



PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEMBERS UPDATE 2017/18

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Article of: Director of Development and Regeneration

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SUBJECT: CONSERVATION AREAS ADVISORY PANEL – ANNUAL REPORT

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

- 1.1 To provide Members with the annual report for the West Lancashire Conservation Areas Advisory Panel for 2017.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The historic environment plays an important role in our cultural heritage and contributes greatly to our sense of national, local and community identity. It has an aesthetic value and provides us with local distinctiveness and helps define our *sense of place*. Importantly it can also help us support the economic development and regeneration of our communities, particularly through leisure activities, tourism and recreation.
- 2.2 The Council has a central role to play in conserving and enhancing the historic environment through policy and plan-making at all levels and through the determination of planning applications for development. Conserving our heritage is identified as a core principle in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and states that the planning system should aim “*conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.*”
- 2.3 Developing an understanding of the significance of our heritage is an important part of the development management process. Conservation Area Advisory Panels are recognised nationally as providing a valuable source of local knowledge and are promoted nationally as a way of assisting in the proper management of our shared heritage.

- 2.4 The West Lancashire Conservation Areas Advisory Panel (CAAP) was set up to support the Council's planning function in 1975 and is one of the longest standing 'Conservation Advisory Panels' in the region. It plays an important role in providing heritage advice on development proposals and helps the Council's planning function fulfil its duty to preserve and enhance our historic environment. The Panel meets monthly and principally scrutinizes development proposals effecting heritage assets (primarily conservation areas and listed buildings). It also liaises with the authority and helps on the preparation of conservation policy, conservation area appraisals and the production of guidance material relating to the preservation of the Borough's heritage.
- 2.5 The Panel is made up of representatives from local groups and professional organisations which are directly involved, or have an interest in planning and the local environment within West Lancashire. The Panel is 'Chaired' by one of the representatives and is provided secretarial support (preparing the agenda, presenting the agenda items and taking minutes) from the Heritage and Environment Manager.

3.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Publishing an annual report is a requirement of the terms of reference of the Conservation Areas Advisory Panel. A copy of the Chairman's report for 2017 is appended to this report, for information purposes.
- 3.2 The report shows that the Panel met on 11 occasions during 2017 and considered a total of 77 applications. A breakdown of the type of applications shows that around 57% (44 applications) related to development proposals and works which affected the character of nationally important listed buildings.
- 3.3 The report gives thanks to Officers from Heritage and Environment for the continuing support in the preparation and presentation of the applications at meetings and for keeping panel members informed of the changing legislation affecting heritage. The wide ranging heritage work that takes place in the Borough is also acknowledged especially given the tightening public finances.
- 3.4 The year included the Council's Design Awards and two members of the Panel helped the authority with the judging process and the picking of the winners. The scheme is supported by the Panel as it contributes to public awareness in good design and planning.
- 3.5 Whilst the number of Buildings at Risk within the Borough remains a matter of concern to the CAAP the report welcomes the progress being made at Scarisbrick Hall School and more recently the Buck l'th Vine PH in Ormskirk. Panel also noted that the review of two Conservation Areas – Plox Brow, Tarleton and The Brow, Hesketh Bank are currently underway.
- 3.6 The report also highlights an on-going concern over the standard of planning submissions, which often lack sufficient detail to assess the applications correctly. The report flags up that the CAAP would support the Council in any initiatives to improve this situation.

- 3.7 The Chairman's report extends an open invitation to all Councillors of the Planning Committee and to Planning Officers to attend a panel meeting to observe CAAP at work.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 That the work of the Conservation Panel is acknowledged and the content of the Chairman's annual report be noted.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 5.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this article and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. The article has no significant links with the Sustainable Community Strategy.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this article.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This Article is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Article.

Equality Impact Assessment

This article is for information only and does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/ or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

West Lancashire Conservation Areas Advisory Panel – Annual Report 2017