

SUBJECT: Collaborative Heritage Services Provision

MEETING: Individual Cabinet Member Decision (Enterprise)

DATE: 10th October 2018

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 This report seeks the Cabinet Member for Enterprise's approval to engage in a collaborative approach to the delivery of Built Heritage Services between Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Monmouthshire County Council.
- 1.2 The proposals seek to maximise the benefits of collaborative working regarding the delivery of a specialist topic area addressing issues of consistency, capacity and experience sharing across the both Authorities building on the success of the recent collaboration between Monmouthshire County Council and Torfaen County Borough Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To authorise the following:
 - The delivery of services set out in part 3 ;
 - Delegate responsibility to the Head of Planning, Housing and Place-shaping, to amend and extend the agreement should demand and resources allow.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Monmouthshire has an established Heritage Team within the wider Development Management Team who are responsible for advising and managing all aspects of the historic environment. A recent report approved by Single Cabinet Member set out a formal collaboration between Monmouthshire County Council and Torfaen County Borough Council providing a joint built heritage service. This has been implemented and the joint service has been successfully operating since January 2019. The first six month review was held in June received very positive reviews of the service and some early success stories. From this some of the commitments in terms of reconsidering case officer roles can now be investigated, building on the relationships formed over the last 6 months. .
- 3.2 Collaborative services has for some time been on the agenda for Local Government services in Wales. The issues were first considered in a report dated 2012, The Simpson Compact, which suggested a series of options recommending voluntary arrangements given funding demands. A further report in May 2013 by Hyder entitled 'Options for the Delivery of Local Authority Historic Environment Conservation Services in Wales' - identified regional collaboration on a formal, constituted basis as having the most support. Up until recently progress on this area

had stalled however concerns about the resilience and capacity of local conservation services were a strong theme throughout the scrutiny of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill/Act. In 2017 a Task and Finish Group was set up by Welsh Government with MCC as a panel member, specifically looking at delivering Heritage Services through collaborative models. In addition specific work streams have also be established in North Wales looking at a series of options to improve Heritage Services delivery underlining the concern and wider review of delivering suitable models to manage the historic environment in Wales.

- 3.3 The delivery of services through a combined approach offers many benefits, such as improved resilience, opportunity to increase skills sharing and build a stronger knowledge base for all and improved officer morale offering constructive peer review. Despite a team approach already being established in Monmouthshire, it is considered that initiating collaborative services, managed by Monmouthshire and on terms that are suitable for MCC, TCBC and Blaenau Gwent CBC is the best approach to collaborative working and delivers a more robust and responsive service. This has been evident in the recent collaboration with TCBC, on which this relationship seeks to build.
- 3.4 The Heritage team includes a Heritage Manager (post A), Senior Heritage Officer (post B), Heritage Monitoring Officer (post C), Tree officer (post F) and a Senior Landscape and Urban Design Officer (post G). Through collaboration team has been supplemented by the addition of two posts, both at a senior level funded by TCBC. Post D is directly funded by TCBC however the post is employed by MCC having the same terms and conditions as posts A-C. Post E is employed by TCBC and remain so for the duration of the separate agreement with TCBC.
- 3.5 In relation to the collaboration proposed with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC), their service demands are significantly less than TCBC. Having only 53 Listed Buildings and 2 Conservation Areas the Development Management demand is only a fraction of the demands of TCBC and MCC. Therefore the proposed agreement is to deliver a set level of service which can be quantified and resourced financially by BGCBC. Based on recent demands, BGCBC have requested that the minimum service level is provided, this comprises processing two listed building consent applications, advising on two planning applications in conservation areas and responding the three pre application enquiries per annum. This service has been costed at £3,564 per annum.

X2 LBC applications @£800	£1600
X3 PP applications @£400	£1200
Average 3 pre apps a year @£120	£360
IT/Communications	£80
Management fee 10%	£324
Total	£3,564
Mileage @ 45 pence per mile	Charged separately.

