Public Realm Enhancements: Oldham War Memorial

Report of Executive Director, Neighbourhoods

Portfolio Holders: Cllr J McMahon; Cllr Shoab Akhtar and Cllr J Stretton

28 January 2012

Officer Contact: Nick Andrews
Ext. 5143

Purpose of Report
To seek approval to progress the refurbishment of the Oldham War Memorial.

Executive Summary

Recommendations
Members are recommended to approve:

1. The acceptance of the grant offered by the War Memorials Trust towards the cost of the proposed works.
2. To approve the overall costs and programme for delivery of the proposed scheme.
Public Realm Enhancements: Oldham War Memorial

1 Background

1.1 Cabinet at its meeting on the 11th September 2011 considered and approved a programme of improvements to the 16 War memorial sites across the Borough to ensure their long term future, enhance their appearance and ensure they are of a standard fit for purpose. The report identified the possible need for additional resources for more extensive works to a number of memorials.

1.2 The Oldham War Memorial, located on Church Terrace, Oldham is a building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (Grade 2). The memorial is in need of extensive repair and refurbishment works, including the repair and conservation of the Book of Remembrance.

1.3 The proposed refurbishment will compliment the recent works undertaken to the Parish Church Steps. Whilst in the longer term the refurbishment will compliment the proposed works to bring the Old Town Hall back into use and the wider public realm works associated this project.

1.4 The scheme also forms part of the Council’s wider aspirations for the Town Centre as set out in the Public Realm Implementation Framework. The refurbishment scheme will contribute to the following PRIF objectives:
   - Protect the character of the Conservation Area
   - Enhance the pedestrian experience
   - Provide good orientation reference by improving the quality in important areas and ensuring a key landmark is fit for purpose.

2. Current Proposals

2.1 The proposed repair and refurbishment works contribute to Councils Corporate objectives in the following manner:

Objective 1 Productive Place. The scheme contributes to the regeneration of Oldham Town Centre in particular the improvement of the public realm, creating a distinctive place that will contribute to the growth agenda

Objective 2 Confident Communities. The scheme is being brought about through a co-operative partnership with the Royal British Legion (Oldham Branch) and War Memorials Trust. It will form part of the Council’s Love where you live campaign encouraging residents to do their bit for the community and respecting those that have given their lives for the community.

2.2 The project forms part of the Councils wider aspirations and ambitions for the regeneration of Oldham Town Centre. In particular the scheme forms part of the programme of enhancements to the Public Realm. It therefore also contributes to Oldham See it Differently – Investment prospectus for Oldham Town Centre; Oldham Town Centre Public Realm Implementation Framework (Sept 2011); and Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal.
2.3 The proposed works to the memorial include repairs to the Granite Plinth and Bronze Doors; repair and re-patination of the Bronze sculpture; repair and re-patination of the brass plaques on the Parish Churchyard wall; conservation repair and digitisation of the book of remembrance. Provision is also made for the temporary relocation of the Book of remembrance during the repair and refurbishment works.

2.4 It is also proposed to commission moulds of the Bronze Plaques on the Parish Churchyard wall. This is following evidence that unauthorized efforts have been made to remove the plaques presumably for their substantial scrap metal value.

2.5 The current proposals have been prepared in partnership with the Oldham British Legion and through this partnership the Council has been able to secure a financial contribution of £30,000 from the War Memorials Trust.

3. Current Position

3.1 Unity Partnership utilising the services of architectural and conservation specialists Lloyd Evans Pritchard developed proposals for the refurbishment and repair works, including works to conserve the Book of Remembrance.

3.2 The overall cost of the proposed refurbishment works is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repair and Refurbishment Works</td>
<td>93,816.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architect’s Fees (12.5%)</td>
<td>11,727.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QS Fees (3%)</td>
<td>2,814.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDM Co-coordinator Fee</td>
<td>500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity Fees (5%)</td>
<td>4,690.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book of Remembrance</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>118,549.43</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 It is proposed that the Book of Remembrance for the duration of the repair works be located and made available for daily visitors at Gallery Oldham. Once the works to the memorial are completed it is proposed that a replica of the Book of Remembrance be installed in the memorial. A further replica will be made available at the Local Studies Library for handling purposes, whilst the original Book of Remembrance will be on display in the Gallery / proposed new Heritage Centre.

