



CABINET

CENTRAL WARD
PUBLIC

DML/30

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Ann O'Byrne, Deputy Mayor of Liverpool

Director:

Nick Kavanagh, Director – Regeneration & Employment Services

Purpose of Report:

Liverpool's World Heritage Site Desired State of Conservation Report to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee Submission.

Date:

23rd February 2018

Report No:

EDR/05/18

Decision Type:

Cabinet Key Decision

Executive Summary:

Parts of Liverpool's historic waterfront and city centre were inscribed a World Heritage Site in 2004. Since 2013 the status has been 'in danger' of removal following the Planning Approval of the Liverpool Waters project by the Local Planning Authority supported at that time by both English Heritage (now Historic England) and Government.

In line with the requirements of the World Heritage Committee, the Government, via Department Culture Media Sport (DCMS), has to submit a report on the State of Conservation and importantly a 'Desired State of Conservation Report' (DSOCR) – for removal of the Liverpool World Heritage Site property from the 'in danger' list.

It is the DSOCR that describes the corrective measures that Liverpool City Council, the recently established World Heritage Site task Force, the City's WHS Partnership Steering Group, together with Historic England and Government agree to put in place.

The decision of the 41st World Heritage Committee held in Krakow in 2017 was that the Government/DCMS would submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2018, an updated final draft report on the state of conservation

of the property and the implementation of the above, for ultimately examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 42nd session in 2018 (July 2018). There is a period following submission on 1st February and in advance of the preparation and distribution of the Committee paper, for review with the WHC technical advisors and therefore production of a final DSOCR.

The draft DSOCR is appended to this report representing the measures agreed to by the City and its partners including the recently established World Heritage Site Task Force, the World Heritage Site Steering Group, Historic England and DCMS.

Background:

The World Heritage Site Property contains six main character areas that help to convey the above key attributes of World Heritage Site status. These are:

- The waterfront Pier Head that contains the emblematic trio of buildings known as the Three Graces, as the prime gateway into the city from the River Mersey;
- The waterfront Albert Dock, its linkage to a series of neighbouring docks, and a group of privately owned warehouses now successfully and sensitively refurbished to include museums and galleries;
- The waterfront Stanley Dock, three privately owned warehouses now successfully and sensitively refurbished as a hotel and major conference centre, and the massive Tobacco warehouse currently in progress of conversion to adaptive re-use;
- Castle Street/Dale Street Commercial Centre - the historic 'downtown' area that contains the City's key civic and financial buildings;
- William Brown Street that contains a cluster of monumental buildings, including St George's Hall, Museum, Art Gallery, Central Library, and Lime Street Station;
- Ropewalks area that developed shortly after the opening of the Old Dock in 1715 and contains merchants' housing and warehouses close to the existing city centre and the Bluecoat, the oldest arts centre in Great Britain and the oldest surviving building in the city centre.

Liverpool's conservation of its World Heritage Site and its component physical assets is a key priority for the City Council and its partners exemplified by its attributes as stated in the new Liverpool World Heritage Site Management Plan (2017-2024), approved by the Cabinet in May 2017 . Following this, the report approved by the Councils Cabinet in January 2018 identified the City's physical priorities for Heritage investment many of which are in the World Heritage Site.

Furthermore, the recent creation of an independent Task Force has been tasked with re-establishing a positive debate with Government and UNESCO with a view to the retention of WHS Status.

However balanced against this is the continuing need to grow the City's economy by prioritising economic growth via investment, development, business growth and subsequently job creation. In accordance with the draft Local Plan (approved by Cabinet and Council in January 2018, for submission to Government in March 2018) the City targets the need to deliver 35,000 new homes and deliver employment locations that will support the growth in employment by 30,000 new jobs.

It is this growth, which in part will take place within the World Heritage Site, requires careful planning, high quality design and respectful development. Indeed, the physical state of conservation is not the issue - as this has improved substantially since inscription in 2004; the repair and re-use of a number of outstanding historic buildings that were previously at risk was highlighted in the Report of the Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission (24-25 February 2015). This positive situation continues:

- The number of Buildings at Risk (problematic heritage buildings requiring repair and re-use) have been reduced to below 2.75% of building stock - far below the UK national average – an achievement made possible by prioritisation of the substantial finances for heritage managed by Liverpool City Council;
- From 2015 each development proposal that has the potential to affect the OUV of the Property is accompanied by a Heritage Impact Assessment that details the significance of the asset/s that may be affected, the nature of that impact and, where appropriate, how any harmful impacts can be mitigated. Historic England, as the national heritage advisory body, is consulted on all of these proposals and the Government/DCMS, taking into consideration the advice of Historic England, will notify the World Heritage Centre, as necessary, under the provisions of the Operational Guidelines paragraph 172

The threat to WHS as described by UNESCO is the ascertained threat of “the proposed development of Liverpool Waters” development scheme that - *if* implemented in line with the maximums allowed by the *outline* planning permission granted in June 2013 – would undoubtedly irreversibly harm the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Property and lead to its deletion from the World Heritage List.

