6   CEMETERY HEADSTONE SAFETY (AN164-2014)

Reference is made to Article VII of the minute of meeting of this Committee of the 29th October, 2012, when a pilot scheme utilising capacity within the Construction Division of the Environment Department to undertake inspection, testing and making safe of headstones was approved.

The pilot has been running for two years and over that time good progress has been made. All headstones in the Eastern Cemetery have been inspected while Barnhill and Balgay are substantially complete. A full record of the condition of the headstones has been recorded in a database and any dangerous stones up to 1.5 metres were dealt with during the inspection process. Dangerous larger stones are being sub-contracted to a specialist contractor to have these made safe. A key benefit of the scheme was to properly record the condition of headstone and by dealing with dangerous stones during the inspection process the risk in the cemeteries has been substantially reduced. While the scheme has been successful there are still ongoing problems of dangerous headstones within cemeteries and there is a need from a health and safety perspective to continue the inspection and action programme.

It is proposed to continue with the current approach and instruct the Construction Division of the Environment Department to continue to undertake the inspection, testing, recording and making safe of stones up to approximately 1.5m in height. It is intended that, where possible, such headstones would be made safe on a more permanent basis. Any headstones in excess of 1.5m will be referred to the specialist contractor who will be appointed using 'Quick Quote' under the Council's E-procurement system.

Committee are asked to approve the above works and to authorise the Director of Environment to undertake these works. The Director of Corporate Services advises that the above expenditure of £60,000 can be met from allowances within the Council's Budget 2014/2015 (p23) - Open Space - Headstone Safety Programme.