

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Customer and Digital (Introduced by the Executive Member for Customer, Advice and Streetscene Services)	Executive Cabinet	15 November 2018

ADOPTION OF COUNCIL'S MEMORIAL STONE INSPECTION POLICY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To seek approval for the adoption of the Council's memorial stone inspection policy.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- The policy is approved.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The purpose of the Stone Memorial Inspection policy is to set out the council's risk based approach to the inspection of stone memorials in the cemeteries it is responsible for. There are approximately 6,400 memorials in Chorley and Adlington cemeteries so this is a significant piece of work in terms of resources. The council is also responsible for two closed churchyards with standing memorials.
- The policy reflects best practise in managing the risks arising from stone memorials. The policy will be available on our website and will be provided to our insurers. It contains details of our inspection and assessment process.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Reason Please bold as appropriate	1, a change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more	2, a contract worth £100,000 or more
	3, a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more	4, Significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- To ensure the Council has a robust policy in place for the risk management of stone memorials in cemeteries and closed churchyards it is responsible for.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- To not adopt the policy would not comply with our insurers requirements and potentially leave the Council open to challenge.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities	√	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	

BACKGROUND

- The Council is responsible for ensuring the cemeteries are safe and welcoming places to visit. A report from Zurich, our insurers from November 2016 highlighted the need for the council to have a memorial inspection policy and to carry out a programme of inspections. There are approximately 6,400 memorials in Chorley and Adlington cemeteries so this is a significant piece of work in terms of resources.
- The Council has a duty under The Occupiers Liability Act (1957 & 1984) to inspect memorials in the cemeteries it is responsible for and to make safe any that are defective. This does mean reinstatement. The memorials remain the property of the burial plot deed holder.
- A report along with a draft Memorial Stone policy was taken to SMT on 30th August 2017 recommending a trial inspection programme of 100 memorials was undertaken to identify how long the work would take and the scale of repairs required. Three members of Streetscene staff were trained in memorial inspections in November 2017.
- The inspection of 100 low risk memorial stones at Chorley cemetery took two working days for two members of staff to complete in December. The age of these graves is around 60 to 70 years old. Details of the inspections were recorded on paper and a work placement transferred the data to an excel spreadsheet. 40% were recorded as not having a grave stone present with 12% of the memorials recorded as having defects.

CLOSED CHURCHYARDS

- The Council is responsible for maintenance of a number of closed churchyards where the Diocese has passed on responsibility to us. Two of the churchyards have standing memorials; St John's, Whittle le Woods and St. Peter's, Harpers Lane, Chorley. A count of the number of memorials at St. John's and St. Peter's churches is required so an estimate of the resources required to complete an inspection programme can be made.
- The Church will be asked to approve the action for any memorial that fails the inspection tests. Any issues identified will be passed to the Church to make arrangements to contact the grave plot owner so they can take action to make the memorial safe.

MEMORIAL STONE POLICY

- The policy sets out the council's responsibilities for safety and maintenance in our cemeteries and closed churchyards we have responsibility for. This is using a risk based approach where highest risks are prioritised for inspection. Memorials will be placed in red,

amber or green categories following inspection. A separate category, for those memorials of exceptional aesthetic or heritage value also exists.

15. Notice will be given in the local press and on social media of the inspection regime commencing to give grave owners an opportunity to carry out repairs prior to inspection. A public notice of the inspection will also be displayed at the cemeteries. The policy also outlines the training required for staff along with the inspection and assessment process.

INSPECTION PROGRAMME

16. To inspect all memorials at Chorley and Adlington cemeteries two trained members of staff would need to carry out inspections on five days each month so it would take around two years to complete all the inspections. The Communities team leader who has been trained to carry out memorial inspections would also carry out checks on ten memorials each month to check the quality of the inspection work carried out. The Waste and Streetscene Manager would monitor quarterly adherence to the inspection programme and report annually to the Senior Management team on progress.
17. The council will only undertake repairs or lay memorial stones flat if there is an immediate danger. The registered owners of the grave plots where defects are recorded will be contacted and told of the issue and the need for repair. The anticipated response rate is expected to be low. The cemetery transaction team will contact the registered plot owner where a defect is recorded.
18. Our insurers have provided some guidance on what areas of the cemeteries should be inspected first based on risk such as those close to busier traffic areas, or older memorials etc. A programme for inspection will be finalised. The inspections will take place over a five year cycle and included the closed cemeteries as recommended in the insurer's report.
19. A specialist stone mason or structural engineers would need to inspect memorials greater than 2.5m. Based on an initial count there are 420 of these at Chorley and Adlington cemeteries. These will be identified and quotations for inspections obtained.
20. A count of the number of memorials at St. John's and St. Peter's churches will be undertaken by the end of 2018 and these inspections will be incorporated into the five year inspection cycle. The inspections of memorials in our cemeteries will take priority.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

21. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	√	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	√	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

RISK

A risk register has been completed	Yes	No
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COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

22. At this stage there is no request for additional resources. There is potential for third party costs as a specialist stone mason or structural engineer would need to inspect memorials greater than 2.5m. Based on an initial count there are 420 of these at Chorley and Adlington cemeteries.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

23. The obligations on the council are properly addressed in the report. The proposed policy ensures the council's compliance with those obligations.

ASIM KHAN
DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Memorial Stone Inspection Policy	October 2018		Attached

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Jo Oliver	5737	29 October 2018	***