

A Conservation & Heritage Strategy for Stockport



A Conservation and Heritage Strategy for Stockport

Foreword by Councillor Sue Derbyshire

Stockport has a rich and varied historic environment. Its heritage assets have an important role to play in connecting us with our past and also have a vital role to play in shaping our future. The Conservation Strategy 2004 - 2007 made impressive progress in delivering challenging targets and as a result Stockport now has an enviable record in key areas of conservation work. Based on its significant recent achievements, Stockport is now seen as a borough that is serious and forward thinking about its heritage. As such this is an important area of work for the Council.

This updated strategy brings together both conservation and heritage service areas for the first time in one document. The development of this policy framework will ensure that the borough's finite heritage assets are preserved and enhanced as well as ensuring that they contribute to the Council's wider regeneration agenda and remain relevant for future generations.

The Conservation and Heritage Strategy sets out how we intend to carry out this work and I am pleased, as the Council's Historic Environment Champion, to lead in the aims, objectives and delivery of the Strategy. I hope you find it of interest and hope that, through a corporate approach and the continuing support and involvement of our partner organisations and community groups, we can work together to ensure its ambitious aspirations and targets are achieved.

Contents

	Page No.
Executive Summary	2
Part One: Strategy	4
1.0 Background	4
2.0 Introduction	6
3.0 Definition and Scope	9
4.0 Aims and Objectives	12
5.0 Stockport's Heritage Resource	14
Part Two: Issues and Actions	21
6.0 Key Issues and Proposed Action	21
Understanding	22
Positive Action	32
Developing Partnerships	44
Promoting Best Practice	50
7.0 Action Plan	54
8.0 Monitoring and Review	54

A Conservation and Heritage Strategy for Stockport

Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to set out a comprehensive and integrated Conservation and Heritage Strategy for Stockport to form the basis for conservation and heritage activities in the Borough from 2008 to 2011 and establish principles to be followed in the longer term.

Stockport has a unique heritage which should be preserved and enhanced for present and future generations. In key areas of conservation work the Council has an enviable record and the Strategy advocates a holistic and joined up approach to the management of the borough's historic assets. The delivery of the strategy will require a partnership approach between the Council, its partners and key stakeholders.

The main focus of this strategy is on physical heritage such as archaeology, monuments, buildings, settlements, landscapes, parks, open spaces, maps, artefacts, documents and archives. In addition it recognises other, less tangible characteristics which help to form Stockport's local distinctiveness and identity that also make a significant contribution to the Borough's cultural and natural heritage.

The historic environment is a valuable asset which can contribute to broader strategic objectives such as economic development, urban and rural regeneration, tourism, leisure and recreation, cultural and community development; good urban design and town planning; provision of formal and informal education, development of skills, and sustainability. This strategy aims to help define, reinforce and bring these diverse aspects together.

The document is in two parts –

Part One sets out the background and achievements of the Conservation Strategy 2004 – 07. It defines the scope, aims and objectives, outlines Stockport's heritage resources and describes the links between this document and other strategies.

Part Two addresses key issues and proposed actions.

The overall objective of the strategy is:

“to ensure that appropriate understanding, recognition and consideration is given to the heritage assets of Stockport so that they may continue to be preserved, enhanced, utilised and accessible for present and future generations”

The aims of the strategy are :

- *To identify, recognise and have an understanding of the nature of Stockport's heritage assets*
- *To raise awareness of Stockport's heritage and issues surrounding its management*
- *To actively promote the role and opportunities presented by conservation and heritage in terms of the wider regeneration and economic development of the Borough and provide a framework for investment*
- *To promote best practice with regard to stewardship, advice, education, policy and project implementation at a local, regional and international level*
- *To develop existing and new audiences and learning initiatives and promote partnership working between public, private and voluntary sectors*
- *To promote positive action and develop initiatives that secure the future and ensure the preservation and enhancement of Stockport's heritage assets*
- *To foster continued use, enjoyment and access to the Borough's diverse historic assets and ensure it contributes positively to quality of life today and for future generations.*

Four key themes underpin the Conservation and Heritage Strategy: ***Understanding, Positive Action, Developing Partnerships*** and ***Promoting Best Practice***. These themes emerged out of internal and external workshops and stakeholder consultation carried out in development of the strategy.

Key action areas have been developed from these themes and are included in an action plan with short medium and long term targets to be developed, monitored and reviewed in light of available resources. This will inform funding priorities and assist external funding bodies to clearly understand future conservation and heritage priorities in Stockport.

In summary the key actions contained in the strategy are:

- the promotion of and adherence to best practice
- improved corporate working
- improved communication and developing partnerships with external groups
- enhanced access to information and advice
- continuing development of links with informal and informal heritage education
- improving access to assets and new audiences
- action to preserve, enhance and regenerate the historic environment
- promote heritage activity and a positive image of Stockport.

Part One

Strategy

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to set out a comprehensive and integrated Conservation and Heritage Strategy for Stockport.
- 1.2 The Council approved a Borough-wide Conservation Strategy and Action Plan in July 2004 and this document has formed the basis of much of the Council's conservation activities since that date. The strategy was primarily concerned with the planning, development, regeneration and management issues affecting Stockport's historic environment. Its scope did not include heritage assets in their broader sense – assets such as museums and galleries, archives and collections, or local traditions and festivals, which are also important aspects of the Borough's heritage. In some cases the Council is responsible for the management and promotion of these assets, but in many cases they are owned or managed by private or voluntary sector groups and organisations.
- 1.3 The Council has been successful at securing substantial levels of external funding for heritage-led regeneration activities and has supported these projects through its own capital programme. These projects have been managed and delivered to an exceptionally high and exemplary standard, a feature which has been recognised by external funding agencies and professional institutions as one of Stockport's key strengths.
- 1.4 Changing national policy, limited resources and funding opportunities dictate that in the future clear priorities must be established both in terms of developing the Council's own heritage projects as well as providing support for projects led by others. It is therefore necessary for the Conservation and Heritage Strategy to provide a clear framework for investment in the borough's heritage over the next few years. As future applications are made for external funding, a clear strategy will send an important message to funding bodies that the Council has an clear vision, established priorities and a framework for implementation in place.
- 1.5 In key areas of conservation, the Council has an enviable track record, particularly within the historic parts of the town centre and including the preservation and enhancement of the Market/ Underbanks Conservation Area (via the Government's Single Regeneration Budget and English Heritage assisted Conservation Area

Partnership and Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes), and the Hillgate Conservation Area (via the Heritage Lottery Fund assisted Hillgate Townscape Heritage Initiative). Such high quality 'conservation through regeneration' work has received considerable praise and this has been recognised nationally. Projects such as Houldsworth Mill, Staircase House, Shawcross Fold and Mealhouse Brow have won highly acclaimed national awards and, uniquely, the Council has won the BURA Award for Regeneration in two consecutive years. During this period, conservation and heritage activities across the Borough as a whole have been more reactive than pro-active and there is great potential to apply the experience and successes secured in the town centre more widely. It is important that this strategy continues to develop new and existing links to economic development and regeneration.

Case Study 1: Shawcross Fold

The Shawcross Fold Regeneration Project has been one of the Council and its partners major success stories in recent years. This project has seen the transformation of Shawcross Fold, and the restoration of Staircase House in The Market Place from a totally dilapidated site to an exemplary flagship project which has received funding, critical acclaim and recognition for excellence from leading Heritage, Regeneration and community organisations, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Museums Libraries & Archives Council, English Heritage, British Urban Regeneration Association, Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme, Disability Stockport and many others.



2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Stockport has a rich, varied and unique history. The evolution of the Borough continues to be relevant to people living within and outside the borough and its history and heritage acts to shape people's lives and the landscape around them.
- 2.2 The historic environment plays an increasingly central role in the delivery of a range of public policy objectives including education, economic development, sustainable growth, urban and rural regeneration, cultural development, and supporting local communities. The historic environment also underpins many successful projects aimed at improving quality of life, transforming areas, empowering local community groups and creating a better and more sustainable environment.
- 2.3 Heritage provides 'roots', a sense of place and local identity; it can provide a focus for engagement and discussion. It can establish a basis for a range of activities – economic, cultural, social, environmental – and provide a basis or vision for the 'future history' of a community. In a fast changing world, heritage and history offer continuity and a 'backdrop' to the immediate. Engagement in heritage and conservation offers a wide range of education, training and skills development opportunities.
- 2.4 Heritage assets are a fragile and finite resource. Each has its own intrinsic value and may come under a variety of increasing pressures. To ensure they are sustained for the enjoyment of future generations there is a need for collective responsibility for their care and stewardship. This requires an understanding of the nature and value of our heritage assets in order to ensure that any decision making and proposed changes positively preserve or enhance their unique value.
- 2.5 The value of the historic environment is enshrined in national government policy and legislation. This is articulated by local government policy and practice, supported by local amenity groups and expressed in the popularity of historic buildings and places in the public mind.
- 2.6 Museum and gallery collections transform and inspire people. Collections can be exotic, intriguing, affirming, pleasurable and challenging. They stir emotions and stimulate ideas. Stockport has a notable wealth and richness of heritage, reflected and celebrated in the eight heritage visitor attractions managed by the Council today.

2.7 The Council's collections span a wide variety of subjects and periods – archaeology, social and industrial history, fine and decorative arts and natural history – and provide an invaluable representation of Stockport, the borough, its people and its history. These collections are an irreplaceable learning resource for present and future generations and it is the fundamental duty of Stockport Heritage Services to act as guardians of this heritage, providing opportunities for people to engage with museum collections and ensure they are as rich, diverse and inspiring as they can possibly be.

2.8 The diagram overleaf illustrates the range of benefits and opportunities which can flow from the Borough's unique historic environment and heritage assets. It is only through careful management, protection and investment in the maintenance, repair and adaptation of those assets that these substantial benefits can continue to be realised.

