



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

SCRUTINY COMMISSION 8 October 2020

Wards affected: All Wards

Hinckley & Bosworth Heritage Strategy 2018-2023 Action Plan Update

Report of Director Environment & Planning

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on work undertaken in the last 12 months, including ongoing initiatives, in order to fulfil the aims and objectives of the Action Plan of the Heritage Strategy 2018 – 2023.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Members:
- a. Note and endorse the heritage work undertaken and outcomes achieved.
 - b. Endorse the ongoing work.

3. Background to the report

- 3.1 The Council, on 7 December 2017, approved the adoption of the Heritage Strategy and accompanying action plan.
- 3.2 The purpose of the strategy is to guide conservation and heritage activities in the borough from 2018 to 2023. The vision of the strategy is:
- To increase our understanding and awareness of the borough's heritage with improved accessibility to the historic environment
 - To implement positive action and active management of the borough's heritage to ensure its conservation and enhancement

- To enable an approach of partnership and collaboration where people, groups and communities come together to care for the borough's heritage
- To celebrate and promote the borough's heritage and identity, allowing it to make a difference for people, groups and communities

3.3 To achieve the vision of the strategy there are four aims with associated objectives. The Action Plan identifies key actions, initiatives and interventions to achieve each objective, to be developed and delivered over short (0-1 years), medium (up to 3 years) and long-term (up to 5 years) timeframes. Actions developed and delivered during the last 12 months to meet each of the four aims and associated objective are summarised below, with more detailed information regarding each action available on request.

3.4 **Aim 1 – Increasing understanding and awareness of heritage with improved accessibility**

Summary and Highlights:

- Parish Councils and local heritage groups have identified the heritage of their area as part of a borough wide audit
- An assessment of the accuracy of listed building record entries on Historic England website has commenced
- Awareness of heritage has been improved with the installation of interpretation boards, the installation of a new blue plaques, signage at Hinckley & District Museum and the production of a Rural Heritage Trail
- A successful and expanded Heritage Open Days event took place over two weekends in September 2019
- Informal links have been established with North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College to determine their desire to deliver traditional methods of construction as part of the educational offer on their Building Construction courses. These links are to be taken further through the development of the Hinckley High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)

3.5 **Aim 2- Implement positive action to manage and enhance heritage**

Summary and Highlights:

- Funding from Historic England (c.900k) and the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) (c.500k) was sourced during late 2019 and early 2020 to develop and deliver a c. £1.85m town centre regeneration scheme – The Hinckley High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ). Match funding is also to be provided via others including HBBC and town centre property owners. Further information on the Hinckley Heritage Action Zone is provided in Appendix 1.

- Development of a HBBC Local Heritage List has continued, devised in part conjunction with a number of Neighbourhood Planning Groups
- A Public Realm Strategy for Hinckley town centre has been produced. Public realm contributions were secured during 2019 following market led redevelopment to deliver the new Aldi store with improvements delivered on site along Baptist Walk
- Scoping work has commenced on the production of a HBBC Heritage at Risk Register to identify heritage assets at risk and target remedial actions
- A number of enhancements to the historic environment have been delivered during 2019 via the Environmental Improvement Programme including wall and canal bridge repairs, installation of heritage name plates, war memorial repairs etc.
- Continued support is given to other Council departments in the development and delivery of projects via funding streams including the Parish & Community Initiative Fund and the Developing Communities Fund etc. e.g. Carlton Parish Church extension
- Input was provided to the production of the Good Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document which includes sections on shop front guidance, historic farm building conversion and an assessment of historic character for context
- Professional advice continues to be provided in a timely manner to Development Management, applicants and consultees in response to statutory consultations with sound and high quality decisions issued

3.6 **Aim 3 - Ensure a partnership approach to care for our heritage**

Summary and Highlights:

- Support to Neighbourhood Planning Groups during the development of Plans has been provided to ensure that heritage and the historic environment is adequately planned for at the Neighbourhood level. During the year advice has been provided to Burbage, Desford, Stoke Golding and Witherley Neighbourhood Groups
- A second HBBC Heritage Forum meeting was held in February 2020 to encourage capacity building in the voluntary sector, develop skills and effective means of communication. Members of the forum include Parish Councils, Local Heritage Groups and other heritage stakeholders (e.g. Hinckley & District Museum)
- The latest Leicestershire & Rutland Conservation Officers Forum was held in October 2019 and the HBBC Conservation Officer continues to be the County Representative for the East Midlands branch of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)

