

# Cabinet Report



Listening Learning Leading

Report of Head of Planning

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To: CABINET

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## Cuxham Conservation Area Appraisal Adoption

### Recommendations

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

(b) 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 Cuxham Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan document prior to formal publication and statutory notification requirements.

### 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 Cuxham Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and to detail the changes that have been made to the document as a result in order to seek formal adoption of the document.

### Corporate Objectives

2. The Appraisal accords with 2020-2024 Corporate Objectives 4 (Improved economic and community well-being) and 5 (Housing and Infrastructure that meet local needs). 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 Cuxham 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. Under Section 71 of the above act, the Council has a responsibility to formulate and produce proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas. This appraisal for Cuxham, authored by the Conservation Team, forms part of our rolling programme of providing or supporting local groups with conservation area appraisals for all the South Oxfordshire designated conservation areas.
5. Internal consultation was undertaken in September 2022 and feedback and responses received fed into the draft document that was issued for public consultation.
6. Officers were satisfied that the draft document met with the tests of Historic England's guidance for Conservation Area designation and appraisal and the draft document was issued for a public consultation.
7. A five-week period of public consultation commenced on Wednesday 8 February 2023, closing on Wednesday 15 March 2023. Hard copies of the document were provided at the Holy Rood Church and Watlington Library. We were assisted with the advertising of the consultation by the parish clerk.
8. 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 as a supplementary planning document. 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

9. This SPD has been prepared and consulted upon in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (Dec 2022).
10. 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.
11. The Consultation Report summarises how relevant issues have been addressed and supports the proposed adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Cuxham as an SPD in accordance with Regulation 14 of the above regulations.

## Summary of the Appraisal Document

12. This document was produced and reviewed by the Conservation Team in tandem with the development of a new template to be used for all future appraisals. Cuxham was chosen as a result of a weighting exercise in which un-appraised conservation areas within South Oxfordshire were prioritised by development pressures. The Conservation Team, in discussion with the Cabinet member, agreed that these priority areas would benefit the most from a conservation area appraisal.
13. The document provides a summary of the history of Cuxham and its development, an assessment of its historic and architectural interest by character area, a gazetteer of local interest buildings (non-listed structures) and illustrative maps showing various details of spatial and character analysis.
14. During a review of the existing Conservation Area boundary, the Conservation Team recognised that the existing boundary sufficiently captured the full extent of the historic settlement at Cuxham, and therefore no boundary revisions were proposed as part of the appraisal process.

## Summary of consultation responses received

15. In total, 11 responses were received during the public consultation period. This is made up of 6 responses via the online survey and 5 responses via email.
16. Further detail and the list of responses can be found in Appendix 2, the Cuxham Consultation Report produced by the Consultation and Community Engagement Team.
17. 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

18. 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.
19. In this and several other conservation area appraisal consultations we have had feedback concerning the accessibility and ease of use of some of the interactive features of the consultation draft appraisals, such as the mapping. In light of this, we have simplified these elements across all of our appraisal work, including the Cuxham conservation area appraisal. No content will be lost as a result of these changes.
20. There are no other major changes anticipated to the document.

## Options

21. There are two options for Cabinet:

- 1) To find that the Cuxham Conservation Area Appraisal as proposed does capture the special architectural and historic interest of the area and that no boundary changes are necessary.

- 2) To find that the Cuxham Conservation Area Appraisal as proposed does not capture the special architectural and historic interest of the area and that changes are necessary to both the appraisal document and boundary.

22. Based upon officers' assessment of Cuxham as presented in the Conservation Area Appraisal and the responses received during public consultation, it is recommended that the proposed appraisal and management plan are adopted, which is in line with Option (1) above and the recommendations made at the beginning of this report.

### **Climate and ecological impact implications**

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

24. 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.

25. Conservation Area designation specifically increases protection of trees over a certain size.

### **Financial Implications**

26. Any council decision that has financial implications must be made with the knowledge of the council's overarching financial position. For South, the position reflected in the council's medium-term financial plan (MTFP) as reported to full Council in February 2023 showed that it is due to receive £644,000 less in revenue funding than it plans to spend in 2023/24 (with the balance coming from reserves), with this budget gap expected to continue in future years. However, there is great uncertainty over this caused by a lack of clarity from government.

27. The future funding gap is predicted to increase to over £8.5 million by 2027/28, based on current cautious officer estimates of future funding levels. Whilst it is anticipated that overall funding for the council will remain relatively unchanged in 2024/25, the lack of certainty on future local government funding from 2025/26 onwards means the level of funding, and the resulting estimated funding gap, could be significantly different from current officer estimates in either a positive or negative way. Every financial decision, particularly those involving long-term funding commitments (i.e. those beyond 2024/25), needs to be cognisant of the potential for significant funding gaps in future years.

