

ITEM No ...5.....

REPORT TO: CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE - 21 AUGUST 2023

REPORT ON: POLICY FOR PROVISION OF MEMORIAL BENCHES, PLAQUES AND TREES IN PUBLIC PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND CEMETERIES

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT NO. 219-2023

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks approval to implement the new policy, namely the Policy for Provision of Memorial Benches, Plaques and Trees in Public Parks, Open Spaces and Cemeteries.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the contents of this report are noted and the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services is remitted to take forward the appended policy in order to improve service provision and customer experience.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The cost of managing and administering the policy will be met from existing Neighbourhood Services Revenue Budgets. There are no immediate revenue or capital financial implications directly associated with the approval of this policy. We will continue to monitor any financial impact through the established budget monitoring procedures and report any significant items to committee in due course.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Council receives regular requests from members of the public who wish to place a memorial bench, plaque, or tree within public parks, open spaces and cemeteries. The provision and management of all seating and benches in all public parks, open spaces and cemeteries owned or managed by the Council is the responsibility of Neighbourhood Services. Although there is no legislative requirement for the provision of these items, it is accepted that these benches or trees provide a useful and valued public amenity in these areas.

4.2 Historically, most requests have been accommodated on an adhoc basis, but the procedures followed have varied over time. This has resulted in overprovision and inappropriate siting of memorial benches in some areas, maintenance difficulties due to a wide range of bench styles being used and ineffective recording of memorial bench information.

4.3 A service audit has been conducted to identify areas that may require new benches and collate details of existing memorial benches. From this audit, the Council has been able to identify areas which can support additional benches and the options for a suitable alternative where an area cannot support an additional bench.

5.0 INTRODUCTION TO MEMORIAL BENCH POLICY

5.1 A policy has been drafted which recognises the need for a consistent approach to the provision of memorial benches, plaques and trees in public parks, open spaces and cemeteries, please see Appendix 1 which details the appropriate operating principles and responsibilities. This policy will help to ensure that memorials are suitably located and of an appropriate and consistent style to ensure they are easier to maintain and less prone to vandalism. It is hoped the customer experience will be improved by ensuring that requests are responded to consistently and efficiently.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment to identify impacts on Equality & Diversity, Fairness & Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. An impact, positive or negative, on one or more of these issues was identified. An appropriate senior manager has checked and agreed with this assessment. A copy of the Integrated Impact Assessment showing the impacts and accompanying benefits of/ mitigating factors for them is included as an Appendix to this report.

7. CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Council Leadership Team have been consulted on the preparation of this report and agree with its contents.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

Elaine Zwirlein
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

Tony Boyle
Head of Environment

19 July 2023

APPENDIX 1

POLICY FOR PROVISION OF MEMORIAL BENCHES, PLAQUES AND TREES IN PUBLIC PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND CEMETERIES

Dundee City Council will facilitate the purchase and placement of memorial benches, plaques, and trees in public parks, open spaces and cemeteries owned or managed by the Council where appropriate opportunities exist.

Background Information

The provision and management of all seating, trees and benches in all public parks, open spaces and cemeteries owned or managed by the Council is the responsibility of Neighbourhood Services, Environment. This policy covers the provision of memorial benches, plaques and trees in public parks, open spaces and cemeteries.

The Council receives regular requests from members of the public who wish to place a memorial bench within a public park, open space or cemetery. Often, these locations are places with which individuals or families have a particular connection or special relationship. It is accepted that these benches provide a useful and valued public amenity in these locations, although there is no legislative requirement for the provision of public or memorial benches by local authorities. Similarly, trees are commonly used as a memorial and it is recognised that these trees can be of benefit to enhance the public amenity and biodiversity of these areas as part of our living landscape.

Over time, most requests have been accommodated, but the approach was not always consistent resulting in the overprovision and inappropriate siting of memorial benches in some areas, leading to maintenance difficulties due to a wide range of bench styles being used and ineffective recording of memorial bench information.

A service audit to identify areas that may require new benches and collate details of existing memorial benches has been conducted. From this audit, the Council has been able to identify areas which can support additional benches, allowing the Council to inform customers on what is available to them. In cases where an area cannot support an additional bench the provision of a memorial plaque on an existing bench or an alternative area which can support a new bench will be provided for consideration.

This policy recognises the need for a consistent approach to the provision of memorial benches and trees in public parks, open spaces and cemeteries. A greater consideration of the level of infrastructure that can be provided and maintained by the Council is required, particularly as resources for public service provision reduce, in addition to maximising the use of new and innovative opportunities for better provision. A rationalisation of the range and quality of infrastructure is also needed to avoid items which are onerous to maintain or have a poor life expectancy.

