



CABINET REPORT

Report Title	GREAT BILLING AND GREAT HOUGHTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLANS AND ALTERATION TO GREAT BILLING CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	14 th March 2018
Key Decision:	No
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	Yes
Directorate:	Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor Tim Hadland
Wards	Billing & Rushmills

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to the adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans for Great Billing and Great Houghton Conservation Areas, following public consultation in November - December 2017 and to agree an alteration to the boundary of Great Billing Conservation Area.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 approves the adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans for Great Billing and Great Houghton Areas (Appendices C & D),
- 2.2 agrees an alteration to the boundary of Great Billing Conservation Area to remove conservation area designation from Cumbrae Drive, Great Billing,
- 2.3 approves further consultation on the making of an Article 4 Direction in respect of Great Billing and Great Houghton Conservation Areas.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 A conservation area is defined in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. There are 21 conservation areas in Northampton.
- 3.1.2 The purpose of a conservation area is not to prevent new development but to manage change in order to maintain, reinforce and, where possible, enhance the special character and quality that justifies designation. Conservation area designation introduces controls over the way owners can alter or develop their properties and controls work to trees. Section 72 of the Act requires the Council, when considering planning applications, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 3.1.3 The Act also requires the Council to periodically review conservation areas to ensure that they still justify their special status and to determine whether boundary revisions are necessary. It also places a duty on the Council to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas.
- 3.1.4 Planning guidance on conservation areas is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. This states (paragraph 127) that, when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest and that the concept is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest. Local planning authorities should also make information about the significance of the historic environment publicly accessible (paragraph 141)
- 3.1.5 To satisfy these statutory requirements, Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans are prepared. These aim to identify the features that contribute to the special character and appearance of a conservation area and provide the basis for making informed and sustainable planning decisions that aim to preserve and enhance the special character. The documents are material considerations when the Council considers planning applications. As part of an ongoing review, Appraisal and Management Plans have been adopted in 19 of the 21 conservation areas, with Great Billing and Great Houghton Conservation Areas outstanding.

3.2 Great Billing and Great Houghton Conservation Area Consultation

- 3.2.1 Great Billing and Great Houghton Conservation Areas were both designated in 1976 and were last reviewed in 1989, when the boundaries were extended. A fresh review of the two Conservation Areas has now been undertaken, resulting in the preparation of draft Appraisal and Management Plans for each area. Consultation on the draft appraisals was held with residents and with Billing and Great Houghton Parish Council's between 30th October and 10th December

2017. Letters and explanatory leaflets were sent to all properties in the two conservation areas and the appraisals were available for viewing on the Council's web site, at the One-Stop Shop in the Guildhall and at both Central and Weston Favell libraries.

3.2.2 In total, 15 representations were received, with ten responses in respect of Great Billing Conservation Area and five regarding Great Houghton Conservation Area. A summary of the responses is attached (Appendices A & B).

3.3 Issues Arising

3.3.1 Wherever appropriate, suggestions and factual corrections have been incorporated into the Great Billing Appraisal and Management Plan that is recommended for adoption (Appendix C). No changes have been made to the Great Houghton Appraisal, although the plan has been redrawn to provide greater clarity (Appendix D). Although the level of public response was low, retention of both conservation areas was supported and two main issues were highlighted: the conservation area boundaries and the benefit of making an Article 4 Direction.

3.3.2 Conservation Area boundaries

There has been some infill and new development within and adjacent to both Great Billing and Great Houghton Conservation Areas since they were designated in 1976 but it is considered that both conservation areas retain sufficient interest to justify retention of their special status.

In Great Billing, the Conservation Area includes some, but not all, of the properties on Cumbrae Drive, built in 1994/95 and which do not contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of the area. It has been suggested that the boundary be re-drawn to exclude Nos 1, 5a, 7, 7a & 9 Cumbrae Drive whilst retaining the historic stone wall that forms the rear garden boundary of 7a and 9 Cumbrae Drive, and this suggestion is supported.

In Great Houghton, it has been suggested that the boundary be extended northwards to Bedford Road. This, however, would include post-war housing on the east side of High Street that does not contribute to the special interest of the area and open fields that it would not be appropriate to include within a conservation area. This suggestion is not, therefore, supported.

3.3.3 Article 4 Direction

The second main issue is whether an Article 4 Direction should be introduced. Article 4 Directions have been made in six conservation areas in Northampton to remove permitted development rights, so that planning permission is required to make alterations affecting the external appearance of houses when viewed from the street - such as replacing windows, re-roofing or removing boundary walls fronting a highway. Following changes to the Fee Regulations which came into force on the 17th January 2018, the Council can now charge a planning fee for such an application. The responses received to the consultation indicated interest and support for such a measure in both conservation areas (although this was before the change to the planning fee regulations) and it is suggested that Cabinet support further consultation with

residents and the respective parish councils to explain the implications, in order that a fully informed decision can be made.

3.4 Choices (Options)

3.4.1 Cabinet could choose to:

- a) adopt the Appraisal and Management Plans with changes made as a result of the consultation, as recommended;
- b) adopt the Appraisal and Management Plans with other changes, or;
- c) adopt the Appraisal and Management Plans with no changes.

3.4.2 Option a) is considered the most appropriate as it would provide the two Conservation Areas with up-to-date Appraisal and Management Plans that have been subject to public consultation.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that it is the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review conservation areas and to determine whether any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas.

4.1.2 The appraisal documents are in accordance with policy contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and guidance produced by Historic England. Policy E26 of the Northampton Local Plan is also relevant.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 Designating and reviewing conservation areas is a statutory duty and is part of the remit of the Policy, Heritage and Environment group. There will be some financial cost in advertising by statutory press notice the alteration to the boundary of Great Billing Conservation Area. This will be met through the existing Conservation service budget. The costs associated with any future enhancement projects will be considered separately and will be the subject of a separate report

4.2.2 Adoption of the Appraisal and Management Plans will assist the Council in safeguarding the special character and appearance of the two Conservation Areas as they will be material considerations in the determination of planning applications and planning appeals. Without up-to-date Appraisals, there is a danger that the special interest and character that justified designation could be eroded.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 As set out above. Additionally, notice of the revised Great Billing Conservation Area is required to be published in the London Gazette and one local newspaper. The cost of advertising will be met from existing budgets. There is no duty to notify owners and/or occupiers individually although criminal liability under the Listed Building Act commences from the date of designation.

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 No significant adverse impacts on those with protected characteristics have been identified. An Equality Impact Assessment Screening has been undertaken and approved.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 Individual letters and a leaflet summarising the draft appraisal were sent to all properties in the two Conservation Areas and to Billing and Great Houghton Parish Council. The ward members were also consulted.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 The appraisals relate to strategies in the Corporate Plan to protect the environment and Love Northampton by celebrating the town's history and heritage.

4.7 Other implications

4.7.1 None

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 Section 69;
- 5.2 Paragraphs 127 & 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (published by HM Government, March 2012);
- 5.3 Historic England Advice Note 1 – Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (Historic England, February 2016).

6.0 Appendices

- Appendix A: Summary of responses received – Great Billing Conservation Area
- Appendix B: Summary of responses received – Great Houghton Conservation Area
- Appendix C: Great Billing Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan
- Appendix D: Great Houghton Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan