

**York Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal:  
Consultation Draft**

**Summary**

1. Conservation areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. To enable City of York Council to better discharge its statutory responsibilities in this regard Alan Baxter Associates were appointed to undertake a detailed appraisal of the York Central Historic Core Conservation Area; including analysis of key strategic long distance and local views, in December 2010. The appraisal is jointly funded by English Heritage and City of York Council and is an important component of the evidence base for the City of York Local Development Framework. The draft document has benefited from detailed input from a key stakeholder group, and has now reached the stage of a public consultation draft. Members are asked to approve the York Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal – Consultation Draft - (Annex 4) for public consultation.

**Background**

2. The York Central Historic Core Conservation Area was first designated in 1968 and extended in 1975 following public consultation. The boundaries have not been reviewed since that time and no detailed appraisal of character and special interest has been carried out.
3. Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Historic Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. In addition, authorities are required to carry out periodic reviews of the conservation areas under their control.
4. Section 71 of the same Act requires local authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and to submit them to a public meeting for consideration. Following designation the local authority, in exercising its planning powers, must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area (Section 72 of the Act).
5. The lack of an appraisal of the York Central Historic Core Conservation Area was identified as a key weakness of the evidence base for the Local

Development Framework to inform the policies and proposals of the City Centre Area Action Plan and other Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.

6. York's Central Historic Core Conservation Area is a large and complex conservation area. Completing a comprehensive appraisal is a significant undertaking and has required a significant commitment by the council. The appraisal has to go beyond mere description in capturing the very essence of the special character and interest of the area and explaining its value and significance.
7. Funding for this work was formally secured in February 2010 including a 50% grant from English Heritage.
8. Following a detailed tender process, Consultants Alan Baxter Associates were appointed in December 2010 to undertake the appraisal. Work commenced immediately.
9. The project is managed through the Renaissance Team by the Heritage Renaissance Officer reporting to a Project Management Team including English Heritage and Officers from Design, Conservation and Sustainable Development.
10. The Appraisal is divided into two parts. Part one deals with understanding the City, including a detailed assessment of twenty-four character areas and an analysis of key views and building heights. Part two deals with management recommendations setting out informed proposals for further work and action.
11. An Executive Summary is provided with this report as Appendix 1.
12. The most significant and immediate of the reports recommendations include suggestions for
  - a. Changes to the Conservation Area boundary at seven locations, five extensions and two reductions;
  - b. Article 4 directions for a number of streets;
  - c. Major improvements to the public realm including; gateway streets, bars, traffic and movement.
  - d. Use of Regulation 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 to remove for sale and to let signs from the conservation area;
13. Following the public consultation, the final edited report will be presented to Members for approval and adoption as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base. This gives the opportunity for The City Centre Area Action Plan to take account of the Management Recommendations set out in the Appraisal.

## Consultation

14. A key stakeholder group has advised the project team throughout. The group comprises: The York Civic Trust; The York Archaeological Forum; The Conservation Area Advisory Panel; and, English Heritage.
15. Two stakeholder workshops have informed the project and a stakeholder draft has generated extensive comment which has directly informed the Consultation Draft of the document.
16. The public consultation draft presented to Members has benefited from this stakeholder input as well as input from the council's City Development, Forward Planning, Design, Conservation and Sustainable Development teams.
17. The consultants were appointed to deliver a document that was legible, accessible and light in text, using maps, diagrams and illustrations wherever possible. They were also asked to ensure that the document could be accessed primarily through web pages. This, has been achieved and although the full document is lengthy – it was always conceived as a modular document
18. The Public consultation will include the following activity:
  - a. a leaflet (Annex 2) drop via Local Link to each property within the conservation area and selected properties around the boundaries (Annex 5);
  - b. article in "Local Link" magazine to all properties in CYC area;
  - c. article in "Your Ward" for Guildhall, Micklegate, Fishergate and Clifton Wards;
  - d. A manned exhibition in Explore York for Friday 15<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> July;
  - e. an evening presentation to interested groups and others;
  - f. presentations to relevant Ward meetings;
  - g. York "Press" and local radio;
  - h. paper copies available at Explore York and Reception, 9 St Leonard's Place;
  - i. appropriate web pages with suitably sized PDF documents and an on-line consultation form.
19. The consultation period is hoped to run from the 4<sup>th</sup> of July until the 12<sup>th</sup> of August to take advantage of the final month before summer breaks and to allow a generous period for the consultants to incorporate comments and prepare their final copy for the autumn.

20. Consultation responses will be recorded in a bespoke matrix showing a clear audit trail from comment through to proposed action.

## Options

21. Option 1 – approve the draft document for consultation purposes and to approve the method and range of consultation;
22. Option 2 – to approve the draft document for consultation with amendments to the draft document and/or changes the method and range of the consultation process;
23. Option 3 - do not approve the draft document for consultation

## Analysis

24. Approval for the draft document to be published for consultation on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June will allow the consultation period to run before the school holiday season and provide sufficient opportunity for the consultants to prepare the final report for adoption in late 2011 as part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework and specifically to inform the City Centre Area Action Plan
25. Delay to this programme will fall outside the project timetable as agreed with the consultants and a final edit deadline would have to be negotiated and there will be potential risks to the Local Development Framework timetable.

## Corporate Priorities

26. York Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal will deliver against “The Sustainable City”. It will also form an essential part of the Local Development Framework evidence base and will complement, “York New City Beautiful: Toward an Economic Vision”.

## Implications

- 27.
- **Financial** Public consultation will be funded from existing budgets.
  - **Human Resources (HR)** No implications.
  - **Equalities** An EIA has been completed for this project and identified that some proposed outcomes such as a Public Realm Strategy and Streetscape Manual will require separate EIA’s as there will be particular issues around disability to deal with. The Appraisal itself has no equality issues.
  - **Legal** No implications.

- **Crime and Disorder** No known implications.
- **Information Technology (IT)** The Council web site will be used to host the draft document.
- **Property** No implications.

## Risk Management

28. There should be no risks at this stage.

## Recommendations

29. Members are asked to approve the Draft York Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal for public consultation.

It is also requested that Members approve the consultation method proposed.

Reasons:

- the document has adopted a rigorous approach to the assessment of the York Central Historic Core Conservation Area, and is in accordance with relevant guidance documents;
- the boundary review has been carried out in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the latest guidance documents from English Heritage;
- The document has been subject to intensive peer review through the key stakeholder group;
- the proposed consultation process is based on previous best practice.

## Contact Details

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Report Approved

Date 6 June 2011

## Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

**Wards Affected:** *Guildhall; Micklegate; Fishergate and part Clifton.*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

**Background Papers:**

There are no relevant background papers.

**Annexes**

***Annex 1:***

Executive Summary.

***Annex 2:***

Consultation list.

***Annex 3:***

Map showing areas for leaflet distribution.

***Annex 4:***

CD, containing a high resolution PDF copy of the York Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal (**Members will receive a copy of the CD later this week**).