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PLANNING POLICY AND LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

23 JANUARY 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

A.4 CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN – BRIGHTLINGSEA HALL AND ALL SAINTS CHURCH

(Report prepared by William Fuller)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT
<p>To report to Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee the Brightlingsea Hall and All Saints Church Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan prepared for the Council by Essex Place Services, and for the Committee to agree a recommendation to Cabinet that this be published for consultation.</p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>As Members will recall, the third tranche Conservation Area Appraisals were considered at this Committee on 10th October 2022 where a decision was made to progress these appraisals to Cabinet and then to public consultation. Those third set of Conservation Area Appraisals were those of Kirby-le-Soken and Great Oakley.</p> <p>This report asks Members to consider the next Conservation Area Appraisal of Brightlingsea Hall and All Saints Church. The Committee is asked to consider this appraisal and to agree a recommendation to Cabinet to publish it for consultation.</p>
RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>That the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) endorses the new Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Brightlingsea Hall and All Saints Church (Appendix 1);b) recommends to Cabinet that the above document be published for consultation with the public and other interested parties; andc) notes that Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans for the District’s remaining Conservation Areas will be brought before the Committee in due course and before the new financial year.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

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DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The Conservation Area Appraisals will support the Corporate Plan 2020-24 (aligned with the core themes of Tending4Growth and Community Leadership) through delivery of interventions aimed at:

- Delivering High Quality Services
- Community Leadership Through Partnerships
- Building Sustainable Communities for the Future
- Strong Finances and Governance
- A Growing and Inclusive Economy

RESOURCES AND RISK

Resources: TDC Officers are leading on this project with the input of Essex County Council Place Services under a service level agreement.

Adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisals will assist in attracting external funding for heritage related activity in the District. Potential sources of funding include:

- National Heritage Lottery Fund
- Section 106 Agreements
- Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas with Historic England

Risks: The adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisals supports the Council's duties to maintain and enhance heritage assets and so reduces the risk of the district's heritage assets being diminished or lost.

LEGAL

National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019), paragraph 185 states:

Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

- (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- (b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- (d) Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

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Consideration of any legal implications of actions proposed in the strategy will be needed in due course.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Crime and Disorder: Heritage assets are, unfortunately, vulnerable to crime. Having a strategy for promoting heritage assets in the district should contribute positively to their maintenance.

Equality and Diversity: The recommendations in this report are aimed at benefitting all who live, shop, work and visit the District.

Health Inequalities: There is a growing wealth of evidence that demonstrates the role heritage plays in improving mental wellbeing and physical health. People who visit heritage sites reported higher life satisfaction and happiness scores, as well as lower anxiety (Department for Culture Media and Sport 2015). Across Essex there are a number of schemes and organisations to encourage and support healthy activity, such as Active Essex and Healthy Life Essex. Tendring's heritage provides a positive platform to encourage people to enjoy the outdoors and take positive steps for their personal health and wellbeing. Heritage Trails, for example, are already established in Harwich and Dovercourt, Frinton-on-Sea, Clacton-on-Sea, Jaywick Sands and Walton-on-the-Naze, they encourage walkers to take routes through the historic environment. Promoting these to new groups and partnering with healthy organisations can open heritage to new audiences and increase wellbeing.

Area or Ward affected: All, with a focus on those where Conservation Areas are being reassessed.

Consultation/Public Engagement: Members will recall that it was agreed at the October Committee meeting to send the first five Conservation Area Appraisals to public consultation. That public consultation took place over the summer and the results of which are being collated and analysed by Place Services and Council Offices.

The second set of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans are due to go out to public consultation at the end of September for a period of six weeks. The third set of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (attached at Appendix 1 and 2 will be consulted on toward the end of the year for a period of no less than six weeks.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Members will recall that the Council's Heritage Strategy was considered by the Local Plan and Planning Policy Committee on 29th October 2019. At that meeting it was resolved that the Committee noted the Strategy and comments made by Members at the meeting.

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On the 20th March 2020 Cabinet agreed to formally adopt the Council's Heritage Strategy. This Strategy contained a number of actions which were envisaged to be carried out by the Council and its partners throughout the lifetime of the Strategy. Two of these actions were for Officers to update Conservation Area Appraisals and prepare a 'Local List' of non-designated heritage assets within the District.

