



# Northamptonshire Heritage Strategy

Northamptonshire County Council  
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*NB This version is for review of the wording only.*

*A fully designed version will be created once the text has been agreed.*



## **DOCUMENT STATUS**

The Strategy is currently a draft version for consultation.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**'A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture, is like a tree without roots.'**<sup>1</sup>

The aim of the Northamptonshire Heritage Strategy is to ensure that we value, care for and make accessible the heritage of the county, whilst also celebrating the importance of this history and offering a focus and direction for those who are already involved in caring for it. The aspiration of those responsible for this Strategy is to share the passion and pride that they feel in the county's heritage. The hope is that the Strategy will also be useful for those who are interested in heritage but need or want to know more, before including it in their planning, work or daily lives, as well as those who cannot yet see its relevance to them.

The Strategy's approach will be built around a central vision:

**The county's history and heritage should be valued and protected, promoted and made accessible to all, now and into the future, so that it becomes a cornerstone of the county's present and future economic and community development.**

Heritage has a value in and of itself. Without it, our lives would be much the poorer. Heritage anchors the present in the past and provides a continuum into the future.

Its importance has been increasingly recognised in our rapidly changing world and the current speed of change is calling for an even stronger voice for heritage. This Strategy and associated action plan will answer this call for Northamptonshire.

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<sup>1</sup> Marcus Garvey, political leader and founder of the Pan-Africanism movement.

## 1. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HERITAGE GATEWAY BOARD AND STRATEGY OWNERSHIP

- 1.1. The Northamptonshire Heritage Gateway Board (NHGB) is a developing multi-disciplinary group with membership from a variety of organisations and bodies with a heritage role. The Board's remit is to develop an overview of heritage activity, identify and prioritise projects and source funding for them.
- 1.2. This Board is made up of representatives from some of the main organisations in Northamptonshire who have responsibility for, or an interest in, a whole range of heritage activity and want to see efforts combined to have greater impact.
- 1.3. The Heritage Gateway Board has the agreed remit:
  - *To give strategic direction relating to the Northamptonshire Heritage Gateway Programme, ensuring that the programme is aligned to and delivers the Partners' key corporate objectives.*
  - *To provide strategic oversight in line with the wider context of Northamptonshire regeneration and act as advocates ensuring the success of the Northamptonshire Heritage Gateway Programme.*
- 1.4. Membership of the Board currently includes representatives from Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), Historic England, the University of Northampton, Churches Conservation Trust, Destination Nene Valley, Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership and the Lieutenancy Office; this membership may develop into the future as projects are developed. There are task and finish groups on specific projects as a way of making progress.
- 1.5. The Board has spearheaded the creation of the Northamptonshire Heritage Strategy (the Strategy), and believes that heritage is intrinsically linked to the wellbeing and prosperity of the county and its residents. The Strategy has been developed as a living document and will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- 1.6. The Board is determined to make an impact and encourage a change in perspective about the value of heritage in Northamptonshire that will last long into the future. If the themes as articulated in this document can be applied to the actions of any organisation or individuals, then the county will indeed be said to have made a real step change in its approach.

## 2. WHY WE NEED A STRATEGY

- 2.1. A Strategy is needed because of heritage's intrinsic importance to the county. The timescale covered by this Strategy is the period from 2016 to 2021 during which the county is expected to grow faster in terms of population and infrastructure than most other counties, and during which the owners, guardians, providers and users of heritage are likely to change. During these financially pressured times there is a risk that heritage is overlooked as a 'nice to have' rather than being treated as the essential component to people's lives that it is. This section will articulate the context in which heritage has to operate in the county and of what the Strategy consists.
- 2.2. Heritage is one of Northamptonshire's richest resources in terms of its potential impact on people and place. This Strategy will seek to enable this potential to be developed in a shared and co-operative way between local government, statutory authorities, local organisations, societies and individuals. The purpose of this Strategy is to provide a framework and context for how we should best care for, prioritise and promote heritage in the county.
- 2.3. We need to care for and prioritise the heritage because once lost, it can never adequately be replaced. Too often we look back in regret at the heritage that has been destroyed in the past; we do not want future generations to do likewise and find fault in our approach. The Strategy is both a call to action and a reminder that everyone has a responsibility for preserving our county's heritage and developing and capturing its contemporary relevance.
- 2.4. Northamptonshire is the fastest growing county in England. Population growth brings with it a need for improved infrastructure, with good roads, housing, schools and other services being crucial to the economic development of the county. However, the county's heritage is strong, diverse and full of character, and should be core to the offer the county can make to new residents, businesses and visitors.
- 2.5. The economic impact of heritage is considerable. It can make a fundamental difference to how people feel and whether they want to live, work in and visit this county - if it is an attractive place where heritage is integrated into modern life, it will be more appealing. It is also now well-established that heritage is a driver of prosperity, especially economic growth and employment. Heritage related tourism accounted for £34.3 billion of Britain's Gross Domestic Product in 2014. Most recent figures are that Northamptonshire has 19 million visitors annually, and that this generates £762 million and 20,000 jobs for the county.

