



Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date: Friday, 19 March 2021

Committee:
Cabinet

Date: Monday, 29 March 2021

Time: 1.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND

Venue: THIS IS A VIRTUAL MEETING

Members of the public will be able to listen to this meeting by clicking on this link:

[Cabinet 29 March 2021](#)

- Please note that this meeting will be made available through Microsoft Teams Live Events - your device will need to meet the minimum specification as detailed on the Microsoft website at this link: [Device Specification](#)
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- The recording will be made available on You Tube following the meeting.

Claire Porter

Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

Members of Cabinet

Peter Nutting (Leader)

Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader)

Gwilym Butler

Dean Carroll

Lee Chapman

Steve Davenport

Robert Macey

David Minnery

Lezley Picton

Ed Potter

Your Committee Officer is:

Amanda Holyoak

Tel: 01743 257714

Email: amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

3 Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 8 March 2021 and 11 March 2021, attached.

4 Public Question Time

To receive any questions from members of the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. Deadline for notification is not later than 1.00 pm on Thursday 25 March 2021

5 Member Question Time

To receive any questions from members of the Council. Deadline for notification is not later than 5.00 pm on Wednesday 24 March 2021

6 Scrutiny Items

7 Rectory Wood and Field - Local Nature Reserve Designation (Pages 7 - 14)

Lead Member – Councillor Lezley Picton – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Waste and Communications

Report of Director of Place

Contact: Mark Barrow 01743 258916

8 Oswestry High Streets Heritage Action Zone Update Report (Pages 15 - 22)

Lead Member – Councillor Steve Charmley – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Assets, Economic Growth and Regeneration

Report of Director of Place, attached

Contact: Mark Barrow 01743 258916

9 Exclusion of Press and Public

To resolve that in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4 [3] of the Council's Access to procedure rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item.

10 Exempt Minutes (Pages 23 - 24)

To confirm the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2021 as a correct record, attached.



Committee and Date

Cabinet

29 March 2021

CABINET

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 8 March 2021

1.00 - 2.19 pm

Responsible Officer: Amanda Holyoak

Email: amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257714

Present

Councillor Peter Nutting (Chairman)

Councillors Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader), Gwilym Butler, Dean Carroll, Lee Chapman, Steve Davenport, Robert Macey, David Minnery, Lezley Picton and Ed Potter

222 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

223 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None were declared.

224 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

225 Public Question Time

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that all preamble, statements of fact and opinions submitted with questions had been circulated and read by Cabinet Members but that she would only be reading out the questions submitted.

Questions were submitted by the following members of the public:

Nick Saxby – in relation to Whitchurch Swimming Centre

Helen Morgan – in relation to enforcement of speed limits

The full questions and answers provided are available from the webpage for the meeting:

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=130&MId=4149&Ver=4>

226 Member Question Time

Member questions were received from the following Councillors:

Brian Williams – in relation to the Montgomery Canal Restoration Trust
Dan Morris – in relation to businesses helped by Shropshire Council during the pandemic
Les Winwood – in relation to car parking charges and parking in Bridgnorth
David Turner – in relation to the Maintenance Challenge Fund Bid
Ed Bird – in relation to the condition of rural roads and litter
David Vasmer – in relation to litter

The full questions and answers provided are attached to the web page for the meeting
<https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=130&MId=4149&Ver=4>

227 Scrutiny Items

Councillor Cecilia Motley, Chair of the Communities Overview Committee, presented the report of the Committee and outlined the work undertaken. She outlined the suggested areas of review of the current Shropshire Affordable Housing Policy and Scheme. The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Strategic Planning and the Leader thanked the Committee for the excellent and helpful report.

RESOLVED:

To note the report of the Communities Overview Committee on the Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme.

228 The Cliffe Designation as Local Nature Reserve

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Waste and Communications introduced the report and explained the benefits of Local Nature Reserve designation.

RESOLVED:

That the Council delegates power to Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council to enable the designation of The Cliffe as a Local Nature Reserve.

229 Strategic Development Framework

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Assets, Economic Growth and Regeneration, introduced the report which set out a bold and ambitious vision for one of Shrewsbury's prime development which would be subject to public consultation for a period of six weeks. In addressing concerns raised in relation to the need for a bus station, the Leader stated that further work would be done on movement within the town and that comments on the consultation were encouraged from all visitors to Shrewsbury.

RESOLVED:

1. To agree that the draft Smithfield Riverside Strategic Development Framework be subject to public consultation for a period of six weeks, commencing on a date to be agreed by the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Regeneration.

2. To agree that the officers will report back to Cabinet on the outcome of consultation and present the final Riverside Smithfield Strategic Development Framework for approval.
3. That Cabinet authorises the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Regeneration, to develop a procurement and delivery strategy (to be informed by the finalised SDF) for the site's redevelopment.

230 Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 3 2020/2021

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support introduced the report and Members noted that at the end of quarter 3, the full year revenue forecast was a potential spend of £0.838m. In answer to a question about removal of SALIX funding in relation to Street Lighting LED conversion, the Executive Director of Place explained that this would now commence in the next financial year and that he would send members an update.