- Positive working practices with local heritage stakeholders have been maintained through various means, e.g. delivery of the Heritage Open Days event
- The involvement of the HBBC Heritage Champion in the assessment of blue plaque nominations has provided more scrutiny to the process

3.7 **Aim 4 - The promotion and enjoyment of heritage**

Summary and Highlights:

- The expanded Heritage Open Days 2019 event was utilised to promote heritage to a wide range of audiences
- Successful completion of the Heritage and Culture programme of the North Warwickshire Hinckley & Bosworth Destination Management Plan with a number of initiatives delivered including the Ada Lovelace Exhibition at the Atkins building, a Better Place Better Environment event and the production of the Rural Heritage Trail
- HBBC Conservation Officer support given to the development of the 1485 project, which has the overall vision of installing six sculptures around Bosworth Battlefield to tell the story of the battle
- Funding provided for new signage to Hinckley & District Museum

3.8 There are challenges to the successful delivery of the implementation of the aims and objectives of the Strategy which will need to be carefully monitored and managed. Such challenges include:

- The required focus upon the development and delivery of the Hinckley HAZ during 2020 may lead to difficulties in delivering some short-medium term objectives, e.g. completion of Conservation Area Re-appraisals etc.
- Delivery of some aims and objectives continue to rely on the time and will of the voluntary sector
- Ensuring information on heritage assets is fully up-to-date, accurate and accessible is resource intensive
- The difficulties of obtaining funding from HBBC and other external sources means some aims may not be delivered fully, e.g. acquiring a budget to comprehensively address heritage at risk, securing funding to deliver key elements of the Public Realm Masterplan etc.
- The impact of COVID-19 may be considerable with many possible adverse impacts, e.g. the overall impact upon the economy and the difficulties of public engagement threatens the early development and delivery of the Hinckley HAZ.

4. **Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules**

4.1 The report is to be taken in open session.

5. Financial implications [CS]

- 5.1 The circa £1.85m mentioned in section 3.5 for the HAZ scheme has already been approved. Should any additional funding be required to achieve aims in the strategy, approval will be required in accordance with financial procedure rules.

6. Legal implications [MR]

- 6.1 None

7. Corporate Plan implications

- 7.1 The Heritage Strategy contributes to all three priority ambitions of the Council, in particular:

Places - creating clean and attractive places to live and work

Prosperity – encouraging growth, attracting businesses, improving skills and supporting regeneration

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The Heritage Strategy was subject to public consultation as part of its adoption in 2017 and is published on the council's website.

9. Risk implications

- 9.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.
- 9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.
- 9.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) risks		
Risk description	Mitigating actions	Owner
None		

10. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

- 10.1 It is considered that this report will not have any effect on equality for any of the protected characteristics and therefore no further analysis or action is necessary.

10.2 Projects suggested in the Heritage Strategy generally have a good spread over the whole of the borough and this includes the rural areas.

11. Climate implications

11.1 We consider climate implications in all initiatives related to the Heritage Strategy e.g. the Hinckley Town Centre Public Realm Masterplan promotes improved walking and soft landscaping in the Town Centre Conservation Area, when new heritage lighting is installed this is now done with LED lighting and many projects delivered as part of the Environmental Improvement Programme look to reuse appropriate materials where possible.

