



WARDS AFFECTED: CASTLE, DE MONTFORT, TRINITY, CLARENDON

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To seek Members' approval to adopt the Conservation Area Statement and Management Plan for the conservation area in Hinckley Town Centre.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That Members adopt the Conservation Area Statement and Management Plan for Hinckley Town Centre as Planning Guidance.

3. **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

3.1 The conservation area in Hinckley Town Centre was declared in 1986 and the area extended in February 1998. Conservation Area leaflets were produced at that time which set out the extent of the Conservation Areas, and gave brief information about the impact of designation on property owners in the area. The information provided in the leaflets is similar to that provided for all Conservation Areas in the Borough.

3.2 As reported to the Planning Committee on 2nd February 2007, it is intended to review all Conservation Areas in the Borough and issue a Conservation Area Statement and Management Plan for each area. The statement will assess the significance of the designated area and analyse how that significance is vulnerable to change. Its aim is to preserve and enhance the character of the area and to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future through the development of management proposals. The documents will provide a description of the historical development of the settlement, set out the important features of the conservation area which should be protected and indicate the planning guidance and policies which apply to new development in the area.

3.3 The benefits of a comprehensive appraisal of a conservation area are that it will provide a sound basis for development control decisions, for protecting our local heritage, for developing initiatives to improve the area and as an educational and informative document for the local community.

3.4 The Management Plan for the conservation Area will take the form of a mid to long term strategy for preserving and enhancing the conservation area. It will address the issues and make recommendations for action arising from the statement and identify any

further detailed work needed for their implementation. It will also set out specific enhancement schemes for the public realm and aim to secure the repair of important heritage features and buildings in the area. The plan will also include a photographic survey, which will be used as a mechanism for monitoring future change in the designated area.

- 3.5 The Conservation Statement and Management Plan for Hinckley Town Centre have recently been completed by officers of the Council. Public exhibitions were held at the Public Library and the Atkins building which were very well attended by local residents. The documents were also made available on the Council's Web Site.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (PE)

There are none arising directly from this report. Any costs involved in the preparation and adoption of the Statement and Plan will be met from existing resources.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (AB)

Under section 71 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, there is a duty on a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas, to submit these for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate, and to have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.

6. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The preparation of the Conservation Area Statement and Management Plan both meet Strategic Objective 7 of the Corporate Plan.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 The exhibition was held at the public library on 19th and 20th of February and at the Atkins building between the 21st and 25th of February. The display included the study findings and future management recommendations illustrated by photographs, drawings and maps.

7.2 The exhibition generated a lot of public interest. The displays also gave the opportunity to provide additional information about the purpose of Conservation Area designation, the impact of the additional controls over land and property, and guidance regarding the type of development that is acceptable.

7.3 Over 140 residents attended the exhibition in the library on the 19th and at the Atkins building on the 21st of February when it was manned by the Conservation Officer. Attendance during the other unmanned exhibition days is difficult to assess however it is known that the conservation area documents and proposals received wholehearted support. A total of 45 written responses were submitted by the public.

7.4 The written responses of the public together with officer responses are included in Appendix A. The applicable comments were incorporated into the revised documents. Any further responses received will be reported to Committee as a late item.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

8.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

8.3 The ability to fund the improvements identified in the Management Plan depends on adequate Council funding being available which in the current economic climate is unlikely. This will have an impact on residents' aspirations for the quality of the environment in the conservation area.

8.4 The key risks of not endorsing and implementing the Conservation Area Statement and Management Plan, are not meeting performance targets and the Council not being recognised for the good achievements of its Conservation Service and not protecting our local heritage.

9. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The new Conservation Area Statements will further protect the Borough's Heritage. (Chapter 5 of the Community Plan).

9.2 The documents concerning Hinckley Town Centre are only relevant to this Conservation Area and will help development control officers when commenting on planning applications. They have no impact on the rural area.

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

By submitting this report, the author has taken the following into account:

Community Safety Implications - None

Environmental implications – Included in the report.

ICT Implications – None

Asset Management Implications - None

Human Resources Implications – None

Planning Implications – Contained within the report.

