

## **BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – 10th MARCH 2022**

#### **Item 10 - Proposed Conservation Area for Braunstone Village**

##### Purpose

To receive the results of the recent residents' survey on the merits of designating as a conservation area, the area of Braunstone Village to the south of Braunstone Lane to coincide with the already designated conservation area within the Leicester City boundary, to consider whether any modifications should be made to the proposals and to receive proposed Milestones and Estimated Timescales for the next stages.

##### Background

On 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022, the Committee received an update on the resident's survey and feedback from partners on the draft Character Appraisal and merits of designating as a conservation area. The Committee also reviewed the next steps and resolved:

1. that the *Proposed Next Stages and Timescales* as set out in the report be approved; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of Planning & Environment Committee, to:
  - (a) make amendments to the draft Character Appraisal following the consultation survey results and feedback from stakeholders and following any advice from historic buildings professionals;
  - (b) publish the amended Character Appraisal for exhibition and further consultation;
  - (c) set the specific dates for the consultations and exhibitions, within the framework set out in the Proposed Next Stages and Timescales section of the report;
  - (d) further engage stakeholders, partners and professional advisers; and
  - (e) make amendments to the timescales to accommodate the input and recommendations of Blaby District Council and Leicestershire County Council.

(Minute 70).

##### First Stage Consultation and Survey

The Consultation Survey was available in paper form, on the Council's website, and has been included in the December issue of the Braunstone Life.

All properties in the proposed area and the Braunstone Conservation Area in Leicester City were leafleted with details of how to respond to the Survey.

The following stakeholders were also contacted by e-letter and made aware of the proposals, timescales and survey:

- Blaby District Council, Planning Policy Department;
- Braunstone Heritage Archive Group;

- Braunstone History Group;
- Leicester City Council, Planning – Conservation Team;
- Leicestershire County Council, Historic & Natural Environment Team; and
- Saint Peter’s Church

### Consultation Responses

The Citizens’ Advisory Panel provided a response to the survey at its meeting on 2nd December 2021:

1. Do you agree that the southern (Braunstone Town/Blaby District) side of Braunstone Village (i.e. South of Braunstone Lane/Main Street) should be designated as a Conservation Area, complementing the existing Conservation Area on the northern (Leicester City) side of Braunstone Village? **Yes: 7 No: 0**
2. If the answer in 1 above is yes; do you agree with the proposed boundary for the Conservation Area (marked in red on the enclosed map)? **Yes: 7 No: 0**
3. If the answer in 1 above is yes; do you consider the Draft Character Appraisal fully and accurately describes the special architectural, historic interest, character and appearance of Braunstone Village? **Yes: 6 No: 0** (note: John Dodd did not vote as an author of the Draft Character Appraisal).
4. Where do you live? **In the proposed Conservation Area: 1; Rest of Braunstone Town: 6.**

The survey closed on 10th January 2021 and there were 38 responses to the survey and these are set out at Appendix 1.

Blaby District Council have also provided an initial response to the outline proposals, which is attached at Appendix 2.

### Proposed Amendments to the draft Character Appraisal

Taking into account the residents’ survey responses (Appendix 1) and the initial response of Blaby District Council (Appendix 2), the Heritage Warden has drafted a proposed amendment (set out at Appendix 3) to section 13, Capacity for Change, of the draft Character Appraisal (original enclosed at Appendix 4).

The Committee are invited to consider the responses from the recent resident’s survey (Appendix 1), and from Blaby District Council Planning Policy Team (Appendix 2), concerning the merits of designating as a conservation area. The Committee also need to consider whether any modifications to the proposals, including those proposed by the Heritage Warden (Appendix 3) and to the draft character appraisal more widely (Appendix 4) should be explored; for example:

1. Is the special character of the area clearly identified? Is it the same as Braunstone Village in Leicester City? Does the Character Appraisal need amending to articulate the special character?
2. Is there sufficient evidence to justify the proposed boundary; should it be amended in any way? Should the extent of the area be limited to the buildings of value? If not, what is the special character of the proposed area as a whole?
3. Is the intention to designate a new conservation area or review and expand an existing conservation area?

