

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Council	
MEETING DATE:	15 September 2016	
TITLE:	The City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan	
WARD:	All wards within The City of Bath and surrounding parishes	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
<p>List of appendices to this report:</p> <p>Appendix 1 – City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan 2016-2022</p> <p>The City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan 2016-2022 (endorsement draft) can be viewed at www.bathworldheritage.org.uk/management-plan</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Accessibility action changes</p>		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The draft replacement City of Bath World Heritage Site (WHS) Management Plan (2016-2022) has been progressed to a stage where it is ready to be passed to central government for submission to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation ('UNESCO' - the body overseeing world heritage). The Council is asked to endorse the draft plan and approve the submission.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Endorse the draft replacement City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan and recommend to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development that it is approved for submission to UNESCO.
- 2.2 Note that further minor editorial changes may be made to the document, as agreed with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, prior to submission.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 The WHS Management Plan is being prepared within allocated budgets.
- 3.2 The Plan contains 47 actions, some of which are funded, and others for which funding must be sought (from external sources such as the Heritage Lottery

Fund). These include aspirations such as action 16 – ‘Continue to seek suitable premises for a one-stop History Centre to house the Council’s Designated archives collection’. The Plan clarifies that inclusion of such items carries no guarantee that funding will be found and cannot be a promise of delivery. The plan must strike a balance between being visionary and deliverable, and inclusion of aspirations proves useful when bidding for funds from external sources.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) status is the highest accolade relating to heritage and remains a globally recognised, respected and coveted brand. The inscription is first and foremost a responsibility, indicating that we are the guardians of heritage which is of importance to all humankind and which should be conserved for this and future generations. The status also brings economic benefit, principally in terms of generating increased tourism, plus civic pride and the general perception of Bath as a place of quality.
- 4.2 UNESCO Operating Guidelines (2015) require all sites to have a management plan. The production and timely despatch of this document is therefore a necessary action in the retention of WHS Status. The draft plan before the Council is the third such plan, replacing previous versions of 2003 and 2010.
- 4.3 It should be noted that in accordance with best practice, this plan is overseen by the WHS Steering Group, a well-established (2001) group of 16 organisations with an independent chair (Mr Peter Metcalfe). The Council takes the role of ‘principal steward’ of the WHS, providing the secretariat to the group and employing the WH Manager who (amongst other duties) writes the management plan. This is not therefore a Council document, although the Council plays the major part in production and implementation.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 As outlined in 4.2, a management plan is a UNESCO requirement. It follows an established format and sets out what the site comprises of, why it is of significance, how it is managed/protected and identifies actions to address challenges and realise opportunities.
- 5.2 The current ‘state of conservation’ of Bath WHS is very good. Key monitoring indicators such as the national ‘Heritage at Risk’ register show that of the 5,000 listed buildings in Bath, only three (of grades I and II*) are at risk, and two of these are under repair. The surrounding landscape would benefit from greater management, but a Heritage Lottery Fund application (as part of the Bathscape Project) has been submitted to help address this. Similarly, interpretation of the site could be improved and the Archway Project (containing a World Heritage Interpretation Centre) is again an active project. The focus of this plan is therefore on ‘raising the bar’ with regard to standards in what is already a well-managed WHS and seeking to ensure that as we move forward in a period of economic and physical growth that interventions made do not harm the values for which the site was inscribed.
- 5.3 The priorities of the Plan, set by the Steering Group and tested through full public consultation are as follows: Managing development, transport, public realm, interpretation and education, and environmental resilience.

