



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Alderman William Russell

The Rt Hon the Lord Mayor of the City of London

Cllr Catherine McGuinness

Chair, Policy and Resources Committee

Cllr Brian Mooney

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Cllr Jeremy Mayhew

Chair, Finance Committee

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP

*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and
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Dear Lord Mayor and Councillors,

PROTECTING HERITAGE IN THE CITY OF LONDON

In recent months, Government colleagues and I have read a number of pronouncements by the City of London on how it may be minded to remove statues and rename street names within your local authority. I understand this stems from a report by a taskforce that is being considered by councillors. Given these matters have attracted national scrutiny and controversy, I thought it may be useful to outline the Government's position and planned changes in legislation which will affect your unique local authority.

In a statement to the House of Commons on 18 January, I outlined a change to national planning policy on the protection of historic statues, plaques, memorials and monuments. This was accompanied by guidance on how the 'call in' criteria will be interpreted, and I also signalled that planning regulations will shortly be amended to bring non-listed works into the planning system. I explained: 'this Government believes it is always right to examine Britain's history, but the removal of statues does harm rather than good. Our aim should be to use heritage to educate people about all aspects of Britain's past'.

On 30 January, my Department also published proposed amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework which will incorporate this change to planning policy into the Framework, to ensure greater clarity for planners. Such a policy position reflects that taken by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, which is the lead department for heritage. This was outlined by DCMS Ministers in Parliament on 25 September 2020. Ministers explained: 'This country has a long and well-established tradition of commemorating its national and local dignitaries with statues... the back story of some of those individuals and their place in history is ridden with moral complexity. Statues and other historical objects were created or obtained by generations with different perspectives and different understandings of right and wrong... the Government want organisations to retain and explain, not remove, our heritage.'

Historic England has provided advice on how local authorities should make decisions on so-called 'contested heritage.' As they assert: "Our stance on historic statues and sites which have become contested is to retain and explain them; to provide thoughtful, long lasting and powerful reinterpretation that responds to their contested history and tells the full story."

These principles similarly apply not just to statues, but other aspects of our heritage, including street names. As a unique local authority with unique status compared to others, I hope you will consider this national advice carefully, given you are seen as a leading authority.

The Corporation of London is itself a product of the City's rich history. It is in the City's own interests that heritage and tradition are given robust protection. I am placing this letter in the public domain, and I hope this feedback is helpful in your careful consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Robert Jenrick.

RT HON ROBERT JENRICK MP