

Subject: Policy for Memorials (not on a grave)

Status: For Publication

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 29th July 2010

Report of: Director of Customers and Communities

Portfolio

Holder: Environment Directorate

Key Decision: Yes

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To gain approval for adoption of the Memorials (not located on a grave) policy.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:-

- Delivering Quality Services to our Customers
- Keeping our Borough Clean, Green and Safe
- Providing Value for Money Services

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

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4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 There have been two sensitive situations within the past three years whereby informal tributes and shrines have appeared in memory of residents of Rossendale. One being a long term tribute/shrine after the tragic death of a young person in Stubblee Park and the other being tributes laid on the war memorial at Greenfield gardens just prior to Remembrance Day 2008. Both situations differed in the response by the public and in both cases an Area Officer from the Communities team arranged long term forms of memorials in agreement with someone connected with the person being remembered.
- 4.2 The Parks and Open Spaces Team currently allows the planting of memorial trees and installation of benches within the maintained estate, each request being dealt with on an individual basis.
- 4.4. The combination of the above situations has lead to the development of a policy (Appendix 1) which can be seen as a set of guidelines to give advice to staff on how to deal with each situation. There can be no set rules or regulations to follow as each case differs widely according to location, scale and sensitivity, but there can be a more structured approach regarding roles of staff and costs involved.
- 4.5 Clearly there are costs involved in the installation and maintenance of each memorial and currently no budget is allocated for this. In light of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, it is necessary for RBC to ensure that all additional costs to the organisation are recovered. Therefore, as part of the new policy, it will be necessary to charge for this service in the same way that there are charges for other forms of memorials.
- 4.6 The amount charged will be benchmarked against neighbouring authorities and will be sufficient to cover installation and maintenance costs. The rate will be reviewed each year or when there is a significant change in supplier costs.
- 4.7 The number of enquiries regarding memorials since June 2008 to present has totalled twelve. Eight of these enquiries have resulted in the installation of a memorial, three did not progress beyond first enquiry and one is in progress. While it is not expected that there will be a massive demand for the service we are expecting numbers to increase if a more structured approach is adopted, thus allowing the service to be marketed in appropriate locations (such as notices in cemeteries and via planned cemeteries leaflets). In the first year we would estimate double the current numbers of requests for memorials such as trees.
- 4.8 In summary, the adoption of this policy would allow us to offer, in a clear, structured and more professional way, a positive and sustainable alternative way for bereaved families and friends to remember loved ones.

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- 4.9 The policy, report and community impact assessment relating to this topic were submitted to the policy overview and Scrutiny Committee and were discussed on 15th June 2010. The committee recommends that the memorial off a Grave policy is supported and adopted.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 5.1 There are no material budget implications arising from the report.

6. MONITORING OFFICER

- 6.1 There are no comments to add.

7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

- 7.1 There are no HR implications arising from the report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The report has identified that there is currently an ad hoc approach to dealing with sensitive customer requests for memorials not located on a grave. The policy would assist staff by providing them with clear advice and guidelines with regard to offering a wider range of positive ways of remembering loved ones. Allowing a charge for this service means that the memorials can be cared for on a routine basis by the Operations Team.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 9.1 That the Cabinet agrees the adoption of the Policy.
- 9.2 That the Cabinet agrees that all future minor amendments to the policy may be delegated to the Assistant Operations Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and Director of Customers and Communities.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 Requests have been made from members of the public directly to the bereavement services officer enquiring about a permanent form of memorial (other than on a grave).
- 10.2 Consultation with neighbouring authorities regarding procedures and costs and have concluded that no other authority has set regulations on how to deal with informal tributes which appear on the death of a locally known person due to the potentially complex and sensitive nature of each case.

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10.3 Feedback received from customers to whom we recently supplied memorial trees includes comments stating that the service we provided was professional, helpful, easy to arrange and of a low cost compared to other authorities.

11. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Community Impact Assessment required Yes

Is a Community Impact Assessment attached Yes

12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required No

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached No

Contact Officer	
Name	Tamzin Percival
Position	Assistant Operations Manager
Service / Team	Operations Team
Telephone	01706 252518
Email address	tamzinpercival@rossendalebc.gov.uk

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Memorials (Not Located on a Grave) Policy Community Impact Assessment	Henrietta Street.

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