

**SUBJECT: Collaborative Heritage Services Provision**

**MEETING: Individual Cabinet Member Decision (Enterprise and Land Use Planning)**

**DATE: 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020**

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All**

**1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 This report seeks the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Land Use Planning's approval to extend the existing arrangements of a collaborative approach to the delivery of Built Heritage Services between Monmouthshire County Council and Torfaen County Borough Council. The extension is for 12 months post the expiration of the existing contract, which is due to end in December 2020.
- 1.2 The proposals seek to maintain and build on the benefits of the existing collaborative framework regarding the delivery of a specialist topic area benefitting from the opportunities of collaborative working can bring in terms of resilience, skills building and experience sharing across the both Authorities.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 To authorise the following:
- The extension of the shared working practices as set out in Appendix A to December 2021;
  - The extension of the contract for post D hosted by MCC but funded directly by TCBC for a minimum of a 12 month period.

**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 in relation to Development Management. An opportunity arose where Monmouthshire County Council could work in partnership with Torfaen County Borough Council in providing a joint built heritage service. The collaborative agreement has been in place since January 2019 and been under regular review. At the last review meeting in May 2020 it was confirmed that both parties wanted to extend the agreement for another 12 months to continue to gain from the benefits of the joint service. Throughout the series of reviews, positive feedback is received regularly and any issues from both sides is addressed quickly improving the overall service.
- 3.2 The reasons for maintaining the collaboration are as valid as they were at the outset and set out fully in the original report. For clarity they are summarised here. 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. 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. Heritage services have been under review in North Wales seeking wider scale collaboration.

- 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 within the team 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 both MCC and TCBC (see attached Memorandum Of Understanding) is the best approach to collaborative working and delivers a more robust and responsive service. This has proved to be the case where officers have taken leave, or been away from work, the service has continued to perform and has proved to be robust.
- 3.4 As stated the working relationships and processes have been 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.
- 3.5 All efforts have been made to address problems quickly where they arose. Despite being a trial run, few problems were encountered, however where they were improvements have been made. For example, after a good start the time taken to respond to consultations increased causing delays at the other end. Following a discussion a new process was implemented to ensure that allocation was fair and that case officers in TCBC knew which heritage officer was dealing with their application. Further improvements are proposed with TCBC increasing access to their systems for officers to access information more readily. It stands that this process of continual feedback and improvement will stay in place, however as per the current terms and conditions, all issues will be escalated to senior managers to resolve.
- 3.6 The Heritage team structure is shown in Appendix A, with the addition of the funded Senior Heritage Post (post D). This post is fully funded by TCBC as part of the agreement and is on a 2yr fixed term. The extension of the agreement also involves the extension of this temporary contract to three years, an extension of 12 months. This post is employed by MCC with the same terms and conditions as posts A-C. Post E is currently employed by TCBC and will remain so for the duration of the agreement and this proposed extension. Posts F and G will continue to deliver services to MCC only. If the service cannot be delivered to TCBC any longer, and MCC withdraw subject to the MoU (see attached) TCBC will be released from funding post D.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 As above the evaluation criteria looked at the number of cases dealt with and the workload and project assessment. In the 18 months of the current collaboration, the team dealt with 13 listed building consent applications, responded to 116 Planning consultations and 8 pre apps. In addition, from the Development Management side, the team have been involved in a number of large scale projects including;
  - Assessment and presentation of the redevelopment (New Urban Village) and large scale alterations to Mamhilad Nylon Spinners factory,

- Advising on the new buildings at the listed LLanfrecfa Grange Hospital,
- Residential development in a Registered Garden at Malthouse Lane,
- New Police Headquarters in the setting of a listed building,
- Extensive negotiations at Cwrt Farm linking the restoration with a solar farm development,
- Commenting on the Local Development Plan candidate sites.

