

REPORT TO: Planning Portfolio Holder

11th December 2017

LEAD OFFICER: Joint Director Planning and Economic Development

Foxton Conservation Area - Public Consultation

Purpose

1. To seek agreement for the draft Foxton Conservation Area Appraisal, and revised Conservation Area boundary, to be published for formal consultation.
2. This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder:
 - Agrees that the draft Foxton Conservation Area Appraisal, which contains the proposed new Conservation Area boundary, be published for formal public consultation running from 15th December – 9th February 2018.
 - That delegated powers are given to the Joint Planning Director, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to make any minor amendments to the attached document for example, regarding matters of presentation, prior to public consultation.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. Conservation Area Appraisals are important documents which capture what is special about that part of the village, and which are used to guide development as well as local enhancement/ management programmes.
5. Foxton's Conservation Area was designated in 1972, and as it is time to be reviewed, a welcome initiative has been undertaken by Foxton Parish Council with support from the Council.

Background

6. A Conservation Area is an 'area of special architectural and historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Town and Country Planning Act 1990). The act requires Local Planning Authorities to review their Conservation Areas and their boundaries from time to time, informed by conservation area appraisals that describe the area's character, appearance and its significance. A management plan makes recommendations for conservation and/or enhancements.
7. The Development Control Policies DPD Policy CH/5 Conservation Areas in its supporting text states that:

The District Council will prepare detailed appraisals of its Conservation Areas. Such appraisals will review the appropriateness of the Conservation Area boundary, define their special character and evolve guidelines for development and enhancement schemes.

8. South Cambridgeshire District Council has 85 Conservation Areas, 15 of which have conservation area appraisals, and these are now over 5 years old. As part of the review process, The Council is exploring alternative ways of delivering and updating conservation area appraisals, including working with local communities/parish councils, for example, via and/or alongside Neighbourhood Plans.
9. Foxton Parish Council approached the Council with a request to review its conservation area having carried out significant baseline studies itself. Both parties agreed that the boundary would be reviewed, and a Conservation Area Appraisal would be prepared.
10. Since March 2016, the Council's Consultancy Team has been working in close collaboration with Foxton Parish Council to produce a draft Foxton Conservation Area Appraisal, which is now ready for formal consultation.

Foxton Conservation Area Appraisal

11. Foxton Conservation Area was originally designated in 1972 and covered only a small part of the Medieval High Street. It did not, for example, include the Grade 1 Listed St Laurence Church, or the majority of the listed buildings in the village, many of which contribute to Foxton's special architectural and historic character.
12. The research and analysis carried out as part of the Conservation Area Appraisal has identified that the village has buildings of various historic periods that together with their streets/green open spaces, views and features contribute to the areas special architectural and historic interests. They are mainly classed into 5 periods:
 - Phase 1: Late Saxon(9th -10th Centuries)
 - Phase 2: Medieval (11th -16th Centuries)
 - Phase 3: Tudor, Elizabethan and Jacobean (16th – 17th Centuries)
 - Phase 4: Georgian/Regency (18th -19th Centuries)
 - Phase 5: Victorian to early 20th Century (19th-20th Centuries)
13. The Conservation Area is broken down into 4 character areas that show a distinct character and identity. They are:
 - High Street West – Agricultural
 - Historic Centre and Trade Area
 - High Street East: Administrative and Religious Centre
 - Eastern Entrance: Mortimer Lane
14. It is proposed that the boundary is extended to include:
 - The majority of the listed buildings in the village including St Laurence's Church;
 - The former University Tutorial Press works and associated cottages on Station Road;
 - Foxton House and its historic parkland;
 - The thatched cottages and medieval moat of Mortimers Lane
 - Foxton Dovecote and Meadow

Considerations

15. It is proposed that the extent of the Conservation Area is substantially increased. This is justified by the inclusion of a number of listed buildings and buildings of local historic and architectural interest in accordance with the guidance set out paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Historic England Guidance.
16. The Conservation Area Appraisal would be a useful baseline document to inform the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan, which is being progressed by Foxton Parish Council.
17. It should be noted that the designation of a conservation area does not stop development, but increases the extent of planning control in order to help guide high quality proposals which preserves or enhances the areas distinctive character. Conservation area status and conservation appraisal are material considerations in determining planning applications.

