

## Stage 2 Evidence Gathering and Consultation

<b>A. Title of Proposal:</b>	HEADSTONE SAFETY
<b>B. Service Area: Department:</b>	Parks & Environment Assets & Infrastructure
<b>C. Lead Officer: (Name and job title)</b>	Carol Cooke Parks & Environment Manager
<b>D. Other Officers/Partners involved: (List names, job titles and organisations)</b>	Diane Munro, Bereavement Officer Stuart Young, Greenspace Manager
<b>E. Date(s) IIA completed:</b>	24 October 2023

### Section 1 Data and Information

#### A. What evidence has been used to inform this proposal?

(Information can include, for example, surveys, databases, focus groups, in-depth interviews, pilot projects, reviews of complaints made, user feedback, academic publications and consultants' reports).

A pilot study at Lennel Cemetery, Coldstream commenced on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and took place over an 8 week period, completing on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The aim of the pilot was to analyse the risk, resource and cost implications to the Burial Authority (Scottish Borders Council) in re-erecting headstones that have been made safe by laying flat. Each headstone that had been laid flat by Scottish Borders Council was revisited and assessed on their suitability for re-erection. A 28 day notice period preceded the reinstatement works, and communications were issued to the local community, Members and stakeholders such as the local congregation. Signage was installed during the 28 day notice period, throughout and after the trial.

Fifty-two headstones were assessed as being suitable to be re-erected with seven already having been re-erected privately by memorial owners using independent monumental masons, as has been done across the region. Two of the headstones which were re-erected required specialist core drilling works which had to be outsourced.

The process involved laying of concrete foundations in preparation for re-erecting the headstones; this was left to cure for 28 days. Once cured, the headstone was revisited and re-erected. This involved drilling and pinning the headstone and base into the new foundation.

The pilot was managed and recorded on site using handheld devices, with the aim of streamlining the data management processes. Using the data collated we have been able to estimate the wider cost, resource and risk implications of any potential wholesale reinstatement of headstones across cemeteries and burial grounds. Staff time, materials, fuel and one-off costs were recorded throughout; in total 405 hours of operational staff time were recorded (this excludes IT, business support and management time).

Some additional costs/potential costs were incurred – for example, two headstones required specialist core drilling works which cost £560.

Three memorial owners in Lennel approached the Council seeking reimbursement for private restoration, at a total cost of £1128. They were advised of the status of the Pilot and that any such decision around retrospective compensation would be subject to further consideration.

Retrospective compensation is likely to be a factor across the region, where memorial owners who have already paid for private reinstatement works may seek reimbursement for these costs, following any policy shift. Headstones are private property and Lairholders, as memorial owners, are by law responsible for maintenance and repair. Burial Authorities have a legal responsibility for public safety and are required to take measures to protect public safety through works to make the headstones safe, while following government guidance. This acknowledges that all parties have a role to play and, in undertaking works to private properties without prior agreement, Burial Authorities begin to act beyond their statutory role.

**Commented [RJ1]:** Unsure if this info is necessary to be in the public domain at this stage?

**Commented [FE2R1]:** Again more detail the better as sets context for the text around cost. It may be that a memorial owner reading this IIA wants to know approximately what kind of costs they might incur, more info seems better for the public.

**B. Describe any gaps in the available evidence, then record this within the improvement plan together with all of the actions you are taking in relation to this** (e.g. new research, further analysis, and when this is planned)

n/a

## Section 2 Consultation and Involvement

### A. Which groups are involved in this process and describe their involvement

Elected members, Coldstream Community Council and the local congregation were provided with updates throughout the pilot.

### B. Describe any planned involvement saying when this will take place and who is responsible for managing the process

Should the proposals be approved, the programme of Headstone Safety will involve informing communities in advance of any headstone safety works. The Bereavement Officer will ensure all communications are in place, notifying the relevant groups of any planned testing works through signage, email correspondence and media releases.

### C. Describe the results of any involvement and how you have taken this into account.

During the pilot no complaints were received. Some enquiries were received around other headstones in the cemetery which had been made safe by socketing, or had fallen flat naturally. Both of these were not within the scope of the Pilot.

### D. Describe any events held and views obtained (if applicable). Add or remove as needed.

#### Event 1

Date	Venue	Number of People in attendance	Protected Characteristics Represented

Views Expressed	Officer Response


## Stage 3 Summary and Next Steps

### Section 1 Summary

**Summarise what you have learned then develop this further.**

(Describe the conclusion(s) you have reached from the evidence, and state where the information can be found.)

**Please consider the following:**

**What have you learned from the evidence you have, and the involvement undertaken? Does the initial assessment remain valid?**

**What new (if any) impacts have become evident?**

**Is the proposal not to proceed because of a disproportionate impact on equality or Fairer Scotland characteristics?**

Upon completing the analysis of the options developed, the proposed option appears to provide the optimal balance between facilitating improved outcomes and managing financial sustainability and risk. In recognising that (even with significant resource pressures) the Local Authority has a role as a stakeholder in this process, we can seek to work in partnership with the private sector to provide a service to memorial owners, ensuring we communicate this timeously during the Headstone Safety Programme.

#### A. Please indicate if the proposal will proceed

- Yes, please see below section 3 for next steps  
 No, the proposal will not proceed based on disproportionate impact on equality or Fairer Scotland characteristics

## Section 2 Sign Off

<b>Signed by Lead Officer:</b>	Carol Cooke
<b>Designation:</b>	Parks & Environment Manager
<b>Date:</b>	03/11/23
<b>Counter Signature Director:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

### Section 3 Monitoring and Review (complete if relevant, remove if not)

**B. State how the implementation and impact of the proposal will be monitored, including implementation of any amendments?  
For example, what type of monitoring will there be? How frequent?**

This would be developed through undertaking initial engagement with suitably qualified independent monumental masons across the region. Through this engagement we would seek to develop a partnership approach, whereby a fee/fee scale is clarified and communicated to memorial owners for any headstone repair works. The Local Authority would then be able to signpost memorial owners to these contractors immediately at the point of making a headstone safe. This gives the memorial owners certainty over next steps and over costs for any repair works, mitigating any unnecessary distress. We will also explore financial support that may be offered where affordability remains a possible barrier (through appropriate revenue budget). By doing so, we would seek to work more collaboratively with communities and memorial owners, as facilitator for remedial works.

**C. What are the practical arrangements for monitoring? For example, who will put this in place? When will it start?**

Unable to complete until the proposal has been accepted or declined.

**D. When is the proposal due for review?**

Unable to complete until the proposal has been accepted or declined.

**E. Who is responsible for ensuring that this happens?**

Unable to complete until the proposal has been accepted or declined.

**F. Please indicate if you have developed an Action Plan to take forward any remaining actions**

- Yes, please see attached on final page  
 No, no further actions required

