

APPENDIX A - IMPROVEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY TO LISTED BUILDINGS

<p>Introduction and context.</p>	<p>In September 2019, Test Valley Borough Council declared a climate emergency and committed to identifying steps to achieve carbon-neutrality as soon as possible. In June 2020, as a step towards this, the council approved and published its Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP). This action plan is a living document and is reviewed in line with changes to technology, government policy and other local trends. The council is working towards refreshing the CEAP.</p> <p>The CEAP focuses on actions that direct the council towards being a carbon neutral authority by looking into the council's assets and assessing how emissions can be reduced. Examples include undertaking the retrofit and decarbonisation of our Romsey depot, and introducing electric fleet vehicles and HVO fuel. It also seeks to support the local community and businesses. Examples include the funding of support for a local community energy initiative working with Community Energy South, including training on how make homes more energy efficient.</p> <p>The actions outlined within the CEAP include that the emerging local plan policies should account for and help respond to the climate emergency.</p> <p>Councillors have expressed a desire to understand more about the planning framework and policies relating to listed buildings and properties in conservation areas within the context of climate change in order to improve their sustainability.</p> <p>Within the Test Valley there are c.2,500 Listed Buildings (not including curtilage listed buildings) and 36 Conservation Areas. There are also numerous non-designated heritage assets.</p> <p>It is most likely the case that there is an issue, both nationally, and locally within Test Valley with people thinking that no changes may be made to listed buildings and properties located inside conservation areas in order to improve their energy efficiency. Whilst this is not the case it is perhaps unsurprising that this is some people's perception given the additional controls that apply to historic buildings which are statutorily protected.</p> <p>These controls mean that approval may be needed for measures that would otherwise not need the Council's permission. For example, changes to a listed building, such as replacing windows or adding solar panels to a roof, usually require listed building consent. The impact on the historic environment is also an important consideration when planning applications are assessed, and decided, including where a proposed development would affect a listed building, its setting or conservation area.</p>
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	<p>It is true therefore that solutions may need to be more creative and inventive, and appropriate regard needs to be given to conserving the special interest of listed buildings when considering alterations and additions, but in many cases, it is possible to make often quite simple changes which can improve their performance.</p> <p>Frequently issues actually arise from ignoring traditional measures, such as ensuring window frames fit properly, and with details such as blinds and awnings. It should be born in mind that listed buildings are inherently sustainable by virtue of their longevity.</p> <p>It is important to encourage discussion and the Council's pre-application service is particularly helpful for facilitating this. However, Design and Conservation do not seem to receive very many enquires about green measures for historic buildings beyond wholesale replacement of windows. This indicates that any misconceptions are unlikely to be based on informed discussion with the Council.</p> <p>Solutions are often feasible but need to be bespoke to the listed building in question. This is because an adaptation which may not be appropriate for one building, could be suitable for a different building. For example, it can be possible to install solar panels on historically important buildings (such as Kings College, Cambridge) because they can be concealed behind parapets, where this option may not be acceptable on a vernacular thatched cottage.</p> <p>The key therefore, is the nature of the heritage asset, and considering this carefully when exploring what may be appropriate to improve its sustainability, and seeking professional guidance, both from heritage specialists and sustainable energy advisors to enable informed options to be identified. A whole building approach is also important.</p> <p>Consideration of this matter by OSCOM at this point is timely given the Government's recent review of the barriers that hold back the greening of historic buildings, which is cited below, and was only published in January this year. The report identifies a number of factors which have constrained improvements to historic buildings, and those located in conservation areas, and steps being taken nationally to address the situation. This report can be used therefore to inform how we consider these matters in Test Valley.</p>
National Policy context	<p>National Government has produced guidance for local planning authorities regarding treatment of heritage assets within the planning process. This also includes climate change policies.</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework December 2023:</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Section 14 (paragraphs 157 to 179) deals with managing the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change.</p>

