



**REPORT of
THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP**

to
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
24 SEPTEMBER 2024**

MEMBER SCRUTINY ITEM REQUEST – MALDON CEMETERY

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to bring to the attention of the Committee a Member scrutiny item request and the conclusions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group (the Working Group).

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee notes the Working Group's conclusion and decides how it wishes to deal with this Member Scrutiny Request.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 A scrutiny item request was submitted by Councillor W Stamp. The pro-forma based on her request together with the initial Officer response briefing paper are at **APPENDICES A** and **B** to this report. The request sought a review of the new contractual arrangements for the cemetery maintenance.
- 3.2 The Working Group received an Officer presentation in support of the briefing paper and noted that the contractual arrangements had recently been changed in order to provide greater certainty and consistency given the resource limitations previously. Although there were set standards of care and maintenance, the Council had some 25 acres of cemeteries within the District and it would take a while for the new arrangements to become established. Officers did however accept that there was scope for improved communication with the public, particularly in seeking to advise of work being carried out in a cemetery. Although there had been some social media activity on this subject, only one formal complaint on standards of maintenance had been received.
- 3.3 Officers also wished to emphasise and bring out in the report to the Committee that the Council did not maintain individual graves or grave spaces as this was the responsibility of those who held the exclusive right of burial, or their representatives/successors.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Working Group has noted the initial Officer response, and apart from emphasising a couple of points in relation to responsibility for maintenance, is content to leave a decision on this scrutiny request to the Committee.

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2027

5.1 Provide good quality services.

- 5.1.1 Thorough scrutiny processes support improved performance and efficiency which in turn will contribute to the quality of services provided, and functions undertaken by the Council.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – None directly, but individual scrutiny reviews will enable the impact on customers to be assessed.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – Equalities are considered as part of the reporting on review work undertaken by Officers.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk (including fraud implications)** – Scrutiny reviews enable potential Corporate Risks to the organisation and their mitigation to be identified.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Scrutiny reviews offer the potential for an assessment of financial impact to the organisation.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – Scrutiny reviews offer the potential for an assessment of any resource impact to the organisation.

Background Papers: None.

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