

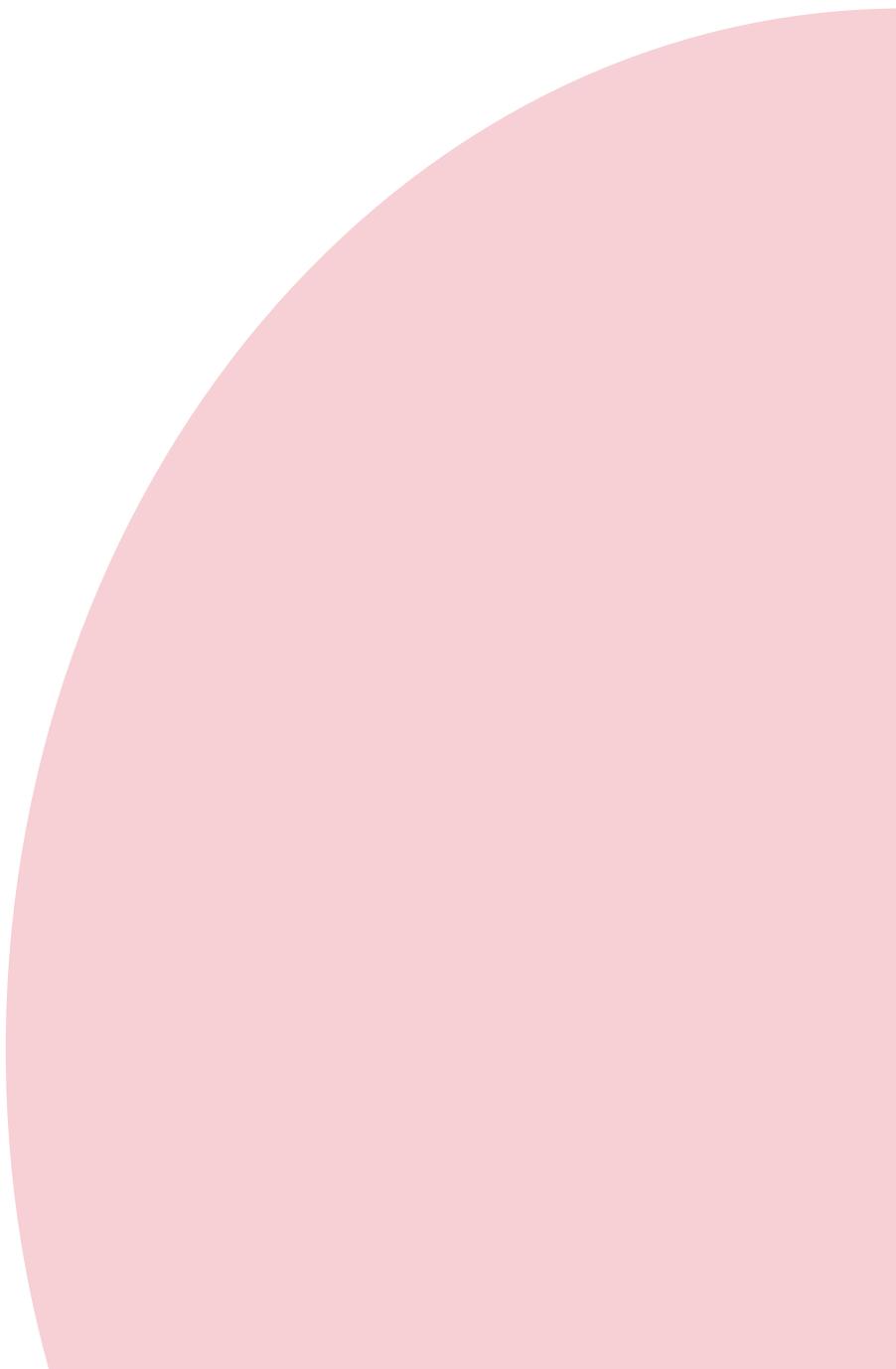


St. Helens  
Council



# High Street and Willow Park Conservation Area Management Plan

January 2009



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# 1.0 Context

## 1.0 Introduction

There is a statutory duty upon Local Authorities to review Conservation Areas and to undertake proposals for their management and enhancement. In conjunction with the preparation of appraisals, the Council is also required to prepare management plans for conservation areas.

As a next step after the Conservation Area Appraisal, this Management Plan is aimed at meeting this broad objective. It has been prepared in accordance with Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, with guidance from English Heritage and Planning Policy Guidance 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment.

Notwithstanding the statutory justification, there is a strong ‘stewardship’ argument for the preparation of character appraisals and management plans. After all, these are our cherished places, which are an intrinsic part of our cultural heritage and therefore we all have a responsibility toward their upkeep. St Helens Council, as the primary local agency for managing its historic built environment, has the authority to lead in this process. However, it requires the efforts of the entire community to ensure that this conservation area remains cherished and well managed. This management plan is an essential tool in that process.

## 1.2 Aims of the management plan

The aim of this Management Plan is to produce a medium to long-term strategy for the management of the High Street and Willow Park Conservation Areas in Newton-le-Willows setting objectives for addressing the issues, making recommendations for action arising from the appraisal and identifying any further or more detailed work needed for implementation.

The role of the Management Plan is to contribute to and inform the physical regeneration of Newton-le-Willows at all levels from policy to forward planning and decision-making. Based on the High Street and Willow Park Conservation Area Appraisal, the Management Plan has three main long-term objectives:

- To implement recommendations arising from the character appraisal.
- To provide policy guidance to ensure that the significance of the conservation areas will be maintained and in any changes that may occur, opportunities for enhancement are maximised rather than features being lost or damaged.
- To establish a framework for future investment decisions and act as a mechanism for applying for additional funding.

In conjunction with the High Street and Willow Park Conservation Area Appraisal and the St Helens Design Guidance SPD, the immediate objectives of the Management Plan are to:

- Make people more aware of the importance of local heritage and to celebrate it for the benefit of the people who live, work, visit and spend time there;
- Provide a robust framework that will be a powerful agent in the consideration and implementation of changes within the area;
- Help provide robust guidance to preserve and enhance the special character of the area as identified in the character appraisal;
- Provide guidance for enhancements to the area, identifying key sites and providing a framework for managing that change;
- Set out the key statutory requirements for considering development in the area and to put in place monitoring and evaluation over the longer term;
- Set out required controls and procedures that will help reverse inappropriate change and provide surety for public investment in the longer term; and
- Encourage regeneration through the protection and reuse of buildings and vacant/underused land and by resolving conflict between conservation objectives and inappropriate land use and activities.

### 1.3 Relationship to the Development Plan

The Council is in the process of preparing the Local Development Framework (LDF), this Management Plan will, for the foreseeable future, be linked to the saved policies of the St Helens Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The key policies are identified below:

S7	Sustainable development
ENV 23	Archaeology
ENV 24B	Development in conservation areas
ENV 25	Listed buildings
GEN 2	Good environments
GEN 4	Security and crime prevention
GEN 5	Design and layout of new housing
GEN12	Lighting and security apparatus
GEN 14	Backland and tandem developments
RET 6	Alterations and new shopfronts

The Council has prepared a Design Guidance SPD, with the aim of improving the quality of design through promoting a structured approach, in securing development focusing on processes and achieving quality by meeting defined performance criteria. The guide makes reference to the programme of conservation area reviews and the need for character appraisals and management plans. It also provides guidance on a variety of built heritage conservation issues across the document.

### **1.4 Status of the management plan**

As set out in English Heritage's guidance on conservation areas, there is no intention of adopting either the conservation area appraisal document or this management plan as SPDs. Instead they will form technical guidance to the Design Guidance SPD which in turn is linked to saved policies in the UDP and which eventually, will link to the Core Strategy of the LDF. As such they will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The Management Plan will also be an important resource-planning tool for St Helens Council and for its partner agencies/organisations. More information on programming and resources is provided in Part 6.

## 2.0 Proposals Deriving from the Appraisal

### 2.1 Issues

The Character Appraisal of the two Conservation Areas in Newton-le-Willows has identified a number of issues that inform the content of the management proposals set out in this document. These are supplemented by some other issues arising from linked strategies and programmes that have relevance to the designated areas and which aim to deliver the objectives outlined previously. These other policies and proposals are set out in Part 3 of this Plan.

### 2.2 Modern development

It was evident from the appraisal that 1930s and post-WWII development has impinged on the smaller, more domestic scale of some parts of the High Street Conservation Area, particularly the historic High Street, cutting across burgage plots and creating large blocks of new buildings. Examples include the modern development of The Parchments and Rokeden.

This has resulted in some loss of the historic grain of the area, particularly affecting the small and narrow plots which were once a characteristic of the both Conservation Areas. In addition to the layout, these modern developments are of a design, which does not respond to the architecture of the area. (Proposals for new buildings and extensions are set out in Part 3 of this Management Plan).

### 2.3 Amending the boundary

As identified in the appraisal, an assessment of the quality of the areas adjacent to the designated Conservation Area boundary is one of the key issues to take into account in preserving and enhancing the character of the area. If the Conservation Area is badly defined then it can lead to features of special interest being unprotected. At the same time, degrading of the designation could also arise if areas without special character are included. As a consequence of the appraisal, it has been identified that the boundary of the Conservation Area should be amended to:



**Action 1**  
**Remove nos. 1, 3 and 5 Ashton Road from the High Street Conservation Area.**

## 2.0 Proposals Deriving from the Appraisal

### (i) Areas recommended for exclusion in the Conservation Areas

Nos. 1, 3 and 5 Ashton Road are currently within the High Street Conservation Area. These are recent developments which have replaced older properties. Their layout and design is not considered to be in keeping with the area and consequently no longer contribute positively to its character or appearance. Under the criteria set out in the appraisal for the amendment of the Conservation Area boundary, these properties are recommended for removal from the High Street Conservation Area.

There are also modern buildings in the two Conservation Areas whose design does not respond to the character of the Conservation Area. In the High Street Conservation Area, these include properties in High Street, Park Road North, The Parchments, Rokeden and Rob Lane. In the Willow Park Conservation Area, these properties include those along Mill Lane. However, given their location in the central parts of the Conservation Area, their removal was considered counterproductive as it might leave them open to even more inappropriate alterations, further eroding the character of the designated area.

Accordingly, despite being insensitive development, it was considered more beneficial to retain the following properties than remove them from the Conservation Areas:

#### (a) High Street Conservation Area:

1, 3a, 3b, 3c, 104, 151, 153, 155 and 157 High Street;  
1 and 3 Park Road North;  
4, 6 and 8 The Parchments;  
1, 2, 3 and 4 Rokeden;  
1, 3 and 5 Rob Lane;

#### (b) Willow Park Conservation Area:

Millbridge Gardens on Mill Lane.

### (ii) Areas recommended for inclusion in the Conservation Areas

The following areas are currently outside the two Conservation Areas and they are recommended to be included into the current boundary:

#### (1) High Street Conservation Area:

Birley Street: 1-31 (odd), 2, 4 and 6 (even) and St Peters CE Primary School

## 2.0 Proposals Deriving from the Appraisal

Mercer Street: 1, 3, 45-165 (odd) and 2-10, 16-26a, 28-42, 56-68, 92-122, 132-142 (even)

Golborne Street: 1,2, 3 The Courtyard, 1/1a and 12-26 (even)

Crow Lane East: 13-39 (odd)

### (2) Willow Park Conservation Area

Southworth Road: 69, 69a, 71, 71a - 87 (odd)

Waterworks Drive: 1, 2 and 3 Waterworks Cottages

Historical records show that the above sections of Birley Street, Mercer Street and Golborne Street were fully developed by 1860, around the same period when the Victorian properties along Park Road North were built. These three areas are still predominantly residential and have retained their historical terrace layout. Most properties have similar Victorian features to those in the High Street Conservation Area. Accordingly, these areas are recommended for inclusion into the High Street Conservation Area.

The properties on the eastern end of Crow Lane East were built by 1891 and although it consists of properties of a much later date than the other three streets mentioned above, they still retain the original features and layouts of areas within the High Street Conservation Area. Their inclusion will help to secure their long-term preservation and conservation.

Unfortunately many properties in these four areas are not in good condition, and doors and windows have been replaced with ones that are not the same proportions and materials. Their inclusion should be seen as an enhancement opportunity.

Similarly, the properties (mentioned above) on Southworth Road should be included in the Willow Park Conservation Area by virtue of their age, architectural features and setting. Despite being of a much later date than the properties to the west of Mere Road, they are older than those on the eastern side and in the Willow Bank Estate, which are all included in the Willow Park Conservation Area. Like most of these properties, those in Southworth Road are large detached Victorian buildings set within substantial grounds with mature trees and hedges.

#### **Action 2a**

Add 1-31 (odd), 2, 4, 6 (even) and St Peters CE Primary School, Birley Street into the High Street Conservation Area.

#### **Action 2b**

Add 1, 3, 45-165 (odd), 2-10, 16-26a, 28-42, 56-68, 92-122, 132-142 (even) Mercer Street into the High Street Conservation Area.