- 2.6. The wellbeing impact of heritage is also considerable: engagement with heritage changes people's lives. Appreciation of and engagement with heritage helps people to understand the world around them – it gives them pride in their surroundings and a 'sense of place'. A shared sense of place between organisations, individuals, heritage / cultural businesses and groups supports community identity, cohesion and health and wellbeing.
- 2.7. Numbers of people visiting or participating in heritage are growing. Anecdotal evidence had suggested that this was improving wellbeing; this has now been borne out by research. Most recent figures from Heritage Counts show that visiting a heritage site improves wellbeing<sup>2</sup>. Thus research found that visiting one or more of the eight different types of heritage site measured had a significant and independent positive relationship with life satisfaction.
- 2.8. The wellbeing valuation approach was used to estimate the monetary value of visits to heritage sites. The amount of money which provides the same impact on wellbeing as visiting heritage overall is calculated as £1,646 per person per year. This represents the amount of money you would have to take away from someone who visits heritage sites to return them to the level of wellbeing they would have had if they were not able to visit heritage.
- 2.9. Participating in a heritage activity or event, and volunteering also contributes to people's sense of self worth. Those volunteering in heritage are reporting greater levels of improved wellbeing than other volunteers<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.10. If it is accepted that Northamptonshire's heritage is a rich resource and has economic and wellbeing benefits for this county, it follows that there should be some benefit in approaching this resource in a strategic and collaborative way in order to have the maximum impact.
- 2.11. Currently there are numerous different groups responsible for and interested in the county's heritage. Much good work is being done to a high standard, and already there are effective heritage partnerships at a local level or between those delivering one particular heritage offer. However, heritage projects are sometimes disparate activities or initiatives with no overall links between them. There is a real need to develop, maintain and strengthen co-operation between the County Council, district and borough councils, heritage / cultural businesses, other key public bodies and charitable agencies, and the wider

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<sup>2</sup> Heritage Counts 2014, English Heritage on behalf of the Historic Environment Forum  
<http://hc.historicengland.org.uk/content/pub/2190644/heritage-counts-national-2014.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Heritage Lottery Fund report 2011  
[https://www.hlf.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/research/social\\_impact\\_volunteering\\_2011.pdf](https://www.hlf.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/research/social_impact_volunteering_2011.pdf)

heritage community, paid and voluntary, professional and amateur. This Strategy will help to address this need.

- 2.12. NCC is the strategic lead for the county's environmental and economic development. This includes the responsibility for the 'Place agenda' – making sure that all relevant bodies are encouraged to work together and contribute to Northamptonshire being an improved place to live, work in and visit – both in terms of the 'sense of place' and as a physical environment. This agenda requires a strategic approach to heritage, as one of the county's core assets, and a consensus between partners as to the vision for heritage within this wider agenda. The aspiration is to develop this partnership approach via the NHGB.
- 2.13. The district and borough councils in the county play a vital role in looking after the Northamptonshire's heritage, especially in respect of their functions as local planning authorities, as owners of heritage assets and through their role in economic development and tourism. National statutory bodies provide necessary advice and guidance. Many other organisations and individuals have key roles to play.
- 2.14. Thus this Strategy will not seek to replicate the priorities that have been set by individual organisations and what is already being done. It will not be a mechanism through which to provide professional town and county planning guidance or advice. However, it will aim to provide focus in areas where it is felt there is most need for more effective 'joined up' working. Many of the priorities, especially in terms of heritage at immediate risk, have already been identified and these tools will be invaluable in shaping the agreements on priorities<sup>4</sup>.
- 2.15. As part of the work in preparing this Strategy, a full review has been undertaken of the existing documents that provide some framework, direction or indication of current commitments in respect of heritage. This has included local authority strategic planning documents at countywide and individual district and borough council level, plus the plans of other county-based organisations. This work has highlighted the shared concern with heritage across the county but also the lack of shared priorities. It has informed the priorities selected for further work: thus key themes have been extracted from this analysis to strengthen the Strategy.

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<sup>4</sup> Historic England Buildings at Risk advice and guidance:  
<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/>

2.16. The proposed themes (detailed in the upcoming chapters) that need to be prioritised in the county are:

- **Valuing and caring for Northamptonshire’s heritage.**
- **Promoting heritage education, learning and awareness.**
- **Enhancing heritage tourism.**

2.17. The Strategy also includes a summary action plan (see appendix one), outlining the key actions that will achieve the Strategic objectives. The action plan includes timescales for the commencement of each action and identifies lead delivery partners.

### 3. DEFINING NORTHAMPTONSHIRE'S HERITAGE – A DISCOVERY FOR EVERYONE

- 3.1. Northamptonshire is distinctive and unique in heritage terms. The county is well-known for its outstanding historic houses, historic churches, beautiful villages, market towns, canals and landscape, all of which make up its unique historic environment. The impact of heritage on the landscape is strong, having been shaped through past industries and in particular the agricultural economy and the boot and shoe industry. The rich historic environment is underpinned and reflected in the varied heritage collections that exist. It is this combination of the historic environment, collections and community history that gives the county its character.
- 3.2. Various attempts have been made to identify an overall Unique Selling Point (USP) for Northamptonshire. This usually results in a list of six or seven USPs, which then cannot each be unique. However, it is proposed that instead of seeking to select one as outweighing the rest, we celebrate the strength of an offer that is not based on one over-riding theme. The delight of Northamptonshire is the richness and variety of its heritage that can appeal to all tastes and interests:
- 3.3. Northamptonshire has a rich and diverse heritage, as stated above. But 'heritage' is a term that covers many different facets. Within this Strategy, the word 'heritage' is used to cover the broad range of elements as summarised below:
  - Archive and local studies collections: records from families, estates, parishes, local authorities, solicitors, charities; and newspapers, maps, photographs etc.
  - Archaeological archives: the written reports and artefacts created during excavation, including pottery, bone, ironwork, coins etc.
  - Archaeological sites (often hidden beneath the ground).
  - Historic buildings, the historic fabric and character of our county, as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework, including, for example, listed buildings, scheduled and non-scheduled monuments, heritage sites (whether of local or national importance), historic houses, churches, bridges, battlefields, historic parks and gardens, conservation areas etc.
  - Historic landscape.
  - Libraries and their collections (public, private, school, colleges, universities).