### Engagement with key local partners

A meeting was held between Braunstone Town Council's Town Clerk, Braunstone Town's Heritage Warden and Blaby District Council Planning Policy Officers on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 to map out the next stages of the process and ensure that appropriate technical support would be provided.

Initial contact has been made with the Heritage Team at Leicestershire County Council to ascertain if they can provide professional input into the draft Character Appraisal. The County Council have offered to share any relevant data they have access to from the Historic Environment Records.

### Proposed Milestones and Estimated Timescales

It was originally anticipated that the final Character Appraisal and proposed area for designation would be published for public exhibition during January and February 2022; with at least one drop in exhibition and session being held for residents to ask questions and make comments. However, following the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022, it has been agreed that further technical assessment is needed to ensure the character appraisal is robust and recognises the area's special character.

Therefore, the proposed milestones and estimated timescales for the next stages is set out below:

- a) Planning & Environment Committee on 10th March 2022 to consider consultation responses and whether any amendments should be made to the proposals and the draft Character Appraisal;
- b) March / April 2022, liaison with Heritage Warden to accommodate any amendments to the draft Character Appraisal;
- c) taking on board feedback from initial residents' survey, Blaby District Council to commission independent conservation area appraisal work;
- d) April 2022 develop a work programme with Blaby District Council; to be considered by Planning & Environment Committee (potentially in May 2022);
- e) engagement with key local partners continues on the proposed Character Assessment up to April 2022, including critique of independent work by Leicestershire County Council Conservation.

Based on the results from the above, both Councils will need to make a decision as to whether to proceed with the process of conservation area designation. Should a decision be made to proceed, then the final Character Appraisal and proposed area for designation will be published for:

- a) formal consultation by Blaby District Council, in partnership with Braunstone Town Council;
- b) public exhibition at Braunstone Civic Centre; during this time at least one drop in exhibition and session will be held (likely to be early evening at Shakespeare Park Sports Pavilion) for residents to ask questions and make comments; and
- c) further engagement with Citizens' Advisory Panel.

Following the above Planning & Environment Committee will be able to consider responses received from the consultation, including any proposed amendments and make recommendations to Blaby District Council.

Blaby District Council will determine the consultation responses and character appraisal through its own constitutional processes, which will include determining whether to make a recommendation to its Council to adopt a conservation area.

### Recommendations

1. that the results from the Residents' Survey (Appendix 1 and Citizens' Advisory Panel on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021) and the consultation response from Blaby District Council (Appendix 2) be received and further considered with Blaby District Council Planning Policy and Leicestershire County Council Heritage Service as part of reviewing and developing the conservation area proposal;
2. that the proposed amendment to section 13, Capacity for Change (set out at Appendix 3), be made to the draft Character Appraisal (Appendix 4);
3. that the *Proposed Milestones and Estimated Timescales* as set out in the report be approved; and
4. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of Planning & Environment Committee, to:
  - (a) make amendments to the draft Character Appraisal following a detailed examination of the consultation survey results and feedback from stakeholders and following any advice from Blaby District Planning Policy and historic buildings and conservation professionals;
  - (b) publish an amended Character Appraisal;
  - (c) approve specific dates and milestones, including consultations and review, within the framework set out in the *Proposed Milestones and Estimated Timescales* section of the report; and
  - (d) further engage stakeholders, partners and professional advisers.

### Reasons

1. To shape the proposals and identify the special character and appearance in Braunstone Village, which should be preserved and enhanced.
2. To respond to issues raised in the consultation responses, particularly those by Blaby District Council concerning the proposed area for designation and the need to identify the reason for its preservation.
3. To provide timescales for engagement, review and amendment in order to shape proposals and enable a decision to be made on whether or not to finalise proposals for Blaby District Council to determine whether to designate the Town/District side of Braunstone Village as a Conservation Area, and if so in what form.
4. To enable the proposals to be updated following consultation and to set detailed arrangements for further consultation, review and engagement, along with obtaining professional support.