

<b>CABINET</b>	<b>DATE</b> 20 October 2021	<b>ITEM NO</b> 10
<b>TITLE</b> Statues, streets and monuments review	<b>WARD (S)</b> All	
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b> Director of Communities and Environment	<b>CABINET MEMBER</b> Culture and Communities	
<b>DECISION CLASSIFICATION</b> Key  Forward Plan 17/09/2021  Non-exempt report Non-exempt appendix	<b>IS THE FINAL DECISION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT TO BE MADE AT THIS MEETING?</b>  Yes	

1. **Decision required**

This report makes the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- 1.1. Note the review of statues, street names and monuments owned by the Royal Borough of Greenwich undertaken by Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust.
- 1.2. Note that the review has not unearthed any evidence of any historic statues, street names or monuments on land owned by the Royal Borough of Greenwich which fail to represent our values of inclusivity, equality and justice.
- 1.3. Note new guidelines from central government in altering statues, street names and monuments.
- 1.4. Note the Royal Borough of Greenwich already has good internal processes for commissioning statues, street names and monuments in partnership with Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust.
- 1.5. Agree to develop a new process for reviewing any historic statues, street names or monuments, where complaints have been received and new evidence has been provided to back up them up.
- 1.6. Agree for the Lead Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Equalities to write to other local institutions to share our findings and encourage them to undertake similar reviews.

## 2. **Links to the Royal Greenwich high level objectives**

2.1 This report relates to the Council's agreed high-level objectives as follows:

- A Great Place to Grow Up
- A Great Place to Be
- A Strong Vibrant and Well-run Borough

2.2 By reviewing the borough's statues, street names and monuments to determine if they are appropriate, we are ensuring that the voices of all our communities are heard in how Royal Greenwich is run. Being included in how the place you call home presents itself makes that place a better place to grow up and live in.

## 3. **Purpose of Report**

3.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a review of the borough's statues, street names and monuments in the context of links to slavery and the exploitation of black and minority ethnic people throughout history.

3.2 It is critical to communities across the borough that this report has been produced as the issue of statues, street names and monuments is of national, if not international importance in recognising the histories and experiences of all people who have suffered from exploitation. This report is part of the council's duty to listen to the concerns of residents and to make Royal Greenwich a place where everyone can live comfortably.

3.3 The decisions required will have a significant impact on residents of the borough because of the national context in which review has taken place and because the report provides learning and advice on taking this work forward.

## 4. **Introduction and Background**

4.1 The Royal Borough of Greenwich is one of the most diverse boroughs in London and the UK. As an organisation, we are committed to ensuring our borough is inclusive and that all our different communities feel

welcome and that they belong. We recognise an important way of fostering this is understanding our heritage and local history.

- 4.2 Following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 and the global Black Lives Matter movement, the Royal Borough of Greenwich commissioned Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust (RGHT) to undertake a review of our statues, monuments and use of naming in the public realm.
- 4.3 The purpose of this review has been to help us understand and provide a shared learning of the historical context of our statues, monuments and use of names. Also, to understand whether these sites or terms are connected to or glorify our colonial history, in particular slavery.
- 4.4 National context
- 4.5 Reviews of statues, monuments and naming in the public realm has been a prominent national debate over the past year, following the Black Lives Matter movement and high-profile toppling of the Edward Colston statue.
- 4.6 The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have provided refreshed guidelines on the process for removing statues and monuments and re-naming. Additionally, in June 2021, new statutory regulations were introduced to amend permitted development rights in order to give legal protection to all historic statues, plaques and other monuments irrespective of whether or not they are listed as being of historic significance by Historic England. As a result of the amended regulations, full planning permission is now required to remove all historic statues, plaques and other monuments, making it difficult to take down controversial monuments.
- 4.7 In considering any planning application to remove a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument (whether a listed building or not), local planning authorities should have regard to the Government's policy on heritage – summarised as “retain and explain”, meaning historic statues and other commemorative structures will only be removed in the most exceptional circumstances. Historic statues, plaques, memorials and monuments may not be removed before a decision on the planning application is made.