RESOLVED:

- A. To note that at the end of Quarter 3 (31st December 2020), the full year revenue forecast is a potential overspend of £0.838m;
- B. To consider the impact of this on the Council's General Fund balance.
- C. To approve that Shropshire Council acts as accountable body for the Leisure Recovery Fund.

231 Hackney Carriage Table of Fares

The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place Planning and Regulatory Services explained the purpose of report.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet approves, with any necessary modifications, the proposed Table of Fares for the whole administrative area of Shropshire Council, as set out in Appendix A, and agrees that it will come into effect from 1 April 2021.

232 Quarter 3 Corporate Performance Report

The Portfolio Holder for Organisational Transformation and Digital Infrastructure introduced the report and highlighted areas of particular interest in each of the key outcome areas.

RESOLVED:

To consider the emerging issues in the report and review the performance portal and identify any

performance areas to consider in greater detail or refer to the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee

233 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED:

that in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4 (3) of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item.

234 Shrewsbury Pitch and Putt

The report was introduced by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Assets, Economic Growth and Regeneration.

RESOLVED

That the recommendation set out in the report be approved.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:



Committee and Date

Cabinet

29 March 2021

CABINET

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 11 March 2021

1.30 - 2.15 pm

Responsible Officer: Amanda Holyoak

Email: amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257714

Present

Councillor Peter Nutting (Chairman)

Councillors Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader), Gwilym Butler, Dean Carroll, Lee Chapman, Steve Davenport, Robert Macey, Lezley Picton and Ed Potter

235 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor David Minnery

236 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Ed Potter Councillor Ed Potter declared that he would leave the meeting for the item on the Local Plan.

237 Minutes

It was noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2021 would be presented for approval at the next meeting.

238 Public Question Time

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that all preamble, statements of fact and opinions submitted with questions had been circulated and read by Cabinet members but that she would only be reading out the questions submitted. Members of the public who had submitted multiple questions were invited to identify one of them to be read out.

Questions from the following were read out:

Rob Wilson – with regard to Putting Pedestrians First

Charles Green, CPRE – with regard to the Local Plan

Malcolm Andrew, Trefonen Rural Protection Group, with regard to the Local Plan

David Cooper, with regard to the Local Plan

David Walker, with regard to CIL, S106 money and the Northwest relief road

Portfolio Holders responded where there had been time to arrange a response to the questions. Responses to the other questions would be added to the webpage for the meeting when available.

239 Member Question Time

Member questions were received from the following Councillors:

- Andy Boddington – in relation to the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan and bus movements
- Nat Green – in relation to implementation of a Low Traffic Zone in Shrewsbury
- Roy Aldcroft - in relation to truck movements and HS2
- Richard Huffer – in relation to expansion of Burford and infrastructure provision
- Ed Bird – in relation to green belt land at junction 3 of the M54
- David Vasmer – in relation to highways spending

The full questions and responses provided to them are attached to the webpage for the meeting.

240 Scrutiny Items

There were no scrutiny items.

241 Local Plan Update to Preparation Timetable

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Strategic Planning presented the report which requested approval of the proposed revisions to the Local Development Scheme which established the ongoing timetable for the Local Plan Review.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approves the proposed revisions to the Local Development Scheme (Appendix 1) which establishes the ongoing timetable for the Local Plan Review.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:



Cabinet Report

29th March 2021

Item

Public

DELEGATION OF POWERS TO CHURCH STRETTON TOWN COUNCIL TO DESINGATE RECTORY WOOD AND FIELD -AS A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Responsible Officer Clare Featherstone, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager
Email: Clare.featherstone@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 255067

1. Summary

- 1.1 Rectory Wood and Field is a 10.1ha public open space that sits between the town of Church Stretton and the Long Mynd. The origins of the site were as a formal designed landscape. It now comprises of ancient woodland, grassland (some of which is species-rich) and watercourses. The location of the site makes it a popular amenity for local people. In April 2015, the site was transferred on a freehold basis to Church Stretton Town Council. The site is managed in partnership with Rectory Wood and Field Interest Group (a community group made up of interested parties). The Town Council would like to designate the area as a Local nature Reserve.
- 1.2 Shropshire Council has the power under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to dedicate land as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). This is an executive function for the purposes of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 and accordingly can be delegated to another local authority by Cabinet. Sections 13 and 19 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012. Church Stretton Town Council is also required to formally accept the delegation.
- 1.3 Environmental designation raises the profile with the public and can increase visitor usage and the health and wellbeing benefits this provides. LNR designations also provides some protection for the site's nature conservation and recreation interest. Declaring Rectory Wood and Field as an LNR will:
 - improve local quality of life, health and wellbeing.
 - create opportunities for education, enjoyment and recreation, helping attract visitors and preserving links with the local community's past.
 - safeguards local ecosystem services – the benefits nature provides for people – such as reducing carbon in the atmosphere or absorbing surface water.
 - protect and enhance the natural heritage as a key part of building sustainable communities.
 - raise the nature conservation and recreation interest.
 - help to recognise the site's wildlife value
 - give recognition of local community involvement
 - provide protection within the planning system from future development.

