

From: Susan Carey, Cabinet Member for Environment
Simon Jones, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee 8 September 2021

Subject: Heritage Conservation Strategy - consultation draft

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This report sets out a draft Heritage Conservation Strategy further to the update presented to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee in January 2021. It is proposed that the draft Strategy will be subject to public consultation during autumn 2021 and following consideration of the responses received, a final strategy will be presented to Cabinet Committee in March 2022 ahead of its adoption.

Recommendation(s):

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse the draft content of the Heritage Conservation Strategy for public consultation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee with a draft Heritage Conservation Strategy ahead of a proposed public consultation. The draft Strategy follows a report to Cabinet Committee in January 2021 where a draft vision, strategic aims and objectives were all endorsed.
- 1.2 The draft Heritage Conservation Strategy is included as part of the Background Documents (Section 7) and has been informed and reviewed by a Member Working Group. It reflects the same vision and four strategic aims endorsed previously by the Cabinet Committee, and the objectives have been refined in the final drafting.

2. Heritage Conservation Strategy

- 2.1 In October 2019, the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee was presented with a report setting out the priorities and future direction of the Heritage Conservation Service at Kent County Council, with an opportunity for Members to make comments to the Cabinet Member on priorities and strategic direction. It was resolved that a Member Working Group be established to help inform the drafting of a Heritage Conservation Strategy.

- 2.2 The Member Working Group initially comprised Susan Carey, Matthew Balfour, Tony Hills, Michael Payne, Alan Ridgers (Chair) and Martin Whybrow. The Working Group met on three occasions and agreed the scope and structure of the Heritage Conservation Strategy whilst commenting on its emerging content. The draft vision and strategic aims were presented to Cabinet Committee in January 2021 and endorsed.
- 2.3 The vision is to:
- Realise the substantial benefits and opportunities of Kent's rich heritage through its conservation, enhancement, and enjoyment
- 2.4 The strategic aims are:
1. Continue to improve the high quality and timely historic environment advice provided to KCC, local authorities and other bodies involved in growth and change based on accessible and up to date information and understanding;
 2. Ensure, working with new and existing partners, that KCC's historic assets are conserved, enhanced, enjoyed and valued by Kent's residents and visitors.
 3. Increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of Kent's rich heritage and increase involvement in heritage activities amongst its local communities; and
 4. Work towards the service becoming financially self-sustaining.
- 2.5 The full drafting of the Heritage Conservation Strategy has now been completed and is included as part of the Background Documents. It retains the same vision and four strategic aims which were endorsed by Cabinet Committee earlier this year. These remain supported by a set of twenty objectives which have been subject to a degree of refinement in the final drafting.
- 2.6 The draft Heritage Conservation Strategy has been informed and reviewed by a Member Working Group now comprising Susan Carey, Alan Ridgers (Chair), Tony Hills, Neil Baker, Mike Baldock, Cameron Beart and Mike Dendor.
- 2.7 It is proposed that subject to endorsement from the Cabinet Committee, the draft Strategy be designed and printed ready for public consultation during autumn 2021. The feedback from the consultation would inform the final Heritage Conservation Strategy which would be presented to Cabinet Committee in March 2022 ahead of its adoption.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Service has a base revenue budget of £223,500 for the current 2021/22 financial year. It also has a capital allocation for windmill weatherproofing of £584,000 for 2021/22 - 2023/24.
- 3.2 The Service generates an income of approximately £192,000 in a typical year to deliver a wide range of activities relating to the historic environment.

3.3 One of the objectives (no. 20) supporting the strategic aims is to develop a strategy to systematically review and monitor progress towards financial sustainability.

4. Equalities implications

4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has informed the preparation of the draft Strategy and is included as part of the Background Documents.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Kent has a rich and varied historic environment and the draft Heritage Conservation Strategy has been prepared to create a clear and measurable approach to how Kent County Council will protect, sustain and celebrate this.

5.2 The draft Strategy has been prepared with the engagement of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee and support of the Member Working Group. The draft is now considered to be ready for a period of public consultation and would be presented to Cabinet Committee in March 2022 ahead of its adoption.

6. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse the draft content of the Heritage Conservation Strategy for public consultation.

7. Background Documents

7.1 Appendix 1: draft Heritage Conservation Strategy

8. Contact details

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