#### **Action 2c**

Add 1, 2, 3 The Courtyard and 1/1a and 12-26 (even) Golborne Street into the High Street Conservation Area.

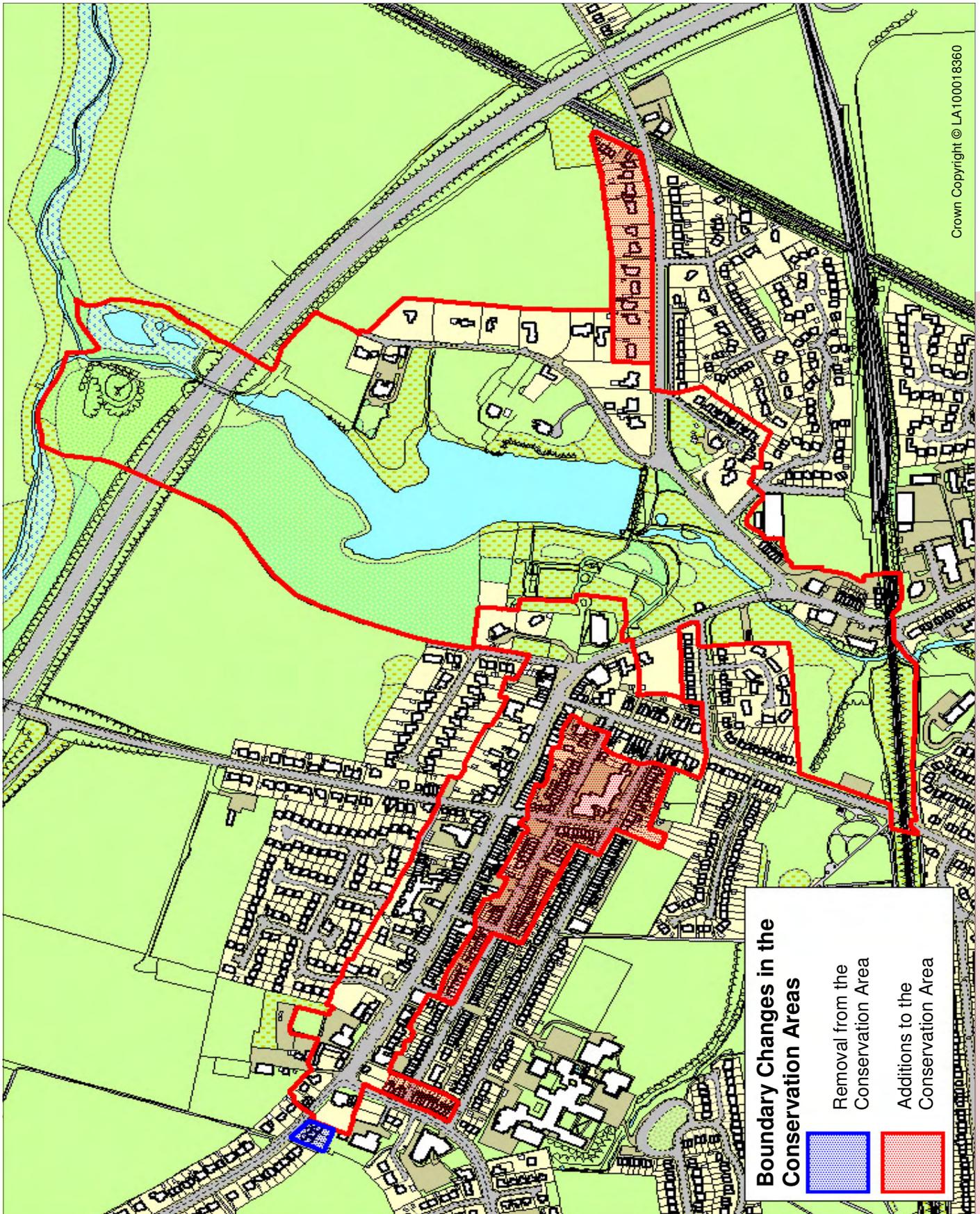
#### **Action 2d**

Add 13-39 (odd) Crow Lane East into the High Street Conservation Area.

#### **Action 2e**

Add 69, 69a, 71, 71a - 87 (odd) Southworth Road into the Willow Park Conservation Area.

## 2.0 Proposals Deriving from the Appraisal



## 2.0 Proposals Deriving from the Appraisal

The properties on Waterworks Drive (nos 1, 2 and 3) are known as Waterworks Cottages. The row of three terraced houses are at the end of Southworth Road. Following the public consultation, they are recommended for inclusion due to their location, as they are adjacent to the railway line but are attached to the existing Willow Park Conservation Area. Their inclusion will form a natural boundary to the Conservation Area.

**Action 2f**  
Add 1, 2 and 3  
Waterworks Cottages  
on Waterworks Drive  
into the Willow Park  
Conservation Area.

### 2.4 Enhancement and regeneration

The High Street Conservation Area has previously benefited from some enhancement works through the Government's Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) programme in 1997-2001. Works carried out under the programme included:

- Improvements to footways, parking facilities, lighting and landscaping including the planting of trees along the High Street;
- Improvements to commercial properties;
- The restoration of the Church of St Peter;
- The redevelopment of the site of the former Newton Civic Hall.



**Action 3**  
Undertake a  
condition/vacancy  
survey of buildings  
in the existing  
Conservation Areas.

A total of £347,000 was invested in the Conservation Area - £179,000 of which was provided through the SRB programme. This scheme made a significant impact on the appearance of the High Street, which has improved a number of historical and architectural features and has created a pleasant environment.



The Conservation Area Appraisal has identified several issues regarding the condition of buildings within different parts of the Conservation Area, some of which are in a state of disrepair, have been unsympathetically altered and/or are vacant. It is evident that in some parts of the Conservation Area, the historic fabric is deteriorating. From a regeneration and enhancement perspective, it will be important to undertake a more rigorous survey relating to the condition and levels of vacancy.

**Action 4**  
Seek funding for the  
scoping of works for  
footways, car park-  
ing and lighting of  
landmark buildings  
and spaces.

Following the condition and vacancy survey, the Council should explore the possibility of another funding programme to further improve the area. (Funding sources are discussed in Part 6 of this Management Plan). Funding should support heritage as a driver for broader economic regeneration. Below is a summary of some of the priority areas for financial support (dependent on funding):

## 2.0 Proposals Deriving from the Appraisal

- Vacant and underused historic buildings in need of repair and re-use;
- Repair or reinstatement of traditional slate roofs;
- Repair and reinstatement of traditional timber windows and doors as well as cast iron rainwater goods;
- Reinstatement of other architectural features which make the respective Conservation Areas distinct including garden walls, metal railings, brick/stone piers and metal gates.

### 2.5 Public Realm

The quality of the public realm varies across the two Conservation Areas. Generally, in most cases the public realm is in satisfactory condition. However, there is a need to improve the quality of the footways and other public open spaces by using materials different from the road surface. This will create contrast and variety in the public realm. Areas that could benefit from a comprehensive enhancement programme include:

- Completion of a paving scheme for many of the footways in the High Street Conservation Area;
- Improve the surface treatment (amongst other car parks in the two Conservation Areas) in St Peter's Church car park;
- Reinstatement of traditional cobbles on the road leading to Newton-le-Willows station and surrounding areas; and
- Explore the potential for possible enhancement of the area around Newton Lake.

Opportunities for improvements are dependent on funding. However, this could include an enhanced lighting scheme for the two Conservation Areas, which would use sympathetic accent lighting to help denote landmark buildings and spaces and create a more welcoming and hospitable setting for activities in the evening. The Newton Ward Committee has already approved a proposal with rough estimates and any funding programmes should also include this scheme.

**Action 5**  
Through the Newton Ward Committee, implement the Newton-Le-Willows lighting strategy.

## 2.0 Proposals Deriving from the Appraisal

### 2.6 Quality of street frontages

The quality of street frontages including buildings and boundaries are important in defining the extent of the public realm and making a positive impact on the special historic character of the area. The degradation of historic street frontages reduces both the historic and cultural value of an area and also can give the impression that an area is in decline. This in turn has wider reaching social and economic consequences.

**Action 6**  
Undertake an assessment of building frontages and boundaries and explore priorities for enhancement.

In both Conservation Areas, there are instances where frontages have been degraded to a greater or lesser extent. It will be important to not only stop this incremental erosion of character, but also, to secure the reinstatement of original frontages in key areas. A programme of targeted interventions to enhance frontages (buildings and boundaries) could be a positive means of demonstrating the benefits of conservation to the community.

### 2.7 Shopfronts and Signage

High Street is a thriving commercial street with a mix of traditional and modern shopfronts, many of which are in keeping with the area. Linked with frontage enhancements, well-designed shopfronts and signs could make a significant visual impact to the streetscape of the Conservation Areas. Poorly designed shopfronts and signage, can detract from the character of the area and should therefore be discouraged. Inappropriate signage includes dominance due to overall size and scale in proportion to the shopfront, the size of lettering, content and design, colours, lighting, materials and the placement of the sign on the building (more usually as a combination of these).

**Action 7**  
Undertake a shopfront and signage audit and explore priorities for enhancement.

In addition to the proposals for the street frontages above, a similar programme of targeted actions to shopfronts and signage could be explored and used as a design framework for assessing planning applications so as to prevent further loss of quality (some suggestions for shopfronts can be seen on page 20):

- Where traditional shopfronts and signage, or elements of them survive, they should be retained and used as the basis for restoration of the original frontage or incorporated into an appropriate new shopfront design;

## 2.0 Proposals Deriving from the Appraisal

- Modern shopfront and signage should be in keeping with the area both in design and materials;
- Historic signs and name boards should be retained, where possible;
- New signs should always be designed for individual buildings, be an integral part of the building and not become a dominant feature in the elevation.

### 2.8 Street lighting, highways and utilities

The style of street lighting as a repetitive feature in street scenes can enliven it or create an urbanised, sterile environment. This has been ably demonstrated in the George Street scheme in St Helens, where high quality new street lighting has become one of the most successful elements of enhancement.

Depending on funding, a programme for more 'sympathetic' street lighting could be devised to run in conjunction with the street lighting/highway maintenance programme. A high quality, sympathetic but contemporary design would be appropriate.

The sensitive choice of materials and detailing in highway works can contribute significantly towards reinforcing the sense of local distinctiveness in the two Conservation Areas. Where existing historic surfaces/detailing remain, as on the road to Newton-le-Willows Station, these should be reinstated and used as a cue for the design of highway based schemes.

### 2.9 Trees and vegetation

Landscape features such as trees and hedges are an important aspect of the character of both the High Street and Willow Park Conservation Areas.

In the High Street Conservation Area, the line of trees along High Street helps to frame the terraced properties and also provide a limited buffer from the busy traffic. The tree-lined nature of Park Road North gives an attractive frontage to the pair of semi-detached properties set behind in well-landscaped gardens. They also create a relative quietness giving this area a more suburban feel and are a transition to the busy High Street. This interaction between the built and natural elements is an important aspect in defining character and creating a distinctive sense of place and should be maintained.

**Action 8**  
Seek funding for scoping of general highway and lighting schemes.

**Action 9**  
Undertake a tree survey to assess the extent of tree coverage, to ensure that protected trees are in healthy condition and consider additional Tree Preservation Orders.

**Action 10**  
From the survey, develop a succession strategy to ensure new trees are planted to replace those lost as a consequence of tree works.

## 2.0 Proposals Deriving from the Appraisal

The public park known as Willow Park covers over half of the Willow Park Conservation Area. It is thickly wooded with areas of grassland, meadows and wetland, providing a variety of wildlife habitats. This wooded character is a dominant visual feature in the area, which should be respected.



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**Tree cover in High Street and Willow Park Conservation Areas (as amended)**

## 2.0 Proposals Deriving from the Appraisal

A large number of the trees are covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), which provides strong protection for those trees that fall within the extent of these orders. In order to preserve the character of the two Conservation Areas, particularly Park Road North, the Church of St Peter and surroundings, Church Street, Southworth Road and Mere Road, it is suggested that the Council should develop a succession strategy to ensure trees are planted to replace those as a result of works on trees.

In terms of condition, the trees at St Peters Church are a particular concern and need closer attention, especially those within the car park area. Some trees may be lost in the next few years and this needs to be taken into consideration so that replacement trees are planted to ensure long-term tree cover.

Within the two Conservation Areas, trees not covered by a TPO are also afforded protection. Property owners are required to give 6 weeks written notice of the works and this gives the Council the opportunity to instigate further protection (a TPO), if necessary. The Council should also encourage and work with owners towards the production of management plans for trees that are on private land.

### 2.10 Planning controls and enforcement

From the appraisal, the two Conservation Areas were generally characterised as follows:

#### (1) High Street Conservation Area

A compact group of buildings lined along two thoroughfares of High Street and Park Road North. Buildings along High Street are in a terraced form, directly fronting the road while those in Park Road North are semi-detached properties set behind medium sized front gardens with mature hedges and trees.

#### (2) Willow Park Conservation Area

Small groups of buildings sparsely scattered adjacent to a large open space. Many of the buildings are detached and within substantial grounds with mature trees and gardens.

