

Brighton & Hove City Council

Tourism, Equalities, Communities and Culture Committee

Agenda Item 11

Subject: Brunswick Town Conservation Area Character Statement

Date of meeting: 16 June 2022

Report of: Director of Economy, Environment and Culture

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Ward(s) affected: Brunswick and Adelaide

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 The report summarises the response to public consultation on the draft Brunswick Town Conservation Area Character Statement and seeks approval to publish the final document. The Character Statement seeks to define the 'special architectural or historic interest' of the area and so helps to inform future planning decisions in the area; it forms a sound basis for the area's future management. This is consistent with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), City Plan Part One and the Conservation Strategy (2015), as set out further below

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Committee agrees publication of the Brunswick Town Conservation Area Character Statement (Appendix 1)

3. Context and background information

3.1 Brunswick Town Conservation Area encompasses the fine late Regency period and early Victorian planned estates of Brunswick Town (1824-1834) and Adelaide Crescent / Palmeira Square (1830-1860). These planned estates are flanked to the south by the open seafront and Hove Lawns and to the north by the commercial thoroughfare of Western Road, with parallel streets of 19th century residential terraces beyond. The conservation area was designated in 1969 and extended in 1977. It covers almost 39 hectares.

3.2 The existing Conservation Area Character Statement is a very brief document that dates from the early 1990s. The council's Conservation Strategy (2015) identified Brunswick Town as the priority Character Statement for review.

3.3 The Act (s69) places a statutory duty on local planning authorities (LPAs) to determine which parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas, and to review these areas from time to time. It also states (s71) that

an LPA should from time to time formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of a conservation area. Whilst there is no statutory requirement to prepare conservation area character statements, local authorities are encouraged by the NPPF to identify and assess an area's significance.

- 3.4 A good understanding of what makes a conservation area special is key to its continued conservation; it gives justification and credence to the designation. An up-to-date character statement is important for making robust and enforceable planning decisions and is a material consideration in determining a planning application and in the event of an appeal.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 There is an option to continue with the existing Character Statement in place, but this document is very brief and is not up-to-date so would carry very limited weight. This option would not be good practice and would risk the council failing its statutory duty under section 69 of the Act.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 Early, informal engagement with ward councillors, local amenity and residents' groups in the area as well as some local businesses took place from early December 2021 to early January 2022 through the appointed consultants. The feedback to that engagement helped to inform a draft Character Statement. Internal consultation on the draft document with other relevant council services was carried out in March 2022.
- 5.2 A formal consultation on the draft Character Statement was then undertaken for 5 weeks from 30 March to 4 May 2022. This included a series of questions via the council's consultation portal as well as direct e-mails to all local amenity and residents' groups and those local businesses engaged at the previous stage, as well as to ward councillors, and information on the council's website. Thirteen responses were received from individuals via the consultation portal and four from local groups or organisations. A summary of responses received and how these have been addressed in the final document is included at Appendix 2.
- 5.3 The comments received were largely positive and the document was complimented by the Conservation Advisory Group (CAG), the Brunswick Town Association and Hove Civic Society. A strong majority of respondents agreed that the draft character statement accurately captured the special character and appearance of the conservation area and that the division into four 'character areas' is appropriate. No changes to the boundary were suggested. Some critical comments were received from the Regency Town House and additions have been made in response to those comments where appropriate.
- 5.4 A number of comments were received in respect of section 6 of the document, which relates to future management of the area and which sets out a number of key opportunities, issues and vulnerabilities. These comments predominantly express concern about the maintenance and upkeep of the public realm and open spaces and particularly Hove Lawns

and the seafront. Some of the comments lie beyond the scope of this document, but where appropriate amendments have been made to this section, including the action plan at Table 6.1.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Conservation area review provides an important mechanism through which to protect and manage historic areas. This is recognised in legislation and through national and local planning policy. The Brunswick Town Conservation Area Character Statement will inform the planning process and future management of the area, with support from the local community.
- 6.2 The boundaries of the conservation area were reviewed as part of this work but no changes to the boundaries are recommended.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The cost of commissioning and producing the Brunswick Town Conservation Area Character Statement was funded from the existing Policy, Projects and Heritage team budget within the City Development and Regeneration service. Staff resources to oversee the document and undertake the consultation were again funded from the team's revenue budget.

Jill Scarfield:

Date consulted (1/6/22):

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The council has a duty under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to review its conservation areas, from time to time, to determine whether any parts or further parts should be designated as conservation areas. The Conservation Area Character Statement provides a mechanism through which to review the area and to define its special interest. There is no statutory requirement for public consultation prior to designation / review but this is considered best practice.

Hilary Woodward

Date consulted 19/05/22:

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The Conservation Area Character Statement will support policy DM 26 of the Submission City Plan Part Two once it has been adopted. A Health and Equalities Impact Assessment (HEQIA) has been carried out on the draft City Plan Part 2 and the Main Modifications

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 An active approach to conserving and enhancing the conservation area will help the small 'high street' local businesses in Western Road Hove to thrive.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices [delete if not applicable]

1. Brunswick Town Conservation Area Character Statement
2. Summary of Consultation Responses

2. Background documents

1. Strategy for Conserving Brighton & Hove's Historic Built Environment (the Conservation Strategy) (2015)