The policy therefore continues to welcome donations of suitable benches and trees for appropriate locations in the public parks, open spaces and cemeteries the Council manages. The operating principles below will ensure that requests for memorial benches and trees are responded to in a consistent, efficient and helpful manner. It will result in appropriate bench styles and tree species being purchased and installed in appropriate locations to ensure they are easy to maintain and not unduly prone to vandalism.

This page is intentionally left blank

Operating principles:

1. When installing new benches, only sites which do not already have a sufficient number of benches will be considered. This will be determined by existing site-specific Management plans.
2. Suitable locations within the site where people are likely to make good use of the bench will be considered. These will be areas which lack any seating nearby or are at a likely stopping point such as a particular view or rest point on a path. In addition, the location will be chosen to minimise future maintenance and vandalism. Remote locations with poor access for maintenance and users will not be considered.
3. A limited selection of suitable low maintenance standard designs for memorial benches will be available at a range of costs; the bench style supplied in an area is location specific and will not be determined by the customer. Annex 1 shows the range of bench and plaque options with suggested prices.
4. Purchase of a memorial bench will be for the expected life period of the bench only, after which time it may be removed. When purchasing a new bench, the cost will include the bench, plaque, inscription, installation, surfacing (if necessary) and an upfront maintenance fee to cover any repairs or maintenance that may be required in the future. The cost and life expectancy of the bench will depend on the type of bench and its location. Any replacement would be treated in the same way as a new memorial bench. To ensure installation is undertaken safely to the required standards, the Council will provide and install the memorial bench with plaque and surfacing in all cases.
5. Where there is no space for an additional memorial bench, requests for placement of a memorial plaque on an existing bench will be considered where the bench is in good condition. As the bench has already been provided through public funds, the cost will cover a fee to contribute towards the bench, the plaque, inscription and installation. This will accommodate the customer's wishes and ensure a fair contribution is made towards the provision of the bench as a personal memorial. The funds raised will be used for the repair or provision of other public benches. The same conditions on life expectancy and maintenance will apply to any existing benches as apply to new benches.
6. The Council's standards of maintenance will be accepted as keeping the bench fit for purpose and clean. This will involve removing built up algae and grime, removal of graffiti and repairing minor faults within resources available. There is a move away from regular painting as in the long term this proves more costly than just replacing the bench when it has reached the end of its natural life. The range of new benches has been chosen for durability without the need for regular painting or treatment.
7. Memorial trees are to be considered on a site-by-site basis to ensure both the location and tree species are appropriate for the site and that the tree meets biodiversity and maintenance considerations. The cost and life expectancy of the tree will depend on the species and location. The cost will be available upon application. Costs will include the tree, planting, a guard and stake to protect the tree from rabbits and deer, which will be removed once the tree has outgrown the risk, a plaque (if required) and an upfront maintenance fee to cover any repairs or maintenance that may be required in the future. Trees that fail within the first year of planting will be replaced at the Council's expense, any further replacements will be at the expense of the customer and in agreement with the Council. A memorial plaque may be attached to a purpose designed, wood effect, recycled plastic post at the base of the tree and inscribed subject to the approval of the Council.
8. Should a memorial be in place and requires renewal, where contact details are held, the opportunity will be given, in writing, to the current memorial holder to retain the location, who will have 30 days to confirm confirmation they would like to retain the location.
9. The Council website will provide information and an enquiry form (Annex 2) for those interested in purchasing memorial benches and memorial trees.
10. A standard Letter of Agreement will be sent in writing by the Council to the customer to ensure all terms and conditions are clearly understood prior to purchase. The form will be returned to the Council with payment in advance of the memorial bench/plaque/tree being placed. Annex 3 shows the standard form of agreement.

Memorial bench/plaque/tree purchase procedure

This procedure describes the process which will be followed by Council officers from the initial customer enquiry/contact through to the final contact informing the customer that their requested memorial is in place.

