

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

13TH FEBRUARY 2014

REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET DECISION

Corporate Management and Finance – Lead Cabinet Member – **Councillor David Harrington**
Cabinet Member for Adult Services & Health – Lead Cabinet Member – **Councillor Jim Beall**

THE GREAT WAR CENTENARY 2014

1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with a summary of the confirmed and planned events scheduled to take place in the coming months that contribute to the Government's UK wide campaign to encourage local responses to the Great War Centenary during 2014 (GWC 2014).

2. Recommendations

1. That Cabinet note the report outlining the Council's response to GWC 2014, and the other events and activities being planned and organised within the Borough by members of the public, community/voluntary groups, and Parish Councils etc.
2. Cabinet notes the Government's plans for commemoration of those awarded the Victoria Cross as part of a national initiative to commemorate the Great War Centenary during 2014
3. Cabinet notes the consultation held regarding the location for a commemorative paving stone in honour of Sergeant Edward 'Ned' Cooper, the Borough's only WW1 recipient of the Victoria Cross, and approves the siting of the paving stone in an appropriate location within Stockton Town Centre.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

To inform Cabinet of the Council's response to the Great War Centenary 2014.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in accordance with paragraph 18** of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a

member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- Relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code)

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code)

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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BACKGROUND

1. The 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War is on 4 August 2014. A number of countries are making preparations to mark the centenary, including ours. Each nation will create a unique focus on its contribution to, and the impact and legacy of the Great War.
2. CMT agreed to set up a GWC 2014 Working Group, (which consists of the Head of Democratic Services, the Libraries and Heritage Services Manager, and the Heritage Officer) to monitor and co-ordinate the current and future projects and initiatives to maximise participation and avoid duplication.
3. This report provides an update on progress that has been made and the current focus of the GWC 2014 Working Group.

DETAIL

4. Culture and Leisure Services are in the process of developing and preparing several local projects which were outlined in the original report. An update on their current position follows:
 - a) **Harvest Home** – This event at Preston Park Museum last September marked the start of the Council's commemoration of World War One. The event included the opportunity for

people to set poppy seeds in the newly developed orchard area. These will flower during the summer of 2014 providing a living memorial to the commencement of World War One.

- b) **‘World War I: Stockton and the wider war’ Exhibition** at Preston Park Museum – The exhibition of paintings by artist Rob Perry is now confirmed. It depicts the Somme and Verdun battlefields as they appear today, alongside his personal account of painting in the trenches, and a range of historical information. The exhibition will run from mid-July 2014 to mid-November 2014.

An opening event is being planned to be held at Preston Hall. This is proposed to involve Cleveland Police Band playing music from the period. The Museum will utilise the Esmee Fairbairn kitchen to provide a real flavour of the era.

In 2015 the commemoration will continue with the period street undergoing a special makeover to take visitors back to 1914 with:

- army recruiting posters
- newspapers reporting the events of the summer of 1914
- the Police Station converted into a recruiting office
- costumed ‘interpreters’ discussing the day to day issues of life in 1914, and trying to persuade visitors to enlist as new recruits.

- c) **Young Roots Heritage Lottery Bid (HLF)** for 13 to 25 year olds – Culture and Leisure Services and the Council’s Youth Services were awarded £34,500 for their project to enable local young people to explore the events of World War 1, including links to this area and local collections.

This project continues with fortnightly meetings of the young participants who are working on producing a graphic novel, a film and an exhibition. All three will be displayed at Preston Hall Museum in conjunction with the Rob Perry exhibition from the summer of 2014.

As part of this process, the young people supported the very successful World War 1 information event held at Stockton Central Library on Saturday 26 October 2013 by creating large format collage posters which will be included in their own exhibition.

As the original HLF guidelines were relaxed to include funding for overseas visits, a second bid (£10,000) was successfully submitted for the purpose of organising visits to Belgian battlefields, following in the footsteps of the Fifth Battalion (Stockton) DLI, this will allow a group of young people to visit the battlefields to see where our local Battalion fought.

- d) **Heritage Website** – The framework for the website is now in place and content is being researched and created for the launch of the resource in the spring of 2014. The website allows visitors to access stories linked to the heritage of the Borough through maps, historical themes and places; or by format such as photo images, videos and documents.

It is intended to develop a core of twenty stories for the launch of the website and further content will be added as an on-going basis through the implementation of a development action plan.

The initial work on the site will be undertaken by libraries and heritage staff who will write the text to be included in each story ready for uploading to the web.

The site will also allow members of the public and community groups to submit stories. These will be checked and moderated before they are included on the main site to ensure consistency of approach and accuracy.

- e) **Armed Forces Week (Monday 23 to Saturday 28 June 2014)** – Democratic Services is responsible for the planning, organisation and delivery of the local activities and displays during this week. The theme for the week will include a focus on the GWC 2014.

The activities will follow the pattern of previous years with a flag raising service by the Town Hall in Stockton High Street (Monday 23 June); the Mayor's Charity Duck Race to raise money for the regiments that have been awarded the Freedom of the Borough; and a big event in Stockton High Street supported by military services and civilian organisations.