- Museum and historic house collections, including archaeology, art, boot and shoe, costume, social history, specialist and place specific etc.
  - People of the county, past and present, and their stories.
  - People with heritage skills including thatching, dry stone walling and masonry.
  - Records and research about our county's heritage, including the sites and monuments record, publications and exhibitions.
  - The 'intangible heritage': our customs and traditions.
  - The things we do, make and create today that will become the heritage of tomorrow.
- 3.4. All these types of heritage can, at the simplest level, tell us about the development of our county across thousands of years to the present day. Heritage can be studied at a personal level for pleasure and interest, for academic reasons, for legal and other professional reasons.
- 3.5. Crucially, knowledge and appreciation of heritage can influence decisions that are made today for the development of the county's future. Therefore one of the key reasons for this Strategy is to enable such informed decision making to happen, now and into the future.

## 4. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE'S HERITAGE COMMUNITY

4.1. Those responsible for heritage in our county include statutory bodies, local county, district and borough authorities and a wide range of organisations, trusts, societies and individuals. The county has a strong reliance on volunteer provision, where elsewhere local authorities and statutory bodies are more heavily involved, for example, in the case of the large number of voluntary-run museums in the county. Therefore, in terms of understanding heritage provision and building for the future, it is vital that this complexity of provision is recognised, embraced and used as a strength.

4.2. Specifically in outlining the different organisations and groups involved in caring for the heritage in Northamptonshire, it is useful to highlight the following:

- NCC, and the district and borough councils.
- Private and public owners of heritage assets.
- The National Trust, English Heritage, Churches Conservation Trust and other Trusts and societies who care for and manage heritage assets.
- Agencies across local and national government who care for heritage assets as part of their wider role.
- Diocese of Peterborough.
- Funding bodies, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- Professional and academic organisations.
- Organisations with very specific targeted heritage roles.
- The voluntary sector.
- Those who provide specific heritage advice and services.
- Volunteers, local history society members, civic society members and other interested individuals.
- Tourists and visitors.
- Businesses.

4.3. There is no doubt that the prevailing economic conditions mean that new ways of resourcing responsibilities towards heritage assets need to be examined. Traditional methods of funding may no longer be sustainable or even appropriate. Staff and volunteers may need different skills in order to engage with audiences, given changing expectations of what makes heritage

appealing. Marketing and commercial skills need to sit alongside ‘traditional’ professional specialisms. New types of heritage business are developing and need support.

- 4.4. As well as a change in the amounts and potential sources of funding, who might best be the safe guardians and providers of our heritage is open for discussion. Thus, governance, to use this term in its broadest sense, needs to be examined and challenged; the county needs a model that is fit for the future. The structures created in the past may no longer be appropriate in the changing ‘landscape’. The importance and value of heritage volunteers in this should not be underestimated; if demographic changes make it more difficult to recruit volunteers in future this would impact on many of the vital roles being undertaken to curate and make accessible the local heritage. Strong guardians and trusted advocates for our shared heritage are needed.

## 5. VISION, OBJECTIVES AND THEMES

- 5.1. Northamptonshire's unique history and heritage is a source of pride.
- 5.2. The vision is that it should be valued and protected, promoted and made accessible to all, now and into the future, so that it becomes a cornerstone of the county's present and future economic and community development.
- 5.3. This Strategy is therefore required to provide a development framework and context as to how this can happen. The words used in the vision seek to encapsulate what the shared aspirations should be.
- 5.4. The word 'value' covers the need for heritage to be respected and to be given an appropriate priority, especially in planning for the future. Protection is used in the sense of caring for the heritage and at its simplest means ensuring the unique heritage of the county survives for future generations, including both preservation and conservation of the heritage. However, protecting the heritage can encompass also the appropriate integration of old and new as the county develops, especially in respect of the historic environment. Promotion of heritage especially in terms of its educational value is vital. If heritage is 'promoted' this will also ensure that there is a wider understanding of heritage that will make it more likely that people will make informed decisions, whether about countryside infrastructure or individual assets. Heritage absolutely needs to be embedded into all future planning. Heritage is fun, it can and should be enjoyed and appreciated by all.
- 5.5. The objectives of the Strategy are borne from the vision and will be focused on developing the following:
  - A strong and ever-growing understanding and appreciation of Northamptonshire's heritage and the contribution it makes to wellbeing and prosperity in the county.
  - A shared understanding amongst statutory bodies, businesses, organisations, communities and other groups of the opportunities presented by heritage, encouraging the better care, conservation of and access to that heritage.
  - The promotion of Northamptonshire's heritage so that it becomes an inspiration for learning and leads to people feeling that they share a 'sense of place' and encourages residents and visitors to enjoy heritage for pleasure.

- A comprehensive and highly accessible shared information-base for the county's heritage that can be accessed in both traditional and innovative ways, supporting the implementation of the vision.
- 5.6. Three main themes have been identified within the overarching Strategy as detailed at the end of section 2.16. These are the areas where it is felt that joint working could have the most impact in meeting the objectives. They are in effect calls to action and should be seen as the priority list for practical work.
- 5.7. These themes are detailed in the following chapters. In each case the theme is explained, and the reasons why it is judged as especially important at the time of writing of this Strategy, as well as a snapshot of the key actions related to this theme. The specific detailed actions associated with each theme are then provided in the action plan in appendix one.

