



## AGENDA ITEM:

### SUMMARY

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Strategic Planning and Environment Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>12 April 2016</b>
<b>PART:</b>	<b>1</b>
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Conservation Service</b>
Contact:	Cllr Graham Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration  James Doe, Assistant Director – Planning, Development and Regeneration
Purpose of report:	To update the Committee on the work of the Conservation Service and to seek views on the proposed Conservation Action Plan
Recommendations	That the report be noted and that the Conservation Action Plan be endorsed for consideration by Cabinet.
Corporate objectives:	The implementation of the Conservation Strategy supports all of the corporate objectives.
Implications:	<u>Financial</u>  None arising directly from this report.
'Value For Money Implications'	<u>Value for Money</u>  None arising directly from this report.
Risk Implications	Risk Assessment completed as part of the service plan.
Equalities Implications	None arising from this report.

Health And Safety Implications	None arising from this report.
Consultees:	<p>Cllr Graham Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration.</p> <p>Mark Gaynor, Corporate Director for Housing and Regeneration</p> <p>Sara Whelan, Group Manager for Development Management and Planning</p> <p>Chris Taylor, Group Manager for Strategic Planning and Regeneration</p>
Background papers:	<p>Planning and Regeneration Service Plan 2013-2015</p> <p>Conservation Strategy</p>

## Background

1. This report provides an update on the Conservation service and how it is being developed.
2. Conservation of the built environment is important to the Borough of Dacorum. It has a rich historic environment with 941 Listed Building entries, relating to some 2,000 individual buildings and 25 Conservation Areas. The Borough also benefits from having 28 scheduled monuments and 3 historic gardens within its area.
3. The Borough Council has a range of statutory responsibilities towards its built heritage, principally in terms of works to Listed Buildings and developments within Conservation Areas. The principal piece of legislation that applies is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 updated some of the provisions of the 1990 Act, and these changes are set out in the Conservation Strategy (see below).
4. Given the Council's statutory responsibilities and the high quality of the historic environment in the Borough, it is important that the Council is sufficiently well resourced with specialist expertise to deal with both a direct caseload of Listed Building applications and proposals in Conservation Areas and to advise both Planning Officers and Members on the effect of new developments on the historic environment.
5. Dacorum is relatively well resourced with Conservation staff. Over the past year a new specialist planning team has been created within the Development Management service. Essentially this covers planning enforcement and the Conservation and Design service. The team is led by a senior Planning Officer. An Assistant Team Leader post has been created and this will be staffed shortly by a new senior Conservation professional, with recruitment into this role having been completed recently. A further part time post, together with budgetary provision for consultancy support completes the capacity that the Council holds for dealing with built heritage matters.

6. The Dacorum Conservation Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 24 November 2015, and is attached to this report for reference at Appendix 1. The purpose of the Strategy is to establish a comprehensive and agreed approach to the work of the Borough Council as a whole in the field of built heritage conservation.
7. The Conservation Strategy is currently being delivered and a draft action plan for activities in 2016 has been prepared. This is attached at Appendix 2. The key priorities proposed are as follows:
  - Continue work on the Conservation Area Character Appraisals.
  - Consider 'Buildings at Risk', locally-listed buildings and Article 4 Directions in respect of the areas being considered through the Conservation Area Character Appraisals.
  - Complete the photographic database of Listed Buildings.
  - Prepare for the move to the new Council Offices ('The Forum') through an appropriate assessment and archiving of the Council's heritage assets contained within the Civic Centre.
  - Complete the integration of the Conservation Team within the Development Management service.
  - Set out a clear framework for joint working with Planning Enforcement.
8. With reference to the detail at Appendix 2, the Committee's views on the proposed action plan is sought at the meeting.
9. Whereas conservation activity can be seen as a regulatory and reactive service, there is also a proactive side to the work of the Council in this regard, which is supported through the Conservation Strategy. Recent successes include:
  - Completion of Conservation Area Character Appraisals
  - Significant input into the design of the highly successful urban realm and one-way system in Hemel Hempstead Old Town
  - Creation of the Old Town Heritage Trail, in partnership with Dacorum Heritage Trust.
  - Assisting in securing funding for the Jellicoe Water Gardens restoration from the Heritage Lottery Fund/BIG
  - Strong input to the design of the Water Gardens restoration work.