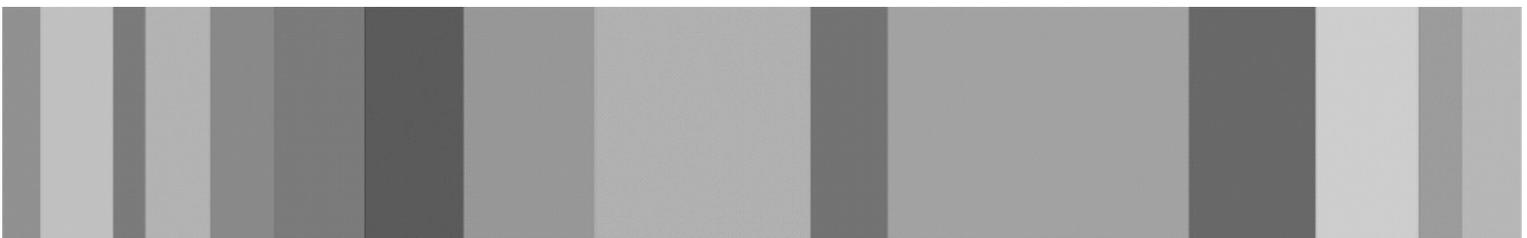


Roadside Memorials/ Tributes Policy

April 2012



1. Background

- 1.1 In recent years, there has been a growing practice of bereaved families and friends placing flowers and other tributes at the scene of fatal road incidents. In some cases, the roadside displays can become quite elaborate and extensive. Sometimes these memorials and tributes can be upsetting to local residents as they are a permanent reminder of an incident which may have occurred in the vicinity of their property. By their very nature, they can also be a danger to the bereaved families as memorials are positioned by often busy roadsides. In developing a policy and putting in place appropriate protocols several emergent issues have been taken into consideration:
- Bereaved families and family friends may have a strong desire to place tributes/tributes at the roadside at the scene of a fatality
 - The placement of flowers and tributes at the roadside does, in some way, emphasise the tragedy of road crashes and may bring to the attention of other road users passing the scene vulnerability of all road users
 - The location of the incident and the nature of the road environment and traffic conditions may present a danger to people who visit the scene to lay tributes
 - The memorials/tributes can in some instances become elaborate, for example an ever growing number of flowers, football shirts, teddy bears and other personal effects are often displayed at the location. This can form a large display which may cause added distraction to road users and can create a hazard for pedestrians as well.
 - Local residents and householders living in the immediate vicinity often request the Council to remove roadside flowers and tributes as they are a constant and upsetting reminder of a tragedy which occurred near their homes.
 - The placement of permanent roadside memorials/tributes carries some of the same concerns as the laying of floral tributes, and may serve to encourage repeat visits over a number of years, particularly on special dates.
- 1.2 A number of local authorities have started to establish policies and procedures relating to the placement and removal of roadside floral tributes and other memorials placed at the scene of fatal road crashes. Such policies have endeavoured to represent a pragmatic and consistent approach in dealing with the above issues. Adopted policies generally set a time period for the placement of flowers and other tributes and include protocols and arrangements for their removal and the return of non - perishable items to bereaved relatives. It is recognised that this is a sensitive and emotional issue.
- 1.3 The issue has been debated at a Greater Manchester level leading to the production of guidance document in February 2008. Although this guidance (background document) has been endorsed, it was left for each individual authority to progress the adoption of the guidelines as was appropriate to the individual authority.

2. Protocols

2.1 In Bolton we chose to carry out extensive public consultation prior to developing detailed protocols for dealing with memorials/tributes. This consultation supported our intended approach (outlined below). Further details about the consultation results are available elsewhere on the council website: follow [this link](#).

2.2 The following protocols have now been approved by the Executive Member for Environmental Services as those which the council will use in responding to this issue:

- The Council shall generally allow roadside floral tributes or other temporary memorials at the roadside for a period of 30 days from when the tribute is first identified. Any floral tributes or memorials remaining in place after the 30 day period shall be removed by the council in consultation with Police Family Liaison Officers. The Executive Member for Environmental Services shall, in exceptional circumstances, retain the right to extend the 30 day limitation period;
- The Council shall generally allow repeat roadside tributes or other temporary memorials placed on special anniversary dates to remain for a period of 30 days after the repeat placement is first identified;
- The placement of permanent roadside memorials including green memorials such as trees or shrubs and other types of memorials such as a seat or a plaque will not be allowed and shall be removed within 30 days after the placement is first identified;
- Any item of a non-perishable nature removed by the council shall be retained for a 90 day period in a safe storage area during which bereaved relatives will, by arrangement be able to collect such items;
- the Council reserves the right to remove at any time roadside floral tributes or any other memorials which are considered to present a hazard or distraction to road users including pedestrians;

2.3 Approved protocols will only apply to the roads for which the Council has a responsibility.

3. Implementation

3.1 In implementing this policy the Council will ensure that the removal of all roadside memorials/tributes is handled in a sensitive and respectful manner. To this end a process has been developed in accordance with this aim, supported by detailed documentation. The council is working in close partnership with Greater Manchester Police Family Liaison Officers to ensure wherever possible there is communication with the bereaved families prior to the removal of any tribute.

4. Roles and Responsibilities: Bolton Council

- The One Stop Shop and contact centre (01204 336632) – Responsible for logging all reports of roadside memorials/tributes for removal.
- Highways and Engineering Development Services – Responsible for the administration processes supporting the removal of memorials/tributes.
- Greater Manchester Police and Family Liaison Officers – Responsible for liaising with bereaved families.
- Highways and Engineering Delivery Services – Responsible for the inspection of tributes and the placing of the appropriate notice at the site.
- Neighbourhood Services – Responsible for the removal and disposal as appropriate of the roadside memorials/tributes.
- Bereavement Services- Responsible for the temporary retention of non-perishable items.

5. Evaluation and Review

- 5.1 In order to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the policy, an evaluation of the protocols and removal process should take place 12 months after the policy has been formally implemented involving all areas of the council with responsibility for implementation, as well as key partners, including Greater Manchester Police. The policy should then be further reviewed on a two yearly cycle thereafter. Each review should identify the elements of the process that are working well and if any improvements can be made which would enhance the procedure. We will also continue to examine the latest developments elsewhere in the country where policies have been introduced, to identify any issues we can learn from, and best practice we could seek to employ locally.