Case Study 2: Accessible Collections

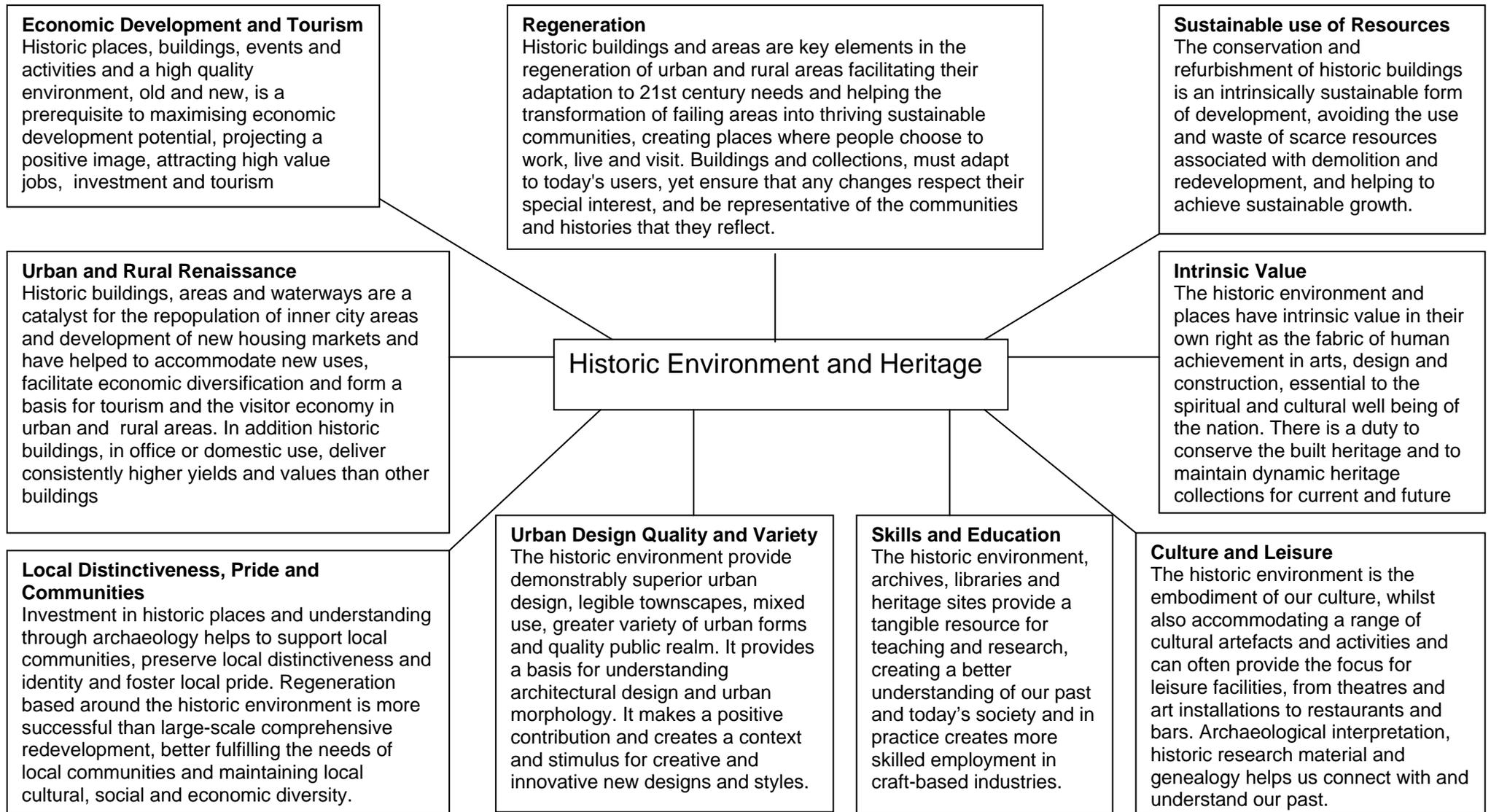
The council is always looking for new ways to make its Heritage Collections more accessible. The new Stockport Story Museum in the Market Place (part of the Shawcross Fold Regeneration Scheme) now provides more than three times the space formerly available for the display of local history and more objects than ever are now on display. There's also a new temporary exhibition area, where items from the reserve collections (now in much improved storage facilities) can be shown in a changing selection of themed displays.



New Improved Storage for reserve collections



Collections in use: WWII living room on display in The Stockport Story Museum



3.0 Definition and Scope

- 3.1 The scope of conservation and heritage is very wide ranging and can mean a variety of things to different people and organisations. The terms conservation and heritage embrace history in all its forms from buildings, spaces, art and artefacts to natural heritage such as flora and fauna and cultural heritage such as customs and traditions, all aspects of which can help to explain the past and give a more rounded understanding of Stockport and its environs.
- 3.2 The focus of this strategy will concentrate on physical heritage such as archaeology, monuments, buildings, settlements, landscapes, parks, open spaces, maps, artefacts, documents, archives and ephemera. It will also however make reference to less tangible aspects such as the oral tradition, festivals, dance, music etc, but recognise that though these local traditions are an important part of the mix, they can sometimes fall outside the direct influence of this type of strategy. It also needs to refer to other aspects which contribute to a wider Stockport's cultural and natural heritage but will not directly focus on them.
- 3.3 The original Conservation Strategy for Stockport focussed upon the historic environment and considered the Council's statutory and non statutory roles and responsibilities. This integrated Conservation and Heritage Strategy embraces a wider definition and scope. The term conservation and heritage is also used in association with policies and action affecting the *natural environment* (flora, fauna, geology etc) and the *cultural heritage* (art, local history and traditions, etc) which can and do have strong associations and relationships with the historic environment, though these are not the primary focus of this strategy.
- 3.4 The focus will therefore be on:
- Conservation Areas
 - Listed buildings, both local and statutory
 - Archaeological sites and monuments
 - Historic Parks and Gardens
 - Historic landscapes
 - Museums and other heritage visitor attractions
 - Galleries
 - Archives
 - Local Studies Collections
 - Social and Family History Collections
 - Art and artefact collections
 - Public art and statues

3.5 One of the key challenges for the historic environment sector is how different communities can be enabled to explore what they value about their heritage, which is not always congruent with what might traditionally have been emphasised by the sector itself. As part of an initial scoping exercise, a list was suggested in response to the question *'What is heritage?'* all of which have validity in contributing to the development of this strategy.

- Historic transport infrastructure
- Areas of industrial heritage
- Archaeology
- Historic and defining views, vistas and skylines
- Vernacular architecture
- Landmarks
- Urban/rural landscape
- Trees, hedges
- Spaces, urban 'grain' and street patterns
- Historic footpaths/bridleways
- Historic routes/roads
- Historic boundaries/walls
- Churches and churchyards
- Townscape/streetscene
- Historic pubs/hotels
- Market
- Place names

- Canals/rivers
- Transport
- Mills
- Geology
- Natural heritage
- Oral history/memories
- Objects/images/films/photos
- Places of entertainment
- Evolution of the built environment
- Heritage trails
- Family history/Personal community
- Sport
- Literature
- Innovations/inventions
- Skills

3.6 As can be seen above, the scope of heritage can be very wide, but the emphasis of the strategy will necessarily need to focus on heritage assets where the Council has a direct role and responsibility and some influence in the decision making or management process. The strategy will also seek to positively include or make reference to private and voluntary sector owned or influenced assets and activities and highlight the Council's role in encouraging and supporting these.

3.7 The strategy recognises that management and ownership responsibilities for heritage assets are often complex and shared amongst many bodies, organisations and individuals.

Definitions

'Heritage'

is used to refer to the values that people attach to particular buildings, culture places and events. These heritage assets make a significant contribution to local identity and distinctiveness. They help to enhance the quality of our lives through their contribution to the local environment, culture, education and leisure.

'Conservation'

refers to the active process of management of these heritage assets. It often involves striking balance between preservation and sympathetic alteration in order to ensure the long-term survival of a historic building, area or structure.

'Preservation'

refers to the process of maintaining the essential character and fabric of a heritage asset in an unaltered state in order to prevent its decay or destruction

4.0 Aims and Objectives

4.1 The overall objective of the strategy is

“to ensure that appropriate understanding, recognition and consideration is given to the heritage assets of Stockport so that they may continue to be preserved, enhanced, utilised and accessible for present and future generations”

4.2 The Conservation and Heritage Strategy does not set out to preserve the Borough’s heritage assets ‘in aspic’ - rather it aims to promote the dynamic and proactive use of those resources to enhance the Borough’s environment and the quality of life for those who live, work or visit here and contributes to the wider North West / Greater Manchester heritage offer.

4.3 The aims of the strategy are set out in the table opposite.

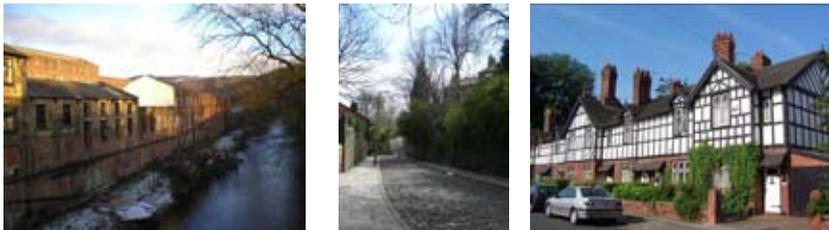
Aims:

- *To identify, recognise and have an understanding of the nature of Stockport’s heritage assets*
- *To raise awareness of Stockport’s heritage and issues surrounding its management*
- *To actively promote the role and opportunities presented by conservation and heritage in terms of the wider regeneration and economic development of the Borough and provide a framework for investment*
- *To promote best practice with regard to stewardship, advice, education, policy and project implementation at a local, regional and international level*
- *To develop existing and new audiences and learning initiatives and promote partnership working between public, private and voluntary sectors*
- *To promote positive action and develop initiatives that secure the future and ensure the preservation and enhancement of Stockport’s heritage assets*
- *To foster continued use, enjoyment and access to the Borough’s diverse historic assets and ensure it contributes positively to quality of life today and for future generations.*

Case Study 3: Conservation Area Review



Many areas of the Borough have special qualities, which contribute to local distinctiveness and sense of place, where the buildings and the spaces around them interact to form distinctly recognisable areas of quality and interest. The designation of these areas as conservation areas is a key component of the Council's overall approach to conservation planning and development. A comprehensive review was commenced in 2004 to reappraise Stockport's existing conservation areas, to review existing boundaries, and to assess the merits of potential new areas of the Borough for conservation area designation. This review has so far resulted in the designation of 12 new areas and the extension of 18 existing. Of the Boroughs 37 conservation areas 34 now have an up to date appraisals which define and describe their special interest and character.



Case Study 4: Mealhouse Brow

A partnership between Northern Counties Housing Association and Stockport Council has restored the historical frontages and repaired important elements of this group of dilapidated and collapsing buildings, including a 15th century stone wall. This site was the location of the 18th century Court Leet, the Town Lock-ups and early manorial buildings, remnants of which survive in the basements.