- 1.4 The anticipated benefits of a Local Nature Reserve dedication in this location lead to the conclusion that it would be appropriate to formally delegate the Council's power to make a Local Nature Reserve dedication in accordance with section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act in respect of the land known as Rectory Wood and Field, to Church Stretton Town Council.
- 1.5 Church Stretton Town Council will therefore also be responsible for undertaking the necessary formalities to give effect to the dedication.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council delegates power to Church Stretton Town Council to enable the designation of Rectory Wood and Field as a Local Nature Reserve.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 Along with the benefits identified above, LNR designation meets the following Shropshire Council strategic outcomes set out in the following Strategies:
 - Vibrant Shropshire- Cultural Strategy for Shropshire (draft) 2021-31
 - Shropshire's Great Outdoor Strategy 2018-2028
 - Shropshire's Economic Growth Strategy- developing the visitor economy, agricultural support post- Brexit, developing skills, improving Quality of Life and ensuring attractive environments.
 - Shropshire's Local Plan- Better planning of meaningful greenspace and non-motorised access, new destination country parks, protecting environmentally sensitive sites.
 - Shropshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy- harnessing the power of the outdoors to increase physical activity, address mental health issues and help people stay independent for longer.
 - Local Transport Plan for Shropshire- encouraging walking and cycling.
 - Shropshire Council Corporate Plan- helping deliver across the board: resilient communities, healthy people and prosperous economy.
- 3.2 There are no discernible risks to Shropshire Council of making this delegation.
- 3.3 The designation of Rectory Wood and Field to a Local Nature Reserve will enhance the site status giving greater emphasis on community involvement and giving rise to enhanced opportunities for external funding and support. LNR designation will safeguard the site into the future. It will encourage stronger community benefit and support Rectory Wood and Field Interest Group with their aims and objectives. The process of designating Rectory Wood and Field as an LNR has full Natural England backing.
- 3.5 Other opportunities and impacts:
 - Impact on Looked After Children – No negative impacts identified
 - Impact on Vulnerable Children, Young People and Adults – No negative impacts identified – Enhanced opportunities for experiencing Shropshire's great outdoors contributing to physical and mental well-being.

- Supports family approach, community resilience. - Enhanced community cohesion and opportunities for experiencing Shropshire’s great outdoors contributing to physical and mental well-being.
- Human rights – No issues identified.
- Equalities – No issues identified.
- Environmental consequences of the proposal – Enhanced protection of the site and access to additional external funding allowing greater protection of habitat and species in the long-term.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications of the delegation beyond staff time to create this report. Church Stretton Town Council will be responsible for making a formal resolution to accept the delegation from Shropshire Council and a separate resolution to make the dedication. They will then be responsible for undertaking all relevant procedures with Natural England etc to give effect to the dedication.

5. Climate Change Appraisal

- 5.1 Local Nature Reserves are important habitats, offering carbon storage and biodiversity gains helping to mitigate the impact of climate change and aid nature recovery. Analysis of Council owned parks and sites demonstrated that the carbon capture value of Rectory Wood and Field is over £1m.

6. Background

- 6.1 Rectory Wood and Field is part-woodland and part-meadow. The wood comprises mature native broadleaf species, with supplementary mixed planting; the meadow is on a steep bank adjacent to the wood. The site gets its name from being formerly part of the grounds of the Old Rectory. These grounds were laid out in the late 18th century and have associations with Lancelot (Capability) Brown. The well-preserved remains of this landscape comprise woodland walks, a stream and artificial pool, and sites of buildings, which include a pumping house, summerhouse and icehouse.
- 6.2 The site has a south-easterly aspect and its topography and structure is varied forming several different management compartments. Although the site is steep in places there are no exposed rocks. Flat ground is confined to the amenity area of the field and the watercourse in the wood.
- 6.3 Rectory Wood and Field provides important recreational open space. The site has full public access by foot and there is a good network of paths. It forms an important gateway to the Long Mynd for both the local community and tourists providing a variety of short walks and access to hills beyond.

7. Legal requirements and other criteria to consider

- 7.1 Schedule 11 (12) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, which replaced Section 15 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (1949 Act), describes a ‘nature reserve’ as:
- land managed solely for a conservation purpose, or

