

## **DELEGATED DECISION**

### **Economic Development & Housing and Planning & Assets Services**



**April 2018**

### **Bishop Auckland and Stockton and Darlington Railway Heritage Action Zones – Memorandum of Understanding with Historic England and the first Delivery Plan**

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**Report of Sarah Robson, Head of Economic Development and  
Housing and Stuart Timmiss, Head of Planning and Assets**

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#### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to sign the proposed Memorandum of Understanding with Historic England regarding the two Heritage Action Zones at Bishop Auckland and the Stockton & Darlington Railway. The report also seeks approval to agree the proposed Delivery Plan for both Zones.

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#### **Background**

- 2 Heritage Action Zones are a recent initiative of Historic England to use the historic environment to create economic growth and improve the quality of life in a small number of towns and cities across the Country. Through working in partnership with local authorities and local communities, they are looking to unlock the potential of places and make them more attractive to residents, businesses, tourists and visitors. The designation provides priority access to the resources of Historic England for the defined period of the Heritage Action Zone. The first round of 10 successful Heritage Action Zones nationally were announced in March 2017, which included Sunderland.
- 3 Last year, we were approached by Historic England to consider making a bid for a Heritage Action Zone for Bishop Auckland. Through the Brighter Bishop Auckland Regeneration Partnership Board, we did submit an application in August 2017. At the same time, we helped frame a bid as a partner organisation for the Stockton Darlington Railway. In December 2017, we were notified that both bids were successful and they would be formally designated in May 2018. There was only 8 successful bids nationally.
- 4 Since December, we have been developing the Delivery Plans for both Heritage Action Zones in partnership with Historic England. The Delivery

Plans will cover the period between April 2018 and March 2023. These delivery plans are expected to set the framework for activity within the defined boundaries of the Heritage Action Zone. It is expected that these plans will be monitored regularly throughout the five year period and reviewed every year. The delivery plans will be signed off by the respective partnership boards before they are submitted to Historic England.

- 5 As part of this process, Historic England have developed a Memorandum of Understanding to help set a framework for the Heritage Action Zone. The draft Memorandum of Understanding has been considered by our legal services and have agreed that it is reasonable to sign, provided that the delivery plan acknowledges that the budget identified is only an estimate and does not necessarily mean that the Council has agreed to fund this budget estimate. This Memorandum of Understanding needs to be signed at the same time that the Delivery Plan is submitted.

#### **Recommendations and reasons**

- 6 The designation of Heritage Action Zones should be welcomed. They offer an opportunity for both areas to have priority access to the resources that Historic England have to offer and should lead to increased economic activity and growth with them.

#### **Decision**

- 7 The recommendation to sign the Memorandum of Understanding and to agree the first Delivery Plan is approved.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – we will use the existing Capital Programme to help deliver projects within the defined Zones. These resources will also act as match funding to enable the Council to access funding from Historic England.

**Staffing** – N/A

**Risk** – the Delivery Plan contains a risk assessment within it

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty** – we will consider the needs of all sectors of society during the 5 year period of project delivery and we will meet our requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

**Accommodation** – N/A

**Crime and Disorder** – N/A

**Human Rights** – N/A

**Consultation** – the Delivery Plan has been developed with partners, and they will be signed off by the respective partnership boards

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**Procurement** – N/A

**Disability Issues** – N/A

**Legal Implications** – these are considered in the main body of the report