The development has resulted in 18 flats for rent, arranged around secure courtyards accessed from Market Place. Seven retail units have also been provided on this steeply sloping site which connects the Underbanks with the historic market place. The project has been recognised by the Manchester Evening Residential Awards, Manchester Society of Architects, a Building for Life Award from CABE and a Making Town Centre Living Work Award from the Association of Town Centre Managers



5.0 Stockport's Heritage Resource

The Conservation Resource in Stockport

5.1 The Borough possesses a rich, varied and unique historic environment which is attributable to a number of factors, including:

- a long history of human settlement in the area, with evidence of human activity surviving from over 8,000 years ago
- its location at a transitional area between Cheshire Plain, the Pennine fringe and the Manchester embayment, the diverse geology and topography of which has resulting in a legacy of diverse traditional building styles & materials
- river valleys and transport routes which have had a defining influence on settlement distribution, form, and townscape
- a legacy of dispersed small medieval settlements, later washed over by suburban development but remaining identifiable as district centres
- the impact of industrialisation and associated urban development from late C18th onwards
- the evolution of a strong local identity & character

- the development of suburbs throughout the C19/20th and the rapid expansion of the Manchester conurbation
- the continuing presence of a large rural area (still some 40% of the Borough) with a strong urban/rural edge

Heritage Assets

- 5.2 A schedule of heritage assets including listed buildings, conservation areas, museums and collections and the archaeological resource is contained in an appendix to this document.
- 5.3 Heritage assets make or have the potential to make a significant contribution to the quality of life for those living, working or visiting in the Borough. They are also very important in presenting a positive image of the Borough, for the purposes of marketing, promotion and attracting inward investment.
- 5.4 There are many examples within the Borough that demonstrate how historic buildings and areas can make a major contribution to the achievement of wider economic development and regeneration objectives. Often national or local recognition of heritage assets has been the key to attracting major external funding (e.g. regeneration of

Market/Underbanks/Hillgate, Staircase House restoration, Houldsworth Mill conversion, Vernon Park restoration and enhancement). Over the last 5-10 years the Council has established a substantial track record in the successful delivery of conservation-led regeneration schemes and these have made a significant positive contribution to the quality of life in the Borough.

- 5.5 This strategy seeks to build on the substantial successes of recent years through the Conservation Strategy and to address conservation and heritage issues more widely across the Borough in accordance with the Council's corporate aims and objectives.

Conservation Strategy Review 2004 - 2007

- 5.6 The Conservation Strategy for Stockport approved in 2004, set down a comprehensive strategy and a three year action plan relating specifically to the historic environment. The overall objective of the strategy was to ensure that appropriate recognition and consideration was given to the historic assets of Stockport so that they may continue to be preserved, enhanced, utilised and enjoyed by existing and future generations. Significant progress has been made in fulfilling the aims and objectives of the strategy and these are set out the Action Plan review appended to this document. It also highlights

a number of areas for future development which may be considered in the context of the new strategy.

Strategic Fit and Heritage Policy Context

- 5.7 The Conservation and Heritage Strategy (and future action plan) will respond to, interact with and support the following strategic documents at a local and regional level:
- **Stockport Council's Priorities 2007-2010** in respect of Physical and Economic Regeneration and a Sustainable Environment, to create an attractive and thriving borough.
 - **Stockport's Community Strategy** in respect of inclusive access and involvement in the Borough's diverse heritage assets.
 - **Unitary Development Plan 2006** in respect of providing a framework for development and the policy base on which to manage change within the historic environment and ensure adequate controls. The current Stockport UDP was adopted by the Council in July 2006, providing development guidance up to 2011.
 - **Stockport's Visitor Strategy 2007-2012** in respect of promoting the heritage aspect of the tourism / visitor offer.

- **The Regional Cultural Strategy 2001** by the North West Cultural Consortium and NWDA, in respect of its detailed mapping of the cultural sector in the region and its analysis of the historic environment in the north west.
 - **Stockport's Economic Development Strategy 2002 – 2012** in respect of using heritage as a driver for inward investment into the Borough and Greater Manchester Economic Plan.
 - **Stockport's Regeneration and Renewal Framework 2006** in respect of supporting the physical and economic regeneration of priority areas.
 - **Stockport's District and Local Centres Strategy** in respect to realising and acknowledging the importance and value of heritage assets throughout the whole district.
 - **Local / Neighbourhood Plans** and actions plans.
 - **Town Centre Future Stockport & Masterplan / M60 Gateway Strategy /** in respect of utilising the town's important historic assets to maximise economic potential, enhancing the fabric and raising its profile.
 - **Strategy for Tourism in the Northwest 2003.** Heritage is a principle component of the heritage offer.
 - **Stockport Town Centre Evening Economy Strategy** by utilising heritage attractions and assets to promote an evening economy.
 - **Regional Planning Guidance** contains objectives to ensure management of the region's environmental and cultural assets.
 - **Regional Economic Strategy 2007** in respect of the vision to create a region which 'nurtures its environment, heritage and culture'
 - **Informal Learning & Inclusion Strategy 2007-10.** In respect of providing access to heritage assets and collections to enable lifelong learning across the borough.
 - **Mills Strategy** draft 2005 deals with mills as a collective resource
 - **River Development Plan** in respect of identifying key buildings along the riverside
 - **Local Transport Plan** in respect of transport policies for Stockport
- 5.8 The aims and objectives of the Conservation and Heritage Strategy will have an important and continued role to play in the emerging **Local Development**

Framework (LDF), and will ensure that adequate consideration is given to the Borough's heritage assets and that these are fully respected when developing policies, plans and Action Areas where there is a significant conservation element.

5.9 At a national level the Conservation and Heritage Strategy is in accordance with and supports the following policy / legal framework:

- **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** establishes statutory duties and powers for the local planning authority in respect of the historic environment. It sets out the Council's responsibilities with respect to:
 - authorisation of listed building consent
 - the issue of enforcement notices
 - prevention of deterioration to listed buildings
 - designation of conservation areas
 - formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas
 - duties in respect of planning functions in conservation areas
 - grant assistance for preservation or enhancement of historic buildings or conservation areas

- **Planning Policy Guidance note 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) PPG15 (1994)**

Paragraph 1.6 emphasises the key role of local authorities in the stewardship of the historic environment urges local authorities to:

'maintain and strengthen their commitment to stewardship of the historic environment, and to reflect it in their policies and their allocation of resources. It is important that, as planning authorities, they adopt suitable policies in development plans, and give practical effect to them through their development control function. As highway authorities too, their policies and activities should reflect the need to protect the historic environment and to promote sustainable economic growth Above all, local authorities should ensure that they call on sufficient specialist conservation advice, whether individually or jointly, to inform their decision-making and to assist owners and other members of the public.'

- **Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (Archaeology and Planning) PPG16 (1990)** Sets out how archaeology remains should be handled through the planning process, and how they should be preserved or recorded in both an urban and rural context.

Case Study 5: Hillgate Townscape Heritage Initiative

The Hillgate Townscape Heritage Initiative is a 5 year conservation led regeneration programme, which commenced in July 2003. The scheme is jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund & Stockport Council.

The objectives of the programme are to safeguard the distinctive character of the Hillgate Conservation Area whilst breathing new life into it. The scheme provides grants for the repair, restoration and re-use of properties as well as infilling of key gap sites. In addition a programme of highways and environmental works will make the area more attractive for residents, businesses and visitors.

Several key schemes have been identified as being vital to the success of the regeneration of Hillgate, and the Council is working closely with development partners to deliver these. The objective is to secure a long term, sustainable future for key building groups within the THI area which are of importance due to their historic value and position as landmark buildings within the conservation area. Amongst these are 27 Higher Hillgate, the Salvation Army Citadel, the former Peaches Nightclub and adjoining buildings.



The old Co-op building, Higher Hillgate



Salvation Army Citadel, Middle Hillgate

- **Town and Country Planning Act 1990**
 - **The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004** provides new arrangements for the planning system. This will involve the adoption of a Local Development Framework (LDF) which will in time replace the UDP. The LDF will consist of a combination of core strategies and policies supplemented by supplementary planning documents on a range of topics.
 - **The Historic Environment: A Force for Our Future (DCMS/DTLR) 2001**
This document sets out key themes for improving the management of the historic environment, focussed on the following areas:
 - leadership/partnership
 - education/training
 - social inclusion
 - protection/sustainability
 - optimising economic potential
 - **Power of Place (English Heritage) 2000** – emphasised the advantages of conservation led regeneration, the benefits of investing in historic buildings and the significance of place making and the historic environment
 - **Protecting Our Historic Environment: Making the System Work Better (DCMS) 2003**
 - **Managing Local Authority Heritage Assets (DCMS, ODPM, English Heritage) 2003** Advocates best practice and offers advice when dealing with local authority owned heritage assets.
- 5.10 In addition the Government's **Heritage Protection for the 21st Century: White Paper (March 2007)** will significantly affect the way in which the historic environment is categorised. The proposed protection system is based around three core principles:
- Developing a unified approach to the historic environment
 - Maximising opportunities for inclusion and involvement
 - Supporting sustainable communities by putting the historic environment at the heart of the planning system
- The reform of heritage protection regime will give local government a significantly enhanced role in relation to the historic environment. This will impact on this strategy which will need to react accordingly.
- 5.11 The White Paper states that levels of public participation in the historic environment are high and are rising. Whether through visiting, volunteering, or studying,

substantial numbers of people choose to access or care for heritage in their free time. This has been noticeable in Stockport through a number of consultations, projects and initiatives. Levels of engagement are good compared to other parts of the cultural sector and this level of interest, commitment and enthusiasm has also come out of the consultation for this strategy document and is an area that should be developed further.

5.12 Organisations such as **English Heritage, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)** and **Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Council for British Archaeology (CBA)** have produced a wide range of advocacy documents and advice notes that provide a useful source of information in respect of the historic environment.

5.13 Other reviews that have some relevance to this strategy are **The Barker Review of Land Use Planning: Interim Report 2006** and **Comprehensive Spending Review** process. The Barker report stressed that the planning system has to balance complex sets of competing goals. Protecting the historic built environment was seen as one of the social objectives that needed to be balanced with other economic and environmental objectives.

5.14 A consistent theme of these proposals is the emphasis and reinforcement given to the key role of local authorities in the management of the historic environment –and the acknowledgement of the need to develop local authority expertise and capacity. The Strategy will need to be able to respond to changes to existing legislative and policy framework.

5.15 Whilst not all statutory powers and responsibilities for conservation are within Council's control, this Strategy acknowledges the key role that the Council plays in promoting the preservation, enhancement and enjoyment of historic environment within Stockport. The Council has various roles as local planning authority, as local highway authority, as owner of land and property, and as a developer and regeneration agency.

Part Two

Issues and Action

6.0 Key Issues and Proposed Action

6.1 Four key themes underpin the Conservation and Heritage Strategy: ***Understanding, Positive Action, Developing Partnerships*** and ***Promoting Best Practice***. These themes have emerged out of internal and external workshops and stakeholder consultation carried out in the development of the strategy.

