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Our ref: PL00675842

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Dear Mr Fuller

Neighbourhood Area Designation for Ardleigh

Thank you for notifying Historic England about this Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment, Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. We are therefore pleased to have been notified at this early stage. We would be grateful if you could pass this letter on to Ardleigh Parish Council, for their information.

Neighbourhood Plans are an important opportunity for local communities to set the agenda for their places, setting out what is important and why about different aspects of their parish or other area within the neighbourhood area boundary, and providing clear policy and guidance to readers - be they interested members of the public, planners or developers - regarding how the place should develop over the course of the plan period.

The conservation officer at your local planning authority will be the best placed person to assist you in the development of the Plan with respect to the historic environment and can help you to consider and clearly articulate how a strategy can address the area's heritage assets. Unfortunately, Historic England is not able to be involved in the detailed development of the strategy for all neighbourhood areas, but we offer some general advice and guidance below, which we hope is helpful.

Paragraph 185 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) sets out that Plans, including Neighbourhood Plans, should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. In particular, this strategy needs to take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of all types of heritage asset where possible, the need for new development to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and ensure that it considers opportunities to use the existing historic environment to help reinforce the character of your area.



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As a minimum, it is important that the positive strategy you put together safeguards and protects those elements of your neighbourhood area that contribute to the significance of any designated or non-designated heritage assets. This is especially important if you are considering site allocations or development proposals as part of your plan. This will ensure that those assets can be enjoyed by future generations of the area and make sure your plan is in line with the requirements of national planning policy, as found in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Information on designated heritage assets, other than Conservation Areas, can be found on Historic England's website by searching the National Heritage List: [<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/).

The government's [National Planning Practice Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2) [on neighbourhood planning](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2) is also clear that, where relevant, neighbourhood plans need to include enough information about local heritage to guide local authority planning decisions and to put broader strategic heritage policies from the local authority's local plan into action but at a *neighbourhood scale*. Your Neighbourhood Plan is therefore an important opportunity for a community to develop a positive strategy for the area's locally important heritage assets that aren't recognised at a national level through listing or scheduling. If appropriate this should include enough information about local non-designated heritage assets, including sites of archaeological interest, locally listed buildings, or identified areas of special historic landscape character. Your plan could, for instance, include a list of locally important *neighbourhood heritage assets*, (e.g. historic buildings, sites, views or places of importance to the local community) setting out what factors make them special against a robust set of criteria. These elements can then be afforded a level of protection from inappropriate change through an appropriately worded policy in the plan requiring any harm to them be clearly justified. We refer you to our guidance on local heritage listing for further information: HE Advice Note 7 - local listing: <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7>

Information and guidance on how heritage can best be incorporated into Neighbourhood Plans has been produced by Historic England, including on evidence gathering, design advice and policy writing. Our webpage contains links to a number of other documents which your forum might find useful. These can help you to identify what it is about your area which makes it distinctive, and how you might go about ensuring that the character of the area is protected or improved through appropriate policy wording and a robust evidence base. This can be found here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-your-neighbourhood/>.

The recently published Historic England Advice Note 11- Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment available to download also provides useful links to exemplar neighbourhood plans that may provide you with inspiration and assistance for your





own. This can be found here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/neighbourhood-planning-and-the-historic-environment/>

The NPPF (paragraphs 124 - 127) emphasises also the importance placed by the government on good design, and this section sets out that planning (including Neighbourhood Plans) should, amongst other things, be based on clear objectives and a robust evidence base that shows an understanding and evaluation of an area. The policies of neighbourhood plans should also ensure that developments in the area, especially if you are considering allocating sites for development, establish a strong sense of place, and respond to local character and history by reflecting the local identity of the place - for instance through the use of appropriate materials, and attractive design. If you are considering site allocations, it is especially important to consider design questions at the earliest possible stage to provide clarity and certainty not only for the community, but also for any prospective developer. Community design workshops are a useful tool to explore the use of in this regard. The output from these can then be fed into the policy wording for any site allocation, ensuring that the plan achieves your aspirations.

One way that we would recommend gathering evidence on your local area and what your community consider to be important is to undertake a "Placecheck" exercise. This is simple and effective a way of assessing the qualities of a place, what is worth preserving, what could be improved, and developing a strategy for achieving both. More information on this can be found here: <https://placecheck.info/en/>

The plan could also include consideration of any Grade II listed buildings or locally-designated heritage assets which are at risk or in poor/deteriorating condition. These could then be the focus of specific policies aimed at facilitating their enhancement as part of any wider proposals. An example could be where a vacant or derelict site contains buildings in poor condition which nonetheless are important to the character of your area or are of interest in their own right, and which would be important to repair and retain as part of any development proposal. We would refer you to our guidance on writing effective neighbourhood plan policies, which can be found here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-your-neighbourhood/policy-writing/>.

If you area contains areas of historic designed landscape or parkland, we would recommend that you contact the [Gardens Trust](http://thegardenstrust.org/) who, as the statutory consultee for parks and gardens, will be able to offer advice and information on their significance. You can then incorporate in the evidence base and policy regarding the historic environment within your plan.

