

Report to Cabinet

21 June 2023

Subject:	Wednesbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan; Approval to carry out public consultation
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Peter Hughes Cabinet Member for Regeneration & WMCA
Director:	Tony McGovern Director of Regeneration & Growth
Key Decision:	Yes Type (c) - an executive decision which is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the Borough.
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1 Recommendations




- 1.1 To authorise the Director of Regeneration and Growth to undertake public consultation on Wednesbury's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan contained in Appendix A,
- 1.2 To receive a further report, if and when necessary, setting out the responses to the consultation and any changes that result from them.



2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The conservation area appraisal and associated proposals augment heritage focussed regeneration works carried out as part of Wednesbury's High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) scheme.
- 2.2 Although there is no statutory requirement to consult the public, it is good practice to do so; by consulting local communities and owners on new designations, and when appraising and reviewing conservation areas (obviously important in achieving support), consideration can be given to relevant information that either might present, helping to ensure decisions are robust. Local communities and owners will also be helpful in providing proactive assistance in identifying the general areas that merit conservation area status and defining the boundaries.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan

	Strong Resilient Communities Consultation on the proposed policies allows local people to have their views on local heritage heard and to afford a degree of protection to places that they care about.
	Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods Conservation Areas promote the protection of buildings and structures that contribute positively to the character and appearance of neighbourhoods.
	A Strong and Inclusive Economy The conservation, use, and re-use of heritage assets exemplifies the fundamental principles of the circular economy.



4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act places a duty on local planning authorities to draw up proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and to reappraise them from ‘time to time’.
- 4.2 Appraisal is an objective analysis of the features within the conservation area, which collectively define its special architectural or historic interest. It also identifies negative factors that detract from the area’s special interest and makes recommendations to encourage the protection and enhancement of its character and appearance
- 4.3 The conservation area appraisal and associated proposals augment heritage focussed regeneration works carried out as part of Wednesbury’s High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme and satisfies the statutory responsibility.
- 4.4 External consultants TDR Heritage have carried out work on behalf of the Council reappraising Wednesbury’s existing Conservation Area against the criteria for conservation area status laid down in statute and in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.5 As part of these works a technical assessment of the historic character and appearance of adjacent areas was undertaken to evaluate suitability for inclusion of those areas into the conservation area.
- 4.6 Further work is currently being carried out to develop a Conservation Area Management Plan to provide guidance to developers, property owners and policy makers in managing change to ensure significance is retained.
- 4.7 After consultation with key stakeholders and the public, the appraisal and management plan will be adapted to take into account representations. and will return for Cabinet to consider formal adoption

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The option exists to not consult on the appraisal and management plan. The reasons why this has been discounted are set out in paragraph 2.2 above.



6 Implications

Resources:	Conservation area status would be a ‘material planning consideration’ when planning consent is sought. This applies irrespective of ownership – including Council-owned assets.
Legal and Governance:	Local Authorities are empowered by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation areas) Act to designate conservation areas and required by the National Planning Policy Framework to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.
Risk:	Erosion of the character of an area risks reputational damage and decline. Conservation area designation mitigates this risk
Equality:	There are no Equality issues arising from the contents of this report.
Health and Wellbeing:	There are no Health and Wellbeing implications arising from the contents of this report.
Social Value:	There are no Social Value issues arising from the contents of this report.
Climate Change:	Conservation of the historic built environment may reduce CO2 emissions through the re-use of ‘embodied carbon’.
Corporate Parenting	There are no implications for Corporate Parenting arising from this report.

7. Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Wednesbury Conservation Area Appraisal

8. Background Papers

Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management
Historic England Advice Note 1 (Second Edition)

