

CABINET

5 SEPTEMBER 2023

STAR HILL TO SUN PIER CONSERVATION AREA SIGNIFICANCE LED DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – REQUEST TO GO TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Simon Curry, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration

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Summary

This report outlines work undertaken to date to assemble the High Street Heritage Action Zone Development Framework, which is due to go to first consultation in coordination with the Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area Appraisal. This report seeks Cabinet approval for public consultation on the draft High Street Heritage Action Zone Development Framework.

1. Recommendation

1.1. The Cabinet is requested to approve commencement of public consultation on the draft Star Hill to Sun Pier Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document.

2. Suggested reasons for decision

2.1. To allow for a public consultation on the draft Framework which will enable the adoption of a more robust document.

2.2. To meet the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement.

2.3. To meet the agreed outputs of the High Street Heritage Action Zone Programme.

3. Budget and policy framework

- 3.1. The draft Development Framework has been prepared by HTA Design LLP with guidance from Council officers across the planning service, including conservation and urban design specialists, to ensure it meets the requirements of national planning policy and guidance. Historic England officers have also provided input into the draft document.
- 3.2. The adoption of the Development Framework will help to deliver sustainable, inclusive, and accessible development in the Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area.

4. Background

- 4.1. In April 2020, Medway Council was awarded £1.6m in funding through Historic England as part of their High Street Heritage Action Zones (HSHAZ) programme, which is funded by the Government. The aim of this programme is to transform high streets into thriving town centres through the power of heritage, by delivering physical improvements and cultural activities to regenerate historic high streets and/or town centres. This programme also has a key role in fuelling the economic, social, and cultural recovery of these areas following the Covid-19 pandemic which had a profound effect on high streets.
- 4.2. One of the programme's workstreams is the creation of a Significance Led Development Framework for the Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area (known locally as 'Chatham Intra' or 'Old High Street Intra') to guide future development in a way which protects the character and significance of the Conservation Area, whilst enabling sensitive sustainable growth and regeneration.
- 4.3. Intra is strategically located between Chatham and Rochester, including sections of both Chatham and Rochester High Streets, and has excellent links with the wider area and the South-East. It is seeing population growth, which is leading to greater demand for more and better-quality places to live, work and enjoy.
- 4.4. The Framework aims to celebrate heritage and local identity, create opportunities for new homes, improve permeability, stimulate economic vitality, create a thriving high street, reimagine the wharves and lanes, increase use of the river and promote biodiversity and sustainability.
- 4.5. The Framework is intended to replace the existing '[Star Hill to Sun Pier Planning and Design Strategy](#)', adopted in May 2004.
- 4.6. This Framework is intended to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which provides additional guidance to Local Plan policy, and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

- 4.7. The Framework forms one of the agreed outputs of the HSHAZ programme, with the expectation that it should be adopted by the end of the 2023/24 financial year.
- 4.8. In February 2021, HTA Design LLP were appointed as lead consultants for implementation, planning, and delivery of the Framework, working alongside both Medway Council and Historic England.
- 4.9. As part of the production of the draft Development Framework, extensive engagement exercises have been undertaken with stakeholders, the local community, and Council officers.
- 4.10. The draft framework is set out at Appendix 1. This document reflects collaborative working with Historic England and wider stakeholders to guide development that responds positively to the unique heritage features of this historic riverside route between Chatham and Rochester.

5. Options

- 5.1. The options available are:
 - a) Approve the request for public consultation of the draft Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area Significance-Led Development Framework, Supplementary Planning Document.
 - b) Reject the request for public consultation: or
 - c) Refine the request for public consultation.

6. Advice and analysis

- 6.1. The proposed public consultation for the SPD will meet the requirements of Part 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for the formulation, publication, and public consultation of supplementary planning documents.
- 6.2. Following the public consultation, and should it be approved, the adopted Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area Significance-Led Development Framework, Supplementary Planning Document will provide guidance to both the public and private sector on how existing planning policies and guidance should be implemented with a focus on conserving local heritage and achieving sustainable change within Chatham Intra.
- 6.3. Failure to undertake the required public consultation would result in being unable to meet the legislative requirements.
- 6.4. The draft Development Framework has been prepared by HTA Design LLP with guidance from Council officers across the planning service, including conservation and urban design specialists, to ensure it meets the

requirements of national planning policy and guidance. Historic England officers have also provided input into the draft document.

