

REPORT TITLE: WINCHESTER FUTURE 50: COMMUNITY CONSERVATION  
AREA MANAGEMENT PROJECT

24 JANUARY 2018

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Councillor Caroline Brook, Portfolio Holder for  
Built Environment

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WARD(S): ALL TOWN WARDS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the Winchester Town Forum that the Historic Environment Team at Winchester City Council have been successful in securing funding from Historic England to undertake a 2-year pilot project to devise and trial a new approach to producing conservation area appraisals and management plans with an emphasis on involving the local community and local amenity groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the project be fully supported.

## IMPLICATIONS:

### 1 COUNCIL STRATEGY OUTCOME

- 1.1 To support Section 6 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 Adopted 2017; Policies CP19 & CP20 Winchester District Joint Core Strategy; and to ensure the policies are robust and fit for purpose.

### 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The total estimated additional costs are £63,641 over the two year project. Funding of £43,380 has been secured from Historic England which leaves £20,261 which is planned to be funded by a forecast 2017/18 general fund budget underspend.
- 2.2 The town account has contributed one-off budget towards Historic Environment project work, with the remaining £13k brought forward into 2017/18. This budget is expected to be fully utilised by the end of 2017/18.

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None

### 4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Grant funding shall cover costs of employing 2 x officers over a 2 year period:  
1 Project Manager at 0.4 of an FTE (full time equivalent)  
1 Project Officer at 0.2 of an FTE (full time equivalent)

### 5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

### 6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 There will be a joint press release with Historic England to advertise the launch of the project.

### 7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 None

### 8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 None

## 9 RISK MANAGEMENT

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<i>Property – N/A</i>		
<i>Community Support N/A</i>		
<i>Timescales – N/A</i>		
<i>Project capacity – N/A</i>		
<i>Financial / VfM – N/A</i>		
<i>Legal – N/A</i>		
<i>Innovation – N/A</i>		
<i>Reputation – N/A</i>		
<i>Other</i>		

## 10 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

### 10.1 2017 celebrates 50 years since the designation of the first Conservation Areas in Britain.

Conservation Areas are designated by Local Planning Authorities and are normally villages or towns, or parts thereof, that are considered by the designating authority to be ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ (Section 69. Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Conservation Areas are normally supported by a conservation area appraisal, which is a document that explains why the area is special, and best practice requires this to be accompanied by a management plan. A conservation area management plan examines what is needed within a given area in order for its special interest to be preserved or enhanced.

Since 2009 Historic England (formerly English Heritage, the public body that looks after and advises on the countries historic environment) has included monitoring the condition of Conservation Areas in their national annual review of Heritage at Risk. The Heritage at Risk programme looks at the condition of heritage assets (including listed buildings, places of worship, registered parks, gardens and battlefields, wreck sites, archaeological sites and conservation areas) and identifies those sites that are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development.

Currently Winchester City Council has 37 Conservation areas designated between the late 1960’s and 1990’s. 17 of the district’s Conservation areas were included on the national At Risk Register in 2017, including the City of Winchester.

There are a variety of reasons why a conservation area can be at risk but it has been highlighted by Historic England that those without up-to date appraisals and/or management plans often suffer the most from inappropriate development, street clutter and lack of enhancement schemes etc. The At Risk surveys have also demonstrated that those Conservation Areas with up-

to-date appraisals and management plans often see improvements which lead to their removal from the At Risk register.

The survey also highlights that where the local community and/or amenity groups are actively involved in the management of Conservation Areas, supported by good liaison with the Local Authority, there is again a marked improvement in these important areas.

An up-to-date appraisal or management plan is defined in Historic England's national guidance on Conservation Areas as one which is 5 years old or less as this is the length of time required to ensure these documents remain current and robust in terms of development management and appraisals. Currently Winchester District has no up-to-date appraisals for our conservation areas and a management plan for only one conservation area which is also out of date. Such documents have previously either been produced in-house by the Historic Environment Team or commissioned from outside consultants; both of these approaches have significant resources, time and cost implications for the Local Authority.

The Town Forum supported extra Historic Environment Officer time to pursue additional funding through the Historic England Capacity Building grant for a pilot project to help address the issue of Conservation Areas at risk in the District and to investigate how best the production of management plans for each of the areas could be facilitated in a cost effective fashion. This has resulted in a successful grant application for a 2 year pilot project.

## 10.2 DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

### Aims of Pilot Project:

The project would begin in early 2018 and evaluate 2 character areas within Winchester City Conservation Area.

Small groups of trained volunteers would help collect the relevant evidence base required to produce a management plan. Each group would focus on a specific theme of a management plan such as, for example, designated heritage assets, listed buildings, memorials, significant character, public realm, buildings at risk etc. These groups, under the guidance of officers, would map, photograph, and in some cases research their specific areas.

This information would be collated and reviewed by Historic Environment Officers and would be used to inform a management plan. The plan would be highly visual; map orientated and web based; and provide relevant up-to-date and easily accessible information.

A portion of the project would also include exploring the facilitation of an existing heritage group to pursue their own funding bid to explore another

potential pilot project; a list of local heritage assets within the Conservation Area boundary (in line with Policy DM31 of the Local Plan).

Projected outcomes:

- Removal of the Winchester City Conservation Area from the national Heritage at Risk register.
- A highly accessible conservation area management plan for central Winchester which would support the role of Development Management and strategic planning and improve customer service.
- Create a legacy of continued input from the themes voluntary groups in terms of regular monitoring, including a 5 yearly update and mentoring of future groups, district wide.
- Facilitate the exploration of potential funding for a local list pilot project by a local group.

Information relating to the historic environment gathered through this process could also potentially be used by other areas of the Council such as Arts and Tourism, Open Spaces, Estates or Enforcement, to support future application for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for specific Historic Environment projects

11 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

11.1 None

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

None

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

None