

Cabinet (Resources) Panel

10 January 2017

Report title	War Memorial Restoration Oxford Street, Bilston	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds City Economy	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	Bilston East	
Accountable director	Keren Jones, Service Director, City Economy	
Originating service	Planning	
Accountable employee(s)	Jon Beesley Tel Email	Historic Environment Officer 01902 555622 jon.beesley@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report considered by	Place Leadership Team	12 December 2016

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Agree to the Council acting as the accountable body to facilitate the restoration of the Oxford Street war memorial in Bilston.
2. Approve the establishment of a capital budget of £46,000 for the restoration works funded by external grants and contributions.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To mark the centenary of the First World War, local residents have come together to form Bilston Remembered. One of the aims of the group is to secure the restoration of the Oxford Street war memorial in the town centre.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet (Resources) Panel authorisation for the Council to act as the accountable body to facilitate the restoration of the war memorial, which will be funded through external grant and contribution from Bilston Remembered.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Bilston Remembered is a local community interest group, established in 2014 to commemorate the role of Bilston and its citizens in the First World War. The group has organised a number of events commemorating key events of the First World War to raise funds for the restoration of the war memorial.
- 2.2 The war memorial is located within gardens bounded on the Oxford Street frontage by a low stone wall topped with decorative railings. The memorial, unveiled in 1921, is a Cross of Sacrifice, a design by the architect Sir Reginald Blomfield, designer of the Menin Gate at Ypres. It comprises a Portland stone cross with inset bronze sword, mounted on a stepped plinth. The names of the fallen of both world wars are recorded on three plaques of Westmoreland green slate mounted on a brick wall, which forms the rear boundary of the site. The memorial and gardens are situated within the Bilston Town Centre Conservation Area and are included in the City of Wolverhampton Local List of Heritage Assets.
- 2.3 An inspection of the memorial has been carried out and a schedule of works prepared. The bronze sword is to be restored and coated with protective wax. The memorial stonework is to be cleaned; damaged sections replaced and the joints repointed. The boundary wall and copings are to be repaired and repointed. The railings are severely corroded and much of the ironwork will be replaced on a like-for-like basis. Surviving original components with minor corrosion will be restored rather than replaced in order to preserve historic fabric. The restoration of those elements that formed part of the original scheme in 1921, (the war memorial and the boundary wall and railings) are eligible for grant aid from the War Memorials Trust (WMT).
- 2.4 Enhancement work has already been carried out by the Council, including felling several poplar trees (the roots of which were damaging the footpaths), removal of a privet hedge to expose the original railings and the resurfacing of the footpaths.
- 2.5 Bilston Remembered propose to add the names of any casualties from the two world wars that were not included on the original roles and the names of those that died in subsequent conflicts. The group also intend to enhance the site with the addition of benches and tree planting. These proposals would not be eligible for grant aid from the WMT. The full cost of such works would be funded by Bilston Remembered. This would be subject to prior agreement of the details and the availability of funds.

3.0 Financial implications

- 3.1 In response to an initial expression of interest the WMT has confirmed that the proposals may be eligible for a grant of up to 75% of the cost of the works, up to a maximum of £30,000.
- 3.2 The Council's Landscape Team will prepare the tender documents and manage the project on site, the fee for which will be in the region of £2,000. Bilston Remembered has confirmed that it will fund the cost of the professional fees and the balance of 25% towards the cost of the grant eligible works up to a maximum of £16,000. The total cost of the grant eligible works and professional fees is estimated to be in the region of £46,000.
- 3.3 Three competitive tenders for the cost of the works will be required for the grant application. On confirmation of an offer of grant aid from the WMT, the contract will be awarded and the works undertaken. Following completion of the works and confirmation of payment of the final invoice, the WMT will reimburse the Council. The outstanding balance for the cost of the works and professional fees will be reimbursed by Bilston Remembered.
- 3.4 The initial preparatory works will be undertaken by the Council's Landscape Team. In the unlikely event that the grant application should not be successful the Council has agreed to meet these costs.
[MF/24112016/Q]

4.0 Legal implications

- 4.1 The Council must ensure the tender process complies with the Council's Contract Rules and the appropriate parties enter into a contract with the successful tenderer. It will also be necessary to ensure that any necessary planning consents have been obtained.
[RB/25112016/B]

5.0 Equalities implications

- 5.1 The restoration of the war memorial will have no equalities implications. The Council's procurement process will be followed to ensure invited tenderers are treated in a fair and equitable manner with access to all relevant and necessary information.

6.0 Environmental implications

- 6.1 The proposals referred to in this report will secure the restoration of a historic structure which is included in the City of Wolverhampton Local List of Heritage Assets. The improvements will also enhance the appearance of the Bilston Town Centre Conservation Area.

7.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 7.1 The proposals referred to in this report will secure the restoration of the Oxford Street war memorial, which is on land within the Council's property portfolio.

8.0 Schedule of background papers

- 8.1 No relevant background papers.