1. Customer enquiries received by Customer Services or Neighbourhood Services will be directed to the website to view the policy and download the enquiry form as shown in Annex 2. An enquiry form can be posted to the customer if required.
2. Customer completes the enquiry form, specifying a requested location and plaque style, and submits this via Council website or by post where a form was provided as a hard copy. The appropriate officer is then allocated the request for action.
3. The allocated officer considers the requested location for the bench/tree/plaque and decides, by applying the operating principles, whether a memorial bench/tree is appropriate in this location. If the requested location is not suitable, the nearest alternative location will be offered.
4. In cases of a new bench being placed, the allocated officer will inform the customer which bench is suitable for the location and will ensure that the plaque text is suitable for use on a public bench. The Council will supply one of four bench styles, detailed in Annex 1. The style of bench supplied will be at the discretion of the Council on a site-by-site basis.
5. In cases of a new tree being planted, the allocated officer will inform the customer which trees are suitable for the location and will ensure that the plaque text, if required, is suitable for use on a public memorial. The species of tree supplied will be at the discretion of the Council on a site-by-site basis.
6. The responsible officer contacts the customer to confirm or discuss the details by phone or email. If an alternative location is required, a letter with a map to illustrate the alternative site being offered will be sent.
7. On agreement, a standard agreement letter is sent to the customer to confirm arrangements and request payment.
8. When payment is received, the responsible officer orders the purchase and installation of the memorial bench/tree, for completion within 4 months of receipt of payment.
9. The responsible officer ensures the work has been carried out as specified, photographs the bench/tree and ensures all information is recorded for future reference.
10. The responsible officer ensures a letter and photograph are sent by post or email to the customer to notify them that the bench/tree is in place.
11. The responsible officer updates the spreadsheets with the contact details of the customer, memorial plaque details and the location of the bench/tree.

Annex 1

Council styles and current prices for installation of new memorial benches with plaques or the addition of a memorial plaque onto an existing bench.

Plaques

Memorial plaques can be fitted to existing benches, where available, for approximately £300. This includes the plaque, inscription, installation and a contribution towards the cost of the bench to cover any future maintenance.

Plaques are available in aged bronze or stainless steel (see below for examples) and their size is standardised based on the bench they are fitted onto. Text will be in Arial font and can be up to 50 characters. All text must be approved by the Council to ensure it is appropriate in public spaces.

Stainless steel:



Aged bronze:



Benches

Glen Clova

A Glen Clova bench costs £1040. This covers the bench, the plaque, the installation and an upfront fee to cover any future maintenance that the Council may need to perform on the bench. In some cases, an additional charge of £760 will be required to install a concrete plinth underneath the bench. This is required to ensure the security of the bench, and if deemed necessary by the Council, is non-negotiable. Thus, in those cases the total cost for a Glen Clova bench will be £1800.

These benches are 5 feet long and are made of sustainably sourced hardwood making them withstanding to the elements.



Phoenix

A Phoenix bench costs £850. This covers the bench, the plaque, the installation and an upfront fee to cover any future maintenance that the Council may need to perform on the bench. In some cases, an additional charge of £760 will be required to install a concrete plinth underneath the bench. This is required to ensure the security of the bench, and if deemed necessary by the Council, is non-negotiable. Thus, in those cases the total cost for a Phoenix bench will be £1610.

These benches are 5.8 feet long and are made from recycled plastic. They are a minimal maintenance bench and are designed to last.



Chisolm

A Chisolm bench costs £1450. This covers the bench, the plaque, the installation and an upfront fee to cover any future maintenance that the Council may need to perform on the bench. In some cases, an additional charge of £760 will be required to install a concrete plinth underneath the bench. This is required to ensure the security of the bench, and if deemed necessary by the Council, is non-negotiable. Thus, in those cases the total cost for a Chisolm bench will be £2210.

These benches are 6.10 feet long and are metal, thus require minimal upkeep and can withstand harsh weather.



Albany

An Albany bench costs £1230. This covers the bench, the plaque, the installation and an upfront fee to cover any future maintenance that the Council may need to perform on the bench. In some cases, an additional charge of £760 will be required to install a concrete plinth underneath the bench. This is required to ensure the security of the bench, and if deemed necessary by the Council, is non-negotiable. Thus, in those cases the total cost for an Albany bench will be £1990.

These benches are 6.7 feet long and are made of metal so are resistant to vandalism and the weather.



NB: All prices are valid for 2023 and may be subject to change.

Maintenance Standard

Benches will be kept fit for purpose with minor faults being repaired and build-up of algae or grime being removed within available resources.

This page is intentionally left blank

Annex 2

Memorial Bench/Plaque/Tree Purchase Enquiry Form for use on the Dundee City Council Website

Please complete, print and return to environment.mgt@dundeecity.gov.uk. Pre-printed forms are available from the same address on request.

Section A - Contact Details

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone E-mail:

Section B - Request Details

Would you like to purchase a new bench or tree (with plaque) to be placed or would you like to purchase a plaque to add to an existing bench?

Bench

Plaque

Tree

Unsure – would like more information

Where would you like your new bench, tree or your plaque placed? Please try to be as specific as possible.