## 6. THEME 1: VALUING AND CARING FOR NORTHAMPTONSHIRE'S HERITAGE

- 6.1. This theme relates to the need to look after the county's physical heritage assets appropriately and make sure they survive for posterity. This includes buildings, monuments, buried archaeology, collections and research. This section summarises the nature of the resources for which there is a responsibility to care. Detail of projects that implement this theme are provided in the action plan in appendix one.
- 6.2. The word 'caring' has been chosen to encompass the more specialist terms such as preservation and conservation, which may describe passive action or proactive intervention, depending on what is appropriate to the type of heritage.
- 6.3. The proactive care of heritage can link directly to the improvement of the physical environment in towns and villages; it can act as a real driver for regeneration. For example, if a building is not maintained it can fall into disrepair and may ultimately be lost, thus damaging the character of an area; derelict buildings reduce the quality of the county, and its towns and villages and may become a barrier to investment as well as impairing the county's reputation.
- 6.4. The role of the county's district and borough councils is key in caring for the local historic environment. The local authorities protect the environment especially through the application of planning advice, designation of conservation areas and the production and implementation of various local plans. Planning policy, and in particular the Local Plans, must be based on a thorough understanding of the needs, opportunities and constraints within any borough or district. To achieve this, local planning authorities are required to prepare and maintain an up-to-date information base on key aspects of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of their area and this will include the heritage assets and historic environment.
- 6.5. District and borough councils can designate Conservation Areas; these are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Designations imposed locally restrict some of the development rights which might normally be allowed.
- 6.6. District and borough council conservation strategies set out the responsibilities and aspirations for the historic environment within the borough or district, the resources that are available and a programme for how they intend to

undertake the agreed tasks over the next five years. Under recent legislation councils have published a series of village design statements (VDS). VDS are documents that describe the distinctive characteristics of the locality and provide design guidance to influence future development of the area.

- 6.7. The impact that new development will have on sites that contain archaeological remains is another key heritage issue taken into account by the county's planning authorities in determining applications for planning permission. Where there could be a potential impact this has to be undertaken before any planning permission can be granted. In many cases the developer or potential developer will be required to commission a specialist contractor to carry out further research or trial investigations to evaluate the site's potential.
- 6.8. The County Council provides the specialist archaeological advisory service for the county, supporting decisions by the council itself and the boroughs and districts. The archaeological evaluations required, prior to planning decisions being made, may involve survey work, such as geophysical survey or field walking, as well as trial archaeological excavation or building survey work. This will provide information to agree the measures required to reduce or mitigate the identified impact; in some cases the archaeological heritage will have to be preserved by record, as it cannot be retained. However, where important historic remains are discovered as part of an evaluation, it is sometimes appropriate to refuse planning permission.
- 6.9. This archaeological process produces further information that helps the process of caring for our heritage. This includes the written reports of any findings, plus the archaeological finds from any excavation, where undertaken.
- 6.10. Caring about what matters in respect of the built assets and historic environment might involve bringing disused or run-down buildings back into beneficial use and enabling them to have a sustainable future, while respecting the heritage. Or indeed, might relate to new development that combines new with old, with an emphasis on high-quality design.
- 6.11. Looking after the unique heritage collections in the county is equally important. These are core assets for understanding the past history of our county and its communities. These collections include, but are not limited to the rich archive collections held in the council's Archives and Heritage Service, the archaeological archives for which a new resource centre is being built, and the rich collections held by organisations such as the county's museums.
- 6.12. The county's archive collections provide the documentary record of past governance, decisions made and development, as well as insights into people's

daily lives. If these records were not looked after, then there would be no source material from which to write our histories: Northamptonshire would be a county without record. The strength of the collections is especially apparent in the number of family estate archives that provide evidence not just of the lives of the wealthier, governing classes but the detail of the social, economic and political history of the county's communities. Collections also include local authority, parish, business, school, solicitors, charity, family and individual records. The variety of types of record, such as title deeds, minute and account books, diaries, letters, maps, photographs, are largely written on paper and parchment, and these need proper preservation if they are to survive.

- 6.13. A challenge is to make best use of digital presentation to protect original archives from over handling and potential damage while still offering hands on experience of archives. It is also important for the county's future that the right material from the quantities being created now is selected for permanent historical preservation. The council looks after the most extensive countywide collection but archive collections are also found in museums, heritage centres, local heritage and history organisations, libraries, historic houses, parks and gardens, private homes and businesses.
- 6.14. The county's archaeological resources consist of the records and finds from numerous archaeological excavations from Victorian times onwards; much of the collection being created currently is as a direct result of mitigation required as part of the planning process, as determined by the countywide archaeological advisory service. The collection includes the man-made artefacts and environmental evidence from our past that give us insight into how people used to live, how they worked, what they ate and drank and much more. The finds date from prehistoric times to present time and are especially rich because of the range of landscapes and significance of the county geographically and historically, making it worthy of detailed study. Specifically the collection includes ceramics, pottery, building materials, glass, coins, jewellery, textiles, animal bone, shells, plant remains etc. The material needs to be looked after for posterity, and in terms of taking this forward, a new countywide resource centre will be provided during the period covered by this Strategy.
- 6.15. Museum collections comprise a rich resource for history, especially of individual places. Museum collections may comprise paintings, costumes, man-made tools, machinery, household objects, business and industrial artefacts. The county is well known for having one of the most important shoe collections in the country, showing both the development in shoe-making techniques over time, as well as the story of fashion and design. However, in

any one museum we might see a railway engine, some Northamptonshire lace or a locally developed pushchair. Such collections are not only found in museums, but may be found also in heritage centres, historic houses and private homes. All these need to be appropriately cared for to ensure their long term survival.

