

Report Title: **World Heritage Site status**

Report of: **Duncan Wilson, APP Chief Executive**

1. Purpose

1.1 To establish the Board's policy on the SAC/CC recommendation that WHS status should be pursued by Alexandra Palace.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Board notes the presentation by Clive Carter set out in the paper attached, and agrees (following the recommendations of the SAC/CC) that in principle AP should pursue WHS status, pragmatically noting the timetable for doing so and the need to adopt a "value for money" approach given the likely cost of the exercise.

Report Authorised by: **Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive APP**

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3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 This report follows a discussion of Clive Carter's paper to the SAC/CC on 8 November, and a parallel presentation by Sue Cole who leads for English Heritage on WHS's. Clive will be representing his paper to the full Board at the meeting. The upshot of the SAC/CC's discussion was a recommendation that there would be support for "the aspiration (that APPCT should pursue).. World Heritage Site recognition" but an acknowledgement that the process would be costly and protracted (the tentative nomination list being closed for a further ten years), and the outcome by no means certain given stiff competition.
- 3.2 Following the tenor of that discussion it is proposed that APPCT undertakes further research on the precise requirements for a WHS bid to be pursued and bears these in mind in the course of pursuing other relevant and more urgent objectives such as regeneration plans including refurbishment and conservation of the BBC studios, the preparation of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid, and the preparation of a Conservation Plan for the whole of Alexandra Palace. This will ensure that we obtain the best value for money in pursuing the objective of WHS status.

4. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)

4.1

5. Background

- 5.1 Clive Carter's paper outlines the case for the international importance of the BBC studios as the "birthplace of television". The studios survive in reasonably authentic condition, which is would meet one criterion for inscription as a WHS. This is currently being assessed in detail as part of the work being undertaken by Donald Insall Associates our conservation architects.
- 5.2 There would be benefits to the Palace achieving WHS status in terms of recognition and profile. Some of these would be achievable without WHS designation, and we should be pursuing these anyway given that it would take ten years for our candidacy for the "tentative list" to be assessed by the Department of Culture Media and Sport. Even then we would in all likelihood be added to a list which currently has a number of candidates which might rank higher than AP in competing for UK nomination. The next stage would be competition for designation by UNESCO, against candidates from all over the world
- 5.3 However in my view WHS status will not necessarily and directly bring in financial support to the Palace, although to might underpin other strategies, for example tourism and learning. No grant money is available from ICOMOS/UNESCO for UK World Heritage Sites (it is channelled instead to developing countries' WHS's where the need is demonstrably greater).
- 5.4 To compete successfully for a place on the UK list would take a significant investment (EH estimate £500k) in consultancy studies and reports. It is not likely to add to our chances if we don't do this work thoroughly with independent experts. Having been involved in Chatham's ongoing bid for WHS status I can confirm this from personal experience. This required significant financial support from a number of local authorities and public bodies and has been running for at least five years already.
- 5.5 I am therefore recommending that APPCT do indeed adopt the objective of featuring on the tentative list of UK nominations at the next opportunity, currently ten years away. But I do not recommend that we make our objective of achieving WHS status the feature of a major press/PR campaign at this stage, or constitute a diversion from the more urgent objectives of preparing for regeneration. This process will incorporate during 2012:
- a conservation masterplan already commissioned from Donald Insall Associates, which will assess the condition and authenticity of the BBC studios;
 - a spatial masterplan about to be commissioned which will make recommendations as to how areas including the BBC studios might be used in future, and whether adaptations might be necessary to make this use possible. The lead assumption is that the Studios might constitute a centre for interpretation and learning at the Palace.
 - A bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to finance the major part of such work, which will have to include a credible and sustainable business case for running any such facility, and a costed refurbishment plan.
- 5.6 As part of this process we should state the case for WHS designation, and our commitment to achieving it. But I do not believe it would help our case to give that

undue weight, given the uncertainty of the eventual outcome and the time we would have to wait.

5.7 So I can recommend to the Board the SAC's resolution that "the proposal for WHS recognition be supported in principle and that the Board be asked to incorporate this into the Trust's long term regeneration strategy and a feasibility analysis be conducted to identify strengths weaknesses and resources needed". However I would not propose that that feasibility analysis be conducted until after the current work on regeneration planning is complete, ie probably not until late in 2012 at the earliest, given very limited staff and financial resources.

DW 23.1.12