.....
.....

Section C - Plaque Details

All plaques will be provided by the Council and attached to your bench or post at the base of your tree

(Please supply the name to be on your plaque)

Plaque to be in the name of

Plaque finish (Please refer to memorial bench protocol for examples):

- Aged Bronze Stainless Steel

Please print your memorial message for the plaque below for Council approval.

A maximum of 50 letters can be included.

.....
.....
.....

This page is intentionally left blank

Annex 3

Form of Agreement for a memorial bench, tree or plaque to be placed in a public area for the natural life expectancy of the bench/plaque/tree

Memorial Agreement between Dundee City Council and

(Name & Address)

Contact no.....

This letter sets out the agreement regarding the purchase of (delete either 1, 2 or 3)

- 1. A new (type of bench) bench to be installed at.....
- 2. A memorial plaque to be placed on the existingbench situated at (e.g. name of area) at the location shown by the attached map.
- 3. A new (type of tree) tree to be installed at

Your bench/tree will carry a stainless steel/bronze memorial plaque in the name of

.....

Your memorial message will read

.....
.....
.....

(name) will pay the sum of £.....

(delete either 1, 2 or 3)

- 1. being the full cost of the installation of the bench with a plaque and a maintenance fee to cover any future maintenance undertaken by the Council.
- 2. being the cost of the installation of the plaque and a maintenance fee to cover future maintenance undertaken by the Council.
- 3. being the full cost of the installation of the tree with/without (delete as appropriate) a plaque, and a maintenance fee to cover any future maintenance undertaken by the Council.

Terms and Conditions

The Council will place the bench, tree or plaque in the agreed location within four months of receiving payment. The Council will be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the bench for the period of its natural life (approximately 10-15 years depending on materials and exposure) or tree for the period of its natural life (species and location dependent). Once the bench/tree has reached the end of its natural life, the bench/tree and plaque may be removed. A request to purchase a new replacement bench/tree can be made at the appropriate time.

The Council's standards of maintenance of public benches will be accepted as keeping the bench fit for purpose and clean. This will involve removing built up algae and grime, removal of graffiti and repairing minor faults within resources available. The Council cannot guarantee against theft or vandalism and may not be able to replace the bench, tree or plaque in this event.

The Council's standards of maintenance to memorial trees will include the tree, planting, a guard and stake to protect the tree from rabbits and deer which will be removed once the tree has outgrown the risk. The price paid covers the cost of a plaque (if required) and a small, upfront maintenance fee to cover any repairs or maintenance that may be required in the future. Trees that fail within the first year of planting will be replaced at the Council's expense, any further replacements will be at the expense of the customer and in agreement with the Council. Plaques will be affixed to a wood effect plastic post which will be replaced by the Council where it reaches the end of its lifespan prior to the tree reaching the end of its lifespan.

The cost and life expectancy of the tree will depend on the species and location. The cost will be available upon application, costs will include the tree, planting, a guard and stake to protect the tree from rabbits and deer which will be removed once the tree has outgrown the risk, plaque (if required) and a small, upfront maintenance fee to cover any repairs or maintenance that may be required in the future. Trees that fail within the first year of planting will be replaced at the Council's expense, any further replacements will be at the expense of the customer and in agreement with the Council.

Should a memorial be in place and it requires renewal, where contact details are held, the opportunity will be given in writing to the current memorial holder to retain the location, who will have 30 days to give confirmation they would like to retain the location.

As the bench/tree will be situated on Council property it will remain the responsibility of the Council and the Council have ownership of said bench/tree. In cases where the bench has to be removed for a period, for instance in cases of roadworks, the Council will aim to make you aware of this, however, in times of emergency this may not be possible. This bench/tree is considered a gift from yourself to the City of Dundee, meaning the public have full access and use of the bench/tree.

The Council understands the sensitive nature of memorial benches and trees, however, articles attached to a bench or tree, for instance balloons and flowers, and carrying out maintenance, for instance pruning of trees, are prohibited. In cases where these articles are found by the Council they may be removed.

No additional memorabilia or flowers are permitted and by requesting a bench you are accepting that it is for widescale public use.

Only Council approved plaques of specific dimensions are permitted, by requesting a plaque you are accepting that you are not permitted to supply or affix your own plaque to any bench, tree or tree stake.

Costs are subject to annual review.

I understand and agree to all conditions above and confirm payment by BACS of £.....

Signed.....

Date.....

