

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**ENVIRONMENT  
CABINET MEMBER**

**MEMORIAL SAFETY IN COUNCIL CEMETERIES**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To raise awareness of the need to inspect memorials across North Lincolnshire.
- 1.2 To seek approval of the Memorial Safety Policy.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Nationally a number of high profile incidents have occurred as a result of unstable memorials, including a small number of fatalities.
- 2.2 Bereavement Service staff have locally undertaken some testing. However, recently concerns were raised by grounds staff over some memorials in Barton Cemetery.
- 2.3 The council has taken some action to make a small number of memorials safe, in areas of risk such as pathways. This indicates that an approved Memorial Safety Policy might be needed for around 30,000 headstones within our responsibility.

**3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 To approve a draft Memorial Safety Policy.

**4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Adopting the draft policy would ensure a consistent approach to memorial safety across North Lincolnshire in line with guidance from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management.
- 4.2 A programme of regular inspection will be developed and publicised.

- 4.3 Responsibility for an unsafe memorial lies with the owner. However, as time goes on these become increasingly difficult to locate and the council inevitably incurs some costs.
- 4.4 Our recommended approach is to stake and notify the owner, if no response is received grounds staff would lay flat the memorial with the inscription face up.
- 4.5 An alternative to dealing with the unsafe memorials is possible. The memorials could be permanently reinstated by a memorial mason or concreted in by grounds staff so that they are not laid flat.
- 4.6 This would incur a greater cost by the council. If 5% of the 30,000 headstones need some remedial work to stand up then this could result in costs of up to £500,000 over the next five years. This would not include ones that have already fallen through natural causes.
- 4.7 Retaining the current situation would leave us with the more ad hoc inspection and reactive action and no policy to back up decisions made. This might not be defensible if a claim arises.

**5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

- 5.1 There are no significant resource implications that arise from the recommendation.
- 5.2 Adopting an alternative approach might expose the council to additional costs as detailed above.

**6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

- 6.1 Approving a Memorial Safety Policy would strengthen the council's Health and Safety duty to individuals that visit council sites.

**7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

- 7.1 This has been discussed with Bereavement and Operational staff and it has been recognised that a programme of inspection is required.

**8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the adoption of the Memorial Safety Policy as attached to this report.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

- Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management - Management of Memorials