Understanding

- Education
- Information
- Learning, Skills and Training
- Accessibility
- Libraries

Positive Action

- Public Realm Enhancement
- Buildings at Risk
- Conservation Areas
- List Review
- Archaeology
- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Historic Landscape Characterisation
- Regeneration
- Pro-active enforcement
- Planning & Development Control
- Collections Development
- Development of sites/collections
- External Funding
- Conservation Fund
- Tourism, Image and Identity

Developing Partnerships

- Local Partnerships
- Community Engagement
- Local and national heritage bodies
- Corporate 'joined-up' working
- International Liaison
- Funding Partners

Promoting Best Practice

- Advice
- Celebrating and Promoting Achievement
- Asset Management and Maintenance

6.2 *Understanding*

“From knowledge flows understanding and from understanding flows an appreciation of value, sound and timely decision-making and informed and intelligent action”. English Heritage Strategy 2005-10

- 6.2.1 The historic environment is not an elite or exclusive place – it is where we live, work and visit on a daily basis and is also personal to us all. In order to protect it and enhance it, we need to ensure the management of change is based on a shared understanding of its value and importance.
- 6.2.2 The Council has a key role in enhancing the public’s understanding and appreciation of Stockport’s historic environment and heritage. It has a responsibility to make sure its expertise, knowledge and skills are accessible to those who need it, and to develop new approaches to assist improved understanding and management of historic assets.
- 6.2.3 A key challenge facing the heritage sector is widening participation by encouraging more people from under-represented communities to access the historic

environment. It is important that any barriers to participation are addressed in this strategy.

The **‘History Matters - Pass it On’** national campaign in 2006 aimed to raise further awareness of the importance of history to our everyday lives and encourage involvement in heritage. Through various forms of engagement, it sought to find out more about what and why history matters to people and to ensure that its importance in the public consciousness is appreciated more fully by policy-makers. A variety of national organisations worked together to run a large-scale and complex campaign that aimed at directly engaging the public and the positive public reception indicates that this approach can be built upon for the long term.

Case Study 6: Hands on Heritage

This project, based in Brinnington and Reddish builds on the successful Access Heritage project which ran from 2001-04. The aims of the Hands on Heritage project is to engage local communities experiencing social deprivation/isolation, to raise individual and community pride and respect for self and the area, and to develop sustained interest in and access to heritage through partnership working.

The team work with community volunteers to develop and deliver holiday activities, school projects, exhibitions, trips to heritage sites, community learning projects, holiday clubs and fun days. Partners include primary schools, parent participation officers, children's centres, etc.



Case Study 7: Mellor Heritage

In the summer of 1997 an important discovery took place on a hilltop in Mellor. A team from the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit uncovered evidence of an Iron Age hill fort which is unique in the North West. As a result, The Mellor Archaeological Trust was formed to progress investigations and to work in partnership with the council to interpret these discoveries in a new Town Centre Museum, 'The Stockport Story'. The Trust has now expanded the scope of investigations with an HLF funded 'Mellor Heritage Project' to study more recent history and industrial heritage too.



Excavations and reconstructed roundhouse at Mellor

6.2.4 Through capacity building programmes, major events such as Heritage Open Days and the National Archaeology Week, the heritage sector has sought to reach new audiences. Examples in Stockport include:

- Access Heritage/Hands on Heritage, a 3 year programme of community heritage was run in Brinnington between 2002-05. Further HLF funding was received to extend this project under the Hands on Heritage banner and now also works in Reddish.
- A Community Heritage Officer works across the borough with target groups of older people, young people, families and Black and Minority Ethnic people on the development of community based heritage initiatives and is the link between communities and heritage attractions, organising trips and activities at the sites often for people who would be unable or unwilling to access the sites independently. In the voluntary sector too, the knowledge and enthusiasm of groups and individuals broadens the provision.
- The Staircase House Interpretation Group worked closely with Disability Stockport and the Ethnic Diversity Service to ensure this heritage asset was as accessible to as many people as possible.

- Research undertaken on the reasons for non-visits to museums informs the development of work across the museums to target those people who are unable or unwilling to visit heritage attractions. Research is currently being undertaken with a view to developing improved services for single parent families – particularly fathers/male carers with children to encourage more use of the sites by this under-represented audience. A similar research project was completed with a view to how we can reach out to more Black and Minority Ethnic people.

6.2.5 Education

- Stockport Heritage Services regularly goes out to organisations, groups and schools to deliver talks or hands-on activities relating to different aspects of heritage work, Stockport's rich social and industrial heritage and the wide variety of heritage attractions available locally. These and similar events, seminars and activities are supported by an excellent circuit of speakers.
- Local heritage library staff and archivist regularly have taster sessions on researching family history using original documents in the local heritage libraries using rate books and ICT resources such as Census and

ancestry information through the Peoples Network. Free use of computers is offered in all libraries. Staff also give talks on various aspects of local history including how the landscape has changed using aerial photographs and class visits to schools.

- *ACTION : to build upon good practice & excellence in educational provision at heritage sites, in libraries and in the community.*
- Heritage Open Days are held annually in September. This is an opportunity to provide access to places such as Abney Hall, which is usually not accessible to the public, and provide a presentation detailing the history of the hall and guided tour. These events are extremely popular every year and a large number of visitors attend the weekend. In 2006, Stockport had over 20 events, tours or buildings opened over the Heritage Open Days weekend (HODs). And there is an opportunity to build on the knowledge and enthusiasm of local groups. It is also important to ensure low income households and underrepresented groups are aware of the free open days.
- *ACTION: to increase the number of historic assets that are accessible and open to the public and expand the*

Heritage Open Days initiative to a wider audience over a wider programme and timescale.

- Stockport's collection items are taken to these talks and events and shown to, and handled by the public. These talks and outreach activities and presentations are an extremely effective way of promoting the Service and the collections, increasing awareness and access to them.
- *ACTION: to increase the programme of outreach activities to promote the service and access to the Council's heritage resource.*
- Access to the collections archives and historic research material at local and central libraries is provided for private and academic research. For instance the Hat Works has a resource area which contains details of the hatting collections, reference material and information which is accessible to researchers and the public.
- *ACTION: to Increase access to the collections, reference material and information for researchers, of both professional and amateur interest.*

Case Study 8: Heritage Open Days

The Council is a strong supporter of the Heritage Open Days initiative which is promoted by the Civic Trust. The Heritage Open Days scheme encourages all sorts of organisations (Council, libraries, Friends Groups, companies and individuals) to make heritage assets more accessible by ‘throwing open their doors’ to everyone during the Heritage Open Days week/weekend in early September. Last year the Council co-ordinated the opening and organisation of special activities at nearly 30 Heritage sites across the Borough, making Stockport one of the biggest contributors in the region.



Air Raid Shelters



War Memorial & Art Gallery



Cheadle Mosque



Vernon Mills



Marple Locks

Case Study 9: Reddish Yarns

The Hands on Heritage (Brinnington and Reddish) team worked with 5 schools and parent groups and, working with local libraries, researched local history in Reddish and produce education resources boxes. The project also involved developing large scale puppets based on the various jobs children did during the 19th century, for example mill workers, farm workers and mine workers. A celebration event day was held in Reddish Vale Country Park where pupils and families demonstrated and celebrated their learning.



6.2.6 Information

- Stockport Historic Environment Database (SHED) is a map base GIS and information database that is currently available internally. The external availability of this information to the public, organisations, volunteer groups on the boroughs listed buildings, conservation areas, park and gardens and archaeology will improve understanding and availability of this key information resource. It may also have a wider value in being incorporated as part of a wider pictorial presentation of Stockport to help with journey planning and signage.
- *ACTION: to make SHED available externally to provide an accessible GIS based heritage information resource.*
- All the heritage sites open to the public are interpreted for visitors using a variety of techniques including interpretive panels, audio guides, audio-visual presentations, guided tours and printed material. Interpretive teams are formed for each new project as appropriate (and where existing interpretation is being revised) and comprises technicians, curators, formal and informal learning officers. This ensures that all learning needs and styles are catered for. Interpretation is carried out using the 'Inspiring Learning for All' framework.
- *ACTION: to ensure all heritage sites provide appropriate and innovative interpretation techniques to provide information and enliven the visitor experience in accordance with the Inspiring Learning for All framework.*
- External funding bodies, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, increasingly require projects to be opened up to new audiences, especially from communities that are hard to reach. Projects can no longer simply address building repair or refurbishment in isolation - the Council or any other grant receiving organisation are expected to continually seek imaginative ways of involving a wider audience when developing project proposals. In order to sustain the historic environment, people must be able to engage with it and access it in some form or other. The importance of people in protecting, enhancing and preserving the historic environment is only too well understood by funding bodies. It is vital that community engagement and learning opportunities are considered at all stages in conservation and heritage schemes.
- *ACTION: to develop and explore new audiences and innovative ways to encourage and increase audience involvement and participation in heritage activity when developing new or existing projects.*

6.2.7 Learning, Skills and Training

- There is a skills deficit when it comes to the conservation sector whether at a professional level or as a contractor or skilled craftsman – these skills which were historically handed on through the apprenticeship system are in decline. There is a real shortage of skilled quality craftspeople which has the effect of increasing the cost of conservation works or reduced quality of work. It is important to ensure the continuation of skills at the highest quality level, and training skills will need developing at a local and regional level, to ensure the local distinctiveness of trades is not lost and is available to owners of buildings in need of a good quality traditional repair.

The Council needs to work with the Historic Environment Forum and educational establishments such as Stockport College and with regionally established training centres and universities to develop and support local and professional 'skills' courses. The Council could also provide some on site training when key projects are being implemented.