- land managed not only for a conservation purpose but also for a recreational purpose, if the management of the land for the recreational purpose does not compromise its management for the conservation purpose.
- 7.2 Land is managed for a conservation purpose if it is managed for:
- providing, under suitable conditions and control, special opportunities for the study of, and research into, matters relating to the fauna and flora of Great Britain and the physical conditions in which they live, and for the study of geological and physiographical features of special interest in the area; or
 - preserving flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features of special interest in the area or for both these purposes.
- 7.3 Land is managed for a recreational purpose if it is managed for the purpose of providing opportunities for the enjoyment of nature or for open-air recreation.
- 7.4 The power to dedicate a Local Nature Reserve rests with Shropshire Council as the principal authority under the 1949 Act. However, under that 1949 Act, the local authority must first have or acquire a legal interest in the land in question through ownership, lease or an agreement with the owners and occupiers involved. Shropshire Council does not have a legal interest in Rectory Wood and Field, and therefore cannot dedicate it as a Local Nature Reserve.
- 7.5 Shropshire Council does have powers under Sections 13 and 19 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities and (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012 to delegate its functions in this regard to a parish, town or community council. The Council's Constitution allows Cabinet to delegate Cabinet functions to another local authority or Cabinet of another local authority. Declaration of a Local Nature Reserve is an executive function and accordingly can be delegated to another local authority by Cabinet.
- 7.6 The Council receiving the delegation will need to formally resolve to accept the delegation and then make the dedication and undertake the necessary formalities with Natural England.
- 7.7 Natural England believes LNRs should be of high value locally for environmental education and/or research. People are more likely to be aware of and value the natural environment when they can experience it at first hand in places such as LNRs. LNRs can help safeguard not just rare but also more common, locally valued species, habitat and geodiversity. They can play an important part in Local Biodiversity Action Plans and Local Geodiversity Action Plans.
- 7.8 Natural England recommends that everyone should have an accessible greenspace of 2 ha within 300m of home; at least one accessible 20 ha site within 2km of home; at least one accessible 100ha site within 5km of home; and at least one 500ha site within 10km of home. LNR's can contribute to these targets and the ANGSt standard of a minimum of 1ha of LNR per 1000 head of population.
- 7.9 The Natural England LNR Visitor Standards set out what an LNR should offer to provide a quality experience for visitors.

8. Consequences of designation as a Local Nature Reserve

- 8.1 In terms of the management of Rectory Wood and Field, there will be no change. The site will continue to be managed by Church Stretton Town Council as an area of public open space for quiet recreation and for the enhancement and protection of flora and fauna together with cultural and historic access.
- 8.2 Designation will benefit the site in terms of recognition by local residents and visitors, offering encouragement to enable continued positive input by the community.

9. Procedure to declare a local nature reserve

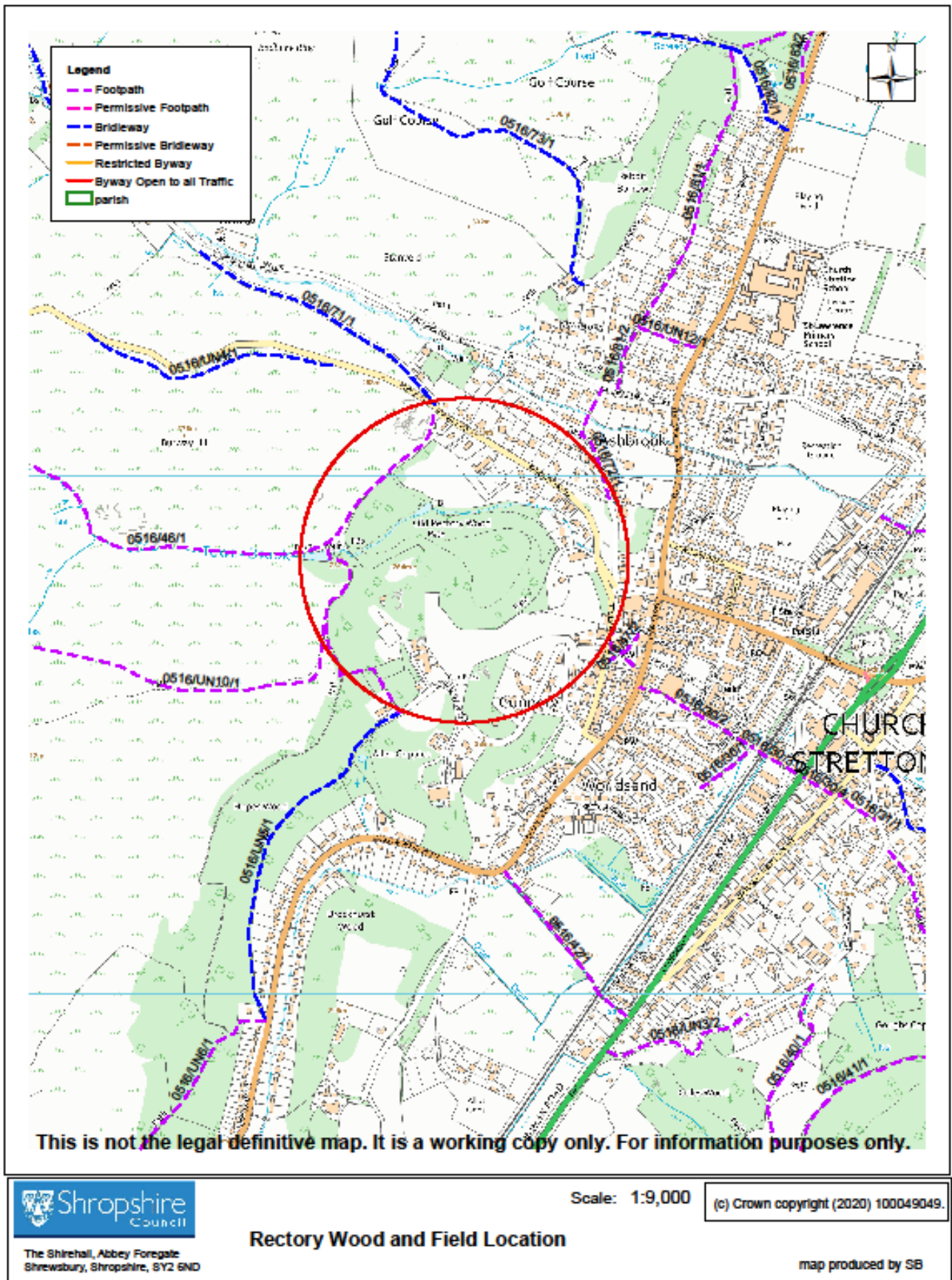
- 9.0 The site needs to be identified *as suitable for an LNR*. Natural England have confirmed suitability following correspondence. The Management Plan has been accepted by Natural England with a review due to take it to 2022. Interested parties must be informed of the intent to proceed to declaration.
- 9.1 A public notice announcing the declaration should be placed in a local paper and copies of the declaration and map made available for the public to inspect free of charge.

