

REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	11 AUGUST 2022	CATEGORY: Delegated
REPORT FROM:	ALLISON THOMAS STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (SERVICE DELIVERY)	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	STEFFAN SAUNDERS HEAD OF PLANNING AND STRATEGIC HOUSING	DOC:
SUBJECT:	ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 The Committee agrees to the Council entering into a revised Service Level Agreement with Derbyshire County Council (Appendix 1) for the next three years to 31 March 2025 for the provision of archaeological services to assist in the determination of planning and other applications.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To seek authorisation for the continued use of the Development Control Archaeological service provided by Derbyshire County Council to assist in the determination of planning and other applications.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 to provide specific protection for scheduled monuments. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 194 states that "Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:
- a) Grade II listed buildings, or Grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
 - b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, Grade I and II* listed buildings, Grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional."

It adds that non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

As such, decision-taking regarding such assets requires a proportionate response by local planning authorities hence the need for expert advice. Where an initial assessment indicates that the site on which development is proposed includes or has potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, applicants are required to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. These assessments then need proper evaluation by an appropriately qualified person to inform the decision making process.

- 3.2 The over-riding consideration for the Council is to secure a service so that it can ensure that it can discharge its responsibilities. The Council does not currently employ an officer with this expertise nor is there any provision for such expertise on the establishment. The Conservation Officer performs a separate but complementary role to the provision of archaeological advice.
- 3.3 The Derby and Derbyshire Development Control Archaeology service is a long-established service hosted by the County Council on behalf of the eight district/borough planning authorities across Derbyshire outside the Peak Park, and Derby City Council as a unitary authority, to provide archaeological advice and support within the planning process. This arrangement has been in place for the previous three years and works well.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The current Service Level Agreement has recently expired and a new one is needed to continue with the current arrangements. It is proposed to retain the percentage contribution of each partner authority at the same level, to reflect the ongoing balance of work. For South Derbyshire, this remains at 12.5% of the total work undertaken.
- 4.2 The current cost to the Council is £5,667, and this figure is anticipated to remain relatively stable over the coming years. This cost can be met from the Planning Services budget.

5.0 Employment Implications

- 5.1 There are no employment implications.

6.0 Corporate Implications

- 6.1 The arrangement provides the necessary archaeological advice in relation to planning applications. The Conservation Officer provides a separate area of expertise, and this archaeological service provides separate and necessary advice helps to ensure that the Council facilitates and delivers a range of integrated and sustainable housing and community infrastructure.

7.0 Community Implications

7.1 Continuation of the delivery of sustainable development to South Derbyshire residents and businesses.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 The provision of expert archaeological services should be sourced by the Council as the service offered by the County Council has a proven track record and remains good value for money.