- *ACTION: to develop links with Stockport College and appropriate training centres and universities and support the establishment of a regional training centre.*

- *ACTION: to develop links with the employment sector and regional initiatives to encourage and improve skills development.*
- There is also a professional specialist skills shortage across the heritage sector (Conservation Officers/Accredited Architects and Surveyors/ Contractors/Planning Officers/Building Inspectors). In addition there are valuable in-house conservation skills that could benefit students and a formalised system of work experience would increase capacity in the sector and in the future of Stockport residents at a local and regional level. The variety of heritage sites, and 'in-house' professional expertise in all fields (management, education, curatorial and archival) means that important opportunities are created for vocational training, placements and work experience.
- *ACTION : to support local and regional professional learning and skills development by offering training placements and work experience in key service areas within the Council and develop an internal training programme for related professionals as part of a wider Continued Professional Development Programme.*

- One of the aims of the Hands on Heritage project is to help members of the community develop the skills to enable heritage activities, projects and opportunities for volunteering to continue beyond the life of the project.
- *ACTION: to encourage further capacity building in the volunteer sector and in the community through heritage activities and projects.*
- Specialist conservation services: the Conservation Register provides a useful and practical national database of accredited conservators in all the various specialised fields and is recognised by major funders.
- *ACTION : to assist in the production of a local/regional database of heritage/ conservation specialists for small to large projects*
- The 'Inspiring Learning for All ' framework underpins all museum/heritage/library/archive site-based learning activities. All of the Council's own heritage sites have programmes of 'formal' and 'Informal' education in place. The variety of the sites means that they provide very different learning opportunities with something to appeal to all ages, interests and abilities. Different learning styles are served by a variety of forms of interpretation to engage people and encourage enjoyment, creativity, learning, and support progression onto further learning.
- *ACTION: to provide a variety of themes at different sites to provide very different opportunities for learning, with something to appeal to all ages, interests and learning abilities.*
- The museum sector needs to be strengthened through increased collaboration and more investment in training, development and succession planning. In particular, museums need to renew their sources of expertise, both internally and externally.
- *ACTION: to consider new and innovative ways of investing and renewing skills and training through succession planning.*
- The Formal and Informal Learning team and Stockport Library and Information Service deliver structured school sessions and workshops throughout the year as well as reminiscence sessions, workshops, youth activities, The Hands on Heritage Brinnington and Reddish project, consultation sessions and focus groups, outreach activities, exhibitions for target audiences across the heritage sites and in the community. The team also work with heritage service colleagues and local heritage

libraries to develop the interpretation of the sites and on audience development initiatives.

- *ACTION: to develop existing informal and formal learning programmes and open up new audiences and learning initiatives across the borough.*
- Local societies and campaigning heritage groups have existed for many years, recent years have seen a new generation of local heritage groups. Alongside this has been a growth in the number of community archaeology projects. The Mellor Archaeological Trust has clearly demonstrated that there is a great level of public interest for this type of activity in Stockport. Community archaeology initiatives such as Dig Manchester have significant potential to develop a wider understanding and appreciation of the historic environment.
- *ACTION: to develop existing and new community based 'hands on' learning projects*

6.2.8 Accessibility

- Inclusive policies and practices are in place at all heritage sites to ensure that sites are welcoming to all and that barriers to physical and intellectual access are minimised. Projects such as 'Hands on Heritage', with a focus on the

Brinnington and Reddish areas ensure that social inclusion is a key motivator for these projects.

- The Council is committed to enabling access in its broadest sense, from sustainable public transport to intellectual access, to allow the best possible public access to the collections and sites for the purpose of education, interpretation, research and enjoyment. This means keeping buildings open for as long as possible and at times convenient for customers. It also means providing a pro-active education service, a lively exhibition programme and ensuring that as large a proportion of the collection is on display as possible and that the collections are relevant to the local population. Another aspect is to ensure that the reserve collections are available to researchers. It is also important that marketing is enhanced where there is poor take up.
- The improvement of the documentation for the Service has meant an increased use of the collections and greater accessibility to the collections. This means that they are easily searched and retrieved with correct information being assigned as to their description and location. This has meant that more objects and a better variety of objects for outreach activities, exhibitions, research, and school sessions have been found and used.

- *ACTION: to aim to increase access to collections and sites to the public and researchers and seek to expand an innovative exhibition programme*

6.2.9 Libraries

- Libraries provide a valuable learning and information resource for the whole borough and the historical and research information and photographic collections held underpins much of the work of the heritage sector. The library resources are extremely accessible and available to the whole community at both local and central libraries.
- By any definition the Local Heritage Library and its collection of books, directories, pamphlets, photographs, newspapers, maps and valuable expertise and associated archive collections covering several centuries are considerable heritage assets in Council ownership. They are in many respects the key to making sense of other heritage assets contained within this strategy.
- Local Heritage Libraries allow local communities and individuals to research and connect with their past and their ancestors, thus engendering community pride through a better understanding and valuing of their surroundings and heritage.

- The digitisation of aspects of the local heritage library collection will enable 24/7 access through ICT.

- *ACTION: support the Library and Information Service in promoting the development and implementation of strategies for the storage, conservation, digitisation and access to current and future parts of the collection.*

6.3 *Positive Action*

- 6.3.1 Active management of historic environment is an essential element in the protection and enhancement of historic assets. There is a considerable range of positive action and intervention that the Council can and has taken, ranging from heritage-led regeneration projects and programmes designed to transform run-down areas in social and economic decline, to the promotion and development of heritage-based tourism, or enhancements to the public realm. Positive action is often essential to secure the future of historic buildings at risk or undertake planning enforcement to control unauthorised works to heritage assets. Often the Council has a statutory duty or responsibility to take a lead role in these initiatives.
- 6.3.2 The success of such positive action requires that clear policies and guidance are in place and that appropriate mechanisms are established to ensure positive management of the historic environment.
- 6.3.3 The Council has a role in developing a strong identity for Stockport rooted in its heritage and history and we must work with local communities to ensure our work is relevant and representative and therefore encourages public support and engagement.

6.3.4 **Public Realm Enhancement**

- Public realm enhancement is often a key element of conservation-led regeneration, creating a high quality environment and sense of place that can attract inward investment. Stockport has already established an excellent track record in delivering high quality enhancement schemes. This should continue and require close liaison with Highways and Transportation and other stakeholders to ensure schemes are identified and brought forward, are to the highest quality, are sustainable, and respect both conservation and highway requirements as well as improving pedestrian links and encouraging walking and cycling.
- Greater closer working relationships with Highways and Transportation and other statutory undertakers will ensure that the heritage elements are respected and given full consideration in any proposals, whether they involve enhancement, reinstatement or repair. This could include the removal of street clutter, improved legibility and signage and the preservation, creation and enhancement of green space.
- ***ACTION: to develop partnerships and establish standards and protocols to ensure the highest quality design and implementation of public realm improvements and repairs.***

6.3.5 Buildings at Risk

- Buildings are an important part of our heritage and they can be a focal point, landmark or a discreet addition to the local scene. Those that are in a run down state, that are vacant and in a state of poor repair and neglected can be detrimental to the character and appearance of an area, are a wasted resource and are the target for vandalism, thus having a negative effect on the community. It is the owners responsibility to repair their building and neglect may be for a number of reasons, but if left they risk further deterioration and possible loss. Action needs to be taken to tackle such buildings. The Council is currently developing a Buildings at Risk strategy and action plan that will address those buildings that are currently at risk from further neglect and deterioration. If negotiations, as a first step, fail then the Council has a duty to use the powers available to it to preserve the historic buildings in their area. The buildings at risk action plan will propose a number of measures including statutory powers such as Urgent Works notices and Repairs Notices and ultimately their power of compulsory acquisition through compulsory purchase.
- *ACTION: to develop an action plan to ensure buildings at risk are identified and appropriate and timely action is*

taken to repair, restore and bring them back into sustainable reuse.

6.3.6 Conservation Areas

- It is a statutory duty for Local Authorities to periodically review Conservation Area boundaries and consider whether new conservation area designations are appropriate. The Council has over the last few years carried out a comprehensive review of the borough to look at existing and potential areas and has designated 12 new and extended 18 existing conservation areas across the borough following public consultation. A periodic review of potential new conservation areas will need to take place.
- It is also important that conservation areas are properly understood and their special interest adequately protected including buildings, structures, spaces and trees. Local Authorities are required to define and describe the character of conservation areas through Character Appraisals in order to make effective and coherent decisions in respect of development proposals. It is also vital that proposals for their management, preservation and enhancement are also brought forward and implemented to meet the needs of the existing and any future communities, including the publication of

Management Plans and the introduction of appropriate levels of planning control through the use Article 4 directions.

- *ACTION: ensure all conservation areas are adequately protected and have up to date appraisals and management plans in place*

6.3.7 List Review

- The identification of historic buildings of national importance and their incorporation into statutory lists is the responsibility of English Heritage and the Department for Culture Media and Sport. At a local level it is carried out by the Council under the umbrella of the policies in the Stockport Unitary Development Plan (UDP). A targeted list review in the former County Borough area has resulted in the identification of additional and potential statutory and local listed buildings as well as updating existing list entries. Further work is needed to review and extend the local list across the Borough as a whole.
- *ACTION: enhance local list of buildings of architectural or historic interest*

6.3.8 Archaeology

- The enhancement of the Greater Manchester Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for Stockport has resulted in an increased number of records from around 900 to over 3,000. The survey has provided the borough with a thorough audit of its rich archaeological resource. The SMR forms the basis for the development of a comprehensive Historic Environment Record (HER) for the whole county that is managed by Greater Manchester Archaeology Unit based at the University of Manchester. The HER will form an important tool in future management, promotion and preservation of archaeological sites through early identification in the planning system. This will provide a mechanism through which the most important sites will be preserved in situ and of the recording of others. There is an opportunity to disseminate the results of these investigations by erecting information boards and through various media including website, publications, exhibitions, museum and libraries and displays of artefacts.
- *ACTION: Develop the Historic Environment Record as a rich archaeological resource and Promote the use of site interpretation / commemoration of archaeological results*

- Community archaeology digs have the potential to increase community pride and encourage communities to take ownership of their local heritage, to provide an excellent environment for formal and informal learning, inspiring children and adults to further/higher education, to provide healthy lifestyle activities, to give people a sense of place and belonging, to actively engage with the local historic environment and understand why it needs to be protected for the future.
- *ACTION: Encourage community dig projects as a way to encourage local communities to take ownership of their local heritage*

6.3.9 Historic Parks and Gardens

- Stockport possesses a wide range of designed landscapes, graveyards, parks and gardens of national regional and local significance. In addition to their intrinsic historic importance they often also provide a setting for historic buildings and form high quality open spaces in conservation areas. Recognition of these assets is important and the development of a register will assist in developing appropriate policies for their management and safeguarding in future.

- *ACTION: Ensure that the significance of historic parks and gardens / landscapes / graveyards resource is recognised and understood*

6.3.10 Historic Landscape Characterisation

- An Historic Landscape Characterisation project for Greater Manchester is being currently undertaken by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit with funding from English Heritage. It will provide an important resource for understanding the evolution of the present day landscape, identifying the character of key historic landscapes and townscapes, and will inform the positive management and long term strategic planning of the wider historic environment.
- *ACTION: Support compilation of county-wide Historic Landscape Characterisation project and promote dissemination of results*

6.3.11 Regeneration

- The future availability of external funding from organisations such as English Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund and the European Commission is unknown but it is recognised that the availability of substantial funding is unlikely in the short and medium term.
- The historic environment can play a significant role in helping to regenerate communities. Where funding is directed towards heritage-led regeneration projects they make a significant difference to the appearance of local areas and provide opportunities for employment and the sense of confidence for businesses and residents. But they are complex projects, resource intensive and take time to implement, requiring long term vision and commitment.
- The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme offers funding for the repair, re-use and enhancement of historic urban areas. The main aim of the scheme is to ensure that the buildings which make up the special architectural character of an area continue to have a viable future use. Highest priority is given to the repair of historic buildings and to bringing derelict and under-used buildings back into use. There is a strong emphasis on community involvement.