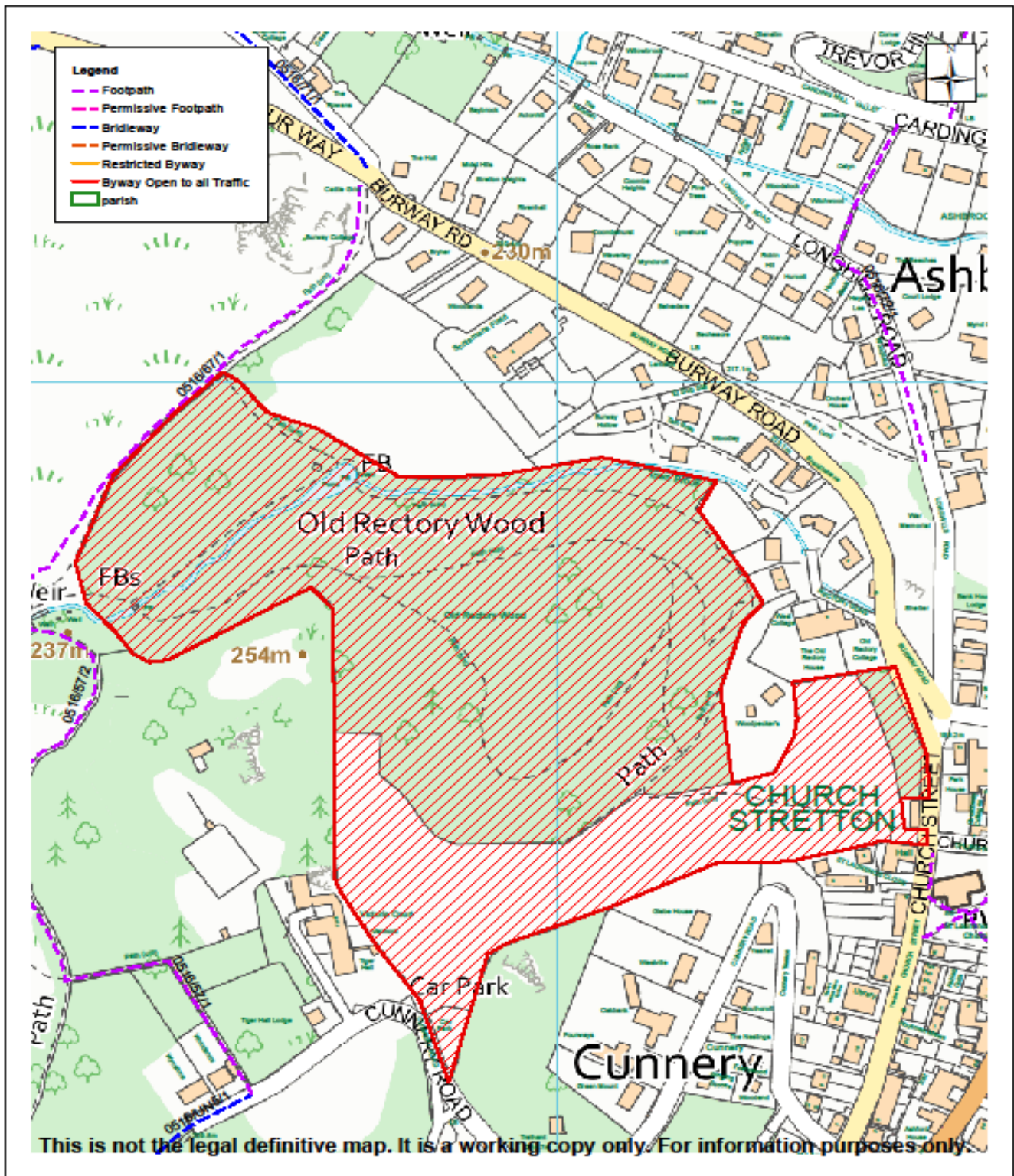
10. Conclusions

- 10.0 It is considered that designation of Rectory Wood and Field as a Local Nature Reserve will enhance the sites status within Shropshire as an area for quiet recreation, nature conservation and heritage interpretation, along with offering Climate Change mitigation. Management of the site in future will follow the management plan which will be reviewed on a 5-year basis and community involvement with the site will be encouraged through a voluntary group known as Rectory Wood and Field Interest Group, in partnership with Church Stretton Town Council. In order for this to take place it is therefore considered appropriate to delegate the power to designate the land as a LNR to Church Stretton Town Council.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information):
Key Decision:
Included within Forward Plan:
Name and Portfolio of Executive Member responsible for this area of responsibility: Cllr Lezley Picton
Local Member: Cllr. Lee Chapman Cllr. David Evans
Appendices: 1. Location Map

