

# South Northamptonshire Council

## Planning Policy and Regeneration Strategy Committee

18 March 2020

### Assessment of Slapton as a potential Conservation Area

#### Report of the Assistant Director – Planning and Economy

This report is public

#### Purpose of report

For Members to consider the assessment of Slapton which considers whether Slapton has special architectural or historic interest necessary to justify designation as a conservation area. The assessment was deferred from the 22 January 2020 meeting of the Committee to allow Members a chance to visit the village. It is now back for consideration.

#### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 That following the assessment, work to designate Slapton as a conservation area not be pursued as the village does not fulfil the criteria to justify designation.

#### 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Following the recent consultation of the Conservation Strategy for South Northamptonshire in 2016, it was identified that conservation areas designation formed a strong element within “preserving what is special” in the district. Conservation area appraisals and reviews have been highlighted as an important way of ensuring that this aspect of policy framework is up to date and robust.
- 2.2 In 2011 the Design and Conservation Team commenced a review of the district’s then 54 conservation areas. By the end of March 2017, 61 areas of special architectural or historic interest had been designated as conservation areas with 53 of the 54 pre 2011 conservation areas having been reviewed and re-designated with an up to date boundary, appraisal and management plan.
- 2.3 In addition 8 new conservation areas have been adopted across the District including two significant designations which cover the lengths of the Grand Union and Oxford Canals as they pass through South Northamptonshire.

- 2.4 The start of 2016-2017 financial year also marked the start of a second phase of work which commenced an assessment of the qualities of the district's 38 settlements not benefiting from a conservation area.
- 2.5 The assessment of an undesignated settlement needs to consider statutory legislation in the Planning Act 1990, which states that conservation areas need to be "*areas of special architectural and historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance.*" The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states within its guidance, in paragraph 186, that "*When considering the designation of conservation area, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.*"
- 2.6 It is important to note that the review process does not automatically guarantee that conservation areas will be designation at any of those settlements.
- 2.7 An assessment is made following a set of criteria (see Appendix) based on guidance set out in the Historic England's *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* as well as the Planning (Listed Building Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the guidance in the NPPF. The criteria aims to assess three key elements within a settlement which all contribute to an area's character.
- Spatial Analysis- considers the relationship between buildings, plan form, scale and massing, as well as views and the impact of vegetation.
  - Architectural Analysis- looks at the use of traditional materials, the design and style of properties, the contributions of the buildings and their impact on the character of the area.
  - Historical Analysis- looks at the development of the area through Historic Environment Records such as maps, and historical and archaeological archives.
- 2.8 An assessment of Slapton was undertaken in 2019 as part of this rolling programme of works.

### **3.0 Summary of the Assessment of Slapton**

- 3.1 Following the completion of this assessment of Slapton, based on the criteria set out (see Appendix for full report), it is recommended that Slapton, although an attractive rural village does not fulfil the criteria set out under legislation. The reasons for this recommendation are outlined below:
- The individual buildings and complexes are dispersed and, whilst a common form and detailing exists between them, their dispersed nature does not help to reinforce the character within the area.
  - Although Slapton has medieval origins most of the built heritage was constructed between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is some archaeology which is believed to be remnants of the original settlement however this offers very little to the current character.

- The defining feature of Slapton, excluding the medieval wall painting within the Church, would be the views over the wider landscape and the countryside that surrounds it.

3.2 Therefore, although Slapton has some historic interest and architectural qualities, these alone are not considered sufficient to warrant the designation of a conservation area.

## **4.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

4.1 The following alternative options have been identified:

Option 1: To agree the recommendation, that following the appraisal, work to designate Slapton as a conservation area is not pursued.

Option 2: To amend the recommendations to the appraisal.

Option 3: To not agree the recommendation, and instead pursue further work into designating Slapton as a conservation area.

## **5.0 Implications**

### **Resource and Legal Implications**

5.1 No direct implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

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### **5.2 Financial Implications**

Any expenditure in relation to the conservation area reviews for the villages will be from existing resources.

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## **6.0 Decision Information**

### **Wards Affected**

Blakesley and Cote

## Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Protected, Clean and Green  
Thriving Communities and Wellbeing  
District of Opportunity and Growth

### Lead Councillor

Councillor Phil Bignell – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning

### Document Information

| Appendix No                | Title  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Appendix 1                 | Assessment of Slapton  |
| Appendix 2                 | Historic England's Criteria taken from <i>Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management</i>         |
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