

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DATE: 29TH JANUARY 2013

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

SUBJECT: BUILDINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST PROCEDURE

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To seek approval from Members for the adoption of a procedure for designating and protecting Buildings of Local Interest (BLIs).

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The adopted Unitary Development Plan contains a policy on Buildings of Local Interest (HE4). The policy is designed to protect buildings or structures which are not currently listed, but which are nevertheless considered worthy of retention because of the significant contribution that they make to the local environment and history of the area. These buildings might include buildings formerly listed at Grade 3, buildings associated with important local historical events, people or activities, and buildings contributing to the setting of Listed Buildings. Buildings of historic interest which were not worthy of the grades 1, 2*or 2 but nonetheless had historic interest formerly constituted Grade 3 buildings. This category was removed during the 1990s and former Grade 3 buildings were used to form a Buildings of Local Interest register by the Council.

2.02 Appendix 1 contains the draft procedural guidance for Members to consider and it is also intended to publish an information leaflet which will be sent to owners and other interested parties which explains why a building is identified as a BLI and what this means to them.

2.03 The Council currently holds a list of Buildings of Local Interest (BLIs) which contains 211 properties and will need updating should the procedure has been adopted. An up to date list will then be available from the Built Conservation Team and will be amended as necessary. The designation of buildings as BLIs is a positive way of recognising important elements of the County's historic built environment, which although not nationally important, are of significance at a local level.

2.04 The need to publish and formalise our procedure for designating BLIs arises from a case at Gelli Farm, Whitford where a BLI was made on a

property that was the subject of a planning application. The applicant sought to challenge the BLI via the courts, and whilst not successful, the judge criticised the Council for not having a published procedure.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The designation of BLIs is common practice by local authorities across Wales as an appropriate way of providing protection to buildings which are considered important to the historic environment and which help form the character of local urban and rural landscapes. This is important not just for residents, but also for the tourist industry and because an attractive environment can help to attract inward investment. It is therefore beneficial to the County as a whole to ensure that the appropriate protection is in place.

3.02 The policy does not mean that the building has to be preserved exactly as it is, but that any alterations should be carried out in a sympathetic manner. Owners will be able to ask for assistance on how best to alter or extend their buildings and it is important that a more transparent and defensible process is in place in order to achieve this and to protect the historic environment and character of Flintshire's individual buildings and settlements.

3.03 The age of the BLIs currently on the list is broken down as follows:

Date	No. of BLI's
16 th Century	3
17 th Century	66
18 th Century	85
19 th Century	35
20 th Century	4
No date	18

3.04 It is important that the Council has adopted guidance, with an up to date list of BLIs, which can be used for providing guidance to owners and for the Council's Development Management team to use in assessing planning applications. This guidance has been drawn up taking into account current best practice relating to BLIs.

3.05 When a new BLI is proposed, in order to determine the historic and / or architectural features that should be preserved, background research will be undertaken and a site visit carried out. Requests to add a building to the local list can be made by anyone. This can include Council Officers, members of the public, County Councillors, Town and Community Councils, local community groups, historic societies etc. who are concerned that historic local buildings are going to be lost or inappropriately altered because of proposed demolition /

development. Based on the information gathered, members of the Built Conservation Team will then prepare a report with a recommendation and this will be taken to the BLI Advisory Panel. The Panel will then assess the proposal and make a decision on whether the building should become a BLI.

- 3.06** The BLI Panel, as outlined in the procedure, will need to be set up to consider proposals for the designation of new BLIs and to review the current list. It is expected that a review of the existing list will provide in the region of 211 BLIs for the panel to consider. Once this review has been carried out, it is expected that the Panel will only convene once every six months unless an urgent case needs consideration.
- 3.07** It is proposed that the Panel will consist of 5 core members who have a high level of expertise in relevant subjects, along with 3 members of local history and civic groups, and 2 County Councillors. It is proposed that the 2 County Councillors are the Cabinet Members for Environment and Regeneration. Letters have been sent to relevant groups and interested people to ascertain whether they would like to form part of the Panel. In addition to the Panel members, the local Member(s), community and town councils will be consulted for their views when sites within their areas are being considered.
- 3.08** A number of national and local historical and civic societies have been contacted to ascertain whether they would like to form part of the BLI advisory panel. These were: The Ancient Monuments Society, Bagillt History Club, Capel, Civic Trust Wales, Mold and District Civic Society, Flintshire Historical Society, The Georgian Group, SAVE Britain's Heritage, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and the Victorian Society. Some of these groups have put forward the names of people who would like to sit on the panel and others are in the process of contacting their local members. At present the Ancient Monuments Society, Mold and District Civic Society, the Flintshire Historical Society, and SAVE Britain's Heritage have put forward people to sit on the panel. The Georgian Group, the Victorian Society and SPAB are in the process of contacting their local members and at present their final responses are still being awaited. Capel have yet to respond.
- 3.09** Training will be given to all members of the Panel prior to the inaugural meeting. Further advice and guidance will also be provided at a later stage if required.
- 3.10** Initial work has already started on gathering information on proposed BLIs and surveying those already on the list. It is expected that once the procedure is adopted by Council, the first Panel meeting can be held within three months of adoption. The process will be carried out as set out in the guidance note to ensure a consistent and transparent

approach is taken.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01** That Members approve the BLI procedure note (in Appendix 1), including the establishment of the BLI Advisory Panel.
- 4.02** That Members support the review of the current list of BLI's.
- 4.03** That Members give the Director of Environment delegated authority following consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment to format (and where necessary typographically correct) the wording of the procedure note into the appropriate house style for publication.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

None

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

None

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

None

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

None

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

None

12.00 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Buildings of Local Interest Procedure Note

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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