

Agenda Item No. 4(e)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

28 February 2017

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

**PROVIDING BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL WITH CONSERVATION
APPRAISAL ADVICE**

- (1) **Purpose of Report** To seek the Cabinet Member's approval to provide assistance to Bolsover District Council (BDC) in undertaking Conservation Area Appraisals for three months on a trial basis.
- (2) **Information and Analysis** BDC has over 395 listed buildings, 27 conservation areas and numerous non-designated heritage assets within its administrative boundary.

It is essential that all of these heritage assets are appropriately considered through the planning process and that their appropriate stewardship is supported more broadly. A document that assists in this process is a Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA).

BDC has undertaken many CAAs. However, to ensure CAAs are as useful as possible they require continual review.

The Conservation and Design Section at Derbyshire County Council has been approached by officers from BDC to see if there is the potential for Officer resource from the Section to help support their CAA review process. In part, BDC's Conservation Officer resource is currently focussed on the coordination and delivery of the New Bolsover Model Village Heritage Lottery Fund scheme.

Within the County Council's Conservation and Design Section, the Senior Conservation Officer (SCO) is, and has been, responsible for the day to day running of the conservation grant schemes the County Council administers. Increasingly, the historic environment grant schemes the County Council contributes towards are either being run through officers secured as part of the grant scheme, or directly by existing officers at the District and Borough Councils – such as the New Bolsover Model Village scheme. An exception to this is the Conservation Areas Partnership Scheme (CAPS) that is currently

run in the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, covering the Belper and Milford Conservation Area and the Cromford Conservation Area. However, the funding available from this scheme has been reduced with only Amber Valley Borough Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council and the County Council contributing to the scheme, as Historic England is unable to continue its contribution. It is likely that 2016-17 will be the last financial year the CAPS will run. Applicants have 3 years to complete the works for which a grant has been allocated. The SCO will be involved in overseeing and administering payments to the end of the 3 years.

As part of the re-profiling of the SCO's work, in part due to the decrease in grant administration, a Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been entered into with Amber Valley Borough Council to supply it with conservation consultancy one day a week. The County Council is remunerated for this service.

It is thought that 3 days over 2 weeks would be sufficient to service BDC's request. However, if this is undertaken by the SCO, it might put undue pressure on the Conservation and Design Section's core work supporting the County Council's planning service and assisting the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Partnership to respond to planning queries regarding impacts on Outstanding Universal Value. To see if this is the case, BDC is willing to trial a period of 3 months to see if the workload can be accommodated. This period would run from 1 March to 31 May 2017 and include 20 days consultancy.

At the end of the 3 month trial, if the additional workload can be accommodated without adversely impacting on the Conservation and Design Section's core work, then a further report will be brought to the Cabinet Member seeking to enter into a Service Level Agreement to formalise the arrangement over a fixed period.

By the end of the 3 month trial, the Conservation and Design Section will have been merged with the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Team to form the Conservation, Heritage and Design Service. The new Service will be in place by 1 April 2017 and is a result of a previous Cabinet approval. The 3 month trial period will establish if this type of request can be acceptably accommodated in the longer term.

(3) Financial Considerations The SCO is a grade 10 post. The hourly rate for a grade 10 post is £25.17 which includes for salary, National Insurance and pension contributions. Full cost recovery for a grade 10 post is usually set at 100% mark up on the core hourly rate. This is to cover other expenses such as equipment, office costs and management costs.

As the post will be hosted by BDC for the days in the 3 month trial, it is suggested that an hourly rate is established by increasing the core hourly rate

by 25% to cover management and computer costs. This gives a figure of £31.46 per hour which is the same that is currently charged to Amber Valley Borough Council.

This will mean that the County Council will need to invoice BDC £4,656.08 at the end of the 3 month trial.

On top of this cost, BDC will be charged directly for any mileage that is incurred as part of the SCO's duties. This will be charges at £0.45 per mile.

(4) **Social Value Consideration** Conservation areas are designated for their special architectural and historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to protect and enhance. BDC has 27 conservation areas. Conservation areas can reflect vernacular settlements typical to an area which contain locally distinct development, for example Tibshelf Conservation Area in the coal measures sandstone region and Barlborough Conservation Area on the Magnesian Limestone Plateau. In addition to this, there are conservation areas that reflect social movements such as Creswell Model Village.

The contribution that historic areas make to the quality of life is widely recognised. They are a link to the past that can give a sense of continuity and stability, and they have the reassurance of the familiar which can provide a point of reference in a rapidly changing world. The way building traditions and settlement patterns are superimposed and survive over time will be unique to each area. This local distinctiveness can provide a catalyst for regeneration and inspire well designed new development which brings economic and social benefits which are valued by both local planning authorities and local communities.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(5) **Key Decision** No.

(6) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(7) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Communities Department. Officer contact details - Adam Lathbury, extension 39791.

(8) **OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member approves:

- 8.1 Entering into a three month trial with Bolsover District Council to support it undertaking Conservation Area Appraisals.
- 8.2 A cost of £4,656.08 plus mileage as an appropriate level of remuneration for the services outlined in the report.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities