

# Cabinet Report

Report of Head of Planning

Author: Samantha Allen

Telephone: 07717 274692

E-mail: [samantha.allen@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:samantha.allen@southandvale.gov.uk)

Wards affected: Blewbury and Harwell Ward

Cabinet member responsible: Cllr Andy Foulsham

E-mail: [andy.foulsham@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:andy.foulsham@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

To: CABINET

Date: 28 June 2024

## Blewbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Boundary Review Adoption

### Recommendation(s)

(a) That the Blewbury Conservation Area boundary is adopted as per the proposed revisions shown at Appendix 1.

(b) That the Blewbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as amended following public consultation is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as part of the Development Plan evidence and is a material planning consideration.

(c) To delegate to the Head of Planning in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member to make minor changes, typographical corrections or non-material amendments to the Blewbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan document prior to formal publication and statutory notification requirements.

Implications (further detail within the report)	Financial	Legal	Climate and Ecological	Equality and diversity
	No	No	No	No
Signing off officer	Damon Cotterill	Pat Connell	Chloe Bunting	Abi Witting

### Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the representations received during the public consultation on the draft Blewbury Conservation Area Appraisal and

Boundary Review and to detail the changes that have been made to the document as a result in order to seek formal adoption of the boundary and associated document.

## **Corporate Objectives**

2. The Appraisal accords with 2020-2024 Corporate Objectives 1 (Providing the homes people need) and 3 (Building healthy communities). The document also forms part of the development plan evidence base supporting the preservation and enhancement of the district's historic environment.

## **Background**

### **Purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Boundary Review**

3. Under Sections 69 & 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local authorities have a duty to designate conservation areas and from time to time to review the boundaries. Such areas are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. The Blewbury Conservation Area Appraisal Document is the mechanism by which the local authority defines the special interest of the area, and the boundary was reviewed during the writing of the document.
4. Blewbury Parish Council commissioned a review of the designated conservation area and production of an Appraisal and Management Plan.
5. Officers were satisfied that the draft document and proposed boundary extension met with the tests of Historic England's guidance for Conservation Area designation and appraisal and the draft documents were issued for a public consultation.
6. Internal consultation with DM and Policy colleagues took place in June 2023 and two comments were received correcting web page links, policy references and simplifying the language in the management plan section.
7. A four-week period of public consultation commenced on Wednesday 5 July 2023, closing on Wednesday 2 August 2023. Hard copies of the document were provided at Blewbury Post Office. We were assisted with the advertising of the consultation by a liaising parish councillor.
8. This consultation period was extended an additional four weeks until 30 August to account for several key stakeholders which we had not contacted directly at the outset.
9. Under Section 71 of the above act, we have exercised our duty to formulate and produce proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area. The appraisal document once adopted will form part of the evidence base for the Development Plan. It should be used in the development management process to manage positive change within the designated conservation area or its setting to minimise harm and encourage preservation or enhancement.

### **Statement of Consultation Methodology**

10. This SPD has been prepared and consulted upon in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (Dec 2022).

11. Appended to this statement is a full Consultation Report (Appendix 2) which outlines the methodology for consultation in accordance with the requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (Regulation 13), the full results and how these were reviewed.
12. The Consultation Report summarises how relevant issues have been addressed and supports the proposed adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Blewbury as an SPD in accordance with Regulation 14 of the above regulations.

### **Summary of the Appraisal Document and alterations to the Proposed Boundary**

13. This document has been commissioned and produced by Blewbury Parish Council following on from work undertaken as part of their Neighbourhood Plan. The conservation team have reviewed draft versions of the document and advised on changes necessary to ensure the content is appropriate and compliant with current good practice for the production of appraisal and management plans as well as being consistent with council documents. The Conservation Team recognise the work undertaken by Blewbury Parish Council and support the adoption of the appraisal.
14. The document provides a summary of the history of Blewbury and its development, an assessment of its historic and architectural interest, a gazetteer of local interest buildings (non-listed structures) and illustrative maps showing various details of spatial and character analysis. The consultation draft can be viewed on the Council's website here: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/planning-and-development/building-conservation-and-design/conservation-areas/review-of-the-blewbury-conservation-area/>
15. During a review of the existing Conservation Area boundary, the Parish Council have identified areas that are of sufficient interest and significance to be considered for inclusion within the designated boundary (see map at Appendix 1). The Conservation Team have also reviewed the proposed areas for inclusion and are in agreement with the Parish Council that these areas meet the tests to be included in the designated area and support the proposed revisions to the existing boundary.