Appendix 1. Location Map





The Shirehall, Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

Rectory Wood and Field Boundary

Scale: 1:3,000

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map produced by SB



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Cabinet
29 th March 2021

<u>Item</u>
<u>Public</u>

REPORT HEADING

Oswestry High Street Heritage Action Zone Update

Responsible Officer Mark Barrow, Executive Director of Place
e-mail: Mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk Tel:(01743) 258919

1. Summary

- 1.1 A successful bid to Historic England was made for Oswestry to become a High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ). Overall, the HSHAZ scheme will have a total budget of £1.25m, including a contribution from Oswestry Town Council and anticipated private investment.
- 1.2 The High Streets Heritage Action Zones (HSHAZ) programme is a place-based scheme designed to secure lasting improvements to historic high streets and the communities who use them through heritage led regeneration. The objective of the programme is to make the high street a more attractive, engaging and vibrant place for people to live, work and spend time, particularly in relation to the need to build back better for post-Covid-19 economic recovery.
- 1.3 The HSHAZ funding will be used to deliver a repair scheme for key strategic buildings in Oswestry, look at converting empty buildings with mixture of uses including workspace, retail and restaurants on the ground floor, with residential units above. There will be permanent enhancements to the historic environment including key shop fronts and a residential conversions programme for the upper floors of shop units to provide a number of new homes within the town, plus increased spend and an enhanced town centre experience.
- 1.4 The HSHAZ Cultural Consortium was established in October 2020 with local cultural organisations and community groups, as a requirement of the HSHAZ programme. Following a number of online workshops with local groups, an application for additional funding has been submitted to Historic England by Shropshire Council on behalf of the Consortium to support the development of an exciting and engaging community-led cultural programme that will show case Oswestry's heritage and culture that will complement the HSHAZ programme. It is proposed that Shropshire Council, in its existing role as the lead HSHAZ partner, will manage, monitor, and disperse the grant monies awarded. If successful, the bid will be subject to a further funding agreement with Historic England. The governance arrangements relating

to the Cultural Programme will be incorporated within the Partnership Agreement between partners.

- 1.5 The Oswestry High Streets Heritage Action Zone represents a partnership between Historic England, Shropshire Council (lead partner), Oswestry Town Council, Oswestry BID and, for the cultural programme, a consortium of community and cultural groups. Governance for the HSHAZ is provided by the Future Oswestry Group, an existing partnership between Oswestry Town Council, Shropshire Council and Oswestry BID.
- 1.6 The Future Oswestry Partnership Agreement sets out the basis on which the Future Oswestry Group partnership will operate. The Partnership - brings together Oswestry Town Council, Oswestry Business Improvement District (BID) and Shropshire Council to safeguard and promote the economic well-being of the town. The Agreement sets out in detail the purpose of the Partnership and the roles and responsibilities of its members. The governance arrangements for the HSHAZ programme are set out in the Partnership Agreement between Shropshire Council, Oswestry Town Council and Oswestry Business Improvement District.
- 1.7 The Future Oswestry Group are leading on the development of the Oswestry Master Plan vision which will define the shared vision for the town following planned engagement with wider stakeholders, and will seek opportunities to secure funding streams to achieve this vision. The Future Oswestry Group will oversee the HSHAZ to provide project management and strategic co-ordination.
- 1.8 This report provides an update to Cabinet on the HSHAZ programme that has been developed. Authority is sought to formally agree the governance arrangements for the HSHAZ programme that have been negotiated.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

- 1) Authorise the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Assets the ability to formally agree the governance structure and management of the Oswestry High Street Heritage Action Zone programme as set out within the Partnership Agreement with Future Oswestry partners.
- 2) Authorise the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Assets to agree variations within the HSHAZ budget and seek any additional funds from Historic England as the opportunity arises.
- 3) Authorise the Executive Director of Place and Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders to negotiate and accept the anticipated contract from Historic England to act as the accountable body for the delivery of the Cultural Consortium programme.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