- 4.8 This has been introduced through new legal protections by MHCLG, a summary of these by MHCLG includes:
- New legal safeguards introduced for historic monuments at risk of removal
  - Removal of all historic statues, plaques and other monuments will now require full planning permission (see paragraph 4.6 above), ensuring due process and local consultation in every case
  - The law will make clear that historic monuments should be retained and explained
  - The Secretary of State is able to “call in” any application and ensure the law is followed
  - The most significant new protection for England’s heritage since the 1967 Civic Amenities Act established Conservation Areas
  - Measures build on proposals that embed beauty, design and quality in England’s planning system for the first time
- 4.9 In addition to new legal measures and guidance from MHCLG and DCMS, Historic England has developed advice and guidance on how local authorities should make decisions on so-called ‘contested heritage’. MHCLG and DCMS advise local authorities to use this guidance (<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/planning-system/contested-heritage-listed-building-decisions>).
- 4.10 The checklist is intended to help planning authorities identify and assess relevant considerations in contested heritage cases when carrying out their planning functions, and make a decision in the wider public interest in accordance with legislation and policy – including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on heritage sites, including statues, monuments, buildings and street names.
- 4.11 Regional context
- 4.12 The Mayor of London has set up a Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm.
- 4.13 It describes its role as:
- The commission will review what currently makes up London’s public realm, discuss what legacies should be celebrated, and make a series of recommendations that will help to establish best practice.

- It will focus on increasing representation among Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, women, LGBTQ+ and disabled groups, as well as those from a range of social and economic backgrounds.
  - It will work alongside a Borough Working Group of local councils, and a Partners Board, including ActionSpace, Art Fund, English Heritage and Shape Arts, Arts Council England, Black Cultural Archives, Historic England and Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts).
  - The Commission is not being established to preside over the removal of statues.
- 4.14 No definite timeframe for deliverables has been published, with the original report to the Mayor suggesting phase one would be complete by the end of March. However, no details of what this phase incorporated were included.
- 4.15 Other London councils have also launched reviews.
- 4.16 On the 1 September 2020 City of London launched a public consultation around the public monuments within the ‘Square Mile’ which received 1,500 responses. As a result, the City of London Corporation’s Policy and Resources Committee decided to remove statues of two prominent figures with links to the Transatlantic slave trade. A working group to oversee the removal of the statues and the works that could replace them was set up and the City is also consider commissioning a new memorial to the slave trade.
- 4.17 Several other councils, including Hackney, Islington, Camden, Lambeth and Southwark have launched reviews.
- 4.18 The Labour Party also promised that all its councils would conduct reviews.
- 4.19 In Tower Hamlets this led to the removal of a statue of Robert Milligan in West India Quay.
- 4.20 Local context
- 4.21 As a local planning authority, the Royal Borough of Greenwich has clear processes in place for street naming and the requirements for this, details of which are available on the Council’s website at:

[https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200199/street\\_naming\\_and\\_numbering/85/apply\\_to\\_alter\\_a\\_street\\_name\\_or\\_address](https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200199/street_naming_and_numbering/85/apply_to_alter_a_street_name_or_address)

- 4.22 As a planning authority, the Royal Borough of Greenwich will be subject to new legal measures recently put in place described in the national context summary earlier in this document.
- 4.23 Renaming a street is a chargeable service of £495 although it is free to apply. Names must be chosen from the approved names list ([https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/downloads/download/561/approved\\_names\\_list](https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/downloads/download/561/approved_names_list) ). This list has drawn heavily from the borough's rich military heritage, with a specific focus on the names of veterans from the local community who were killed during WWI. The Council recognises that this has resulted in a list of largely white British males. In consultation with the London Fire Brigade, Officers in DRES have been working to redress and this and promoting names of notable females and those from a diverse/BAME background.
- 4.24 The review
- 4.25 The full review in relation to land owned by the Council can be found in Appendix A.
- 4.26 RGHT has brought together and catalogued a comprehensive and centralised index of:
- Statues and monuments (Chapter 1)
  - Street names (Chapter 2)
  - Museum collections (Chapter 3)
  - The Built environment (Chapter 4)
- 4.27 The index has focused on the local context in the Royal Borough of Greenwich and has been developed using national research such as:
- University College London (UCL) Legacies of British Slave-ownership project database
  - National Trust's Interim report on the Connections between Colonialism and Properties
  - Historic England research audit of The Transatlantic Slave Economy and England's Built Environment
- 4.28 The review is a comprehensive resource to help us, and our communities, understand and learn more about our heritage and local

history. Centralising and indexing this information will help to facilitate learning and make our heritage and history more accessible.