Appendix 2: Integrated Impact Assessment Report



Integrated Impact Assessment

Committee Report Number: 219-2023

Document Title: POLICY FOR PROVISION OF MEMORIAL BENCHES, PLAQUES AND TREES IN PUBLIC PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND CEMETERIES

Document Type: Policy

Description:

To introduce a new/revised policy to implement a consistent and efficient service with regards to the provision of memorial benches, plaques and trees in Dundee's public parks, open spaces and cemeteries and to seek approval for its implementation.

Intended Outcome:

Approval to take forward the Memorial Bench Policy to improve service provision and customer experience.

Period Covered: 22/08/2023 to 31/08/2026

Monitoring:

Through Customer feedback and annual review of the policy.

Lead Author:

Catherine Conroy, Service Manager (Environment), Neighbourhood Services,

catherine.conroy@dundee.gov.uk , 01382 436378,

5 City Square, Dundee, DD1 3BA

Director Responsible:

Elaine Zwirlein, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services, Neighbourhood Services

elaine.zwirlein@dundee.gov.uk, 01382 434358

5 City Square, Dundee, DD1 3BA

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

Impacts & Implications

Age: No Impact

Disability: No Impact

Gender Reassignment: No Impact

Marriage & Civil Partnership: No Impact

Pregnancy & Maternity: No Impact

Race / Ethnicity: No Impact

Religion or Belief: No Impact

Sex: No Impact

Sexual Orientation: No Impact

Are any Human Rights not covered by the Equalities questions above impacted by this report?

No

Fairness & Poverty

Geographic Impacts & Implications

Strathmartine: No Impact

Lochee: No Impact

Coldside: No Impact

Maryfield: No Impact

North East: No Impact

East End: No Impact

The Ferry: No Impact

West End: No Impact

Household Group Impacts and Implications

Looked After Children & Care Leavers: No Impact

Carers: No Impact

Household Group Impacts and Implications

Lone Parent Families: No Impact

Single Female Households with Children: No Impact

Greater number of children and/or young children: No Impact

Pensioners - single / couple: No Impact

Unskilled workers or unemployed: No Impact

Serious & enduring mental health problems: No Impact

Homeless: No Impact

Drug and/or alcohol problems: No Impact

Offenders & Ex-offenders: No Impact

Socio Economic Disadvantage Impacts & Implications

Employment Status: No Impact

Education & Skills: No Impact

Income: No Impact

Caring Responsibilities (including Childcare): No Impact

Affordability and accessibility of services: No Impact

Fuel Poverty: No Impact

Cost of Living / Poverty Premium: No Impact

Connectivity / Internet Access: No Impact

Income / Benefit Advice / Income Maximisation: No Impact

Employment Opportunities: No Impact

Education: No Impact

Health: No Impact

Life Expectancy: No Impact

Mental Health: No Impact

Overweight / Obesity: No Impact

Child Health: No Impact

Neighbourhood Satisfaction: Positive

Policy will lead to better consistency and more appropriate placement of memorials which should enhance, or not detract from, the neighbourhoods in which they are located.

Transport: No Impact

Environment

Climate Change Impacts

Mitigating Greenhouse Gases: Positive

Introduction of appropriate tree species will be of benefit to the environment.

Adapting to the effects of climate change: Positive

As above

Resource Use Impacts

Energy efficiency & consumption: No Impact

Prevention, reduction, re-use, recovery or recycling of waste: No Impact

Sustainable Procurement: No Impact

Transport Impacts

Accessible transport provision: No Impact

Sustainable modes of transport: No Impact

Natural Environment Impacts

Air, land & water quality: Positive

Introduction of appropriate tree species will be of benefit to the environment.

Biodiversity: Positive

As above

Open & green spaces: Positive

As above

Built Environment Impacts

Built Heritage: No Impact

Housing: No Impact

Is the proposal subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

No further action is required as it does not qualify as a Plan, Programme or Strategy as defined by the Environment Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005

Corporate Risk

Corporate Risk Impacts

Political Reputational Risk: No Impact

Economic/Financial Sustainability / Security & Equipment: No Impact

Social Impact / Safety of Staff & Clients: No Impact

Technological / Business or Service Interruption: No Impact

Environmental: No Impact

Legal / Statutory Obligations: No Impact

Organisational / Staffing & Competence: No Impact

Corporate Risk Implications & Mitigation:

The risk implications associated with the subject matter of this report are "business as normal" risks and any increase to the level of risk to the Council is minimal. This is due either to the risk being inherently low or as a result of the risk being transferred in full or in part to another party on a fair and equitable basis. The subject matter is routine and has happened many times before without significant impact.

This page is intentionally left blank