	<p>Section 16 (paragraphs 195 to 214) deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment.</p> <p>The Government's Planning Practice Guidance includes a section specifically relating to climate change:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/guidance/climate-change</p> <p>and one relating to the historic environment:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment</p>
<p>National Guidance and Government Review:</p>	<p>National Government have very recently produced a review relating to: Adapting historic homes for energy efficiency: a review of the barriers https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adapting-historic-homes-for-energy-efficiency-a-review-of-the-barriers/adapting-historic-homes-for-energy-efficiency-a-review-of-the-barriers</p> <p>The report highlights next steps across a number of areas connected to improving the green credentials of our historic buildings as set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Local authority skills, training and capacity, guidance and information, • Construction industry skills, training and capacity • Affordability and financial incentives <p>A suite of guidance documents has been produced by Historic England which is the Government body that is responsible for heritage across the country.</p> <p>These may be found at:</p> <p>https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/</p> <p>(also linked to TVBC webpage: https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/heritage/listedbuildings)</p> <p>https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/energy-efficiency/generating-energy/</p> <p>They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: How to Improve Energy Efficiency (2018) - Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating pitched roofs at ceiling level-cold roofs (2016) - Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating thatched roofs (2016) - Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Open fires, chimneys and flues (2016) - Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating solid walls (2016) - Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating timber-framed walls (2015)

<p>Wider context – Other authorities' approaches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading (2017) - Installing heat pumps - Solar water heating - Biomass boilers - Photovoltaics - Small-scale wind turbines. <p>Advice can also be found on the Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance website: https://stbauk.org/</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Responsible Retrofit Guidance Wheel - The STBA Whole House approach – looking at a holistic approach to improving the whole building. <p>National Amenities Societies, such as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) also provide guidance: https://www.spab.org.uk/advice/search-our-knowledgebase?category_type=153&keywords=</p> <p>Other councils have produced guidance: Historic Buildings and Energy Efficiency - Winchester City Council https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/historic-environment-energy-efficiency</p> <p>(there is a significant resource implication associated with producing this type of guidance)</p>
<p>The Local Plan</p>	<p>The current Local Plan (2011-2029) was adopted in January 2016 https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/local-development-framework/dpd</p> <p>Due to its date, it does not include a specific policy relating to climate change, but the need to respond to this does run through the document, particularly paras 7.49-7.51.</p> <p>Policy E9, and its supporting paragraphs, deals with the management of the historic environment. Para 7.74 states: <i>Heritage assets are irreplaceable and should be retained wherever possible. For listed buildings, the Council will have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any historic features of interest. The Council recognises that some change may be necessary to ensure the asset is continued to be used and retained in its current or alternative appropriate use that is compatible with the conservation of its significance. However, such changes will need to be undertaken sensitively having fully recorded, understood and appreciated the significance of the heritage asset.</i></p>

<p>Discussion regarding the nature of the issues identified, and possible next steps and actions the Council could take.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness of existing advice, guidance and providing targeted briefing sessions to increase knowledge of how sustainability could be achieved for historic buildings (resource implication). - Encourage engagement with Council Officers (through the pre-application service) to seek solutions and bespoke guidance. - Information sharing - Update and expand links to existing guidance on website - Consider whether any bespoke documents are needed (resource implication) - Consider additional resources where required. The Council could, for example, explore whether to provide financial support to the owners of heritage assets to help deliver sustainability measures. This has significant resource implications in terms of providing grant assistance and managing that process. Most councils do not now offer such types of support if they ever did. It would be important to consider whether such intervention was justifiable and appropriate, in terms of the outcomes it might help to secure, including whether the funding might be used in another way, which would provide greater impact and benefit, from a climate emergency point of view. - Consider the findings set out in the Government's recent review – Adapting historic homes for energy efficiency: a review of the barriers January 2024 -to identify any further actions the Council could consider, in addition to those cited above, which may help to encourage enhancement to the sustainability of our historic buildings and premises in conservation areas.
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