

Report to Cabinet

7 December 2022

Subject:	Chance Heritage Trust – Memorandum of Understanding
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth, Councillor Peter Hughes
Director:	Director for Regeneration and Growth, Tony McGovern
Key Decision:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Growth & Spatial Planning Service Manager, Tammy Stokes tammy_stokes@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 Cabinet to endorse the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the Chance Heritage Trust relating to the heritage – led regeneration of the Chance Glassworks site.
- 1.2 That details of the allocation of approved Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership Capacity Funding to support the regeneration of the Chance Glassworks Site be received.




2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The objectives of the Chance Heritage Trust (CHT) are closely aligned with the Council's aspirations and policy objectives for the site and its locality. Regeneration of the site would create a boost for the local economy, create jobs and homes, conserve a locally and nationally important cultural asset and enhance the image of the borough through restoration of this high-profile industrial heritage site.






- 2.2 The Memorandum of Understanding sets out how the Council and the CHT will work together to deliver regeneration of the Chance Glassworks site and the Soho Foundry and Mint.
- 2.3 In April 2022, Cabinet approved a report, which delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth, to submit Sandwell's capacity funding spend proposal for financial year 2022/23 to the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership Board (BCLEP).
- 2.4 Sandwell's capacity fund proposal included an allocation of £144,000 towards the Heritage Regeneration Project Development (Chance Glassworks and Soho Foundry). This was approved at the BCLEP Board in May 2022.
- 2.5 Proposals have been received, subsequently, from the Chance Heritage Trust to spend the £144,000 allocation on Chances Glassworks Site, as set out in brief below:
- Review of the use mix and density, with a view to reducing viability gap
 - Where practicable, further surveys to provide more certainty and to reduce risk e.g. additional air quality and noise measurements
 - Discussions with Historic England (HE) to scope the survey work (desk top and physical), and to establish the significance of underground structures, which form part of the scheduled monument designation
 - Preparation of a first phase delivery plan.
 - Update Outline Business Case to Full Business Case

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people Education and enhancing opportunities for young people is a stated objective of the Chance Heritage Trust
	People live well and age well
	Strong resilient communities



	The MOU is a statement of joint intent to deliver objectives that benefit the local community and restore a key component of that community's heritage.
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods Provision of housing in a site that has been regenerated to a high standard
	A strong and inclusive economy Facilitating the regeneration of the Chance site would create employment directly and would bring a long-underutilised site back into productive economic use in line with Council policy.
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 Chance Glassworks (off Spon Lane, West Bromwich) is prominently located - adjacent to the elevated section of the M5 motorway.
- 4.2 Soho Foundry is located on a 21-acre site in Smethwick, around 2.5 miles to the west of Birmingham city centre.
- 4.2 These two industrial sites are connected by the Galton Valley – a narrow canal corridor along the Birmingham Canal, from Smethwick Junction to Bromford Stop.
- 4.3 The Galton Valley contains the two parallel canals crossing Smethwick Summit. The original Brindley Canal of 1768-9, known as the 'Old Main Line', was lowered, in 1790, under a scheme (attributed to John Smeaton). In 1829-30, a parallel and deeper canal was cut, -Thomas Telford's 'New Main Line'. The Galton Valley has a great many canal heritage structures, including Telford's Engine Arm Aqueduct and Galton Bridge.
- 4.4 Reflecting its significance to the borough's industrial heritage, **in 1985**, the Council designated the Galton Valley as a conservation area.
- 4.5 Soho Foundry was established in 1795 by some of the most notable figures of the Industrial Revolution, including Matthew Boulton and James Watt, and their sons – Matthew Robinson Boulton and James



Watt Jr. The Foundry was the first purpose-built steam engine manufactory in the world. Watt's invention of the separate condenser is regarded as one of the most important innovations in the history of motive power. Clearly, the site has huge significance in terms of local and national industrial heritage.