3.9 In relation to work connected with the regeneration team at TCBC, the Heritage team have provided extensive advice in terms of the Blaenavon Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) and the Pontypool Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) programme. Both schemes have involved extensive heritage input including grant support and assessment, monitoring on site and assessment of proposals to improve the character and vitality of the conservation areas in these locations. The team has provided reasonable and constructive advice in a timely manner in order to facilitate the delivery of the programme targets

#### 4. **EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

To Summarise:

**Positive:** This proposal will continue with the collaborative arrangement in fulfilling the need to provide specialist advice to management of the historic environment across the two council areas. This ensures resilience within the Heritage team.

**Future:** Provides the opportunity for the continuation of the department to identify opportunities and challenges to service delivery and adapt accordingly ensuring that the service can be most effective in the future.

**Negative:** Resource implication in relation to the management of the delivery of the collaborative approach.

**Future:** Continue to monitor the impact of the management of the delivery of this collaborative services within the Development Management Team and adapt accordingly.

#### 5. **OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

5.1 The options in relation to the proposals to extend the collaborative Heritage services with Torfaen for a period of 12 months are to:

- Agree to the extension of the contract for a further 12 months.
- Reject the proposed extension of the collaborative arrangement and TCBC will need to deliver the service independently.

<b>Option</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1) Extend the agreement on exactly the same terms of the memorandum of understanding for another 12 months, ending in December 2021	The current service provision, results in a wider team and greater resilience across the two counties. MCC benefits from having a larger team that is able adapt to a varied workload. The inclusion of two further specialists, one with considerable experience of grant work and regeneration	A level of increased management will be required for the current Heritage Manager however, this is partly offset by the additional post (D).	This is the preferred option and ensures that MCC Heritage services are delivered at a high standard and a collaborative working relationship with TCBC continues.

	enhances the skills base available to continue to deliver a robust heritage service.		
2) Reject the proposed extension of the collaborative arrangement and TCBC will need to deliver the service independently.	There would be no detriment to current service delivery within MCC should this happen. Any redundancy for post D is covered by TCBC in the MoU. It would increase the capacity of the Heritage Manager as there would be a reduction in staff numbers.	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 and the positive working relationships and work conducted to date. Reduces the resilience of the heritage team to deliver a robust service in MCC.	

## 6. RECOMMENDATION:

- 6.1 Based on the reasons above, Option 1 (to extent the contract with TCBC) is the preferred option. This will result in the provision of an enhanced and more resilient heritage service for both Councils.

## 7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Providing a collaborative approach will remain at cost neutral to MCC as current staffing levels are maintained and are within budget. The additional post created for a period of two years, now proposed to be extended for 12 months is fully funded by TCBC, including any salary increments and national joint council negotiated pay awards.
- 7.2 TCBC will commit to payment for post D for an extended period of 12 months for the service delivery identified above. Should the service be withdrawn by MCC on the basis that MCC are unable to provide the service as set out above, TCBC shall be released from payment. MCC shall invoice for the post at the beginning of the 12 month extension, plus any NJC increase or associated pay adjustment, ensuring commitment of the funding.

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

The are no significant equality impacts identified in the Assessment (Appendix 2).

There are likely to be beneficial impacts to the local community either economically or in qualitative terms e.g. ensuring green infrastructure is secured, as a result of the effective monitoring of planning obligations.

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 and types of obligations and the time taken to monitor these.

## **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.
- TCBC, Senior officers have been a key stakeholder in developing and writing the MoU and are in full support of the collaborative approach.
- Legal responded confirming that the informal collaborative approach would be a trial and any issues that arise will be addressed as and when. In addition the financial exposure was considered acceptable given TCBC's commitment to finance the post for two years.

