

Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 15 September 2020

War Memorial, City Chambers

Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All
Council Commitments	46

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee agrees to:
- 1.1.1 commission a design solution to protect the memorial from inappropriate use that ensures it remains a place for remembrance and respect; and
 - 1.1.2 remove the metal barriers in the meantime and continue with the active policing of the memorial by the City Chambers security staff.

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War Memorial, City Chambers

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report responds to the amended motion from the City of Edinburgh Council meeting on 21 November 2019 on the War Memorial at the City Chambers.

3. Background

- 3.1 The War Memorial is included within the listing of the Category 'A' listed City Chambers building and quadrangle. The memorial is situated beneath the canopied portico in front of the City Chambers and is readily accessible from the High Street. A plaque notes that the 'stone of remembrance' was set up to commemorate the people of Edinburgh lost in the First World War. It was unveiled by HRH Prince Henry on Armistice Day 1927, being accepted on behalf of the city by Lord Provost Stenson. A further commemorative inscription was added after the Second World War.
- 3.2 The memorial is understated and is a memorial for the whole of the city of Edinburgh. The scale and design of the memorial decided upon was mainly due to its chosen location between St Giles and the City Chambers within the canopied portico and also because another grand monument was not required since there was already one in the city at the top of the Castle Rock.
- 3.3 The simplicity of its design is deliberate and is a variation of Lutyen's Stone of Remembrance. It represents the size of memorials for cemeteries of more than 500 graves, illustrating the scale of Edinburgh's loss.
- 3.4 The War Memorial is a place of respect and remembrance and is visited and photographed by numerous visitors and residents throughout the year. Scotland's Service of Remembrance takes place at the memorial every year.
- 3.5 An agreed amended motion by Councillor Cameron, at the City of Edinburgh Council on [21 November 2019](#) called for a report to Culture and Communities Committee setting out:
- 3.5.1 how the preservation and presentation of the war memorial in its setting can best be achieved and respected, without the use of metal barriers; and

- 3.5.2 any access issues to the War Memorial and to the entrance to the public Quadrangle in order to keep pavement space free for pedestrian movement and access to the City Chambers and Quadrangle.
- 3.6 Metal barriers are currently in place to protect the memorial, together with a sign requesting people to respect the War Memorial. Metal poppy-shaped studs in the pavement in front of the memorial seek to delineate the space.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The footfall on the Royal Mile has increased considerably over the last decade. Despite its location beneath the portico and the metal chain link around the memorial, it continues to be used by the public in a number of inappropriate ways that undermine it as a place for remembrance and respect.
- 4.2 It is frequently used as a vantage point to view street performers and street traders frequently encroach on the site. It is also been used as a shelter from inclement weather and it has even been used for laying out picnics and lunches.
- 4.3 Despite the best efforts of the City Chambers security staff, policing the memorial has proved difficult and these practices continue.
- 4.4 The metal barriers were put in place to protect the memorial. Although unsightly, they have been effective.
- 4.5 There is not one simple solution to prevent members of the public from using the memorial inappropriately. It is proposed that a combination of interventions are considered that will ensure the memorial is protected and preserved in the long term.
- 4.6 Any new interventions would need to be done sensitively and in keeping with the design of the memorial and its placing beneath the portico. A combination of lighting, a new barrier system, increased policing, improved signage and a greater delineated space around the memorial itself should be considered. Because of its location within a Grade 'A' listed site, design proposals would need the approval of Historic Environment Scotland (HES).
- 4.7 There are no access issues to the memorial itself. Any temporary installations that could restrict access are considered by the security staff at the City Chambers to ensure pedestrian access is kept clear and open.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 In consultation with HES and Edinburgh World Heritage Trust (EWHT), commission a design to protect the memorial in keeping with the memorial and the original design aesthetic.
- 5.2 In the meantime, remove the metal barriers and continue to actively police the memorial.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The estimated cost of the design work to determine the best possible solution for protecting the memorial is £3,000. This cost can be contained within the 2020-2021 revenue budget.
- 6.2 Once the design is complete, the costs of the selected solution will be considered. The opportunity to secure third party funding towards implementation will also be explored.
- 6.3 EWHT have agreed to contribute to the cost of the design work and improvements.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Design proposals will be shared with HES and appropriate listed building consents will be sought, if necessary.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 None.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.