

# Cabinet Report



Listening Learning Leading

Report of Head of Planning Author: Samantha Allen Telephone: 01235 422600 E-mail: samantha.allen@southoxon.gov.uk Wards affected: Kidmore End and Whitchurch	
South Cabinet member responsible: Anne-Marie Simpson E-mail: Anne-Marie.Simpson@southoxon.gov.uk To: CABINET Date: Thursday 18 December 2025	

## Adoption of the Whitchurch-on-Thames Conservation Area Boundary Review and Appraisal

### Recommendations

- (a) That the Whitchurch-on-Thames Conservation Area boundary is adopted as per the proposed revisions shown at Appendix 1.
- (b) That the Whitchurch-on-Thames 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 Whitchurch-on-Thames 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	James Ticehurst	Pat Connell	Jessie Fieth	Ruth Lewin- Leigh

## **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 Whitchurch-on-Thames 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.

## **Strategic priorities**

2. The appraisal supports the council's strategic priorities. These are:

Financial stability and innovative transformation; Action on climate change and nature recovery; Participation, accessibility, and accountability; Thriving, healthy, and inclusive communities; Homes and infrastructure that meet local needs.

3. 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**

4. 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 Whitchurch-on-Thames 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.
5. Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council commissioned a consultant to undertake a review of the designated conservation area and to produce a draft Appraisal and Management Plan.
6. 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.
7. Internal consultation with DM and Policy colleagues took place in August 2025 and no comments were received.
8. A four-week period of public consultation commenced on Wednesday 10 September 2025, closing on Wednesday 8 October 2025. Hard copies of the document were provided in the village at the Church of St Mary.
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 Whitchurch-on-Thames 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 was drafted by a Heritage Consultant, commissioned by Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council. The heritage team 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 heritage team are grateful for the work of Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council and their consultant to bring forward this draft and support the adoption of the appraisal.
14. The document provides a summary of the history of Whitchurch-on-Thames 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: [Whitchurch-on-Thames Conservation Area Appraisal - Join the conversation - South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse - Citizen Space](#)
15. During a review of the existing Conservation Area boundary, the Consultant on behalf of the Parish Council identified areas that are of sufficient interest and significance to be considered for inclusion within the designated boundary (see map at Appendix 1). The heritage team also reviewed the proposed areas for inclusion and were in agreement that these areas were of historic interest and should be consulted on.

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

16. There are three main changes proposed to the boundary:
  - The addition of land on Hardwick Road east of the existing boundary to include a historic avenue of trees.
  - The removal of the modern dwellings at Old Gardens on the southern side of Manor Road.
  - Corrections of the boundary in three places to follow the property boundaries at Eastfield House, at Pluto and at Chiltern Edge.
17. The proposed boundary is shown at Appendix 1.

## **Summary of consultation responses received**

18. In total, 19 responses were received during the public consultation period. This is made up of 17 responses via the online survey and 2 responses via email. Further detail and the list of responses can be found at Appendix 2.
19. Overall, the responses received were mixed in respect of the proposed boundary revisions. Some of the residents directly impacted by the proposed extension of the boundary along Hardwick Road objected to the addition of the area and raised concerns about the additional controls over works to the trees. More residents responded in support of adding the line of trees noting their historic character and contribution to the green and verdant nature of the village.
20. Whilst there are more controls over trees over a certain size within the conservation area, it is important to note that designation does not prevent works to trees but seeks to ensure that changes are well managed and that if necessary replacement planting can be agreed in certain circumstances. In this case, it is considered that there is a wider benefit to including the historic tree lined area of this part of Hardwick Road to the designated conservation area.
21. Two comments were received suggesting the removal of a pocket of development behind the old Manor House consisting of Old Barn Cottages and a group of modern garages. It is not considered that either of these areas harm the existing special interest of the conservation area and as such it is not proposed to remove them at this time.
22. Other general comments were supportive of the overall document and its content.
23. Summaries of the changes made as a result of the comments are detailed below.

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

24. The draft appraisal document will be updated to reflect the outcome of the public consultation. Specifically, Section 1 and Section 7 will be updated with the dates of consultation and outcome of adoption. Section 7 will also clarify what boundary revisions have been made with additional links provided on where to find advice about caring for trees in the conservation area.
25. There are no other major changes anticipated to the document.

### **Options**

26. There are three options for Cabinet:

- 1) To find that the Whitchurch-on-Thames 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 Whitchurch-on-Thames 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.

27. Based upon officers' assessment of Whitchurch-on-Thames as presented in the Conservation Area Appraisal and the responses received during public consultation, it is recommended that the proposed slightly reduced extension to the boundary is adopted and the whole area is designated Whitchurch-on-Thames 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**

28. The process of designating a conservation area entails a small cost to externally advertise the designation of a new boundary to meet the statutory notification requirements as described in the legal implications section below.
29. No additional dwellings would be added to the boundary. The area of trees to be added would result in new applications made for tree works when necessary which could increase planning work as a result.
30. The modest costs associated with the above points will be met from existing Planning budgets.