- 5.4 Public consultation was conducted over 8 weeks in early Summer 2016 and full details are given in the Statement of Public Involvement which is made available alongside the Plan. Section 8 below gives an overview of the consultation.
- 5.5 None of the priorities of the plan were challenged during consultation and consequently post-consultation changes mostly comprise of minor wording alterations. This is considered to be partly due to stakeholder engagement undertaken before the plan was compiled (see section 8).
- 5.6 Transport was the most frequently cited issue during consultation. 58 of the 98 comments received included concern about a potential new eastern Park and Ride (P&R) site. In describing the management of the Site, the WHS Management Plan frequently defers to other strategies and in this case to the Getting around Bath Transport Strategy (2014) which provides proposals for establishing an efficient and sustainable transport system. The WHS Management Plan does not therefore directly address individual transport proposals, but in response to concerns from consultation respondents several references to P&R have been amended or deleted to ensure that the Plan is neutral with regard to this matter.
- 5.7 The transport action in the plan was also modified to make it clearer. The action relating to flooding was strengthened in response to concerns by resident's associations, and a new action was added to monitor proposals for coach parking, which is currently under review. One amendment which is proposed after the endorsement draft of the plan had gone to the print designer is minor wording change to the action on accessibility in line with advice received from the Council's Corporate Equalities and Diversity Officer. This is included at Appendix 1 to ensure this change is visible to all.
- 5.8 After the Plan has been endorsed, minor editorial changes will be made (mostly to images) and it will be submitted to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for that department to in turn submit it to UNESCO.
- 5.9 With regard to timetable it should be noted that this plan also looks to the Placemaking Plan (amongst other strategies) for delivery of some objectives and in places uses consistent wording. It is acknowledged that the Placemaking Plan has its own timetable and may change following the forthcoming Examination in Public. Given the timetable of the Placemaking Plan (the Inspector's Report is not expected until early 2017), it was not considered prudent to hold back submission of the WHS Management Plan. If any major revisions occur which require changes to the WHS Management Plan, an addendum can be produced.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 The rationale for recommending endorsement rather than adoption of the Plan is that (as outlined in section 4.3) this is a Steering Group document rather than a Council document.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Production of a management plan is a UNESCO requirement and in this respect there are no alternative options. Not to produce a plan would call into question the Steering Group and Council's good management of the Site with both the UK Government and UNESCO.

7.2 The Plan follows a standard format and by necessity is lengthy. It is therefore proposed to take the option of producing a summary version for (predominantly electronic) distribution which can be shared more easily and which will encourage greater public engagement.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 A stakeholder event with an invited audience of 154 people was held in April 2015 and issues captured here were used to compile the draft.

8.2 Full public consultation was conducted during an eight week period from 23rd May to 15th July 2016. A wide range of methods were used including the Council's on-line consultation system, exhibition stalls at World Heritage Day and the Bath City Conference, individual emails to the 150 invitees to the previous stakeholder event, direct messages to all ward councillors, a press release, posters, social media alerts and others. Public consultation generated 98 responses. These comprised of responses from 73 individuals, 17 organisations, 5 council departments and 3 ward councillors. When added to the list of issues raised during the pre-consultation stakeholder event this gives a total of 232 responses.

8.3 The Council's Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer have been given the opportunity to review and feed into this report.

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.

Contact person	Tony Crouch, World Heritage Manager, 01225 477584
Background papers	<p>The Statement of Community Involvement relating to this plan can be viewed at www.bathworldheritage.org.uk/management-plan</p> <p>UNESCO Operational Guidelines concerning World Heritage Site Management: http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/</p>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

APPENDIX 1

The City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan 2016-2022 (endorsement draft) can be viewed at www.bathworldheritage.org.uk/management-plan

APPENDIX 2

Accessibility action changes

One late change to the draft Plan relates to the question of the wording of the action relating to accessibility. At the WHS Steering Group of 28 July there was debate over the wording of this action, as captured in the minutes below:

Action 39 refers to seeking to make the historic environment more accessible for those with limited mobility. Historic England had suggested that this might be widened to include those with disabilities. The meeting raised no objection to this, but had concerns over the wording used. SB pointed out that the language on this shifted and evolved and what one group or individual accepted could cause offence to others. Advice was sought from the Council's Equalities and Diversity Officer (Louise Murphy), who was unfortunately out of office for the week. However, language used on the award winning accessibility guide introduced by the Roman Baths is consistent with the suggestion to use the terms both 'limited mobility and disabled'. It is therefore proposed that the action should read as below, and this will be checked with Louise next week:

Action 39. Continue to identify and implement opportunities to make the historic environment more accessible for those with limited mobility and disabilities.

Louise Murphy subsequently responded and proposed the following:

Action 39. Continue to identify and implement opportunities to make the historic environment more accessible for disabled people, considering a wide range of physical and sensory impairments.

The wording as suggested by Louise is accepted and is shown within this report as the proposal arrived after the 'Endorsement Draft' of the Plan had been received from the print designer.