

RURAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

4th SEPTEMBER 2013

REPORT OF HEAD OF REGULATORY SERVICES

THE ALLIANCE TO REDUCE CRIME AGAINST HERITAGE (ARCH)

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the aims, objectives and outcomes of The Alliance to Reduce Crime against Heritage (ARCH)

The Leicestershire Environment Board have requested that each member organisation should consider signing up to the Memorandum of Understanding (M o U) and/or ARCH to help protect the historic environment from heritage crime

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the activity of ARCH and its outcomes.**
- 2.2 **That the Committee agrees to sign up to the Memorandum of Understanding and/or ARCH**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Alliance to Reduce Crime against Heritage (ARCH) is a new voluntary national network to take forward initiatives to tackle heritage crime and galvanise local action. It may be joined by any individual, organisation or partnership. The overriding objective of the group therefore is to reduce the amount of crime that causes damage to or interferes with the enjoyment of heritage assets in England.

Membership of the group is free and open to all organisations and groups that have an interest in preventing and enforcing heritage crime.

- 3.2 Members of ARCH have a shared interest in preventing and seeing effective enforcement of heritage crime. Through conferences and training events, the group will be a means of discussing priorities, sharing information about heritage crime, carrying out training, highlighting best practice and making local contacts.
- 3.3 Heritage crime consists of offences which harm heritage assets or impairs their enjoyment. These may be regulatory (ie: not applying for necessary consents) or criminal (ie; arson, theft or anti-social behaviour).

Heritage crime may affect listed buildings, churches, monuments, parks and gardens, conservation areas, battlefields etc. In 2011 for example almost 70,000 historic buildings and sites were blighted by anti-social behaviour whilst almost 38% of religious buildings had been subject to crime.

- 3.4 ARCH have devised a Memorandum of Understanding on the prevention, investigation, Enforcement and Prosecution of Heritage Crime. This is aimed at developing and promoting a realistic and sustainable partnership model for prevention and enforcement The Memorandum of Understanding is intended to serve as a

general guide to fostering cooperation between the respective parties and to allow the necessary flexibility in activities that are undertaken between them in relation to heritage crime. It defines the roles and responsibilities of the parties in the prevention, investigation, enforcement and prosecution of heritage crime, in keeping with their respective aims.

- 3.5 The main parties to the agreement are English Heritage, The Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Crown Prosecution Service and Participating Local Authorities, ie: those authorities who have agreed to be a party to the MoU.
- 3.6 Partnership working plays a fundamental role in tackling heritage crime and enables all parties to focus resources and efforts towards identified heritage crime priorities. Regional partnerships are seen as a means of achieving a more formal strategic approach to enable local authorities, the Police and English Heritage to tackle heritage crime more effectively and expediently.

Regional partnerships will identify operational roles and responsibilities and set out working arrangements between the parties. All parties within the MoU will work closely with ARCH

3.7 Local Authority Responsibility

Amongst other things local authorities have a statutory duty, under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to work with other local agencies and organisations to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder including anti-social behaviour that adversely affects the local environment within their area. Such a strategy should include the historic environment and associated heritage assets within that defined area.

- 3.8 Participating Local Authorities, as part of their function as a Local Planning Authority have a duty to prevent, investigate and where appropriate prosecute:
 - Unauthorised works or deliberate damage to listed buildings caused by the owner or occupier, breaches of conditions attached to listed building consent and breaches of listed building enforcement notices;
 - Unauthorised demolitions within conservation area, any breaches of conditions of conservation area consent and conservation area enforcement notices.
- 3.9 Where items that are suspected of having been removed from a heritage asset come to the attention of any of the parties to the MoU each has a responsibility to notify the police who are responsible for investigation of possible related crimes such as theft and the handling of stolen goods.

4.0 **POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

5.0 **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no financial or other resource implications. All of the initiatives can be incorporated into existing work streams.

6.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no Legal Implications arising from this report

7.0 **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

7.1 The outcomes of this project will assist in a consistency of approach across Leicester and Leicestershire and help to reduce heritage crime

8.0 **EQUALITIES**

8.1 There are no equality implications.

9.0 **RISKS**

9.1 There are no risks identified with this report.

10.0 **CONSULTATION**

10.1 None

11.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

11.1 All Wards

12.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

12.1 There are no climate change implications relating to this report.

Contact Officer: Richard Spooner

Date: 20th August 2013

Background Papers:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/imported-docs/k-o/memo-understanding.pdf>

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/advice-bytopic/heritage-crime/arch/>