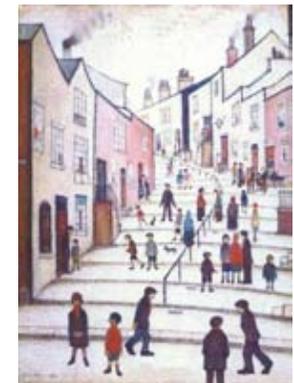
Case Study 10: Crowther Street

This development comprised the construction of 7 new houses and the restoration of the historic steps, which are the subject of a Lowry painting in the Council's Permanent Art Collection.

The houses built by Johnnie Johnson Housing Trust enclose one side of the steps and include historical references to the original terraced houses which were demolished in the 1960's.

The project was grant aided by the Heritage Lottery Fund through the Hillgate Townscape Heritage Initiative.

It was the winner in the New Build Residential Category of Stockport Council's Conservation and Design Awards 2007



- Stockport’s Hillgate Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is a resounding success, yet required a significant level of resources both financial and human from the Council to match the Heritage Lottery Fund grant offer. The positive regeneration and improvements to the environment and heritage assets is significant. The THI programme is currently the largest source of funding for heritage-led area-based regeneration and opportunities should be explored to maximise this potential. This proactive work maximises available funding and the output and benefits in regenerating run down historic areas is significant.
- *ACTION: to maximise opportunities to develop heritage led regeneration projects, and ensure that the benefits are sustained.*

6.3.12 Pro-active enforcement

- The use of statutory powers to secure improvements to buildings and land can have a positive effect on the appearance of an area. If these problems are not tackled they can have a significantly negative impact upon an area and community. Planning powers such as Section 215 notices can be used as a positive tool to ensure rundown sites or buildings in historic areas are targeted for improvement. The Hillgate Townscape Heritage Initiative is developing a proactive strategy of positive

intervention to ensure that the benefits of the grant aided regeneration works are not undermined by inaction and neglect by adjacent owners resulting in untidy or derelict sites. This type of action is an effective way of achieving enhancements in historic areas, and is an area which ought to be developed further.

- *ACTION: to establish priorities and take positive action to tackle key problem buildings and sites.*
- Planning enforcement action is an effective tool to control breaches of planning control and ensure trees are protected. Whilst such action is normally used as a last resort after all other efforts have failed, it is often demanded by the public, voluntary bodies and residents associations when they feel that the quality of their environment is being affected either by incremental or significant breaches of control. Where enforcement is not pursued this can cause frustration and disillusion amongst those trying to protect their local environment. Enforcement action should therefore be actively promoted and negotiated where appropriate. The provision of advice and information to property owners may also help to discourage uninformed and minor incremental alterations.

- *ACTION: to work with Development Control to establish priorities and ensure appropriate and timely conservation enforcement action is pursued.*
- *ACTION: to develop advice / guidance for property owners to help prevent uninformed alterations.*

6.3.13 Planning and Development Control

- Planning briefs, development briefs and masterplans can provide a useful framework to assist owners and developers to understand and respect the conservation and heritage aspects of an area or building at an early stage in the development process. This can help ensure that conservation issues are addressed from the outset and can avoid the preparation of abortive schemes and proposals. Briefs and masterplans can also have a clear benefit in the disposal of buildings and sites, helping future purchasers and decision makers aware of conservation issues at an early stage.
- A recognition of the role of the historic environment and local distinctiveness in contributing to the social, economic and environmental sustainability of an area – which can add value to broader community needs and priorities – should be built into strategic planning frameworks.

- The Government requires local planning authorities to adopt appropriate conservation policies in development plans and give practical effect to them through development control decision-making. Effective development control in the historic environment requires particularly close attention to detail to assess the full impact of proposals.
- Consultation and community engagement is important also in the context of adopting the policy framework against which applications are determined such as the Local Development Framework and Unitary Development Plan. We need to ensure that the policy framework is relevant and robust, and community engagement plays a vital role in informing some of the issues that will need to be considered.
- *ACTION: ensure that conservation and heritage is given full consideration when developing Planning Policy and the emerging Local Development Framework.*
- The effectiveness of the development control system depends upon a vigorous and consistent approach to decision making, in conjunction with the use of enforcement powers to control unauthorised works and breaches of planning condition.

- Applications for planning permission, listed building consent, conservation area consent and advertisement consent which affect historic buildings or areas throughout the Borough are subject to specialist consultation with the Conservation Officer based in Regeneration. Many proposals require negotiation and discussion – either at pre- or post-application stage - to ensure that they are of an appropriate standard to obtain approval. Pre-application discussions are particularly encouraged and can reduce delays in the decisions making process. We must look at ways in which we can achieve demanding targets without compromising quality of decision making in respect of conservation and design, and the resources available to provide this element of the statutory conservation service need to be in place and maintained. In addition we must look at developing skills and building capacity in existing resources.
- *ACTION: to establish a clear protocol for consultation and monitoring and establish a programme of capacity building and training.*
- There is a need to promote the adoption of the highest architectural standards and ensure sustainability for all new development in historic areas. The quality of design for new development in historic areas in Stockport can be highly variable and frequently poor or uninspired. The

Council, as local planning authority, tends to be reactive to new proposals rather than proactively seeking higher standards of design. The Council has established close links with CABE and English Heritage and is now in a position to promote the adoption of the highest architectural standards for all new development in historic areas. This will require identification of key and sensitive sites and preparation of appropriate design briefs in advance of proposals. A commitment to consider creative design solutions is likely to be required.

- The conservation and refurbishment of historic buildings is an intrinsically sustainable form of development, avoiding the use and waste of scarce resources associated with demolition and redevelopment, and helping to achieve sustainable growth. New technologies should be adopted where they are not detrimental to the character of a building and area.
- *ACTION: to continue to promote best practice throughout the planning process, through the Stockport Conservation and Design Awards and ensure that high quality design is achieved through design briefs and a design framework.*

6.3.14 The Dynamic Collection

- Museums should actively develop their collections, with a renewed commitment to acquisition as a key part of their role, and new strategic and funding approaches. Disposal should be seen as an integral part of collections development. Collections should be more mobile, seen in more venues both within the UK and internationally.
- *ACTION: to establish a programme of collection development and renewal.*

6.3.15 Developing sites

- The Council is currently 'expanding opportunities' in Stockport by enhancing/developing 'the variety of sites', formal & informal learning programmes, outreach activities etc. and through better collections management there is greatly improved access to collections related knowledge.
- There is a responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard.

- The buildings, displays and attractions will need to be refreshed / renewed to ensure they do not become dated. This will ensure that attraction remains fresh and remains popular to visitors and tourists. Refreshing will reinvigorate enthusiasm and new audiences will also be attracted. When sites are being developed, issues such as access to sites, sustainable transport, provision of cycle parking will need to be considered and there will need to be a balance between the special interest of the building and the needs of the user in terms of access and safety.
- *ACTION: to further develop opportunities to enhance the learning programmes and establish a programme of refreshing and renewal of buildings, displays and attractions.*

6.3.16 External Funding

- In view of the commitment to the 2012 Olympics it is clear that for any large projects, reliance on Lottery Funding cannot be guaranteed and this will affect the ability to deliver significant projects that rely on external funding. Both the Council and other voluntary and community organisations will need to prioritise and think creatively about securing funding and ensure that projects fit with

external funders priorities in order to maximise funding opportunities.

- The revised priorities for the distribution of Lottery funding will be increasing participation, inspiring young people, involving local communities, supporting volunteers and encouraging creativity among new talent and developing their skills.
- There also exists great opportunities for public art, both permanent and temporary instalments in a historic or contemporary context. These opportunities should be explored further and provide a chance to celebrate the past and create a legacy for the future.
- *ACTION: to work creatively with external and internal partners to maximise funding opportunities for key projects and establish priorities for funding activity in order to maximise potential.*

6.3.17 Conservation and Heritage Fund

- There is a duty in the planning legislation for local authorities to take positive steps to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas. For smaller projects a small local authority financed and managed conservation fund can be effective to promote

or enable repairs to historic buildings (grant assistance to owners), small conservation area enhancement schemes, and urgent works/repairs notice action. It may also assist the development of public information, guidance and interpretative material.

- Constraints on local government funding have exerted great pressure on grant schemes; similarly funding from external sources is both limited and strictly targeted. In practice most historic buildings or areas do not benefit from public grants or loans and building repairs and enhancements must be carried out and funded by private owners. The availability of small levels of grant can have a significant impact upon the character and appearance of historic buildings and areas: it stimulates private investment in and wider public support for conservation, ensures that work is carried out to high standards, can act as a catalyst for further private investment, and can avoid the need for more costly action by the Council in the future.
- A small Conservation Fund can be particularly effective if used as a pump priming mechanism to attract external funding. The development of partnerships to co-ordinate and bid for additional external resources, backed by modest sums from the Council's own budgets, can generate significant investment in historic environment

projects. A small Conservation Fund also provides the means to support urgent works action by the Council to safeguard threatened historic buildings. The absence of a budget for this type of work means that the Council is presently constrained in its capacity to enforce urgent works or repairs notices in default should owners refuse or are unwilling to carry out and fund works themselves.

- *ACTION: to establish a conservation fund to ensure proactive conservation enhancement work across the borough.*

6.3.18 Tourism / Image & Identity

- Heritage tourism can have an impact on the key economic outcomes of output and employment in a community and Heritage is a key driver of the Visitor Strategy. For most visitors to a particular area, access to the historic environment is likely to be part of a 'package' which also involves access to the natural environment and taking part in straightforward leisure pursuits. There is a need to work alongside other Stockport heritage assets such as the Plaza and Historic Churches to develop a 'package' of assets that will act as a draw rather than focus on simply the Council's own assets. This will increase opportunity/ability to attract new/existing

audiences both locally, regionally and national as a heritage-based visitor destination.

- There is also a need to promote a positive image of Stockport and conservation /heritage assets – parks, canals, buildings, markets, events, festivals and by developing initiatives more widely across the borough such as heritage and Blue Plaque trails. The Heritage Open Days initiative also presents a positive image and helps promote the heritage and visitor offer to a wider audience.
- Comprehensive publicity is currently produced detailing information about sites, locations, opening times, facilities, collections, exhibitions, events and activities through leaflets, press articles, website, and mail shots.
- Stockport is unique and its Historic Market area a set piece, Bramall Hall, Plaza and other assets should be promoted and branding considered such as the Old Town Quarter currently being developed. It is also important to promote leisure activities and cycling to and from heritage sites including the promotion of the Trans Pennine Trail and canals.
- *ACTION: to work with our partners to utilise and promote the boroughs key heritage assets to promote and*

increase tourism activity and improve the image of the borough through a number of existing, new and innovative initiatives.