- 3.6 The above charges have been based on available evidence from the Simpson report commissioned by WG looking as cost recovery for planning departments. The Simpson report, which carried out research from across Wales, identified the average cost against processing an application. This concluded that on average it costs £800 to process a listed building consent application. In relation to planning consultations, as this involves half the work, this has been set at half the application fee and the pre application fees are set to mirror MCC's approved charging schedule. It was also considered necessary to include an additional 10% management fee and a small element of IT. Any mileage incurred is charged at the standard rate and calculated from the employee's base of work. If BGCBC require services above the agreed service level, this is charged at our hourly rate. The hourly rate is the total cost to the LPA for the post, plus 10%.
- 3.7 As this level of service demand is small it can be absorbed by the current team, however should demand increase additional resources would be required, which in turn would need to be resourced by BGCBC.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 4.1 This addition to the current collaborative arrangement with TCBC is based on one year's service provision as opposed to the two years agreed with TCBC. As with the current arrangement, service provision in MCC will be maintained and unaffected. However, this does increase the level of management required for the current Heritage Manager, given MCC would be hosting Heritage Services for three Local Planning Authorities. This impact, together with the quality of service delivery will be subject to regular review.
- 4.2 There is the option to reject the proposed collaborative arrangement, in which BGBC will continue to deliver the service independently. There would be no detriment to current service delivery should this happen. However, this would be considered a missed opportunity given the increasing agenda for collaboration in many areas of service delivery at a local level from Welsh Government.
- 4.3 As stated the offer will be under regular review with data collated relating to key performance indicators, for example number of applications and time taken to determine. As well as qualitative data and feedback from managers and customers as to the quality of advice provided. If service delivery within MCC begins to suffer either party can terminate the agreement providing 3 months' notice with limited impact on resources.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 5.1 A successful collaboration will be the provision of an enhanced and more resilient heritage service for all Councils involved. An evaluation assessment has been included at Appendix B for future evaluation of whether the decision has been successfully implemented. The evaluation of success will be reported to the

Economy and Development Select Committee each September/October as part of the Planning Service's Annual Performance Report. Planning Committee members are invited to that meeting.

6. REASONS:

- 6.1 The recommendations propose to enter into a suitable collaborative arrangement in fulfilling the need to provide specialist advice to management of the historic environment. This will ensure that the terms and conditions of any arrangement are able to be negotiated by the service providers rather than being imposed on the Local Authority should formal collaboration be enforced.
- 6.2 To provide the opportunity for the department to enter into voluntary arrangement in order to identify opportunities and challenges to service delivery and adapt accordingly ensuring that the service can be most effective in the future.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 Providing a collaborative approach will be cost neutral to MCC as current staffing levels are maintained and are within budget. The additional resources can be accommodated within the current team given the low level of demand. If service demands from BGCBC increase this will be at an additional cost the BGCBC.
- 7.2 Should the voluntary agreement be ended by either party, a notice period of 3 months is required to terminate the agreement. If MCC terminate the agreement any remaining payment shall be returned to BGCBC. If BGCBC terminate the agreement the funding shall be retained by MCC.

8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

The are no significant equality impacts identified in the assessment (Appendix C).

There may be beneficial impacts economically or to quality of life from quicker decisions in some instances given the wider pool of staff.

The actual impacts from this report's recommendations will be reviewed regularly with programmed periodic evaluations. The criteria for monitoring and review will include: collating data on numbers of applications, time taken to determine, types of applications/work area pressures and general managerial feedback.

9. CONSULTEES:

MCC Development Services Manager - responded stating that approach to collaboration is sensible and allows MCC to prescribe terms that maintain and protect current service delivery in order to future proof the service.

Heritage Team – responded that they were excited about the potential opportunities that collaboration could bring

Finance – provided information in relation to employee hourly rates and have reviewed the charging schedule.

Legal – responded stating that the notice period should be in writing to avoid any doubt.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

