

SUBJECT:	PROPOSED COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES SCHEME FOR LINCOLN
DIRECTORATE:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK
REPORT AUTHOR:	HEATHER GROVER, PRINCIPAL POLICY OFFICER PAT JUKES, BUSINESS MANAGER, CORPORATE POLICY

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To submit proposals for a Commemorative Plaques Scheme for Lincoln.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Expression of interest in erecting a plaque in Park Ward led to a request to consider the introduction of a city wide commemorative plaques scheme. This report provides details of how a scheme might operate and resource implications.

2.2 Outside of the blue plaque scheme in London there are few schemes currently in operation across the country, a few being operated by district councils (see Appendix A for details).

2.3 There are a small number of commemorative plaques already in place at various locations across the city, erected under previous schemes operated by CoLC and Lincoln Civic Trust (see Appendix B). These schemes have now lapsed and no guidance or criteria exist.

2.4 Appendix C provides draft guidelines and criteria for a new Lincoln scheme, based on schemes operated by other councils.

2.5 The scheme would be operated by Development Management within existing staff resources. However, it should be noted that it is proposed the new scheme should be partly funded by City of Lincoln Council (producing and installing the plaque) for which a reserve budget of £2k initially will be identified through Finances.

2.6 Appendix D provides details of information to be requested of proposers through an online form.

2.7 If approved consideration will need to be given to the date of the first annual consideration of plaques as well as detailed plaque design.

3. Background

3.1 Expression of interest in erecting a plaque in Park Ward led to a request to consider the introduction of a city wide commemorative plaques scheme. This report provides details of how a scheme might operate and resource implications.

3.2 Outside of the blue plaque scheme in London there are few schemes currently in operation and the majority of live schemes are operated by heritage organisations (e.g. heritage forums and civic trusts). However, a few are operated by local authorities and all follow similar lines. Appendix A provides a summary of a range of local authority running schemes, together with some feedback received from Salford Council and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

3.3 Existing plaques

There are a small number of commemorative plaques already in place at various locations across the city, erected under previous schemes operated by CoLC and Lincoln Civic Trust (see Appendix B). These schemes have now lapsed and no guidance or criteria exist.

4. Main Body of Report

4.1 Draft guidelines

Appendix C provides draft guidelines and criteria for a new Lincoln scheme, based on schemes operated by other councils and the London Blue Plaques Scheme. This guidance assumes City of Lincoln Council will fund production and installation of the plaque, with the plaque proposer bearing any other costs.

4.2 The other costs could include researching and obtaining evidence, consents as set out in the guidance and any other expenditure not associated with the physical production and installation of the plaque. Ongoing maintenance of plaques will be the responsibility of City of Lincoln Council, although this is expected to be negligible.

4.3 Time elapsed after death or an event varies from scheme to scheme, and timescales proposed are the most commonly seen in other schemes. If different timescales are preferred this would have no significant impact on costs, but may mean significant people or events could be commemorated at an earlier date.

4.4 Approval process for plaques

It is proposed that applications are first considered by the Historic Environment Advisory Panel (HEAP) to gain comment on the significance of the nominated individual or event. The Development Manager and Conservation Officer would then make a recommendation to Executive on whether or not the plaque should be approved in principle, taking into account the impact on the building as well as comments provided by HEAP and the overall appropriateness.

4.5 Nominations would be invited for annual consideration, with no more than three plaques being approved in any one financial year. The launch date will be agreed once the scheme has gone through the approval process, with first plaques anticipated to be approved in early 2019. This would ensure the scheme could be operated within existing staff resources, and that costs are within the budget allocated for provision and installation of the plaques.

4.6 Permissions

Listed Building Consent may be required, and in a very small number of cases there may be other planning restrictions which prevent an individual erecting a plaque on their own building. Proposers should have an initial discussion with the

Conservation Officer to ensure they are aware of likely requirements, but will not be required to submit applications for permission until such time as the principle of a plaque has been agreed.

4.7 Proposers will be responsible for gaining the written consent of the owner of the building on which the plaque is requested to be installed, and any other parties with a relevant legal interest in the site.

4.8 Application process

Nominees will need to complete an online application form. It should be noted that sufficient time will need to be allowed from the opening of the scheme to deadline for receipt of applications to enable applicants to undertake the necessary research and evidence gathering. A hard copy version of the proposed form content is attached at Appendix D.

4.9 Costs

There is no existing budget for commemorative plaques and therefore a new budget would be required. Discussions have taken place with the Development Manager and the scheme as outlined in this report could be operated without any additional staff resource, but there is no existing budget to fund plaque purchase and installation. Plaques would cost between £300 and £500 each with a possible additional one off charge for artwork dependent on plaque design, as well as installation costs. An operational reserve budget of £2k would therefore be required to start the policy off, this would be reviewed annually by Finance.

4.10 Other

Should the scheme be agreed and implemented, consideration should be given to linking appropriate accepted plaques to the relevant Lincoln Heritage Trail. There are currently six trails in operation – the Jewish Trail; the Aviation Trail; the Roman Trail; the 1217 Battle of Lincoln Trail, the Brayford Architecture Trail and the Boole Trail.

In addition local visitor information should be updated – e.g, through Visit Lincoln, updating the The Arches/Arcade site.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's enhance our remarkable place

This initiative contributes to enhancing our remarkable place through commemorating people or buildings which have made a positive contribution to the city.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

A budget of £2k will need to be identified to support the scheme before it can go ahead. CMT has suggested a one off reserve be created initially and then reviewed annually.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

A legal agreement will be required between the council and building owners to ensure owners have given their permission for a plaque to be affixed to their

property and for the council to undertake any maintenance or repair should it be required in the future. This will need to include provision on the sale of the property for this to continue.

6.3 Land, property and accommodation

It is possible that a request could be made to affix a plaque on a City of Lincoln Council owned property and if so this will require consultation with and the approval of the Strategic Property Manager.

6.4 Human Resources

There are no HR implications as it is agreed the scheme as outlined would not require any additional staff resource.

6.5 Equality, Diversity & Human Rights (including the outcome of the EA attached, if required)

Plaques will be approved for the historical significance and public profile of the person or building regardless of any protected characteristic.

7. Risk Implications

7.1 (i) Other options explored have included an unfunded scheme and fully funded scheme. An unfunded scheme would reduce the incentive to take part in a co-ordinated scheme as individuals could simply put up their own plaque. A fully funded scheme, whereby we undertake all of the background research and evidence gathering could require significant additional staff resource.

7.2 (ii) Risks associated with the proposed option are that there could be an over subscription to the scheme, meaning worthy plaques are not able to be put up for some time. Also in restricting number of plaques will reduce the impact of the scheme. Alternatively there could be no applications to the scheme.

(iii) Consideration has been given to requiring maintenance and insurance to be the responsibility of the building owner. However, it may be difficult to enforce any agreement of this nature, and would be much simpler and straightforward for the council to retain responsibility in respect of maintenance and insurance. Enquiries of other schemes has shown the risk for any action beyond initial installation is extremely low.

8. Recommendation

8.1 Policy Scrutiny to consider the proposal to adopt a commemorative plaques scheme and comment on the guidelines (Appendix C) and approval process as set out in paragraph 4.4.

8.2 Policy Scrutiny to make recommendations to Exec on the scheme as set out in the attached appendices - for approval of the scheme prior to submitting to HEAP for information.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules
(call-in and urgency) apply?**

No

How many appendices does the report contain?

List of Background Papers:

None

Lead Officer:

Pat Jukes, Business Manager Policy Unit
Telephone (01522) 873657