Many of the large detached Victorian properties along Mere Road and Southworth Road in the Willow Park Conservation Area are generally unaltered, retaining traditional windows and doors amongst other architectural features. In contrast, a majority of unlisted buildings along High

## 2.0 Proposals Deriving from the Appraisal

Streets have had original features like timber doors, sliding sash and casement windows as well as cast iron rainwater goods removed under permitted development rights and replaced, usually with uPVC. Such alterations erode the appearance and character of the two Conservation Areas. The cumulative impact of such numerous small alterations was identified in the appraisal as the main threat to their character and appearance.

The issues which require action, can be summarised as follows:

- Loss of the continuous frontages with unsympathetic developments;
- Fragmentation of the front garden walls and introduction of hardstandings;
- Erosion of vernacular styles through the use of incongruous materials and building elements;
- Deterioration of the environment through the lack of attention to details such as spaces between buildings, small-scale landscaping, signs, trees and other features.

Aimed at conserving and enhancing the built environment, the planning objectives in the Conservation Areas should therefore be focused on the following areas:

- To prevent the further fragmentation of existing frontages;
- To prevent the erosion of vernacular building styles by inappropriate alterations;
- To guide and promote private and public actions towards enhancing the environment.

## 2.0 Proposals Deriving from the Appraisal

### Planning Controls

The range of specialist planning controls available to the Council include:

#### i) Article 4 (2) Direction

Article 4 (2) Directions remove permitted development rights for alterations to residential properties that would otherwise be permitted. In Conservation Areas they are a particularly useful tool in preventing piecemeal erosion of character arising from incremental alterations and changes to properties that otherwise would be outside planning control. Windows and doors for example, are particularly susceptible to change and which, without Article 4 protection, would be permitted development.

The High Street Conservation Area is already subject to Article 4 (2) Direction, declared in 1982. Many of the inappropriate alterations in the area might have taken place after the declaration.

Given the many changes in legislation since 1982, it is also suggested that the Direction needs to be updated to be in keeping with the changes. The new Direction could also cover some of the new areas recommended for inclusion in the High Street Conservation Area. There will be a need to provide an educational campaign to remind residents of the Direction.

However, the Direction does not extend to the Willow Park Conservation Area. It is therefore suggested that a separate Article 4 (2) Direction should be considered to bring under control, as in High Street, the following types of development currently allowed under permitted development rights:

- Replacement of natural slate or clay pantiles with non-traditional materials;
- Installation of rooflights;
- Replacement of traditional timber windows and doors;
- Changes to window and/or door openings;
- Taking down, altering or building a chimney;
- External painting of buildings which have not previously been painted;

**Action 11**  
**Publish Conservation Area leaflets to inform property owners of the declaration of the Article 4 (2) Direction in the two areas and its implications on planning applications.**

**Action 12**  
**Re-declare Article 4 (2) Directions in High Street Conservation Area to cover all single dwelling residential properties, in line with current legislation.**

**Action 13**  
**Declare Article 4 (2) Directions in Willow Park Conservation Area to all single dwelling residential properties.**

## 2.0 Proposals Deriving from the Appraisal

- Building an extension, porch, conservatory, door hood/canopy, swimming pool, garden building or other buildings ancillary to the enjoyment of the main house;
- Providing a hardstanding for a property;
- Taking down/demolition of boundary walls.

Article 4 Directions would apply only to single dwelling houses, as flats and commercial properties do not have any permitted development rights. Listed buildings are not covered either as any works which affect the architecture or historic interest of the building as well as it's setting will require Listed Building Consent.

### ii) Advertisement Controls

Advertising is a significant issue for the High Street. As discussed previously, the signage on some buildings is not in keeping with the area.

There are planning powers to discontinue consent for advertisements and to take enforcement action against unauthorised signs. As part of the works to enhance the Conservation Areas, the proposals for shopfronts and advertisements in section 2.5 would go a long way towards meeting this objective. This will be a joint conservation and enforcement project to identify inappropriate signage and then develop a strategy to address it.

### iii) Section 215 notices

These notices can be served by the Council to require land and property owners to undertake work to tidy/repair land and buildings that are detrimental to public amenity. This power enables Councils to take direct action where owners are unwilling/unable to affect the works themselves.

### iv) Enforcement

Enforcement has a key role to play in the protection of the two Conservation Areas in Newton-le-Willows, in particular with regard to the proposed Article 4(2) Direction. At the moment, enforcement of the Direction in the High Street Conservation Area is often reactive, only resulting in investigation once a formal complaint is made.

A more proactive approach should be considered, possibly including monitoring development activity and ensuring compliance with the terms of planning permissions. A positive and active approach to enforcement will help to keep contraventions to a minimum and secure the special interest of the two areas.

**Action 14**  
**Consider the use of Section 215 powers in relation to untidy sites/properties if negotiation with owners proves unsuccessful.**

## 3.0 Guidelines for new development, extensions and alterations

### 3.0 General issues

The appraisal identified a number of unlisted buildings, which make a positive contribution to the respective characters of the two Conservation Areas. To provide additional protection to such properties, it is worth considering including them into either the statutory list of buildings of significant national interest or the local list of buildings of historical and architectural interest. Such buildings include the former Magistrate's Office building (in the statutory list), and the Pied Bull Hotel, the Blue Lion Public House, No.2 High Street, the Kirkfield Hotel and Legh Arms Public House in the local list.

New buildings, alterations, extensions and repairs to buildings and structures within the Conservation Areas need to be of a high quality design and workmanship so as not to detract but rather to enhance the area.

The sensitive repair of existing features of the building should always be the starting point in considering work to properties. If repair is not appropriate then sympathetic replacement should be undertaken seeking to reflect the original detail in terms of style, materials and finish.

In all instances, early discussion with the Conservation Officer is advisable to ensure that proposals are well informed and appropriate.

**Action 15**  
Consider recommending the former magistrate's offices for inclusion into the NATIONAL list of significant historical and architectural interest.

**Action 16**  
Consider including the Pied Bull Hotel, the Blue Lion Pub, no. 2 High Street and the Kirkfield Hotel into the list of significant LOCAL historical and architectural interest.

### 3.1 Guidelines for development proposals and alterations

From the appraisal, the key characteristics of the two Conservation Areas can be summarised as follows:

- Terraced properties directly fronting the highway in the High Street area;
- Semi-detached properties set behind front gardens with mature trees and hedges in the Park Road North Area;
- Large detached properties set within substantial grounds with mature trees in the Willow Park Area;
- Two and three storey buildings of mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century origins;
- Smooth faced red brick walls, timber doors, windows, slate roofing and cast iron rainwater goods.

