

Report to:	PLANNING COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Carl Carrington, Head of Planning (Quality and Control)
Date of Meeting:	6 September 2022

SOUTH SHORE AREA OF SPECIAL LOCAL CHARACTER

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To explain the nature and purpose of an Area of Special Local Character, and to seek support for
- the principle of creating Areas of Special Local Character
 - establishing a South Shore Area of Special Local Character
 - drawing up design guidance with particular emphasis on converting commercial to residential, as a precursor to the development of a borough wide design code

Suggestions for the process of public consultation are also invited

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To support the principle of creating areas of special local character.
- 2.2 To support the establishment of a South Shore Area of Special Local Character in principle and officers are asked to undertake a period of consultation proportionate to the impact of the proposed 'local listing' .
- 2.3 To request the Head of Planning (Quality and Control) to start drawing up design guidance and to bring forward a further report to a future Planning Committee meeting.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 To enable the setting of locally listed buildings within the boundary of the Area of Special Local Character to be better managed, and the enhancement of historic areas which do not meet the criteria for Conservation Area designation
- 3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No
- 3.2 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

The immediate setting of Locally Listed buildings can be managed within the Development Management system so the 'do nothing' option offers some limited

opportunity for preserving setting. However, changes within the wider townscape may not be a material consideration of significant weight, and incremental change could continue to erode historic character. An Area of Special Local Character would enable greater weight to be placed on wider townscape changes and also create an opportunity to pilot an informal design code to support the delivery of more cohesive and well-designed areas.

5.0 Council Priority:

- 5.1 The relevant Council priority is ‘Communities: creating stronger communities and increasing resilience’.

6.0 Background Information

- 6.1 On 2 November 2011 Executive approval (EX52/2011) was given to create a list of buildings of local architectural and/or historic interest. Local Lists are a way of helping conserve buildings of local, rather than national, importance which make a positive contribution to the character of our streets. Local listing is a material consideration when planning permission is sought which might harm a building’s special interest. The Local List is now complete, although public nominations are still accepted.
- 6.2 Historic England describes Areas of Special Local Character as historically important areas that fail to meet the criteria for Conservation Area designation. ‘Local Listing’ is the most appropriate way to create an Area of Special Local Character. The main difference between Conservation Areas and Areas of Special Local Character is that planning permission is necessary for partial or total demolition in Conservation Areas. Permitted development rights in Areas of Special Local Character are not affected although, in Blackpool, an Article 4 Direction is currently being progressed to remove permitted development rights for the demolition of individual Locally Listed buildings. However, the area’s special interest will be a material consideration when applications for planning permission are being considered which would result in alterations to, or the total or partial demolition of, any building within the area.
- 6.3 Bond Street and Waterloo Road are the main historic shopping streets in the South Shore area. Today the streets retain their retail character and are busy thoroughfares which include several Locally Listed buildings and the Grade II Listed Holy Trinity Church. However, commercial pressures and poor or unauthorised development in the past have resulted in the loss of many architectural features, and more recently the economic decline of the area has resulted in high vacancy levels and disrepair. Nevertheless, the concentration of designated and undesignated heritage assets on these streets, together with some interesting original architectural features on the upper floors of other buildings, merits the establishment of Waterloo Road and Bond Street as an Area of Special Local Character. The designation would assist the decision-making process when applications are received which would affect the setting of Listed and Locally Listed buildings, or where proposals would result in further erosion of historic character.

- 6.4 On 6 August 2020, the Government published ‘Planning for the Future,’ a consultation on reforms to the planning system. ‘Planning for the Future’ included proposals for local authorities to introduce local design codes.

On 20 July 2021, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government introduced the Building Beautiful Places plan, a programme incorporating a range of measures including an update of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the introduction of the National Model Design Code (NMDC). The National Planning Policy Framework was amended to urge all councils to develop local design codes.

A Design Code for the Bond Street and Waterloo Road Area of Special Local Character would be developed in consultation with the local community. This would set out the design expectations for new development in the area which respects the local historic character and ensuring that proposals such as new buildings, shopfronts or external alterations associated with conversions, are sympathetic to the area’s historic character and appear cohesive in the streetscene. The Design Code would set out detailed parameters for development in the area and could, for example, contain a list of suitable materials for different types of development, include an illustrated design guide and architectural detail requirements in conversions, such as the inclusion of bay windows and/or stone dressings or require traditional shopfronts etc.

- 6.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices

Appendix 5(a): Assessment of the South Shore Area of Special Local Character

Appendix 5(b): Boundary map

8.0 Financial considerations:

- 8.1 Officer time only in the public consultation process.

9.0 Legal considerations:

- 9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

- 10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

- 11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 Internal consultation with Development Management team.

14.0 Background Papers

14.1 None.