

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee – 4  
September 2019

**Subject:** War Memorials

**Report of:** Director of Operations (Highways) and Operations and  
Commissioning Director (Neighbourhoods)

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**Summary**

The report outlines the work that both the Grounds Maintenance team and Public Realm team undertake to both maintain war monuments and manage memorials that are regularly placed around the area.

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**Wards Affected:** All

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## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 There are a number of monuments across the city and there are a number of different owners responsible for maintaining them as they are the responsibility of the owner of the object or the building in which they are situated. The total number of War Monuments in Manchester, last confirmed in 2009 through work undertaken by City Galleries, is over 550 and ownership falls across numerous stakeholders including churches, private ownership, Council, other public sector bodies and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

## **2.0 Monument Maintenance**

2.1 Over the last 3 years an asset condition survey has been completed on War Monuments, Heritage Monuments and Public Art across the city, and an improvement programme contract is currently being scoped to address the need to conserve these. This will include both capital conservation works and revenue maintenance works.

2.2 A mini programme of works has been included in the Public Realm AMP programme to be undertaken for 2019 / 2020. The War Monuments included in this programme are:

- Tree of Remembrance (Piccadilly Gardens)
- The Blackley Angel (Boggart Hole Clough)
- Cenotaph (including lighting works)

The details of the proposed works have been sent through to the Urban Conservation Officer (Planning) for comment. All work methodologies will be agreed in advance of any conservation works starting.

2.3 There are two main sources of funding available for the repair, maintenance and engagement of war monuments, the National Lottery Heritage Fund ([www.heritagefund.org.uk](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk)) and The War Memorials Trust ([www.warmemorials.org/grants](http://www.warmemorials.org/grants)) both grant sources are subject to a strict criteria and bidding process and are open to anyone to apply; individuals or organisations including councils. The Public Realm Team currently has had six applications rejected as ineligible for funding. Two applications were rejected because they were not deemed as war memorials and four applications were rejected as they did not fit the eligibility criteria funding for stone cleaning. Eleven are at pre application stage to determine what works could be funded and four where works have been accepted as meeting the criteria. Quotes are being obtained from Halcyon Conservation and CBS Conservation to submit the applications to the Trust for approval by the end of August. Further applications have not yet been considered as there is an oversubscription nationally for the available grants. The focus has been on applications for the monuments requiring key conservation works.

2.4 The Cenotaph is probably the most high profile of all the War Monuments and is maintained on a regular basis particularly in readiness for Remembrance Sunday. Specialist conservation cleaning is undertaken on an annual basis

which can alternate between a full clean of all walls, seating, raised sections and upright structures, to a lesser flooring, walls and seating areas clean. This is undertaken generally to ensure it is completed prior to Remembrance Sunday. Other additional cleaning has been undertaken in readiness for recent high profile commemorative services such as Somme, Manchester Hill, Armed Forces Day, or as a consequence of damage.

- 2.5 The Public Realm Team work closely with Neighbourhood Teams to assist interest / friends groups to undertake improvements to War Monuments. Some examples include:-

Through working with the South Neighbourhood Team and the Royal British Legion, Northenden Branch funding was recently secured by them to install a noticeboard at the Northenden War Monument and Didsbury Civic Society raised funding to have the Didsbury War Memorial cleaned last year.

The Public Realm Team supported the Central Neighbourhood Team who worked with Walking with the Wounded and Keep Britain Tidy to launch their joint campaign on 04 April 2018 to encourage veterans to organise local clean up events.

Work with the North Neighbourhood Team allowed for conservation works to be undertaken to the Arbor Day Blackley Municipal School Memorial in David Lewis Park. Work is also in progress with City Co to develop and launch a guide for businesses who wish to become involved in cleaning the local environment including monuments and war memorials.

Additional engagement work will be undertaken with the North and Central Neighbourhood Team in regard to the Public Realm AMP Programme for 19/20 with a view to identifying any existing or exploring the potential to establish 'Friends of Groups' or 'Adoption Groups'.

- 2.6 The Public Realm Team will develop this further and work with the Neighbourhood Teams and Central Communications Team to develop a community engagement plan to ensure community groups are fully able to understand how they can be involved in the conservation, repair, maintenance and enhancement of War Monuments and to raise awareness of these and the stories and people they commemorate. This will include information on the monuments that are the Council's responsibility, their listed status, Planning requirements and limitations, planned conservation and maintenance programme, funding opportunities that are available, grant funding already secured or rejected and information sources for non-Council owned monuments.
- 2.7 The Public Realm Team also works with Historic England when requests are made to change the status of a war memorial such as the two recent upgrades from unlisted status to grade II Listed for Northenden War Memorial in May 2016 and more recently for the Gorton and Abbey Hey District memorial late last year.

2.8 The Public Realm Inspectors undertake regular inspections of the Cenotaph and a monthly inspection of the city centre War Monuments. The remaining war monuments, outside of the city centre are not currently inspected by the Public Realm Team nor are any private, church, or other public sector body owned memorials.

### **3.0 Memorial Maintenance**

3.1 The grounds maintenance team are responsible for the maintenance of MCC public green space within the city (excludes cemeteries). Each memorial location, whether within a green space such as the Ardwick Green Memorial, or as a stand alone location, such as the Northenden War Memorial has an agreed approach to maintenance of the surrounding green space. Works will include the maintenance of trees, shrubbery, cutting of grass and planting programmes. Floral tributes left at these locations are removed at an appropriate time and disposed of. It is proposed in future where practical to send these items for composting.