

Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan  
Heritage Topic Group

25/04/2013

Present: David Cowans(chair) Ed Campbell Ian Campbell Dorothy Cowans John Earl  
John Lewis (notes) Barry Mead Frank Robinson Bryony Roff

1. Apologies: none

2. John Lewis agreed to take notes

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 27/03/13

Under AOB it was agreed to amend the first sentence to read “ E C ; It was hoped that rapid progress could be made on the Neighbourhood Plan as there was a raft of local development proposals emerging.” The minutes were then accepted.

4. INVITED SPEAKER

Elaine Gray (NCC Conservation Officer) spoke about Conservation/Heritage issues. There are specific County Core Strategies (Consultation Document February 2013) for the natural and historic environment (policies 50, 51, 52, 53)

There are some 6000 listed buildings and 70 Conservation Areas in Northumberland. The National Planning Policy Framework underpins this work. Section 11 deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Section 12 deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

In particular, paragraph 126 says that “Local planning authorities should set out in their local plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets.”

Paragraph 127 says that “When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.”

Elaine Gray said that 10% of Listed Buildings in Northumberland are at risk

The position concerning existing and proposed Conservation Areas in the Neighbourhood Plan Area appears to be as follows:

MORPETH; There are policies in the Morpeth Local Plan for the existing Conservation Area in the Town Centre.

These include design, demolition, advertisements, street furniture and the protection of Listed Buildings. Policy MC 8 says the Council will investigate the extension of the existing Conservation Area but Elaine said that no further work had been done because of lack of resources. An appraisal of the Conservation Area was in DRAFT at the moment, which Elaine thought could be made available to the Heritage Topic Group.

With regard to possible Conservation Areas at Mitford, Hepscoth, Hebron and Pegswood there appears to be no more information.

There is still room for designating new Listed Buildings but English Heritage think that most of them have been picked up nationally. There is no current Local List.

The Topic Group thought it should lay down a marker for the above issues since the Neighbourhood Plan has to fit into an overall strategy.

It was suggested (IC) that in the issues and options for the Neighbourhood Plan a choice should be presented to the public on the issues concerning existing Conservation Area and proposed ones. We need evidence as to what we might want to do. Management policies were needed concerning the valuation of heritage assets. We may be able to gain extra resources from CABE

## 5. DESIGN STATEMENT, LOCAL PLAN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

BR raised the issue of how best to deal with the quality of design in the various settlements and rural areas.

It should be noted that amongst the policies in the Morpeth Local Plan, Policy H15 sets out criteria against which new housing development will be assessed. One of these criteria says “proposals must be compatible with any distinctive vernacular character present in the locality, in respect of layout design and materials.”

JL referred to the NPPF section 7 called “Requiring good design” paragraphs 56 to 78. In particular, paragraph 58 says that “Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics.” It lists 6 criteria to be met.

The Heritage Topic Group should set a marker for this.

How will this be achieved?

## 6. STRATEGIC OUTLINE FOR PROTECTING HERITAGE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

FR had submitted a single page document to DC. This sets out his views as a guide to relevant points for protecting heritage matters.

DC read out the document and it was agreed that it should be taken into account by the Topic Group.

## 7. PROPOSALS TO PROGRESS WORK

IC had listed 9 items relating to the work so far by the Topic Group. There was general discussion about this. It was suggested that a small group collate collected material so far. DC thought that the Topic Group (which was not large in numbers) could probably do this. EC thought we should press on to discuss Issues and Options as a sole topic early next month.

8. AOB – none

9. Next Meeting: Wednesday 8 May 2013 at 7pm, Morpeth Town Hall