



Historic England

By email only to:

Our ref: PL00707442

Your ref:

Date: 05/08/2020

Dear Sir or Madam

Refined Issues and Options Consultation for the next Local Plan

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on the above document. As the government's adviser on the historic environment, Historic England is keen to ensure that protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all levels and stages of the local planning process. This letter contains the following sections:

- Historic England's published guidance
- Evidence base
- Sustainability appraisal
- A positive strategy for the historic environment
- Development management policies
- Site allocations

Historic England's published guidance

Historic England has published planning advice which we recommend that you review as part of your plan preparation.

Good practice advice

- The Historic Environment in Local Plans <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa1-historic-environment-local-plans/>
- Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa2-managing-significance-in-decision-taking/gpa2.pdf/>
- The Setting of Heritage Assets <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/gpa3.pdf/>
- Enabling Development <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa4-enabling-development-heritage-assets/>



Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.
Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



Historic England advice notes

- Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-designation-appraisal-management-advice-note-1/>
- Making Changes to Heritage Assets <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/making-changes-heritage-assets-advice-note-2/>
- The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/historic-environment-and-site-allocations-in-local-plans/>
- Tall Buildings <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/tall-buildings-advice-note-4/>
- Local Heritage Listing <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/>
- Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>

All Historic England advice should be read alongside our Conservation Principles, which underpin our work <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/constructive-conservation/conservation-principles/>

Evidence base

The evidence base for the plan should be proportionate, comprehensive and robust. Sources include:

- National Heritage List for England www.historicengland.org.uk/the-list/
- Heritage Gateway www.heritagegateway.org.uk
- Historic environment records
- National and local heritage at risk registers www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk
- Non-designated or locally listed heritage assets (buildings, monuments, parks and gardens, areas)
- Conservation area appraisals and management plans
- Historic characterisation assessments e.g. the extensive urban surveys and historic landscape characterisation programmes or more local documents. www.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/EUS/
- Environmental capacity studies for historic towns and cities or for historic areas
- Detailed historic characterisation work assessing impact of specific proposals.
- Heritage impact assessments looking into significance and setting
- Green Belt studies
- Visual impact assessments
- Archaeological assessments
- Topic papers



Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy. Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



Where proposed sites are located in areas of known archaeological potential, weight should be given to this as a consideration in site selection and the comparison with alternate locations. We encourage close liaison with the county archaeologist at site allocation stage.

Conservation areas

Conservation areas are more effective as policy tool where they are supported by up-to-date appraisals and management plans. The NPPF states that "The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence." Therefore, plan makers should consider whether new or updated evidence on conservation areas is needed to support the plan. This should identify each conservation area's local identity and distinctiveness, identify features that typify and contribute to its special distinctiveness and consider wider setting. The plan will be more robust where it directs future development to take account of the special and distinctive character of conservation areas.

Listed buildings

Listed buildings include a variety of structures reflecting the area's architectural, industrial and cultural heritage. We will look for policies that carefully consider the preservation and, where appropriate, enhancement of these assets and their settings.

In some instances, a full consideration of setting may require close co-operation with adjoining authorities. Where relevant, we will seek evidence of cross-boundary co-operation in the evidence base.

We also encourage a policy that addresses the potential listing over the plan period of as yet unidentified heritage assets that further demonstrate the development and activity of the town and its inhabitants.

Registered parks and gardens

As a distinct category of heritage asset with a separate legal basis for protection, the most appropriate approach to registered parks and gardens is to have a bespoke policy. This is often more effective at providing an indication to decision-makers of how they should consider registered parks and gardens, as distinct from other heritage assets.

Setting

We expect to see appropriate references to setting in policies. The starting point for assessing the impact of development on the setting of an asset is to understand the significance of the asset. This will usually require a heritage specialist. This involves more than identifying known heritage assets within a given distance, but rather a more holistic process which seeks to understand their significance and value. Whilst a useful starting point, a focus on distance or visibility alone as a gauge is not appropriate.



- See also, the baseline information section within sustainability appraisal, below

As set out in GPA1, this is not simply an exercise in setting out known sites but, rather, in understanding the value to society (i.e. the significance) of sites both known and unknown.

A positive strategy for the historic environment

Paragraph 185 of the NPPF requires local plans to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.

A good strategy will offer a positive approach throughout the whole plan whereby the historic environment is considered not just as a standalone topic but as an integral part of the plan. Site allocations may need to refer to the historic environment, identifying opportunities to conserve and enhance the historic environment, avoid harming heritage assets and their settings and positively address heritage assets at risk, as appropriate. The plan may need to include areas identified as being inappropriate for certain types of development due to the impact on the historic environment.