- ***ACTION:** support the actions of the Visitor Strategy to ensure Stockport is a destination of choice.*

Case Study 11: Blue Plaques

The Stockport Heritage Trust has recently erected a series of Blue Plaques around Stockport celebrating aspects of the town's rich heritage. These 11 plaques compliment the existing 12 plaques erected by the council in the year 2000. The Trust, working in partnership with council officers, received a grant of £9,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. As well as the plaques themselves, the HLF has also funded the production of a Blue Plaque Trail leaflet which guides visitors around the sites and provides additional information on each one.



Blue Plaque Trail launch at the Plaza – June 2007

6.4 *Developing Partnerships*

“This historic environment is something...which can bring communities together in a shared sense of belonging”
(Secretary of State’s forward to A Force for Our Future, DCMS/DTLR 2001).

- 6.4.1 The heritage resource is by its nature very fragmented and involves a wide ranging and diverse group of organisations, agencies, individuals and volunteer groups. The value of a partnership approach to delivering the aims and objectives of this strategy is recognised and is vital to its success.
- 6.4.2 This is an area of work that has significant potential and the strategy should reflect a desire to include, involve and galvanise interest in Stockport’s heritage and ensure that the roles and responsibilities of protection, management and celebration are shared by all concerned.
- 6.4.3 It has been clear through the consultation responses that the Council is seen as an organisation that should play a central and coordinating role in pulling together the interests of the ‘heritage community’.

Case Study 12:

Working in Partnership with Friends Organisations

The Council works in partnership with a number of friends organisations, particularly in parks. Friends groups lead on projects and/or support Council initiatives. Friends groups can make HLF bids in their own right, as at Chadkirk Country Estate and Heaton Moor Park and are supported by council officers or they can act in a supporting role to Council Projects, as at Vernon & Woodbank Parks and Bramall Hall & Park. Friends groups help with funding of projects, staffing of events, marketing and publicity initiatives and generating new ideas to involve communities.



Well Dressing at Chadkirk: Supported by the Friends of Chadkirk

6.4.4 Partnership working is fundamental to the heritage sector and is a resource that should be harnessed and developed, and not taken for granted. There are clear advantages in partnership work, such as

- Community Development/Outreach
- Higher Profile/Greater Influence
- Increased Capacity
- Increased Effectiveness/Ability to Achieve Goals
- Funding Benefits
- Access to/Sharing Expertise
- Increased support for an organisation's work.

Broader benefits in developing a collaborative working culture include:

- A potential for greater community impact
- Local empowerment
- Ensuring that the voluntary heritage sector is not seen as 'fragmented'
- Political influence/change
- Independent thinking/action

6.4.5 Building Preservation Trusts, Development Trusts and other voluntary sector bodies play a significant role in securing the future of key buildings, maintaining ownership by and access for the local community. The historic environment sector has in recent years been engaged in a keen debate about how we identify what

people value. Different communities are likely to value different elements of the historic environment.

6.4.6 It is important that the historic environment is recognised by the Council departments as a shared, cross-cutting issue that affects the Council as a whole and spans most if not all service areas. Heritage is recognised as an issue which affects everyone's quality of life, touching many aspects of Council policy. It is therefore important that there is engagement with key stakeholders on issues affecting the historic environment, that we develop cross-cutting recognition of the value of the historic environment to ensure effective policy and decision making. It is also important that we identify and develop new public and private sector partnerships and sources of partnership funding for the historic environment.

6.4.7 **Local Strategic Partnerships**

- Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) offer a forum for the local authority to engage with other public agencies and stakeholders, with the LSP playing the role of a 'partnership of partnerships' across a number of areas of public policy. The current Local Area Agreements (LAA) offer one means of delivering on specific outcomes and targets. The historic environment should be involved in this developing area in respect of cultural and heritage

issues. Local Strategic Partnerships bring together the different parts of the public, private, business, community and voluntary sectors to work together at a local level. This non-statutory partnership helps to move stakeholders beyond separate professional or service areas, to address community goals as a whole. The Local Strategic Partnership is responsible for developing and driving the implementation of Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements. It is therefore necessary that there are champions and experts at different levels within the Local Strategic Partnership to represent the historic environment.

- *ACTION: to ensure that heritage and conservation are represented and given due consideration within the framework of the Local Strategic Partnership and its themed partnerships through Local Area Agreements.*

6.4.8 Community engagement

- Stockport Council is increasingly involved in a large number of project areas, and as a result the voluntary heritage sector as a whole is engaged in a wider variety and diverse area of work activity to broaden its appeal. The voluntary sector has significant public value by harnessing community energy and contributing to community identity, community pride and a sense of place

and we should recognise, support and harness this significant resource, which could also have a positive effect on crime reduction.

- Volunteer and community organisations report that there are a variety of factors that would help them work more effectively. The most reported factors were access to funding, stronger recognition and understanding by the council as well as more volunteers and a desire to access greater numbers of staff, members and professional expertise, as well as improved communications, infrastructure and governance.
- Conservation groups and volunteer organisations have expressed a desire to become more involved in the wider heritage debate and issues and suggest a suitable forum be established in which to network, receive and pass on information on policy and best practice and help develop conservation policy.
- Whilst Stockport benefits from large numbers of energetic and active local amenity and voluntary groups there is a need to strengthen links between these community groups and Black and Ethnic Minority Groups to benefit these groups and conservation and heritage in the Borough. There is a need to set up a suitable forum to

engage external partners and organisations in a number of heritage related initiatives.

- Involvement in conservation and the planning process is one way that communities often express their interest in the historic environment and is an area that can in many cases be their main focus and as such is an area that needs to be given consideration in this strategy.
- *ACTION: to maintain, recognise, develop and support community and voluntary organisations and activity across the Borough.*
- Museums should do more to expand the opportunities open to people to engage with collections and should be further diversified to meet the needs of a diverse community including underrepresented groups and Black and Ethnic Minority Groups. More collections should be in active use and museums should improve the way they manage collections-related knowledge. This can be achieved through the implementation of the Informal Learning Strategy
- *ACTION: to improve opportunities to engage with collections, local exhibitions and libraries and proactively engage BME communities to promote their sense of belonging*

6.4.9 Local and National Heritage bodies

- Stockport has established a good working relationship and links with national and regional bodies such as English Heritage, Victorian Society, CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment), IHBC (Institute of Historic Building Conservation), MA (Museum's Association), MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council) Greater Manchester Archaeology Unit (GMAU) and local building preservation trusts (BPT's). These links need to continue and develop.
- *ACTION: to maintain and develop good working contact with local and national heritage bodies and relevant BPT's*

6.4.10 Corporate 'joined-up' working

- The Council is a major owner and has responsibility for a number of heritage resources, such as buildings, monuments, streets, collections which are all managed by a number of different departments and the Council's asset management arm, Norfolk Property Services Stockport Limited. The authority has the same responsibilities as any owner of a historic asset, to keep such assets in good repair and indeed should set an example in the way that they manage and maintain these. The extent of the

Council's heritage ownership will have resource implications if it is to exercise these duties in a responsible way and it is therefore important that the Council exercises adequate controls, provides adequate resources and develops appropriate conservation and management plans for its own heritage assets.

- Conservation Area Management Plans have sought to bring together internal services to provide a more corporate and joined up approach to dealing with conservation matters especially sections that have responsibility for aspects such as highways, historic street furniture, historic street surfaces etc. The special character of historic features on highways and the public realm – such as natural stone paving and kerbs, stone setted surfaces or historic street furniture - is extremely vulnerable to damage or loss through work carried out by contractors, statutory undertakers or private developers and owners. A code of practice to integrate management of highways and public realm works within the historic environment, including conservation areas, should be effective in minimising potential damage to historic materials and features, emphasising the need for quality design and special care carried out by all. Protocols need to exist that involve conservation expertise at the early stages of consultation on all highway matters that affect the historic environment and heritage assets.
- Conservation and heritage matters overlap and integrate with many Council services and responsibilities including tourism, economic development, leisure, education, highways, planning etc. It is important that a corporate approach is taken when considering matters that affect the historic environment and our heritage assets and systems and protocols need to be in place to ensure a cross cutting and corporate approach is taken and that all services give due consideration to the importance of conservation issues in preparing programmes of work and budgets.
- The Council has a Historic Environment Champion who will provide leadership on heritage and conservation issues and ensure integrated corporate working.
- *ACTION: to ensure that the value and benefits of conservation and heritage are understood as corporate asset and responsibility and establish clear and appropriate roles and responsibilities*
- *ACTION : to ensure that appropriate communication networks and consultation protocols are established and maintained in order that conservation and heritage is dealt with in a cross cutting, collaborative and 'joined-up' way.*

6.4.11 International Liaison

- It is important to develop links with heritage organisations and partnerships at a wider scale in order to promote Stockport's heritage assets and promote wider understanding of best practice throughout the international as well as the national and local communities. Stockport Council is seen in the North West as a leader and exemplar in conservation best practice. The projects and activities that we have and are involved in have much wider relevance and there is an opportunity to promote this success more widely and encourage further international liaison that could generate additional funding and activity.
- It is important to develop existing and new links with the international heritage community and support wider heritage projects that could secure partnership funding.
- *ACTION: to develop international partnership working with existing and potential new links and funding initiatives.*

6.4.12 Funding Partners

- In order to benefit from external funding it is important to develop a good understanding of existing and future funding opportunities and the needs/priorities of the various funders, and establish greater links with funding partners such as English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund. We will also need to develop our own project priorities for funding, especially in the light of diminishing resources, we will need to work more creatively in order to secure it. It may also be possible to seek opportunities for corporate sponsorship for heritage projects.
- *ACTION: to ensure that projects requiring external funding are established and prioritised, and that we understand through our links with internal and external partners the availability, needs and priorities of each funding organisation.*

6.5 *Promoting Best Practice*

- 6.5.1 It is important that we continue to promote best practice across the Council and to a wider audience at a local, regional, national and international level.
- 6.5.2 The Council is recognised by organisations such as British Urban Regeneration Agency BURA, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Royal Institutes of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and English Heritage as an organisation that is highly effective at delivering exemplar projects of the highest possible standards in terms of conservation and regeneration. It is also recognised as an authority which has a strong conservation team that is achieving and promoting best practice and high standards both locally and across the region.
- 6.5.3 Exemplar projects such as Staircase House and Houldsworth Mill are flagship conservation projects and the Council is also unique in that it owns and manages such a comprehensive range of heritage and visitor assets that have themselves won best practice awards.
- 6.5.4 It is important that Stockport maintains and builds on this track record of success and continues to establish and

Case Study 13: Houldsworth Mill, Reddish

This project involved the mixed use regeneration of a substantial Grade II listed former cotton mill. In 1996 with the fabric of the building deteriorating and with occupancy levels of just 25%, a partnership comprising Stockport Council, Heaton and Houldsworth Property Company and Northern Counties Housing Association began work to secure the building's long term productive and sustainable future. The work was largely complete by 2001 and the majority of the mill's 35,000 sq metres of floor-space has now been brought into use as housing, workspace, school and community education, some public service areas, and a health club. The workspace element of the scheme has recently expanded as take-up has exceeded business plan projections and the mill now accommodates some 500 jobs.*



promote itself as an organisation that delivers best practice in conservation and heritage.

