

South Northamptonshire Council

Planning Policy and Regeneration Strategy Committee

18 March 2020

<h3>Local List for South Northamptonshire Assessment Criteria</h3>
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Report of the Assistant Director – Planning and Economy

This report is public

Purpose of report

To seek Committee approval of criteria against which to identify Non-Designated Heritage Assets within South Northamptonshire.

1.0 Recommendation

The Committee is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the criteria for the assessment of Non-Designated Heritage Assets in South Northamptonshire as a precursor to preparing a Local List.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 South Northamptonshire Council has consistently recognised the importance of the historic environment and how integral it is in defining the character of the area and the positive contribution it makes to the health and wellbeing of its residents and visitors. The historic environment comprising not only the historic landscape but also those historic sites also known heritage assets. Recognising the contribution these assets make to local distinctness by way of identifying them is a good way of enabling the planning system, as part plan making and development management process, to protect and enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the District.
- 2.2 Communities, through their response to conservation area appraisals and development proposals have frequently sought the protection of buildings they consider important to the local character and community. Some of these communities have recently been given greater powers in the identification and protection of these heritage assets. Any group approved as a plan making body Neighbourhood Plan qualifying body (usually Parish Councils) now has the power to identify Non-designated Heritage Assets (NDHA) in their Neighbourhood Plan.

- 2.3 In line with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) the Heritage Team also identifies NDHA assets on an ad-hoc basis as part of the Development Management process. It is considered that a more objective methodology would assist all those involved in the identification of NDHA and ensures a robust and defensible evidence base that provides a sound basis for decision making should proposals be submitted which affect a NDHA.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The NPPF recognises the importance of the historic environment and in particular heritage assets. These are defined within the Glossary as *“a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority known as non designated heritage assets (NDHA)”*. Designated assets include Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields and Historic Parks and Garden, World Heritage Sites, Conservation Areas, etc. NDHA are defined in the accompanying Planning Practise Guidance (PPG) as *“buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decision’s, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets”*.
- 3.2 The PPG sets out how non-designated heritage assets can be identified which include the local and neighborhood plan-making process, conservation area appraisals and the development management process. The PPG is clear that irrespective of how they are identified it is important that the decision to identify them as non-designated heritage assets should be based on sound evidence. This report presents a set of criteria that provide a sound basis for the identification of non-designated heritage assets across the District for use by the Council and other plan making bodies. Historic England also provide advice in the Advice Note 7 on Local Heritage Listing. Any heritage assets identified will be placed on a list, also known as a Local List. The Council has already expressed its intent to produce a local list within many of the approved Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans which include an Action Point to produce a Local List of buildings. This is reinforced through the policies of the emerging South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2, which is currently going through the examination process. The intention of the selection criteria would be to expand that list to include all types of heritage assets.
- 3.3 A criteria-based assessment is the most appropriate approach providing a consistent and robust methodology for the identification of heritage assets. These criteria have been drafted in such a way as they recognize and allow the identification the different types of heritage assets not only of buildings of historic and architectural interest but also criteria for assessing other structures, parks, gardens and open space and archaeology. They have also been drafted to ensure that each asset is carefully considered, and its specific interest(s) identified. Appendix A sets out the criteria against which historic assets can be assessed to see if they reach the appropriate threshold for recognition.

- 3.4 Once identified, either through the Neighbourhood Plan or development management, the PPG also requires plan making bodies, in this case the Council and relevant Neighbourhood Plan qualifying bodies, to make available *“clear and up to date information on non-designated heritage assets accessible to the public to provide greater clarity and certainty for developers and decision-makers. This includes information on the criteria used to select non-designated heritage assets and information about the location of existing assets”*. It goes on to say that it is helpful in the local planning authorities keep a list of NDHA (a Local List) and that information it included in the historic environment record.
- 3.5 The approval of selection criteria will ensure that all NDHA identified in the future are undertaken on a sound and consistent basis across the district. Existing NDHA should be reviewed and assessed against the criteria before they are placed in a local list and should include buildings and structures already identified as having potential to be on a Local List.
- 3.6 Once compiled the Local List can be added to as buildings continued to be identified through the development management process and any subsequent adopted Neighbourhood Plans. This does however mean that the local list produced will be limited to the Neighbourhood Plan areas approved after the date of this report and those assets identified as part of the development management process. Consideration will need to be given in the future as to how other potential heritage assets across the district will be identified.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The identification of heritage assets is currently undertaken on an ad-hoc basis. The introduction of selection criteria for the identification of non-designated heritage assets will ensure that any heritage assets on a local list are identified using a sound methodology in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance.

5.0 Publication and Consultation

- 5.1 None

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 To allow the identification of non-designation assets to continue to be undertaken in an ad-hoc, subjective way. If a planning application is refused based on the impact on the harm to the heritage asset an Inspector could challenge and overturn the NDHA if it has not been identified using sound criteria and is not considered to be of sufficient interest to be a NDHA. This could raise concerns about the validity of the whole list.

6.2 Identification could be undertaken using different methodology, some Councils use a system which weight the relative interest of factors which contribute towards significance. The factors could include age, condition, rarity, streetscape value, etc; scoring in this manner is considered to introduce an element of subjectivity into a criteria system. Other authorities use the criteria for the designation of listed building but introduce a lower threshold in architectural or historic interest; this methodology does not fully acknowledge locally interesting sites and buildings and their contribution to the historic environment. The selection method and criteria proposed are considered to be the most appropriate for the district.

7.0 Implications

7.1 Financial and Resource Implications

The costs of undertaking this review has been met from the existing budgets.

Comments checked by:
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7.2 Legal Implications

To support compliance with Paragraph 190 of the National Planning Policy Guidance

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8.0 Decision Information

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

To preserve what is special
To protect quality of life

Lead Councillor

Councillor Phil Bignell – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Non-Designated Heritage Assets Selection Criteria
Background Papers	
West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy South Northamptonshire Local Plan (Part 2) Submission Draft National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance Local Heritage Listing – Historic England Advice Note 7	
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