

**Report for:** Cabinet 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015

**Item number:** 17

**Title:** Draft Noel Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

**Report authorised by :** Stephen Kelly, Assistant Director, Planning

**Lead Officer:** Nairita Chakraborty, Principal Conservation Officer (x2841)

**Ward(s) affected:** Noel Park

**Report for Key/  
Non Key Decision:** Non key

## **1. Describe the issue under consideration**

1.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the draft Noel Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, attached at Appendix 1, for a six week public consultation. The draft Management Plan has been updated to reflect comments made by Regulatory Committee meeting on 21 September 2015. The final amended character appraisal and management plan, having regard to any representations received, will be referred back to Cabinet for adoption by the Council in early 2016.

## **2. Cabinet Member Introduction**

2.1 The draft Noel Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan follows guidance published by Historic England. It covers the historical context of the area and provides an assessment of the area's character and special interest. It addresses planning policy and development management issues and provides design guidance. It also includes a review of the boundaries of the conservation area and a recommendation that the boundaries of both the conservation area and Article 4 Direction are extended. If there is residents' support for the two recommendations, separate processes would be followed to extend the conservation area boundary as well as the Article 4 direction and cabinet will receive a further report about this in due course.

2.2 The character appraisal supports the Council's existing Local Plan Strategic Policies and emerging development management policies, and does not seek to introduce new policy.

- 2.3 Whilst very high in architectural quality, many buildings within Noel Park have been altered poorly with insensitive additions. In many cases, original details have been lost that has led to further loss of character. Despite the Article 4 Direction, the Council has been unable to enforce against many of these insensitive alterations, mainly due to lack of resources. The conservation area has also been included in Historic England's At Risk Register.
- 2.4 Recognising these issues, the Council along with support from Historic England considered working with the community to produce an Appraisal and Management Plan under the Community Heritage Initiative Partnership (CHIP). Officers have also worked closely with Homes for Haringey during this time to ensure that the work undertaken by Decent Homes Programme is sensitive towards the character of the area. The document thus produced has been in close liaison with residents, Homes for Haringey and Historic England.
- 2.5 The Conservation Area Appraisal seeks to clearly identify those elements that make the area special and provide further guidance to residents, members and agents on how to alter and upgrade their properties sensitively so that the character of the area is not further eroded. It would also provide the Council a valuable tool to enforce against unauthorised works.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 That Cabinet approves the draft Noel Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, attached at Appendix 1, for a six-week public consultation.

### **4. Reasons for decision**

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that conservation areas are preserved or enhanced and publish policies for the implementation of the same. The various insensitive alterations within the area have resulted in the conservation area being included in Historic England's 'At Risk' register. It is therefore important that the Council publishes this appraisal along with the management plan to ensure that the significance of the area is preserved or enhanced.

### **5. Alternative options considered**

- 5.1 The draft Appraisal explores the possibility of leaving the boundaries of the conservation area and the area covered by the Article 4 Direction as they currently are. Given the fact that the area proposed to be included is contemporary with the Noel Park Estate and has the same architectural and historic significance, it was considered that it should be recommended to be a part of the conservation area and given the same protection as the rest of the area. In addition, given the cumulative impact of the loss of architectural

detailing, it is imperative that a consistent control over such alterations is implemented across the whole of the conservation area. It is, therefore, recommended to extend the Article 4 direction (which removes permitted development rights to alterations to the front of the property only).

- 5.2 It should be noted that if the proposal for extension of the conservation area and the extension of Article 4 directions is taken forward, Cabinet approval would be sought to undertake the respective legal processes.

## 6. Background information

- 6.1 There are 29 conservation areas in Haringey, designated over a period of 45 years, of which 13 have adopted character appraisals. Noel Park was designated as a conservation area in 1982. An Article 4 direction was implemented in 1983, restricting permitted development (PD) rights to the front of the properties. The conservation area was extended in 1991 to cover most of the original estate, but the Article 4 Direction was not extended at this time and currently only applies to part of the conservation area.
- 6.2 The Council has a statutory requirement to '*...formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas*' under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Conservation area character appraisals are primary evidence-based documents which aid the implementation of approved development plan policies for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.
- 6.3 It is important to stress that a character appraisal or management plan **cannot introduce new policy**. The purpose of the appraisal and management plan is to provide a clear indication of the Council's approach to the preservation and enhancement of the Noel Park conservation area, as well as supplement existing planning policy already set out in the Local Plan.
- 6.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued by the Government in March 2012 requires local planning authorities to set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. In this regard, character appraisals are primary guidance which define the special character of conservation areas, and identify what is of special architectural and historic interest within them.
- 6.5 The Council's strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment takes into account the desirability of new development that makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. This position is

reflected in the Council's adopted UDP and emerging Local Plan Strategic Policies.

