

RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE REVIEW OF HERITAGE IN HILLINGDON 2008/09

Cabinet Member	Councillor Henry Higgins
Cabinet Portfolio	Culture, Sport and Leisure
Officer Contact	Natasha Dogra, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee (RESPOC) review of Heritage in Hillingdon

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	To receive the Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee's report providing recommendations which seek to build upon the Borough's promotion and protection of heritage in Hillingdon.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	This report contributes to the Council's priorities for promotion of a historically important and modern Borough.
Financial Cost	There are no direct financial implications of this report for the "Cabinet to Note"
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee
Ward(s) affected	All.

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet:

- 1. welcomes the report from the Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee and note the general consensus it found in favour of improving the preservation of heritage in Hillingdon; and**
- 2. will take forward the POC's recommendations as part of the wider heritage agenda, where appropriate and in light of emerging developments and / or budgets available, and ensure that Members are kept informed as the recommendations progress.**

INFORMATION

Reasons for recommendation

The recommendations are aimed at allowing Cabinet to take forward the POC's recommendations made in the Heritage Final Report.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Cabinet could decide to reject or amend the Committee's recommendations.

Supporting Information

1. The Committee chose 'Heritage in Hillingdon' as a review topic in 2008/9 to enable the Council to build on its successes so far.
2. The aim of this review was to review the duties, functions, performances of and potential for improvements in the preservation of the heritage of Hillingdon. Opportunities to improve the Council's current storage of artefacts held by the Borough were investigated and were considered when producing the recommendations.
3. The review took place between December 2008 and April 2009. The Committee consulted residents of the borough via a borough-wide survey. The Committee took evidence from the Local Studies and Archives Manager, Maidenhead Heritage Centre Trustees, Hillingdon Heritage Champion and RAF Uxbridge Supplementary Planning Document Lead Officer. The Committee also visited the archives store in the basement of the Civic Centre to see the condition of items being kept in storage first hand.
4. The review proposed the following five recommendations. Comments from relevant officers regarding the recommendations are provided for Cabinet's information.

Recommendation 1

- i. The Committee advise that an independent assessment of the store should take place to ensure items in storage are kept in the best possible conditions.**
- ii. That the Council consider investigating the possibility of obtaining appropriate temporary storage until a more permanent facility within the borough can be established.**

Officer Comments:

Cabinet should note that the Council are in contact with the HLF regarding Heritage Projects across Hillingdon and that the HLF are continuing to support the Council as the Council plans out the future for Heritage in Hillingdon.

Recommendation 2

The Committee notes Cabinet's endorsement of the RAF Uxbridge supplementary planning document and support the aspiration to build a museum or heritage centre on the site.

Officer Comments:

Cabinet should note that the Committee endorse Cabinet's decision to develop the RAF Uxbridge site and welcome the aspirations to include a museum onsite. The Committee understand that whilst there is likely to be a museum associated with the RAF Bunker, the Supplementary Planning Document for RAF Uxbridge does not specifically say that there will be a museum or heritage centre on site.

Recommendation 3:

The Committee advise that due consideration is given to the recruitment of an experienced photographer to complete a digital cataloguing system of items in storage.

Officer Comments:

Cabinet should note that completion of a centralised cataloguing system of all artefacts held in the Borough has the possibility to act as an income generator. Currently a small charge is in place for some library searches but this does not yet include heritage searches.

Recommendation 4

i. The Committee recommend that the placement of Blue Plaques should be extended to all places and people of interest throughout the borough.

ii. The Committee recommend that as part of publicising heritage, notice boards should be erected at entrances of publicly owned buildings of local architectural or historical importance.

Officer Comments:

Cabinet should note the process of placing Blue Plaques has already begun with two already situated in the borough, and the third being unveiled soon.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommend that consideration be given to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the borough in 2015.

Officer Comments:

Cabinet should note that the 50th anniversary of the borough should act as a time to commemorate the important history and celebrate the rich diversity of the Borough.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendations?

The Committee's recommendations will provide a springboard for the Council to take those steps necessary to improve the promotion and preservation of heritage in Hillingdon.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

The Committee took evidence from residents, officers and experts as described in the attached report (see page 11).

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications of this report for the "Cabinet to Note". However if any of the recommendations are taken forward then there would need to be a full financial assessment of any costs involved with their implementation on the council budgets. For example the costs for the recommendation for additional appropriate storage, would have both capital and revenue implications.

Legal Implications

One of the most significant factors for the Cabinet to take into account in deciding how to take forward the POC's recommendations is the grant of £305,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and whether or not the conditions attached to that grant have been satisfied. If, for example, the archive storage has not been improved to BS5454 then there is a risk that the grant may be clawed back.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL