

Maidstone Borough Council

Regeneration and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 11 March 2008

Memorial Safety– Interview with the Director of Operations, Alison Broom, the Environmental Services Manager, Malcolm Wells and the Facility Management Officer, Tim Jefferson.

Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Officer

1. Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 20th June 2006 the Recreation and Community Services Committee Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved to undertake a review into memorial safety at cemeteries. This would help to inform the forthcoming decision of the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture with regard to Memorial Safety Requirements in Closed Churchyards.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 19th September 2006 the Committee interviewed the Facility Management Officer, Tim Jefferson and the Parks and Open Spaces Officer, Clare Lanes. Members later visited Maidstone Cemetery to see the memorial safety work being carried out.
- 1.3 The Memorial Safety Review was submitted to the Cabinet Members for Leisure and Culture and Environment on the 14th November 2006. The Memorial Safety Review is attached at Appendix A and the Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP) containing the responses of the Cabinet Members is attached at Appendix B.
- 1.4 At its meeting on 20th March 2007 it was noted that there had been a delay in the decision of the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture regarding Memorial Safety Requirements in Closed Churchyards. The relevant extract from the minutes of the meeting is as follows:

“It was noted that the decision of the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture regarding Memorial Safety Requirements in Closed Churchyards had been delayed, and so several of the recommendations made in the Committee’s Memorial Safety Report had not yet been implemented. However, the Facility Management Officer had met with the Archdeacon of Maidstone to discuss alternative funding for the reinstatement of historical memorials, and some possibilities could exist via individual church funds”.
- 1.5 At its meeting on the 7th November 2007, the Regeneration and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee was disappointed to hear that the decision on Memorial Safety had been delayed and that therefore an update was unavailable on the review. A

letter was sent to the Director of Operations and the Facility Management Officer to convey this concern.

- 1.6 At its meeting on the 12th February 2008, the Committee identified that the decision on Memorial Safety was scheduled to be considered by Cabinet in March. Please find the relevant extract of the draft minutes below:

“The Committee expressed its strong disappointment that the report had taken a year to come to fruition despite its requests and earlier review in 2006. Mr Goulette informed the Committee that despite its listing on the Forward Plan the report may not be ready in March, the Committee agreed that the Director of Operations, the Facility Management Officer and the Environmental Services Manager be invited to provide a report to the Committee on the matter at its next meeting”.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are recommended to consider the comments of the Director of Operations, Alison Broom, the Environmental Services Manager, Malcolm Wells and the Facility Management Officer, Tim Jefferson and ask questions with regard to Memorial Safety as they feel appropriate.