

**Appendix A – Review of Action plan for enforcing the memorial decoration Policy in Council managed Crematorium and cemeteries**

The action plan below was recommended by Overview and Scrutiny Board members at their meeting on 1 November 2017 for approval/adoption by the Council’s Cabinet. Cabinet subsequently approved it at its meeting on 12 December 2017:

The table below reproduces this Action plan. The “Comments” column provides a summary against each action of what was implemented and when:

Action	Lead Officer(s)	Deadline date	Comments
<p>1) Build up and maintain awareness and understanding of the Council’s rules governing memorials at the crematorium and cemeteries it manages (targeted at Bereavement service staff, funeral directors, customers and residents) covering the following areas:</p> <p>A) Clear and conspicuous public notices at Woodlands and Larpool cemeteries;</p>	<p>Jonathan Bramley (JMB), Michael Broadley (MB), in liaison with funeral directors. Gabrielle Jandzio in relation to any general communications via press and social media.</p>	<p>A) Public notices have been ordered and are in the process of being erected at strategic locations.</p>	<p>A) Public notices were erected, from April 2018, at entrances and exits to the Council’s cemeteries and nearby graves that have the most serious breaches of the memorials policy.</p>

<p>B) Clear advice on our web-site</p>		<p>B) End of January 2018.</p>	<p>B) The Council's crematorium and cemeteries web-pages have been reviewed and updated. Our simple colour information leaflet on memorials on graves is available to read and download from our "home page".</p>
<p>C) Ongoing advice and support to Funeral Directors to discuss the Council's Memorial Policy with their clients.</p>		<p>C) On-going.</p>	<p>C) Since March 2018, our new colour information leaflet on memorials on graves has been routinely attached to ALL requests for applications of interment at our cemeteries, either from Funeral Directors or families.</p>
<p>D) Ensure the above initiatives are supported by press/media activity and social media activity where appropriate. This should include ongoing social media activity to promote a better understanding of why we have a memorial decoration policy.</p>		<p>D) On-going</p>	<p>D) A total of 16 messages were posted on the Council's twitter and Facebook accounts during July and August 2018 promoting what was and wasn't acceptable as a memorial on graves in our cemeteries. Furthermore, a media statement was released in July 2018, which attracted media attention.</p>

<p>2) Propose a targeted/priority approach to enforcing the memorials policy as follows:</p> <p>a) Deal with one grave plot section at a time (starting with the oldest and progressing through to the newest); in each section starting with the oldest grave plots with breached memorials;</p> <p>b) In terms of plots relating to babies and children, Bereavement service staff should first make reasonable efforts to arrange face to face/verbal conversations with the affected families;</p> <p>c) For all future cemetery sections/rows opened</p>	<p>JMB in liaison with MB and Parks and Countryside staff (Tim Ellison/Chris Roe and cemeteries gardeners).</p>		<p>a) Following consultations with Parks and Countryside staff, at the end of September 2018, it was agreed to prioritise graves/cremated remains plots with breached memorials that featured plants, bushes, trees and other such vegetation; a phased approach, starting from the oldest grave/cremated remains sections at Woodlands cemetery, was approved.</p> <p>b) Due to the heightened sensitive issues surrounding the baby and children's sections at Woodlands, it was agreed not to enforce the Council's memorials policy for the time being.</p> <p>Will be ongoing.</p>
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<p>in the “general” parts of the cemetery, enforce the memorials policy from the start.</p>			
<p>3) Enforcing the memorial Policy will entail the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Verbal/face to face discussions with grave owners;</li> <li>b) Informal written warning instructing owner of plot to remove breached memorial(s) within a reasonable timescale (normally a month);</li> <li>c) If no response to a) or b) above, a final written warning giving a deadline for memorial to be removed or the Council will do so in default;</li> <li>d) Aggrieved grave owners have the option of utilising the Council’s Corporate complaints/LGO process. If this occurs, the Council will delay removing any breached</li> </ul>	<p>JMB in liaison with MB and Parks and Countryside staff (Tim Ellison/Chris Roe and cemeteries gardeners).</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>This approach has already been adopted with specific graves at Larpool cemetery and experience has shown it can be a time consuming process (i.e. aggrieved grave owners fully utilising the Council’s Complaints and Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) processes).</p> <p>If the Council have to remove breached memorials the owner will be given a period of three months to pick the item(s) from the Council. Any unclaimed memorials will be disposed of by us.</p>

<p>memorial until this process has been concluded;</p> <p>e) Assuming the original decision is reinforced after any Council's Corporate Complaints/LGO process has been completed, the Council will remove any breached memorial(s).</p>			
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**Resource implications for implementing the above action plan**

The above action plan will inevitably require resources from the Council. Most of these relate to staff time implementing the above actions, but also the cost of producing public notices (action point 1a). All will be within existing budgets.

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**Date:** 3 January 2019.