



Committee and date

Cabinet

15 June 2011

13:30 p.m.

Item

11

Public

Proposed Great Ness Conservation Area

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Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for a public consultation exercise regarding the designation of the village of Great Ness as a Conservation Area. A copy of the proposed Conservation Area boundary map is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

Recommendation

- A. That Cabinet approves for the purpose of public consultation the area identified on the accompanying map (and described in the report) for consideration as the Great Ness Conservation Area.

Report

Background on Conservation Areas

1. The concept of conserving the character of entire areas was first introduced in the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. These provisions were consolidated into the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act, subsequently the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
2. Conservation Area legislation emphasises the importance of the character of an area as a key consideration when decisions are made in respect of development proposals. A Conservation Area is defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. There is an important difference between preservation, achieved by the listing of buildings, and conservation, through the designation of Conservation Areas. Preservation implies no change, but conservation is a more dynamic approach which allows change, but change that is controlled so as to retain the inherent quality of a place.
3. The Council has a duty to review from time to time areas of special historic or architectural interest for designation. At the present time there are 120 Conservation Areas designated within the County, the most recent being The Pant Glas and Brogyntyn Park Conservation Area north of Oswestry which was designated in July 2010.
4. As Cabinet makes the decision to designate a Conservation Area, it is appropriate that Cabinet considers proposals for new Conservation Areas

prior to undertaking any public consultation exercise related to the designation. Although the Council is not obliged under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to consult on the designation of a Conservation Area, it is considered appropriate to do so.

Background on Current Proposal

5. Great Ness is a small, compact settlement located north-west of Shrewsbury, and is located in close proximity to the larger village of Nesscliffe. The nucleus of the hamlet is the Grade I listed St. Andrew's Church, the oldest building in the settlement, with some sections dating from the early 13th Century. The hamlet consists of 28 dwellings, a number of which are statutorily listed and which represent a range of building styles and materials including several large brick 18th-19th Century houses, smaller traditional cottages, barn conversions, interesting ancillary buildings and historical features such as a restored Parish Pound and Village Pump, and a group of modern bungalows. Dressed red sandstone is the predominant local material, evident in both the buildings in the settlement as well as the walling around the principal houses, the Church and along the hamlet lanes. The surrounding area is rural in nature with uninterrupted views out of the village to undulating fields primarily in agricultural use.
6. The notion of designating Great Ness as a Conservation Area was raised by residents of the settlement. On August 7, 2009 a letter was written to Shropshire Council requesting designation of the hamlet, accompanied by supporting signatures of all residents. A copy of this letter is attached as Appendix 3.
7. On October 6, 2009, the Great Ness and Little Ness Parish Council considered a request from the residents of Great Ness to support their proposal to designate Great Ness as a Conservation Area. The Parish Council resolved to support the proposal provided a full consultation of all residents and land owners of the settlement is carried out.
8. Since that time, representatives of the Historic Environment Team have been working with a small team of Great Ness residents to compile background material to support the potential designation of the hamlet. This Working Group has now produced an audit of the special architectural, historic and landscape fabric and character of Great Ness, which has been submitted to the Council as background, supporting material.
9. A provisional boundary for the proposed Conservation Area based on the findings of the audit is attached as Appendix 1. An aerial view of this proposed boundary is attached as Appendix 2.
10. The first formal step in the process of designation is to receive endorsement from the Council to approve, for the purpose of public consultation, the area identified on Appendix 1. Following the endorsement of this provisional boundary, a formal public consultation exercise to solicit the views of residents, owners and relevant external agencies on the matter of the proposed designation would be initiated. This consultation exercise would include the mailing of letters outlining the proposal to all properties within the proposed Conservation Area boundary as well as those immediately outside

of it. The letter would request that any views or comments on the matter of the proposed designation be submitted to the Council, and a 12 week consultation period in line with Council policy would be provided.

11. As part of the consultation exercise, a drop-in Information Session would be held in the area where representatives from the Council's Historic Environment Team would be available to discuss the proposal and answer questions, and material and maps related to the proposal would be on display.
12. Following the completion of the formal public consultation exercise, a report summarising the results of the consultation, along with a resolution either recommending designation in line with the provisional boundary, a revised boundary or recommending against designation would be presented to Cabinet. Should the Council at that time recommend the proposed area for designation, the designation would be valid from the resolution of the Council meeting approving it. Following any approval, a Notice of Designation would be drafted and advertised as statutorily required, and the designation would be confirmed with all residents falling within the Conservation Area by way of a letter and copy of the designation document, along with guidance notes on what Conservation Area status means.
13. Conservation Area status would acknowledge the special significance of Great Ness and would assist in protecting the area's distinct character while permitting appropriate new development to go ahead. Designation would also help ensure proposals for new development maintain or enhance the area's special character. It also provides for greater opportunity to engage with the local community in managing the historic environment that they value.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

See Appendices attached and listed below.

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The recommendations contained in this Report are compatible with the provisions of The Human Rights Act 1988.

Environmental Appraisal

Designation of the proposed area as a Conservation Area would give additional planning protection from unsympathetic development which might otherwise spoil the area's special character, including the safeguarding of important hedgerows, trees and open spaces.

Risk Management Appraisal

There are no associated risks.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

The formal public consultation period would be initiated following approval of this Report by Cabinet.

Cabinet Member

Councillor Mal Price

Local Member

Councillor David Roberts

Appendices

- 1 – Map indicating proposed Conservation Area boundary
- 2 – Aerial Map showing proposed Conservation Area boundary
- 3 – Copy of August 7, 2009 letter to the Manager of the Historic Environment Team