

G Councillor Neil Murray, Historic Environment Champion, City of Lincoln Council

H+I Steep Hill, Lincoln



CASE STUDY – CITY OF LINCOLN COUNCIL

The appointment of Councillor Neil Murray, the portfolio holder for Regeneration and Tourism, as the City Council's Historic Environment Champion has brought about a change of thinking in the way the authority approaches heritage issues. As Councillor Murray puts it 'we have begun to integrate much more closely the regeneration, tourism and heritage functions of the council in recognition of their obvious connections, which has meant that councillors, officers and our partners have all had to change. A combined approach of conservation plans to safeguard precious heritage assets together with the Townscape Heritage Initiative/regeneration partnerships and links to Lincoln's Community Plan have proved to be very successful'.

All of this has meant that Lincoln's historic environment has moved up the authority's agenda. All involved are now more aware of its value in making Lincoln an increasingly attractive visitor destination and an increasingly vibrant, economic, educational and cultural centre within the East Midlands region.

CONCLUSION

We know that appointing a Historic Environment Champion can lead to significant benefits for a local authority and its community. Champions provide leadership and a symbol of commitment on the part of the Authority, and can join up policy and strategy across departments. This greater degree of focus on the historic environment delivers real benefits for everybody.

For further information on Historic Environment Champions, please contact English Heritage on 020 7973 3279 or via email champions@english-heritage.org.uk.



Role Description. The key objective for the Historic Environment Champion is to ensure that the historic environment plays a central role in the development of all the authority's policies, plans, targets and strategies. Champions work to persuade colleagues in both the local authority and the wider community that the historic environment offers many opportunities to improve the quality of life for everyone.

The Champion can:

- Ensure that Cabinet portfolio holders and senior officers (including the Chief Executive) are aware of historic environment issues and opportunities as they relate to their service
- Promote the value of the historic environment as a catalyst for urban and rural regeneration and neighbourhood renewal
- Be alert to the opportunities for the historic environment to attract inward economic investment and funding
- Ensure that relevant historic environment issues are taken into account in the preparation of all relevant corporate strategies and local development frameworks, including Community Strategies prepared by Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements where appropriate
- Ensure that the provision of historic environment expertise is adequately resourced and organised and seek to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of service delivered to the public
- Work with officers in the planning service to ensure that new development in historic areas responds creatively and sympathetically to its environment and ensure quality assurance, compliance and enforcement where necessary
- Ensure that the Authority's key policies, such as education, highways management, tourism and leisure take proper account of the local and regional historic environment
- Work with officers and colleagues in the Authority to develop a Conservation Management Statement or Strategy
- Ensure that good practice within the authority relating to the historic environment is shared, and that examples of such practice from other authorities are brought to the attention of the relevant Members or officers
- Work closely with corporate property officers and other colleagues and Members to ensure a positive and long-term strategic approach to the management and conservation of the Authority's own historic estate, and to ensure that it is appropriately identified and recorded
- Ensure that all relevant colleagues within the Authority (both elected Members and officers) are aware of the available external expertise and advice on the historic environment available from bodies such as English Heritage and the national statutory amenity societies.



Why your Authority should appoint an Historic Environment Champion

ENGLISH HERITAGE
in partnership with

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Creating sustainable communities



HELM HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
LOCAL MANAGEMENT
www.helm.org.uk

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Local authorities are essential to the protection and management of England's historic environment. Over 150 authorities have now recognised the benefits of appointing a Historic Environment Champion and have asked an elected Member to undertake the role. They have been involved in a wide range of activities and projects, and have enabled their local authority to make much better use of the historic environment resources at their disposal.

Local Authority Historic Environment Champions have demonstrated that they can:

- Help unlock the untapped cultural, social and economic potential of the local historic environment
- Provide leadership for heritage issues within the authority
- Join up policy between departments across the local authority and ensure the historic environment is taken into account in the development of all the authority's policies, plans and forward strategies
- Develop a close working relationship with the Design Champion, ensuring that the authority has a seamless and coherent approach to the built and historic environment
- Promote the cultural heritage of everybody in the local community
- Identify opportunities for the authority to use the historic environment in the pursuit of its wider corporate objectives

BACKGROUND

The notion that the historic environment can make a significant contribution to much of what a local authority does is becoming increasingly accepted. Among other things, the historic environment can

- act as a cornerstone for **regeneration** projects
- underpin **local employment** and attract **inward investment**
- provide **distinctive** and **vibrant** retail environments
- create greater **community cohesion** and **social inclusion**
- offer a local educational resource

In short, a well cared for and managed local historic environment improves everybody's **quality of life**.

By appointing a Historic Environment Champion, local authorities are providing leadership for heritage issues within the authority. Champions ensure that the historic

CASE STUDY – NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Cromer Seafront Enhancement Programme has made a significant contribution to the town's future as a modern seaside resort, while at the same time protecting and enhancing the town's heritage. North Norfolk DC's Historic Environment Champion, Councillor Hilary Nelson, has chaired the Seafront Steering Group. This group included representatives from the community and several public bodies and has overseen a programme of works which have included refurbishment and improvements to the historic pier, promenade and esplanade, as well as incorporating exciting public art schemes celebrating the town's proud lifeboat history.

