

2 CEMETERY HEADSTONE SAFETY (AN17-2016)

Reference is made to the cemetery headstone inspection and testing programme. Significant progress has been made in the last few years in both the recording of and making safe dangerous stones in cemeteries. A full record of the condition of the stones has been recorded in the Council database and any dangerous stones up to 1.5 metres were dealt with during the inspection process. Dangerous larger stones were sub-contracted to a specialist contractor to make safe.

A programme of actions over a number of years including the application of minimum, standards relating to foundations, limiting the size of headstones, introducing a memorial mason registration scheme and a small grant scheme to assist individuals to repair their headstones, have all contributed to reducing the risks in cemeteries. However 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 therefore proposed to continue the inspection, testing and programme of making dangerous stones safe by utilising capacity within Neighbourhood Services. The programme will include the proper recording of the condition of headstones and by dealing with dangerous stones during the inspection process. 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. Where a risk is identified, and if possible, the headstone owner will be contacted and consulted. An allowance of £20,000 is included in the overall costs of the project for these specialist works.

Committee are asked to approve the above works and to authorise the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services to undertake these works, with the exception of any specialist works above that would require to be undertaken separately. The Executive Director of Corporate Services advises that the total capital improvement works of £186,000 can be met from allowances within the Recreation, Culture, Arts & Heritage: Parks & Open Spaces section of the Capital Plan 2016-2021. It is anticipated that this project will be completed by 31st March, 2017.