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NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS AND HERITAGE

Shane Gould, Local Government and National Infrastructure Advisor at Historic England explains how to prepare a heritage-aware neighbourhood plan

The historic environment is the legacy of thousands of years of human activity in the form of buildings, monuments, settlements and landscapes. People value their local heritage, and neighbourhood plans can help in its conservation, using local character to guide future development.

What information is needed, and where can it be found?

A sound evidence base is essential, including information on how a place has developed, how its heritage can contribute in future, and what needs to be done to conserve or enhance it. Local authority Historic Environment Records are important resources for identifying what there is and why it is important, and many can be accessed online (www.heritagegateway.org.uk). Information on nationally-important listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, and registered battlefields can be found on the National Heritage List for England www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/.

It is advisable to speak to the local authority conservation officer and the local authority archaeological advisory service (often provided by the County Council), who manage the Historic Environment Record and provide advice on archaeological matters, on how to incorporate heritage in neighbourhood plans.

How can you properly capture heritage in your plan?

- An analysis of the historic character and its contribution to the appearance of the place
- The identification of any nationally and locally designated heritage assets, and sites of local importance
- Environmental issues the plan seeks to address
- Policies to protect heritage assets, their settings and views, and historic environment considerations to be taken into account when developing sites
- Guidance to encourage locally distinctive development
- Opportunities to conserve, repair and bring heritage assets back into use, especially those that are at risk
- Opportunities for use of heritage assets to generate social, economic or environmental benefits
- The possibility of new or revised conservation areas together with conservation area appraisals, the need for a local heritage list or local buildings at risk survey

How can Historic England help?

Historic England has a statutory role in the neighbourhood planning process and is likely to get involved in those plans which affect heritage sites and areas of the greatest importance, that are sensitive to change or at risk, and where our limited resources can have the greatest impact. We also have to be consulted on all neighbourhood development orders and community right to build orders.

If you are not sure whether Historic England needs to be involved, we advise you to contact our relevant office as early in the process as possible (www.historicengland.org.uk/about/contact-us/local-offices/).

We have also prepared further guidance on neighbourhood planning and the historic environment: www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-your-neighbourhood/.

Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan Committee Workshop



✓ Heritage Checklist

1. Does the plan have a clear vision and strategy for the historic environment, and are the key conservation issues identified?
2. Does the plan record all heritage assets?
3. As part of the evidence gathering have you consulted your local Historic Environment Record?
4. Has consideration been given to Historic England's 'Heritage at Risk Register', local authority buildings at risk registers and whether proposals in the plan can use these assets?
5. What are the opportunities to protect, enhance, and improve the understanding and appreciation of the historic environment?
6. How can the historic environment be used to help shape and inform future development in the area?
7. How can the contribution of the area's heritage to its economy, social cohesion and environmental quality be sustained and enhanced?
8. What impact will the proposals have on heritage assets, their settings and local character?
9. Does the plan include specific historic environment policies to address locally specific matters?
10. Do the design policies consider historic or locally distinctive aspects of character?
11. Have proposed site allocations taken proper account of heritage assets (including setting) in both selecting these and through accompanying policies which set out development parameters?
12. Have you discussed your plan proposals with the local authority heritage specialists and, if appropriate and necessary, Historic England as early in the process as possible?