



City of Westminster

Cabinet Member Report

Decision Maker:	Cabinet Member for Sports, Culture & Community
Date:	25 September 2019
Classification:	For general release
Title:	Commemorative Green Plaque to Sir Alan Dawtry CBE TD at Pimlico underground station
Wards Affected:	Tachbrook
Key Decision:	No
Financial Summary:	The Green Plaque scheme is funded by sponsorship, which has been secured for this plaque
Report of:	Richie Gibson, Head of City Promotions, Events and Filming

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Sir Alan Dawtry (1915-2018) was one of the most influential figures in local government. He was Town Clerk, then Chief Executive, of Westminster City Council, from 1956 to 1977. He was rated by one of his successors “the last of the great patrician town clerks who commanded their councils and were held in awe by their members”.
- 1.2 With his vast experience, Sir Alan played a major role reforming London’s local government into the 32 London boroughs and City of London, we have today. He was knighted in the 1974 New Year Honours.
- 1.3 Sir Rodney Brooke CBE DL, one of Alan’s successors as Westminster Chief Executive, and the fellow executors of Sir Alan’s estate have nominated a Green Plaque to commemorate his impact on the City of Westminster. When the Victoria Line was being extended to Brixton, Sir Alan was particularly proud of his efforts in persuading the government to create an additional station at Pimlico.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the nomination for a Green Plaque to commemorate Sir Alan Dawtry, former Chief Executive of Westminster City Council is approved.

3. Reasons for decision

- 3.1 Sir Alan Dawtry CBE TD was a local government official of the highest order. With his vast experience, Sir Alan played a major role in reforming London's local government into the 32 London Boroughs and City of London, we have today. He was appointed CBE in 1968 and received a knighthood in 1974 for his service to local government.

4. Policy context

- 4.1 The Green Plaque scheme aims to highlight and improve awareness of Westminster's diverse cultural heritage and social history, provide information for visitors and to create a sense of pride in neighbourhoods.

5. Background

5.1 Early years

- 5.1.1 Alan Dawtry was born in Sheffield, son of Melancthon and Kate Dawtry. He was very proud of his home city, attending King Edward School, before studying at Sheffield University where he graduated head of class. He was following in the footsteps of his mother who was a student at the Sheffield Day Training College, part of University College, Sheffield, which was the precursor of the University.
- 5.1.2 Having qualified as a solicitor, he was appointed to Sheffield City Council as a prosecutor on behalf of the Police and Director of Public Prosecutions. His career was interrupted by the Second World War and as a member of the Territorial Army he was called up immediately. His family had long links to the military and his great grandfather fought at Waterloo and had gone on to guard Napoleon on St. Helena.

5.2 War service

- 5.2.1 While in France, Dawtry's Royal Artillery regiment was ordered back to Britain following the collapse of the French Army. Making their way across country to Cherbourg, Dawtry and his men found only one ship remaining in the harbour with a drunk captain. He arrested the captain, commandeered the vessel and sailed the boat to safety across the Channel.
- 5.2.2 In 1943, Dawtry was fighting in Algeria and Tunisia. Later he took part in the Salerno landings, facing fierce opposition from the 16th Panzer Division. The

following year found him at the equally bloody Anzio landings for which he was awarded the military MBE. He was twice mentioned in dispatches.

5.2.3 Sir Alan ended the war as Lieutenant Colonel on the staff of Field Marshall Alexander. He was in Milan when it was reported to him that the corpses of Mussolini and his mistress were hanging upside down outside a petrol station, on public display. He ordered that the bodies be cut down.

5.3 Local Government service

5.3.1 Returning to Sheffield, to resume his post as Assistant Solicitor (1938-48) after the war, Dawtry later moved on to other municipal appointments. He became Deputy Town Clerk of Bolton (1948-52) and Leicester (1952-54), then Town Clerk of Wolverhampton (1954-56). In 1956 he became Town Clerk of Westminster, later becoming Chief Executive until 1977.

