

SCRUTINY PANEL B

Meeting held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,

on Thursday, 19th September, 2019 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Christian Chapman in the Chair;

Councillors Tony Brewer, Dale Grounds,
Phil Rostance and David Walters.

Apology for Absence: Councillor Rachel Madden.

Officers Present: Phillip Bennett, Lynn Cain, Theresa Hodgkinson,
Mike Joy and Shane Wright.

SB.4 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

SB.5 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 27th June, 2019, be received and approved as a correct record.

SB.6 Scrutiny Review: War Memorials

The Scrutiny Research and Support Officer presented the report to the Panel and reminded Members that the initial meeting held on 27th June, 2019 had resulted in an understanding that the timely cleaning and restoration of the four identified war memorials was paramount.

This consensus resulted in a set of interim recommendations being submitted to the Cabinet meeting in July 2019 to ensure that funding was available to undertake the restoration works notwithstanding the potential award of funding from the War Memorials Trust as a result of a previous grant application being made.

Cabinet had been thankful for the recommendations and agreed to fund the works if the grant application was unsuccessful, and further ensure a communications plan was in place to keep the public informed as to the Council's ongoing restoration efforts and Remembrance events being held during November 2019.

The Service Manager, Scrutiny and Democratic Services took the opportunity to update the Panel in relation to the outcomes from the informal Working Group that had taken place during August 2019.

At the Working Group meeting, Members had discussed the importance of a longer term plan/protocol for the Council which could offer Members, officers and members of the public a clear guide as to how the Council wished to preserve and protect its war memorials around the District. It was intended that the document would include the following:-

- how the Council intends to work with community groups to assist with the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the memorials;
- to enlist the advice and support from service veterans regarding event planning etc;
- a protocol for dealing with wreaths post remembrance;
- a cleaning and maintenance programme;
- publication of events as appropriate;

Once developed, the plan/protocol would sit alongside the communications plan to provide a complete reference guide to the Council's war memorials and its commitments for the future maintenance of such monuments.

Utilising resources already available to the Council, a profile of Ashfield's war memorials was already available on the website. It was important to both officers and Members that the Council's war memorial profile remained prominent all year round.

The Council's Cemeteries and Allotments Team Leader advised the Panel that the cleaning and restoration contractors had already been procured and work would be starting on the four priority war memorials in early October 2019.

Members then took the opportunity to discuss the issues as follows:-

- the need to ensure the Council works with all veteran service personnel and enlist their advice and guidance as required;
- the acknowledgement that the imminent Scrutiny Commission for veteran military personnel would enhance the work already undertaken by the Council to further cement good working relationships with local armed forces;
- the benefits of a wreath protocol and some ideas for wreath management post remembrance events;
- the work of the War Memorials Trust and acknowledgement that their funding opportunities were unfortunately dwindling;
- the importance of establishing the Council's statutory obligations in relation to the maintenance and upkeep of its war memorials;
- the possibility of future crowd-funding by community groups to assist with the upkeep of local war memorials in the future;

- the benefits of building good relationships with local war memorial community groups;
- the development of the Council's war memorial website space to provide a one stop shop for war memorial information.

RESOLVED

that Cabinet be recommended to approve the following:

- a) the development of a brief protocol focusing on the four priority war memorials previously identified. This should set out the Council's key principles with regards to maintenance, engagement and partnership working.
- b) the enhancement of existing webpages on the Council's website to provide further information on maintenance work, events, and community guidance regarding war memorials.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

Chairman.