Consultation

18. The review of the conservation area boundary and conservation area appraisal work was initiated by Foxton Parish Council in close collaboration with the Council's Consultancy Team.
19. An early proposal for the Conservation Area was presented at a local exhibition/public meeting held In Foxton on the 2nd May 2017. Feedback from that event, along with comments from Historic England, Cambridge County Council and internal departments led to amendments to both the scope of the appraisal and proposed boundary. For example, the station area, (adjacent the A10), which was initially considered for inclusion, was after further consideration and analysis omitted. Whereas, it is now proposed to include the recreation ground, adjacent the St Lawrence Church, within the Conservation Area.
20. A further informal public exhibition was held on the 21st November 2017 on these proposals and final draft of the Conservation Area Appraisal. The draft Foxton Conservation Area Appraisal, and revised Conservation Area boundary, as currently been proposed have been agreed with Foxton Parish Council.
21. The next stage is for the Council to formally endorse this document and formally consult on the documents.
22. It is proposed that public consultation starts on the 15th December 2017 and runs for 8 weeks (rather than our usual 6 weeks period given that it covers the Christmas period). As such it would run until 9th February 2018 and would include an evening public meeting on the 15th January 2018.
23. The consultation will be advertised in the Laurentian (Village magazine), and residents would be notified by letter (all properties in Foxton Parish) as well as key stakeholders. It would also be highlighted on the Council's website and via social media. Copies would be available for viewing on the SCDC website with hard copies in Foxton Village Hall and South Cambridgeshire Hall. The Foxton Conservation Area publicity banners would also be on display at Foxton Village Hall through out the consultation period to drawn attention to the proposals and encourage comment.

24. After the consultation period, the Council will consider the representations on the draft Appraisal and proposed boundary. A report would be made to a subsequent Planning Portfolio Holder meeting summarising the representations received and considering whether any further changes should be made.

Options

25. There are a number of possible options available: to leave the Conservation Area Boundary where it is, as well as other variations of that currently drafted.
26. It is recommended that formal consultation stage is carried out on the proposed boundary and accompanying appraisal document to gather comments and these be considered further, prior to formal adoption.

Implications

In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

27. The work to date has been carried out by Foxton Parish Council in collaboration with the Consultancy Team, using existing resources and within existing budgets

Legal

28. None

Staffing

29. The Consultancy Team, Planning and Graphic Team officers have been involved and will continue to support to the consultation process through to final adoption.

Risk Management

30. No significant risk. The consultation responses will highlight any issues for further consideration by the Council.

Equality and Diversity

31. None

Climate Change

32. The draft appraisal supports sustainable development and retention and use of existing buildings

Consultation responses

33. See paragraphs 17-23 above.

Effect on Strategic Aims

Aim 1 - We will listen to and engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure we deliver first class services and value for money.

34. The Foxton Conservation Area Review and Appraisal has been initiated by Foxton Parish Council. It has been developed through close collaboration with the Parish. There have been two rounds of informal public consultation which have informed the final draft document.

Aim 2 - We will make sure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer an outstanding quality of life for our residents

35. The Foxton conservation area appraisal outlines what is distinctive about the conservation area and puts forward a management plan to enhance its surroundings.

Aim 3: Work with partners to create opportunities for employment, enterprise, education and world-leading innovation.

38. The Foxton Conservation Area would raise the quality of development and would create opportunities for skills in construction and conservation.

Background Papers

Conservation Area Appraisal: Formal Public Consultation 2017-18

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