

Windermere Villas Conservation Area

1 Summary

- 1.1 Members are asked to approve the consultation draft of the proposed boundary and Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) for a new conservation area on the eastern shore of Windermere; Windermere Villas Conservation Area. It seeks approval to progress with a six-week period of public consultation in Autumn 2025. Members were briefed about a proposed conservation area at an event in 2023. This draft Plan gives Members their first opportunity to comment on the draft Plan prior to public consultation. The final version will be brought to Members following public consultation to seek approval later in the year.

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| Recommendation that a you: | Agree the proposed boundary and draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for public consultation (Annex 1 and 2); and |
| b | Delegate any minor pre-consultation amendments to the Director of Sustainable Development. |

2 Background

- 2.1 Conservation Areas were first designated under the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 and are defined as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.” Within the Lake District National Park there are currently 23 conservation areas, covering both large and small settlements.
- 2.2 Designation as a Conservation Area allows the National Park Authority to formulate specific policies and proposals to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area. These documents set out the special character of the conservation area (the appraisal) and make recommendations for future management of the area either through Development Management controls or enhancement projects (the management plan).
- 2.3 The effect of Conservation Area designation for homeowners and businesses (without any further controls such as an article 4 direction) requires applications for planning permission to be judged upon how well the proposals conserve and enhance the special interest of the conservation area. Certain Permitted Development Rights do not apply in conservation areas – demolition of unlisted structures being the main change and works to trees may need consent.
- 2.4 This draft report follows on from a presentation to committee members at the Windermere ‘Seeing is Believing’ event in 2023. The draft appraisal and management plan have been consulted on internally and both the relevant Parish Councils are aware of the project and will be formally briefed ahead of the public consultation period.

3 Policy Context

- 3.1 The Lake District's historic environment and cultural landscape is an integral part of the Special Qualities of the National Park and the Attributes of Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site. The proposed Conservation Area contains a number of internationally recognised Villas and their associated Villa Landscapes, which are individually significant as designated heritage assets, but collectively form an Attribute of Outstanding Universal Value contributing to the overall significance of the World Heritage Site.
- 3.2 The eastern shore of Windermere is also highly significant for its tracts of ancient woodland and individual specimen trees planted as part of designed villa landscapes. Our intention for the Lake District's historic environment and cultural landscape is described in the Vision and the strategies in the Lake District National Park Partnership Plan 2020 - 2025 (LDNP Partnership Plan), the management plan for the National Park and World Heritage Site. Of particular relevance is Partnership Plan Strategy 2 - Sustained distinctive and well maintained built historic environment and landscape, Strategy 5 - Well considered tree and woodland establishment and improvement and Strategy 7- The continuation of the Lake District as a source of artistic, literary, and cultural inspiration.
- 3.3 Business Plan Action 8 Historic Environment: Lead the delivery of the Lake District Historic Environment Strategy 2020-2025 Action Plan, through the Historic Environment programme board.

4 Options

- 4.1 Members have the following options:
- a) Approve the proposed conservation area boundary, draft appraisal and management plan for public consultation.
 - b) Authorise the Director of Sustainable Development to make any minor amendments necessary to the document that does not alter its main purpose, in consultation with the Head of Development Management, prior to public consultation.
 - c) Do not approve the document for public consultation and suggest an alternative course of action.

5 Proposals

- 5.1 I propose that Members select option a) in 4.1 above and approve the period of public consultation in accordance with details of this report and the supporting papers.
- 5.2 I also propose that Members approve option b) in 4.1 above, to allow for further minor amends and internal feedback, prior to public consultation.

6 Stakeholder Consultation

- 6.1 The proposed conservation area falls within Windermere & Bowness Town Council area and Cartmel Fell Parish – both Councils were made aware of the project when the consultants were appointed, and Councillors will be formally briefed ahead of the public consultation period via officer attendance at their meetings.

