

Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED: Castle

Cabinet

30th October 2006

HIGH STREET CONSERVATION AREA

Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval for amendments to the boundary of the High Street Conservation Area and the adoption of the High Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal as supplementary guidance to the Local Plan.

2 Summary

- 2.1 The provisions of ss. 69(1)9a) and 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require that local authorities review their conservation areas from time to time and to formulate and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. A character appraisal is the means by which these requirements can best be met.
- 2.2 The High Street Conservation Area was designated in May 1989 in response to anticipated pressures on this historic area following development of the Shires shopping centre behind the former Co-op department store. Although a basic appraisal was done at that time, a full appraisal is now appropriate in view of the major changes that area taking place in the area. This document, and the responses to the consultations that have taken place, forms the substance of this report.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are recommended to:
1. Approve the alterations to the boundary of the High Street Conservation Area; and,
 2. Adopt the High Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal as supplementary guidance to the City of Leicester Local Plan 2006.

4 Financial & Legal Implications

Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
M Judson, Head of Finance

Legal Implications

- 4.2 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on the City Council as local planning authority to review the past exercise of their functions under s.69 from time to time to determine whether any parts or further parts of its area should be designated as conservation areas. If it so determines, the Council 'shall designate those parts accordingly'.

5 Report Author

June Gray

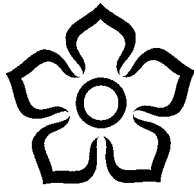
Planner

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DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	N/A
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)



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Report

1. Background

- 1.1 The High Street Conservation Area covers an area of about 3.2 hectares (just under 8 acres), making it one of the smallest of the city's 25 conservation areas. It stretches from the St Nicholas Circle car park in the west to East Gates and adjoins the Market Street and Market Place Conservation Areas on its eastern boundary. Within the conservation area there are 6 Grade II listed buildings, covering 13 properties.
- 1.2 The periodic review of the city's conservation areas is an integral part of Leicester's planning functions. Up-to-date appraisals and management proposals (that is, appraisals that are less than 5 years old) are also Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs 215b and 215c). To date the Council had adopted 13 Appraisals of which 9 are up-to-date and 3 have approved management proposals. A rolling programme of appraisals is under way and 100% coverage should be achieved in 2010.

2. The Issues

- 2.1 Changes, such as the Shires (now Highcross Quarter) shopping centre extension and the Council's "Streets and Spaces" programme, are taking place in and around the High Street area and it is appropriate to re-examine the conservation area to determine whether it is still an area worthy of conservation area status. Full appraisal and consultation has helped to highlight the area's problems and the opportunities for improvements.
- 2.2 The draft appraisal has been available on the Council's website since mid-July and in the Customer Services Centre in B Block. A small exhibition was placed in the foyer of the BBC Radio Leicester Building on St Nicholas Place between August 7th and 19th. A public meeting to consider the management proposals was held between 6 and 7 pm on August 9th. About 20 people attended. All comments received are attached in the Appendix at the end of this report.
- 2.3 Conservation area status imposes some stricter controls on development, such as demolition, some minor development and a general protection of all trees). An appraisal sets out the features that make an area worthy of conservation area status. The attached report shows how history, archaeology, architecture and townscape combine to create the area's special character. It also sets out the problems and pressures in the area and suggests ways in which these could be

tackled or addressed. Two small alterations to the boundary are proposed – the inclusion of the Clock Tower within the boundary and the exclusion of the north half of the BBC building on St Nicholas Place. The latter will be incorporated within the boundary of the Cathedral Guildhall Conservation Area.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

3.1 The report and appraisal conclude that the area remains worthy of conservation area status.

3.1 Members are recommended to :

1. Approve the alterations to the boundary of the conservation area; and,
2. Adopt the Character Appraisal as supplementary guidance to the Local Plan.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	PARAGRAPH REFERENCES WITHIN SUPPORTING PAPERS
Equal Opportunities	No	No specific reference. Although the appraisal has no direct impact on equal opportunities, alterations to buildings within it will have to balance the need for conservation with the needs of all groups such as disabled people, elderly people, children, ethnic minorities etc.
Policy	Yes	No specific reference. The appraisal supports the Local Plan policies set out in Appendix 5
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	No specific reference. Conservation area status helps to prevent unnecessary loss of the existing built fabric and helps to minimise demands on scarce resources by ensuring the continued use of existing buildings.
Crime and Disorder	No	No specific reference. There are several bars, restaurants and other leisure uses in the area that can be the source of anti-social behaviour. However, conservation area appraisals can only recognise that such problems exist; they cannot resolve the issues. The impact of such problems can affect the appearance of the area (boarded up windows, security shutters etc) and it is important that such remedies take account of the need to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area.
Human Rights Act	No	No specific reference. There are additional controls over development

		in conservation areas but these are not over-turned by the Human Rights Act.
Older People on Low Income	No	No specific reference. Conservation areas as concerned to enhance and preserve historic areas. Their designation may only directly effect low income people if they own, but cannot afford to maintain, buildings within these areas.

4.2 Risk Assessment Matrix

	Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/or appropriate)
1	De-designation of the conservation area	L	H All unlisted buildings in the area would lose their protection	Re-affirm conservation area status
2	Not adopting the character appraisal	L	H	The appraisal sets out the special features of, and the reasons why, the area should remain a conservation area and provides detailed information about its special features to guide future development decisions.
3	Unsympathetic works to buildings	H	H	Unsympathetic alterations can have a substantial impact on an area, particularly if these are cumulative. By describing the special features of the area the appraisal serves as guidance for owners and developers.

L - Low
M - Medium
H - High

L - Low
M - Medium
H - High

5. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

- City of Leicester Local Plan 2006
- Constitution of Leicester City Council
- English Heritage guidance on Appraisals and Management of Conservation Areas

6. Consultations

Consultee	Date Consulted
R&C Head of Finance	15 August 2006
Head of Litigation	15 August 2006
Urban Design Group	25 May 2006
City Archaeologist	'
Development Control	'
Development Plans	'
Highways & Traffic	'
Property Division	'
Housing Department	'
Parks & Green Spaces Division	'
Trees & Woodlands Division	'
Conservation Area Panel	24 May 2006
All occupiers and owners/agents where known	25 July 2006
English Heritage	'
Police Architectural Liaison Officer	'
Chamber of Commerce	'
Leicester Asian Business Association	'
Leicester Civic Society	'
Leicester Victorian Society	'
Ward Councillors	24 July 2006
Leicester Regeneration Company	

7. Appendix

Respondent	Comment	Response to Comment
Conservation Area Panel	Provided additional information for the text	Incorporated into the Appraisal document
August 9th public meeting		
1. Occupiers of 76-86 High Street	This listed building is subject to increasing maintenance issues that they find difficult to resolve	Listed buildings need to be well, and properly, maintained as they are of national importance. The building could be 'at risk'. The Council could contact the freehold owner to discuss remedial works and grants.
2. Business people generally	Concerned about the impact of the plans to restrict access onto High Street	Referred these people direct to the consultation meeting taking place in the Town Hall on the evening of August 9th.