

3. HERITAGE FRAMEWORK

3.1. The review has highlighted that different business units providing heritage services across the council, shown chapter 1, **Table 1**, frequently work in isolation, resulting in confused perceptions, inefficiency and piecemeal service delivery. This confusion is demonstrated in **Appendix Four A4.2**. In addition it does not make best use of heritage resources at the Council's disposal.

3.2. The Structures & Property Task Group considered these issues. The detailed analysis carried out by these groups has been used to inform this section, and the full reports can be accessed via the Museums Service Headquarters, New Walk Centre.

3.3. There is considerable evidence that national bodies are looking for coherent approach from local authorities:

The Historic Environment: A Force for our Future (DCMS/DTLR, 2002) states:

“The Government looks to local authorities to adopt a positive approach to the management of the historic environment within their area and monitoring its condition. It urges them to appoint champions for the historic environment within their management structures and to ensure that elected members have access to training in respect of the historic environment wherever it is needed”.

English Heritage's 2002 consultation paper *Making the Most of our Civic Heritage* emphasises the need to take a strategic, long-term view of the role and value of heritage in local authority ownership. It stresses the fundamental importance of continuing care of historic assets, as good conservation practice and for efficient and economical property management. It regards the role of a historic environment champion in relation to an authority's own buildings as vital.

The East Midlands Regional Heritage Forum's *Viewpoints on the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (2002) builds on these, responds to the Regional Assembly's Integrated Regional Strategy, setting an agenda for the historic environment, which supports its objectives.

3.4. Leicester's heritage services are not in a position to either make an adequate response to the regional and national agenda or to promote and fully utilize heritage as a resource for regeneration and social change in the city because there is no clear operational framework, corporate lead, or overall agreed strategy for heritage. This has made it difficult for services to work together to use and promote Leicester's heritage, or to learn from each other's approach. For example, built heritage and cultural heritage have no cross-over and the "people factor" in the historic environment often gets missed: there is no clear lead on statues, commemorative plaques, memorials or heritage trails. Education providers develop courses, which make little use of the city's heritage resources, and guided tours are entirely provided by freelance operators coordinated by an outside organisation. Heritage initiatives are often developed by services without the others having any way of knowing.

3.4.1. This situation is reflected in the local press coverage of heritage in Leicester. It particularly evidences dissatisfaction and lack of confidence in the City Council to deal effectively with heritage preservation issues, both for council owned property and city-wide. Press coverage and evidence of Museum enquiries also demonstrates confused public perceptions regarding responsibilities for heritage issues. (**Appendix Four**).

3.4.2. One of the main issues identified in relation to property management and maintenance is that a distinction needs to be made between ordinary Council owned buildings and historic/heritage buildings which need special safeguarding and a commitment to the development of them. Currently heritage buildings are treated the same as others and given low priority if not in use. John of Gaunt's Cellar, for example, is given a low priority for maintenance but a high priority for heritage. This is picked up in the improvement plan.

3.5. The survey of comparator museums shows that most museums are within a more integrated structure (**Appendix Six**, A6.). The benefits of an integrated approach can be seen from looking at Birmingham, where the Assistant Director for Museums leads on Heritage for the whole Authority. Because the museum service in Birmingham works closely with property management, other heritage related services and economic regeneration, they have been able to secure major heritage benefits for the City, e.g. The Jewelry Quarter, Think Tank and the Canal Network. This joined up approach in Birmingham has also enabled maintenance budgets for historic buildings to be used

creatively as match funding for development projects. Similarly, Nottingham has consulted on, and leads community consultation on regeneration schemes.

3.6. Local consultation highlights the importance of heritage. Leicester & Leicestershire Museums' User & Non User Survey 2001 (**Appendix Five A5 2.3.**) found that by far the most popular of all museum and heritage related subject areas are the environment, historical buildings and gardens and local history.

3.7. This is backed up by Leicester's own Cultural Strategy findings, reflected in its illustrations: the built and natural environment form by far the greatest single group in the document, and in addition the many images of heritage activities, festivals, events, sports, shopping, and play, are mainly shown against a backdrop of the historic environment.

3.8. The following suggestions came out of our consultation:

- "Could have day conference for city heritage workers." (**Appendix Five A5 3.7**)
- "Next Adult Learning Plan could have more about heritage in it." (**Appendix Five A5 3.7**)
- "Champion' for heritage **should be based in Cultural Services and Neighbourhood Renewal Department.**" (**Appendix Five A5 3.7**)

The evidence demonstrates the need for a cohesive structure to fully utilize heritage and heritage services to support regeneration and development of effective services.

Issues Identified

- The need for a strategic lead for heritage and a clear framework.
- Clear identification of heritage assets in the Asset Management Plan so that they are managed appropriately.
- Clearly identified roles and links between service providers and development of cross working networks.
- Regeneration initiatives need to take into account and fully utilise heritage.

These issues will be picked up in Chapter 6, recommendations & conclusions.