3.1 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1.1 The day-to-day administration of the HSHAZ is supported by the Project Officer employed by Shropshire Council. Governance for the HSHAZ will be provided by the Future Oswestry Group, an existing partnership between Oswestry Town Council, Shropshire Council and Oswestry BID. Governance and management arrangements that have been developed in line with Historic England criteria will be formally agreed.
- 3.1.2 As part of the HSHAZ programme, work has been undertaken on the Risk Assessment for the programme which has been developed in consultation with Historic England. The Risk Assessment identifies the risks and impact across the programme and proposed mitigation. The Risk Assessment is regularly reviewed by the HSHAZ Project Board and as part of the programme monitoring arrangements.
- 3.1.3 As part of the ongoing programme monitoring arrangements, the Risk Assessment has been reviewed. For each risk review identified, mitigation or control measures have been identified to reduce the risk to an appropriate level and are being implemented. The key risks identified within the Risk Assessment that are currently being as addressed include the inability to identify a suitable building to deliver the HSHAZ 'flagship project'; slippage in spend making it difficult to deliver the programme objective; and the potential ongoing disruption that the Covid-19 pandemic could have, both on grant take up and engagement, if infection rates start to climb again. In each instance control measures have been identified, including undertaking appropriate feasibility studies and condition assessment to ensure that investment is directed at the appropriate buildings, and regular progress, budget and risk reviews by the project board, partner organisations and with Historic England. In each instance this is considered to substantially reduce the project risk to an acceptable level.

3.2 Human Rights Act Appraisal

- 3.2.1 The recommendations contained in the report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.

3.3 Equalities and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.3.1 As part of the HSHAZ programme, detailed work has been undertaken on the HSHAZ Community Engagement Plan. The Community Engagement Plan has been developed and sets out how the programme will involve local residents to ensure that the benefits of the scheme are fully realised and embedded within the community. This will be achieved for example by providing workshops on traditional building skills for children, young people and trades; showcasing the projects that are being funded through the HSHAZ using digital media; and developing community based archive research and building assessment skills to facilitate the development of planning and design guidance (such as a shop front design guide). The overall aim is to ensure that the HSHAZ has a longer term legacy beyond the life of the programme itself.
- 3.3.2 As part of the finalisation of the Community Engagement Plan, the Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) will be undertaken for the HSHAZ programme.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Following successful submission of the Programme design, a budget reprofiling exercise was undertaken in late June and July last year in consultation with Historic England and the scheme partners to amend the spend profile to take account of the delays caused by the 1st Covid lockdown.
- 4.2 The Table 1 provides a summary of the HSHAZ budget as currently agreed with Historic England for the interventions programme and community engagement elements of the HSHAZ scheme.

Programme item	Funding partner	Total Amount (£) Y1 – Y4
Project Officer	Historic England	66,872
	Shropshire Council	87,288
Project Admin	Shropshire Council/ OTC/ BID – in-kind	50,000
Physical Interventions Programme		
Shop fronts	Historic England	135,000
	OTC	75,000
	<i>Private Investment</i>	<i>140,000**</i>
Repurposing	Historic England	150,000
	Shropshire Council (S106 affordable housing)	150,000
	<i>Private investment</i>	<i>200,000**</i>
Flagship scheme	Historic England	171,208*

	OTC	150,000
	<i>Private/ additional investment</i>	200,000
Public Realm	Historic England	125,000
	OTC	125,000
Community Engagement	Historic England	5,000 (+10,000)
	Shropshire Council/ OTC/ BID – in-kind	5,000
Total		1,835,368

Table 1 HSHAZ budget summary

* As a result of the delays caused by the Covid-19 Crises, the £20,418 that HE had agreed to Q1 & Q2 of the PO post in Y1 has now been recommitted to the Physical Interventions Programme.

**Grants under the physical interventions programme would be offered on a 60:40 ratio, with the recipient expected to fund 40% of the eligible works themselves (i.e. £540,000 coming from private investment).

Partner	Amount (£)
Historic England (Grant Offer)	653,080
Shropshire Council	237,288
OTC	350,000
Private investment	540,000
Shropshire Council/ OTC/ BID – in-kind	55,000
Total	1,835,368

Table 2 Breakdown of sources of grant and match contributions

- 4.3 Work is currently being undertaken to investigate opportunities to develop a flagship project through feasibility work to assist with. This work will inform options for potential investment.
- 4.4 The 2nd and 3rd Lockdowns mean that the current spend profile may need to be subject to further ongoing review to take account of the impacts this has had. Equally, Historic England have indicated that due to the impact that the Covid-19 crises has had around the country, there may be opportunities for the Oswestry HSHAZ to secure additional funding from them to increase the funds available for the interventions and community engagement elements of the scheme. Authorisation is therefore sought for the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Assets, to agree spend profiles and seek any additional funds from HE as the opportunity arises.
- 4.5 The funding for the Cultural Programme elements of the scheme is subject to a separate application that is currently under active consideration by Historic England. It is proposed that Shropshire Council, in its existing role as the lead HSHAZ partner, will manage, monitor, and disperse the grant monies awarded. If successful, the bid will be subject to a further funding agreement with Historic

England. The governance arrangements relating to the Cultural Programme will be incorporated within the Partnership Agreement between partners.

- 4.6 The HSHAZ Project Officer will be responsible under Historic England guidance for putting together reports and claims to Historic England as well as paying invoices to contractors delivering as part of the Cultural Programme. Approved projects and activities within the Cultural Consortium programme will draw down funding on the delivery of the project activities.
- 4.7 The additional grant applied for to support the cultural programme of activities amounts to £106,800 with match of £182,340 contributed as in-kind match from Consortium member organisations. The match comprises in-kind salary costs and volunteer time.

