

**REPORT TO:** Planning Portfolio Holder

20<sup>th</sup> March 2018

**LEAD OFFICER:** Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development

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### **A Blue Plaque Scheme for South Cambridgeshire.**

#### **Purpose**

1. To consider whether South Cambridgeshire District Council should have a Blue Plaque Scheme.
2. A blue plaque is a permanent sign installed in a public place to commemorate a link between that location and a famous person or event, serving as a historical marker.

#### **Recommendations**

3. It is recommended that the Planning Portfolio Holder:
  - (a) Approves a Blue Plaque Scheme in South Cambridgeshire.
  - (b) Endorses an extension of the existing local scheme administered by Cambridge Past Present and Future (CPPF) into South Cambridgeshire with a representative from the Council elected annually to The CPFF Blue Plaque Committee
  - (c) Notes the criteria for the Scheme, which will be publicised via the Council's website.

#### **Reasons for Recommendations**

4. This scheme presents an opportunity to commemorate significant people from or events that have happened within South Cambridgeshire.

#### **Background**

5. Nationally there are a number of Blue Plaque schemes. In London the scheme is administered by English Heritage; elsewhere plaque schemes are administered by a range of bodies including local authorities and civic societies.
6. Locally, The Cambridge Blue Plaque Scheme was launched in 2001 and since then has erected 29 plaques to honour famous people including, for example, John Addenbrooke, Jack Hobbs, Henry Morris or events associated with the city. More information can be seen: <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/blue-plaque-scheme>
7. This scheme is publicised via the Cambridge City Council website through which nominations by the public are made. Until recently the scheme was administered by a group of volunteers, but this has now passed to Cambridge Past, Present and Future (CPPF) which has a committee to consider nominations.

#### **Considerations**

8. It is proposed that the scheme for erecting blue plaques be extended to within the boundaries of South Cambridgeshire District Council. It would be administered in the same manner as the existing Blue Plaques scheme in Cambridge City, and according to the same criteria, namely:

People to be commemorated should:

- have been dead for at least ten years
- have been born or educated in South Cambridgeshire, or lived here
- be eminent through their profession or calling
- have made a significant contribution to the life of the district and its residents
- merit recognition because of an outstanding or notorious act

Events to be commemorated should:

- have occurred at least ten years ago
- be instantly recognisable to the majority of the general public
- have significance in the history of the district or county as a whole

9. The Scheme will be publicised via the Council's website and magazine.
10. Decisions would be made by the same committee that manages Blue Plaques in Cambridge City, whose area of operation would be expanded to cover South Cambridgeshire. The Blue Plaques Committee has recently become part of Cambridge Past, Present and Future. South Cambridgeshire District Council would appoint an official representative, elected from amongst its District Councillors as an appointment to an outside body, but the Blue Plaques Committee would be able to co-opt other persons living in South Cambridgeshire
11. The costs of the scheme are limited; the aim wherever possible is that each plaque is self-funded, (usually given from the building owner, relative of the person commemorated, or related organisation). Annual funding of £1000 is recommended.

### **Options**

12. The following options are suggested:
  - (a) To do nothing
  - (b) To extend the existing scheme into South Cambridgeshire, as recommended above.
  - (c) To set up our own independent scheme.
13. The proposal offers an opportunity to working with local partners to recognise significant people and events from within our district, without undue expense and resource, which setting up our own independent scheme would inevitably involve.

### **Implications**

14. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

### **Financial**

15. The costs of the scheme are limited. Annual funding of £1,000 is recommended which the Council may review in future years at its discretion. This would come from within existing budgets.

16. This funding would need to be reserved by the Committee solely for use within the District for the purposes of creating the design and any needed first plaque or prototype, essential maintenance of existing plaques or the creation of new plaques as a last resort, should it not be possible to obtain full funding for a given plaque from a building owner, relative of the person commemorated, or related organisation

***Legal***

17. None, relevant permissions would be sought and be the responsibility of the CPPF.

***Staffing***

18. The proposal will have limited implications for staff resources, a supporting liaison role will be provided from the Consultancy team initially pending the shared planning service.

***Risk Management***

19. It is envisaged that the risks to Council would be minimal. The scheme has been successfully operating locally for over 15 years, it will be administered by CPPF with oversight and decisions being made by a dedicated committee to which the Council would nominate a Member.

***Equality and Diversity***

20. Nominations can be made by any member of the public.

***Climate Change***

21. None.

**Consultation responses**

22. No formal consultation has been undertaken.

**Effect on Strategic Aims**

**Aim 1 – Corporate Aims**

23. Living Well – the scheme will celebrate people from within our community or events that have taken place within South Cambridgeshire, that have made a difference either locally or nationally.

**Background Papers**

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/26/section/93>

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