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**Annual Review of the WDC Conservation Advisory Forum (CAF)
Recommendations for Changes to the CAF Constitution**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report updates Members on the Annual Review of the WDC Conservation Advisory Forum (CAF), and makes recommendations for revisions to the way in which CAF operates.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Committee is recommended to agree the following amendments to the operation of CAF and its Constitution:

- 1: CAF will meet once a calendar month in a room provided free of charge by the Council at Riverside House, (nominally Room 2.37), between 17.30 hrs and 19.00 hrs. (The Constitution previously specified CAF would meet every three weeks at the Town Hall).
- 2: Around four schemes will normally be considered at CAF meetings to fit within the allocated meeting time.
- 3: It is proposed that officers will continue to attend CAF meetings and will provide the agenda but that the minutes are done on a rota basis, shared between members of CAF. This will be reviewed again at the next Annual Review.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of CAF is to assist in protecting and enhancing the District's special historic and architectural character.

The Constitution for CAF requires that the Council's Development Manager will measure the effectiveness of the Forum in delivering its purpose, and undertake an Annual Review of its membership and operation.

(The Constitution for CAF is provided in Appendix 1).

The purpose of the Annual Report is to demonstrate the Forum's performance over the previous year.

The last review of CAF was undertaken in April 2012. Given the four-year gap, and the need for all services to consider how cost-savings can be made,

fundamental questions have been asked whether CAF should continue in its present form.

The Head of Development Services, the Development Manager, and the Principal Conservation Officer, have held two meetings with Members of CAF, as part of the review process.

It should be noted that any amendments to the CAF Constitution must receive approval by Planning Committee.

ANNUAL REVIEW

April 2015 – March 2016:

CAF met on ten occasions during the last year and provided advice on 49 schemes (43 submitted applications, and 6 pre-application schemes). All meetings were held within Leamington Town Hall.

The following representatives are members of CAF:

Councillor Mrs P Cain (Chair), (WDC)
Councillor R Edgington (Vice-Chair), (WDC)
Mrs R Bennion (CLARA)
Mr P Edwards (Leamington Society)
Mr N Stephens (Royal Leamington Spa Chamber of Trade)
Mr M Sullivan (Royal Town Planning Institute)
Mr M Baxter (The Victorian Society)
Cllr G Cain (Kenilworth Society)
Mr J Mackay (Warwick Society)
Dr C Hodgetts (Warwickshire Gardens Trust)
Mr A Pitts (The Twentieth Century Society)
Mrs Kimberley (CPRE)
Mr Poole (Warwick Rural West)
Mr R Ward (RIBA)

The following organisations are invited to attend CAF but did not attend in the last year:

The Whitnash Society
Warwick Rural West
The Georgian Group
Leamington Chamber of Trade
Warwick Chamber of Trade
Kenilworth Chamber of Trade
The Rural Community of Forums

THE OPERATION OF CAF AND ITS CONSTITUTION

Warwick District Council benefits from the free expert advice provided by CAF, and CAF enables the Council to work collaboratively with a range of community and professional organisations with specialist conservation knowledge. In return, the Council meets CAF's operational costs, including officer time to attend and

administer their meetings (preparation of agenda, assembling a presentation of schemes, and writing up the minutes), room hire, and provision of sandwiches and refreshments.

Given the challenging climate of financial cuts which have impacted across all areas of the Council, various options have been considered to reduce the Council's costs incurred in supporting CAF. Three possible options have been identified:

- 1: No change; CAF continues to operate as existing
- 2: The Council withdraws its financial support, and CAF would have to continue on an independent basis
- 3: The Council continues to support CAF in a more streamlined way and with reduced costs

Following discussion with Members of CAF, officers have identified the following cost savings that could be delivered with Option 3:

Location of CAF Meetings

Existing: The Council currently provides the Council Chamber, Leamington Town Hall, free of charge, forgoing potential commercial booking income of £43.50 per hour.

Proposed: The use of Room 2.37 is proposed, next to The Space, at the Council's offices at Riverside House. This room seats up to 20, has IT equipment including a digital screen, and access to free car parking.

Officer time

Existing: The Council covers the cost of officer time spent attending CAF meetings (meetings can be up to 3 hours), producing the agenda, writing minutes, booking the room etc.

Proposed: The duration of the CAF meeting is proposed to be reduced to 1.5 hours, (finishing prior to 19.00 hrs, when Riverside House closes). Furthermore, the number of schemes considered in any one meeting is proposed to be in the region of four, all of which will result in a significant cost saving in officer time.

It is proposed that officers will continue to provide the agenda but the minutes are done by Members of CAF on a rota basis. This will be reviewed again at the next Annual Review.

