

Report for:	SERVICE DELIVERY & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
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Date of Meeting:	15 September 2025
Subject:	Memorial Tree and Seat Policy
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Josh Wright, Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement
Responsible Officer:	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property and Climate Resilience
Exempt:	None
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Memorial Seat and Tree Policy

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To review a proposed Policy for Memorial Seats and Trees on Council property.

Recommendation(s):

That the Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group recommends to Cabinet that Full Council adopt the Memorial Benches and Memorial Tree Policy.

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction/Background

- 1.1 From time to time the Council receives requests to support the provision of memorial trees and seats on its land. There is currently no policy setting out how to deal with these enquires. The proposed policy, attached as Appendix 1, sets out what is generally currently followed on an ad hoc basis for the purpose of clarity, equity and transparency.

2.0 Rational

- 2.1 Consideration will be given to requests for a seat with plaque or a tree on Council land in memory of loved ones who have died and other special events. This policy sets out the basis for this and seeks to demonstrate an equitable and transparent process.

2.2 The Council's parks and open spaces are primarily places for recreation and not memorial gardens. However, they do though provide a place for reflection and remembrance and are part of supporting well-being through the provision of quality open spaces.

2.3 There will not always be an immediately available space for a seat or tree and for those requests that can't be accommodated immediately, there will be the option to be added to a waiting list that will be maintained by the Council.

3.0 **Trees**

3.1 Trees will only be provided where there is a need for a tree in-line with the Council's Tree Policy. That may be where there is space to accommodate a tree or further tree or where an existing tree has failed and needs to be replaced. There isn't infinite space for trees and any newly planted tree must enhance and not detract from the setting.

3.2 No plaques or other marker will be permitted to accompany a tree as these may be the subject of theft and/or vandalism. However, natural floral tributes may be placed up to 3-times annually (birthday, anniversary or religious event) with any wrapping removed and may remain in place for up to 1 week.

4.0 **Seats**

4.1 Seating can only be provided where there are sites available within the Council's parks and cemeteries and where a new seat is needed to replace either a missing seat or one which is in a poor state of repair. Seats are not always replaced like for like. They need to be in places where the Council determines they will be used and enjoyed.

4.2 Locations for seats

Tiverton

- People's Park
- Westexe Recreation Ground
- Cemetery

Crediton

- Newcombes Meadow
- Cemetery

Other Towns and Parishes

- There are no similar ornamental parks owned by the Council and the Cemeteries are operated by Town and Parish Council where they exist.

Other sites may be considered, for example play areas and other open-spaces.

4.3 Engraved stainless steel plaques with appropriate wording may be affixed to a bench. Again, natural floral tributes may be placed up to 3-times annually

(birthday, anniversary or religious event) with any wrapping removed and may remain in place for up to 1 week.

- 4.4 The principles of the seating policy are endorsed by the Tiverton People's Park Trustee Group.

5.0 **Costs**

- 5.1 The cost of any memorial seat or tree will be met by the requestor.

- 5.2 Costs are subject to annual review but will increase by at least the appropriate Consumer Prices Index.

Financial Implications

There may be some financial advantage to the Council as the donation of seats and trees should result in improvements to the Council's parks and open spaces.

Legal Implications

None.

Risk Assessment

No risks additional to normal operational risk to consider.

Impact on Climate Change

Minimal impact but planting additional trees will be beneficial.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The provision of seats where the Council may not otherwise provide them may ameliorate the experience of those users with reduced mobility and enable greater confidence to use parks and cemeteries for recreation and reflection. Seats will be compliant with Disability Discrimination legislation requirements.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

Supports the use of parks and cemeteries for well-being. Supports carbon reduction targets with tree planting where appropriate and re-use of materials.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Date: 04/09/2025

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 04/09/2025

Chief Officer: Andrew Jarrett
Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director
Date: 04/09/2025

Performance and risk:
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager
Date: 04/09/2025

Cabinet member notified: (yes)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Steve Densham
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Telephone: 01884234921

Background papers: