

**CABINET  
6 JANUARY 2026**

---

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT APPRAISAL FOR THE VICTORIA EMBANKMENT  
CONSERVATION AREA INCLUDING PROPOSED BOUNDARY EXTENSIONS**

---

**Responsible Cabinet Member -  
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -  
Trevor Watson, Executive Director Economy and Public Protection**

---

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks Cabinet approval to go out for public consultation with the new draft appraisal for the VICTORIA EMBANKMENT Conservation Area (NB: there is similar report for the new West End Conservation Area draft appraisal). The document also includes proposals to extend the existing conservation area boundary.

**Summary**

2. This report provides justification for writing a new appraisal for the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area. It also briefly outlines the contents of the document and the proposed consultation process.

**Recommendations**

3. It is recommended that:-
  - (a) Cabinet authorises public consultation on the new draft appraisal for the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area attached at **APPENDIX 1**.
  - (b) The draft document is publicised for a period of at least six weeks, to allow members of the public and other stakeholders sufficient time to submit comments.
  - (c) The draft document is amended and finalised in light of the comments received during the public consultation period.
  - (d) The finalised conservation area appraisal including new boundary is submitted to Councillors for adoption; this will be subject to another Cabinet report.

## **Reasons**

4. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:-

- (a) According to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), the Council must review Darlington's conservation area boundaries from time to time and make amendments where necessary. The duty to prepare and review appraisals is also reflected in the Darlington Local Plan, forming part of the Council's proactive approach towards protecting the borough's heritage assets.
- (b) The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area was designated on 10 May 1990. An appraisal was first adopted in March 2007. It did not include a reassessment of the original boundary line. The 2007 document is now considered out of date and inadequate.
- (c) The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area used to be on the national Heritage at Risk registers from 2009 until 2023, due to its poor condition.
- (d) The new appraisal offers a comprehensive re-evaluation of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area in accordance with current planning policy and guidance, providing a robust document that would be of greater influence in the planning process. It also includes an assessment of the 1990 boundary line and the area's condition, as well as proposals for enhancement to prevent it from becoming 'at risk' again.

**Trevor Watson**  
**Executive Director Economy and Public Protection**

## Background Papers

Darlington Borough Council (2007) *Victoria Embankment Conservation Area. Character*

*Appraisal. March 2007:* [https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/j21bsuxp/veca\\_appraisal.pdf](https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/j21bsuxp/veca_appraisal.pdf)

English Heritage (2010) *Heritage at Risk. North East 2009*

Historic England (2023) *Heritage at Risk. North East & Yorkshire Register 2023*

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/heritage-at-risk/search-register/annual-heritage-at-risk-registers-and-maps/>

David Hand : 6294

Council Plan	<p>Our ambitions – <i>An inclusive and sustainable economy will have a growing economy that supports our environment and heritage.</i></p> <p>Our ambitions – <i>Thriving places and connected communities will have cultural, heritage and community assets.</i></p> <p>Our priorities – <i>Local environment: Investing in our heritage and culture is important in preserving the identity of our communities, delivering regeneration and economic impact.</i></p> <p>Our priorities – Local environment – Key deliverables: 6. <i>Deliver revised supplementary planning documents that [...] contribute to a sense of pride in place.</i></p>
Addressing inequalities	No impact
Tackling Climate Change	<p>The draft appraisal points out that the achievement of sustainable development also encompasses an environmental objective to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.</p> <p>The draft appraisal also raises some awareness <i>against</i> the use of modern materials that are incompatible with traditional buildings. Modern materials are likely to decrease the insulating properties of traditional structures by trapping water in the walling, potentially leading to long-term damp problems. In addition, they often have a high-carbon footprint and short lifespan.</p>
Efficient and effective use of resources	<p>In the long term, the new appraisal is meant to assist planning officers, applicants and other stakeholders in making informed decisions on development proposals within the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area, which should be more time effective (and deliver desirable outcomes).</p> <p>In addition, if external funding is sought for works within the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area, this up-to-date appraisal will be an essential requirement.</p>
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The information provided in the draft appraisal may lead to wider improvements in the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area.</p> <p>The draft appraisal also raises some awareness <i>against</i> the use of modern materials that are incompatible with traditional buildings, potentially leading to long-term damp problems which can impact negatively on the occupants' health.</p>
S17 Crime and Disorder	The information provided in the draft appraisal may lead to wider improvements in the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area.
Wards Affected	Park East and Park West
Groups Affected	No impact

Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area was designated on 10 May 1990.
6. A conservation area is '*an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*' (Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The special interest of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review comprises:
  - (a) being one of the first roads to be laid out for the residential development of the area to the west of Bank Top Station
  - (b) physical and historical links with the grade-II-registered South Park (outside the Conservation area under review)
  - (c) associations with renowned local architect George Gordon Hoskins and the former cattle market on High Row (outside the Conservation Area under review)
  - (d) a unique character and appearance in Darlington because of the juxtaposition of the straightened river Skerne and the two fine rows of housing facing it
  - (e) the general survival of the of the late-Victorian character
7. An appraisal for the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area was first adopted in March 2007. It does not include a reassessment of the original boundary line. The 2007 document is now considered out of date and inadequate.
8. The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area used to be on the national Heritage at Risk registers from 2009 until 2023, due to its poor condition. It was Darlington's first conservation area to ever be on the register. In November 2023, it was removed following an assessment by the Council's Conservation Officer and the North East & Yorkshire Historic Places Adviser of Historic England, concluding that the area was generally in a good (improved) state of maintenance.
9. At the time, it was also considered that a new appraisal of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area would be advisable, in order to prevent it from becoming 'at risk' again.

## RECENT ASSESSMENT

10. The new appraisal was drafted between June 2024 and August 2025 by the Council's Conservation Officer.
11. The draft appraisal reassesses the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area in accordance with current planning policy and guidance, providing a robust document that can be of greater influence in the planning process. It focuses on the following aspects:
  - (a) The special architectural and historic interest of the area
  - (b) The condition of the area, any problems or threats to it, and opportunities for beneficial change
  - (c) The relevance of the existing boundary line and any proposed changes to it

## PROPOSED PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

12. The draft appraisal will be available for consultation for a minimum of six weeks.
13. It will be available:
  - (a) In digital format on the Council's website, along with a feedback form that can be completed. Additionally, members of the public can also email a response to the Conservation Officer
  - (b) As paper copies (read only) of the document and feedback form at the Town Hall (by appointment only), and at the Crown Street and Cockerton libraries
14. At the commencement of the public consultation period, the Conservation Officer will directly approach individuals, groups and organisations that are likely to have a particular interest in the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area, including Councillors of the affected wards.
15. Site notices will be displayed within the proposed boundary extension areas.

## Financial Implications

16. The public consultation on the draft appraisal will only require minor expenses for the printing of a few hard copies of the document and feedback forms, and the time of the Conservation Officer for evaluating comments received and amending draft.
17. If, in the future, the document including boundary changes is adopted, one-time advertisement costs for publicising the amended conservation area will occur.

## Legal Implications

18. At the time of public consultation there will be none.

19. New conservation area designation (or loss of it) would take effect following the adoption of a new boundary, which would be subject to another Cabinet and a Council meeting.

#### **Estates and Property Advice**

20. The proposed boundary changes affect Council land (South Park).

#### **Carbon Impact and Climate Change**

21. The draft appraisal points out that the achievement of sustainable development also encompasses an environmental objective to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.
22. The draft appraisal also raises some awareness *against* the use of modern materials that are incompatible with traditional buildings. Modern materials are likely to decrease the insulating properties of traditional structures by trapping water in the walling, potentially leading to long-term damp problems. In addition, they often have a high-carbon footprint and short lifespan.