Provision of refreshments

Existing: Sandwiches and drinks are provided at a cost of £5.25 per head, (£52.50 per meeting).

Proposed: The shorter meetings and earlier finishing time mean that sandwiches and refreshments are not needed, (use can also be made of the pay-as-you-go staff canteen in The Space). This amendment does not require a change to the CAF Constitution.

SUMMARY

Planning Committee are requested to agree the amendments to the Constitution and operation of CAF, as identified under option 3, which will allow the Council to continue supporting CAF, in a more streamlined and cost-effective way.

NOTE

The contents of this report were presented to CAF at their meeting on 19th May 2016.

Appendix 1

Warwick District Council Conservation Advisory Forum Constitution

Purpose & Role

The purpose of the Conservation Advisory Forum is to assist in protecting and enhancing the District's special historic and architectural character

The role of the Conservation Advisory Forum is therefore:

1. To provide expert, constructive, impartial advice on historic buildings and their use, historic landscapes, and Conservation Areas to:
 - a. potential applicants and the Council at the pre-application stage (before submission) of an application that may affect the historic environment;
 - b. applicants and the Council (including the right to speak at Planning Committee on any item) by commenting on planning, listed building, conservation, advertisement, and tree applications that may affect the historic environment;
 - c. the Council and other bodies, such as Town and Parish Councils, on the designation of the historic environment, and formulation of policy and guidance relevant to the historic environment;
 - d. the Planning Inspectorate when determining appeals for planning and listed building applications that may affect the historic environment; and,
 - e. the Council and other statutory bodies when undertaking works under their statutory powers that may affect the historic environment.
2. To draw the Council's attention to possible unauthorised works to the historic environment; and,
3. To provide a forum for the sharing of knowledge and experience of best practice in relation to the historic environment between members of the Forum, officers of the Council and developers.

The Forum is an informal consultative body organised by Warwick District Council.

Membership & Roles

The Forum will consist of the following members:

1. Two elected Members of Warwick District Council who have an interest in the historic environment and planning matters.
Their role is to Chair and Vice Chair the Forum, give legitimacy to the Forum, inform its views through sharing their knowledge, and help develop their experience of the historic environment and planning matters.

The Chair of the Forum shall also act as the Council's Heritage Champion in promoting the historic environment both within the Council and the wider community. The Vice Chair shall be a Member with a desire to have a future involvement in Planning matters.

Elected Members may feedback the views of the Forum to District Council Ward Members as appropriate to individual cases.

2. One representative from each of the following organisations who will be invited to represent the views of that organisation on the historic environment at the Forum:
 - a. Leamington Society
 - b. Warwick Society
 - c. Kenilworth Society
 - d. Whitnash Society
 - e. Victorian Society
 - f. Georgian Group
 - g. Twentieth Century Society
 - h. Warwickshire Gardens Trust
 - i. Central Leamington Area Residents Association
 - j. Royal Town Planning Institute
 - k. Royal Institute of British Architects
 - l. Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
 - m. Royal Leamington Spa Chamber of Trade
 - n. Warwick Chamber of Trade
 - o. Kenilworth Chamber of Trade
 - p. Campaign to Protect Rural England
 - q. Representative of the Rural Community Forums

Elected Members and representatives will be allowed to nominate a substitute to carry out their duties in the event of them being unable to attend a Forum meeting. A meeting will only be considered quorate if at least one elected Member and five representatives are in attendance.

Operation of the Forum

The Forum will normally meet every three weeks at the Town Hall.

The Forum is not a public meeting and members of the public will not be allowed to attend.

The Forum will be facilitated by officers from Development Services who will:

- a. prepare and distribute an agenda for each meeting;
 - b. arrange for any invited participants to attend the Forum to present items, in accordance with criteria a, c and e of the agreed purpose and role of the Forum above;
 - c. present items to the Forum for their consideration;
 - d. record the consensus view (or opposing views where there is no consensus) of the Forum and feed this back to the Council or other relevant organisation as appropriate; and,
 - e. publish the agenda and record of the meeting on the Council's website.
- The more detailed operation of the Forum shall be agreed by the Chair and Vice Chair, in consultation with the Forum and the Development Manager.

Annual Review of the Forum

The Development Manager will measure the effectiveness of the Forum in delivering its purpose, and undertake an annual review of its membership and operation with the Forum.

An Annual Report demonstrating the Forum's performance over the previous year and the output of the above review will be reported to the Forum, before being reported to the Planning Committee. Any amendments to the Constitution must receive approval by the Planning Committee, or its successors.