

Have Your Say Proposals for a new Heritage Advisory Panel



**Consultation Document
9 March to 5 May 2020**

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
1.1 Purpose of the Consultation.....	3
1.2 What we are seeking your views on	3
1.3 How to have your say	3
1.4 How we will use the findings?	3
2. Background.....	4
2.1 What we found as part of our review	4
3. Our proposals for the existing CAACs	5
4. Proposed Heritage Advisory Panel	6
4.1 Purpose and scope	6
4.2 Benefits of the proposed panel	7
4.3 Membership of the Heritage Panel	8
4.4 Operations.....	9
4.5 Selection of Planning Applications.....	11
4.6 Accessibility.....	11
5. Resource Implications and training.....	11
5.1 Resources: The Heritage Advisory Panel	11
5.2 Resources: Training.....	11

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the consultation

We are proposing to establish a borough-wide heritage panel to help ensure that significant planning decisions involving heritage are informed by the expertise of local stakeholders with consistency across the borough.

It is proposed that this will be managed by the council in conjunction with panel members who will be recruited to join the panel. It will not replace other local bodies, which are independently run, but instead will provide a focus for local expertise. Local community organisations are being invited to nominate potential members for the panel.

1.2 What are we seeking your views on

We are seeking your views on the proposal to introduce a Heritage Advisory Panel and how this should operate. We are also seeking your views on our new proposals for the existing Barnet Conservation Area Advisory Committees.

1.3 How to have your say

The consultation is open to everyone including residents, businesses, statutory bodies, interested parties, and community groups.

There are two ways in which you can give your feedback:

- complete a questionnaire online at engage.barnet.gov.uk
- complete a paper questionnaire

If you would like a paper questionnaire or a copy of the consultation in another format, please contact us:

- by email: alissa.fawcett@barnet.gov.uk

The consultation is open from 9 March to 5 May 2020.

1.4 How we will use the findings?

The findings from the consultation will help us review and inform the final recommendations.

2. Background

We are committed to the protection of the borough's heritage. Most recently we have led in the review of the local list, working with local organisations and volunteers.

In 2017 our Planning Committee commissioned a review of Conservation Area Advisory Committees (CAACs) to consider their effectiveness, inclusivity, profile and other matters. All our borough's CAACs were asked to give their views as part of the review, together with other organisations, local authority officers and some other London boroughs, as a benchmarking exercise. The review was undertaken in early in 2019.

2.1 What we found as part of our review

CAACs are no longer mentioned in national planning policy or guidance. Whilst many CAACs continue to operate around the country, alternative methods are also being used, including borough or district-wide heritage panels and design review panels. These operate in addition to scrutiny by a range of local community organisations, such as civic societies.

The review recognised the benefits and expertise that Barnet's CAACs bring to scrutinising planning applications within their Conservation Areas, but also identified that not all CAACs had constitutions or functioning committees. Furthermore, the review found that CAACs were operating very differently to each other, with little borough-wide knowledge sharing. To improve the consistency and reach across the borough's sixteen Conservation Areas, a borough-wide approach is required. We are therefore proposing to introduce a Heritage Advisory Panel.

Key questions we are seeking your views on:

- to what extent do you agree or disagree that a borough wide approach is required?
- if you disagree please say why.

3. Our proposals for the existing Conservation Area Advisory Committees

The London borough of Barnet currently has five Conservation Area Advisory Committees (CAACs) which are independently run. We recognise the importance and value of the CAACs and of other local community organisations.

In the past council officers have attended CAAC meetings on a regular basis. This has had considerable resource implications and represents an inconsistency compared with interaction with other local community organisations.

The review of CAACs identified that some of their representations are recorded through the minutes at the meeting, made by the Planning Officer attending the CAAC meeting, whilst other CAACs submit their representations themselves via the council's online planning portal. It is far better practice for a formal representation to be submitted by the CAAC itself.

Approach:

Therefore, it is proposed to change the approach in the way the council interacts with the CAACs:

- we will continue to value and consider CAAC representations, but these must be submitted as written representations on each planning application, via the council's planning portal
- we will encourage regular contact with the CAACs, as with other local community organisations, but will not routinely attend CAAC meetings.

Recommendations:

In addition to these changes, we will encourage and support the following:

- for CAACs to jointly develop and adopt a model constitution, in the interests of consistency and good governance
- for CAACs to seek to develop a more diverse local community membership, for example targeting businesses, students and younger representatives, with a balance of genders.

The CAACs will take these recommendations forward themselves, although we will continue to offer advice.

Key questions we are seeking your views on:

- overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the suggested approach for Barnet's five Conservation Area Advisory Committees?
- if you disagree please say why
- overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed recommendations for Barnet's five Conservation Area Advisory Committees?
- if you disagree please say why.

4. Proposed Heritage Advisory Panel

4.1 Purpose and scope

We are purposing that a new Heritage Advisory Panel will consider planning applications and projects that have a significant impact on the borough's heritage and will provide informed advice to the council to support decision-making.

The proposed panel will cover the entire borough. It will deal with all kinds of heritage, including:

- listed buildings (buildings of special architectural or historic interest)
- conservation Areas (areas of special architectural or historic interest)
- buildings on the council's Local List
- other designated heritage
- other non-designated heritage.

To keep the workload manageable, there will need to be clear criteria and thresholds to determine what the panel considers. This could include planning applications and projects, such as public realm schemes that specifically impact on the borough's heritage.

