

SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL

Report

Subject : Poultry Cross – Conservation and Repair Proposal
Committee : Environment
Date : 29 September 2025
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1. Introduction:

- 1.1. The Poultry Cross, Salisbury's only surviving market cross, is a Grade I Listed building and Scheduled Ancient Monument situated at the junction of Minster Street, Silver Street and Butcher Row. It is an iconic structure dating back to the 14th century and a significant landmark within the historic city centre.
- 1.2. The structure has been added to Historic England's *Heritage at Risk Register* in 2025, following decades of insufficient maintenance, a vehicle collision in 2022, and increasing evidence of water ingress and timber decay. Salisbury City Council, as guardian of the monument since 2016, now seeks approval to proceed with urgent Phase I repairs and a longer-term conservation strategy.

2. Proposal Summary

- 2.1. The Council has commissioned Loop Architects, who specialise in historic building conservation to develop a phased programme of repair and conservation.
- 2.2. The works have been phased to address the most urgent structural and safety priorities first, ensuring the building is weatherproof, stable, and compliant with essential services, before moving on to longer-term conservation, planning, and enhancement measures in subsequent phases.
- 2.3. **Phase I (Priority Works – 2025/26):**
 - Roof repairs, including structural timber repairs and complete re-leading.
 - High-level masonry conservation, including the Victorian crown and parapet.
 - Electrical and lighting upgrades (including floodlighting and internal improvements).
 - Upgrading of bird and vermin protection.
- 2.4. **Phase II (Subsequent Phases – 2027 onwards):**
 - Repair and conservation of masonry to arches, buttresses, central column, and seat.
 - Development of a Conservation Management Plan and cyclical maintenance programme.
 - Potential landscaping adjustments and public realm enhancements around the monument.

3. Significance & Community Value

- 3.1. The Poultry Cross is the last remaining of four medieval market crosses in Salisbury.
- 3.2. It is central to the identity of the Market Place and contributes to the city's tourism economy.
- 3.3. The monument is of exceptional national importance, warranting urgent intervention to ensure its preservation.
- 3.4. There is strong public expectation that the City Council will safeguard this heritage asset for future generations.

4. Benefits

- 4.1. Protects a nationally significant landmark from further deterioration and potential loss.
- 4.2. Enhances the historic core of Salisbury for residents, visitors, and businesses.
- 4.3. Opportunity to introduce sensitive improvements (lighting, interpretation) to increase public appreciation.
- 4.4. Supports the Council's statutory duty as guardian of a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- 4.5. Enables access to external grant funding streams by demonstrating a clear repair strategy.

5. Potential Issues

- 5.1. **Cost Uncertainty:** Full extent of timber decay will only be known once the lead roof is removed.
- 5.2. **Disruption:** Phase I works will require full scaffold around the monument, potentially disrupting market and pedestrian flow.
- 5.3. **Consent Dependencies:** All works require Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic England.
- 5.4. **Future Maintenance:** Without a cyclical maintenance plan, risks of repeat deterioration remain.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial:

- Significant capital investment required for Phase I repairs (costing exercise to follow Quantity Surveyor review).
- Potential for grant funding, particularly linked to the *Heritage at Risk* status.
- Ongoing maintenance budgets must be allocated to prevent recurrence of decay.

6.2. Legal:

- Scheduled Monument Consent required for all works.
- Works must comply with conservation principles for Grade I Listed buildings.
- Procurement of suitably qualified conservation contractors essential.

6.3. Environmental Impact:

- Repairs will prioritise sustainable methods and use of traditional materials (lime mortars, Chilmark stone, lead roofing).
- Works will enhance the resilience of the structure against water ingress and weather damage.

6.4. Equalities Impact:

- The monument is a public heritage asset, freely accessible to all.
- Sensitive upgrades (lighting, seating, landscaping) will improve inclusivity of access and enjoyment.

7. Recommendations

7.1. It is recommend that the Committee:

7.1.1. Notes the presentation by Loop Architects on the condition and repair strategy for the Poultry Cross.

7.1.2. Supports the proposed phased programme of works, prioritising Phase I roof and structural repairs.

7.1.3. Authorises officers to:

- Submit Scheduled Monument Consent applications to Historic England.
- Seek accurate costings through specialist Quantity Surveyors.
- Explore external grant funding options to support delivery.

7.1.4. Agrees in principle to make the necessary budget provision for Phase I repairs within the 2026/27 financial year.

8. Wards Affected:

8.1. The Poultry Cross lies within the St Edmunds Ward but is of cultural and economic benefit to all Salisbury residents and visitors.

9. Background Papers: Loop Architect Presentation & Project Summary