

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	16 May 2017
<b>Subject:</b>	Tewkesbury Battlefield
<b>Report of:</b>	Annette Roberts, Head of Development Services
<b>Corporate Lead:</b>	Robert Weaver, Deputy Chief Executive
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Councillor R Bird
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	One

## **Executive Summary:**

At the Council meeting on 24 January 2017, Members were presented with a petition regarding the Gastons Field in Tewkesbury.

This report outlines the progress to date in exploring the whole of the Battlefield as a heritage, cultural and economic asset for the Borough. This includes looking at planning policy in relation to protecting the Battlefield in planning terms and how the Battlefield can best be promoted in the future.

## **Recommendation:**

### **That Council requests:**

- 1. That officers meet with Historic England and other partners to explore utilising the Battlefield as a cultural and heritage asset.**
- 2. That officers continue to work through the preparation of the Borough Plan to ensure the wider Battlefield area is recognised in planning policy.**
- 3. That future progress is reported to the Executive Committee.**

## **Reasons for Recommendation:**

To explore options for promoting the Battlefield as a cultural and heritage asset and to protect the Battlefield as a cultural and heritage asset for both the community and visitors.

## **Resource Implications:**

In any future project regarding the Battlefield as a cultural and heritage asset, the Council would look to be facilitator and enabler. The Council is already working on the Borough Plan and this work to enhance the Battlefield will be a part of that work. The Council promotes the Battlefield through existing tourism marketing.

## **Legal Implications:**

None at this stage.

## **Risk Management Implications:**

None at this stage.

**Performance Management Follow-up:**

Monitoring reports will be provided through the quarterly Performance Tracker. It is also an action within the refreshed Council Plan.

**Environmental Implications:**

None directly related to the report other than the potential future impact on the Battlefield.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

**1.1** A petition was received by the Council from Tewkesbury Battlefield Society on 11 December 2016. The petition requested that the Council:

- communicate to the Governors of Tewkesbury School our disagreement with its decision not to sell the Gastons to the Tewkesbury Battlefield Society.
- make clear any aspiration to sell the Gastons for development purposes is wholly inappropriate given its historical significance and will be vigorously opposed if attempted by the Trustees.
- consider formally designating the Gastons, in the Local Plan, as the intended site for the future creation of a Heritage Park for Tewkesbury and work with the Society and residents to deliver this objective.

**1.2** At the Council meeting in January 2017 it was resolved:

1. That the Council is committed to the principle of developing the whole of Tewkesbury Battlefield as a heritage, cultural and economic asset for the Borough and requests Officers to consider the issues raised within the petition through:
  - a. the Borough Plan and other planning processes including supplementary planning guidance and enforcement; and
  - b. exploring with Tewkesbury Battlefield Society, the Tewkesbury School Trust and landowners the potential for improving the Battlefield as a cultural and heritage asset.
2. That an update report be presented to the Council within three months on the progress made.

**1.3** Since the Council meeting progress has been made on a number of these issues and they are outlined within this report.

## **2.0 PLANNING PROTECTION**

- 2.1** As reported at the Council meeting, with regard to planning policy, the Gastons fields area is currently subject to saved policy HEN24: Historic Battlefields of the Adopted Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan to 2011.

The policy covers the wider Battle of Tewkesbury (1471) area, including the Gastons, and requires that any proposals for development pay regard to the conservation of the historic landscape. The supporting justification to the policy states that proposals should be able to demonstrate that they respect the character of the registered site and generally retain its openness. Any proposal for development within the Battlefield would be judged against this policy as well as the other saved policies contained within the adopted Borough Plan as well as guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework. Any additional policy approaches to development on the Battlefield would have to be determined through the statutory plan making process as set out by Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

- 2.2** Through the Borough Plan the Council has the ability to review and update existing policies, such as HEN24, and include new policies to designate land and guide future development. Therefore, following the Battlefield Society's request, wider designation of the Battlefield in its promotion as a cultural and heritage will be considered through a policy designation in the review of the Tewkesbury Borough Plan (TBP). The TBP is being worked on now and will be consulted on later this year.

## **3.0 THE BATTLEFIELD – FURTHER DISCUSSIONS**

- 3.1** Since the Council meeting, officers have held a meeting with a representative of the Battlefield Society and a date is now in place to meet with landowners, including Severn Trent, Tewkesbury Park Hotel, Greene King and Tewkesbury School Trust to consider the historic and cultural significance of the battlefield as a whole (including the Gastons). At this meeting Officers can gauge landowners' interest in terms of their engagement in further discussions to explore options for the promotion of the asset. At this meeting the owners will also be briefed on the Council's resolution.

- 3.2** Since the Council meeting in January, Historic England have amended the boundary of the designation of the Battlefield, which now includes more land surrounding the Cambian Southwick Park School and removes some land which is existing development. Officers are requesting a meeting with Historic England to discuss the designation and boundary amendment, as well as future funding opportunities and options to further promote the Battlefield. It is important that any proposal to deliver an improved cultural and heritage asset is a partnership approach between the Council and other stakeholders, with the Council having a facilitative and enabling role rather than sole responsibility for delivery. Once these meetings have taken place an indication will be able to be given in terms of what may be feasible from an enhancement perspective.

- 3.3** In the lead up to 2021, Tewkesbury Abbey will be running a number of events and celebrations to mark the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Norman Consecration. The Council has been asked to provide officer representation on this group to support it in the development of this major landmark. In the same year, it will be 550 years since the Battle of Tewkesbury. This double landmark celebration provides an extra focus and inspiration to look at how the Battlefield can be effectively utilised and how the different partners can work together to promote the Battlefield.

#### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 None.

#### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

5.1 None as yet however a meeting is planned with the key landowners in the Battlefield.

#### **6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

6.1 Draft Economic Development and Tourism Strategy. Any proposal for a policy will need to be considered in light of the NPPF and other relevant policies/guidance/legislation through the Borough Plan process.

#### **7.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

7.1 Any proposal for a policy will need to be considered in light of the NPPF and other relevant policies/guidance/legislation through the Borough Plan process.

#### **8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**

8.1 Officer time in considering the issues raised as part of the Borough Plan process and options for improving the Battlefield.

#### **9.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**

9.1 Any proposal for a policy will need to be considered in light of the NPPF and other relevant policies/guidance/legislation through the Borough Plan process.

#### **10.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**

10.1 None.

#### **11.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**

11.1 Council – 24 January 2017.

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**Background Papers:** None.

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**Appendices:** One – Petitions Scheme.