After identifying the first five Conservation Areas to be assessed in October 2021, Members then agreed the second set of Appraisals in May of this year, a third set of two was also agreed in October of this year. Members are now presented with the next two draft Conservation Area Appraisals; Brightlingsea Hall and All Saints Church.

Officers intend to review the seven remaining Council's Conservation Areas before the new tax year. The next two (Lawford and Great Clacton) are at final draft and the last five have already been commissioned from Place Services.

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS

Members will recognise general structure of this Appraisal as being very similar to others presented at this Committee. At the start of this Appraisal a section detailing the context and general character of the Conservation Area and the evolution of the Conservation Area is given. There are however a number of elements specific to this Appraisal which are of note.

Alterations To Boundaries

The boundary currently includes the listed church, its surrounding churchyard, and the Hall with historic barn complex which is now occupied by businesses.

It is proposed that the area is extended to include the pair of early nineteenth century dwellings to the south of the area. They contribute positively to the historic character and appearance of the area. Their location and proximity to the road creates a sense of a gateway for the Conservation Area. They are prominent in views towards the Church to the north west. The building is red brick with details such as the flat headed arches at ground floor level, and single polychromatic diamond above the original central entrance. The simple but decorative detail adds to the quality and character of the building and Conservation Area. Although some changes have occurred, such as the loss of original windows and roofing, and timber lean to extensions on both sides, the building still makes a positive contribution. It is considered, therefore, that the Conservation Area and building would both benefit from inclusion within the boundary.

Designated Heritage Assets

There is one designated heritage asset within the Brightlingsea Hall and All Saints Church Conservation Area, the Grade I listed Church of All Saints (List UID: 1337182).

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This building has been listed due to its special architectural and historic interest under Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Proposed Non-designated heritage assets

Local listing is an important tool for local planning authorities to identify non-listed buildings and heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the locality. This Appraisal has identified heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and could be considered for local listing in the future. This list is not exhaustive, and further buildings may be identified as non-designated heritage assets through the planning application process. Buildings and features within the Conservation Area which are considered to be non-designated heritage assets include:

- Brightlingsea Hall
- All Saints Church Lych-gate

Heritage at Risk

The Grade I Church of All Saints is included on Historic England's Heritage At- Risk Register, in a 'very bad' condition and at immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric, with no solution agreed. As a key, landmark building of the Conservation Area, it is important that a solution is agreed to work towards taking this building off the register.

Archaeology

Throughout the Conservation Area there is the potential for a multitude of below-ground heritage assets yet to be discovered. In general the appraisal promotes a cautious approach to development which might disturb or destroy these assets.

Assessment of significance

A detailed assessment of significance of the Conservation Area is then presented. The assessment considers the following features:

- Layout
- Building materials and boundary treatments
- Listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets
- Other buildings
- Landscaping and open spaces
- Views

Opportunities for Enhancement

This section of the Appraisal identifies the issues facing the Conservation Area. A large number of the issues are common to all Conservation Areas throughout the District, but where they are unique, that is also highlighted.

- The Conservation Area could use better interpretation to complement that already in place within the Church building.

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- On-street parking detracts from the historic character of the Conservation Area.
- The Conservation Area suffer from the loss of or inappropriate use of architectural detailing such as UPVC windows and doors, rainwater goods and external paintwork.
- The public realm and green spaces could be better utilised.

Management Proposals

As outlined above, there are a wide range of issues facing this Conservation Area, many of which share common themes with other Conservation Areas seen by this Committee. This section recommends management proposals which address these issues in both the short and long term.

- The preparation a Local Heritage List of non-designated heritage assets is suggested for this Conservation Area.
- The Council is encouraged to use its enforcement powers to prevent inappropriate development.
- The monitoring of trees and additions to tree planting within public open space is recommended.
- Publishing guidance for homeowners and businesses in Conservation Areas could help owners identify appropriate alterations to their properties within Conservation Areas.
- The timely renewal of these Conservation Area Appraisals could help to monitor change within the Conservation Areas more accurately.
- Further interpretation could help with legibility.

Funding Opportunities

- Heritage lottery fund
- S106 Agreements
- Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas

CONCLUSION

Taking into account the discussion had at this meeting, Members of the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee are asked to recommend to Cabinet that this Conservation Area Appraisal is to be put to a six week public consultation.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Brightlingsea Hall and All Saints Church Conservation Area Appraisal

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None