

Report to:	PLANNING COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Carl Carrington, Head of Planning [Quality and Control]
Date of meeting:	27 February 2024

REVISED CONSERVATION AREA GUIDANCE

1.0 Purpose of the report

1.1 To seek approval for publication on the Council website of the revised Conservation Area Guidance and Conservation Area Guidance for Shop Fronts and Signage.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 To approve for publication on the Council website the revised Conservation Area Guidance and Conservation Area Guidance for Shop Fronts and Signage,

3.0 Reason for recommendation(s)

3.1 To assist in the good management of Blackpool’s Conservation Areas and provide additional resources for applicants in making decisions about changes and developments to assets within Conservation Areas.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered

4.1 General Conservation Area Guidance is already available on the Council website following Planning Committee approval in 2017. Since then it has become apparent that further information is required specifically to guide applicants seeking to install new shop fronts in Conservation Areas. The alternative ‘do nothing’ option will undermine efforts to improve the design of shop fronts in Conservation Areas.

5.0 Council priority

5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- ‘The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool’

6.0 Background and key information

- 6.1 General Conservation Area Guidance was approved and published on the Council website in 2017 following the designation of several new Conservation Areas.
- 6.2 A guidance note providing information on appropriate shop front design in Conservation Areas was made available on the website approximately 3 years ago to supplement SPG5: External Shutters and SPG6: Shop Fronts and Signs.
- 6.3 A number of applications for replacing shop fronts with bi-fold doors in the Town Centre Conservation Area has demonstrated that there is a need to update the general Conservation Area Guidance, and formalise the Shop Front Guidance in order to make clear information available to applicants about what may or may not be permitted in Conservation Areas. This should ensure that the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas is preserved as required by section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 6.4 The documents have no policy status, but offer guidance both in principle and covers where certain materials or standards of construction/fitting are required.
- 6.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 8a: Conservation Area Guidance
Appendix 8b: Conservation Area Guidance – Shop Fronts and Signs

8.0 Financial considerations

- 8.1 There are no financial considerations

9.0 Legal considerations

- 9.1 As the guidance holds no status as policy, and is in line with national guidance and that of comparable local authorities, there are no legal considerations.

10.0 Risk management considerations

- 10.1 There are no risk management considerations

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people:

- 11.1 As the national legislation governing conservation areas is deemed to have met the legal tests around equality, there are no equalities considerations.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 This guidance supports the Council's Net Zero objectives as it encourages the retention of original features and the use of traditional materials like timber thereby reducing the carbon footprint of development work in Conservation Areas and the harmful effects of large scale plastic manufacturing for features like windows, doors and signage.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 Internal consultation with the planning team and external consultation with Blackpool Civic Trust took place for the existing guidance, and they expressed support for clearer guidance for conservation areas.

14.0 Background papers

14.1 None.