- 6.5. The adoption of the Development Framework will help to deliver sustainable, inclusive, and accessible development in the Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area. A Diversity Impact Assessment document is appended to this report.

7. Risk management

- 7.1. Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Not undertaking the public consultation	It is a statutory requirement for SPD's to be consulted upon in public. Failure to do so would be contrary to legal requirements.	Undertake public consultation in line with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement.	D2
Not achieving effective engagement	The public consultation allows for additional information to be included and the content refined.	Reach individuals and groups that will actively contribute to the public consultation.	D2
Reliance on the existing Planning & Design Strategy	The existing adopted strategy is dated and requires refreshing to reflect recent changes and help avoid inappropriate or harmful development.	Preparation of updated planning guidance and adoption of the SPD	D3
Delayed consultation leading to SPD not being adopted by March 2024	Reputational risk of not delivering agreed output of High Street Heritage Action Zone funding	Undertake public consultation in October/November 2023	D2

For risk rating, please refer to the following table (please **retain** table in final report):

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely	I Catastrophic
B Likely	II Major
C Unlikely	III Moderate
D Rare	IV Minor

8. Consultation

- 8.1. The project team have consulted with various external stakeholders such as the Environment Agency, Peel Ports, the Marine Management Organisation, Historic England, as well as the local community and Council officers throughout the preparation of the document. They have provided specialist technical advice and guidance on the information and proposals contained within the draft Framework.
- 8.2. Consultation on the Framework is intended to be undertaken alongside the draft Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, which will request approval from Cabinet separately to go to public consultation.
- 8.3. Deep and wide public engagement has formed part of the strategy for producing the draft Development Framework, with community forums, symposia and stakeholder group meetings held between 2020 and 2023.
- 8.4. Additional engagement and awareness has also taken place through the University of Kent School of Architecture and Planning, with associated projects intended to continue into the future.
- 8.5. The public consultation is planned to be for a minimum 6-week period between October 2023 and November 2023 and will follow the requirements set out for Supplementary Planning Documents in the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 8.6. Electronic copies of the draft framework will be available through the Council website and paper copies will be made available for inspection at public buildings (such as local libraries).
- 8.7. Statutory consultees (such as Historic England) will also be consulted, as well as local history and amenity groups.
- 8.8. Consultation responses will be gathered through the bespoke consultation software 'OpusConsult' used by the Planning Service.

8.9. Responses to the consultation will be collated and responded to in a summary table at the close of the consultation.

8.10. Following the consultation, a final draft Appraisal will be brought back to Departmental Management Team (DMT) and Cabinet to request adoption.

9. Climate change implications

9.1. [The Council declared a climate change emergency in April 2019](#) - item 1038D refers and has set a target for Medway to become carbon neutral by 2050.

9.2. The information and guidance within the SPD framework will support existing and emerging planning policies within the Council's Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), including those relating to sustainability, sustainable development, and mitigating the effects of climate change.

9.3. The SPD framework sets out opportunities to increase biodiversity, tree planting, improve air quality, Sustainable Urban Drainage, and the environmental quality of new development though as guidance does not give detailed concrete solutions to all such issues.

10. Financial implications

10.1. The costs of producing the document have been met from within the externally funded HSHAZ programme. There are no financial implications to the Council, other than the printing costs for a limited number of paper copies of the draft Development Framework and officer time, which can be accommodated from within existing revenue budgets.

11. Legal implications

11.1. The Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area Significance-Led Development Framework document is a proposed Supplementary Planning Document. On adoption, it will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Council has followed the legal requirements for producing Supplementary Planning Documents, including the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Draft High Street Heritage Action Zone Development Framework
Appendix 2 – Diversity Impact Assessment

Background papers

None