#### 4.29 Statues and monuments – Chapter 1

An index of statues and monuments which are in the ownership of the Council. The index includes the location, ward, owner, age, description and image for each statue and monument. War memorials were not included in the review as they are unlikely to present contested histories and are primarily a memorial to local men who lost their lives in the first and second world wars. Many local families still have a direct connection to the names listed there.

#### 4.30 Street names – Chapter 2

The index on street names includes information about how the Council and RGHT have worked together for over 10 years to research suitable names for new roads and buildings in the borough to be incorporated in the Council's Approved List of Names.

An index of street names provides oversight and cross-referencing with UCL's database to help understand our local street names connections to colonialism and slavery. This is clearly organised and includes notes and descriptions accompanying the street names to provide further understanding and context.

#### 4.31 Museum collections and the Built environment – Chapters 3 and 4

These chapters provide further information on work taking place by RGHT, the Royal Borough of Greenwich and other local groups to understand the history and potential links to colonialism.

#### 4.32 Chapters 5 and 6 also offer useful learning and information about activities across the borough.

#### 4.33 Contentious figures

#### 4.34 With a long maritime history in the borough, and a history of colonialism in the UK, it is inevitable that historical figures remembered in our statues, street names and monuments will have links to slavery and the exploitation of minorities.

#### 4.35 However, the RGHT review does not identify any direct slave traders. This is not to say that these historical figures are not responsible for

actions that would be unacceptable in modern times or that do not need to be included in the retelling of their histories.

4.36 The Council has not received any direct complaints about street names, statues or monuments. However, we have publicly said (11 June 2020) that a review and consultation would take place - [https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/news/article/1640/royal\\_greenwich\\_to\\_review\\_statues\\_monuments\\_and\\_historic\\_figures](https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/news/article/1640/royal_greenwich_to_review_statues_monuments_and_historic_figures) - saying “we will work with residents and partners to develop a way forward”.

4.37 The way forward

4.38 Bearing in mind government guidance, the direction of ‘retain and explain’ it would be unwise for the Council to develop a project aimed at replacing or renaming items. In addition, the review has not identified any statues, street names or monuments of concern on land owned by the Council.

4.39 The Royal Borough of Greenwich already has good internal processes in place for commissioning statues, street names and monuments in partnership with the RGHT.

4.40 It is proposed that this internal process is built on, that the Royal Borough of Greenwich develops a new process for reviewing any historic statues, street names or monuments, where complaints have been received and new evidence has been provided to back up them up as described in option 2.

## 5.0 **Available options**

### 5.1 **Option 1**

Do nothing. Nothing changes and the Council is exposed to criticism about lack of action (despite committing to action) and not caring about all its diverse communities equally.

### 5.2 **Option 2**

Develop a new process for reviewing historic statues, street names and monuments following complaints from members of the public.

- 5.3 Such complaints must be clearly evidenced by the person or organisation submitting the complaint in order to be considered. Any decisions made in relation to the complaint would be in line with government guidelines.
- 5.4 Establish a panel to review complaints and commit resources to facilitate this at least once per year.
- 5.5 Consult with the public on this approach and the composition of panel membership.
- 5.6 Ensure any new naming follows the national policy context and that appropriate processes and considerations are undertaken to mitigate future issues as much as possible.
- 5.7 Agree for the Lead Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Equalities to write to other local institutions noted in the report to share the findings and encourage them to undertake similar reviews.
- 5.8 The advantage of this option is that it builds on guidance from Historic England and new government guidelines on undertaking good public engagement on decisions for our public realm. It also means that we have a process in place to respond to complaints fairly and transparently with our communities.
- 5.9 In addition, it enables us to have stronger links across our borough for understanding our shared local history and context.

