

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

GROUND AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

13 NOVEMBER 2017

DUNSTABLE WAR MEMORIAL

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| Purpose of Report: | To report to Members the work undertaken by the War Memorial working group and to consider the options available for moving forward with this project. |
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1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 That, taking account of the preferences expressed by the working group, Members consider the options detailed in section 3.5 of this report with a view to approving Option 2 at a cost in the order of £50,000.
- 1.2 That Members recommend to Finance and General Purposes Committee that financial provision is made to underwrite any shortfall in third party contributions to complete the project.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the Council's Corporate Plan 2017 to 2019 includes an action to carry out a complete renovation of the Dunstable war memorial and install an additional plaque to commemorate those who have died in conflicts since 1945.
- 2.2 Members will recall that at the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee in June 2017 approval was given to establish a working group of elected members and appropriate voluntary organisations. The group has met on two occasions to discuss the project.
- 2.3 Saturday 11 November 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War and it would be fitting to ensure that the renovation and placing of an additional plaque are completed by this important date, or sooner if possible.
- 2.4 The war memorial, located in Priory Gardens, was erected in 1952 by public subscription and the bronze plaques were donated by the Rotary Club of Dunstable. The memorial underwent limited refurbishment in 1999 with funds from the Rotary Clubs of Dunstable and Menen (Belgium), the Dunstable Branch of the Royal British Legion (now no longer in existence) Dunstable Town Council and a South Beds District Council Millennium Fund grant.

3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The working group has agreed a project brief which includes the following key objectives.
 - Refurbishment and improvements to the structure including options to re-face the brickwork with stone, stabilisation of the memorial and replacement of copings and paving

- Incorporation of a new Combined Services emblem feature to commemorate those lost in conflict since 1945
 - The addition of names missing from the original roll call plaques for WW1 and WW2.
- 3.2 The brief and further supporting information has been sent to the War Memorial Trust, as a pre application submission, to identify if the project is eligible for funding. The Trust have advised the Council that if the intention is to fundamentally change the appearance of the memorial by re-facing it with stone then it is highly unlikely to be eligible for Trust funding.
- 3.3 The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services is currently working with Brasier Freeth and a specialist stonemason to establish the practicalities and implications of stabilising the memorial, re-facing the brickwork with stone and replacing copings and paving.
- 3.4 The Dunstable and District History Society, who are represented on the working group, have fully researched a list of persons not currently listed on the war memorial for WW1 and WW2 and have identified 28 men who should be added to the memorial roll call plaques.
- 3.5 The working group met again on Wednesday 8 November to discuss the response from the War Memorial Trust, the historical research into missing names and the options for moving forward. The working group have requested that this Committee consider the following options.

Option 1 – A new war memorial

This option would require the demolition of the existing memorial and the creation and installation of a new memorial in its place. It is estimated that this might cost in excess of £80,000 to £100,000 and would require Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic England. Furthermore this option was not included within the original brief and the requirement to complete such a commission by November 2018 could be problematic.

Option 2 – Stabilisation and Re-facing with stone

This option would involve installing a stabilising structure at the rear of the memorial, re-facing the existing brickwork with large sheets of stone to match the existing central epitaph stone, replacing the main wall copings, the brick planter copings and the paving with similar stone, recasting new role-call plaques to add the additional 28 missing names and install a new Combines Services emblem (stone carved or cast bronze) at the angled slope at the foot of the memorial. It is estimated, subject to full procurement, that this option could be achieved with a budget in the order of £50,000.

Option 3 – Stabilisation and retain brick appearance

This option would involve all of the elements in Option 2 with the exception of the re-facing of the brickwork with stone. Following this option would not result in a significant improvement to the aesthetic appearance of the memorial. It is estimated, subject to full procurement, that this option could be achieved with a budget in the order of £30,000.

- 3.6 The working group have expressed the view that Option 1 is not a realistic proposition at this stage. Option 2 is the preferred choice of the group subject to practicalities and budget constraints.
- 3.7 The addition of the missing names to the bronze roll call plaques would require a complete recasting of the plaques so that they can be presented in the traditional manner in alphabetical order.
- 3.8 The installation of a new Combined Services emblem would likely take the form of a carved stone plaque or a bronze style cast plaque located centrally at the base of the memorial and proud of the existing 45 degree angled paving where the commemorative wreaths are laid.
- 3.9 It is therefore proposed that Members consider the options presented in this report with a view to approving Option 2 as the way forward.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND TIMESCALES

- 4.1 The cost of achieving Option 2 is estimated to be in the order of £50,000. The Corporate Plan capital programme includes £10,000 of Council investment towards the project leaving a shortfall of £40,000. It is evident that this project will not secure War Memorial Trust funding. As a result, officers are looking for opportunities to secure alternative funding including crowd funding arrangements.
- 4.2 Members may therefore wish to consider the financial implications detailed in this report in the context of the wider Corporate Plan capital expenditure programme with a view to making provision to underwrite any shortfall in third party contributions to this element of the programme.
- 4.3 A full report will be presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee detailing the wider capital expenditure programme including the War Memorial project.
- 4.4 In order to provide a window of opportunity to pursue third party / crowd funding and being mindful of the desire to complete the project well in advance of November 2018 the following indicative timescales are proposed. It should be noted that this would provide a third party / crowd funding window of 8 weeks with a cut-off date at the end of February 2018. At this point, and with priced tenders received, it would then be possible to calculate the level of underwriting required from the General Reserve.

| Stage | Timescale |
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| Detailed Design | Mid November 2017 to mid January 2018 |
| Third Party / Crowd Funding | January to end February 2018 (8 weeks) |
| Preparation of Specification, Bill of Quantities and Tenders Documents. | Mid January to end January 2018 |
| Procurement | Mid February to end February |
| Build (4 weeks on site) | Commence beginning April 2018 |
| Completion | End April 2018 |

Members should note that these timescales are ambitious and taking account of the need to complete such a sensitive refurbishment in a very careful and appropriate manner the risk of slippage is high. However, there is a significant buffer period in place up to November 2018.

5. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The proposals detailed in this report provide the opportunity to complete the refurbishment of the War Memorial in line with the specific objective in the Council's Corporate Plan 2017 to 2019

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The stabilisation of the War Memorial will ensure that it remains in a safe condition for many years to come and is in line with the recommendations contained in the 2017 structural survey commissioned as part of this project.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE, LEGAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None

8.0 APPENDICES

- 8.1 None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 Working group project brief and structural engineers report

10. AUTHOR

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