



CABINET REPORT

Report Title	ST GILES' CONSERVATION AREA RE-APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	19 th February 2020
Key Decision:	No
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	Yes
Service Area:	Planning services
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor James Hill
Ward	Castle

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to adopt a review of St Giles' Conservation Area, following public consultation in November & December 2019.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 approves the adoption of the St Giles' Conservation Area Re-appraisal and Management Plan (Appendix B).

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 requires the Council to periodically review its 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 their preservation and enhancement.
- 3.1.4 Planning policy on conservation areas is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 186 states that local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies conservation area 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 maintain and make publicly accessible up-to-date evidence about the historic environment (paragraph 187 & 188)
- 3.1.5 To meet these statutory obligations, Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans are prepared and periodically reviewed. These aim to identify those 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 quality. An appraisal is a material consideration when the Council considers planning applications within or affecting a conservation area.

3.2 St Giles' Conservation Area review

- 3.2.1 St Giles' Conservation Area was first designated in 1986. It was last reviewed in 2006, when the boundary was extended to include additional properties on Spring Gardens and St Giles' Street. An Article 4(2) Direction, requiring planning permission for alterations to the front of properties, was made in 2008.
- 3.2.2 As part of an on-going review of all of the designated conservation areas, a re-appraisal of St Giles' Conservation Area has been undertaken. This has taken into account changes in the area since the previous review and also includes changes in planning legislation (notably the introduction of the NPPF) and guidance on the content of conservation area appraisals issued by Historic England in 2016. Public consultation on the draft re-appraisal was undertaken between 11th November and 20th December 2019; letters and explanatory leaflets were sent to all properties in the area and the appraisal was available for viewing on the Council's web site, at the Council's Contact Centre and at the Central Library on Abington Street.

3.3 Consultation responses

- 3.3.1 Written expressions of support for the continued designation of the Conservation Area and for the Article 4 direction were received from the Town Centre Conservation Area Advisory Committee and from one individual. A summary of the responses received is attached (Appendix A). Where appropriate, suggestions and factual corrections have been incorporated into the St Giles' Re-appraisal and Management Plan that is recommended for adoption (Appendix B).
- 3.3.2 Although the level of public response was disappointing, the responses confirm support for the retention of the Conservation Area and the Article 4 direction and recognise their value in maintaining the special character and appearance of the area. It is therefore proposed that the Conservation Area and Article 4 direction be retained.

3.4 Choices (Options)

- 3.4.1 Cabinet could choose to:
- a) adopt the St Giles' Conservation Area Re-appraisal and Management Plans with changes made as a result of the consultation, as recommended;
 - b) adopt the Re-appraisal and Management Plans with other changes, or;
 - c) adopt the Re-appraisal and Management Plans with no changes.
- 3.4.2 Option a) is considered the most appropriate as it would provide an up-to-date Appraisal and Management Plan for St Giles' Conservation Area that has 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 places a duty on a local planning authority to review conservation areas from time to time and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be so designated.
- 4.1.2 The re-appraisal is in accordance with policy contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and recent guidance produced by Historic England.

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. The costs associated with any possible future enhancement projects will be considered separately and would be the subject of a separate report

- 4.2.2 Adoption of the Appraisal and Management Plan will assist the Council in safeguarding the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area as it is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and planning appeals. Without an up-to-date Appraisal, there is a danger that the special interest and character that justified designation could be eroded.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be a material planning consideration but there are no legal notices or advertising required to adopt the review as a statutory planning document.

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 Conservation Area. Ward members were also notified.

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 and protecting the town's history and heritage.

4.7 Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)

- 4.7.1 The document will help to protect the environment of the Conservation Area. There are no implications for climate change.

4.8 Other implications

- 4.8.1 None

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 Section 69;
5.2 Paragraphs 186, 187 & 188 of the National Planning Policy Framework (published by HM Government, July 2018);
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

Appendix B: St Giles' Conservation Area Re-appraisal and Management Plan