

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP, CULTURE  
AND TOURISM**

**23 September 2020**

Report of the Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**HERITAGE ACTION ZONE SCHEME, SPRING GARDENS, BUXTON**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To seek approval from the Cabinet Member to formally offer High Peak Borough Council (HPBC) assistance with the implementation of the Spring Gardens Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) Scheme in Buxton.

(2) **Information and Analysis** In May 2019, Historic England (HE) launched a new multi-million pound fund – the High Streets HAZ scheme. This fund enables HE to work with partners to find new ways to champion and revive historic high streets. The HAZ scheme will deliver a four-year programme of physical improvements, community engagement and cultural activities to revive England's struggling historic high streets and town centres by investing in a high street's heritage, ensuring it contributes to the streets vibrant and vital future.

The HAZ scheme will help to revive existing spaces and repurpose failing shops to provide new uses, making high streets more resilient. The programme has three aims:

- To change perceptions of heritage and high streets.
- To support sustainable economic and cultural growth, on and around the high street.
- To restore and enhance local historic character.

Each HAZ scheme targets a high street in a designated conservation area. This helps to ensure the conservation area's continued appropriate management and protection through the repair, restoration and regeneration of its historic environment.

The Spring Gardens HAZ objectives are:

- To progress and support the already strong culture and heritage offer through investment, development, and promotion within the identified HAZ area.

- To enhance the area as a destination for a greater range of accommodation and distinct retail offer through the repair and restoration of historic buildings, focusing upon the restoration of traditional shopfronts and the repair of traditional joinery details on upper floors to encourage vacant buildings to be brought back into use and prolong the existing use of a building.
- Secure the long-term viable future of key buildings at risk located at pivotal points at each end of Spring Gardens.
- Widen experience, knowledge, understanding and awareness of Buxton's heritage through the delivery and promotion the Community Engagement Plan and Cultural Programme, including engagement with those communities who have not been involved with heritage projects before.
- Create and deliver a strong cultural programme to contribute to the Visitor Economy Strategy priorities and support the development of a more coherent, year-round cultural programme.
- Improve visitor understanding and enjoyment of Derbyshire's heritage through the delivery of heritage interpretation at key visitor entrance points.
- Increase knowledge and understanding of Buxton's heritage through the production of guidance and educational materials, to ensure long-term benefits are delivered beyond the HAZ programme.

The Buxton HAZ Scheme Programme will consist of the following to meet the above objectives:

- General grants scheme for the repair and restoration of historic buildings.
- Funding to explore and implement the repair, restoration and reuse of two listed Buildings at Risk – White Lion and Grove Hotel.
- Complementary facelift scheme for more modern buildings that include enhanced colour schemes and signage proposals.
- A programme of guidance, education and research through a series of guidance leaflets, development of education pack and historic research and listing.
- Heritage Interpretation at key destination points.
- Community and cultural engagement to deliver a series of events to celebrate the high street.

When HPBC was assembling its bid to HE for Spring Gardens, it approached the County Council's Conservation, Heritage and Design (CH&D) Service to see if the County Council could contribute towards the scheme from its Historic Environment Grants Budget. The Historic Environment Grants Budget came to an end as part of the efficiency savings when the CH&D Service was formed, with the merger of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Coordination Team, with the former Conservation and Design Section.

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HPBC was informed that the Budget no longer existed. However, it was noted that the bid would be strengthened if the County Council could contribute towards it. To this end, HPBC enquired if the CH&D Service could formally provide Conservation Officer time to support the implementation of the Spring Gardens HAZ scheme.

Within the CH&D Service, there are three historic built environment specialists, one of these is a Conservation Officer. Half of the time of this position is currently charged to Amber Valley Borough Council to provide conservation advice to its planning department. The other half of the position's time is split between providing conservation development control advice to the County Council and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Partnership, as well as administering the remnants of the Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas (PSiCA) grants the County Council used to run. The PSiCA grants have now ended which leaves only a small amount of administration.

It is proposed that in year 1 (2020-21), the County Council's Conservation Officer would give 12 days of support to the HAZ and 28 days each for years 2, 3 and 4 (2021-24). It is felt that this level of formal commitment can be accommodated within existing workloads with small adjustments and support from the wider CH&D Service.

The work supporting the HAZ will help capitalise on the County Council's previous support and investments in Buxton, not least Buxton Crescent, which is situated just west of Spring Gardens across Terrace Road (A515).

(3) **Financial Considerations** Derbyshire County Council's Officer time contribution to the HAZ will equate to £40,000. This gives a total project value of £1,408,114, including the County Council's in-kind contribution. This includes:

County Council in-kind contribution	£40,000
HPBC match	£54,500
Private sector match	£390,000
Historic England HAZ funding	<u>£923,614</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,408,114</b>

(4) **Human Resources Considerations** The Conservation Officer is a Grade 10 position and is line managed by Derbyshire County Council's Historic Buildings Architect in the CH&D Service.

HPBC is appointing a Spring Gardens HAZ Officer to administer the scheme.

The County Council's Conservation Officer will provide assistance to the Spring Gardens HAZ Officer, producing such things as schedules of work,

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shop front scheme designs and assisting grant applicants with submitting planning applications.

Due to the fee income the Conservation Officer post generates for the County Council to support the function of the CH&D Service, the Officer will not typically be able to give more than two days assistance to the HAZ scheme in any one week.

(5) **Social Value Considerations** The HAZ scheme will help improve the environs of Spring Gardens for both residents and visitors to Buxton. It will also help underpin the local economy supporting jobs for local people.

### **Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(6) **Key Decision** No.

(7) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(8) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department.

(9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That the Cabinet Member approves that the County Council formally offers High Peak Borough Council assistance with the implementation of the Spring Gardens Heritage Action Zone Scheme in Buxton via the allocation of Officer time as detailed in the report.

**Tim Gregory**  
**Director – Economy, Transport and Environment**