## **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:**

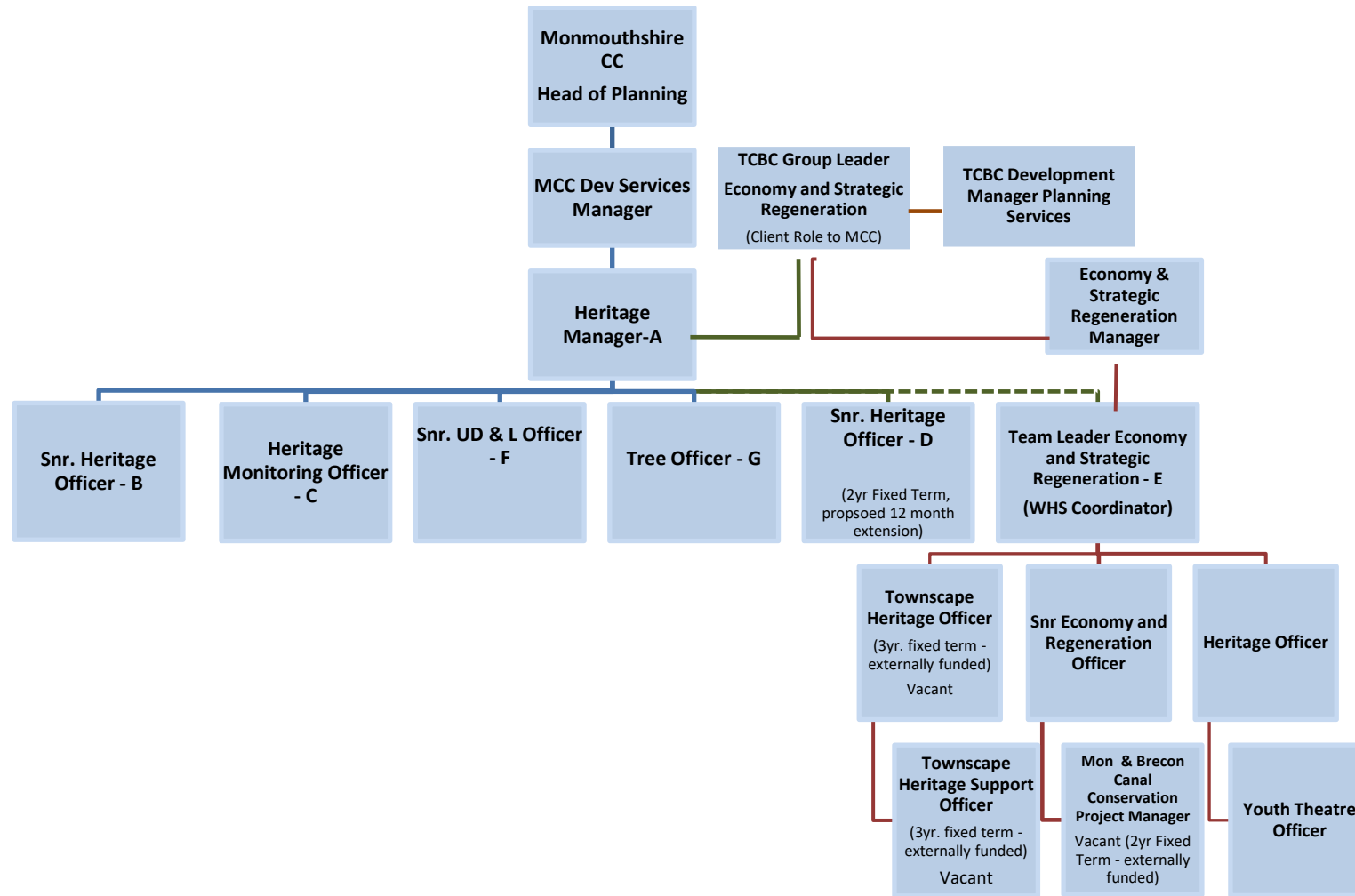
Amy Longford, Heritage Manager

## **12. CONTACT DETAILS:**

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Appendix A –



— — Conservation Management  
— Regeneration Management

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

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Collaborative Heritage Services</b>
<b>Date decision was made:</b>	
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Amy Longford</b>

### 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 12 month appraisal intervals

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

Turnaround time from receipt to response of request for advice

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 12 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 are cost neutral. Any costs associated with extending beyond the current 12 month extension would be discussed at that time, and a decision made on whether or not to proceed.

To be completed at 12 month appraisal intervals

*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