- 4.6 The historic foundry buildings at Soho are Grade II* listed, and are covered by scheduled monument status. However, they have no economic purpose, without which, there is no obvious way in which they are to be maintained, much less, restored.
- 4.7 Chances Glassworks was in constant use for glass manufacture from 1814 until the 1980s, supplying glass for the Crystal Palace, the Westminster Clock Tower ('Big Ben'), and the White House. It played an important part in both world wars (lenses, bomb aimers etc.); and is internationally famous for its pivotal role in the development and supply of lighthouse lenses.
- 4.8 The history of Chances has been said to be the very essence of British glass manufacture in the country, through the 19th and 20th centuries. The works employed thousands of local people, and the Chance family were noted local philanthropists. In terms of the heritage of Smethwick, the Borough and the nation, the site's importance is huge.
- 4.9 Reflecting the above heritage considerations, the Chance Glassworks site is home to several statutorily listed buildings, but most of them are in a serious state of disrepair. The site is a designated Scheduled Monument which Historic England considers to be 'At Risk' It also stands within, and is an important component of, the Galton Valley Conservation Area (which itself is designated to reflect its significance in terms of industrial heritage).
- 4.10 Since glass manufacture has ceased, both sites have been underutilised; and ownership has become fragmented. Notwithstanding their heritage status, the buildings and structures on both sites continue to deteriorate, resulting in poor image and low levels of economic activity.
- 4.11 Chance Heritage Trust (CHT) is a charitable Community Benefit Society which was established to restore and protect heritage buildings, through regeneration - with a particular focus on residential, education and enterprise.



- 4.12 This report recommends that the Cabinet endorse the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and a copy of which is included at Appendix A.
- 4.13 The Memorandum of Understanding calls for a joint approach, and to “work together to realise the potential of Sandwell’s significant industrial heritage assets to make a positive impact on economic regeneration of the area and to maximise the benefit to the local community through place-making and cultural activities.”
- 4.14 Under this joint approach the Council and CHT agree to work together on these sites to:
- realise the potential of Sandwell’s significant industrial heritage assets;
 - make a positive impact on economic regeneration of the area; and
 - maximise the benefit to the local community through place-making and cultural activities.
- 4.15 This will be achieved through collaboration on activities such as:
- Masterplanning
 - Funding Bids to external bodies
 - Allocation of Grant Funding (from SMBC to CHT) to support Business case Development and other activities (subject to any necessary Grant Agreement)
 - Surveys, and other technical assessments, of heritage assets on these sites
 - Collaboration with Historic England on relevant issues
 - Site Assembly (where appropriate)
 - Use of the Compulsory Purchase Order powers (where appropriate)
 - Collaboration on heritage or other designations (where appropriate) that might assist regeneration
- 4.16 The Memorandum of Understanding is not a legally binding contract, and does not create any legal obligations or liabilities. However, it does provide a written commitment that the Council and CHT will work jointly together to regenerate Sandwell’s industrial heritage assets along the Galton Valley, but, more specifically, the Chance Glassworks and the Soho Foundry and Mint.



4.17 Entering into the Memorandum of Understanding does not interfere with or prejudice the statutory, or other rights and obligations, of the Council or the CHT. It does not supersede any existing Governance arrangements; nor does it have any influence in the Council's function as Local Planning Authority.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 Do nothing – the heritage assets would continue to deteriorate, resulting in loss of heritage significance and poor image, and creating potential for reputational damage to the Council.

6 Implications

Resources:	Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (BC LEP) Capacity Funding for financial year 22/23 was agreed by BC LEP Board in May 2022. The proposals from the CHT meet the requirements for this funding.
Legal and Governance:	The Memorandum of Understanding is not legally binding and does not supersede any existing Governance requirements.
Risk:	Risk of BC LEP funding claw back if funding is not expended by end of 22/23 financial year. As the document is not legally binding there are no legal risks but reputational risks from not taking steps to support CHT in line with the MOU. No other significant risks identified at this stage.
Equality:	There are no equality issues arising from entering in to the Memorandum of Understanding.
Health and Wellbeing:	Retaining and investing in our industrial heritage will help secure the assets for future generations to enjoy.
Social Value	None in relation to the approvals sought in this report.
Climate Change	None in relation to the approvals sought in this report.

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Sandwell MBC and Chances Heritage Trust Memorandum of Understanding



8. Background Papers

Report to Cabinet - Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership
Capacity Funding – Sandwell Allocation – 13th April 2022