In addition, the Tees Valley WW1 touring exhibition will be displayed in the Rediscover Stockton shop unit in Stockton High Street from 23rd June 2014 – 4th July 2014.

- f) **Remembrance Day (Sunday 9 November 2014)** – Remembrance Services across the Borough are organised by the Royal British Legion. As in previous years, Members will be identified to represent the Council at the various Remembrance Services across the Borough and will lay a wreath on behalf of Members, Officers and residents. The Mayor will attend the service at Stockton Parish Church and the Deputy will attend service and parade at Thornaby.
- g) **Community Participation** – John Beeley, Stockton's Heritage Development Officer, has continued to work with local groups. "Yarm 1914" have the most developed programme as yet, and have recently successfully bid to the HLF for £27,500 to fund their activities. They also took part in the Public Information Day in Stockton in October 2013.

A second public engagement day is planned to be held at Thornaby Central library during March 2014 with an associated visit to the Thornaby Youth Centre by the Time Bandits. This forms part of the Arts Council Strategic Fund project currently being delivered across the Tees Valley's Museums and Library Services.

The Heritage Officer has also met with Billingham residents to develop their community commemorations in the town.

There will a national candlelit vigil at Westminster Abbey on 4 August 2014, exactly 100 years after WW1 started. Details are still to be finalised. This provides an opportunity for communities across the country to participate by organising local candlelit vigils. Discussions about this will take place with the incoming Mayor and Rev. Alan Farish from Stockton Parish Church. The Government hopes that churches, faith groups and community organisations across the country will organise their own local vigil.

- h) **Commemoration of those awarded the Victoria Cross** – This is one of the Government's centrepiece projects to mark the Great War Centenary to ensure that there is a permanent memorial to all the heroes who were awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) for gallantry – this country's highest wartime honour – during World War I.

The idea of a personalised monument in each hero's home town came from the individual tributes given to each gold medal winner at the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, which saw the Royal Mail paint more than 100 of its red post boxes gold.

Over 400 communities across the United Kingdom will be provided with specially designed commemorative paving stones to be laid on the 100th anniversary of date that the medals were originally awarded. The first ceremonies will begin in August 2014 representing the date the first two VC's were awarded during the First World War, with further ceremonies to continue until 2018.

The winner of the competition to design the commemorative paving stone was recently announced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The design has a circular emblem with the name of the recipient and their regiment. Each stone

will incorporate an electronic reader which people will be able to scan on their smartphones to discover more information about their local Victoria Cross recipient.

Stockton will be provided with a paving stone in honour of our only WW1 recipient of the Victoria Cross – Sergeant Edward 'Ned' Cooper, who was awarded his medal 'For most conspicuous bravery and initiative in attack' during the battle of Passchendaele at Langemarck on 16 August 1917, whilst serving with the King's Royal Rifle Corps.

The DCLG are in the process of securing production of the stones and plan to get it delivered during this summer. It will be made from York stone, Scoutmoor, measuring 600mm x 600mm and will weigh roughly 45 kg.

They would like the Council to store the paving stone until it is needed (i.e. until the date of the 100th anniversary of the battle for which the VC was awarded thus ensuring that the laying of stones happens over the four year period). Based on the DCLG guidance, the installation of the Commemorative Paving Stone should take place on the 100th anniversary of the award of the Victoria Cross, which would be August 2017.

The DCLG will cover the costs of production and delivery, but the Council would need to cover storage, laying the stone and maintaining it.

It is up to local councils to decide the specific location of the stone (in discussion with interested parties such as relatives where relevant), but the DCLG is encouraging councils to consider sites with relevance to the VC recipient. The Secretary of State is keen that people should just 'come across' the stones whilst going about their daily lives.

The Commemorative Working Group, at its meeting held on 24th January 2014, approved Sgt. Cooper's inclusion within the Stockton Hall of Fame, and having considered possible locations, supported its proposed siting within Stockton Town Centre.

The views of the family of Ned Cooper have been sought regarding a preferred location, and they too have expressed a preference for the commemorative stone to be laid in Stockton Town Centre, where he was 'most well known'.

There are already other strong links to the armed forces in the High Street such as the War Memorial with the Remembrance Day parade and service; the Remembrance Garden at the Parish Church; and the Armed Forces Week activities, which includes the flag raising ceremony next to the Town Hall. Considering the results of the consultation exercises and the existing links to the High Street, Cabinet are requested to approve the siting of the paving stone in an appropriate location within Stockton Town Centre.

- i) Regional World War One Commemoration Group** – Officers from Stockton Borough Council continue to meet with representatives of Museums, Libraries, Archives and local authorities from across the North East to discuss the wider commemoration of the Great War through community projects, regional groups and services.

The public World War One information event held at Stockton Central Library on Saturday October 26th proved very successful with around 700 people visiting throughout the day to view stalls and displays from local groups, museums, archives and heritage focused services. The "Time Bandits" provided local colour and costumed interpretation, whilst Mike McGrother and the Town Choir provided appropriate music to help commemorate all those lost in conflicts, but especially those lost during the First World War.

A second, similar, event in the Borough is being developed for Thornaby Central Library which it is hoped will take place during March 2014.

