

Report sponsor: Chief Planning Officer
Report author: Environment and Business
Energy Efficiency Group Manager

Heritage Conservation work priorities 2019/20

Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members of the work priorities of the Conservation service following the deletion of the full time Conservation officer's post as part of the recent budget saving exercise.
- 1.2 The report will also inform members of the processes and procedures that will be put in place to help mitigate any financial/reputational issues in acknowledgement that the workload and complexity of the Conservation service for a city the size of Derby cannot be carried out effectively with this diminished level of resources.

Recommendations

- 2.1 To acknowledge the main work priorities for the Conservation service along with those work items that will not receive any professional time and support going forward.
- 2.2 To acknowledge the processes and procedures put in place to manage this service with the limited professional resources available.

Reason(s)

- 3.1 Given the recent deletion of the full time Conservation post this service cannot be maintained at its present level and hard decisions need to be made regarding priorities going forward for both business continuity and staff wellbeing reasons.
- 3.2 Leicester and Nottingham City Council have approximately 3 FTE professional Conservation posts. Derby will effectively have a 0.6 resource taking into account the Conservation Team Leader's managerial responsibilities for the Urban Design function (approx. 0.2 FTE).

Supporting information

- 4.1 Prior to the latest budget decision the Conservation service comprised of the following two posts:
 - 0.8 FTE Conservation Team Leader
 - 1.0 FTE Conservation Officer

The team provides a diverse range of specialist services: commenting on all types of planning applications and input at appeal and public inquiries where necessary; dealing with pre-application enquiries regarding all types of Heritage Assets; responding to general enquiries via email or telephone from Councillors, members of the public; input into discharging conditions; work and input into Council buildings which are key corporate priorities e.g. The Market Hall, Allestree Hall; input into policy development through the Local Plan; seeking and securing opportunities to regenerate the city including the former shop fronts scheme and the current THI scheme on Green Lane.

- 4.2 The latest budget saving exercise has effectively deleted the full time Conservation post with a saving of £30,000. This effectively leaves the 0.8 Conservation Team Leader with her additional managerial duties for the Urban Design function, to support the service in its entirety, which is obviously not possible. Appendix 1 lists the priority work areas for the service over the next 12 months and is divided into the following categories to clearly demarcate where the limited professional conservation resource will be spent:
1. High Priority – work areas that require a specialised conservation input to avoid any delays to the planning system that could incur severe financial or reputational consequences.
 2. Medium Priority – work areas where a commitment has already been made to complete a project resulting in potential financial or reputational consequences if resources are withdrawn at short notice.
 3. Low priority – work areas that will receive no time or support with the potential for reputational consequence that can largely be managed.
- 4.3 The list of conservation priorities will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the limited resources of the service are being utilised as effectively as possible. This will also provide an opportunity to review those time bound projects that currently fall into the second category, many of which will be completed in the next 12 months. Once the annual priority list has been drawn up and presented to Planning Committee and Conservation Area Advisory Committee no changes will be allowed throughout the year unless agreed by the Chief Planning Officer.
- 4.4 The Planning team has put in place a number of new procedures to help mitigate some of the issues arising from this saving including a change to the telephone system where all calls now come in to the Development Management Service to decide if the enquiry requires professional conservation advice or can be dealt with in a more general way. The Conservation Team Leader also has a dedicated surgery every week with Planning Officers to discuss any pressing issues that need to be resolved.
- 4.5 Whilst every attempt has been made to try and reduce the potential financial/reputational issues arising from the loss of over half of the Councils professional Conservation resource, no concrete guarantees can be given. Over the next 12 months it will be important to capture as much information as possible to properly establish the impact of this saving on the development services provided by the Council. It should also be acknowledged that the list of high priority tasks outlined in Appendix 1 may need to be further reduced if this proves too extensive for the Conservation Team Leader to manage alone.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 Members of Planning Committee and the Conservation Advisory Committee have been notified (through this report) about the priorities of the Conservation service over the next 12 months. If any changes are proposed, these need to be sent to the Chief Planning Officer for further consideration.

Other options

- 6.1 No other options have been considered.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 The Conservation service plays an important role in helping to secure the annual income from the Planning service

Legal implications

- 8.1 None directly arising from this report.

Other significant implications

- 9.1 None directly arising from this report.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	All approvals signed off by Paul Clarke, Head of Planning	03/04/2019
Finance Service Director(s) Report sponsor Other(s)		

Background papers: None

List of appendices: Appendix 1: Conservation Priorities 2019/20

High Priority

1. Development Management consultations (big/medium) including: Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and buffer zone; Listed Buildings; Conservation Areas; Large impact to Locally Listed Buildings and heritage assets.
2. Paid Development Team pre-application advice for large schemes e.g. Market Hall Transformation, Allestree Hall, Assembly Rooms etc.
3. Paid for Listed Building pre-application advice
4. Facilitation of Conservation Area Advisory Committee within the context of the reduced agenda previously agreed with the Chair
5. Planning Policy input for the Local Plan Part 2
6. General enquiries (specialist input only)
7. Listed building enforcement input.
8. Discharge of conditions (Listed Buildings or where specialist input is needed)
9. Silk Mill conditions (as currently on site)
10. New/deleted Listed Building entries (Statutory duty)

Medium Priority

1. Agard Street – addendum to the Friar gate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and Map; Addendum to City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.
2. Long Mill Darley Abbey building and roof repairs
3. Heritage Lottery Fund Funded Townscape Heritage Initiative
4. Managerial tasks

Low Priority

1. Enforcement (general) including Article 4 infringements
2. Historic Environment Record
3. DVMWHS boundary clarifications
4. Development consultations – small scale
5. Telephone and general email enquiries
6. Locally Listed building list review
7. Buildings at Risk
8. Estates disposal of assets
9. Article 4 direction review
10. Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Conservation and Planning Panel attendance
11. Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust report regarding Buildings at risk project
12. Conservation Area Appraisals

13. Review of new conservation areas
14. Review of DCC heritage self-help webpages
15. Review of Shop front and advertisement guidance
16. Design briefs
17. Discharge of conditions regarding locally listed buildings and some small conservation area proposals
18. Input of CAAC minutes onto online system.