

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-024-2019/20
Date of meeting: 6th January 2020



Portfolio: Community & Partnerships – Cllr N Bedford

Subject: Epping Forest Holocaust Memorial

Responsible Officer: Gill Wallis (01992 564557).

Democratic Services: A Hendry (01992 564243).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That Cabinet agrees to grant a long lease of 125 years at a peppercorn rent for the demised area of 14.1m x 6m = 84.6m² (911 sq.ft.) at Traps Hill, Loughton, to the Epping Forest Holocaust Educational Trust for the purpose of the erection of a Holocaust Memorial for the district.

Executive Summary:

At the Full Council meeting on 31st July 2018, the following motion was passed; “That the Leader of Council appoint the relevant Portfolio Holder to secure an official holocaust memorial within our district and brings forwards a proposal (after working with the mover and seconder of this motion) to a future Cabinet meeting.”

In October 2018 an Epping Forest Holocaust Memorial Working Group was established and significant work undertaken to identify a suitable site for a holocaust memorial for the district. Following careful analysis, a site in Traps Hill, Loughton (as identified in Appendix A) was identified as the most appropriate. Proximity to Loughton Library and the opportunity to establish a small educational facility within the library over time, along with historical links to Holmehurst hostel in Loughton where holocaust survivors were sent in 1945 were key contributing factors in the selection of the proposed site.

An Epping Forest Holocaust Educational Trust is currently being established and the Trust would oversee the design and implementation of the memorial, subject to consultation and securing planning permission, as appropriate. The Trust would be responsible for the long-term maintenance of the site and the memorial itself.

Approval is sought from Cabinet that Epping Forest District Council grant a long lease of 125 years at a peppercorn rent for the demised area of 14.1m x 6m = 84.6m² (911 sq.ft.) to the Epping Forest Holocaust Educational Trust.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

Epping Forest District Council is committed to supporting the establishment of a holocaust memorial for the district.

Detailed work has been undertaken by an Epping Forest Holocaust Memorial Working Group to identify the most suitable site for the memorial. The Traps Hill site in Loughton has been selected due to historical links to this part of the district and the potential to develop an educational resource in the adjacent library.

Other Options for Action:

Cabinet do not grant the proposed lease at Traps Hill, Loughton to the Epping Forest Holocaust Educational Trust for the establishment of a holocaust memorial for the district.

Report:

1. At the Full Council meeting on 31st July 2018, the following motion was passed; "That the Leader of Council appoint the relevant Portfolio Holder to secure an official holocaust memorial within our district and brings forwards a proposal (after working with the mover and seconder of this motion) to a future Cabinet meeting."
2. In October 2018 an Epping Forest Holocaust Memorial Working Group was established. The Working Group is predominantly made up of members of the local community, including representatives from the Chabad Lubavitch of Buckhurst Hill Synagogue. The Working Group is Chaired and Vice Chaired by Cllr Gavin Chambers and Cllr Howard Kauffmann respectively. The then Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Communities, Cllr Helen Kane, regularly attended early meetings in the capacity of observer.
3. Following Portfolio Holder changes at Epping Forest District Council over the ensuing period, both Cllr Sam Kane and Cllr Nigel Bedford have retained a watching brief in respect of the progress of the Working Group in order to bring forward a proposal to Cabinet regarding the memorial.
4. In their efforts to identify and secure a suitable site for the memorial, the Working Group considered options in North Weald, Chigwell and Loughton. The consensus, following careful analysis, was that a site on Traps Hill, Loughton (as identified in Appendix A) would be the most appropriate. A key element of this decision being its proximity to Loughton Library, and the opportunity to establish a small educational facility within the library over time.
5. Establishing the holocaust memorial in Loughton also resonated with the Working Group due to the historical links to this part of the district. A number of holocaust survivors were sent to the Holmehurst hostel in Loughton following the liberation of concentration camps in 1945. Indeed, to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of Second World War, Epping Forest District Museum will host an exhibition in 2020 exploring the stories of holocaust survivors sent to Holmehurst hostel. The exhibition will be curated by a member of the Epping Forest Holocaust Memorial Working Group, Ellis Spicer, PhD Candidate and CHASE-DTP Scholar from the University of Kent, Centre for the History of War, Media and Society.
6. Representatives from the Working Group have liaised closely with the District Council's Estates Team in order to determine the suitability of the Traps Hill site for the proposed memorial. Loughton Town Council has also been consulted regarding the erection of the memorial due to its proximity to Town Council land and its adjacent playground.

Loughton Town Council has subsequently confirmed that it has no objection to the memorial being sited at Traps Hill.

7. The Working Group is currently in the process of setting up a charitable trust and has confirmed that all funding is in place to achieve this. The Epping Forest Holocaust Educational Trust (EFHET) will have seven Trustees and the President will be Gavin Chambers.

8. Approval is sought from Cabinet that Epping Forest District Council grant a long lease of 125 years at a peppercorn rent for the demised area of 14.1m x 6m = 84.6m² (911 sq.ft.) to the Epping Forest Holocaust Educational Trust. Access to the site would be to the rear of Loughton Library, as the land directly in front of the proposed memorial is owned by the City of London. This replicates the access already granted to Loughton Town Council for the playground area directly behind the proposed site. The maintenance of the memorial and area would be the responsibility of the Epping Forest Holocaust Educational Trust. If Cabinet approval is granted, detailed Heads of Terms will be drafted and solicitors instructed accordingly.

9. Having secured Cabinet approval for the land at Traps Hill, the Epping Forest Holocaust Educational Trust intend to identify, shortlist and commission a memorial designer and commence the next stage of the initiative, undertaking consultation and securing the relevant planning permission as appropriate.

Resource Implications:

No specific resource implications

Legal and Governance Implications:

None

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None

Consultation Undertaken:

The Epping Forest Holocaust Memorial Working Group has consulted with Loughton Town Council in respect of the proposed site at Traps Hill, Loughton.

The Epping Forest Holocaust Educational Trust would be responsible for all consultation in relation to the proposed holocaust memorial.

Background Papers:

None

Risk Management:

None