The works have complemented the Victorian and Edwardian character of the seafront area, and form part of the wider regeneration project underway in the town, which has included a successful Townscape Heritage Initiative.

environment is properly considered when key decisions are taken and work to identify opportunities where it can make a contribution to wider corporate objectives. The role involves identifying the historic environment 'angle' to the authority's policies on such wide-ranging areas as parks, highways and planning and ensuring that it is taken into account at all stages of the decision making process. This also involves ensuring that partner bodies, such as the Local Strategic Partnership, consider the historic environment in the development of their policies and strategies.

There are also a number of other areas of wider Government policy where local government is playing a leading role. The modernisation of the planning system, the sustainable communities agenda and the increasingly important local area agreements are examples where Champions can help ensure that the historic environment plays a key role in the development of policy.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The majority of Champions are elected members. Many are cabinet portfolio holders, but there are also a significant number of Champions who are 'backbench' councillors and several who are senior officers. A role description is detailed elsewhere on this leaflet. This is not meant to be prescriptive, but has been drawn up with help from existing Champions and a range of local authorities facing a variety of historic environment issues. We realise that there are many different models of management structures across English local authorities, together with differing functions, responsibilities and local circumstances. All of which means that the role of Historic Environment Champion will vary between authorities.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT – LOCAL MANAGEMENT (HELM) UPDATE

The HELM project was launched by English Heritage in March 2004. It is a suite of awareness raising and training tools designed to improve planning, land management, economic and social development decisions relating to the historic environment, and is aimed at local authority officers and members. It is being delivered by distance learning, training seminars, courses and a series of publications which are also accessible at www.helm.org.uk. To date these include

- Regeneration & the Historic Environment
- Low Demand Housing & the Historic Environment
- Local Strategic Partnerships & the Historic Environment
- Streets for All
- The Future of Historic School Buildings
- Transport & the Historic Environment

Further information on the HELM project is also available at www.helm.org.uk or via email at info@helm.org.uk.

A Councillor Robert Pendlebury, Historic Environment Champion, Durham County Council
 B Councillor Lady Doreen Jones, Historic Environment Champion, Liverpool City Council
 C Councillor Peter Metcalfe, Historic Environment Champion, Bath & North East Somerset Council

D Cromer Esplanade and Pier, Norfolk
 E Eldon Lane Primary School, Bishop Auckland, County Durham
 F Windlestone Hall School, Ferryhill, County Durham.
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CASE STUDY – DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

Durham County Council's Historic Environment Champion (and also Design Champion) is Councillor Robert Pendlebury. Councillor Pendlebury has collaborated closely with the Design and Conservation Team on the development of the County Council's *Built Environment Strategy* and *Creating Excellent Buildings Strategy*. The former was recently approved by cabinet, while both documents are designed to ensure that all the authority's development is of the highest quality.

The proposed design review process has assumed particular importance because of the current Building Schools for the Future programme. Both these strategies will see Councillor Pendlebury and colleagues well placed to ensure that this multi-million investment programme results in the highest standards of design in new build and high quality, sensitive refurbishment and remodelling in the case of existing and historic schools. The *Built Environment Strategy* also considers the particular issue of redundant school buildings where these are architecturally significant.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND DESIGN CHAMPIONS

Many local authorities have already appointed Design Champions, either at senior officer or at Member level. The primary role of a Design Champion is to ensure that design issues are taken into account at each stage of the decision making process within the local authority. There is a clear relationship between the roles of Design and Historic Environment Champions, and as a result many local authorities have decided that the two roles should be combined. English Heritage and CABE have provided joint training in this area and are currently finalising details of the future programme.

Further details, advice and information regarding the role and responsibilities of Design Champions are available from CABE (enquiries@cabe.org.uk, tel 020 7960 2400 or www.cabe.org.uk).

SO YOU'VE BEEN APPOINTED YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY'S HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT CHAMPION. WHAT DO YOU DO NEXT?

- Make contact with English Heritage. We will ensure that you have up to date information about the HELM project and its publications and training programme and that you are kept in touch with developments including the emerging regional networks of Champions around the country. We can also put you in touch with one of our nine regional offices who will be able to offer advice on how we can work with your authority.
- Visit www.helm.org.uk and familiarise yourself with the material that is currently available. In addition to the publications already detailed, the website contains a comprehensive library of guidance documents and an extensive collection of case studies of best practice.
- Research what kind of training and development opportunities are available. In addition to English Heritage's HELM project, other organisations offer training courses in related areas, such as CABE.
- Seek to foster working relationships with senior officers within the Authority, particularly those in related departments such as planning, environment, highways and regeneration.
- Establish whether or not your Authority has a Design Champion. If it has, you should organise regular liaison meetings and include relevant senior officers.
- Establish early contact with specialist officers in your authority. Historic environment staff, such as conservation or archaeological officers, will be best placed to let you know what the key issues are locally.

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