

Cherwell District Council

Executive

3 October 2016

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| <p>Heritage Partnership Agreement (HPA) - RAF Bicester</p> |
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Report of Head of Development Management

This report is public

Purpose of report

To seek the agreement of Executive to adopt the Heritage Partnership Agreement.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To adopt the Heritage Partnership Agreement (Appendix 1).

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 sets out the option for a local planning authority to make an agreement (Heritage Partnership Agreement (“HPA”)) with any owner of a listed building under Section 26A of the amended Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 2.2 It was envisaged that this type of agreement would make provision for the granting of listed building consent (“LBC”) as well as specifying any conditions to which the consent is subject.
- 2.3 The idea behind the introduction of HPAs was to streamline the often time consuming and sometime expensive process of obtaining LBCs, especially when the listed buildings are part of a group of similar structures where it might reasonably be anticipated that similar works of repair, for example, would be required.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The military airbase at RAF Bicester is the quintessential airfield of its age; almost better than any other site it typifies the public perception of the World War II airfield.

- 3.2 The site began life as a Flying Corps aerodrome towards the end of the First World War. Construction of the RAF station we see today began in earnest in 1925. Construction continued through the inter-war years and was still underway at the outbreak of hostilities in 1939.
- 3.3 RAF Bicester was decommissioned in 1994 when the offices and military hospital in use by the United States Air Force in Europe closed its operations.
- 3.4 In 2002 Cherwell District Council (“CDC”) designated the airbase as a conservation area. This area was extended in 2008 to include: the domestic site (west of Buckingham Road); the pre-war married airmen’s housing (adjacent to the domestic site); the former officers’ mess (Cherwood House on the Buckingham Road); the technical site (east of Buckingham Road); the flying field; defence structures (east of the airfield).
- 3.5 In March 2013 the technical site, the flying field and the defence structures were acquired by Bicester Heritage with a view to their conversion into a national centre for historic motoring and aviation excellence.
- 3.6 The aim of the HPA is to facilitate the work of restoring the original RAF buildings.
- 3.7 This HPA has been prepared in order to provide a blanket vision for the technical site and flying field. Given that there are more than 60 existing buildings and structures on the technical site alone (of which more than 30 are listed, or designated SAMs) it will provide an agreed baseline among all stakeholders as to the nature of the repair works and interventions that are possible without the need for a series of LBC applications, which would prove time-consuming for all parties concerned and which, without the HPA, would otherwise be required for each proposal.
- 3.8 Once approved the details within this HPA will be used as the guide to all future building and structure repairs thus alleviating the need for a series of applications thereby freeing up manpower within both CDC and providing Bicester Heritage with an unhindered opportunity to restore the buildings and structures on the site.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 Heritage Partnership Agreements to streamline the often time consuming and sometime expensive process of obtaining Listed Building Consent, especially when the listed buildings are part of a group of similar structures where it might reasonably be anticipated that similar works of repair, for example, would be required.
- 4.2 The aim of this HPA is to facilitate the work of restoring the original RAF buildings and it has been prepared in order to provide a blanket vision for the technical site and flying field. It will be used as the guide to all future building and structure repairs.

5.0 Consultation

Planning Committee
(1 September 2016)

Supported and endorsed the HPA and recommended to Executive that it be approved

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to agree to adopt the HPA.

Lack of heritage guidance undermines the reputation of the Council as the Planning Authority for Cherwell District seeking high design and conservation standards. Without the HPA in place there is a risk of future unsympathetic alteration to the heritage asset.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 None arising directly from this report.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

7.2 There are no additional legal implications arising for the Council from accepting this recommendation. The document has been prepared and completed in conjunction with Bicester Heritage.

Comments checked by:

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8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: **No**

Community Impact Threshold Met: **No**

Wards Affected

Launton and Otmoor

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Cherwell; A thriving community

Lead Councillor

Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning

Document Information

| Appendix No | Title |
|---------------------|--|
| 1 | Heritage Partnership Agreement |
| Background Papers | |
| None | |
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