## **Legal Implications**

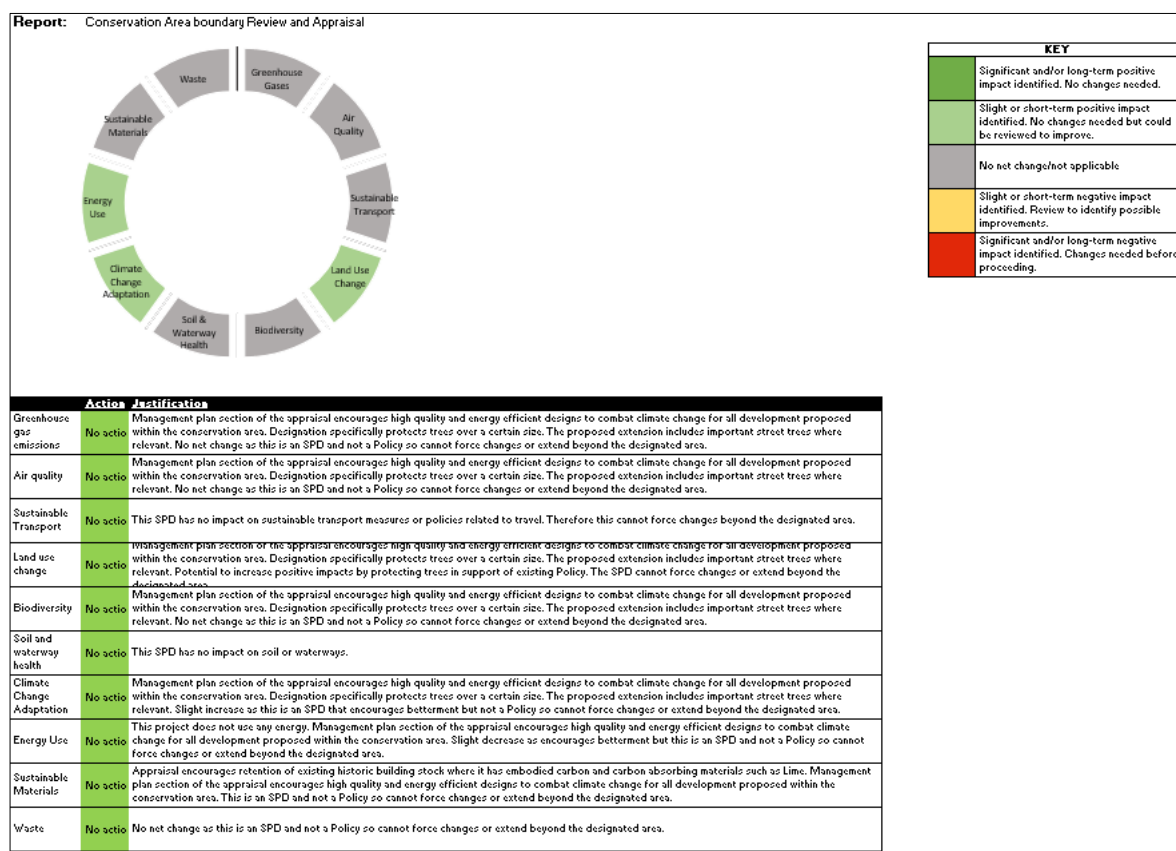
31. The Appraisal meets the Council's obligations required by the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Under Sections 69 and 71 of the Act, the Council should review conservation area boundaries from time-to-time and formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas. This Appraisal for Whitchurch-on-Thames forms part of the Council's rolling programme of providing conservation area appraisals for all its designated conservation areas.
32. 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.
33. 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**

34. There are no anticipated negative climate or ecological implications as a result of the proposed boundary revision or appraisal document.
35. 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.

36. Conservation Area designation also specifically increases protection of trees over a certain size. Trees within the proposed extension will benefit from this added protection.

37. Results of Climate Impact Assessment Tool provided below:



## Equalities implications

38. 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.

39. The Equality Impact Assessment Tool has been completed and there are no implications or actions identified. Conservation Area Appraisal documents are 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. Results of the impact assessment tool are provided below:

	Action	Justification
AGE	No action required.	We are required to publish appraisals. These are intended
DISABILITY	No action required.	We are required to publish appraisals. These are intended
GENDER	No action required.	We are required to publish appraisals. These are intended
REASSIGNMENT	No action required.	We are required to publish appraisals. These are intended
RACE & ETHNICITY	No action required.	We are required to publish appraisals. These are intended
RELIGION OR BELIEF	No action required.	We are required to publish appraisals. These are intended
SEX	No action required.	We are required to publish appraisals. These are intended
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	No action required.	We are required to publish appraisals. These are intended
PREGNANCY & MATERNITY	No action required.	We are required to publish appraisals. These are intended
MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	No action required.	We are required to publish appraisals. These are intended
OTHER GROUPS	No action required.	We are required to publish appraisals. These are intended

Following an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), this proposal has returned a "No action required" result, indicating no anticipated adverse impacts on any protected characteristic groups as defined by the Equality Act 2010. All findings suggest that the project aligns with our commitment to inclusivity and equality. No further action is deemed necessary at this time, though ongoing monitoring will ensure that any unforeseen impacts are addressed should they arise.

For guidance on producing accessible documents, refer to style guide and Gov.uk's accessibility requirements for public sector bodies and the WCAG 2.1 AA standards. These resources provide actionable steps for ensuring materials meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) for accessibility.

If change needed is identified, appropriate mitigation measures must be in place to reduce or eliminate detrimental impacts. Mitigations should be in line with legal requirements, including the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that all affected groups are considered fairly.

For further support please contact  
Equalities@SouthandVale.gov.uk

Please include the outputs from this report into any decision making report

## Risks

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

## Other Implications

41. No other implications have been identified.

## Conclusion

42. Having regard to the evidence collected and presented in the Whitchurch-on-Thames Conservation Area Appraisal and to the responses received during consultation, it is recommended that the Whitchurch-on-Thames 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: Whitchurch-on-Thames Conservation Area Proposed Boundary Map
- Appendix 2: Consultation Statement, sent under separate cover
- Digital Consultation version of the draft appraisal document: [Whitchurch-on-Thames Conservation Area Appraisal - Join the conversation - South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse - Citizen Space](#)



APPENDIX 1: WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES CONSERVATION AREA PROPOSED BOUNDARY MAP

