

**STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**AGENDA  
ITEM NO**

**08 FEBRUARY 2018**

**07**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>STROUD DISTRICT HERITAGE STRATEGY: SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING ADVICE</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To seek approval of a Heritage Strategy for the District.
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>The Committee RESOLVES to:-</b> <b>a) ADOPT the Stroud District Heritage Strategy as Supplementary Planning Advice.</b> <b>b) Agree the use of the Objectives and Strategy Priorities therein as a basis for the drafting of a Heritage Action Plan.</b>
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	<p>There has been ongoing informal engagement with Historic England since February 2016, alongside periodic informal and formal consultation with key officers and relevant Council service areas.</p> <p>Parish Councils and other key stakeholders (e.g. civic societies, local history groups) could input during early evidence-gathering (June/July 2016): a questionnaire sought views, experiences and suggestions in relation to some specific areas of heritage management.</p> <p>Members engaged through Planning Review Panel during 2016, from early evidence-gathering through to discussion of the emerging consultation 'discussion paper', which was approved by Environment Committee in December 2016.</p> <p>The discussion paper was published in July 2017 for nine weeks' public consultation, targeted principally to parish councils and key heritage stakeholders, as well as SDC Members and Officers. A consultation report is provided as <a href="#">APPENDIX B</a>.</p>
<b>Financial Implications and Risk Assessment</b>	<p>There are no direct financial implications relating to this report.</p> <p>Adele Rudkin, Accountant Tel 01453 754109 Email: <a href="mailto:adele.rudkin@stroud.gov.uk">adele.rudkin@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>Financial Implications and Risk Assessment</b> Cont'd/...	<p>There is a risk that failure to adopt a positive and robust strategy could impact negatively on Historic England's input into the future Local Plan review, as well as on day-to-day planning matters.</p> <p>There is a further risk that the lack of an appropriate Strategy and Action Plan might inhibit the Council's ability to make informed decisions about the allocation of resources or to effectively discharge all its statutory obligations and duties in relation to the historic environment.</p>
<b>Legal Implications</b>	<p>The specific strategy has not been subject to review as part of these implications as it was not supplied with the report. Nevertheless, in general terms the position remains that when dealing with planning applications, the Council has to have regard to the Local Plan and to any other material planning considerations of which the proposed strategy (if adopted) will be one. The weight to be attached to the strategy in any particular case will be a matter for the decision maker (whether the Development Committee or the Planning Manager etc.) acting reasonably. (Ref:r181c191d25)</p> <p>Karen Trickey, Head of Legal Services          Tel: 01453 754369</p>
<b>Report Author</b>	<p>Natalie Whalley, Senior Planning Strategy Officer          Tel: 01453 754324          Email: <a href="mailto:natalie.whalley@stroud.gov.uk">natalie.whalley@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Options</b>	<p>Options are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approve the Strategy as amended following public consultation</li> <li>2. Make further amendments to the Strategy</li> </ol>
<b>Performance Management Follow Up</b>	<p>The Local Plan sets out five key indicators for measuring the success of Policy ES10 (and the Heritage Strategy) and how effectively the policy influences planning decisions (SDLP Appendix 1, p184). These should be monitored year by year. A performance appraisal will form part of the periodic review and refresh of the Heritage Action Plan, helping to inform future actions and priorities.</p>
<b>Background Papers/ Appendices</b>	<p>Background papers  <a href="#">Appendix A – Heritage Strategy</a>  <a href="#">Appendix B – Consultation Report</a></p>

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The NPPF advocates that local planning authorities should produce a clear and positive strategy for the conservation and management of their area's heritage: *"Local Plans should ... contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment..."* (para.157) and

*“Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats” (para.126).*

- 1.2 At the Local Plan examination, Historic England’s support of the Plan was conditional upon the Council strengthening its explicit commitment to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Consequently, a Statement of Common Ground with Historic England committed the Council to producing a separate Heritage Strategy document, to support the Local Plan; the Local Plan’s monitoring framework also identifies this project as a key target for the Plan.
- 1.3 The adopted Local Plan also sets out a series of five key ‘indicators’ that relate to Policy ES10 (SDLP Appendix 1). These are things that can be measured and monitored year by year, to give an indication of how successful the policy is and how effectively it influences planning decisions. The Heritage Strategy and Action Plan will help to implement the Local Plan by setting out:
  - i) the nature and extent of a programme to monitor the District’s heritage assets that are “at risk”, including the degree of positive and proactive influence the Council may be capable of;
  - ii) a programme for the appraisal and management of the District’s conservation areas;
  - iii) an appropriate methodology for the identification and assessment of non-designated heritage assets, including options for ‘local listing’ or alternative means of monitoring and managing such assets.

