

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

12 SEPTEMBER 2018

CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the Conservation Team's proposals to review the District's Conservation Areas (CAs).
- 1.2 For Committee to note that a future project developing online access to items at the resource centre at the Brunel Drive depot will be progressed at a later date.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The power to designate CAs falls under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the 'Act'). Section 69 (1) states: "Every local planning authority— (a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and (b) shall designate those areas as conservation areas". The first CAs were designated in 1967 under the Civic Amenities Act and there are now over 9,000 CAs in England. They are designated for their special architectural and historic interest. An area may warrant designation if, for example, it has an historic layout of streets, or a grouping of historic buildings that reflect the materials and style of the region. It may also be an area reflective of a particular historical time period, or it could be that the relationships between buildings and spaces create a unique historic environment. There are many different types including the centres of our historic towns and cities, model villages and planned housing estates, 18th and 19th-century suburbs, country houses set in their historic parks and historic transport links and their environs, such as stretches of canal.
- 2.2 Most CAs are designated by the Council as the local planning authority. Historic England can designate CAs in London, where they have to consult the relevant London Borough Council and obtain the consent of the Secretary of State for National Heritage. The Secretary of State can also designate in exceptional circumstances - usually where the area is of more than local interest.
- 2.3 Designation is a Land Charge and affects property owners. Designation does not prevent change, but enables the Council to positively manage and protect areas from neglect, decay or inappropriate development. Typically, if you live in or run a business from a property in a CA, you may need permission from the Council before making alterations such as external cladding, inserting windows, installing satellite dishes and solar panels, adding conservatories or other extensions, laying paving or building walls. As the Council can change the types of alterations that need permission by making an Article 4 Direction, property owners are encouraged to contact the Council before making arrangements to start any work. In addition, property owners in CAs are required to notify the Council if they are thinking of cutting down a tree or doing any pruning work. Demolition or substantial demolition of a building within a CA will usually require permission from the Council.

- 2.4 The Council has a legal duty to review existing CAs from time to time in accordance with Section 69(2) of the Act. The special interest of areas designated many years ago may now be so eroded by piecemeal change or by single examples of poorly designed development that parts of the area may no longer have special interest. In such cases, boundary revisions will be needed to exclude them or, in exceptional circumstances, reconsideration of the CA designation as a whole. Conversely, the existing boundary may have been drawn too tightly, omitting areas now considered of special interest such as historic rear plots with archaeological potential, later phases of development (such as more recent housing), or parks, cemeteries and historic green spaces. In such cases the existing boundary may need to be extended.
- 2.5 In undertaking the review of the CA, it is usual to publish a draft CA Appraisal document in accordance with advice and guidance contained within the Historic England document 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1'. Local communities may be involved in many ways with CAs, not only by consultation of both communities and owners, obviously important in achieving support, but by proactive assistance in identifying the general areas that merit conservation area status and defining the boundaries, therefore adding depth and a new perspective to the local authority view.
- 2.6 In addition, Section 71 of the Act places on local planning authorities the duty to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of CAs in their districts. Regularly reviewed appraisals identifying threats and opportunities can be developed into a management plan, which can in turn channel development pressure to conserve the special quality of the CA. Both areas in relative economic decline and those under pressure for development can benefit from management opportunities that promote beneficial change.
- 2.7 There are currently 47 conservation areas in Newark & Sherwood District. Newark was the first designation in 1968. The Council currently has 15 CA Appraisals in total, although some of these are now of some age and might only be regarded as background documents (albeit still useful). The last formal review of a CA was Thurgarton in 2008.
- 2.8 It is desirable to maintain a continuous programme of CA reviews, noting the general duty within section 69 of the Act to designate new areas and review past designations. In addition, various local and parish councils have approached the Conservation Team in the recent past to request a review of their areas, including Edwinstowe, Halam, Balderton, Halloughton and Norwell for example. Some of the existing Appraisals such as Southwell and Collingham require an update furthermore due to the impact of development and new research on the significance of that area (in the case of Southwell, for example, the Appraisal would benefit from the addition of the local community project work on archaeological interest as expressed in their 'archaeological core' mapping). Others require a comprehensive review. However, when considered strategically, we feel that our focus to begin with should be CAs at risk (including through development pressure). In this regard, we feel that Newark and Ollerton should be a priority for boundary review and publication of a draft Appraisal with Management Plan. Both settlements are identified as being at risk on the national CA 'at risk register'. Considerable work has already been undertaken towards a draft Newark Appraisal furthermore, and as officers, we have already discussed potential boundary changes to consider, such as whether Northgate benefits from remaining in the Newark CA, and whether further historic housing stock might be considered for inclusion. However, we are open-minded about these issues and plan to run a comprehensive public consultation including a public meeting.

