

## **Record of Officer Decision**

### **Torbay Memorial Benches**

#### **Decision Taker and Date Decision Taken:**

Director of Pride in Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport & Parking, on 04 September 2025.

#### **Summary of Matter or Issue Requiring Decision:**

From time to time the Council receives requests from members of the public who wish to place a Memorial Bench or rededicate a bench within a public open space owned by the Council. In 2024 it was agreed that the process for considering requests needed to be revised to ensure a consistent approach to the provision of Memorial Benches on Council owned or maintained land.

There is no legislative requirement for the provision of memorial benches although it is accepted that they provide a useful public amenity as well as improving and adding value to the environment.

Memorial Benches within cemeteries are covered by the individual rules and regulations of each cemetery due to the particularly sensitive management arrangements covering these areas.

As demands on Council services, including those relating to parks and open spaces increase, more consideration of the level of infrastructure that can be provided and maintained is required. The quality of Memorial Benches is an important consideration to avoid introducing assets which are onerous to maintain or have a poor life expectancy. On this basis the process should continue to seek contributions towards Memorial Benches for appropriate locations in the public open spaces the Council owns and manages.

The principles within the process along with a formal application process will ensure that requests for Memorial Benches and trees are responded to in a consistent, efficient and helpful manner.

The majority of benches have been in situ for over 10 years. These benches have been dedicated to loved ones under a variety of agreements, most of which are for a 10-year period which has now expired and where new agreements are required.

The memorial bench policy was developed in the summer of 2024 and briefed to the portfolio holder and group leaders in September and October 2024.

#### **Decision Taken:**

That SWISCo be instructed to implement a Memorial Bench Policy mapping benches to locations and contacting those people who have requested a bench to be offered one with the pricing as indicated below:

Sponsorship opportunities to be offered on all vacant benches, based on a five year agreement (lifespan of bench) for a cost of £2400 Zone 1 – premier sites, such as Torquay seafront, Babbacombe Downs, Preston and Paignton Seafront and Harbours or £1600 Zone 2 – non premier local sites;

Opportunities to be offered for shared sponsorship – maximum three per bench for £850 Zone 1 and £550 for Zone 2;

Sponsorship will include installation of new bench and maintenance for a five year period with an option to extend this period to 25 years with the cost in line with that longer period of maintenance; and

Upon the conclusion of the five year term the maintenance period lapses, the bench would not be removed unless required owing to the condition of the bench itself.

**Summary of Reason(s) for Decision Taken:**

The Corporate Plan includes a range of themes and priority objectives in respect of Pride in Place. Implementing this policy supports the Council's ambition to protect and enhance our lived, built and natural environments, including our green spaces. It also provides for residents a valuable opportunity to offer a memorial for a loved one

**Summary of Alternatives or Options considered and rejected and Background Papers:**

To do nothing, this option was discounted given the historic support for memorial benches and the requirement to ensure that there was an agreed policy.

**Details of any conflict of interest and dispensation granted to the Officer taking the decision or by any Member of the Council in delegating responsibility for any specific express delegation:**

None

**Implementation:**

This decision will be implemented immediately.

A copy of this decision and any supporting documentation considered by the Officer taking this decision may also be available for inspection by the public at the Council's offices or posted upon payment of any copying and postage charges. Any member of the public wishing to take up either of these options is asked to please ring (01803) 207087 or email [governance.support@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:governance.support@torbay.gov.uk)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Director of Pride in Place)