

## **Case Studies: Making the most of heritage assets**

### **Purpose of report**

For information.

### **Summary**

In July the LGA and English Heritage launched a new collection of case studies showing how heritage is helping councils achieve a range of local priorities – from boosting economic growth through tourism, jobs and attracting businesses, to improving the attractiveness of places and engaging communities.

They also show that in the context of severe budget pressures, councils are finding new ways of working that brings together specialist conservation, planning and archaeological advice in a coordinated, place-based approach to heritage and planning.

Three case studies are shared in this report and copies of the full publication will be available at the meeting.

### **Recommendation**

Members are invited to note the report.

### **Actions**

To be taken forward by officers as directed by members.

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## **Case Studies: Making the most of heritage assets**

### **Essex County Council**

#### ***'Place Services': developing a centre of excellence***

Following a scrutiny review of delivery, specialist planning and advice services within Essex County Council were combined in 2012 to form a multi-disciplinary 'Place Services' Team. This includes environmental planners, archaeologists, ecologists, landscape architects, urban designers, listed building specialists and arboriculturists.

Over the following year, the Team worked in partnership with 11 local authorities in Essex, providing, through Service Level Agreements (SLAs), advice and information aimed at safeguarding and maximising the environmental, social and economic benefits the historic environment brings.

During this time the new Team tested more commercially focussed and integrated approaches to its operations, including a move towards full cost recovery from SLA's with local authority partners and internal commissioning of work by Essex County Council. This increased commercial aptitude, and the application of multi-disciplinary principles, has also resulted in more active involvement in tendering for consultancy work. This has included national framework agreements, such as the Planning Advisory Service planning framework, large Heritage Lottery Funded projects, and the provision of specialist services to the independent sector. In addition, the team has been trialing combined responses to planning applications, with the objective of resolving conflicting advice early in the process, helping to save time and money in the long run.

Through internal training and mentoring, the team's historic environment specialists have adopted more flexible working practices, including multi-skilling, to help build resilience to future challenges. Each of the specialists is now able to provide all historic environment functions in relation to the provision of information and advice, including for the purposes of development management and Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship scheme; management and maintenance of the Historic Environment Record; and project delivery.

After reviewing the first year of operations, it was decided that the service will continue to develop as an arms-length, not-for-profit specialist environmental planning and management enterprise.

### **Newcastle City Council**

#### ***Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team***

The Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team (hosted by Newcastle City Council) is the archaeology, industrial archaeology and historic buildings service for each of the local authorities in the Tyne and Wear area. It helps and advises Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland Councils to carry out their statutory duties to care for the precious historic environment of Tyneside and Wearside.

The service is based on a joint arrangement between these five Tyne and Wear authorities and has been in operation since 1986. It provides a high level of service at a low cost due to the efficiencies achieved by joint working across local authority boundaries.

The Team provides shared, specialist advice on archaeology, listed buildings and conservation areas and places the historic environment at the heart of local planning.

The service also manages the Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record, a database of archaeological and historic sites across the five Tyne and Wear districts. The Historic Environment Record is used as a management tool as well as resource for education and community engagement.

Perhaps most remarkable, however, is the added-value provided by the service in addition to its statutory duties. From attracting Heritage Lottery Fund funding for local projects, to research, or programmes of community engagement for local residents such as Heritage Open Days, the Tyne and Wear service has established itself as a valuable and respected resource.

## **Barnsley Council**

### ***Developing the visitor economy through heritage***

Barnsley Council is developing its visitor offer by capitalising on its heritage. On average, Barnsley's museums attract one million visitors a year, contributing in excess of £13 million a year to the local economy. But Barnsley plans to improve these figures by securing funding to maintain and improve its museums.

Cannon Hall Museum, a flagship attraction, has around 500,000 visitors each year. The interpretation of the park and gardens are being transformed following a grant of £50,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. A further £100,000 of European funding will enable improvements to be made to the Hall itself. Future plans include a major £3.5 million funding application to restore and transform the Park, Gardens and Lakes. Should this be successful, work is hoped to start in 2014/15.

Elsecar Heritage Centre currently attracts 325,000 visitors per year and these visitors support 38 businesses on site employing around 200 people. Visitors are attracted to the industrial workshops of the Earl Fitzwilliam and the wider village that he directed the creation of from the 1790s. Elsecar has been described as being one of the most important industrial heritage sites in the world. So £500,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage has been secured to realise the immense potential of the site. This money will focus in particular on the conservation of the world-famous Newcomen Engine.

Finally, a new multi-million pound museum, Experience Barnsley, opens in summer 2013. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and European Development Fund (ERDF), this promises to be a major attraction right in the centre of Barnsley, directing footfall and spend to businesses in the town centre. It will be a signpost for visitors to the town to discover what the rest of the offers are.