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Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

9 March 2022

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities – Councillor D Welsh

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services

**Ward(s) affected:**

All Wards

**Title:**

Introduction of Council Blue Plaque Scheme

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**Is this a key decision?**

No – However proposed scheme will be available to all city wards

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**Executive Summary:**

The proposal is to introduce a heritage plaque nomination scheme (commonly known as a Blue Plaque Scheme), hosted via the Coventry City Council website, inclusive of associated administration and element of financial support for successful nominations.

**Recommendation:**

The Cabinet Member is requested to:

- 1) Approve the introduction of a city-wide Blue Plaque scheme
- 2) Delegate to Head of Planning Policy and Environment, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to finalise the details of the process

**List of Appendices included:**

None

**Background papers:**

None

**Other useful documents**

English Heritage Guidance – Celebrating People & Place – Guidance on commemoration plaques and plaque schemes. [\[link\]](#)

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

## **Report title:**

Introduction of Council Blue Plaque scheme.

### **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1. In the past, commemoration plaques have been erected in the city on an individual basis, and/or alongside the support of local historical societies, as well as the City Council in the past, and add greatly to the cultural and heritage offer of the city.
- 1.2. Although the City Council has not had a scheme in place for many years, such proposals are often brought to the Council's heritage team as enquiries regarding the due process of nomination and installation.
- 1.3. In this context, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities asked officers to draw up a best-practice scheme and speak with stakeholders regarding the Council re-introducing a Council-led Blue Plaque scheme. The aim being to complement the existing, valued efforts of organisations, and provide a route to plaque installation that varied from the pre-existing processes.
- 1.4. Following this process, officers have drawn up a route to nomination of commemorative plaques via the Local Authorities website, establishing this as the formal path for such proposals whilst introducing an assessment and recommendation process, supported by the Local Authorities heritage specialists. Final details are proposed to be delegated to the Head of Planning Policy and Environment, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing, but will adhere to Historic England best practice whilst promoting and celebrating the diversity of heritage within the city.
- 1.5. However, it should be noted that a key component will be an element of public voting on Plaques to take forward, allowing a wide range of voices to be heard, reflecting the diversity of heritage within the city, and ensuring that is reflected in the Blue Plaques being installed.
- 1.6. Alongside the introduction of a nomination platform for commemorative plaque proposals, the council's heritage team will concurrently be engaging in an audit of existing plaques in the city, in order to inform future recommendations in regard to levels of existing representation.
- 1.7. Furthermore, it is proposed that the development of an appropriate scheme for the promotion and management of two annual CCC supported heritage plaques, thereby ensuring that the financial cost of production and installation is not a barrier to any specific person or even being commemorated with a Blue Plaque.
- 1.8. It should be noted that the establishment of the scheme will not preclude the erection of commemorative plaques outside of the Council's nomination process, and the Council will continue to work positively with organisations seeking to install Plaques where appropriate.

### **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1. The City Council could choose not to progress the establishment of a commemorative plaque scheme, allowing for such nominations to continue as they do currently. However, the City Council scheme will allow for a wider variety of plaques to be installed

and help generate public interest in the heritage of the city. For this reason, this option is not recommended.

- 2.2. The recommendation is to approve the establishment of an application scheme for commemorative plaques in line with the detailed process delegated as per recommendation 2.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1. No formal consultation has taken place. Public involvement is a key element of the proposal.

### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1. The decision will be implemented at the earliest opportunity.

### **5. Comments from the Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and the Director of Law and Governance**

#### **5.1. Financial implications**

It is proposed that the creation of up to two plaques are financially supported by the Local Authority per year, whilst the council's conservation specialists will provide resource in assessing and recommending upon nominations. The cost of financially supporting 2 plaques per year is expected to be less than £1000 which will be managed through existing budgets.

#### **5.2. Legal implications**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

### **6. Other implications**

#### **6.1. How will this contribute to the Council Plan ([www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/))**

- Raising the profile of Coventry through :

Promoting Coventry as a visitor destination and centre for the arts and culture, sports and leisure, music and events.

#### **6.2. How is risk being managed?**

There is no risk associated with the recommendations.

#### **6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?**

Should the scheme be approved, the Local Authorities conservation specialists will provide support in audit of existing plaques in the city and assessment of future nominations.

#### **6.4. Equality/ EIA**

A full Equality and Impact Assessment (ECA) was undertaken as part of developing the Local Plan. As part of that analysis, the Council had due regard to its public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act (2010).

**6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment**

There is no direct impact from the recommendations of the report.

**6.6. Implications for partner organisations?**

None

**Report author:**

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**Service**

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