

ITEM 6



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CABINET
12 July 2005

Report of the Director of Development and Cultural Services

Council Cabinet's Response to the Report of the Culture and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Commission on "Review of the way in which Derby City Council promotes the part of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site that lies within the city boundary"

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To congratulate the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on an outstandingly thorough and helpful piece of work.
- 1.2 To approve the range of initiatives outlined in the report which are designed to better exploit our World Heritage Site status in months and years to come.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 On 26 April 2005 the Chair of the Culture and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Commission presented the Commission's report to Cabinet. Cabinet asked for a response to be available for Cabinet approval on 12 July. This report represents a response on behalf of the whole of the City Council to the recommendations contained in the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's report.
- 2.2 The objectives of the Commission's investigation were:
 - 2.2.1 To gain an appreciation of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site as a whole and become familiar with the parts of the World Heritage Site that lie within the boundary of the city. In order to do this it was thought that the commission would need to consider:
 - The way in which the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site is managed
 - The way in which the site is promoted as a whole
 - How Derby promotes its part of the World Heritage Site within the city boundary
 - 2.2.2 To compare the way in which the Council promotes its part of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site with other similar sites in the UK.
 - 2.2.3 If appropriate to make recommendations for:

- Raising the profile of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site within the city
- Improving the Council's management role in the World Heritage Site
- Improving the way in which Derby promotes its part of the World Heritage Site individually and as part of the Derwent Valley as a whole

2.3 Outcomes of the Review

2.3.1 From the evidence heard by the Commission in the course of its review, members identified a number of issues associated with the promotion of Derby's part of the Derwent Valley Mills WHS, which they considered need to be addressed.

2.3.2 The evidence considered by the Commission in the course of its review showed that residents of Darley Abbey:

- a. are aware that Darley Abbey Mills, Village and Park were parts of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and consider the Mills to be an important part of Darley Abbey
- b. are aware that the Silk Mill is part of the World Heritage Site in Derby and would like the Council to do more to promote the parts of the Site that lie within the city
- c. have concerns that promotion of the site and any subsequent increase in the number of visitors to the site needs to be managed carefully, particularly in terms of traffic congestion in the Darley Abbey village and surrounding area
- d. do not consider car/coach parking to be an important factor for the World Heritage Site at Darley Abbey
- e. consider that both public transport to the Site and a visitor centre are priorities for attracting more visitors to the Site.

2.3.3 During its evidence gathering interviews the Commission was told that:

- a. the City Council does not allocate any specific funding to projects related to the promotion of the World Heritage Site
- b. the Council is represented on the Derwent Valley Mills Partnership by a number of officers and members, but that there is a lack of coordination between the various Panels' projects

2.3.4 The Commission also learnt that:

- a. there is little World Heritage Site signage in the city and none to direct visitors to either the Silk Mill or Darley Abbey from the Railway Station
- b. the foot and cycle path which runs alongside the River Derwent by the Silk Mill has been closed for almost three years and that this discourages people from using this path which runs from the city centre to the edge of Darley Park

- c. there is no World Heritage Site visitor attraction or interpretation material available in either Darley Abbey Village or the privately owned mill complex
- d. the museum at the Silk Mill has limited information about the Derwent Valley Mills WHS and none about the significance of the Silk Mill, as the earliest mill building in the Derwent Valley and is recognised as the forerunner of the textile factory.

2.4 Recommendations and the Council's Response

Recommendation 1 – to actively encourage the Education Service to consider introducing the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site to Derby schools within the requirements of the national curriculum, by the start of the 2005 academic year.

- Darley Barn – a full programme of curriculum-related and non-curriculum activity is being devised as part of the Darley Barn Conversion Project to create an Outdoor and Environmental Education Centre. The building is expected to be complete in March 2006 providing for a spectrum of users including community groups and schools. The Education Service has very little capacity for the production of teaching resources outside of projects such as this, and their use in schools will always ultimately be under the control of the schools themselves
- Derby Museums Service produces a range of activities for schools. For example freelance educator sessions, “May the forces be with you” and “The light of Joseph Wright”. The number of these sessions is increasing, “Earth and Space” is a new science session relating to Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution that will be offered from September 2005.
- The East Midlands Museums Hub is conducting detailed research on teacher requirements in relation to Heritage related curriculum opportunities. The results of the research will be known in nine months. The follow-up work of producing relevant materials is likely to be funded by the Hub
- A pilot project is under way between Derby Museums Service and the Derby and Derbyshire Schools Library Service to introduce multi-media packs for schools throughout Derbyshire. Scope of current topics does not cover the World Heritage Site, but developments in that direction will be considered when funding becomes available, as expected, in 2007

Recommendation 2 – to investigate the installation of economically and environmentally sustainable pedestrian and transport links that could be established between the Silk Mill in the City Centre and the Mills at Darley Abbey.

- There is already a cycleway on the eastern side of the River Derwent from Folly Road into the City Centre
- Darley Grove has been put forward as a possible cycle route, but it suffers from gradients and blind spots. No further action is planned on this

- There is a current proposal (subject to consultation) to construct a cyclepath on Chester Green Road and along the edge of Chester Green adjacent to Mansfield Road. The route will then cross Mansfield Road to proceed down Caesar Street and Cut Lane, cross Stores Road and proceed into the Racecourse
- Additionally we are proposing to extend the pedestrian/cyclepath between Cut Lane underpass and Hampshire Road within the Racecourse
- An initial feasibility study has concluded that a river taxi between the Park and the City Centre could be self-sustaining once the initial capital costs are met
- We would want to put forward a proposal for transport links as part of a much larger package of proposals in the Derby end of the valley, not on its own, linking with developments within the Park and beyond.