28. There are no proposed changes to the existing Cuxham Conservation Area boundary and as such there are no anticipated additional or new financial implications resulting from the adoption of the appraisal. The document will help to inform planning decisions within the existing designated boundary as a supplementary planning document and the emerging joint Local Plan.

### **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 Cuxham 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.

## **Risks**

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

## **Other implications**

32. 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.

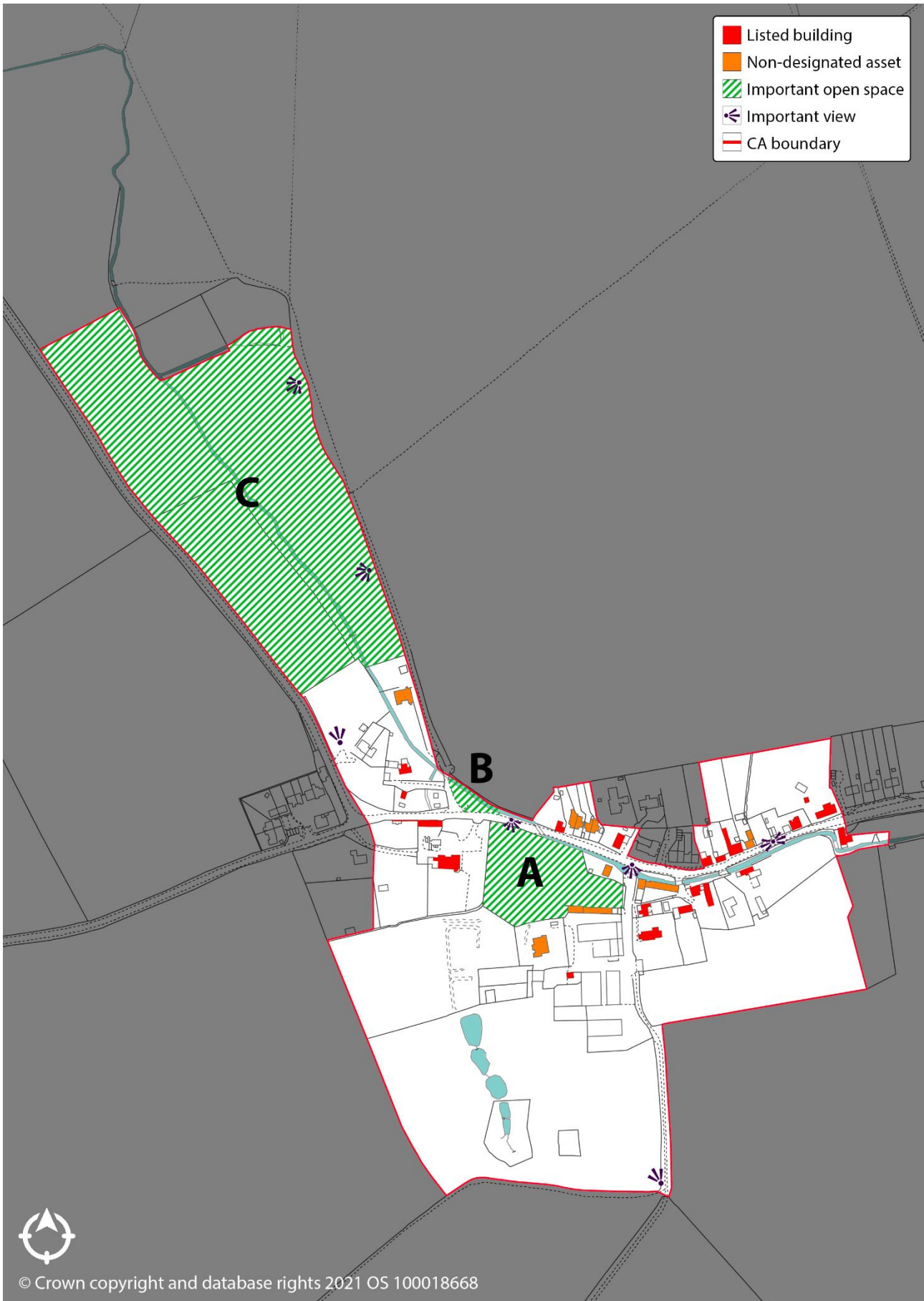
## **Conclusion**

33. Having regard to the evidence collected and presented in the Cuxham Conservation Area Appraisal and to the responses received during consultation, it is recommended that the Cuxham Conservation Area Appraisal is adopted as proposed for development management purposes in line with the recommendations made at the beginning of this report.

## **Background Papers**

- Appendix 1: Cuxham Conservation Area Map
- Appendix 2: Consultation Report

# Appendix 1: Cuxham Conservation Area Map



**Appendix 2: Consultation Report**