

2 CEMETERY HEADSTONE SAFETY (AN94-2017)

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 headstones within cemeteries. A full record of the condition of the stones has been recorded in the Council database and any unstable stones up to 1m height were dealt with during the inspection process. Stones taller than 1.5m were subcontracted 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 isolated problems of unstable 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 works to foundations and making safe of these stones.

Following a tender process via the Council's procurement team, only one compliant bid was received. It is therefore recommended that the tender for the stones in excess of 1.5m height be awarded to a specialist contractor Vermicom Ltd, with a maximum budget spend of £40,000. It is also recommended that Construction Services be awarded the works for the creation of concrete plinths to host new memorial headstones at a total cost of £30,000.

Committee is requested to approve these works and to authorise the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services to undertake these works, with the exception of any specialist works that would require to be undertaken separately. The Executive Director of Corporate Services advises that the total capital improvement of £70,000 can be met from allowances for Cemeteries within the Service Provision section of the General Services Capital Plan 2018-23. It is anticipated the project will be completed by 31st March 2018.