6.5.5 It is also important that it promotes best practice in conservation across the borough and leads by example when dealing with its own heritage assets.

6.5.6 **Advice**

- Best practice advice in conservation and heritage is promoted by the Council in a number of ways - through leaflets, website and advice notes. It also acts as a conduit when signposting members of the public to advice and guidance such as HELM (Historic Environment Local Management) a best practice site run and updated by English Heritage. With the development of the website and proposed external access to SHED this is likely to form the Council's first point of contact with a customer so it is important that the information is both up to date, relevant and in accordance with best practice. However, hard copies of leaflets and other documents should also be made available in a number of formats to enable access to a wider audience.
- Advice from officers will also need to follow best practice and a personal develop plan for each member of the Conservation and Heritage Teams should include specific

continues professional development and up date to ensure the advice given is current, in line with good conservation practice and promptly delivered. The resource in this area needs to be maintained at a level to enable effective delivery of this service.

- *ACTION: to ensure that all guidance and advice is relevant, up to date, accurate, consistent, in accordance with best practice and made accessible to a wide audience through a variety of means, but in particular the Council website.*

6.5.7 **Celebrating and promoting achievement**

- Over the last few years Stockport Council has won a number of prestigious awards. It is important that we continue to celebrate success and apply for awards that promote our achievements at a local, regional and national level, and celebrate this through the media. The Council's Historic Environment Champion should lead and be at the centre of this activity.
- Local awards schemes for conservation projects provide recognition for exemplar projects that demonstrate best practice. Such schemes also provide an opportunity to positively promote conservation activity in the Borough. The Council ran its first award scheme in 2006 in

Case Study 14: Conservation & Design Awards

Stockport's first Conservation and Design Awards scheme took place to provide recognition for exemplar projects that demonstrate best practice in conservation and design. The awards successfully aimed to celebrate the best in quality and achievement in the Borough whilst at the same time promoting and raising the standard of design and conservation. Entries included conversions, restorations and new build in residential, commercial and mixed use categories, and plaques and certificates were given in recognition of their achievement.

The judging panel applauded the quality of the entries and consisted of representatives from English Heritage, CABI, Stockport Heritage Trust, Stockport Civic Society and Stockport Council.



Best Residential Conversion - Victoria Mill, Reddish

partnership with CABI, English Heritage, Stockport Heritage Trust and Civic Society and after this success in raising the profile of conservation and design and promoting high standards and best practice, intends to run a further scheme in 2008.

- *ACTION: to continue to develop the Stockport awards scheme and promote our achievements through positive press articles and awards.*
- The Council exemplar work has also attract interest from particular specialist interest groups such as Greater Manchester Conservation Officer Group, the Townscape Heritage Initiative Forum and visits and tours of regeneration and heritage projects have gained us recognition across the north west including examples of best practice in major publications such as the North West Streets for All Guide. Stockport will also be hosting the national Heritage Open Day launch in September 2007.
- *ACTION: to continue to host conferences and events that share knowledge and best practice and celebrate and promote Stockport's heritage.*

- The Council has also gained recognition that should also be acknowledged and celebrated. Recognition by Disability Stockport of the Staircase House project as exemplary in terms of Access. Also, the recent achievement of accredited status for all 8 heritage sites is recognition by MLA (Museums Libraries & Archives Council) of the high standards of collections care and public service offered at each site. Accreditation also ensures grant-aid eligibility by major funders such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.

- *ACTION: to continue to strive for exemplar projects and excellence in achievement and provision of services.*

6.5.8 Asset Management and Maintenance

- The scale of maintenance and repair of historic assets is considerable but there is considerable economic value as well as social, cultural, historic, and architectural value to these assets. There is a need for the development of maintenance strategies and plans following designation and a clear understanding of the impact of designation on the maintenance, use and management of the asset.
- Achieving quality in the care of heritage assets and new build design needs leadership at a senior level by the Heritage and Design Champion this is crucial to ensure

that all aspects of heritage asset management are co-ordinated, joined up and in accordance with best practice.

- It is essential that the Council sets a high standard in dealing with its own assets to maintain credibility as stewards of the historic environment, which will have resource implications. An inventory of assets is needed.
- In order to manage heritage assets it is important to have a full understanding of the nature, significance condition and potential of an asset and must be the basis for rational decision making about its management, use, alteration and disposal, including understanding the whole life cost of quality materials in maintenance plans.
- Historic assets should be made accessible to all members of the community without compromising their character and quality and should be retained in use where possible. A creative and flexible and well informed approach can often provide innovative solutions to meet the Council's changing needs and access.
- *ACTION: to ensure that Council and non-Council owned and managed heritage assets have appropriate conservation and management plans in place and a recognition of the resources needed to implement these.*

7.0 Action Plan

7.1 See attached Appendix 1

8.0 Monitoring and Review

8.1 The Strategy and Action Plan will be reviewed annually and reports prepared and presented as appropriate.

Appendices:

1 Action Plan

2 Schedule of Stockport's Heritage Assets

3 Conservation Strategy 2004 – 2007 Action Plan Achievements

Appendix 2

Schedule of Stockport's Heritage Assets

Stockport has many historic assets many of which are in private ownership. The schedule below is not exhaustive, but is meant as an indication of the statutorily protected elements and those heritage sites and collections where the Council has direct ownership and responsibility for.

National recognition:

- 368 entries on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest
- 6 scheduled monuments – archaeological sites of national importance
- 2 historic parks/gardens included on the national register

Local recognition:

- 131 entries on the list of locally listed buildings of architectural or historic interest

- 37 conservation areas (list all areas) including 12 with Article 4 directions 34 with Character Appraisals and 10 with Management Plans
- 3000+ entries on the Greater Manchester Sites and Monuments Record

For further and more detailed information on these assets and information on the borough's conservation areas please access the following pages on the Council's website:

www.stockport.gov.uk/historicareas

Museums / Galleries / Collections

- Stockport Story
- Staircase House
- Bramall Hall
- Chadkirk Chapel
- Hatworks Museum
- Air Raid Shelters
- Vernon Park Museum
- Stockport Art Gallery

Existing collections, including the subjects or themes for collecting

Stockport has a wealth of heritage which is reflected in the number of sites operated by Stockport Heritage Services.

To provide a brief overview of the main collecting areas of Stockport it is important to have some knowledge of the different sites:

Hat Works, The Museum of Hatting Museum dedicated to the history of the hatting industry, with particular emphasis on the fur felt hatting industry based in Stockport. The museum has permanent displays of machinery, tools, hats and headwear from Stockport and around the world.

The Stockport Story Museum

The new local history museum reflects the history of Stockport and its surrounding area from prehistory to the present day.

Staircase House is a recently restored historic timber framed building which depicts Stockport town life from the 15th century to the mid 20th century.

The Air Raid Shelters interpret the use of the shelters during World War II and are used by schools as part of the National Curriculum.

Bramall Hall is a timber framed house with furnished period rooms. The interpretation tells the history of the hall and its inhabitants over a period of 600 years.

Chadkirk Chapel is a 14th century chapel with displays and contemporary artworks interpreting the ecclesiastical history of the chapel.

Stockport Art Gallery exhibits a selection of the permanent collection and has a number of artist led exhibitions throughout the year as well as an art loan scheme.

Vernon Park Museum (also known as Stockport Museum) houses a selection of the Natural History collections in the environmental gallery known as the Green Gallery, and has a representative sample of Stockport's varied collections displayed in the basement galleries.

The collections held by Stockport Heritage Services are very broad and cover a variety of subjects and themes. Below is a short resume of the main areas of the collections.

Social and Industrial History Collections

- Hatting collections: tools, machinery, hatting and headwear, fur felt hatting, archive material, trade unions, hatting manufacturers and retailers
- Costume collection

- Local industry collection
- Local history collection, in particular the William White's Shop Collection
- Social history collection

Natural Sciences Collections

- Zoological collection
- Botanical collection, in particular the J E McDonald Bryophyte Collection
- Geological collection
- Entomological collections, in particular the C F Johnson European Butterfly Collection and the J Daniel Beetle Collection
- Mollusc collection, in particular the Smart Collection
- Bird skins and eggs collection, in particular the Moore Egg Collection

Archaeology Collections

- Egyptology
- Roman
- Greek
- Prehistoric and medieval
- Mellor – loan

Fine & Decorative Arts Collections

- Museum Collection, in particular John Benjamin Smith Collection and the Marple Hall Oil Portraits
- Art Gallery Permanent Collection
- Abney Hall Collection, in particular Crace furniture
- Lime Hall Collection
- Ceramics and Glass collection
- Furniture collection
- Metalwork Collection
- Textiles

Ethnography Collections – *closed collections*

Archive Material

- Stockport Sunday School Collection
- Thornton Pickard Collection
- Photographic collection

In the Stockport context, for 'collections' we can read not only the artefacts in the collections but also *buildings*. The buildings in the Stockport portfolio of sites open to the public and operated as Heritage Attractions have intrinsic qualities which make them 'collections items' in themselves.

Stockport Heritage Services' collections embrace a wide variety of subjects which is due, in part, to the diverse nature of the sites. These sites cover a wide variety of subjects including: -

- Social & Industrial History (local history)
 - Natural Sciences: Geology, Botany and Zoology
 - Archaeology
 - Art: Paintings, Prints, Photography and Sculpture
 - Decorative/Applied Arts
 - Costume and needlework
 - Furniture and Metalwork
 - Architecture, wall painting and painted glass
- Archived collections

Improvements to the documentation of collections have resulted in increased access to and use of the collections. They are used for permanent and temporary displays, exhibitions, outreach activities, school groups, workshops, community exhibitions and for handling. Sometimes objects are particularly collected for this purpose.

Local and Central Libraries and Heritage Libraries hold a number of important collections which form an important part of Stockport's Heritage resource including:

- Newspapers
- Books
- Directories
- Photographs
- Maps
- Pamphlets