

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES**

**HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

**Strategic Priorities**

Healthy City

Learning City

Attractive and Inclusive City

**Corporate Improvement Priorities**

C101 – Delivering customer focussed services

C102 – Being ‘One Council’

C103 – Efficient and effective council

C104 – Improving partnership working to deliver ‘One City’

**1.0 WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO COMMITTEE?**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the work ongoing within Culture and Tourism with regard to the Heritage agenda across the city.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Heritage is an area of continuing growth both across the region and for the City of Sunderland. Sunderland has a distinct heritage in which there is a strong sense of pride across the city. This pride is based on our character and our traditions, including the distinct identity of specific communities and the cultural traditions of our people. A successful nomination for World Heritage Status (decision to be made in 2011) would allow the city to become a cultural heritage landmark as one of three World Heritage Sites across the region and 27 sites across the UK, allowing the city to prosper in areas such as economic development and tourism.
- 2.2 Heritage for the city (as detailed in previous reports) is managed through the Directorate along with the World Heritage Project Liaison Officer for Sunderland City and South Tyneside Councils. Responsibility for the conservation of heritage buildings and built heritage lies within the Development and Regeneration Directorate of the City Council, where a close working relationship has been developed in order to ensure that projects are enhanced and developed using both areas of knowledge, expertise and funding where possible.
- 2.3 The City Council is committed to supporting heritage initiatives and this is viewed within the context of the Council’s strategic priorities, Cultural Strategy and Public Library Heritage Strategy, alongside the existing commitments to other projects across the city.
- 2.4 Listed below is a current update of some of the work ongoing across Culture and Tourism in relation to Heritage.

### 3.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Heritage Open Days** continues to be a hugely popular event in the Sunderland Calendar, with the 2008 event being a resounding success. Work is now underway to develop the 2009 calendar which takes place from 10 – 13 September 2009. Officers within Culture and Tourism are working to encourage new venues to participate in the event. Proposed programme includes developing a Ghost Walk, encouraging voluntary heritage societies to host events including talks and exhibitions and exhibiting rare artefacts from Fulwell Windmill. Contact is currently being made with venues such as Darwin's Brewery, Hendon Sewage Works, the Fire Service and Liebherr premises to encourage participation in the event.
- 3.2 Bede's Way Annual Walk** is an event which takes place annually in June and encourages people to follow in the footsteps of one of our great ancestors, Bede himself. The walk which this year takes place on Saturday 27 June, will leave from St Peter's Church in Monkwearmouth, leading to Whitburn, Cleadon, via South Shields finishing at St Paul's Church, in Church Bank, Jarrow.
- 3.3 Local Studies Fact Sheets** – the information sheets are developed on a rolling programme, aiming to develop 3 sheets per annum. There are now a total of 20 sheets available which give detail on the history and heritage of the city focusing on industry, built heritage, people and places. The latest information sheet produced features information on Slavery in Sunderland and the North East and follows on from the work delivered for the Bi-Centenary of the Abolition of Slavery in 2007. The next sheet currently under development is Bernard Gilpin which links to the proposed celebrations of Houghton Rectory Park which will take place in June 2009.

All factsheets are available in hard copy or can be downloaded from the Council website at [www.sunderland.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/libraries)

- 3.4 Fulwell Windmill** – Fulwell Windmill as reported to the Committee in November 2008 has now celebrated its Bi-Centenary and continues to be the famous landmark it was 200 years ago as well as one of Sunderland's most treasured heritage assets.

The Windmill now offers a free access policy which was introduced in April 2008 and continues to attract a growing number of visitors to the site. It is anticipated that 2009 will once again be a successful year for the Mill and attract new audiences, by developing a range of activities and programme to complement the visitor attraction. Children's activities are on offer throughout all school holidays and programme will be developed for National Mills Weekend, Heritage Open Days and the Mill's Christmas weekend.

The Windmill, following a successful funding bid in 2008, recently developed a virtual art project to mark the end of the Bi-Centenary. The project involved contracting a local arts agency to facilitate workshop sessions with two intergenerational groups to develop the artwork. Working in partnership with two main groups – children from Fulwell Primary School and members of the nearby community, the history, personal memories and importance of the Mill was

researched and used to develop the artwork. This culminated in the artwork being projected directly on to the Windmill itself for the duration of two weeks in December. There is a strong sense of community within Fulwell and feedback from the groups and arts agency was that the project evoked a strong sense of pride and sense of place. Participants also enjoyed sharing memories and stories together and were very pleased with the tasteful and sympathetic finished artwork. This work has been recorded onto CD ROM for archive purpose and has provided a lasting legacy in celebrating the Bi-Centenary of Fulwell Mill.