## 3.0 Guidelines for new development, extensions and alterations

New development, extensions, demolitions and other alterations could respond to these general characteristics.

### (i) New buildings and extensions

Any proposals for new development will be expected to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the High Street and Willow Park Conservation Areas and to comply with the relevant Development Plan policies. The following design principles could guide any new development or extensions, together with the Design Guide SPD and the Unitary Development Plan:

- Whilst new development should not seek to mimic the prevailing Victorian design it should be responsive to each Conservation Area in terms of scale, massing, materials, proportions and height;
- Layouts, boundary treatments and landscaping schemes will also be expected to make clear visual reference to those traditionally found in the areas;
- Redevelopment of vacant sites or sites developed from recently demolished properties should respect the footprint of the existing building;
- Appropriate external materials and finishes will be required on all new development within or affecting the setting of the two Conservation Areas;
- Traditional materials typical of either Conservation Area will be encouraged to complement the existing buildings;
- Modern materials will only be accepted where they form part of a coherent, high quality design that complements the prevailing character, harmonising with the colours and textures of the built heritage;
- Extensions and alterations to existing buildings will be encouraged to follow the scale, proportions, detailing and materials of the existing property;
- Development should maintain the setting of the two Conservation Areas particularly frontages in High Street, front gardens in Park Road North and the substantial grounds in Mere Road and Southworth Road;
- Development should respect/maintain key views into and out of the Conservation Areas;
- New development should enhance existing views, any development, which obscures or has a detrimental impact on such views, should be considered inappropriate to the enhancement of the appearance of the Conservation Areas.

## 3.0 Guidelines for new development, extensions and alterations

### (ii) Demolitions

In line with national Planning Policy, there is a general presumption against the demolition of Listed Buildings (including their outbuildings) and buildings of townscape value, which are identified in the High Street and Willow Park Conservation Area Appraisal.

The demolition of other buildings in the area should only be approved if:

- The building(s) is/are identified as making either a negative or insignificant<sup>1</sup> contribution to the character or appearance of the area;
- Any replacement building or feature will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- Any application for a replacement building must be accompanied by a design and access statement, which describes how the new building respects the 'key characteristics' of the area as defined in the Conservation Area Appraisal;
- To avoid unsightly gaps in the Conservation Area, a condition will be imposed on any grant of Conservation Area Consent, which prevents the demolition of a building from taking place until a contract has been let for the redevelopment of the site.

### (iii) Windows, doors and conservatories

Historically, windows and doors would have been constructed in timber and painted (mainly white). Consequently, uPVC will be discouraged in the Conservation Areas in favour of timber that is from a sustainably managed source. UPVC is considered an inappropriate material as it has a detrimental impact on the area.

The general proportions and design of windows and doors should reflect those of the area. Doors should be constructed in timber and in some instances a fanlight will be appropriate. Conservatories should be of a suitable scale and design and should be constructed in appropriate materials. Whilst uPVC will be discouraged, high quality, contemporary design incorporating modern glazing and minimalist metal frames may be acceptable.

1. Section 4.26 of PPG 15 states that: 'In the case of conservation area controls [over demolition] account should clearly be taken of the part played in the architectural or historic interest of the area by the building for which demolition is proposed, and in particular of the wider effects of demolition on the building's surroundings and on the conservation area as a whole.'

## 3.0 Guidelines for new development, extensions and alterations

### (iv) Walls and other boundary treatments

Where boundary walls are proposed, they should be constructed in brick or stone as appropriate. The height and finishing of the wall, including the coping detail should reflect the existing.

### (v) Shop fronts/signage

Traditional Victorian shopfronts would include features such as a stallrisers, pilasters, pediments and cornice, giving depth and robustness.

Such elements should inform any new shopfronts within the Conservation Area and colours should be from a pre-agreed palette. Signage should be of a scale and style appropriate to the building and below the fascia line. Other signage considerations include the following:

- Illuminated signage will only be appropriate if it is of high quality (internally illuminated box fascia signs and external swan neck lighting will not be appropriate);
- The size and design of projecting signage should reflect the design of the shopfront and associated fascia signage;
- Transfer signage on the glazing may be appropriate subject to the extent/design; and
- Roller shutters should be internal and in lattice form and backlit during the evening.

There are a number of well-detailed, historic shopfronts which have been identified in the appraisal. A number of them however are badly detailed and use garish colours, poor quality materials and signs, particularly in the High Street. To help prevent further unacceptable changes, the Council should produce a Borough-wide shopfront design guide with detailed advice on the general principles on good shopfront design, particularly in historic environments.

