

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 20 APRIL 2017**

**IRONBRIDGE GORGE WORLD HERITAGE SITE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYMENT**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR RICHARD OVERTON**

## **PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

### **1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 Telford & Wrekin Council is the managing authority for the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site (WHS). It is a requirement of the international body that oversees World Heritage Sites (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation – UNESCO) that an up-to-date Management Plan is in place. The Council produced its first Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Management Plan in 2001 which was updated in 2010. Since then an Agreement has been established with the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust to lead on the preparation of the Plan. In accordance with UNESCO best practice this process has been overseen by the multi-agency Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Steering Group. The responsibility for submission remains with the Council. A draft document was produced in 2016 and was subject to public consultation. The plan has since been amended and progressed to a point that it is considered ready to submit to Central Government for submission to UNESCO. This report seeks Cabinet endorsement to the draft plan and approval for the submission.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Management Plan, which must meet UNESCO requirements, is to ensure the effective protection of the site for future generations, preserving and protecting the Outstanding Universal Value of the Ironbridge World Heritage Site; ensuring appropriate interpretation and understanding of the culturally unique and outstanding built and natural environment of the Ironbridge World Heritage Site. The plan also aims to improve the interpretation and understanding of the cultural landscape to its visitors and inhabitants and enhance the living community within the WHS through social and economic regeneration.
- 1.4 This management plan sets out to balance the internationally important heritage of the area with the ambitions of residents, business and visitors for today and tomorrow. It identifies the qualities of valued environments and proposes how the Gorge can be nurtured and protected but also flourish as a community. To these ends, partners in the Ironbridge Gorge have committed to working together to:
- Safeguard the unique industrial heritage and character of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site for present and future generations.
  - Strengthen the World Heritage Site as a vibrant living and working community and strong economy.
  - Interpret the World Heritage Site in ways that ensure its accessibility to all.
  - Incorporate holistic planning and strategic decision-making which will conserve the historic environment, essential ecological processes and biodiversity found in the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet endorse the draft replacement Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Management Plan and approve the document for submission to UNESCO.
- 2.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Assistant Director: Business Development & Employment and any other officer authorised by the Assistant Director in writing, in consultation with the lead Cabinet Member to review, amend, and consult on any further WHS management plans.

## 3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	<i>Business winning, business supporting. Supporting owners and developers.</i>
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	<i>Specifically the residents, landowners and stakeholders within the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, in managing, preserving and enhancing the WHS.</i>
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</b>	<i>Immediately post Cabinet. To be reviewed every 5 years</i>	
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes	<p>The Management plan identifies a number of organisations who will work in partnership to achieve the Plan's objectives.</p> <p>A detailed action plan is included in section D and identifies how the actions will be implemented, monitored and evaluated.</p> <p>Telford &amp; Wrekin council have a number of ongoing, short, medium and long term actions identified which will be met from within existing resources.</p> <p>A number of actions will only be implemented if additional resources are identified. The Service will actively pursue external funding to achieve this.</p> <p>AEM 22/03/17</p>
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	Yes	<p>Previous Central Government Planning Policy Guidance encouraged Local Planning Authorities to work with owners and managers of World Heritage Sites in their areas to ensure that comprehensive management plans</p>

		are in place, Even though the new replacement NPPF policies are not as specific regarding roles and responsibilities in respect of World Heritage Sites, Local Planning Authorities are still working off the earlier guidance. This proposed Management Plan appropriately seeks to ensure the effective protection of the Site for present and future generations in accordance with the recognised applicable guidance (IR 23.03.17)
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	No	
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	Yes	Ironbridge Gorge and Madeley - Management of the WHS, through ensuring appropriate development.

## **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **4. INFORMATION**

- 4.1 The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site (WHS) was inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1986. At the time of its inscription, UNESCO (the organisation that inscribes WHS's) did not require management plans of World Heritage Sites. UNESCO Operating Guidelines have since changed and require all sites to have a management plan. The production and timely despatch of this document is therefore a necessary action to ensure the retention of WHS Status. The importance of these plans is also emphasised within national planning legislation including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and supporting Planning Policy Guidance (PPG).
- 4.2 Telford & Wrekin Council is the managing authority of the WHS. It produced its first Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Management Plan in 2001 which was updated in 2010. This Management Plan being proposed for adoption will run until 2026.
- 4.3 The production of the Management Plan has been lead under agreement with TWC by IGMT and overseen, as best practice, by the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Steering Group. The steering group is independently chaired by Les Sparks, formerly director of Planning and Architecture of Planning and Architecture at Birmingham City Council from 1991- 1999. The Steering Group is made up of the following organisations and agencies.
- Department of Culture, Media, and Sport
  - English Heritage Trust
  - Historic England
  - The Environment Agency
  - International Council on Monuments & Sites UK (ICOMOS UK)
  - Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust
  - Natural England
  - Parish and Town Councils within the World Heritage Site:
    - Broseley Town Council
    - Gorge Parish
    - Madeley Town Council

- Severn Gorge Countryside Trust
- Shropshire Council
- Telford & Wrekin Council

- 4.4 This management plan sets out to connect the historic environment with the ambitions for the future. It identifies the qualities of valued environments and proposes how the Gorge can be nurtured and protected. To these ends, partners in the Ironbridge Gorge have committed to working together to:
- Safeguard the unique industrial heritage and character of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site for present and future generations.
  - Strengthen the World Heritage Site as a vibrant living and working community and strong economy.
  - Interpret the World Heritage Site in ways that ensure its accessibility to all.
  - Incorporate holistic planning and strategic decision-making which will conserve the historic environment, essential ecological processes and biodiversity found in the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site.
- 4.5 The WHS has a population of approximately 4,000 people, many of who have lived in the Gorge prior to its WHS designation, and a wide range of businesses. These include long-established local companies, shops, tourism-related businesses, creative industries and community services, which together provide work for 1,500 people. Maintaining and strengthening this economic base is essential for the long-term protection of the area's unique character and importance. The Management Plan recognises that if the Ironbridge Gorge is to survive as a living community, it will continue to change and adapt and the spirit of innovation, must be allowed to continue to flourish. The challenge for the plan is to ensure that this organic change safeguards the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site.
- 4.6 The value and successful implementation of the Management Plan will rely upon those organisations that have signed up to it continuing to work in partnership to achieve the Plan's objectives
- 4.7 The new Plan is composed of 4 parts:
- Part A:** Why the WHS is internationally important and a description of the significance of the Site
- Part B:** An assessment of the issues and challenges affecting the Site as well as the opportunities and objectives to address those issues and challenges
- Part C:** The management of the Site
- Part D:** An action plan describing how the actions will be implemented, monitored and evaluated.
- 4.8 Public consultation has been undertaken on the draft plan during summer 2016 and a number of public events were held throughout the WHS. All consultation comments have been reviewed by the steering group and amended where agreed to produce the final version (see Appendix 1). The comments were largely supportive and raised no outright objections to the documents. A summary of the consultation responses is contained in Appendix 2. It is now proposed to endorse the WHS MP as a framework

5. **IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**  
NA

6. **PREVIOUS MINUTES**  
NA

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Appendix 1** World Heritage Site Management Plan

**Appendix 2** Summary of Consultation Responses

- a. UNESCO Operational Guidelines conserving World Heritage Site Management <http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>
- b. National Planning Policy Framework <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--3>
- c. National Planning Policy Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>

**Report prepared by Valerie Hulme, Planning Delivery Group Manager,  
Telephone: 01952 384130**