

CABINET

15 DECEMBER 2020

MONUMENTS AND PLACE NAMES WORKING GROUP

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Adrian Gulvin, Portfolio Holder for Resources

Report from: Councillor Barry Kemp, Chairman of the Working Group

Author: Perry Holmes, Chief Legal Officer

Summary

Council agreed a motion on 16 July 2020 to set up a Monuments and Place Names Working Group to consider monuments and place names in Medway. This report presents the outcome of the Working Group's work, with recommendations about two structures.

The report was considered by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 November 2020. The comments of this Committee are set out in section 5 of the report.

1. Budget and policy framework

1.1. The naming of monuments and place names in Medway is a matter for Cabinet.

2. Background

2.1. In the wake of the Black Lives Matter demonstrations across the country, the Council considered three motions at its meeting on 16 July 2020. The motion that was agreed sought to set up a Working Group to consider monuments and place names in Medway.

2.2. A cross-party Working Group was arranged. It met on three occasions and produced a final report on 17 November 2020, which is attached as Appendix A to this report.

3. Options

- 3.1. Cabinet has the authority and role to name monuments and places in Medway. The Working Group has considered this issue and made a recommendation. Cabinet is asked to give thought to implementing the recommendation. It is within the gift of Cabinet to implement the recommendation, to substitute their own recommendation/s or take no action.

4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1. The Working Group took advice from Officers as part of their deliberations and sought to obtain historical information from Medway Archives.
- 4.2. It was recognised that the information provided by Medway Archives was not necessarily exhaustive but the Working Group was entitled to consider it together with any information they could glean from other sources, and their local knowledge to carry out their role.
- 4.3. A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been completed and is attached at Appendix B.

5. Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 26 November 2020

- 5.1. The report was considered by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 November 2020, the comments of this Committee are as follows:
- 5.2. With specific reference to Stalin Avenue the Committee discussed the scope to review street names at a later stage as a request for this to be included within the terms of reference of the Working Group had not been supported. It was recognised that the Council has a statutory role in relation to street naming and numbering and that there are wider implications including a degree of inconvenience for residents when street names are changed.
- 5.3. The Committee agreed to notify the Cabinet of its support for the recommendation of the Monuments and Place Names Working Group that Sir John Hawkins Car Park should be renamed as St John's car park.

6. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Cabinet chooses to retain the name of the Sir John Hawkins Car Park	There may be community concern about a Council asset continuing to be named after an	Consider changing the name as advised by the Working Group	C3

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
	individual linked to the slave trade		
Cabinet chooses to retain the name of the Sir John Hawkins Car Park	There may be reputational damage to the Council about continuing to name an asset after an individual linked to the slave trade	Consider changing the name as advised by the Working Group	C3

7. Consultation

- 7.1. The Working Group considered one petition that was presented at the Council meeting on 16 July 2020 and four comments received by the Council in June 2020 from members of the public as part of their work. The Outcome Report of the Working Group was the subject of pre-decision scrutiny by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 November 2020.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1. The cost of changing signage for the car park can be paid from the existing budget.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1. The legal implications are set out in the body of the report.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1. The Cabinet is asked to consider the comments of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee set out as section 5 of the report.
- 10.2. The Cabinet is asked to agree to rename the Sir John Hawkins car park to "St John's Car Park."

11. Suggested reasons for decisions

- 11.1. Sir John Hawkins has links to the slave trade and the cross-party Working Group recommends the changing of the name to something that is more in keeping with Medway's cultural heritage and future.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix A - Monuments & Place Names Working Group Outcomes Report

Appendix B - Diversity Impact Assessment

Background papers

None.