perfectly stable and will only need to be inspected in 5 years time.

The council's current procedure does not incorporate Priority 2, and categorises memorials as either Priority 1 or Priority 3 as defined above.

From previous experience of the Council's inspection and testing programme it is considered that if a memorial is inspected and found to be unsafe or not fully stable then immediate action should be taken to properly deal with the memorial rather than accept the risk and the resource implications of continual annual re-inspection.

- 2.8 It is considered that the Council's current approved procedure of memorial inspection and testing, which has been successfully implemented in previous phases of the memorial safety programme, is broadly compliant with the ICCM guidelines and also offers additional risk management benefits to the Council and other stakeholders as described in section 2.2.

3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 Option 1- Adopt ICCM guidelines on Memorial Safety
- 3.2 Option 2 - Continue with the Council's current approved procedure for memorial inspection and testing.

4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 It is proposed to endorse the Council's current procedure for the management of memorials and to continue to apply it to the forthcoming approved 5 year programme of memorial inspection and testing in the Borough Council's cemeteries.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 The Council has a legal and statutory duty to ensure the safety of visitors, contractors and staff within its cemeteries
- 5.2 The Council's current approved procedure for memorial inspection and testing has been successfully implemented in previous phases of the memorial safety programme, is broadly compliant with the ICCM guidelines and offers additional risk management benefits to the Council and other stakeholders.

6. **Outcomes linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 6.1 Creating a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough
- The community is not put at risk of pollution or environmental hazard
 - The natural and built environment is protected and enhanced

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 There are legal and statutory duties incumbent on the Council to ensure the safety of visitors, contractors and staff within its cemeteries, crematoria, parks and open spaces.

7.2 Equality Impact Assessment

7.3 No negative differential equality impact has been identified in this report.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

None arising as a result of this report.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 The major risks in relation to memorial safety management have been identified and reported in the previous report to Cabinet on 20 July 2011.

10. **Key Decision Information**

10.1 The issues in this report do not involve significant expenditure, affect all wards in the Borough and have been included in the Forward Plan.