Recommendation 3 – to nominate a Derby City Council Officer to co-ordinate the activities of the Council and non-Council representatives of the Derwent Valley Mills partnership.

- The City Council has now set up an inter-departmental officer working group on the World Heritage Site under the joint chairship of the Assistant Directors for Development and for Cultural Services.
- This will co-ordinate a multi-stranded development plan including the search for internal and external funding. The combined efforts of a multi-disciplinary team will have more impact than a single officer.
- At Chief officer level, the working group is sponsored by the Director of Development and Cultural Services: the Director will receive regular progress reports and will bring issues forward to Cabinet as the plan progresses.

Recommendation 4 – for the Council to develop and promote its part of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site by:

- a) **Pursuing funding for a feasibility study into the renovation of the Darley Abbey Stable Block on Darley Park for use as a Visitor Centre**
 - b) **Assigning an Officer to identify and pursue World Heritage Site funding opportunities**
 - c) **Ensuring that planning approvals for developments within the World Heritage Site buffer zone in Derby incorporates Section 106 Agreements that can be used to support Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site projects within the city**
- a) Some initial work has been carried on the Stable Block. The next stage will need to be at a different level of detail for which funding opportunities continue to be sought

- b) We are experimenting with an approach which pools the efforts of a number of Officers from Parks, Finance, External Funding and Development and Cultural Services in order to achieve the widest possible search for funding opportunities
- c) Where applications are made and it would be reasonable and legally possible to look for contributions to support the WHS through S106 agreements then these will be pursued. An example where this has already occurred is on the Full Street new development

Recommendation 5 – for the Council to actively investigate the opportunities for promoting the part of the World Heritage Site in Darley Abbey Village and at the Mills by:

- a) **Supporting the property owners within the World Heritage Site by identifying and informing them of grant funding opportunities and to provide them with advice for making appropriate applications**
- b) **Engaging with Darley Abbey Mills property owners about the possibility of mixed use development of the site, which may include some residential use and about generating renewable energy from hydro-electric power**
- c) **Communicating with Darley Abbey Mills property owners on issues which affect Derby's part of the World Heritage Site and provide regular updates on matters which specifically relate to their part of the site, including Darley Abbey residents**
 - Action is being taken on a) b) and c) through the City Council's Department of Development and Cultural Services. Specific meetings have taken place with Mill owners and with residents associations: The main channel of written communication will be the regular newsletter of the Derwent Valley Mills Partnership and its website. Links between the Council and the Partnership are being strengthened to ensure fuller coverage for Derby-based stories and developments.

In addition to these points which are relevant to the specific recommendations the Commission may like to note that:

- Signage to and within the World Heritage Site is an agenda item for the new City Council Officers' Working Group and the issue will be pursued in close association with the preparation of general guidelines on signage, which will require Member scrutiny and approval
- The World Heritage Site is signed with boundary style signs as elsewhere in the Derwent Valley. These are in three locations: A6/Church Lane, A6/Mileash Lane and Alferton Road/Haslams Lane. Due to the distance of the Silk Mill from the Railway Station there is no pedestrian signing from this point; it is just not physically possible to sign everything from this point. There are, however, three maps available for visitors to view at the exit from the Station which show the location of the Silk Mill and the Tourist Information Centre.

Signing for city promotion has recently been looked at by a working group who identified the need for further work to be done in this area although as a separate element from the pedestrian direction signing.

- The public footpath along the Derwent next to the Silk Mill Museum is scheduled for reopening in October 2005. The delay has been created by a long wait for listed building consent for the refurbishment of the Silk Mill fire escape. Specialist contractors will dismantle the Silk Mill fire escape during the summer. A further short closure is scheduled at the turn of the year so that the escape can be re-installed.
- The Silk Mill Museum now has a room devoted to the interpretation of the Mill, its building and its activities, which places the Silk Mill in the context of the Derwent Valley Mills
- The early work of the Inter-Departmental Working Group mentioned under recommendation 3 has so far identified these elements for further development
 1. River navigation
 2. Bath Street Mills
 3. Evans Estate housing
 4. The Barn
 5. Stable block
 6. Toll Bridge
 7. Silk Mill
 8. Darley Abbey Mills
 9. Nutwood
 10. Interpretation and signage facilities
 11. Darley Park and Darley Grove. Restoration of original park features, eg walls, paths, plantings, including the walled garden
 12. Derwent Park
 13. Transportation and access
 14. Wildlife on land and water
 15. Archaeology

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 None directly from this report. All of the actions specified will be funded from existing budgets.

Legal

- 2.1 None.

Personnel

- 3.1 None.

Equalities impact

- 4.1 None.

Corporate objectives

- 5.1 The proposal comes under the Council's Objectives of
- a stimulating and high quality learning environment
 - a lively and energetic cultural life
- 5.2 The proposal furthers the priorities of
- a prosperous, vibrant and successful economy
 - raising educational achievement
 - improving customer service in the city centre and locally