Planning consent for Liverpool Waters legally lasts until 2042, but the three-dimensional outline approval of the maximum development envelope – not the same as plans for implementation - requires detailed planning consent of the layout, scale, appearance, access and landscaping of all components of the scheme. There is positive progress in this regard.

The World Heritage Committee required the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2018, an updated report on the state of conservation of the WHS property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 42nd session in 2018, this is with a view to them considering the deletion of this property from the

World Heritage List at its 42nd session if the State Party does not:

- Reverse course and stop the granting of planning permissions which have a negative impact on the OUV of the property,
- Provide substantive commitments to limitation on the quantity, location and size of allowable built form,
- Link the strategic city development vision to a regulatory planning document,
- Submit a DSOCR and corrective measures in a form that might be considered for adoption by the Committee;

Responding to each of the above significant progress and the planning of Liverpool Waters has already and will continue to evolve positively and respectfully from a heritage perspective but also responding to the economic growth forecasts for the City and the potential that the vastness of the 60-hectare prime waterfront development site has to offer.

This DSOCR and Corrective Measures developed by Liverpool City Council and its partners with the advice of Historic England are based on the approved Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the Property, and its attributes as stated in the new Management Plan (2017-2024) for the Property that was approved by the Cabinet of Liverpool City Council in 2017. The Corrective Measures proposed are in summary;

- The provision of a comprehensive Management Plan for the World Heritage Site – Done and approved by Cabinet in May 2017.
- To provide regulatory Planning documents which provide clear, legal guidelines to protect the WHS Property. The City Local Plan, the Liverpool Waters Neighbourhood Masterplans, the WHS management Plan and a proposed new Supplementary Planning Document are either done or works in progress.
- To produce a new WHS SPD (as above).
- To review development in Princes Dock and continue the lowering of heights of building projects compared to the Liverpool Waters Outline Planning Permission 2013. In progress.
- Should a planning application be submitted to progress a stadium at Bramley Moore Dock it is to be dealt with in accordance with national and local planning policy and would need to demonstrate how it benefits the regeneration of the WHS and its detailed design responds positively to the attributes of OUV.
- Develop a skyline policy for tall buildings as proposed in the City's

Local Plan. In progress.

- Provide clear urban design guidelines as proposed in the City's Local Plan. In progress.
- Implement the complementary Ten Streets Spatial Regeneration Framework, completed and pending a report to Cabinet in February 2018. Done
- Future management of the WHS Property potentially through the creation of a new Trust.
- Develop and Implement a WHS Interpretation and Communication Strategy building on the creation of the first WHS 'Hub' at the RIBA North Centre including the use of the City's Digital Model. In progress.
- Review the WHS Property boundary with a view to the enhancement/extension of the Site.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet endorse the Desired State of Conservation Report (DSOCR) as a record of the City's submission to Government and subsequently the World Heritage Centre for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 42nd session in July 2018.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications directly arising from this report. The corrective measures proposed are already works in progress via the Liverpool Waters and each component project and the City's Local Plan and its proposed actions.

Impact:

This document will be considered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in July 2018. The Committee will make the decision regarding Liverpool's status as a UNESCO WHS at that point. The impact of a positive or negative conclusion at the Committee will be the subject of further deliberation and a subsequent report to Cabinet once a decision has been taken and the formal position is understood.

Community Benefit:

Document as proposed and submitted will support the continuing regeneration of the City and the subsequent growth in its economy particularly in the geographical area of North Liverpool where proposed developments on Liverpool Waters will create new homes, employment space and jobs.

Consultation including consultation with Ward Councillors and outcome:

The City Council has liaised with relevant local and national stakeholders in preparing the Statement and comments received have been incorporated into the document.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There are no legal implications relevant at this stage of the project's evolution.

Risk and Mitigation:

This document will be considered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in July 2018. The Committee will make the decision regarding Liverpool's status as a UNESCO WHS at that point.

The Risk is that the document results in the loss of UNESCO World Heritage Site Status. The mitigation in this case would be the continuing regeneration of the City and the subsequent growth in the economy particularly in the geographical area of North Liverpool where proposed developments on Liverpool Waters will create new homes, employment space and jobs. The planning of Liverpool Waters has already and will continue to evolve positively and respectfully from a heritage perspective and Liverpool will continue to be a world heritage city.

Reason(s) and Alternate Options Considered:

Proposing a DSOCR that provides for any further corrective measures will undermine and possibly prevent proposed regeneration of the Liverpool Waters site within the North Liverpool area. The option to do this was therefore discounted.

Not proposing a DSOCR or any corrective measures would lead to the loss of UNESCO WHS Status without due consideration or debate.

Equality Implications:

There are no equality implications arising from this report.

Key Decision:

Key Decision – Yes

28 Day Notice – Yes

Urgency Notice – N/A

Implementation Date:

2 March 2018

Contact:

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Background Reports:

N/A

Supporting Documents:

Appendix 1 – Desired Statement of Conservation Report