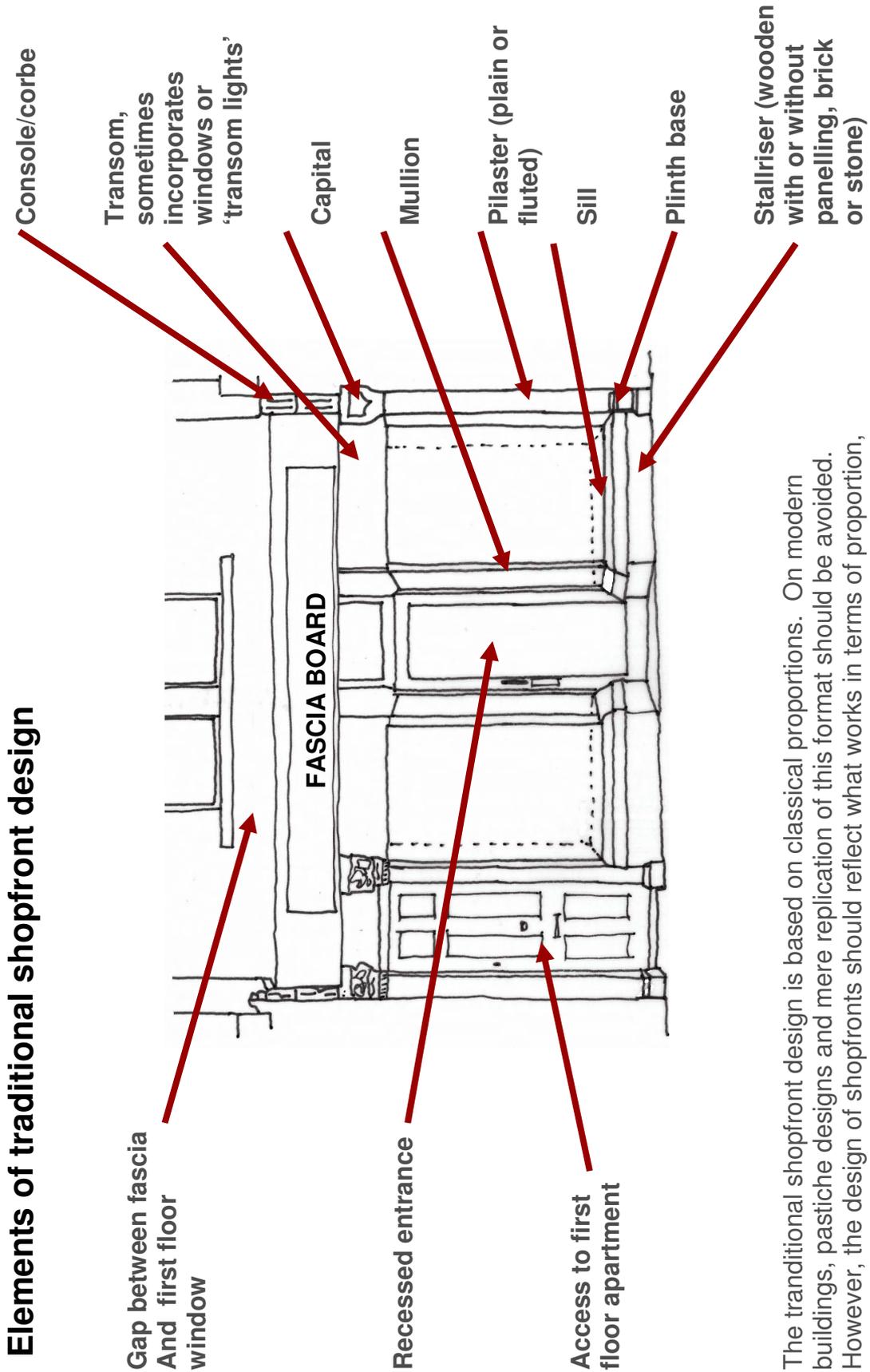
### vi) Tree Works

There is a need to retain mature tree cover wherever possible within any proposed development. Where development is granted, developers should follow the guidelines laid out in the St Helens Council Trees and Development SPD 2008, with particular reference to the issue of tree protection.



**Action 17**  
Produce a shopfront design guide to inform on the general principles on the design of shopfronts and advertisement signs for the entire Borough.

### 3.0 Guidelines for new development, extensions and alterations



The traditional shopfront design is based on classical proportions. On modern buildings, pastiche designs and mere replication of this format should be avoided. However, the design of shopfronts should reflect what works in terms of proportion, scale and the relationship to the rest of the building.

## 4.0 Other Projects

### 4.1 Other projects

Alongside the historic environment conservation issues arising from the appraisal, there are several other related issues that can be considered in this management plan.

### 4.2 Gateways into the area

It is important to create a strong sense of arrival in relation to the conservation areas, particularly along the main A49 Road. This helps create a positive impression of the place and helps to announce its historic significance.

There are four main gateways into the Conservation Areas: Ashton Road, Crow Lane East and Park Road South in the High Street Conservation Area and Mill Lane and Southworth Road in the Willow Park Conservation Area.

Therefore, there is the potential to explore the possibilities for gateway features in the form of signage/public art/enhanced landscaping/improved lighting and public realm improvements.

**Action 18**  
Explore funding opportunities for potential public art gateway features at the entry points into the two Conservation Areas.

# 5.0 Community Involvement

## 5.1 Community ‘ownership’

For the two Conservation Areas to be successful, it is important that all sectors of the community (the public, voluntary and civic groups, businesses, property/land owners and developers) are engaged in the management proposals and agree with the objectives and outcomes. Everyone has a responsibility for his or her heritage.

The character of Newton-le-Willows has been dramatically affected by past decisions and activities, and some current developments could be considered to be adversely impinging upon the historic built environment. This Management Plan is about redressing some of that impact so as to enhance the area’s distinctiveness and make it a more popular and pleasurable place for businesses, residents and visitors alike.

It is therefore proposed that the Council should regularly inform residents in the two Conservation Areas of their responsibilities towards their historic built environment.

**Action 19**  
Produce Conservation Area advice notes and guidance to inform land and property owners of the constraints and opportunities associated with the designation.

## 5.2 Consultation and involvement

The Council is committed to meaningful community involvement in the proposals for Newton-le-Willows. A comprehensive consultation process has been taking place and the views of the community have been sought and taken into account in developing this management plan. The Statement of Community Involvement for the Local Development Framework sets out the consultation considered appropriate in relation to planning for the Borough and this will guide this process.

The Council also aims to form strong partnerships with local civic, heritage and community groups, who will all be an additional outlet for keeping the community informed of progress and involving them in decision making.

On the issue of community consultation and involvement, PPG15 advises Local Planning Authorities to set up Conservation Area Advisory Committees to assist in the formulation of policy and as a source of advice.

Acknowledging that expert advice and consultation are vital elements in the protection of the Borough’s heritage, the Council could explore the role of such committees in the management of its Conservation Areas. This could be done through a pilot committee possibly implemented as part of the Ward Committee system.

**Action 20**  
Consider piloting a Conservation Area Advisory Committee to assist in the formulation of policy and as a source of advice, as proposed in PPG15.

## 6.0 Delivery and Funding

### 6.1 Monitoring and Review

As recommended by English Heritage, this document should be reviewed every five years from the date of its formal adoption. It will need to be assessed in the light of the emerging Local Development Framework and Government policy generally.

A review should include the following:

- A survey of the Conservation Areas including a full photographic survey to aid possible enforcement action;
- An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, and how successful this has been;
- The identification of any new issues which need to be addressed, requiring further actions or enhancements;
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action;
- Publicity and advertising.

**Action 21**  
Undertake a regular review every five years of the Conservation Areas including a photographic survey.

It is possible that the local community under the guidance of a heritage consultant or the Council could carry out this review. This would enable the local community to become more involved with the process and would raise public consciousness of the issues, including the problems associated with enforcement.

### 6.2 Delivery plan

A Delivery Plan has been devised on the actions outlined in this report (see Appendix 1). It is based on the premise that the programme will entail short, medium and long-term projects. Short-term projects would aim to be delivered within 18 months; medium-term within the 5 years and longer-term thereafter. The plan is a notional one at this stage, as commitments in relation to funding have not been secured.

**Action 22**  
Undertake a regular review of the delivery of the actions outlined in this report.

In addition, discussions with landowners and other parties need to be undertaken and agreements reached before definitive timetables can be given. Therefore, the delivery plan and timetable can only be indicative at present. As the project proceeds the plan will evolve and be firmed up.