7 Demonstrating Best Value

- 7.1 The Best Value implications are:

- Challenge – we should do this work to fulfil our Statutory Purpose, Management Plan Strategies and Business Plan Action.
- Compare – our approach is best practice and follows Historic England Guidance on preparing Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans and using the tools available to conserve and manage conservation areas.
- Consult – consultation will be carried out both internally and with key partners, stakeholders, and wider public via a range of public consultation exercises.
- Compete – we are the only organisation with the duty and powers to designate, manage and adopt strategies for conserving Conservation Areas.

8 Finance Considerations

- 8.1 The public consultation will be delivered using existing financial resources – any additional funding required will be managed through the Historic Environment Programme Board.
- 8.2 The process of consulting on the draft appraisal and management plan does not commit us to designating the conservation area or adopting any greater management controls. At this stage we need to consult on the principles of the new conservation area, the appraisal and management plan, and will provide further advice to members on the financial implications of any proposed designations and management controls when the item returns to committee.

9 Risk

- 9.1 There are few risks associated with the public consultation period, however some of the implications of conservation area designation – greater control over demolition and works to trees, along with recommendations in the management plan - particularly the introduction of an article 4 direction, may receive a negative response and be challenged. We have the evidence to show why these changes are needed and we anticipate that there will also be public support for these controls.
- 9.2 The public consultation period prior to adoption will help to raise awareness of the special interest of the area, the risks to that special interest and engender support for the new conservation area and management plan prior to formal adoption.

| Risk | Consequence | Controls Required |
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| Members do not approve the proposals for public consultation | Special interest of the area continues to deteriorate | Members approve report or suggest alternative approach |
| Significant challenge from affected property owners. | Members may wish to review following public consultation | Clear communications and evidence base |
| Sudden increase in works prior to the Conservation Area and Management Plan coming into force. | Harm to special interest of the Conservation Area | Refresh guidance documents, updated webpages and best practice case studies |
| Large increase in planning applications once the Conservation Area and Management Plan comes into force. | Impact on Development Management resourcing | Refresh guidance documents, updated webpages |

10 Legal Considerations

- 10.1 There are no legal considerations to take into account from presenting the report for public consultation. There is no statutory requirement for Local Planning Authorities to consult with anyone before a conservation area is designated. However, Historic England advise LPAs to consult as widely as possible.

There is no statutory requirement on the level of detail that must be considered by an LPA before designation. However, guidance from Historic England states that it is vital an area's special architectural or historic interest is defined and recorded in some detail. A published character appraisal is highly recommended.

The consultation will follow the requirements set out in Table 2 within our Statement of Community Involvement: **Statement of Community Involvement: Lake District National Park.**

11 Human Resources

- 11.1 The development of the Windermere Villas Conservation Area is established in the business plan and service plan; therefore, resource allocations have been planned to deliver this work package.

12 Diversity Implications

- 12.1 We have considered diversity and equality issues in this process, and it is not considered that there will be a negative impact on groups with relevant protected characteristics as a result of this work. We will have particular regard to diversity and equality issues through the consultation process. We will also take these issues into account when delivering our services in relation to Conservation Areas in future.

13 Sustainability

- 13.1 Long term, the designation of a new conservation area, along with the associated appraisal and management plan seeks to develop and support a sense of place

and context for communities to benefit from the potential and intrinsic value that the historic environment and cultural landscape can provide for tourism, culture, wildlife and wellbeing. It also meets the test of the Vision in contributing, where it can, to sustain the social and economic vibrancy of the area. Conserving the historic environment is inherently a sustainable approach to development and promotes the best use of existing resources – this is particularly relevant in an area of the National Park with heightened development pressures.

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| Background Papers | n/a |
| Author/Post | Rose Lord, Built Environment Adviser |
| Responsible Director | Steve Ratcliffe, Director of Sustainable Development |
| Date Written | 16/07/2025 |

Annex 1: Proposed Conservation Area Boundary

Annex 2: Draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

(We are awaiting the final version of the report to include all maps, plans and images etc – i.e. the version that will go out to public consultation. Provided in this annex is the text only version of the consultation draft.)