

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
REPORT FOR RESOLUTION

COMMITTEES: Executive

DATE: 18th January 2006

SUBJECT: Roadside Memorials and Floral Tributes

REPORT OF: Strategic Director (Operations)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval for proposed policy in relation to Roadside Memorials and Floral Tributes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive agree that

1. Requests to place permanent memorials on street to commemorate emergency services personnel killed in the area in the course of their emergency duty will be determined by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
2. Except in exceptional circumstances requests to place permanent memorials at the roadside will otherwise be declined.
3. The policy of the Council is that (except in exceptional circumstances) the Council will only allow the placing of temporary roadside tributes for a period not exceeding 30 days where:-
 - The bereaved family place the tribute in accordance with an agreement with the GMP Family Liaison Officer.
 - The tribute is proportionate and does not pose a significant health and safety risk or a hazard to road users.
4. Officers approach AGMA with a request to support the Police in adopting this policy by considering a Countywide scheme for temporary tributes.

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REVENUE BUDGET

There are no consequences.

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CAPITAL BUDGET

There are no consequences.

CONTACT OFFICERS:

P North	0161 957 8349	p.north@manchester.gov.uk
J Fisher	0161 718 4810	j.fisher@manchester.gov.uk

IMPLICATIONS FOR:

Environment	Employment	Anti-Poverty	Equality	Human Rights
YES	NO	NO	NO	YES

WARDS AFFECTED

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Discussion note J Fisher to P North dated 30th September 2005.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The practice of placing floral tributes at the scene of a road death incident by bereaved relatives and friends has grown considerably in recent years. On the majority of occasions the tributes are placed for a short period of time immediately following the accident. However, a few have been sustained and replenished over many months and occasionally the tributes have been excessive for their location.

On certain occasions, the placing of the tribute has itself presented an increased risk of a road traffic accident either by diverting motorist's attention at a key junction or through lack of robust health and safety practice during the process.

- 1.2 The Council also receives requests for permission to erect permanent memorials on or close to the highway. Officers have declined to agree such requests to-date, referring applicants to the alternative facilities highlighted in paragraph 2.3, except in the specific circumstances outlined in paragraph 2.1.
- 1.3 In the light of the above developments, discussions have taken place between Council Officers and Greater Manchester Police with a view to establishing formal policy which is sensitive to grieving family's feelings but secures a consistent practicable approach in the wider community interest which can be explained to constituents by both Members and officers. This report outlines the conclusions of those discussions.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Police Officers Killed on Duty

- 2.1.1 The Police Memorial Trust is a national charity which operates a scheme which places permanent memorials [i.e. plaques] at the roadside to Police Officers killed in action.
- 2.1.2 It is usual to hold an unveiling ceremony for these memorials undertaken by a representative of government. The Chief Constable and the family of the victim would be in attendance together with friends, police colleagues and local dignitaries. The highway authority would normally pay for the provision and maintenance of these plaques.
- 2.1.3 The most recent example in Manchester is the memorial to PC Raja Basharat Ahmed at the junction of Oldham Road and Queens Road, the memorial being erected in 2001. PC Raja Basharat Ahmed was the 29th officer nationally to be honoured by the Police Memorial Trust by the placing of a memorial to pay tribute to his bravery and dedication.
- 2.1.4 There are no other circumstances under which such requests have been approved.

2.2 Family Liaison Officers (FLOs)

- 2.2.1 Greater Manchester Police have a small team of FLOs who support bereaved families. The FLOs are ideally placed to discuss any policy and its application with the family at the outset. They are trained and experienced officers who are deployed on a countywide basis.

2.3 Memorial Gardens

- 2.3.1 In 2003 a memorial garden dedicated to road accident victims was opened in Southern Cemetery. The suggestion for such a garden came from Paul Goggins MP, a Home Office Minister at that time. The garden, which was also subsequently opened by Mr Goggins, is adjacent to the Church of England chapel and aims to provide a place of quiet contemplation for bereaved families and friends. The option for providing individual commemorative plaques could be considered.
- 2.3.2 A similar garden has been provided at Grange Community Centre in Beswick but this is not within a cemetery and was constructed independently of the City Council. This garden did though provide the inspiration for the garden at Southern Cemetery.
- 2.3.3 In addition to the above facilities, bereaved families have been encouraged to plant trees or place a bench in a park or a cemetery rather than at the roadside where they have pursued the creation of a special memorial. If they have required a plaque with the tree then a supervised and enclosed area such as the Wythenshawe Horticultural Centre has been suggested. It is proposed that these arrangements continue subject to the discretion of the Chief Executive in individual cases.

2.4. Policy Elsewhere

- 2.4.1 The majority of Councils do not have a formal policy in relation to roadside memorials and floral tributes. Those that have been identified follow a similar approach to the one suggested in this report.

3.0 POLICY PROPOSAL – TEMPORARY TRIBUTES

- 3.1 It is clearly important that the Council's policy in this area will attract public support. It is therefore considered that it should allow for a modest placement of flowers which marks the feelings and memories experienced by the bereaved family. However, it is believed to be important to public safety that such tributes are controlled, are proportionate and have a limited lifespan.
- 3.2 It is therefore proposed that temporary roadside floral tributes are allowable where they are organised in accordance with an agreement with the Police Family Liaison Officer, are placed for a period not exceeding 30 days, are proportionate in scale and do not pose a significant health and safety risk.
- 3.3 Greater Manchester Police have indicated their support for such a policy but have asked that the City Council promotes a similar Countywide policy through

the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) to enable a consistent approach by Officers whose brief transcends Council boundaries.

4.0 POLICY REGARDING PERMANENT ROADSIDE MEMORIALS

- 4.1 Members and officers receiving requests from members of the public to support a permanent memorial need to be able to respond consistently in accordance with the wishes of the Council.
- 4.2 Consideration has been given to proposing an extension in policy terms to the Police Memorial Trust Scheme to cover other emergency services. The costs of such an extension would be insignificant and the numbers of potential cases very small. It is therefore proposed that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council be authorised to consider any such applications on their individual merits.
- 4.3 It is proposed that in relation to other requests, except in exceptional circumstances these are declined and applicants are guided to consider the use of memorial gardens as in paragraph 2.1.4.