**3.5 Sunderland Heritage Forum** is a partnership of voluntary and professional organisations who work towards celebrating and protecting Wearside's heritage. The Forum has now been established for 12 years and representatives meet on a bi-monthly basis to develop projects and promote the history and heritage of the city across the region. The Forum is now working to conclude the Street Names Project which has been led by Stuart Miller and has involved volunteers researching the street names of the city, which will be completed in a booklet, website and will conclude with an Exhibition and symposia to publicise the project across the city.

The Forum in partnership with the City Council is also working to promote Local History Month which takes place throughout May. Groups and societies across the city will be hosting a variety of events which will be publicised and promoted through the production of a 6 page booklet which will be available citywide. The programme will include a variety of guided walks, talks, and exhibitions.

**3.6 Their Past Your Future 2** – this project was carried out and completed during 2008. The project was part of a UK-wide educational project which aims to inspire people of all ages to truly discover the impact of 20th century conflict, and recognise why it is relevant now and in the future. Sunderland City Council working with Infinite Arts researched and developed an E-Resource Pack using the Council's own photographic collection as a starting point involving pupils, teachers and older people in Sunderland. The work is now available as an education resource pack for schools and is available to download on the Sunderland City Council website. All participants have concluded that the project was fulfilling and achieved, if not surpassed, their expectations.

**3.7 Bowes Railway** – following the feasibility study that was carried out in partnership with Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council, work is progressing to address the immediate priorities highlighted within the report.

- i) The Health and Safety Report has been completed and has been presented to the Chair for consideration, with an offer of further advice and support from City Council representatives if required.
- ii) The Conservation Management Plan for the site is also about to be completed which will give documented evidence on the historical significance of the site, as well as an outline of works and associated costs, which will be necessary to secure the site for the future.
- iii) The feasibility study outlined the lack of governance and management arrangements. This will be addressed through the Bowes Railway Steering Group.

Recent developments at the site have included the successful grant funding that has been confirmed to carry out emergency works on the Blackham Hill Hauler House which has been drawn down from English Heritage, Washington Area SIB and Sunderland City Council. Work will commence following a tendering process to complete the essential repair works. This will allow provision of a secure building for many years to come. Work is also continuing with the area's LMAP (Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group) to address safety and security issues on the site.

### **3.8 World Heritage Site Status**

Following the submission of the UK's World Heritage Nomination of Darwin's Landscape Laboratory (January 2009), Wearmouth-Jarrow will now be the next UK Site to be nominated.

The Nomination Document and Management Plan are in the final stages of preparation. Text will be agreed and then taken through public consultation during 2009 before being submitted by the UK Government to UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) by January 2010.

Funding from ONE North East has now been confirmed for resources to support this process during 2008/9 and 2009/10. This includes the design and production of the Nomination Document, information and awareness raising work through the public consultation period and capital improvements to the way the site is presented, including investment at St Peter's. Match funding for the ONE North East grant has been confirmed from English Heritage and Sunderland City Council and other funding bids are in preparation to support the nomination.

Awareness raising work has included the Books of Life, a modern-day "manuscript" which thousands of people from the UK and overseas from members of the public to VIPs, have signed to demonstrate support for the nomination. The "VIP" book, first signed by the Duke of Gloucester, has most recently been signed by all three national major political party leaders.

Northumbria Water has now nearly completed work at St Peter's, renewing a sewer pumping station. To offset potential damage to the site (which should in any case be prevented through archaeological supervision) and demonstrate support for the bid, they have agreed to install a marked-out footprint of the monastic buildings originally excavated. A planning application for these works is currently with Sunderland City Council for consideration.

## **4.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and to receive further updates regarding Heritage in Sunderland as appropriate.

## **5.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

5.1 Local Heritage Strategy

## **6.0 GLOSSARY**

MLA – Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

TWM – Tyne and Wear Museums

HLF – Heritage Lottery Fund

CGF - Community Grant Foundation

LMAP - Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Group

UNESCO - United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

---

Contact Officer: Chris Alexander, Head of Culture and Tourism,  
0191 561 8420  
[Chris.Alexander@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.Alexander@sunderland.gov.uk)