- 6.16. The benefits of preserving intangible heritage such as memories, language and traditions is also essential. These are all part of the county's past. However there are challenges in capturing this evidence.
- 6.17. Into the future it is key that there is clarity about who is making the judgements about what to look after, what to intervene to preserve or conserve and what not to keep. Such decisions have been the preserve of the various owners and those with management responsibilities. In terms of buildings and the historic environment, this may include local authorities, their planning committees and other statutory bodies. In terms of the collections, whether archive, archaeological or museums, this is done by local authorities as well as the voluntary and private sector.
- 6.18. Businesses, parishes and town councils, churches, community groups and existing heritage groups and societies also have a vital role in caring for the heritage, especially by promoting awareness of the heritage both within and outside the county.
- 6.19. The key thing is to ensure heritage survives but then also to ensure it is built into the very fabric of the lives of members of the community, especially through education, engagement and participation.
- 6.20. Thus this key theme of the Strategy is to ensure that Northamptonshire's heritage assets are cared for, proactively conserved, protected and enhanced where appropriate.

Key actions for Theme 1 are to:

- Improve the protection of cultural heritage by embedding this into planning policy and local plans, and through education and training of asset owners and the industry.
- Work to promote the inclusion of heritage as integral to new build, regeneration and re-development areas.
- Support specific conservation and restoration projects where they support a strategic countywide goal.

- Provide support to heritage conservation projects and the organisations delivering them across Northamptonshire.
- Provide support to initiatives around the preservation of collections through digital access.
- Explore innovative approaches to funding the long-term protection and management of heritage assets and collections.

**Table 6.1: Key actions for Theme 1**

## 7. THEME 2: PROMOTING HERITAGE EDUCATION, LEARNING AND AWARENESS

- 7.1. Heritage has a key role to play in inspiring learning and creativity for people of all ages but especially children. Heritage locations – museums, heritage centres, historic churches and houses, and historic landscapes – provide safe and inclusive spaces where individual, family and group learning can take place. The historic environment, parks and gardens, archives, archaeological archives, libraries, collections and heritage websites provide vital resources for teaching and research. It is the combination of the collections and the locations that make the learning offer of heritage so powerful.
- 7.2. It follows that by caring for the heritage that matters (as detailed in Theme 1) we will be looking after potential heritage education and learning resources. All the heritage assets, as listed in section 3.3, have a value for learning that can be tailored to suit individuals or groups, families or work colleagues, and people of all ages, abilities, interests and beliefs. Also, education that is designed to build heritage skills and capacity through workforce support and training will promote opportunities and experience of heritage conservation.
- 7.3. Education about, and arising from, heritage takes many forms. It encompasses formal and informal learning, activity based-learning, participation and skills development. Formal learning includes school-based teaching and ensuring our local heritage is used to support the delivery of national curriculum topics, and not only the history curriculum. It also encompasses the heritage courses that are offered at further and higher education levels. Some of these are designed to develop knowledge about history and heritage and produce the heritage managers of the future. Others are designed to teach the skills needed to maintain our heritage in terms of practical skills. Much learning about heritage occurs in locations other than schools, such as museums and other heritage sites. Museums and archives run outreach programmes for children to develop new skills through heritage projects.
- 7.4. Informal learning is gained especially through participation and volunteering. Volunteering in heritage-based tasks is incredibly popular and rewarding for the individuals involved. The sort of tasks being carried out across the county include researching and cataloguing of historic and heritage collections as well as new material, heritage conservation, tour guide work, exhibitions, running local history groups of various sorts, talks and lecture programmes.
- 7.5. Volunteers are often driven by a want to engage and find out about their past, in terms of their ‘sense of place’ within a community, the desire to learn, and a

wish to help things survive into the future. Another key factor leading to volunteering is about the people involved, meeting and making friends and the social interaction an activity can provide. This social interaction enriches communities, and arguably when it is based around local and shared heritage, it is all the stronger. Volunteers, as passionate advocates for this county's heritage, are vital to any heritage strategy.

- 7.6. Heritage awareness grows in other less tangible ways – seeing change around you that incorporates heritage, visiting places for one reason and then seeing that heritage might offer both stimulus and relaxation.
- 7.7. Understanding of heritage is fundamental to our ability to understand our current world. It gives us perspective on day to day happenings; it enriches our appreciation of our environment and our shared cultural heritage. If we better understand our past we can better understand today's society. We can also ensure people retain or learn traditional skills and that skilled employment in heritage craft industries is supported.
- 7.8. Specifically, it is important that those responsible for strategic planning decisions be able to weigh up the needs of the heritage against the demands of current day – whether that be in decisions to build new roads, new houses or develop existing buildings.
- 7.9. It is especially important that young people see the value of looking after our heritage, as they will be the guardians of this in the future. Children need to be encouraged to think about the world around them and their place in it; they need to develop skills for life in the modern world that are based on both study and practical hands-on learning opportunities; they need to learn what is lasting and what is transient, the power of analysing evidence, the complexity of decision making, and the certainty that there is no 'absolute' and right answer to historical questions.
- 7.10. The top actions to improve education and awareness are a mix of general initiatives to promote education and awareness, plus some specific ideas around heritage skills.

