

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET		
SUBJECT:	ADOPTION OF THE CIVIC CENTRE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN		
DATE OF DECISION:	29 JUNE 2009		
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND WORKFORCE PLANNING IN CONSULTATION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT		
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Not applicable.

SUMMARY

The Civic Centre was listed Grade II in October 1980. The listing was upgraded to II * in 1997 because it was considered to be of exceptional merit. The Civic Centre consists of 4 distinctive buildings and the outside areas.

Changes are constantly required to the building to enable it to function effectively, ranging from minor alterations and maintenance to major development projects. Change and improvement has to be managed around, and in line with, the statutory restrictions imposed by its Listed Building status.

The Conservation Management Plan provides a framework for change by setting out policies that will guide the management of change in the Civic Centre. Once adopted by the council it will be formally agreed with English Heritage. It identifies a level of heritage merit (high, medium and low) for areas of the Civic Centre. It will allow planning and Listed Building Consent to be more efficiently managed, focussing attention on areas of greatest heritage impact.

The aims of the Plan are to facilitate changes to improve the operational efficiency and sustainability of the building and secure compliance with various legislation (e.g. Disability and Discrimination Act and various H&S issues).

Adoption of the document will not form a legal contract with English Heritage. However it will be the basis for a more formal Heritage Partnership Agreement between Southampton City Council and English Heritage in due course.

This report is not seeking funding to carry out works to the building.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To formally adopt the Conservation Management Plan for the Civic Centre and to use it as the basis for all future management decisions regarding the Civic Centre and its surrounding areas.
- (ii) To delegate authority the Head of Property and Procurement, the Head of Planning and Sustainability and the Solicitor to the Council to agree the terms of and enter into a Heritage Management Agreement with English Heritage for the Civic Centre, based on the principles in the Conservation Management Plan.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To adopt the conservation policies that will guide future developments and changes to the Civic Centre.
2. To enable the Council to complete a Heritage Partnership Agreement with English Heritage for the Civic Centre based on the principles in the Conservation Management Plan.
3. Adoption of the Plan will enable the Council to progress major projects (i.e. the Civic Refurbishment Project and the associated Accommodation Strategy) within an agreed management framework. It will significantly improve and speed up the approvals process with English Heritage, and has the potential to result in efficiency savings during the procurement and design process.
4. By completing the Heritage Partnership Agreement the Council will achieve recognition (from English Heritage and GOSE) as an example of good practice.

CONSULTATION

5. This report is jointly authored by officers from Environment and Transport and Resources. There has been internal consultation with Legal Services and Finance. Additionally, English Heritage has been consulted.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

6. To not approve the Conservation Management Plan and subsequently not enter into a Heritage Partnership Agreement will make the process of obtaining Listed Building Consent for any works to the Civic Centre (both major and minor) more difficult and in some cases will mean consent may not be forthcoming.
7. Adopt the Plan in part only. This is not regarded as an option in conservation terms. The Plan stands in its entirety.

DETAIL

8. The Council as the Local Planning Authority for the city has a leading role to play in securing the historic environment of the city. As the owner of the Civic Centre it has a moral obligation to provide an example of good practice for other Listed Building owners in the City.

9. The Conservation Management Plan was commissioned by Property and Procurement Division with Planning and Sustainability Division's close guidance and input. The plan will be required by English Heritage to support proposals for major works to the buildings. It supports the Council's aspirations for the development of the former Magistrates Courts and the major refurbishment repair programme for the Municipal Block and parts of the North Block.
10. The final draft report was completed in April 2009, and has formed the basis for pre-application discussions for Civic Centre projects since this date.
11. The Conservation Management Plan has already proven to be a functional and user-friendly document that has helped to speed up design and consent procedures. Officers are currently in dialogue with English Heritage on ways in which these improvements can be developed, through the formation of a Heritage Partnership Agreement that would have the effect of taking a raft of works out of the formal consent system. This would effectively speed up the decision-making process for projects thus having potential savings on costs and resources. It is recognised there may be a slight but short term increase on staff time during the initial use of the Plan however this is outweighed significantly by the long term savings.
12. Any major or minor works within the Civic will be carried out in line with the Council's Sustainability Policy. Energy saving devices have already been installed and plans are to increase such measures in line with the Plan and thus reducing the Civic's CO2 footprint. The Conservation Management Plan will enable the process to install such measures more efficiently.
13. Required training will be provided to relevant staff (such as building surveyors from Capita and Civic Buildings Services and Building Contract Services from SCC) on the Plan and how best to use it when designing or carrying works. Part of that training will include how to make use of the 'Pro-Forma Heritage Statement' template in order to speed up the consent process.
14. A document which summarises the Conservation Management Plan, together with copies of the floor plans is located in the Members' room. It details the areas of the Civic Centre with the identified levels of Heritage Merit together with the policies that will be adopted for the future management of the buildings. The full Conservation Management Plan is available for inspection in Room 66 ground floor of the Civic Municipal Block.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital

15. No additional resources are required to implement this plan. However it is anticipated that there could be efficiency savings associated with the reduced timescale for dealing with internal applications once the Heritage Management Agreement is signed.
16. Although English Heritage will expect the Council to maintain the Civic Centre in future in line with good practice, the requirements have already been built into the major refurbishment proposals and other works are already carried out in line with the draft Conservation Management Plan and as such it is anticipated that adopting the Plan will not increase those costs.

Revenue

17. No additional resources are required to support this plan apart from some limited and short term staff time during its early implementation. It is anticipated that there could be savings in terms of officer time if the plan is approved.

Property

18. The proposals contained within this report are consistent with the approved Corporate Property Strategy and the Accommodation Strategy. The plan will set the context of the Council's responsibility to maintain and preserve the built fabric, and setting, of the Civic Centre complex. It establishes the Council's intention and commitment to accept this responsibility.

Other

19. None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

20. Works to the Civic Centre and its surrounds are controlled through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Other Legal Implications:

21. There will clearly be legal implications if the proposals to take certain works out of the consent regime are approved by English Heritage. However, it is anticipated that these implications will be wholly positive.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

22. Development Plan Documents for Planning and Sustainability
The Conservation Management Plan is not a Development Plan Document (DPD), which are statutory documents that have significant planning 'weight' when determining planning applications and development proposals in the city. However, this Plan is consistent with them and therefore supports this strategy in order help create a better Southampton.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

(Non-confidential appendices are in the Members' Rooms and can be accessed on-line)

Appendices

1.	Summary of the Civic Centre Conservation Management Plan
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Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
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Background Documents

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

1.	Conservation Management Plan and Strategy consisting of: 6 volumes; Volume 1 Control Document Volume 2 Police Block Volume 3 Guildhall Volume 4 North block Volume 5 Municipal Block Volume 6 Outside Areas	
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Background documents available for inspection at: Civic Buildings Operations
Manager office:- Room 66
Civic Centre

FORWARD PLAN No: RW03482 **KEY DECISION?** No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	Bargate
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