Brunel Drive Archive Material

2.9 The Resource Centre based at the depot on Brunel Drive stores the bulk of the museum's collection. The purpose built facility holds over 87,000 objects and archive materials in climate controlled conditions. Within the collection are over 20,000 historic photographs. Limited digitisation of the whole collection is ongoing. The Resource Centre is open to the public by appointment.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 Our proposal is to fully review the District's CAs, and in due course, amend/designate CAs and publish associated CA Appraisal documents. The work will involve comprehensive public consultation using the approach set out in the Statement of Community Involvement in relation to developing Supplementary Planning Documents. This includes 6 weeks of public consultation and engagement with interested stakeholders such as Civic Societies and local history groups.

3.2 Specifically, over the next 3 years we will review Newark, Ollerton, Edwinstowe and Southwell CAs.

3.3 In addition, within the next 3 years, it is our intention to publish designation statements for all 47 areas. The designation statements will provide factual information on the date of designation and include a summary of interest. This is a useful process for us insofar as it provides a context for priorities in preparing appraisals and boundary reviews. It also provides a useful interim resource for developers and stakeholders. The preparation of these statements is not too resource intensive, but does allow us to conduct a reasonably effective review of all the CAs and then draw up a schedule of priorities in terms of appraisal writing and boundary reviews. There are a small number of villages which might also be considered for designation, including the estate villages of Winkburn and Budby, as well as attractive settlements with distinctive historic cores such as Halam and Langford.

Digitisation Project

3.4 Committee is to note that whilst there are currently limited resources to progress a more comprehensive and audience focused digitisation project of the Museum's collection that this will be taken forward in the future, including where appropriate, funding bids.

4.0 Equalities Implications

4.1 In carrying out the Council's legal duty under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, there are no specific equalities implications for the District Council when designating or reviewing conservation areas. However, in accordance with the duty to publish management proposals within the affected area and the benefit of wide ranging public engagement, appropriate consideration will need to be given to consultation strategies, public meetings and access to documents (also in accordance with public expectations for consultation as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement). As such, before we start the programme of review, the Conservation Team will undertake an equalities initial assessment in accordance with the Council's Equalities Checklist. Consultation reports will also be published alongside each Appraisal setting out how, amongst other things, access and equality has been considered.

5.0 Impact on Budget/Policy Framework

- 5.1 The Conservation Team expects no budget impact in this case. A new Conservation Officer is due to join in October 2018, increasing our capacity to undertake conservation area reviews. In addition, the number of planning applications received by the Council is not likely to change significantly as a result of this work. It is possible that increased reporting of enforcement matters might occur, but it is considered that current provision exists within the Planning Team to deal with this.
- 5.2 There are no budget impacts with the digitisation project as this is for information only. This will have potential budget implications in future.

6.0 Comments of Director

- 6.1 It is desirable to maintain a continuous programme of CA reviews, noting the general duty within section 69 of the Act to designate new areas and review past designations. There are currently 47 conservation areas in the district of Newark and Sherwood. Newark was the first designation in 1968. The Council currently has 15 CA Appraisals in total, although some of these are now of some age and might only be regarded as background documents (albeit still useful). The last formal review of a CA was Thurgarton in 2008.
- 6.2 As for the digitisation of the archived material at the Resource Centre, whilst it would be of benefit to have elements of the 'unseen' collection online, the vast quantity of archived material, as stated in 2.9 above, makes digitisation a very long process and resource intensive. This process, therefore, needs to be evaluated against other priorities within the service; namely, the continued improvement to the permanent exhibitions in the NCWC, signage and the ongoing work in relation to the wider Castle Gatehouse scheme

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- (a) **the Conservation Team be given delegated authority to undertake the Conservation Area review work. Updates will be given to the Committee bi-annually, as well as reports at the appropriate time to designate/amend Conservation Areas and adopt the associated Appraisal; and**
- (b) **that a future project developing online access to items at the resource centre at the Brunel Drive depot will be progressed at a later date when resources permit be noted.**

Reason for Recommendations

To enable officers to carry out the Council's legal duties in respect of section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Background Papers - Nil

For further information please contact Oliver Scott on Ext 5847.

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