Key actions for Theme 2 are to:

- Promote greater awareness and understanding of our natural and cultural heritage through the creation and promotion of a digital Heritage Gateway resource.
- Encourage training and capacity building in heritage management and

heritage skills.

- Develop expert partnerships to help promote training, mentoring and skills development.
- Promote joined up and innovative use of volunteer capacity and skills across the heritage sector.
- Improve communication about heritage laws, regulations, policies and decisions to help ensure they are better understood by all, especially for private owners through education and training for asset owners and the industry.

**Table 7.1: Key actions for Theme 2**

## 8. THEME 3: ENHANCING HERITAGE TOURISM

- 8.1. Northamptonshire has a rich and diverse heritage and offers a rich tapestry of places to visit. However, there is a need to better highlight, celebrate and promote the heritage offer as part of the overall development of the county as a tourist destination. Unlike established heritage tourism destinations like Oxford, Cambridge, Bath or York, Northamptonshire's heritage is much more wide-ranging but less well known and appreciated.
- 8.2. Marketing, promotion and having a brand for the county are important. If the county is well-promoted, then this raises the profile of its heritage offer and this in turn will impact on the county's economy as well as the overall wellbeing of its inhabitants.
- 8.3. It is well documented that heritage has an economic impact. Specifically in respect of tourism, recent figures show that experiencing heritage was the main activity for 69 million day visits in England in 2012<sup>5</sup>. There were countrywide over 58 million visits to historic properties alone. Visiting heritage sites generates money for the local economy: for every £1 spent as part of a heritage visit, 32p is spent on site and the remaining 68p is spent in local businesses such as restaurants, cafés, hotels and shops. Many jobs are created as a result, both directly in providing the heritage service but also in supporting industries.
- 8.4. This known market, that is also a growing one, makes it even more important to care for and value the county's historic environment. Thus by caring for and valuing the heritage there will be an increase in tourism to the county that will also improve the economy.
- 8.5. Key to successful heritage tourism is co-operative working between partners. Therefore the different sectors within the heritage arena need to develop a united approach. This will include statutory partners and other bodies such as Historic England, English Heritage, the National Trust, Arts Council, The National Archives and the Heritage Lottery Fund. As well as other locally established groups such as Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (NEP).
- 8.6. Potential partners including businesses also need to be clear of the value of taking a more cohesive approach to promoting the county and cross marketing. Targeted heritage tourism campaigns feature as a key action within the Strategy, promoting Northamptonshire's heritage to visitors.

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<sup>5</sup> National finding from Heritage and the Economy: <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/heritage-and-the-economy/heritage-and-the-economy-2015.pdf/>

- 8.7. Local communities will be encouraged to promote and tell the stories of their local heritage through the development of the Strategy. The linkages with local tourism bodies will also be explored to promote these heritage experiences.
- 8.8. The Northamptonshire Heritage website that acts as an information point for heritage and also as a link to other heritage sites offering information for the county is under development. The aim is that this will improve public access to heritage information, especially through new technologies and social media in an easy to understand format. This will allow greater public interaction and facilitate heritage stories being shared. This resource will be heavily promoted through the Strategy.

Key actions for Theme 3 are to:

- Encourage local communities to promote and tell the stories of their local heritage and to explore linkages with local tourism bodies to further promote these heritage experiences.
- Increase the visitation to digital resources and sharing of resources for maximum impact.
- Improve public signage on roads and pedestrian areas to the wealth of heritage in the county.
- improve written and visual signposting to the heritage in the county e.g. collections, websites, leaflets, books, exhibitions etc.

**Table 8.1: Key actions for Theme 3**

## 9. ACTION PLAN

- 9.1. The action plan in appendix one includes a number of short-term, quick wins, which not only increase education and raise awareness, but will also result in an increase in heritage tourism across Northamptonshire. A number of longer-term aspirations relating to the protection and enhancement of the historic environment through regeneration and development opportunities are also outlined in the action plan.
- 9.2. The action plan includes a timescale for the completion of each action and identifies a lead delivery partner. The timescales used are defined as follows: short (1-3 years), medium (3-5 years) and long term (over 5 years).
- 9.3. The action plan is designed to cover the next five years 2016 – 2021. It will be a living document but will be formally reviewed after five years.

## 10.CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1. This Strategy addresses the need for and aspiration to have a standalone statement of the importance of heritage to the county of Northamptonshire.
- 10.2. It is hoped that the themes identified can act as both a prompt to action and a reason to develop projects in collaboration that will make a real difference.
- 10.3. If we care for and value our heritage it will be in a better condition literally and metaphorically. Valuing heritage as an inspiration for learning and engagement will improve the lives of individuals and communities. By looking after the heritage the full value of the offer to visitors can be realised and this in turn will enable funding to be brought into the county to further develop and enhance the heritage.

