

SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL

Report

Subject : Professional Services Repair of Poultry Cross – Procurement Approval
Committee : Full Council
Date : 9 March 2026
Author : Marc Read, Head of Environment & Deputy CEO

1. Report Summary:

- 1.1. This report requests Council approval to undertake a specialist procurement process and grant permission to spend for urgent conservation and repair works to the Poultry Cross, Salisbury's nationally significant Grade I Listed and Scheduled Ancient Monument. The structure has recently been added to Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register owing to rapid deterioration and long-term lack of substantive repair.
- 1.2. Salisbury City Council currently holds a Repairs and Maintenance Contract with D&N Maintenance, but both the appointed Conservation Architect (Loop Architects) and Historic England have confirmed that the works required are beyond the scope of a general maintenance contractor. Given the specialist heritage skills, traditional materials, and conservation methodologies required, the Council must appoint a specialist conservation contractor with proven experience working on Grade I listed buildings.
- 1.3. Estimated cost for Phase 1 works (roof, structural repairs, high-level masonry, scaffolding and associated services): £400,000.

2. Background:

- 2.1. The Poultry Cross is a 14th-century, hexagonal open market structure, prominently located between Minster Street, Silver Street and Butcher Row. It is the sole surviving market cross of four that once stood in Salisbury and is of exceptional local significance.
- 2.2. Key developments recorded in the Loop Architects Project Summary (Sept 2025) include:
 - No substantive repairs recorded for decades; roof coverings are likely 19th-century and at end of life.
 - Severe deterioration of the lead roof, cracked asphalt gutters and ongoing water ingress, causing accelerated timber decay.
 - Structural instability identified following access enabled by a 2022 emergency scaffold (installed after a vehicle collision).
 - High level inspections in 2025 confirm decayed roof timbers, failing joints and moisture-stained structural elements requiring urgent replacement or consolidation.
 - Historic England has added the monument to the Heritage at Risk Register citing long-term deterioration requiring immediate intervention.

- Loop Architects, AWA Structural Engineers, and Meon Surveys have confirmed a required “top-down” repair strategy, beginning with structural stabilisation and complete roof renewal.

3. Existing Repairs & Maintenance Contract

- 3.1. Salisbury City Council holds a Repairs and Maintenance Contract with D&N Maintenance, covering general building maintenance across the Council’s estate.
- 3.2. While D&N Maintenance has provided valuable assistance with temporary propping works (approved and installed on 24 June 2025), the Conservation Architect and Historic England have both confirmed that:
 - The nature of the Poultry Cross repairs requires specialist skilled heritage stonemasons,
 - Complex structural conservation experience,
 - Traditional materials expertise (lime mortars, Chilmark stone, historic leadwork),
 - And an ability to work within Scheduled Monument Consent conditions.
- 3.3. These requirements fall **outside** the capability profile of a general maintenance contractor.
- 3.4. Therefore, a separate procurement is required to appoint a specialist, conservation-accredited heritage contractor.

4. Scope of Works – Phase 1

- 4.1. Phase 1 works, identified as urgent and mandatory by Loop Architects and Historic England, include:
- 4.2. Roof Structure & Lead Coverings
 - Structural repairs to severely decayed timber beams, joints and bearing ends
 - Renewal of the failing Victorian lead roof (likely original to the 1850s addition)
 - Removal of cracked and deteriorated asphalt gutters
 - Full replacement of insulation and weathering components
- 4.3. High-Level Masonry Repairs (“Crown”)
 - Conservation and structural repair of the Victorian flying buttresses and pinnacled crown
 - Lime-based repointing
 - Stone indents and replacements on a like-for-like Chilmark stone basis
- 4.4. Services & Associated Works
 - Removal of redundant electrical boxes and loose wiring
 - Opportunity to introduce sensitive internal and external lighting upgrades
 - Improvement of bird & vermin netting system

4.5. These works require a major scaffold encircling the monument, and all interventions must follow the conservation philosophy outlined in the architect's report (preservation of earliest fabric, minimal intervention, prioritisation of water management and structural integrity).

5. Procurement Approach:

5.1. Given the specialist nature of the project and the Grade I/Scheduled status of the monument, it is recommended that the Council undertakes a restricted tender process to:

- Pre-qualify contractors with formal conservation accreditation
- Ensure bidders have proven Grade I heritage experience
- Obtain accurate costings supported by heritage-experienced quantity surveyors
- Meet the requirements of Scheduled Monument Consent
- Ensure quality and compliance, reducing long-term risk to the asset

5.2. Procurement will be delivered in partnership with Hampshire County Council Procurement Services.

6. Recommendations

Full Council is recommended to:

6.1. Approve the commencement of the procurement process to appoint a specialist heritage conservation contractor for the Poultry Cross.

6.2. Grant permission to spend up to £400,000 for delivery of Phase 1 works.

6.3. Note that the existing Repairs & Maintenance Contract is not suitable for these highly specialised heritage works.

6.4. Endorse the "top-down" repair strategy recommended by Loop Architects and supported by Historic England.

6.5. Authorise the submission of Scheduled Monument Consent applications and associated heritage approvals.

6.6. Support the exploration of external grant funding, using the detailed design documentation now available.

Wards Affected: All wards, given the citywide cultural, economic and heritage importance of the Poultry Cross.

Implications:

Financial: Costs provisioned in revenue budgets for 2027/28 and 2028/29; specialist procurement ensures best value.

Legal: Compliance with heritage legislation, Scheduled Monument Consent, and

procurement regulations.

Personnel: Officer time needed for procurement, project management and liaison with Historic England.

Environmental: Use of traditional, low-carbon lime mortars and stone supports sustainability objectives.

Equalities: Ensures continued public enjoyment and safe access to a landmark central city asset.