



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Update on the Memorial Safety Process in Cemeteries
Date:	14 March 2013
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
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1.	Relevant Background Information
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In 2008, the Parks and Leisure Committee agreed to the implementation of a pilot programme of work on memorial safety and inspection in the City Cemetery and an interim policy framework for improving memorial safety. The implementation of the pilot programme was carried out for approximately nine months and relied on the use of existing staffing levels at the City Cemetery.

The implementation of the pilot programme coincided with the introduction of a Departmental improvement programme. During this time an operational efficiency review of the Parks and Cemeteries Service was carried out which resulted in the restructuring and movement of some of the key staff associated with the roll out of the pilot programme. The emphasis of the initial pilot programme related to the inspection, management and maintenance stages of the memorial safety process. Data and evidence gathered as part of the pilot programme revealed the need to update and review the memorial safety process and concentrate on the installation stage as well. This report recommends the introduction of an all-encompassing dual management approach and procedures around the memorial safety process (installation, inspection, management and maintenance).

2.	<p>Key Issues</p>
	<p>The Council as the City's burial authority has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Northern Ireland Order (1978) to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees and responsibilities towards members of the public and other contractors who visit our cemeteries.</p> <p><u>City Cemetery pilot programme results</u></p> <p>A basic evaluation and review of the evidence and data gathered as part of the pilot programme reveals the following results, limitation and issues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed inspection reports were captured for eight grave sections within the City Cemetery – Grave sections L, M, N, P, Q, R, F2 and G2. • There is the need to focus on the memorial headstone installation stage as there is currently a lack of awareness of and adherence to installation procedures by monumental masons, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The cemetery office not informed when headstones are being erected ○ Headstones being erected with no permission ○ The fixing method used to erect some of the 'newer' headstones does not adhere to the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) Code of Practice. • There is a greater risk of injury to staff and the general public from the memorial headstones erected within the last 15-20 years. • There is a requirement to allocate adequate financial and human resources to successfully carry out all the duties associated with the various stages of the memorial safety process (installation, inspection, management and maintenance of memorials). <p><u>Current position</u></p> <p>The Council is responsible for eight cemeteries in the greater Belfast area with burials mainly carried out at three locations (City, Roselawn and Dundonald). There are currently over 358,140 burials within these sites. To date a total of 5,676 graves have already been inspected at the City Cemetery as part of the pilot programme.</p> <p>Roselawn cemetery is currently the only cemetery operating by the Council that has new burial ground available. Section W is the current new section which has just over 3,000 graves in it. With the recent development of Section Y (2,800 graves approximately) the imminent development of Section Z (1,500 graves approximately) and 28 acres of undeveloped future burial ground, the life span of the cemetery in relation to the current number of new burials per year is 30-35 years.</p> <p>In 2012 there were a total of 254 new graves sold at Roselawn. This figure shows the large number of current and future memorial headstones at</p>

	Roselawn Cemetery based on the assumption that 80% of all graves have a headstone erected. In addition to this Roselawn, Dundonald and the City cemeteries continue to have new and/ or replacement headstones erected on existing graves on an ongoing basis.
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3.	Proposed approach and next steps
	<p>Based on the current position outlined above, the Department is proposing to develop and introduce a dual management approach and procedures around the memorial safety process which will include some of the following key priority areas of work:</p> <p><u><i>Approach to carrying out memorial inspection, management and maintenance</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update the interim policy framework of memorial safety and inspection; • Roll out staff training across the three main cemeteries (Roselawn, City and Dundonald) in memorial safety inspection. This will be carried out by an accredited trainer who works to the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) and the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) Code of Practise. • Introduce and roll out the reviewed memorial safety and inspection programme over a nine month period to a section within Roselawn and Dundonald cemeteries in order to determine financial and human resources implications. This feedback will combine with the existing data and information gathered at the City Cemetery to help inform the extent and the actual costs of a long term programme of work around the safety and inspection of memorials. • Review the growing problem of the appearance of unauthorised memorials within the three cemeteries and to try and recover lost income either from the sculptor if known and/or the grave owner. <p><u><i>Approach and procedures for the installation of memorials</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conjunction with the Policy and Business Development Unit (PBDU) and Legal Services develop a robust set of Rules and Regulations for monumental masons, which defines clearly a set of procedures right from the initial application process for monumental masons and families' right through to the compliance and monitoring stage of the erected memorial. • Introduce a central approved list of NAMM and/ or BRAMM accredited sculptors and masons who will be permitted to carry out work around the memorial safety process within cemeteries. All associated cemetery partners including customers, sculptors, masons and grave owners will be contacted and informed of the new procedures, outlining the subsequent implications and given the option of contacting the Council for further assistance in relation to meeting the procedural requirements.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sculptors and/ or masons who are unable to produce adequate evidence of being a preferred supplier will be refused entry onto Council Cemeteries to carry out any work. • Introduce a simple sign in and sign out process for sculptors and masons within the cemeteries, which will also prompt a monitoring and compliance check on the installation of memorial headstones. <p>It is envisaged that a detailed plan of work around the development and introduction of the dual management approach and procedures for the memorial safety process will be developed over the next couple of months. This will realistically outline a phased approach to carrying out priority areas of work and explore any associated financial and human resources implications.</p>
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4.	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p><u><i>Financial and human resource implications for the approach to carrying out memorial inspection, management and maintenance</i></u></p> <p>The extent of the human resources implications will be examined in detail in order to introduce and roll out the reviewed memorial safety inspection for a nine month period within Roselawn and Dundonald cemeteries. Some of the options to be explored include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of cemetery operatives. • Recruit additional staff which may include seasonal staff. <p>There will be a financial cost attached to staff training across the three main cemeteries which will be examined over the next couple of months. Provision for the financial and human resource costs associated with the development and implementation of this approach will be reflected in site estimates for 2013/14. At this time the full extent and actual costs associated with the long term programme of work is unknown: hence the need for an additional nine months inspection regime within Roselawn and Dundonald.</p> <p><u><i>Financial and human resource implications for the approach and procedures for the installation of memorials</i></u></p> <p>Work on the development of the approach and procedures for the installation of memorials can begin straight away by the City Park Manager, Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager, Policy and Business Development Unit, Legal Services and the Corporate Occupational Health and Safety Unit. The financial implications in relation to IT support systems will need to be reviewed. Existing staff will be used to develop and introduce the approach and procedure but the following human resource issues would need to be more fully explored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing procedures; • Responsibility for ensuring compliance • Cemetery office, management and business support implications
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5.	Equality Implications
	None

6.	Recommendations
	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to the development and introduction of a dual management approach and procedures around the memorial safety process including installation, inspection, management and maintenance. • Note that an update report will be brought to Committee in May 2013 detailing an annual programme of work (April 2013 – March 2014) and exploring associated financial and human resource implications. • Agree that a rigorous evaluation is carried out in January 2014 to ascertain the long term actual costs and programme of work associated with the sustainable implementation of a rigorous Memorial Safety process.

7.	Decision Tracking
	A follow up committee report will be brought the Assistant Director in May 2013.

8.	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>NAMM – National Association of Memorial Masons BRAMM – British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons</p>

9.	Documents Attached
	None