

Item no.

Report to: Executive
Date: 26 February 2008
Report of: Executive Member for Regeneration
Subject Easington Village Conservation Area Appraisal
Ward: Easington Village and South Hetton; Easington Colliery

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Easington Village Conservation Area Appraisal and to approve revised designated boundaries.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 A public meeting was held in Easington Village, with assistance from the Easington Parish Council, to gauge residents views on the conservation area, its importance and extent. Subsequently a draft appraisal of the conservation area was published for consultation. The response to the public consultation is included in the option appraisal section of this report.
- 2.2 The Management Team have been consulted.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council has a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to determine which parts of the authority area are of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. This should be reviewed from time to time through the preparation of appraisals for all conservation areas, to provide a sound basis for their designation and management, and to ensure that planning decisions are based on an informed understanding of the local historic environment. This is the first review of Easington Village to be undertaken since the Conservation Area was designated in 1974.
- 3.2 Residents at the public meeting were asked to identify the features they considered important to the character of the conservation area, and to review the continuing appropriateness of the existing boundaries in the light of land use changes since it's original designation. A draft Appraisal was prepared in response to the views expressed, which proposed revisions to the boundaries. The draft document was published on the Council's website and made available to residents for comment. A draft Appraisal is appended to this report, a plan of the proposed boundary amendments can be found facing page 1 of the Appraisal.
- 3.3 An appraisal of Hawthorn Conservation Area will be prepared during 2008/09 to complete the current round of appraisals of all the District conservation areas.

4. Position Statement and Option Appraisal

- 4.1 On the whole, the document was welcomed and the important features and buildings of noted local importance were supported. Most of the representations focused on the proposed boundary revisions to the conservation area. The boundary is proposed to be extended westwards along Hall Walks as far as the A19 bridge to include three further properties and to include the gardens of all properties currently in the conservation area in this vicinity which form an appropriate defensible boundary.

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These additions add significantly to the approach to the conservation area, the proposal did not attract any objections.

- 4.2 The northern boundary is proposed to be amended to exclude Rectory Farm and the development at Cadwell Lane built after the Conservation Area was designated. Whilst the Parish Council wishes to retain the farm to protect the trees in the garden, the original justification for inclusion of the farm was the existence of listed stone buildings which have subsequently been lost. Modern buildings on the site are of no historic or architectural value and, situated to the rear of Seaton Holme, this area does not contribute directly to the character or amenity of the conservation area. There are protected trees retained within the grounds of Seaton Holme itself which provide the buffer to secure the setting of the conservation area and listed building. Any development in this vicinity would be considered in the light of its impact on this setting so its inclusion does not necessarily add greater protection.
- 4.3 It is generally accepted that the historic character of the Cadwell Lane area has been lost since the conservation area was designated, but concern at its proposed exclusion focused on the impact on the setting and views in and out of the conservation area. This is an important consideration but already applies to development on the edge of conservation areas, it does not necessitate including areas that are not worthy of designation.
- 4.4 It is proposed to exclude three properties at Sunderland Road on the southern edge of the designated area. The 1974 boundary in this vicinity incorporated older buildings since lost. These are modern properties, alien in style to the buildings that form the heart of the conservation area, which do not contribute to the strength of the designation. Concern has been expressed at the impact of these properties on the setting of the conservation area but this is already a consideration for development proposed on the edge of conservation areas.
- 4.5 Other representations proposed that both Jackson's Mill and the Council offices should be included in the conservation area as landmark features important to the village. As a listed building, the former is protected but both properties are divorced from the current designated area and to include them would necessitate including significant areas of land that are not worthy of inclusion and weaken the strength of character that the conservation area has.
- 4.6 The principle consequences of designation of a conservation area are that demolition would require consent, work to trees would require written notice to the Council and some development would be brought into planning control. This refers mainly to changes to roofs and cladding. The additional controls in reality are relatively minor, allowing for greater attention and control of detailed design issues related to the physical characteristics of the area. However in practice the success of a conservation area in maintaining a localities character relies very much on the support of building owners and the general public to ensure changes are undertaken in a sensitive manner. Where planning permission is required, the test is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 4.7 **Conservation Area Management Plans**
A management plan will be prepared for the conservation area, proposals are identified at the end of the Appraisal to guide development control and also to foster partnership working to preserve and enhance their special characteristics, in accordance with the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance 15, Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15).

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5. Implications

5.1 Financial

There are no financial implications on designation. Actions arising from the Management Plans may require further consideration.

5.2 Legal

Under the terms of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, a notice of designation is required to be published in the London Gazette and in at least one local newspaper and submitted to the Secretary of State.

5.3 Policy

Revision to the Conservation Area boundary will extend the area to which heritage policies will apply.

5.4 Risk

As this is a technical document, there are no risks associated with the proposal.

5.5 Communications

Designation of the revised conservation areas will be reported in accordance with the legal requirements and the approved Appraisals will be published on the Council's website. Notification will also be made to householders in the extension areas to ensure they are aware of the implications in respect to development works requiring planning permission and work to trees.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Corporate Plan and Priorities

Having Appraisals of the conservation areas is a performance measure, the appraisals meets corporate plan priorities for clean tidy communities. There are no procurement or other corporate implications.

7. LGR Implications

The report supports the local planning authority in managing development in it's area, this function will transfer to the new authority without further implications.

8. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council

- (i) approve the Conservation Area Appraisal of Easington Village, and**
- (ii) agree to designate revised boundaries to the Easington Village Conservation Area under the terms of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.**

Background Papers/Documents referred to:

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, Planning and the Historic Environment