## **2. APPROACH AND SCOPE**

- 2.1 The purpose of the Heritage Strategy is to set informed priorities in relation to the conservation, management and monitoring of the District’s heritage assets, including the effective and efficient discharge of statutory duties and obligations. The supporting Action Plan will enable better and more efficient performance and more effectively targeted action, including through the identification of opportunities for partnership working, funding, training, education and capacity-building – for our communities as well as for those operating within Stroud District Council.
- 2.2 As Supplementary Planning Advice, the Strategy will support the implementation of the Local Plan, in particular Policy ES10, which is concerned with *“Valuing our historic environment and assets”*. As such, this is conceived principally as an historic environment strategy (i.e. pertaining to the District’s historic built and natural heritage), rather than a more broad-ranging ‘cultural heritage’ strategy.
- 2.3 However, the vision, objectives, and main themes that run through this Strategy are applicable to our District’s heritage in its widest sense; and parts of the Strategy will have useful relevance to other Council services, duties and powers that directly or indirectly relate to our area’s heritage.

- 2.4** The Strategy does not set out detailed policy/guidance to supplement or refine what is already established in the Local Plan. Instead, the Strategy seeks to highlight the value and significance of our District's heritage, the benefits of 'positive management' and how this ties in with the Council's corporate priorities. There are three main objectives:
- 1) to identify ways to maximise the contribution that the historic environment makes to the character of the District, its economic well-being, and the quality of life of its communities;
  - 2) to identify ways to positively address the issues and pressures that are facing our heritage assets;
  - 3) to maximise opportunities for the historic environment to help deliver the Council's wider corporate objectives, including those of the Local Plan.
- 2.5** The Strategy seeks to channel efforts to achieve these objectives by highlighting four key themes (each of which leads to a set of 'strategy priorities', which should help the Council and our District's communities to focus future action):
- i) Understanding our heritage and its significance;
  - ii) Capitalising on our heritage;
  - iii) Positive management;
  - iv) Raising our heritage up the agenda.

### **3. PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

- 3.1** Last summer's consultation sought views about whether the priorities and big issues then identified were the right things to focus on; what options exist for tackling them; any practical or financial implications; and whether there are other options or opportunities that had been missed by the discussion paper.
- 3.2** Although it was open to the public, the consultation was principally targeted to key stakeholders. 50 responses were received from individuals and organisations, including the County Council, several Parish Councils, Historic England, Stroud Preservation Trust, The Museum in the Park, The Cotswold Canals Trust, Gloucestershire Gardens and Landscape Trust, Woodchester Mansion Trust, Stroudwater Textile Trust, local civic societies and local history groups.
- 3.3** Appendix B provides more detail and summarises the key points raised and how these have been addressed. Many comments related to specific actions or projects – these will be addressed through the 'next steps' after the Strategy's adoption. Resources were a recurring concern (again, this will be a matter for the scope and ambition of the first Action Plan), which resulted in some scepticism. But there was broad support for the Strategy's overall intent, the three Objectives and the Vision. There were useful comments about the structure and flow of the document.

#### **4. NEXT STEPS**

- 4.1** To support this Strategy, a Council Heritage Action Plan (to be approved by Environment Committee) will be produced, consisting of a programme of works relating to priorities identified in this Strategy. Feedback from the 2017 consultation will help to inform the first Action Plan, which will set out realistic objectives and actions for the following five years. The Action Plan will be periodically reviewed and refreshed with a rolling five year timeframe; performance will be monitored, with an annual progress report to Environment Committee.