## 6. **Preferred option**

- 6.1 The preferred option is to explore Option 2, developing the described process for reviewing historic statues, street names and monuments with members of the public and an independent panel, where complaints have been received and new evidence provided.

## 7. **Reasons for recommendations**

- 7.1 Option 2, developing a new process for reviewing historic statues, street names and monuments with members of the public and an independent panel, where complaints have been received and which provide new evidence, will enable the Royal Borough of Greenwich to respond to complaints fairly and transparently with their communities.

7.2 It will help to build on our good, existing internal process and ensure we are in line with new guidelines from central government.

**8. Consultation results**

8.1 There is no statutory duty to consult and none has taken place to date however the outcomes of the review will help to determine what consultation is required in the future.

8.2 The results of the review in respect of public realm owned by the Council are available in Appendix A.

**9. Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Legal</b> including Human Rights Act	<p>There are no direct legal implications arising from the report, as the review does not propose that any alterations be made to statues, street names or monuments. However, the Council has a duty to ensure that it complies with its duties under section 149 Equality Act 2010. This requires the council in exercise of its functions to have due regard to the need to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conducted prohibited under the Act.</li> <li>2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</li> <li>3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it</li> </ol>	<p>Azuka Onuorah Head of Legal Services 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021</p>

	<p>Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard in particular to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic</li> <li>2. take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristics that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.</li> <li>3. encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.</li> </ol> <p>The review assists the Council with demonstrating its discharge of duty.</p>	
<b>Finance</b> and other resources	<p>The report makes a number of recommendations to the Decision Maker and these are detailed at 1.1 – 1.6 of this report.</p> <p>There are no direct financial implications arising from any of the recommendations being made.</p>	<p>Joanne Stark Accountancy Business Change Manager 02.07.2021</p>
<b>Equalities</b>	<p>Decision-makers are reminded of the requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty (s149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other</p>	<p><i>Sarah Abley Head of Communications and Culture</i></p>

	<p>conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper could directly impact on end users by perpetuating historical discrimination and not recognising past exploitation as a valid part of history. The impact has been analysed and varies between groups of people depending whether the exploitation is directly linked to their ancestors/heritage. This report seeks to recognise and discover where exploitation is being inappropriately commemorated via the names or images of those historically involved. This aligns with every commitment to make a real difference in the Equality and Equity Charter and fulfils our organisational commitment to promoting equality and equity.</p>	
<b>Climate change</b>	<i>This is not relevant to the climate change agenda</i>	<i>Sarah Abley Head of Communications and Culture</i>

## 10. **Report Appendices**

10.1 The following documents are to be published with and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Review of statues, monuments and the public realm in the ownership of the Royal Borough of Greenwich

## 11.0 **Background Papers**

Government announcement of new legal powers around the removal of statues and monuments:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-legal-protection-for-england-s-heritage>

Royal Borough of Greenwich street naming process:

[https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200199/street\\_naming\\_and\\_numbering/85/apply\\_to\\_alter\\_a\\_street\\_name\\_or\\_address](https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200199/street_naming_and_numbering/85/apply_to_alter_a_street_name_or_address)

Royal Borough of Greenwich approved names list

[https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/downloads/download/561/approved\\_names\\_list](https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/downloads/download/561/approved_names_list)

Royal Borough of Greenwich announcement of review and residents' consultation

[https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/news/article/1640/royal\\_greenwich\\_to\\_review\\_statues\\_monuments\\_and\\_historic\\_figures](https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/news/article/1640/royal_greenwich_to_review_statues_monuments_and_historic_figures)

Report Authors: Sarah Abley – Head of Culture and Communications  
Tel No. 020 8921 5074  
Email. [sarah.abley@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.abley@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

Reporting to: Stuart Godfrey – AD Corporate and Central Services  
Tel No. 020 8921 5124  
Email. [stuart.godfrey@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.godfrey@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

Chief Officer: Mirsad Bakalovic – Acting Director Communities and Environment  
Tel No. 020 8921 6432  
Email. [mirsad.bakalovic@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:mirsad.bakalovic@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)