3.5 It is also proposed that a digitised copy of the Book of Remembrance be made available with the appropriate links being installed on the Council’s and British Legion’s websites.

3.6 Following completion of the refurbishment works it is proposed to seek upgrading of the listing from Grade 2 to Grade 2*.

4 Options/Alternatives

4.1 Option 1: Do nothing; this approach would require the Council to continue to fund the
daily manual turning of pages in the Book of Remembrance at a monthly cost of £425; the War memorial would continue to deteriorate and eventually become unfit for its purpose necessitating potentially radical options.

4.2 Option 2: The total costs could be reduced by eliminating the commissioning of a mould of the Brass Plaques. The savings would be circa £20,000. However, should at some future date the memorials be removed and lost, replacement would be impossible. The commissioning of moulds would eliminate this risk.

4.3 Option 3: Undertake the proposed repair and refurbishment works as proposed including the commissioning of moulds of the Brass Plaques.

5 Preferred Options

5.1 Option 3 is the preferred option.

6 Consultation

6.1 The scheme has been prepared in consultation with the Royal British Legion, Oldham Branch, and the War Memorials Trust.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 Capital

Within the approved capital programme there is £1.515m in 2012/13 and £2.919m for 2013/14 for Public Realm Improvements. The War Memorial refurbishment will be financed from within this budget.

7.2 Revenue

The revenue implications of this capital spend has been accounted for in the MTFS update reported at July Cabinet through the repayment of Prudential Borrowing.

The War Memorial is not a Council asset, however the War Memorials (Local Authorities’ Powers) Act of 1923 and subsequent amendments enables, but does not oblige, local councils to carry out work to war memorials within their area whether they officially ‘own’ them or not. Oldham Council has assumed maintenance of the memorial of which the current annual cost is £7,100, inclusive of the cost of manual daily page turning. This cost is included within the overall Street Scene budget. (Sam Smith senior Finance Manager)

8 Legal Services Comments

8.1 There are no Land and Property Protocol issues to consider as the War memorial is not a Council owned asset. Any conditions of the grant funding from the War Memorials Trust need to be recorded, logged with Treasury and complied with. With regard to the balance of the funding from the Council, any conditions of that provision need also to be recorded and complied with. (Rebecca Coldicott).
9. **Cooperative Agenda**

9.1 The Council is working co-operatively with Oldham branch of the Royal British Legion so that the war memorial repairs and enhancements are delivered within a timescale that is acceptable and will ensure the memorial is available for the relevant major commemorative events in 2013. The Book of Remembrance will be on continual display to ensure that anyone wishing to see the relevant daily page is able to do so throughout the repair contract.

10 **Human Resources Comments**

10.1 Not applicable

11 **Risk Assessments**

11.1 The Public Realm Project Board has developed and regularly reviews a project Risk Register for the scheme.

11.2 The following major risks have been identified:

- Delays to the refurbishment works will impact on use of the memorial for Armistice Day 2013.
- Public concerns about being able to view the Book of Remembrance during the restoration works.

12 **IT Implications**

12.1 None

13 **Property Implications**

13.1 The War Memorial is not a Council asset, however the War Memorials (Local Authorities’ Powers) Act of 1923 and subsequent amendments enables, but does not oblige, local councils to carry out work to war memorials within their area whether they officially ‘own’ them or not. Oldham Council has assumed maintenance of the memorial; the current annual cost is £7,100, inclusive of the cost of manually turning the page of the Book of Remembrance.

13.2 The estimated ongoing maintenance costs for the memorial are £4,000 per annum, inclusive of a sinking fund of £2,000 to cover the re-waxing of the sculpture every 4/5 years.

14 **Procurement Implications**

14.1 There are no procurement implications as the specialist supplier, Lloyd Evans Pritchard has been appointed direct by Unity in-line with the overarching Unity Partnership contract terms. Karen Lowes
15  **Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**
15.1  The works will be undertaken in accordance with the appropriate Health and Safety legislation.

16  **Equality, community cohesion and crime implications**
16.1  Refurbishment of the war memorial will contribute to the Council’s efforts to promote community cohesion. The refurbishment scheme will address recent efforts to remove the Brass Plaques.

17  **Equality Impact Assessment Completed?**
17.1  No

18  **Key Decision**
18.1  No

19  **Forward Plan Reference**
19.1  N/A

20  **Background Papers**
20.1  Public Realm Implementation Framework (PRIF)