**APPENDIX ONE:  
DRAFT ACTION PLAN 2016-2021**

**NB detail on some of these projects is awaited from partners**

<i>Actions for Theme 1: Valuing and caring for Northamptonshire's heritage</i>	<i>DETAIL</i>	<i>LEAD PARTNERS</i>	<i>TIMEFRAME</i>
To protect the fabric and setting of the county's heritage assets.	Work together to protect all designated and undesignated archaeological sites, monuments, structures and buildings, registered historic parks and gardens, battlefields, listed buildings, conservation areas, local listings and their settings.	NCC, district and borough councils, and Historic England	Medium to long term
To work together to find new ways to look after, manage and fund the protection of the county's heritage assets in their widest sense.	This will include the development of a business case and supporting business plan for the creation of a Northamptonshire Heritage Trust as a potential new governance model for heritage assets; it might also involve looking at the best ownership for heritage sites, for example, local community ownership and use.	Heritage Gateway Board	Business plan and structure developed 2016 Implemented 2017
To ensure that heritage is properly considered in the planning and development process.	The aim is to ensure that development in the county takes account of the setting of historic buildings and other historic landscape assets. That is, there is proper evaluation of the overall potential impact of any scheme on the historic landscape.	Heritage Gateway Board, partners and local planning authorities	Continuing
Explore opportunities to connect and enhance major development sites through heritage links or themes.	Use heritage as a theme to enhance and give meaning to specific development projects. If aimed through partnership working, it becomes possible in all future major development for there to be full consideration of the role of heritage to enhance schemes.	Heritage Gateway Board	Long term

<i>Actions for Theme 1: Valuing and caring for Northamptonshire's heritage</i>	<i>DETAIL</i>	<i>LEAD PARTNERS</i>	<i>TIMEFRAME</i>
The inclusion of heritage in regeneration schemes in Northamptonshire – preserving the richness of the county's history.	Investment in infrastructure programmes including Northampton Castle station gateway and commercial hub development; transformation of Northampton including St Peters and Old Black Lion.	NCC and Northampton Borough Council	Short to medium term Continuing
Preserving the unique heritage site of Chester Farm - a key heritage asset for the county.	Preserve, conserve and maintain the historic landscape of Chester Farm utilising Heritage Lottery Funding; and to preserve, conserve and find new uses for the buildings on the site with the focus on use being around heritage education and learning.	NCC	Medium term Buildings work July 2016 to March 2018
Providing a repository for the safe storage and public access to the archaeological artefacts in the county.	Develop a new Archaeological Resource Centre at Chester Farm to house all the legacy archives and provide a repository for newly generated material.	NCC	Medium term Resource Centre created by April 2018
Exploring additional ways of ensuring the safe preservation of archive and museum collections and making them more accessible.	Collections can be preserved through digitisation – there is potential to look at joint programmes or at least a joined up approach to decisions around the priorities for digitisation. Ensure Historic Environment Record data is accessible online as a key set of data for use in the planning process, thus supporting the appropriate care of heritage assets.	Heritage Gateway Board	Medium term
Supporting heritage conservation projects as examples of good practice.	More information to be collected on condition and management needs of heritage assets, conservation areas and artefacts within the county and where these have been effectively addressed. Write these up as case studies and promote them.	All	Continuing

<i>Actions for Theme 1: Valuing and caring for Northamptonshire's heritage</i>	<i>DETAIL</i>	<i>LEAD PARTNERS</i>	<i>TIMEFRAME</i>
Supporting the preservation and development of heritage along the Nene Valley.	[Information from Destination Nene Valley Board and Nenescape to be included shortly].	Destination Nene Valley Board, Nenescape	Short to medium term
Joint working across sector and between organisations to identify and share information on capital projects and agree timescales to ensure a more joined up approach, especially to external funding.	Highlight and share information about key projects that are being developed, consider added value from countywide approach including options for funding from key bodies. Maximise the bids for funding from the county.	Heritage Gateway Board, NCC, district and borough councils	Medium term
Church conservation management plan for Holy Sepulchre, Northampton.	[Information from Diocese of Peterborough to be included shortly]	Diocese of Peterborough	[Information from Diocese of Peterborough to be included shortly]

<i>Actions for Theme 2: Promoting heritage education, learning and awareness</i>	<i>DETAIL</i>	<i>LEAD PARTNERS</i>	<i>TIMEFRAME</i>
Ensuring that there is appropriate consultation with the right people, at the right time and in the right way in relation to heritage issues and projects.	Joint working to raise awareness of heritage through appropriate consultation. The outcome will be increased engagement and participation in heritage.	All	Continuing
Providing church cycle tours.	[Information from Diocese of Peterborough to be included shortly]	Diocese of Peterborough	[Information from Diocese of Peterborough to be included shortly]
To increase understanding of heritage.	To encourage parish, town, district and borough councils, and County Councillors to engage with heritage and become advocates in their respective wards. Actively encourage all local authorities in county to endorse the Strategy.	Heritage Gateway Board, NCC and district and borough councils	Medium term
To work to ensure that heritage awareness informs the planning processes	To raise awareness of heritage issues with those involved in current 'growth' planning and influence the negotiations around the Section 106 process and investment into the Community Infrastructure Levy where appropriate.	NCC and district and borough councils	Short to medium term

<i>Actions for Theme 2: Promoting heritage education, learning and awareness</i>	<i>DETAIL</i>	<i>LEAD PARTNERS</i>	<i>TIMEFRAME</i>
To raise awareness of volunteer opportunities across Northamptonshire's heritage sector and increase numbers volunteering.	Joint promotion between organisations of the volunteer projects and roles that are available. Making sure that the marketing of these is joined up and visible, including links from existing heritage interests to the relevant opportunities. Aim to develop the county as a model of good practice for volunteer involvement in heritage.	All	Short to medium term and continuing
Creation of the Northamptonshire Heritage website - an online resource to promote greater understanding and awareness of the county's heritage and including specific education 'packs'.	Development of the Northamptonshire Heritage website that brings together and adds value to current heritage resources. This includes the use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to increase learning and awareness.	Heritage Gateway Board	Website to be launched November 2016 and development ongoing
Create case-study pilot examples where new developments clearly promote good practice in terms of heritage to promote wider awareness.	Needs a proactive approach to seek out examples and some capacity to write them up as case studies.	Heritage Gateway Board	Short to medium term and continuing
Encourage and support more community and heritage groups to work in partnership to develop educational / engagement heritage projects.	Need to link the Strategy with work being undertaken by local groups e.g. local history groups and museums. The Strategy provides them with a tool to support their aspirations plus makes it possible to agree some countywide patterns or themes if information and learning is shared.	All	Short to medium term and continuing