Key questions we are seeking your views on:

- to what extent do you agree or disagree that the Heritage Advisory Panel should look at all kinds of heritage, including conservation areas, listed buildings and other kinds of designated and undesignated heritage?
- if you disagree please say why.

4.2 Benefits of the proposed panel

There are numerous benefits from setting up the Heritage Advisory Panel. These include:

- coverage of the entire borough, including all 16 Conservations Areas, not all of which have a CAAC
- the panel will address all kinds of heritage, including Conservation Areas, listed buildings and other designated or non-designated heritage
- there will be clear terms of reference and consistent operation over the whole of borough
- the panel will provide a concentration of local expertise, providing a direct and authoritative voice to the council and the wider community on protecting and enhancing the borough's heritage
- the panel will focus not just on character and conservation, but also the ways in which heritage delivers wider economic and community benefits and helps to support sustainable growth and development.
- servicing the heritage panel will create a more effective use of the council's limited resource, providing a direct operational link between the borough's heritage team and the panel
- the panel will act as a cross-borough knowledge hub for heritage best practice.

Key questions we are seeking your views on:

- to what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed Heritage Advisory Panel will help achieve these benefits?
- if you disagree please say why
- do you think there will be any other benefits to introducing the proposed Heritage Advisory Panel?
- do you think there are any disadvantages introducing the proposed Heritage Advisory Panel?

4.3 Membership of the Heritage Advisory Panel

Recruitment to the panel will be managed by the council. It is proposed that there will be nine members of the panel. These will include:

- three members from relevant built environment professions (for example planners, architects and surveyors, ideally with heritage specialisms)
- three members from local community organisations and societies
- three members from business, education, government or property backgrounds or other local stakeholders.

All members of the proposed heritage advisory panel will need to have an interest in heritage, including not just its cultural values, but also how it forms part of the infrastructure, economy and community of Barnet today. The panel's scope will not only include consideration of character, but also wider issues affecting Barnet's historic areas, such as affordability, economic changes and sustainability. Panel members will also need to have a general awareness of heritage protection legislation, policy and designations and of planning decision-making.

The aim will be to achieve diversity in the membership to best reflect the diversity of the local population. This includes diversity in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and other factors.

Recruitment will be undertaken through a simple application process to the council. Links will be sought with the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), other professional bodies, local community organisations and other local bodies to help in publicising the panel to potential members.

Key questions we are seeking your views on:

- overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed approach to membership of the Heritage Advisory Panel?
- if you disagree please say why.

4.4 Operations

It is proposed that the panel will meet every eight weeks. This will allow for consideration of larger or more complex planning applications, which have a 13-week period for decision-making. However, many planning applications have an eight-week period for decisions. Therefore, it will be necessary for the panel to operate remotely at times, for example through email.

It is proposed that the council's Governance and Planning Service will manage the panel in conjunction with panel members.

The panel's advice on any planning proposals will be given within the body of planning committee reports or made directly to the relevant planning officer. It is envisaged that Heritage Advisory Panel advice will be treated in a similar way to statutory consultees.

The panel's advice will be monitored to establish how effective it is in informing outcomes.

Key questions we are seeking your views on:

- to what extent do you agree or disagree that the panel should meet every eight weeks and deal with smaller planning proposals through email?
- if you disagree how often do you think the panel should meet?

4.5 Selection of Planning Applications

The suggested criteria for selecting planning and other applications to present to the panel are proposed as follows:

- the complete demolition of any statutory listed building
- significant changes to listed buildings of all grades, including impacts on their setting
- significant changes within a Conservation Area, including schemes that involve the demolition of locally listed buildings
- large or complex developments directly impacting upon a conservation area or its context
- significant public realm schemes in Conservation Areas or effecting the settings of listed buildings
- proposed new conservation areas or changes to conservation area boundaries
- other matters with significant heritage implications, at the request of the panel.

Key questions we are seeking your views on:

- overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the suggested selection criteria for applications to be referred to the Heritage Advisory Panel?
- if you disagree please say why.

4.6 Accessibility

It is proposed a web page will be created with details of the panel, including its purpose and membership. The web page will also provide details of other local community organisations with an interest in heritage, and how to contact them.

Key questions we are seeking your views on:

- do you have any other suggestions on what should be included on the web page?

5. Resource implications and training

We will seek to arrange an ongoing programme of training and skills development for the heritage panel members, planning officers and elected members. It is proposed that this training will be opened to CAACs and other local community organisations. Such training could include conservation practice, urban design, Character and context, law and policy, and other relevant matters.

5.1 Resources: The Heritage Advisory Panel

For the council, there will be additional demands on planning officers to manage and service the heritage panel. This will include organising and attending six annual meetings, servicing the panel by email, writing-up the panel's comments and recommendations and liaising with panel chairs to obtain sign-off.

These additional demands on officer time will be off set against the time savings from not attending meetings of the five CAACs and not having to write-up notes from these meetings. However, there is likely be an impact on Governance, as panel meetings will require administrative support.

5.2 Resources: Training

The organisation of training for panel members, officers and elected members will involve some officer time. In addition, there may be financial cost if external trainers are commissioned. However, it is proposed training will be a normal and ongoing expense for the local authority.

Key questions we are seeking your views on:

- to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about training?
 - heritage related training would be useful
 - training should be given to local community organisations.
- are there any other comments that you would like to make about the management of Barnet's Heritage Advisory Panel?