12. Corporate implications

12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications – none directly as a result of this report
- Environmental implications – various projects identified in this report will have a positive impact
- ICT implications - none directly as a result of this report
- Asset Management implications - none directly as a result of this report
- Procurement implications - none directly as a result of this report
- Human Resources implications - none directly as a result of this report
- Planning implications – planning matters will be dealt with, when appropriate, through the regeneration projects being brought forward
- Data Protection implications - none directly as a result of this report
- Voluntary Sector – the voluntary sector is supported through a number of initiatives identified in this report

Background papers:

Hinckley & Bosworth Heritage Strategy 2018 - 2023

Hinckley & Bosworth Heritage Strategy 2018 – 2023 Background and Action Plan

Contact officer: Paul Grundy 01455 255671

Executive member: Councillor D Bill

Appendix 1 Hinckley High Street Heritage Action Zone

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has recently received agreement from Historic England to deliver a High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ for short) within Hinckley. The Heritage Action Zone consists of a range of projects worth £1.85million with the aim of using Hinckley's unique historic environment to revitalise the town centre. Projects are to be launched during autumn 2020 with overall completion by the end of March 2024. The Borough Council believe the Heritage Action Zone can play a key role in the economic and social recovery of the town centre following COVID-19.

What is a Heritage Action Zone?

A Heritage Action Zone is a heritage-led regeneration programme designed to secure lasting improvements to our historic high streets and the communities who use them. The zone is located within Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area and comprises of an exciting and innovative array of projects to help safeguard and celebrate the heritage of the town. Heritage Action Zones are Historic England's flagship initiative to help transform historic places and Hinckley is one of a number of zones chosen throughout the country.

Who is involved?

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will need to work closely alongside high street stakeholders and a number of local organisations to develop and deliver the programme as a partnership. Stakeholders including Hinckley Business Improvement District (BID), Hinckley Museum, Leicestershire County Council, cultural and educational establishments and local history groups have been involved in the development of the Heritage Action Zone programme so far and will continue to be involved in its delivery. Local communities have a key role in deciding what works they want to see happening within the Hinckley Heritage Action Zone and what sort of place they want it to be.

Why Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area?

The conservation area has a unique and special character. However in recent times it has suffered from the loss of historic building details, the installation of some unsympathetically styled shop fronts, and some poor quality modern development. Certain buildings demonstrate a lack of maintenance and repair. Areas of the public realm and shared spaces with the town centre provide great opportunities for improvement. The conservation area is currently on the Historic England At Risk Register.

A Heritage Action Zone provides the opportunity to work with partners in a coordinated and pro-active way in order to address these issues. In doing so, we would help secure the long-term sustainability of the area for future generations by preserving, restoring and enhancing its architectural, historical and cultural heritage.

Delivering a Heritage Action Zone would also support the building of momentum for the regeneration of Hinckley Town Centre as a whole, meet the aims of the Council's Heritage Strategy, and assist in the delivery of other complimentary projects including those identified in the Hinckley Town Centre Public Realm Masterplan.

What types of work can be funded?

A Programme Design document has been produced which identifies a number of exciting projects:

- Historic building owners and occupiers can apply for generous grants for works of repair and reinstating traditional features, including a particular focus on shop fronts
- Works to improve the public realm (areas of open space and spaces between buildings) and to facilitate safer pedestrian movement
- Determining whether vacant buildings and spaces can be brought into alternative uses that better meet the demand of the area
- Increasing understanding and awareness of heritage assets within the town centre
- Putting management procedures in place to secure the long-term conservation of heritage assets
- Engaging the public through a range of activities and training to appreciate the area and its history

Historic buildings located on Castle Street (lower and upper), Market Place, The Borough and Station Road have been chosen as the focus for the proposed works of enhancement. The works to the public realm are targeted to the area around the Church Walk Car Park, Castle Street and the historic jitties located off Castle Street.

The projects total £1.85 million with Historic England providing approximately 50% of the funding required. The remainder of funding is to come from private and public sources and includes a contribution of approximately £360,000 from the Borough Council.

What happens next?

Despite a delay to the launch of the Heritage Action Zone due to COVID-19 development and delivery of the projects can now begin in earnest. To aid this process since the beginning of September 2020 the Borough Council have employed two HAZ Project Officers (a shared-role equating to one full-time post) and they have overall responsibility for managing and delivering the programme of projects.

Community engagement is critical to the development of the projects so safe and innovative ways to engage with people are being devised as part of detailed Community Engagement Plan and Cultural Programme. These plans are to be submitted for discussion with Historic England by late October.

Building owners and occupiers are to be contacted and provided details about the grants that are available, contact is also envisaged to commence from October onwards.

Further information about the Heritage Action Zone is to be made available on the Borough Council website and via other sources as soon as possible.