



## AGENDA ITEM: 11

### SUMMARY

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>21 October 2014</b>
<b>Part:</b>	<b>1</b>
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Conservation Strategy 2014-2019</b>
Contact:	<p>Clr Andrew Williams, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration</p> <p>Author/Responsible Officer</p> <p>James Doe, Assistant Director – Planning, Development and Regeneration</p>
Purpose of report:	To seek approval of the proposed Conservation Strategy for the Borough of Dacorum for the purposes of consultation.
Recommendation	That the draft Conservation Strategy, as set out at Appendix 1 to this report which sets out the Borough Council's corporate approach to Conservation matters in Dacorum be approved for consultation.
Corporate objectives:	<p>Regeneration – the Strategy will be instrumental in helping to guide new developments where heritage considerations are important</p> <p>Dacorum Delivers – the Strategy provides a corporate framework for best addressing Conservation and heritage issues across the organisation</p> <p>Building Community Capacity – the successful implementation of the Strategy will be enhanced by the engagement of external organisations.</p> <p>Safe and Clean Environment – the Strategy is aimed at making the best of the Borough's rich built heritage.</p>

Implications:	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>The proposed Strategy makes use of established budgets to deliver the core Conservation service and provides a platform and direction from which to consider future actions which might require non-recurring expenditure.</p> <p><u>Value for Money</u></p> <p>The proposed Strategy provides a basis from which to prioritise expenditure; it provides a basis for seeking external funding, should opportunities arise; it takes a balanced approach to assessing matters of heritage value without committing the Council to excessive expenditure.</p>
Risk Implications	To be completed as part of the forthcoming Action Plan to support the Conservation Strategy.
Equalities Implications	Not directly applicable for the Conservation Strategy. The detailed action plan to follow will require the completion of an Equalities Impact Assessment.
Health And Safety Implications	None arising from this report.
Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments	<p><b>Monitoring Officer:</b></p> <p>No further comments to add to this report.</p> <p><b>Deputy S.151 Officer</b></p> <p>There are no budgetary implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.</p>
Consultees:	<p>Cllr Andrew Williams, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration;</p> <p>Corporate Management Team;</p> <p>Alex Chrusciak, Group Manager – Development Management and Planning;</p> <p>Chris Taylor, Group Manager – Strategic Planning and Regeneration;</p> <p>Fiona Webb, Assistant Team Leader – Planning, Development and Regeneration.</p>
Background papers:	<p>DBC Conservation Strategy</p> <p>Dacorum Local Planning Framework Core Strategy 2013</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework 2012</p> <p>National Planning Policy Guidance 2014</p>
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

## Background

1. Conservation of the built heritage of the Borough of Dacorum is an important issue for the Council, the Borough's residents and businesses. Dacorum is rich in heritage with some 2000 listed buildings and 25 Conservation Areas. Recently, the Council has invested £1.2 million into the Hemel Hempstead Old Town High Street public realm scheme, which has considerably improved this historic part of the town and will hopefully lift business activity and vibrancy. It is a good example of where an enhancement and celebration of the Borough's heritage can lead to wide-ranging improvements.
2. To sensitively manage the Borough's built heritage, it is important that the Council has in place a strategy to guide its activity, the deployment of resources and engagement of external bodies in the field of conservation.
3. The time is right for a new Conservation Strategy. The last version was produced in 2008, largely to set a programme for carrying out reviews and character appraisals of Conservation Areas. Through many such reviews have been completed since then, this programme has to be completed. Furthermore there have been changes to legislation and Government policy which ought to be properly reflected in the Council's forward programme of work in this field. Importantly, the new strategy should be comprehensive and cover all relevant aspects of conservation work.
4. The draft before Members in this report, included at Appendix 1, aims to do this. Once adopted, it will serve as the Council's corporate statement on, and commitment to, conservation matters as they relate to built heritage.
5. To elaborate, the Strategy covers the following areas (in no order of priority):

1.	Photographic resurvey of Listed Buildings	To ensure that the Council has an up to date visual record of the Borough's Listed Buildings
2.	Listed Building Survey	Proposals for an assessment of buildings as they come to light where listing is justified
3.	Buildings at Risk	Where historic buildings are at risk of deterioration or failure, use of statutory powers to enable repairs to be carried out by the owner
4.	Conservation Area Character Assessments	The completion of the programme of CA reviews; 17 areas remain to be done
5.	Locally Listed Buildings and non-designated Heritage Assets	To set a mechanism for how assets of heritage value that are not already covered by a formal designation (e.g. Listed Building, Conservation Area, Scheduled Ancient Monument etc) can be identified and recorded
6.	Article 4 Directions	These are designations the Council can make to withdraw rights over 'permitted development' that the landowner could otherwise do without the need to apply for

		planning permission
7.	Enhancement projects	A key role here for the Council's Corporate Regeneration Group, to consider how key historic features of the Borough can be enhanced (such as Hemel Old Town and the Water Gardens).
8.	Guidance	The production of specific guidance for developers, where necessary and when it is not available from another source, such as English Heritage. This includes the development of Conservation-related policy in the emerging Local Planning Framework.
9.	Planning Enforcement	Specialist support for the enforcement function when formal action has to be taken over breaches of planning and listed building control.
10.	Promoting Heritage	A general activity to develop the heritage offer of the Borough, which is particularly important for the promotion of Dacorum:Look No Further programme.
11.	Development Management	Taking a major part of the capacity of the Council's conservation staff, this is critical for the determination of submitted proposals and the defence of refusals at appeals and inquiries.
12.	Changes to Legislation	There is a need to stay on top of legislative change as it happens. Since the last strategy, for example, Government has introduced the concept of Heritage Assets, and made changes to the approval regime around developments within Conservation Areas.

6. The involvement of outside agencies is an important part of any strategy for built heritage. Members will be familiar with the Council's engagement of the Heritage Lottery Fund, which has supported and is funding in large part plans for the restoration of the Jellicoe Water Gardens; of the Dacorum Heritage Trust, which the Council provides funding for, and which it works on a number of projects such as the Bury Museum and Art Gallery and production of the Hemel Old Town heritage trail; and of regular liaison with English Heritage on a range of cases, to name just a few bodies.
7. As such it will be important to seek the views of these, and other bodies, and local residents on the proposed Strategy before the Council moves to finalise and adopt it. If the Council's Cabinet approves the Strategy, officers will organise an appropriately targeted consultation exercise and report back to Cabinet on its outcome with recommended changes as necessary.
8. Once approved, an action plan to commit the deployment of resources to deliver the constituent parts of the Strategy will need to be developed.

9. Members should note that the Strategy has been drafted to work within current budget constraints, but provides the opportunity for further work to take place if resources (such as grant funding) become available. Decisions on the specific deployment of resources, both staff and finance, will be taken through the consideration of the Action Plan.
10. Members are therefore invited to consider the proposed Strategy and approve it for consultation purposes.