### 6.3 Funding

Proposals for the enhancement and regeneration of the two Conservation Areas, as well as the introduction of planning controls will have financial implications for the Council as well as residents. For the Council, funding would be required for the improvement of the public realm and commercial properties. As for the residents, they may incur extra costs associated with Article 4 (2) Directions. It is inevitable with a programme of this size and nature, that not all the funding will be derived from the Council.

At the moment there is a limited budget set aside for the implementation of a proposed grant scheme to assist residents in the two Conservation Areas with costs associated with the proposed Article 4 (2) Direction. There are also some funds at the disposal of the Newton-le-Willows Ward committee, which could be made available for the implementation of the management plan, particularly in the area of commercial properties improvement.

#### Grant Schemes

The Council will also be looking for partners to help in the delivering of proposals, to assist where possible in contributions toward specific elements. In addition, it will seek to integrate the management proposals into its existing work programmes so that resources are targeted and prioritised towards its objectives. Alternative funding sources for larger improvement proposals could include:

- The Heritage Lottery Fund through their Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme (THI);
- English Heritage through their Conservation Partnership Scheme;
- The Market Towns Initiative through Regional Development Agencies and Government Offices;
- Arts Council funding; and,
- S106 contributions to tree planting, public realm, street lighting etc.

**Action 23**  
Consider submitting proposals for either THI/ Conservation Partnership Schemes or North West Regional Development Agency.

# Appendix 1

	<b>Action Description</b>	<b>Short term (1-2 years)</b>	<b>Medium term (2-3 years)</b>	<b>Long term (4-5 years)</b>	<b>Implemented by</b>	<b>Funding from</b>	<b>Notes/comments</b>
1	Remove Nos. 1, 3 and 5 Ashton Road from High Street Conservation Area.				SHC	N/A	Statutory process to be followed
2a	Add Nos. 1-31 (odd), 2, 4, 6 (even) and St Peters CE Primary School, Birley Street into the High Street Conservation Area.				SHC	N/A	Statutory process to be followed
2b	Add Nos. 1, 3, 45-165 (odd), 2-10, 16-26a, 28-42, 56-68, 92-122, 132-142 (even) Mercer Street into the High Street Conservation Area.				SHC	N/A	Statutory process to be followed
2c	Add Nos. 1, 2, 3 The Courtyard and 1/1a and 12-26 (even) Golborne Street into the High Street Conservation Area.				SHC	N/A	Statutory process to be followed
2d	Add Nos. 13-39 (odd) Crow Lane East into the High Street Conservation Area.				SHC	N/A	Statutory process to be followed
2e	Add Nos. 69, 69a, 71, 71a - 87 (odd) Southworth Road into the Willow Park Conservation Area.				SHC	N/A	Statutory process to be followed
2f	Add 1, 2 and 3 Waterworks Cottages on Waterworks Drive to the Willow Park Conservation Area				SHC	N/A	Statutory process to be followed
3	Undertake a condition/vacancy survey of buildings in the existing Conservation Areas.				SHC	SHC	May require Structural Engineers input
4	Seek funding for the scoping of works for footways, car parking, areas around Newton Lake and lighting of landmark buildings and spaces.				SHC	SHC	May require Engineers input
5	Through the Newton Ward Committee, implement the Newton-le-Willows lighting strategy.				SHC	SHC, EH, HLF	Joint highways and Conservation Team project
6	Undertake an assessment of building frontages and boundaries and explore priorities for enhancement.				SHC	SHC	
7	Undertake a shopfront and signage audit and explore priorities for enhancement.				SHC	SHC	
8	Seek funding for scoping of general highway and lighting schemes.				SHC	SHC	Joint highways and Conservation Team project

## Appendix 1

	<b>Action Description</b>	<b>Short term (1-2 years)</b>	<b>Medium term (2-3 years)</b>	<b>Long term (4-5 years)</b>	<b>Implemented by</b>	<b>Funding from</b>	<b>Notes/comments</b>
9	Undertake a tree survey to assess extent of tree coverage, to ensure that protected trees and in healthy condition and consider additional Tree Preservation Orders.				SHC	SHC	May require consultancy input
10	From the survey, develop a succession strategy to ensure new trees are planted to replace those lost as a consequence of tree works.				SHC, LLO	SHC	May require consultancy input
11	Publish Conservation Area leaflets to inform property owners of the declaration of the Article 4(2) Direction in the two areas and its implications on planning applications.				SHC	SHC	
12	Re-declare Article 4 (2) Directions in High Street Conservation Area to cover all single dwelling residential properties in line with current legislation.				SHC	SHC	Statutory process to be followed.
13	Declare Article 4 (2) directions in Willow Park Conservation Area to single dwelling residential properties.				SHC	SHC	Statutory process to be followed.
14	Consider the use of Section 215 powers for untidy sites/properties if negotiation with owners proves unsuccessful.				SHC	SHC	Statutory process to be followed. Joint design team and enforcement initiative
15	Consider recommending the former Magistrate's Office for inclusion into the NATIONAL list of significant historical and architectural interest.				SHC, EH	SHC	Statutory process for spot listing.
16	Consider including the Pied Bull Hotel, the Blue Lion Public House, No. 2 High Street, the Kirkfield Hotel and Legh Arms Public House into the LOCAL list of significant historical and architectural interest.				SHC	SHC	Local list will carry less weight until policy set out in the LDF
17	Produce a shopfront design guide to inform on the general principles on the design of shopfronts and advertisement signs for the entire Borough.				SHC		A borough-wide guidance
18	Explore funding opportunities for potential public art gateway features at the entry points into the two Conservations.				SHC	SHC, HLF, EH, AC	Part of wider public realm initiative

## Appendix 1

	<b>Action Description</b>	<b>Short term (1-2 years)</b>	<b>Medium term (2-3 years)</b>	<b>Long term (4-5 years)</b>	<b>Implemented by</b>	<b>Funding from</b>	<b>Notes/comments</b>
19	Produce Conservation Area advice notes and guidance to inform land and property owners of the constraints and opportunities associated with the designation.				SHC	SHC	
20	Consider piloting a Conservation Area Advisory Committee to assist in the formulation of policy and as a source of advice, as proposed in PPG15.				SHC	SHC	Consider incorporating this into existing Ward Committee
21	Undertake a regular five-year review of the Conservation Areas including a photographic survey.				SHC	SHC	Led by Council but involving other stakeholders
22	Undertake a regular review of the delivery of the actions outlined in this report.				SHC	SHC	Delivery group made up representatives from local community and other stakeholders
23	Consider SHC with St Helens Council, LLO for either THI/Conservation Partnership Schemes or North West Regional Development Agency.				SHC, English Heritage	SHC, EH, HLF, NWDA	Part of Conservation Area Partnership Scheme and Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme



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