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**REPORT TO:** Full Council

**DATE:** 19 April 2006

**REPORTING COUNCILLOR:** Cabinet Member for Cultural Services  
*(Councillor Mrs Pat Jones)*

**SUBJECT:** **Memorials Affected by Safety Audit**

**WARD AFFECTED:** All

**FORWARD PLAN REF:** N/A

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the Council Meeting on 1 March 2006 Councillor Andrew Williams proposed the following Notice of Motion, which was seconded by Councillor Charlie Powell:

**“This Council recognises the distress caused to families visiting graves in our cemeteries as a result of the number of memorials which have been laid flat. In view of the time that has now elapsed it is unlikely that these will be reinstated.**

**Therefore, this Council agrees to commence a phased programme of works to ensure that our cemeteries are restored to a condition that bereaved relatives would expect rather than the distressing one that many families tending graves find.”**

- 1.2 The Notice of Motion was referred to me, as the Cabinet Member for Cultural Services. I met with Councillors Williams and Powell on 29 March 2006 to consider the Notice of Motion and take the appropriate action.

## 2.0 INFORMATION

- 2.1 At the meeting with Councillors Williams and Powell I reminded them that the memorials were not technically the responsibility of the Council but were actually the responsibility of the owners of the grave. In addition there are many very complex regulations which dictate what can and cannot be done with regards to these memorials and a summary of those

regulations was given to the Councillors (See Appendix 1)

- 2.2 I also advised them that I was very sympathetic towards their request and was keen to find a solution if at all possible but because of the regulations and the scale of the issue it was not straight forward, would take considerable officer resources to deal with the administrative side and would prove to be very expensive to deliver if the works were to be contracted out. To put that into perspective when the estimates for reinstating the memorials were last calculated it was estimated that it could cost in excess of £1,000,000 to sort them all out.
- 2.3 It would also be necessary to identify in each cemetery what could be done depending on the classification of the memorials (See Appendix1)
- 2.4 As such to be able to start to resolve this issue, it would be necessary to try to identify a resource that could actually help to deal with the on site side of the works and in the discussions with Cllrs Williams and Powell two possible solutions were identified. These were the Army in Ripon and also the Probation Service. It was agreed that Cllr Williams would write to the Commanding Officer at the Ripon Army base and the Head of Parks and Open Spaces would write to the Probation Service to see if there was any way in which they could help.
- 2.5 If either organisation were able to help then this would go a long way towards being able to start to resolve the issue of the memorials that are currently laid down and do not appear likely to be re-fixed by their owners.
- 2.6 It was agreed that whilst this would be a start financial resources would also be required to carry out this work. Consequently I advised Cllrs Williams and Powell that I would discuss this with the administration to see if there was any way in which any financial resources could be identified to start this work.
- 2.7 In summary I am very keen to try to find a way of resolving this issue and if an agency can be found who could assist with the works on site then it will be possible to start to undertake the work in the cemeteries to resolve the issue of the memorials that have been laid down. Likewise, if a willing agency cannot be found then even with some financial resource being made available it is unlikely that any major progress can be made on this proposal.
- 2.8 In addition if some additional funding can be identified then this will help to progress these works at a quicker pace. Members do however need to be aware that this will take time as there are considerable processes that the Council have to go through to advertise and consult on their proposals before any works take place on the ground and it is anticipated that these will take between 6 & 9 months per cemetery.

**Background Papers – None**

**OFFICER CONTACT:** Please contact Mr Patrick Kilburn, Head of Parks & Open Spaces if you require any further information on the contents of this report. The officer can be contacted at the Department of Community Services, Springfield House, Kings Road, Harrogate HG1 5NX, by telephone on 01423-556704 or by e-mail – [Patrick.Kilburn@harrogate.gov.uk](mailto:Patrick.Kilburn@harrogate.gov.uk)

**SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT/CRIME AND DISORDER**

		<b>Implications are</b>		
		<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>
A	Economy		✓	
B	Environment		✓	
C	Social Equity		✓	
i)	General			
ii)	Customer			
iii)	Care/People with Disabilities			
iii)	Health Implications			
D	Crime and Disorder		✓	

If all comments lie within the shaded areas, the proposal is sustainable.