### **Proposed changes to the Designated Boundary**

16. There are two areas where the existing Conservation Area Boundary is proposed for revision. The proposals are shown at Appendix 1.
  - Addition to add mature trees and four properties around the junction of Church End and Westbrook Street.
  - Adjustments to conform the boundary with the rear property lines of several properties on the east side of South Street.

### **Summary of consultation responses received**

17. In total, 19 responses were received during the public consultation period. This is made up of 9 responses via the online survey, 9 responses via email, and one taken by telephone. Further detail and the list of responses can be found at Appendix 2.

18. Overall, the responses received were generally supportive of the content of the document. Summaries of the changes made as a result of the comments are detailed below.

### **Proposed changes to the consultation version of the Appraisal Document**

19. The draft appraisal document will be updated to reflect the outcome of the public consultation. Specifically, Section 1 will be updated with the dates of consultation and outcome of adoption and more up-to-date photographs will replace older ones to reflect recent developments.
20. As a result of ongoing discussions, aided by feedback provided by respondents, it was agreed to scale back the extent of the proposed northern boundary extension. Following further consideration, it was found that the modern bungalows on Church End and the areas of Mockbeggars farmyard outside of the present boundary were not of sufficient historic interest to merit conservation area designation. Likewise, the areas of open space north of these had some local heritage value but were found not to meet the tests for designation. These areas are no longer proposed to be added to the designated conservation area, as shown on the map, Appendix 1 with this noted in the revised document.
21. In recognition of their local heritage value, the areas associated with the historic Blewbury Manor Farm and Quaker Burial Ground are proposed to be identified as Areas of Special Local Character, a type of non-designated heritage asset. This recognises their local value but does not change their statutory status. Details on this can be found at the end of Appendix D of the revised appraisal document.
22. There are no other major changes anticipated to the document.

### **Options**

23. There are three options for Cabinet:

- 1) To find that the Blewbury Conservation Area as proposed to be extended is of special architectural and historic interest and designate the whole area as a conservation area and adopt the accompanying appraisal.
- 2) To find that the Blewbury Conservation Area as proposed to be extended is not of special architectural and historic interest and not to extend the designated area, leaving the existing boundary as the designated conservation area.
- 3) To find that there is an area of special architectural and historic interest that extends beyond the existing boundary but that it should be different to that proposed. Having identified and justified the difference to designate that area the conservation area.

24. Based upon officers' assessment of Blewbury as presented in the Conservation Area Appraisal and the responses received during public consultation, it is recommended that the proposed extension to the boundary is adopted and the whole area is designated Blewbury Conservation Area together with adopting the accompanying Appraisal, which is in line with Option (1) above and the Recommendations made at the beginning of this report.

## **Financial Implications**

25. The process of designating a conservation area entails a small external cost to advertise the designation of a new boundary to meet the statutory notification requirements as described in the legal implications section below.
26. Dwellings within the proposed extension once designated would be required to apply for planning permission for certain works that no longer benefit from permitted development rights. In the case of these proposed changes this affects 4 properties.
27. There could be a modest increase in work to the council arising from the processing of those applications but some of the cost of processing these applications would be recovered from the planning fee. Additionally, there may be a small increase in overall workload for the service that might not be recovered because some cases will be more complex than average. However, having regard to the low number of additional properties that the extension would cover, this impact is likely to be very modest relative to annual workloads.
28. The modest costs associated with the above points will be met from existing Planning budgets.