Background papers: Conservation Area Appraisal, Appraisal Plan, Long Term Strategy Management Plan, Public Comments on Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area available in the members room and can be viewed on the Council's web site. [All are available to view on line](#)

Contact Officer: Barry Whirrity - ext 5619

APPENDIX A

HINCKLEY TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA EXHIBITION

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Over the consultation period 45 written responses were received with an overwhelming majority supporting the aims and objectives put forward in the Management Plan. Some of the comments received were more of a general nature and did not particularly refer to conservation matters.

The following issues were raised:

1. Several comments were received suggesting that the conservation area be extended to include the following areas; Spa Lane, Orchard Street, Derby Road, *Priesthills* Road, Mount Road, Factory Road, Queen's Park, Gaumont Cinema and the property Elm Lea.

All of these areas and properties have been considered for inclusion on their merits, however, they are considered to be residential in character and do not fit the criteria of the town centre shopping area. It is felt the Town Centre boundary should be left as it is.

2. Shop keepers should be encouraged to change their shop fascias and signs to reflect more of the traditional characteristics of a shopping conservation area. This would help make the centre more attractive and encourage more shoppers.

The Town Centre Appraisal does refer to the attributes of traditional shop fronts and particularly shop signs. Inappropriate designs can have a negative affect on the conservation area.

3. Argents Mead and the vicarage site are considered to be in a key area of the town centre. Their re-development should be given the highest priority in providing well designed buildings.
4. Several comments were received on the need to preserve traditional buildings, with particular reference to the Gaumont Cinema (Flutters Building) and parade of shops fronting Rugby Road.

From the conservation standpoint, traditional buildings should be retained although this is not always possible because final decisions quite often rest with other departments and initiatives.

5. Fludes factory should have been kept in its traditional form and not modernised and surrounded by new housing development.

The scheme to redevelop the factory as the Hinckley Hub has been approved and construction is currently being undertaken.

6. The Council was criticised for not keeping the public fully informed on large projects on a more frequent basis.

Council projects are published on the web site and in the Borough Bulletin.

7. One resident felt that Hinckley Town Centre was declining and more effort should be given to try and restore its character as a traditional market town. It was suggested that the re-development of the bus station is started as soon as possible as it could be a stimulus for attracting more growth to the town. It was also added that the bus station should be designed to accommodate visiting buses.

Although construction work has not yet commenced, work on land acquisition is well underway.

8. One comment was a plea for better shops and leisure facilities for young adults and teenagers. The bus station should be made safer at nights and toilet facilities provided.

The scheme will take into consideration the provision of a safe environment and it is expected that toilet facilities will be provided in the proposed supermarket.

9. One elderly person commented that it was difficult to access the banks in motor vehicles and suggested short minimum stay parking areas should be located close to the banks.

Short stay parking spaces have been provided in the vicinity of the banks.

10. Some shops in Castle Street with steps still don't provide disabled access drawing particular attention to listed properties. It was felt they should be made to comply with the regulations.

This is not always possible in some instances.

11. One disabled lady requested that consideration is given to providing a drop-off/collection parking area fronting the library. She referred to an instance where a taxi driver was fined for parking outside the library while inside collecting her.

This will be taken up with Leicestershire County Council.

12. One resident was pleased that a great amount of time and effort had been spent on producing the Management Plan. However, he expressed concern over the lack of foresight given to past changes made.

It is accepted that some town centre buildings constructed in the 1950s/70s are not of the highest quality and these have been highlighted in the appraisal.

13. It was suggested that the earthworks associated with the Motte and Bailey in Argents Mead are delineated and the original position of the medieval priory highlighted.

This can be considered during the redevelopment of Argents Mead.

14. One historian suggested a reconstruction of Roman/Saxon Hinckley. This would give a better historic setting of the Town and provide an understanding of its place in the ancient road networks: Watling Street, Fosse Way and Mancetter to Leicester road and its position in Mercia in the Saxon period or earlier.

This matter is not relevant to the town centre conservation area.

15. One resident suggested that one of the three derelict sites identified on the Management Plan could be used as a public car park catering for the eastern end of the town centre. Together with toilet facilities provided, it would not only improve the appearance of the town centre but help rejuvenate businesses in the area.

These sites have already been granted consent for residential development.

16. More on-street parking places should be provided in the vicinity of the police station particularly for short 'pop in' visits.

This is a matter for the County Highways Authority.