- 6.6 The emerging Development Management Plan Policies (anticipated for adoption by 2016) states that the preservation and enhancement of historic environment should be given highest regard as per statutory duty and should be used as the basis for good design and positive change. All new development should be of the highest standard of design that respects its local context, character and historic significance.
- 6.7 An adopted character appraisal provides a sound basis, defensible on appeal, to implement the Council's approved development plan policies and to inform development management decisions. The appraisal is for the use of local residents, community groups, businesses, property owners, architects and developers and is an aid to the formulation and design of development proposals and change in this particular area. The document will be used by the Council in the assessment of all development proposals.
- 6.8 An adopted character appraisal is taken into account by the Planning Inspectorate when it considers and determines planning appeals. The character appraisal is also helpful to those considering investing in the area, and can be used to guide the form and scale of new development proposals. When funding was sought for grant aid schemes, such as the Townscape Heritage Initiative at Bruce Grove, Tottenham, an adopted character appraisal was essential to demonstrate the value of the area.

#### Structure of the Noel Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

- 6.9 The Noel Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been written to reflect the framework set out in *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*, published by Historic England in March 2011. A brief structure of the appraisal and the issues it addresses is set out below:
- a) **Introduction:** the background and aims of the study, general identity and character of Noel Park Conservation Area and details of its designation;
  - b) **Summary of special interest:** a vivid, succinct picture of the overall conservation area as it is today;
  - c) **Community based partnership:** details of the Community Heritage Initiative Partnership;
  - d) **Location and setting:** the context of Noel Park within the wider settlement and landscape;
  - e) **Origin and Development:** The history of the area and its development up to the present day;

f) **Character Assessment**

An overall assessment of the current character and appearance of the area, including;

- Townscape analysis
- Layout and plan form
- Architectural character
- Hierarchy of streets
- Boundary treatments
- Uses within the area
- Public Realm
- Trees and open space
- Views
- Positive contributors
- Negative contributors

g) **Problems, issues and opportunities:** alterations to properties, subdivision of properties, poor quality public realm, opportunity for boundary review, opportunity to upgrade some properties through the decent homes programme, opportunity for public realm enhancements;

h) **Management plan and design guidance:** details of the council's plans for the management of the area, including:

- Boundary review: proposals to extend the boundaries of the conservation area and Article 4 Direction;
- The planning process: the council's approach to planning decisions and enforcement; and
- Design guide: guidance on how to repair and maintain buildings and how to alter them sensitively.

Please see the Appendix 1 for the draft Noel Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

### Community Involvement and Public Consultation

6.10 The appraisal has been produced as part of a Community Heritage Initiative Partnership in collaboration with Historic England, aimed at encouraging the local community to better understand their historic surroundings, and engaging with the issues around the future management of the area. The process involved a training workshop for volunteers including representatives from various amenity and conservation societies, the appointment of a group of stakeholders as a steering group who undertook survey work, and then a review of the draft document by stakeholders prior to the formal consultation period.

Their observations, where consistent with current planning policy and guidance, have been included in the draft appraisal.

- 6.11 Public consultation of this draft appraisal will be undertaken in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The Council will notify all residents on its database, and will issue a press notice. Paper copies of the draft appraisal will be issued to the Wood Green Central Library. It will be published on the Council's website, accompanied by an electronic feedback form to facilitate responses to the Council. A six-week period of public consultation is proposed.
- 6.12 The final character appraisal, with any further amendments, will be referred back to Cabinet in early 2016 for adoption by the Council, together with a report to Cabinet detailing how the input from the community has been evaluated and how it has been taken into account in informing the final character appraisal.

## **7. Contribution to strategic outcomes**

- 7.1 The Appraisal and Management Plan support the Council's strategic objective 3 (A clean and well maintained and safe borough where people are proud to live and work) by providing a document that in collaboration with resident stake holder groups highlights the architectural and significance of the area. It also gives guidance on how the area can be maintained and enhanced in the future for our future generations to enjoy.

## **8. Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)**

### Finance and Procurement

- 8.1 Any costs associated with publication of the adopted character appraisal will be contained within existing approved budgets for Planning Policy & Design.

### Assistant Director of Corporate Governance and legal implications

- 8.2 The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance has been consulted on the preparation of this report and comments as follows.
- 8.3 Local planning authorities are under a duty to formulate and publish proposals for the enhancement of conservation areas under section 71 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The power to vary and extend the nature and extent of a conservation area is provided for in sections 69 and 70 thereof and there are associated notification requirements to be complied with. Where the local planning authority publishes proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are existing conservation areas those proposals shall be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate and the local planning authority shall have regard to

any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.

- 8.4 The procedure for making and extending Article 4 Directions is contained in Schedule 3 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.
- 8.5 The Cabinet will need, following a report back at the conclusion of the consultation exercise, to consider the proposals in light of the requirements for not only conservation areas but also Article 4 Directions and provide any necessary authority to action any agreed proposals.

### Equality

- 8.6 Equality Impact Assessment would not be required for this report as this does not introduce any policy.

## **9. Use of Appendices**

Appendix 1: Draft Noel Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan for consultation

## **10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

- a) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- b) Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2105
- c) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), March, 2012;
- d) Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5 Practice Guide, English Heritage, March 2010;
- e) Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, English Heritage, March 2011.