<i>Actions for Theme 2: Promoting heritage education, learning and awareness</i>	<i>DETAIL</i>	<i>LEAD PARTNERS</i>	<i>TIMEFRAME</i>
Work with educational establishments and national organisations to support the knowledge and development of skills in the heritage sector.	Joint working between organisations and the university with the aim of ensuring that specialist skills are developed because this will enable the better protection, understanding and management of heritage assets into the future.	University of Northampton	Long term
Joint working to provide education and learning resources digitally.	Develop a list of current initiatives and encourage more digitisation to make things more accessible. E.g. digitisation of archive collections that can then be used by others for education purposes.	Heritage Gateway Board	Medium term
Promoting the need for heritage exhibitions, displays and awareness raising events.	All sectors to be aware of the need for increased learning about Northamptonshire's heritage and to work together to have a greater impact e.g. specific Heritage Open Days, Festivals etc.	All	Continuing
Development of heritage digital trails	Looking at existing heritage trails offered by various organisations via leaflets and making these accessible digitally, in order to increase audiences and therefore broaden awareness and increase learning.	University of Northampton	Short term
Scheduled monuments and other fixed assets should include detailed site interpretation.	Those organisations that own or have responsibility for scheduled monuments in the county should work to ensure there is some interpretation of the site, ideally in situ or accessible via the internet.	Historic England	Medium

<i>Actions for Theme 2: Promoting heritage education, learning and awareness</i>	<i>DETAIL</i>	<i>LEAD PARTNERS</i>	<i>TIMEFRAME</i>
Provide public access to information about the outcomes of excavations where development takes place, and archaeological mitigation is required in advance of development.	Where a brief is written for an archaeological contractor to do pre-development archaeology, this should include some requirement on a contractor for public access to information about the findings.	NCC	Immediate and continuing

<i>Actions for Theme 3: Enhancing heritage tourism</i>	<i>DETAIL</i>	<i>LEAD PARTNERS</i>	<i>TIMESCALES</i>
Using heritage to promote the county and county town as a destination for tourism, and developing a marketing and branding strategy based on this offer.	Promote heritage as a means of boosting public engagement and tourism in the county and county town. NEP to lead on the creation of a marketing and branding strategy.	NEP/ NCC, Northampton Borough Council, Destination Nene Valley	Short to medium term
Developing a joint communications strategy for the promotion of the county's heritage.	Partners to develop a strategy for communication about the county's heritage. Aim to join up use of social media so it has greatest impact. E.g. use of the Northamptonshire Heritage website that enables linking of social media feeds.	NCC/NEP	Short term and continuing
Strategic partners to work together to ensure that the significance and potential impact of Northamptonshire's heritage on the tourism economy is fully recognised and supported.	Lobbying, collection of data, taking opportunities to input into other strategies and agendas.	NCC/NEP	Medium term
Creation of the Northamptonshire Heritage website - an online resource to promote greater understanding and awareness of the county's heritage (linked with the action in Theme 2).	Section of the website to be used specifically to provide an interactive mapping system alongside a list of places to visit, while also linking to an events calendar.	NCC	Short term. Website to be launched Nov 2016
Development of an events calendar for heritage-related events happening across the county.	Pulling together information from other organisations and ensuring it all links together.	NEP	Short term

<i>Actions for Theme 3: Enhancing heritage tourism</i>	<i>DETAIL</i>	<i>LEAD PARTNERS</i>	<i>TIMESCALES</i>
Protect, enhance and promote the rich cultural and diverse heritage within the Rockingham Forest, Nene Valley and inland waterway network.	Support activities that achieve a diverse and sustainable rural economy whilst empowering local communities to be more resilient and have a sense of ownership across the Area by 2021. Focus on outdoor adventure for families. Focus on older people's enjoyment of cultural and wildlife heritage. Focus on healthy activity for couples in valley. Summer 2016 and Summer 2017 events.	Rockingham Forest Trust, Northamptonshire LEADER programmes, Nene Valley Festival, Tourism Board	Medium to long term
Continue to develop and promote the Heritage Gateway branding and support the Board's role in the county.	Partners to agree the value of the Heritage Gateway Board and help to develop this into one key heritage advocate and spokesperson for the county.	NCC	Continuing
Ensure that our heritage is appropriately signed / visible.	Work with partners to ensure heritage is 'cross-marketed'.	NEP	Short to medium term
Considering the opportunities for heritage tourism that any new development might offer.	Look at new development projects with a view to the heritage tourism market – if this is done in a joined up way, the benefits to the heritage and the economy will be much greater into the future.	NCC	Medium term
Supporting partnerships around joined promotion and delivery of heritage events especially those targeted at tourist markets as a way of promoting the economic prosperity of the county.	Northamptonshire Heritage events -partnership working around key events.	NEP	Short to medium term