## **Legal Implications**

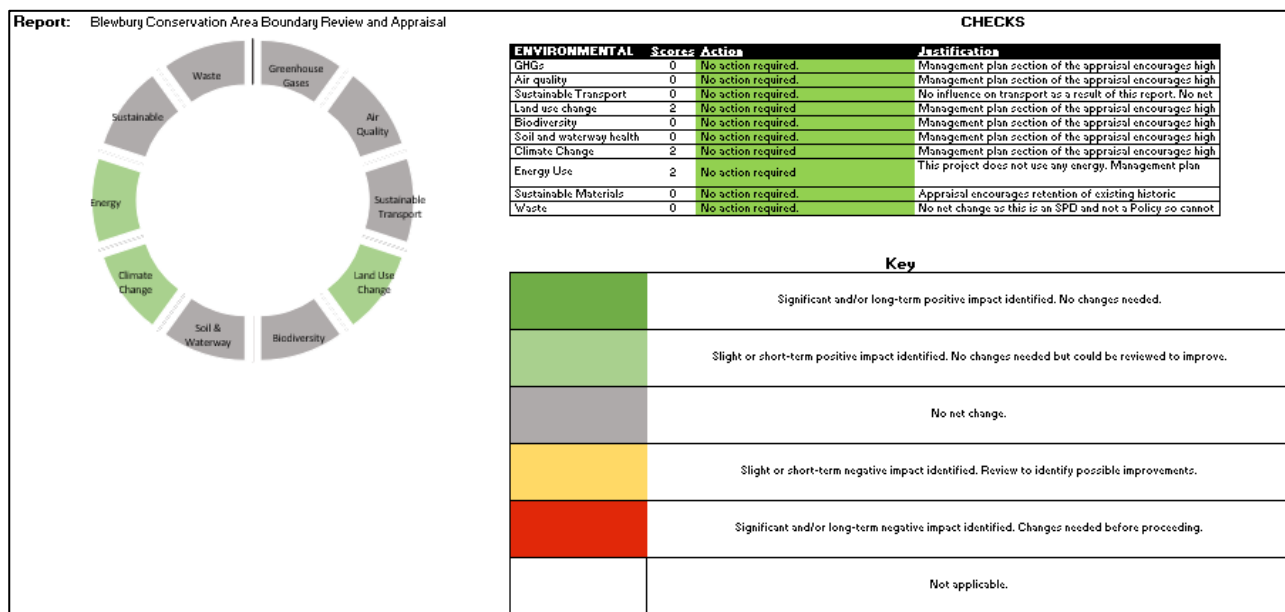
29. The Appraisal meets the Council's obligations required by the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Under Sections 69 and 71 of the Act, the Council should review conservation area boundaries from time-to-time and formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas. This Appraisal for Blewbury forms part of the Council's rolling programme of providing conservation area appraisals for all its designated conservation areas.
30. The principal legal effect of the designation of an area as a conservation area is control over demolition of buildings (including structures classed as buildings in planning legislation) and control over works to trees. In determining applications, the council also has a duty under the Planning Acts to have regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area and there are less generous permitted development rights, under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.
31. The Act requires that the designation of a new conservation area or variation to it be advertised in the London Gazette, a local newspaper and registered as a local land charge. The Secretary of State (DCMS) and Historic England will also be notified.

## **Climate and ecological impact implications**

32. There are no anticipated negative climate or ecological implications as a result of the proposed boundary revision or appraisal document.
33. The management plan section of the document encourages high quality and energy efficient designs to combat climate change for all proposed development within the conservation area.

34. Conservation Area designation also specifically increases protection of trees over a certain size. Trees along the Church End verge will benefit from this added protection.

35. Results of Climate Impact Assessment Tool provided below:



## Equalities implications

36. In making decisions the council is required to have regard to its equalities duties and in particular to those set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and eliminate any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic namely age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, and persons who do not share it and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

37. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and there are no implications identified. Following screening, an Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this Conservation Area Appraisal document. The document is a supplementary guide to existing planning policy and statutory designation with no negative impact on associated policies, service users or employees. The document has been produced to be as accessible as possible.

## Risks

38. No strategic or operational risks associated with the matters covered in this report have been identified

## Other implications

39. No other implications have been identified.

## **Conclusion**

40. Having regard to the evidence collected and presented in the Blewbury Conservation Area Appraisal and to the responses received during consultation, it is recommended that the Blewbury Conservation Area boundary is amended as shown at Appendix 1. It is also recommended that the Conservation Area Appraisal document is adopted for development management purposes. This is in line with the Recommendations made at the beginning of this report.

## **Background Papers**

- Appendix 1: Blewbury Conservation Area Proposed Boundary Map
- Appendix 2: Consultation Report, to be sent under a separate cover

# Appendix 1: Blewbury Conservation Area Proposed Boundary Map

