



Report to: Planning Committee 5 October 2023
Director Lead: Matt Lamb, Planning and Growth
Lead Officer: Oliver Scott, Senior Conservation Officer, ext. 5847

Report Summary	
Report Title	Appointment of Heritage Champion
Purpose of Report	Update Planning Committee Members on a recent approval by the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth on the appointment of and need for a Heritage Champion and the role they play in supporting the protection of the historic environment.
Recommendations	To note the report

1.0 Background

- 1.1 A Portfolio Holder Report was presented to Councillor Spoor as Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth to approve the appointment of a Heritage Champion. This report has been prepared for Planning Committee for awareness and confirmation that Councillor Andy Freeman has been appointed as the Council's Heritage Champion. Below is the Portfolio Holder report.
- 1.2 A Heritage Champion is normally a local councillor who has been nominated by their authority to promote all aspects of the historic environment in their area. It is up to the local authority to decide how to nominate their Heritage Champion.
- 1.3 The role is not a statutory position but can be positive and influential. At a strategic level for example, Champions can make sure that local plans and strategies capture the contribution that the local historic environment can make to the success of an area. They could also promote heritage within the local authority, generating enthusiasm for and awareness of the importance of the local historic environment.
- 1.4 It would, however, be for the Heritage Champion to interpret the role in a way that fits with their own interests, position and local conditions.
- 1.5 There is an existing network of Heritage Champions across the country. Historic England offer support and training for this role and will otherwise be encouraging the Champion to support the authority's local historic environment services (both archaeological and

historic buildings conservation officers). Useful guidance is available in Historic England's '[Heritage Champions Handbook](#)'.

- 1.6 The position was previously held by the Chairman of the Planning Committee. The previous Champion played an important role in promoting Conservation priorities for the Council, including the production of Conservation Area Appraisals, the introduction of a Criteria for identifying Non-designated Heritage Assets, the delivery of a Newark High Street Heritage Action Zone and proactive approaches to both the Heritage at Risk and Heritage Crime agendas.

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 Essentially, the Council can decide to appoint or not appoint a Heritage Champion.
- 2.2 If the Council does decide to appoint a Champion, they will play an important and influential role in supporting and celebrating our local historic environment. Being a Heritage Champion can lead to highly visible and positive outcomes for the community, which can boost the Council's profile within the local area. This contributes in turn to our Community Plan objectives of maintaining the high standard of the appearance of the local environment and improving the health and wellbeing of local residents.
- 2.3 The Council could decide not to appoint a Champion. This would prevent the opportunity for the Champion to become a figurehead and voice for the historic environment. This may result in some reputational impact from a Historic England perspective. This would not contribute to our objectives in the Community Plan insofar as maintaining the appearance of the local environment or improving the wellbeing of local residents.
- 2.4 It is therefore recommended that the Chairman of Planning Committee (Councillor Andy Freeman) is appointed as the Heritage Champion.

3. Implications

- 3.1 In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment below where appropriate.
- 3.2 The Council would need to inform Historic England of the appointment. Local Engagement Advisers (LEAs) are the main point of contact for Heritage Champions in Historic England. By ensuring that Historic England has the details of our Champion, including how they prefer to be contacted, they can be kept up to date on new publications, heritage events and training opportunities.

Financial Implications (FIN23-24/8211)

- 3.3 There should be no additional financial implications associated with the role of Heritage Champion other than attending occasional training events. It is envisaged that the championing role will permeate throughout other tasks as a local authority member and be incidental to them. However, it could be necessary for some specific time to be

allocated to Champion duties (e.g. meetings, training, etc). This would equate to no more than a handful of days per year.

- 3.4 The occasional training events, as per paragraph 3.3, will generally be funded by Historic England and the handful of days per year travel expenses can be contained within the Council's existing Members' service budget.

Legal Implications

- 3.5 There are no legal implications in this case. The role is an honorary position aimed at raising the profile of the historic environment, but it has no statutory function.