



Northumberland

County Council

COMMITTEE: CABINET

DATE: 13th September 2022

ENDORSEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL FOR BAMBURGH

Report of Rob Murfin, Interim Executive Director of Planning & Local Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Horncastle, Portfolio Holder for Community Services

Purpose of report

To explain the need for a Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Bamburgh, the background to this and the benefits of doing so.

Recommendation

To note the contents of the Bamburgh Conservation Area Character Appraisal and to endorse its use as an evidence base to inform Council decisions.

Link to Corporate Plan

This links to the '*We want you to love where you live (Enjoying)*' theme of the Corporate Plan, which states that '*We also appreciate the quality of the wider environment. Northumberland is blessed with stunning countryside and coastline that is peppered with a host of remarkable cultural and heritage assets and is home to a network of towns and villages that each have their own unique characteristics.*'

Key issues

The need for a Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Bamburgh.

Conservation Areas are designated with the intention to preserve and enhance the special architectural or historic interest of an area and to ensure its protection and management in a positive and sustainable way.

Local authorities have a duty to formulate and publish proposals to protect and enhance their Conservation Areas. The duty is met through the production and implementation of appropriate Local Plan policy and through the adoption of Management Plans for Conservation Areas. Conservation Area Character Appraisals provide an evidence base for these two pieces of work and ensure that Conservation Areas are well managed

through the planning system. There is a commitment within the Northumberland Local Plan for the Council to prepare, update and act on Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans¹.

Background

1. Purpose and Benefit of Conservation Areas

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Section 69) places a duty on Local Authorities to designate, as Conservation Areas, those areas deemed to be of special architectural or historic interest, whose character or appearance it is desirable to protect or enhance. The Act requires Local Planning Authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing Conservation Areas in the exercise of their planning function (Section 70). Conservation Areas are considered designated heritage assets within the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF recognises heritage assets as “an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations” (NPPF para 184).

Conservation Areas play an important part in the protection of our highly valued historic towns and villages. They tend to be valued by those living and working in them as special places worthy of preservation and enhancement; they are important both economically and through the contribution they make to quality of life. Recent research undertaken by Historic England has shown that, nationally, house prices in rural Conservation Areas are 22% higher than in similar non-Conservation Areas².

2. Legal Requirement to Manage Conservation Areas

Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on the Local Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are Conservation Areas. Local Plan policies play a key part in meeting this requirement. However, the production of Conservation Area Character Appraisals are important in providing the evidence base which allow both local, and national, Planning Policy to be implemented.

The need for a full set of Conservation Area Character Appraisals was recognised following Local Government Reorganisation, when the Council took on responsibility for the protection and management of all Conservation Areas within Northumberland. However, it was not possible at that time to find the resources to undertake this work. The introduction of Neighbourhood Plans has seen a new demand for Character Appraisals, with many communities, including Bamburgh, recognising their value and including the need for one in their Neighbourhood Plan Action Plans³.

3. Background to the Bamburgh Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Bamburgh is located on the north Northumberland coast, within the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB). Whilst there is evidence of

¹ Northumberland Local Plan, Supporting the Conservation of Heritage Assets Commitments, p212.

² [Heritage and the Economy 2018 \(historicengland.org.uk\)](https://www.historicengland.org.uk)

³ North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2032, Community Action 2.

settlement in this location from the prehistoric period, it was during the Anglo-Saxon period that it rose to prominence, when it formed a stronghold of the Kings of Northumbria. The village has a rich medieval and post-medieval character dominated by the impressive Bamburgh Castle.

Bamburgh is one of the most scenic and historic villages in the AONB and, in recognition of its historic and architectural importance, it was designated as a Conservation Area in 1972. The Conservation Area is rich in designated and non-designated heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

4. The Bamburgh Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal was completed in October 2020. Public consultation was undertaken by the Northumberland Coast AONB staff team and ran from 12th January to 9th March 2021. Consultation comprised of presenting the appraisal to Bamburgh Parish Council, making the appraisal available via Bamburgh Parish Council's website, and providing an eight-week consultation period. Details of the consultation process were included on Bamburgh Parish Council website and on the Parish Council notice board in the village. Internal consultation was undertaken with the Planning and Planning Policy Teams. Measures to formally endorse the Appraisal were put on hold pending the adoption of the Northumberland Local Plan.

The Bamburgh Conservation Area Character Appraisal is a publicly accessible document available as a source of information for anyone interested in the Conservation Area. The Appraisal sets out the history and development of the village and considers how individual features contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It includes a description of the form and function of key buildings, the types of style and architectural detailing and an analysis of the spatial qualities of the village. It also includes advice on management and enhancement and is accompanied by a gazetteer which contains a detailed description of all listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets within the Conservation Area.

By setting out clearly those elements which contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area, it provides an evidence base which will help Local Plan policies to be developed and implemented, and planning applications determined in a clear and transparent way. It will also help prospective developers bring forward appropriate developments which respect the character of the Conservation Area, to underpin any future proposals for conservation and regeneration and to help local people have a better understanding of their historic environment.

5. Next Steps

The Bamburgh Conservation Area Character Appraisal will be used as an evidence base to inform Council decisions and policy. The Appraisal will be placed on the Council's website so that it is publicly accessible and it will be circulated to relevant Planning Service staff.

Implications

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| Policy | The Conservation Area Character Appraisal will form part of the evidence base for Local Plan policy development and implementation. |
| Finance and value for money | No financial costs to the Council. |
| Legal | Endorsing the Bamburgh Conservation Area Character Appraisal will assist the Council in fulfilling its duties under S.71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 |
| Procurement | None |
| Human Resources | None |
| Property | None |
| Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | None |
| Risk Assessment | N/A |
| Crime & Disorder | None |
| Health and Wellbeing | None |
| Customer Consideration | Public consultation demonstrated this Appraisal is supported by the local community. Production of an Appraisal is an Action in the Neighbourhood Plan |
| Carbon reduction | None |
| Wards | Bamburgh |

Background papers

Bamburgh Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Report sign off

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

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| | Full name of officer |
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| Monitoring Officer/Legal | SB |
| Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer | JW |
| Relevant Executive Director | RM |
| Chief Executive | ROF |
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