

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 2 November 2015

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Policy and Resources
<b>Subject:</b>	Fareham/Vannes Twinning - Anniversary Sculpture
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Finance and Resources
<b>Strategy/Policy:</b>	N/A
<b>Corporate Objective:</b>	Strong and inclusive communities

**Purpose:**

To propose an alternative location and design for the sculpture and explanatory plaque being commissioned to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning between Fareham and Vannes.

**Executive summary:**

On 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015, the Executive considered a report outlining proposals for how the Borough Council might wish to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning between Fareham and Vannes. As a result of the discussion, members requested that officers review the location of the commemorative sculpture and consider possible changes to the design.

As a result of the review it is proposed that the commemorative sculpture be located in Westbury Manor Gardens and that the explanatory plaque, an integral part of the sculpture, is redesigned to include both town crests and images of sailing to reflect the original links between the two areas that resulted in the twinning arrangement.

**Recommendations:**

That the Executive approves:

- (a) that the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary sculpture is installed in Westbury Manor Gardens, with the Civic Gardens being held as a 'reserve' site; and
- (b) that the design of the explanatory plaque is changed to include both town crests and sailing images.

**Reason:**

To locate the sculpture in a more central position within Fareham Town Centre, and to take account of some of the historical background to the twinning arrangement.

**Cost of proposals:**

Costs were previously reported to the Executive on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

**Appendices:**            **A: Design of Explanatory Plaque - to be tabled**  
                                 **B: Proposed Locations**

**Background papers:**   **None**

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

<b>Date:</b>	2 November 2015
<b>Subject:</b>	Fareham/Vannes Twinning - Anniversary Sculpture
<b>Briefing by:</b>	Director of Finance and Resources
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Policy and Resources

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this report is to propose an alternative location and design for the sculpture and explanatory plaque being commissioned to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning between Fareham and Vannes.

#### BACKGROUND

2. At the last meeting of the Executive, members considered a report outlining proposals for how the Borough Council might wish to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The report proposed an event in September 2016, whereby guests would be invited from Vannes Council to watch a Freedom March by HMS Collingwood followed by the unveiling of a commemorative sculpture in the Sensory Garden of Reflection to mark the occasion.
3. During the debate, some reservations were expressed regarding the proposed location and design of the sculpture. Members felt that the Sensory Garden of Reflection, whilst an attractive and tranquil setting, was too far away from the main footfall within the Town Centre. It was also suggested that the design of the sculpture might be amended to reflect the maritime links between the twin towns, including the display of both town crests.
4. The Executive approved:-
  - (a) the production and installation of a sculpture to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning between Fareham and Vannes, subject to a further report to consider the location and design of the sculpture;
  - (b) that an unveiling ceremony takes place, with a contingent from Vannes attending as guests of honour;
  - (c) the proposal that HMS Collingwood carry out a Freedom March as part of the event; and
  - (d) a budget of £25,600 for the proposed sculpture and event.

5. This report seeks to address the issues detailed in 4(a) above.

## **LOCATION**

6. Having reviewed possible alternative locations for the commemorative sculpture and explanatory plaque in Fareham Town Centre, there appear to be three options for consideration:-
  - Westbury Manor Gardens
  - Civic Gardens
  - West Street Pedestrian Area
7. A number of sculptures are already located within West Street Pedestrian Area. These include the Henry Cort Exhibition and the World War 1 Commemoration. Whilst it would be possible to add a further sculpture within this area, there are potential implications for the layout of the market stalls and the impact on shop fronts. Given the significant number of sculptures already located in West Street, it is suggested that it might be better to install the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary sculpture in an alternative place, to help spread public art over a wider area of the Town Centre.
8. The Civic Gardens have a high footfall given the close proximity to Fareham Shopping Centre. As the sculpture is being commissioned to reflect the civic links between the twin towns, the location is appropriate as it would be adjacent to the Borough Council's offices. Space, however, is limited and it is important to recognise that the shape of the Civic Gardens might be affected by forthcoming proposals for the regeneration of the Town Centre. The Civic Gardens remain a feasible "reserve" option.
9. The preferred location would be Westbury Manor Gardens. The footfall is reasonably high, as it sits adjacent to the main Bus Station, and the location is central. Members will be aware that plans are being developed, in partnership with the Hampshire Cultural Trust, to redesign Westbury Manor Museum. There is a possibility that the Gardens might need to be redesigned as part of these plans but it is felt that the proposed location of the sculpture is a suitable distance from the Westbury Manor building to remain unaffected by any changes.
10. It is therefore proposed that the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary sculpture is installed in Westbury Manor Gardens, with the Civic Gardens being held as a 'reserve' site should the Museum Gardens need a major redesign. Appendix B includes images of the proposed locations for the sculpture at both sites.

## **DESIGN**

11. Public Art will, by its very nature, have different meanings to different people. Some people prefer a more traditional approach whilst others prefer a modern style which is more open to interpretation. There is no right or wrong answer.
12. When commissioning public art it is important to allow the artist some "creative licence", resulting in a unique and meaningful piece of artwork. In this case the artist, who also created the Golden Jubilee Gates in Market Quay, and the World War 1 Commemoration in West Street, has explained the rationale for his design as follows:-

"The trunk is in two intertwining halves, representing the two towns and both the bond and the friendship that has developed over 50 years. The two trunks narrow and divide

into five branches on each, representing each decade of the twinning and have gilded spheres at the ends. The sculpture sits firmly on its solid stone base, symbolising that the twinning of the two towns will last well into the future”.

13. It was suggested at the Executive meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October that the design might be amended to include the crests of the twin towns as well as some reference to the sailing links which sat at the heart of the original twinning decision. Given the rationale set out above, it would be difficult to amend the design of the sculpture without starting with a completely clean sheet. Such an exercise would have a cost and, as is the case with the current design, there is no guarantee that the final design would be acceptable to everyone.
14. As an alternative approach, it is therefore suggested that the design of the explanatory plaque is changed to include both crests and sailing images. An example of the proposed design is included in Appendix A. The plaque will form an integral part of the sculpture by being included within its base. It is felt that such an approach could combine both the traditional and modern outlook to public art whilst not interfering with the unique design that the artist has presented.
15. Due to the change of location the height of the sculpture will be adjusted to ensure that it is consistent with its surroundings.

#### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

16. At the previous meeting of the Executive, a depute raised concerns about the safety of the sculpture as well as the potential for vandalism.
17. The Council is responsible for a significant number of sculptures, street furniture and play equipment across the Borough and takes its health and safety responsibilities very seriously. The sculpture could not be installed without meeting stringent safety checks and would be inspected on a regular basis to ensure that it remained safe.
18. With regard to potential vandalism, the Council has not experienced any significant levels of vandalism with any pieces of public art in the Borough and there is no reason to believe that the new sculpture is any more susceptible than the rest. There is a danger of developing a very bland streetscape, and an unattractive borough, if the fear (rather than the reality) of vandalism is central to the decision making process.

#### **CONCLUSION**

19. On 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015, the Executive considered a report outlining proposals for how the Borough Council might wish to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning between Fareham and Vannes. As a result of the discussion, members requested that officers review the location of the commemorative sculpture and consider possible changes to the design to include the two town crests and images of sailing.
20. As a result of the review it is proposed that the commemorative sculpture be located in Westbury Manor Gardens and that the explanatory plaque, an integral part of the sculpture, is redesigned to include both town crests and images of sailing to reflect the original links between the two areas that resulted in the twinning arrangement.