If you have not already done so, we would recommend that you speak to the staff at your local archaeological advisory service (this is usually your county council, but can also be held by Unitary Authorities) who look after the Historic Environment Record





and give advice on archaeological matters. They should be able to provide details of not only any designated heritage assets but also non designated locally-important buildings, archaeological remains and landscapes. Some Historic Environment Records may be available to view on-line via the Heritage Gateway (www.heritagegateway.org.uk <<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>>), and this website also provides the contact details for the Historic Environment Team relevant to your local area. It may also be useful to involve local voluntary groups such as a local Civic Society, local history groups, building preservation trusts, etc. in the production of your Neighbourhood Plan, particularly in the early evidence gathering stages. They could undertake community led historic area assessments, record features of interest, or undertake research.

Your local authority might also be able to provide you with more general support in the production of your Neighbourhood Plan, including the provision of appropriate maps, data, and supporting documentation. There are also funding opportunities available from Locality that could allow the community to hire appropriate expertise to assist in such an undertaking. This could involve hiring a consultant to help in the production of the plan itself and assist with the development of sound policies, or to undertake work that could form the evidence base for the plan. More information on this can be found on the My Community website here: <<http://mycommunity.org.uk/funding-options/neighbourhood-planning/>>.

The neighbourhood plan is an opportunity for the community to clearly set out which elements of the character and appearance of the neighbourhood area as a whole are considered important, as well as provide specific policies that protect the positive elements, and address any areas that negatively affect that character and appearance. An historic environment section of your plan could include policies to achieve this and these policies could be underpinned by a local character study or historic area assessment. This could be included as an appendix to your plan. Historic England's guidance notes for this process can be found here: [HE Advice Note 1 - conservation area designation, appraisal and management](https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-designation-appraisal-management-advice-note-1/) <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-designation-appraisal-management-advice-note-1/>>, and here: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/understanding-place-historic-area-assessments/>>. The funding opportunities available from Locality discussed above could also assist with having this work undertaken.

Your neighbourhood plan is also an opportunity for the community to designate Local Green Spaces, as encouraged by national planning policy. Green spaces are often integral to the character of place for any given area, and your plan could include policies that identified any deficiencies with existing green spaces or access to them, or aimed at managing development around them. Locality has produced helpful guidance on this, which is available here: <<https://mycommunity.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-planning-local-green-spaces.>>





You can also use the neighbourhood plan process to identify any potential Assets of Community Value in the neighbourhood area. Assets of Community Value (ACV) can include things like local public houses, community facilities such as libraries and museums, or again green open spaces. Often these can be important elements of the local historic environment, and whether or not they are protected in other ways, designating them as an ACV can offer an additional level of control to the community with regard to how they are conserved. There is useful information on this process on Locality's website here: <http://mycommunity.org.uk/take-action/land-and-building-assets/assets-of-community-value-right-to-bid/> .

Communities that have a neighbourhood plan in force are entitled to claim 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds raised from development in their area, if the local planning authority has CIL in place (some do not). The Localism Act 2011 allows this CIL money to be used for the maintenance and on-going costs associated with a range of heritage assets including, for example, transport infrastructure such as historic bridges, green and social infrastructure such as historic parks and gardens, civic spaces, and public places. As a Qualifying Body, your neighbourhood forum can either have access to this money or influence how it is spent through the neighbourhood plan process, setting out a schedule of appropriate works for the money to be spent on. Historic England strongly recommends that the community therefore identifies the ways in which CIL can be used to facilitate the conservation of the historic environment, heritage assets and their setting, and sets this out in the neighbourhood plan. More information and guidance on this is available from Locality, here: <https://mycommunity.org.uk/resources/community-infrastructure-levy-neighbourhood-planning-toolkit/>

In addition to the Historic England guidance linked to above, the following general guidance also published by Historic England may also be useful to the plan forum in preparing the neighbourhood plan, or considering how best to develop a strategy for the conservation and management of heritage assets in the area. It may also be useful to provide links to some of these documents in the plan's Glossary:

HE Advice Note 2 - making changes to heritage assets:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/making-changes-heritage-assets-advice-note-2/>

HE Good Practice Advice in Planning 3 - the setting of heritage assets:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/>

If you are considering including Site Allocations for housing or other land use purposes in your neighbourhood plan, you may need to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment. We would recommend you review the following two guidance





documents, which may be of use:

HE Advice Note 3 - site allocations in local plans:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/historic-environment-and-site-allocations-in-local-plans>

HE Advice Note 8 - Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment :

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>

We recommend the inclusion of a glossary containing relevant historic environment terminology contained in the NPPF, in addition to details about the additional legislative and policy protections that heritage assets and the historic environment in general enjoys.

Finally, we should like to stress that this advice is based on the information provided by Tendring District Council in your correspondence of 21 January 2020. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on or, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise as a result of the proposed neighbourhood plan, where we consider these would have an adverse effect on the historic environment.

I hope that the above information is useful for you, but if you have any queries about anything above, or would like to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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cc:



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