A good strategy will also be spatially specific, unique to the area, describing the local characteristics of the area and responding accordingly with policies that address the local situation. We would expect references to the historic environment in vision, the inclusion of a policy or policies for the historic environment and character of the landscape and built environment, and various other references to the historic environment through the plan relating to the unique characteristics of the area.

Strategic policies

Strategic policies are a very important part of the plan, particularly given the need for neighbourhood plans to be in conformity with these policies. Paragraph 20 of the NPPF makes it clear that, 'Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for...conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure...' Therefore we would recommend the inclusion of a strategic policy that addresses these matters. References to the historic environment will also be needed in non-strategic policies, including both those related primarily to the historic environment and other issues, as set out below.

Development management policies

Archaeology

We welcome specific provision for the protection and enhancement of archaeology as well as emphasis that sites of archaeological importance can occur everywhere. We encourage clear guidance on expectations for archaeological recording and the submission of records with an appropriate public record (e.g. Historic Environment Records) for archaeological remains that are not to be retained in situ.



Heritage at risk

We recommend the inclusion of a policy basis to address heritage at risk. We also recommend the creation and management of a local *heritage at risk register* for grade II listed buildings, as the National Heritage at Risk Register only applies to grades I and II* assets. Similarly, we welcome positive local solutions for addressing all heritage at risk, whether nationally or locally identified. The National Heritage at Risk Register can be found and searched here by local authority:
www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk

Historic England has published guidance pertaining to local listing which you may find helpful: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/>

Non-designated heritage assets

In national policy terms, 'non-designated heritage assets' (including those on a local list) are recognised as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Government guidance recognises that local lists and local criteria for identifying non-designated heritage assets can help with decision-making:
<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/what-are-non-designated-heritage-assets-and-how-important-are-they/>

We would recommend that as a minimum, criteria for identifying non-designated heritage assets is included in the plan, with a local list of assets. Robust provision for these heritage assets will increase the soundness of the plan.

Design

We strongly encourage provision for the historic environment throughout the plan, not solely within heritage focused policies. Most particularly, we seek a specific requirement for consideration of the historic environment within the design policies of the plan, which should seek to draw on opportunities offered by the historic environment and reflect local character and distinctiveness. This should not stymie contemporary development but should require an appreciation of the significance and character of the historic environment in producing a high standard of design. We would also welcome this in relation to any tall buildings policies.

Landscape and streetscape

Landscape

Landscape character assessments, particularly regarding major developments, should include assessment of the landscape value relating to scheduled monuments and their settings. The historic environment has an important role to play in understanding the landscape. Many tracks, green lanes, field boundaries and settlement patterns are remnants of past use and provide evidence of how the landscape has evolved. The objective of protecting and enhancing the landscape



and recognition of its links to cultural heritage can help improve how the historic environment is experienced and enjoyed.

Streetscape

Consideration of streetscape, particularly given the issues of connectivity and traffic management is an important issue. For streetscape improvements we would refer you to Historic England's Streets for All publications <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/streets-for-all/>. These documents provide updated practical advice for anyone involved in planning and implementing highways and other public realm works in sensitive historic locations. It sets out means to improve public spaces without harming their valued character, including specific recommendations for works to surfaces, street furniture, new equipment, traffic management infrastructure and environmental improvements.

The advice draws on the experience of Historic England's planning teams in the development of highways and public realm schemes. Case studies show where highways works and other public realm schemes have successfully integrated with and enhanced areas of historic or architectural sensitivity.

Please also see our advice for highways engineers and designers:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/streets-for-all/highway-engineers-and-designers/>.

Historic shop fronts

The retention of historic or significant shop fronts is often integral to the character of these buildings and that of the wider street scene. The local plan should highlight the importance of retaining or restoring historic shop front features. This is both in terms of the positive contribution historic shop fronts make to the character of an area, but also the economic benefit of providing traditional and bespoke shopping units to shop owners. A good example of how historic shop fronts can positively contribute to an area both aesthetically and economically is where Derby City Council teamed up with Historic England to help restore an area of Victorian and Edwardian shops (The Strand). The restoration of a number of shops within the area has meant that a previously underused part of the city now provides bespoke shopping, has a much larger footfall and is considered to be a national success. The council has also seen a ripple effect of surrounding properties being restored.

Green Belt

One of the five purposes of the Green Belt is to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns. Historic towns (this also applies to historic cities) are situated across the region and should form a consideration in any review of Green Belt. An appreciation of the history of the region's historic settlements and their relationship to their surrounding landscapes is required in order to understand the setting and special character of historic towns.