A further Regional event will be held at the Discovery Museum in Newcastle later in the spring.

- j) **Arts Council Strategic Fund Bid** – The successful bid has enabled the Tees Valley's Museums to take forward their Commemoration Project, despite changes to staffing which have offered significant challenges.

A Steering Group of representatives from each of the five local authorities is directing the work of two working groups that are continuing to meet regularly to further the work of the project, namely: -

The Learning, Exhibitions and Collections Group – this group is currently being chaired by John Beeley who will hand over responsibility once the new Collections Officer for Preston Park is in place. This post will be taken up by Christine Hutchinson who is currently employed as the World War One Coordinator based in Hartlepool.

The Exhibition is in the process of being designed following the appointment of Janvs, a company with an international reputation. The Exhibition will consist of three stand-alone pods each individually modelled to represent scenes from the War. Each pod will have a number of interpretive panels which will pass on information about the war with a Tees Valley perspective. There will be a preview of the exhibition at Preston Hall during May 2014.

The Outreach and Performance Group – Periplum has been appointed to deliver the performance element of the project and in Stockton the event will take place on 27 September 2014. Local stories have been passed onto the Project Officers and these will be used to develop a script for the show.

- k) **Digital Tapestry** – The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) proposed a national 'arts-related' online war memorial, comprising work from local communities. A variety of media forms could be used from performances being filmed and uploaded onto the internet, to art work created by local communities being digitized for inclusion.

The SCL has now submitted their bid to the Arts Council for this work which would feature contributions from ten library services across the country, including Stockton, North Tyneside and Newcastle in the North East region.

The £100,000+ bid would provide funding for the ten individual library-based projects as well as the development of an online platform to upload locally created work from each area of the country. A decision about the bid is expected this month, and if successful, work will begin almost immediately. The intention is to spread the opportunity out to other library services across England if the bid is successful and the first stage goes to plan.

Stockton's proposed contribution is for a contemporary musical reflection on the war. Interlinked with spoken word from original texts of the period, a musical soundscape would be produced that would then be placed on the digital war memorial. It would bring a new audience into the library, and give them an insight and understanding of the impact the war had on this area and its people. The words would be recited by performing art students from Stockton Riverside College and local theatre schools.

- l) **War Graves Plaques** – This initiative by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) aims to raise public awareness about the existence of war graves in their local cemeteries. This initiative has involved the installation of small plaques at the entrance of Durham Road, Oxbridge Lane and Thornaby cemeteries in the Borough all of which have war graves.

m) Sunflower Project - Sunflower Remembrance Project – The Council and key partners will deliver a high profile Borough wide event, that offers all of our communities the opportunity to be involved in the planting of sunflowers in memory of the 1,245 people from Stockton that went away to fight for their country in WW1 and never returned. The sunflower seeds will be distributed this Spring and each one will be accompanied by a name of one of Stockton's fallen of 1914. Individuals, families, schools and businesses from across the Borough will be invited to take a seed or number of seeds and, as well as tending for the growing plant there will be the option of researching the life of their named person. Stories will be gathered and a reflection on their lives will form some of the content of a commemorative community event to be held in a central location in Stockton on August 4th - the day that Britain entered the war. On that day, the sunflowers will be 'cut down' many, significantly before they are fully grown, to represent the fact that members of our community were cut down before they reached their prime as a result of the Great War. The sunflowers will be displayed around the War Memorial / or at the graves of those buried in the town. It is hoped also to involve representatives from the Rifles Regiment within the ceremony as a tribute from current serving personnel.

CONCLUSION

5. The initiatives outlined above are the current known responses to the GWC 2014 campaign. In addition, interest is beginning to grow amongst members of the public, community groups, Parish Councils etc., wishing to support/develop activities of commemoration within the Borough. Some of these activities may require support /assistance from the Council to assist their delivery, and the Council's Events Programme Group will consider such requests and make recommendations to the Events Board as to which be supported and what the Council could offer each activity.

CONSULTATION

6. Consultation is on-going with officers from Culture and Leisure Services about preparations for GWC 2014 (paragraphs 6 a-l refer). The Local Branch of the Royal British Legion has also been consulted and they are talking to other local branches to discuss possible projects, and have stated that they would be keen to support any initiatives set up by the Council (e.g. Armed Forces Week 2014) in addition to their own.
7. The Event Programme Board is supporting the GWC 2014 Working Group to monitor and co-ordinate current and future projects and initiatives to maximise participation and avoid duplication. The local response supports the Council's Armed Forces Community Covenant, and our plans will be shared with the Tees Valley Armed Forces Forum. Consultation has also been held with the Commemoration Working Group and their views sought in particular regards the location of the commemorative paving stone.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8. There are no legal obligation associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9. Costs will depend on the finalised local response to GWC 2014. Culture and Leisure Services are using existing budgets and funding grants. Extra funding is being sought from the Heritage Lottery's 'Young Roots' programme.

RISK ASSESSMENT

10. Due to the variety of GWC projects and initiatives, appropriate risk assessments would need to be undertaken by the relevant services involved.

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Background Papers: None
Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: Not Ward specific
Property Implications: None