

Appendices

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NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Item No.

6

CABINET REPORT

Report Title

Proposed Boot & Shoe Conservation Area

AGENDA STATUS:

Public

Cabinet Meeting Date:	24 November 2010
Key Decision:	No
Listed on Forward Plan:	Yes
Within Policy:	N/A
Policy Document:	N/A
Directorate:	Planning & Regeneration
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Richard Church
Ward(s)	Castle, St Crispin and Abington Wards

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of members to undertake public consultation on a proposed Boot & Shoe Conservation Area.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that consultation on three alternative conservation area boundaries take place.

2.2 Delegate to the Director of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration amendments to Appendix 1, if required, prior to starting the consultation process.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background – The Borough Council recognises and appreciates the importance of the Boot & Shoe industry and the important role it played in the history and development of Northampton. The rapid development of the industry in the mid 19th century created a very distinctive urban environment much of which survives today. The Council recognises it is worthy of protection through conservation area designation. In order to inform the process, earlier this year, the Council commissioned a report from a specialist consultant who was involved in the County-wide survey of the Boot & Shoe industry. This survey data was subsequently used to include some buildings on the statutory list of important buildings and the publication of book 'Built to Last' by English Heritage in 2004. The Council has therefore harnessed this wider understanding and appreciation of the industry as a whole to inform the designation process to preserve and enhance the significance of the Boot & Shoe industry to Northampton's heritage

3.2 Issues – it is important that the area designated adequately reflects the principle characteristics of the Boot & Shoe industry particularly its influence on development of the area north of the town centre. The principle characteristics include: the development of the industry from a home based workshop industry to mass production, a regimented street pattern, the close association of industrial and domestic buildings and the subtle architectural embellishments.

3.3 Choices (Options) - There are three principle options available to the Council with regard to the area to be considered for designation as a conservation area and these are illustrated in the attached Appendix 1. The Appendix 1 also summarises the advantages and disadvantages of each option, and the key considerations relating to the designation of Conservation Areas. Once a preferred option has been established an appraisal and management plan will be drafted specific to the area.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy – Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on the Council to consider 'areas of special architectural or historic interest' for designation as conservation areas. There are currently 19 conservation areas within the Council's administrative boundary. The Council has a five-year rolling programme of conservation area re-appraisals which accords with best practice guidance published by English Heritage.

4.2 The historic importance of the boot and shoe industry in Northampton is recognised by the Council and therefore evaluation for designation as a conservation area is the appropriate mechanism to acknowledge this significance, and to maintain the characteristics of the area for the future.

4.3 Resources and Risk

A proposed public consultation on the designation will require both staff resources and a limited amount of publication material to highlight the process and enable partners, amenity organisations and the local community to adequately participate in the consultation process.

Public consultation on previous conservation area re-appraisals has received a limited number of responses. However, in light of the historic significance and importance of the industry to Northampton, and the possible size of the of the Boot & Shoe conservation area, there is potential for a significant number of responses. These responses will require due consideration which will result in increased demand on very limited officer resource. There are no resources available to undertake any proactive actions to improve the area should designation be approved. Any actions necessary would have to be subject to a growth bid in the future budget rounds.

The Council has been under some pressure from heritage groups and English Heritage to assess the potential of a boot & shoe conservation area and therefore may face criticism and lose reputation if the historic asset is not adequately assessed.

4.4 Legal - None directly related to this report.

4.5 Equality – An equalities impact assessment screening has been undertaken which has identified the diversity of the local community which will need to be addressed as part of the public consultation exercise.

4.6 Consultees (Internal and External)

A number of internal departments have been contacted regarding the proposed designation and WNDC and English Heritage are aware of the Council's intention and progress with regard to the area being evaluated. English Heritage are fully supportive of a designation.

The public consultation will take the form of an 8-week consultation period with residents, businesses, partner organisations and amenity societies. The focus of the consultation will be on the three options available as to the extent of the conservation area. To enable absent freeholders to engage in the process, it is also proposed to include local letting agents in the circulation of publicity material.

4.7 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

Designating a conservation area will assist in meeting the ambitions of Priority 3 of the Corporate Plan in celebrating and enhancing our unique history, heritage and culture.

The appraisal process also meets the guiding principles of Northampton Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2011:

1. Engage and involve local communities
2. Involve active participation of councillors within and outside the executive
4. Be based on a proper assessment

4.8 Other Implications

Any minor, non-material changes providing clarity to the information included in the consultation material will be agreed with the portfolio holder and Director of Planning & Regeneration in consultation with the portfolio holder.

5. Background Papers

Research report submitted by commissioned consultant. English Heritage publication– Built to Last 2004

**Jane Jennings – Team Leader
Built & Natural Environment**