

<b>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council</b>		
<b>MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:</b>	<b>Cllr Paul Crossley (Leader of the Council)</b> <b>Cllr Tim Ball, Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning</b>	
<b>MEETING/ DECISION DATE:</b>	<b>On or after 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2014</b>	<small>EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:</small>
		<b>E 2612</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Bath World Heritage Site attributes</b>	
<b>WARD:</b>	All wards within and immediately surrounding the City of Bath	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Draft Attributes of the City of Bath World Heritage Site		

## **1 THE ISSUE**

- 1.1 UNESCO, the body governing World Heritage Sites, requests that key characteristics which convey or express the 'Outstanding Universal Value' of the site. In UNESCO guidance these characteristics are termed 'attributes' are identified for all WHSs. Draft attributes for the City of Bath have been developed, and these now need to be formally confirmed by B&NES before being issued to UNESCO.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the attributes of the City of Bath World Heritage Site are confirmed as a material consideration in Development Management and plan-making.

## **3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 3.1 No resource implications are foreseen with this proposal. The attributes clarify or expand upon existing planning guidance, and it is not anticipated that endorsement will increase the workload of planning staff or applicants. It is intended that this work will be published to the website rather than in hard copy, and no printing costs are therefore anticipated.

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 Whilst inscription as a World Heritage Site entails no extra planning controls, it is a significant material consideration in the determination of planning applications and the development of policy in Plan making.

## **5 THE REPORT**

- 5.1 UNESCO Operating Guidelines (revised 2013) outlines good practice expected in the management of World Heritage Sites. One such expectation is that sites will produce 'attributes'.
- 5.2 Attributes are described by UNESCO as being 'aspects which convey or express the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site and which contribute to and enhance understanding of the Outstanding Universal Value'. In essence, they are key characteristics of the site. When a site is inscribed, the reasons for inscription may be explained in a concise written description. There is a need therefore to explore this further, and produce a more detailed analysis of what it is about the site that makes it outstanding, and what therefore needs to be protected. This is a key element in site management, as a clear understanding of what is that requires protection is needed in order to then ensure measures are in place to achieve this. It is important to note that attributes are a more detailed analysis of the adopted reasons for inscription, and new elements cannot be introduced into this work.
- 5.3 Although the 28 UK World Heritage Sites have an exemplary record in producing Management Plans, few had fully developed attributes. Therefore, in 2012 English Heritage ran national workshops in order to assist sites in developing this work and ensure a consistent approach.
- 5.4 The attributes were produced by the Council's World Heritage Manager in close co-operation with English Heritage officers (both in the South West office and the London International Advice section), and with landscape and conservation officers within the Planning Department. In February 2013 they shared with the World Heritage Site Steering Group.
- 5.5 UNESCO guidance states that 'the key purpose for identifying attributes is so that they can be protected, managed and monitored and are needed when assessing planning applications, when considering planning allocations and when planning projects or other interventions' (Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, Sections 88 and 89, and Annex 5). In order therefore to give the attributes weight and ensure they are a material consideration in the planning system, Cabinet Single Member endorsement is sought.
- 5.6 Following endorsement, the attributes will be published to the Council website alongside the 2010-2016 World Heritage Site Management Plan, and fully incorporated into the 2016 revision of that document.

## **6 RATIONALE**

- 6.1 Production of this guidance aids site management through the greater clarification of planning policy relating to the Bath World Heritage Site. It will provide greater clarity both to decision makers and applicants.
- 6.2 Endorsement of this guidance fulfils expectations contained in UNESCO Operating Guidelines, and therefore demonstrates responsible management of the World Heritage Site by the Council and the Steering Group.

## 7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Given the national expectation to produce this guidance, and the consistent approach taken across all UK sites, the only other option would have been not to proceed with this work. This would however have shown the Council not to be following UNESCO operating guidelines, and could have been construed as poor site management. For these reasons this option was discounted.

## 8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The attributes were produced in close co-operation with English Heritage, both through their regional (Bristol) office and the International Advice office in London. English Heritage subsequently shared drafts of this work with the other UK World Heritage Sites, and with UNESCO advisory body ICOMOS UK.
- 8.2 Locally, the work was produced by the Council's World Heritage Manager in close co-operation with landscape, archaeology and conservation officers within the Planning Department. The World Heritage Site Steering Group was consulted on the document in February 2013. This group has wide representation, including senior council members and officers, Bath residents groups, heritage societies and other bodies involved in Bath World Heritage Site.
- 8.3 Given the specialist technical aspect of this work, no bespoke wider public consultation has been undertaken.

## 9 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

<b>Contact person</b>	<i>Include your name and contact telephone number here</i>
<b>Background papers</b>	<i>List here any background papers not included with this report because they are already in the public domain, and where/how they are available for inspection.</i>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	