Whilst Green Belt reviews often divide the area into parcels of land to make the assessment exercise manageable, parcels should not be solely reviewed individually within their immediate context, as the chosen size of the parcels is likely to skew



results. More accurate results are likely to come from assessing Green Belt performance of the whole area as a starting point, then refining the assessment based on significant natural and built landscape features (i.e. significant features would be valleys and hills rather than field boundaries).

Green infrastructure

Landscapes, parks, open spaces and routes often have heritage interest, and it would be helpful to highlight this. It is important to consider green infrastructure not only in terms of the natural environment, health and recreation, but also the role it can play in conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Green infrastructure can improve the setting of heritage assets and improve access. Heritage assets can also contribute to the quality of green spaces by helping to create a sense of place and a tangible link with local history. Green infrastructure networks can be linked to existing green spaces in historic spaces such as church yards to improve the setting of historic buildings or historic townscapes. The maintenance of green infrastructure networks and spaces should also be considered so that they continue to serve as high quality places which remain beneficial in the long term.

Climate change and renewable energy

We invite a specific policy relating to the inclusion of renewable technologies within conservation areas and with regard to historic buildings and the wider historic landscape. A sustainable approach should secure a balance between the benefits that such development delivers and the environmental costs it incurs. The policy should seek to limit and mitigate any such cost to the historic environment.

Listed buildings, buildings in conservation areas and scheduled monuments are exempt from the need to comply with energy efficiency requirements of the Building Regulations where compliance would unacceptably alter their character and appearance. Special considerations under Part L are also given to locally listed buildings, buildings of architectural and historic interest within registered parks and gardens and the curtilages of scheduled monuments, and buildings of traditional construction with permeable fabric that both absorbs and readily allows the evaporation of moisture.

In developing policy covering this area you may find the Historic England guidance *Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings – Application of Part L of the Building Regulations to Historically and Traditionally Constructed Buildings* <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/energy-efficiency-historic-buildings-ptl/heag014-energy-efficiency-partl.pdf> to be helpful in understanding these special considerations.

Site Allocations

General

When mapping heritage assets, it is important to recognise that simply identifying assets on a map will not fully show the potential impact of development on the historic environment. This is for two main reasons: while databases show areas of



archaeological potential, it is never possible to know the full extent of archaeology. Therefore, while we can anticipate where we are more likely to encounter archaeological artefacts, there is always the possibility of new finds in unexpected areas. The level of archaeological assessment or investigation will therefore need to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Significance is what makes an asset worthy of protection. Significance a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values that can be ascribed to a place. A full appreciation of the significance of a heritage asset is likely to require the skills of an expert. Therefore, simply plotting an asset on a map is unlikely to be sufficient.

Where there is uncertainty about the precise way in which a site could be developed, this can make it difficult to assess the full impact on the historic environment. Supporting information should be sufficient to make an appropriate level of assessment, through the plan-making process. The greater the level of detail in how a site should be developed, the easier it is to assess the impact on the historic environment. We encourage the use of detailed sites requirements as part of the allocation policy and where appropriate, development briefs and masterplans. There is a danger to both heritage assets and potential developers of allocating sites without sufficient guidance on the issues that need to be addressed at the planning application stage. The significance of heritage assets, and the potential impact of allocations on that significance, will need to be fully understood and justified as early as reasonably practicable in the plan-making process.

The cumulative impact of a number of site allocations in one location could also cause considerable harm to the historic landscape/townscape.

Assessing sites

Our advice note 3 on site allocations in local plans sets out a suggested approach to assessing sites and their impact on heritage assets. It advocates a number of steps, including understanding what contribution a site makes to the significance of heritage assets, and identifying what impact the allocation might have on significance. This could be applied to the assessment and selecting of sites within a plan.

In essence, it is important that you

- a) Identify any heritage assets that may be affected by the potential site allocation
- b) Understand what contribution the site makes to the significance of the asset
- c) Identify what impact the allocation might have on that significance
- d) Consider how to maximise enhancements and avoid harm
- e) Determine whether the proposed allocation is appropriate in light of the NPPF tests of soundness

In assessing sites it is important to identify those sites which are inappropriate for development and also to assess the potential capacity of the site in the light of any historic environment (and other) factors.

If a site proposed for allocation, we would expect to see reference in the policy and supporting text to the need to conserve and seek opportunities to enhance any





heritage assets that would be affected by the development, including their setting, the need for high quality design and any other factors relevant to the historic environment and the site in question.

If you have any queries about any of the matters raised above or would like to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Historic Environment Planning Adviser



Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.
Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.