5. Climate Change Appraisal

- 5.1 There are a number of investment objectives that will support the Climate Change agenda including the revitalisation of Oswestry high street by investing in the repair and restoration of vacant or under-utilised heritage assets and public realm assets. This will ensure that best use is made of the embodied energy within the existing building stock. The scheme will also promote the use of traditional building materials and skills, many of which are either renewable or have a lower carbon footprint than contemporary construction materials. Likewise, much work funded under the schemes are likely to be carried out by locally based business with expertise in traditional building skills. Signposting is provided to business applicants on wider support opportunities including grants to support investment in energy efficiencies and renewable energy generation.
- 5.2 The HSHAZ programme will work to support sustainable growth and add economic value over the long term by creating and facilitating new employment and training opportunities which can be taken up by local people.
- 5.3 The HSHAZ programme will invest in historic buildings and the associated public realm, and stimulate new private investments in mixed commercial, leisure, residential and community uses to support sustainable development.

6. Background

- 6.1 Following the submission of an application to Historic England by Shropshire Council as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme, Shropshire Council were awarded £653,080 grant funding. The overall HSHAZ programme totals £1,835,368 with match being provided by Shropshire Council, Oswestry Town Council and private investment.
- 6.2 Oswestry Town Council has committed £350,000 as match funding to support the physical interventions grants programme and development of a flagship project. Governance arrangements have been agreed with Oswestry Town Council within a voluntary agreement relating to the Town Council's HSHAZ match contribution.

- 6.3 The Oswestry HSHAZ is made up of the following strands:
- Two capital grant scheme funds: -
 - One involves the repair or reinstatement of historic shop fronts
 - The other is to repurpose empty buildings, this includes the reinstatement of upper floors to accommodation, some of which may be affordable housing, and look at new uses for the ground floor by possibly sub-dividing the area to smaller shop units.
 - A Flagship project which will bring back into use a current long-term vacant property and repurpose it into an incubation space for businesses, specifically targeting young entrepreneurs.
 - Public realm improvement which will include looking at the alleyways in the town to make them more welcoming as well as exploring the possibilities of making Oswestry a dementia friendly town.
 - A community engagement programme that will engage and inform the community as well as giving them the opportunity to get involved with the project through volunteering
 - A cultural programme that will run a series of events that will celebrate the heritage and the artistic culture of the town that will enable all members of the community to participate in the project
- 6.4 The Partnership Agreement for the Future Oswestry Group has been developed to formalise the roles and responsibilities of the Future Oswestry Group members and sets out the arrangements relating to the HSHAZ funding and the delivery of the HSHAZ programme.
- 6.5 The Partnership Agreement sets out the Partnership's purpose, objectives and functions and sets out arrangements relating to governance and accountability, monitoring performance, financial matters, risk management, review process, structures and membership, and communications protocols. Such terms of reference and governance arrangements have been established to oversee the HSHAZ programme, to reflect the HSHAZ funding requirements and expectations.
- 6.6 Following the recruitment of the HSHAZ Project Officer, Expressions of Interest (EOIs) and grant criteria for the grant scheme element of the programme were developed and promoted to local businesses. The EOIs were made available to businesses on the 11th November 2020, which has generated to date 9 EOI's for the shop front scheme and 10 for the repurposing scheme. These EOIs were taken to the HSHAZ Board for recommendation to progress to submit a full application which was passed on the 6th January 2021. Applications from businesses are being supported to bring forward proposals that meet with the HSHAZ criteria.
- 6.7 As part of the HSHAZ Programme, the Cultural Consortium has now been set up to deliver an exciting and engaging cultural programme in collaboration with the community that will show case Oswestry's heritage and culture. The group was set up in October 2020 and consists of local cultural organisations and community groups.

- 6.8 Shropshire Council were able to secure a £10,000 pilot project grant to deliver an initial series of events however these are currently on hold due to the third lockdown but will be delivered by September. Shropshire Council has supported the Cultural Consortium to submit an application for additional funding from Historic England of £106,800 to grow the pilot project into a series of cultural events that everyone can participate in that will enable people of all ages to engage with their unique heritage of Oswestry until the project ends in March 2024. The grant submission also includes funding to appoint an independent facilitator / formative evaluator on a self-employed basis to work with the group to develop the Consortium and its governance arrangements to ensure future legacy of the cultural programme activities.
- 6.9 A Communications plan has been developed for the HSHAZ, which has been signed between Historic England, Shropshire Council and Oswestry Town Council. A dedicated webpage for the site is under development on the Shropshire Council website and Social media pages have been set up.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 This report provides an update on the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme currently being delivered. Delegation is sought to formally agree the governance arrangements for the HSHAZ programme as outlined within the Cabinet report presented in November 2019, to enable Shropshire Council to act as accountable body for the delivery of the Cultural Consortium programme and to seek additional funds from Historic England to support the HSHAZ programme, if the opportunity arises.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Oswestry High Street Heritage Action Zone 18th November 2019

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Councillor Steve Charmley

Local Member

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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