5.3.2 When Dawtry joined Westminster, local government included five counties, three county boroughs and a collection of district councils. Dame Evelyn Sharp, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, was determined to reorganise. As Chief Executive of Westminster, Sir Alan played a major role in the Government's reorganisation process. Leading a small group of officials and in the face of fierce resistance, they fought for the complete reorganisation, overturning a mix of complex structures which had been in place since the 19th century.

5.3.3 The result of the London Government Act of 1963 was the 1965 Greater London Council, together with 32 London Boroughs and the City of London. The newly formed City of Westminster incorporated St. Marylebone and Paddington and Sir Alan spearheaded the new street signs for the enlarged city, in the uniform and elegant Misha Black typeface still used today.

5.3.4 In 1958, Sir Alan introduced parking meters to Britain. He was also largely responsible for the council intervening to save Dolphin Square apartment complex from becoming a hotel in the 1960s. It was because of this that the executors and Lady Dawtry have requested that the proposed plaque is situated on the station underpass nearest to Dolphin Square.

5.3.5 For his distinguished service to local government he was appointed CBE in 1968 and received a knighthood in 1974. In recognition of his key role in the reorganisation, Dawtry became the first secretary of the London Boroughs Association.

5.3.6 Later, in 1974, when a new pattern of local government was established in the rest of the country, Sir Alan joined Sir John Boynton, Chief Executive of Cheshire County Council in forming the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives

(SOLACE) to replace the three previous chief executive associations. He succeeded Boynton as the second President.

5.4 Pimlico underground Station

5.4.1 The Victoria line was planned in the 1960s and was the first entirely new underground line in London for 50 years. It was intended as a connecting line and every station planned on the line had an interchange. The line was completed to Victoria station and was opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 7th March 1969. A 3.5-mile extension from Victoria to Brixton with stations across the Thames at Vauxhall and Stockwell was approved in March 1966. The line opened in July 1971 with no stop at Pimlico.

5.4.2 Meanwhile Sir Alan Dawtry, with the backing of the council, lobbied for the building of a station in Pimlico to serve the people of south Westminster. Sir Alan in person persuaded the then Minister of Transport, Richard Marsh, to approve the building of Pimlico station and ministerial approval was announced on 28 June 1968.

5.4.3 Without Sir Alan's intervention there would have been no station in Pimlico. The station opened on 14 September 1972 – more than a year after the rest of the line had become fully operational.

5.5 Sir Alan Dawtry - the man

5.5.1 Sir Alan was extremely proud of Sheffield University and, as he watched the University grow in size and reputation, supported it through philanthropy as well as attending numerous events and reunions. He also played a role in the celebrations to commemorate the University's centenary in 2005 and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Laws in 2007.

5.5.2 Sir Alan Dawtry died at the age of 102 on the 27th January 2018.

6. Financial implications

6.1 The cost of production, installation and administration will be covered by the sponsor, Sir Rodney Brooke and the fellow executors of Sir Alan's Estate. There is no cost to Westminster City Council.

7. Legal implications

7.1 Listed building consent is not required.

8. Consultation

8.1 Westminster City Council owns the underpass approach to Pimlico station, the proposed location of the Green Plaque. Ward Members have been consulted and no objections have been raised.

If you have any queries about this report, please contact Claire Appleby on 020 7641 3388 or cappleby@westminster.gov.uk.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Location plan of Pimlico Station and ramp, SW1V at 1:1250 scale

Appendix 2

Photo montage showing proposed location of the Green Plaque at the bottom of the ramp leading to the underpass under Bessborough Street into Pimlico Underground Station.

Appendix 3

Wording and layout of the proposed Green Plaque.

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Sports, Culture & Community**

Declaration of Interest

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NAME: **Councillor Iain Bott** _____

State nature of interest if any

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(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **Commemorative Green Plaque to Sir Alan Dawtry CBE TD at Pimlico Underground Station** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed

Cabinet Member for Sports, Culture & Community

Date

If you have any additional comments which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:
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If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Strategic Director Finance and Performance and, if there are resources implications, the Strategic Director of Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy & Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.