See appendix A – Team and Reporting Structure

See appendix B - Future Evaluation of Implementation

See appendix C - Future Generations Evaluation

11. AUTHOR:

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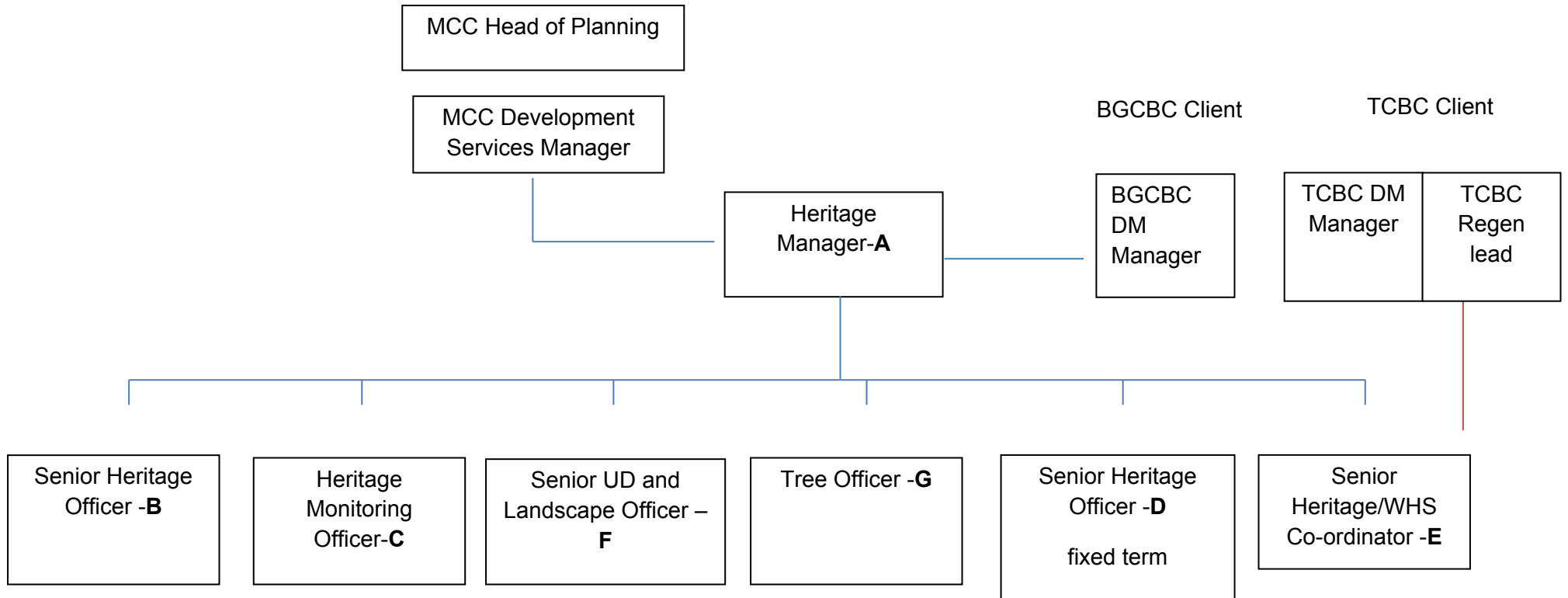
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Appendix A

Team and Reporting Structure



Appendix B Evaluation Criteria – Cabinet, Individual Cabinet Member Decisions & Council

Title of Report:	Collaborative Heritage Services
Date decision was made:	
Report Author:	Mark Hand

What will happen as a result of this decision being approved by Cabinet or Council?

The desired outcome is to see an established and responsive collaborative approach to service delivery with the development of a larger multi-disciplinary team.

The decision will offer an enhanced level of service meeting customer needs.

To be completed at 6 month appraisal

Was the desired outcome achieved? What has changed as a result of the decision? Have things improved overall as a result of the decision being taken?

What benchmarks and/or criteria will you use to determine whether the decision has been successfully implemented?

Criteria will include:

Number of applications

Time taken to determine

Types of applications/work pressures

Effective and responsive advice provided in a timely manner through Managerial Review/Evaluation.

On-going monitoring of standard service provision to ensure that timescales and service is not detrimentally affected beyond the normal parameters as identified in current monthly reviews of data by DM Management.

To be completed at 6 month appraisal

Paint a picture of what has happened since the decision was implemented. Give an overview of how you fared against the criteria. What worked well, what didn't work well. The reasons why you might not have achieved the desired level of outcome. Detail the positive outcomes as a direct result of the decision. If something didn't work, why didn't it work and how has that effected implementation.

What is the estimate cost of implementing this decision or, if the decision is designed to save money, what is the proposed saving that the decision will achieve?

There is no proposed immediate resource requirements or savings. The proposals will see an additional income of £3,564 (+VAT) for the development management team.

To be completed at 6 month appraisal

Give an overview of whether the decision was implemented within the budget set out in the report or whether the desired amount of savings was realised. If not, give a brief overview of the reasons why and what the actual costs/savings were.

Any other comments