

## LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2020-2036

Note: the Civic Society is responding to those parts of the draft local plan which directly affect heritage assets

The proposals set out in the draft local plan are mainly positive and reflect the more positive approach the city council has taken to heritage assets over the last few years. This has been evident in schemes such as the restoration of Friars Mill, the Greyfriars THI and the High Street Heritage Action Zones.

The Civic Society would like to note the following positive points in the draft plan:

- Objective 7 of the vision for Leicester to “Conserve and enhance the identity, character and diversity of the city’s built and heritage assets.”
- The objective to enrich “the retailing experience by protecting and enhancing the historic environment through the use of heritage led regeneration” in the Central Development Area, which is included in policy CDA01.
- The production of an updated Tall Development SPD, which will include guidance on the impact on heritage assets and local heritage views.
- The inclusion of heritage led development as a requirement for the townscape character areas.

We have to mention though that these objectives need to be adhered to in practice when developers apply for planning permission and not ignored, as has happened in the past.

There are comments we would like to make about the details of the HE01 Policy.

- Under the Listed Buildings section we would like to see mention that there are actions the council has outlined in the 2020 Leicester Heritage At Risk Register to safeguard heritage assets at risk and encourage their long-term conservation.
- The policy mentions that demolition of a building in a conservation area will not be supported unless “It can be demonstrated that the removal of the structure and its subsequent redevelopment would make a greater contribution to the special character or appearance of the area than the structure to be demolished.” This is OK, but only if there are a set of criteria against which any “greater contribution” can be judged. The policy should reflect this at a high level.
- In the section on local heritage assets the policy states that the partial, or complete demolition of such assets will be discouraged “, unless it can be demonstrated that the loss is outweighed by the wider public benefits of the proposal.” The Civic Society would again like to see this backed up with a set of criteria to judge any proposal against. This is most important where a redevelopment scheme for an area, e.g. the Waterside redevelopment, involves the wholesale clearance of existing buildings. We would like to see a policy commitment that the council would ask developers who are tendering for such projects to respect local heritage assets in the plans.

- The Civic Society would like the council to include a commitment to consult with local interest groups before a decision on any major works, or applications for demolition affecting local heritage assets are made. Under the current administration this is not so much of an issue, but things could change in the future, so would like to see a commitment to this included.
- We would like to see a specific policy commitment that the council will continue to monitor all heritage assets, so that the likelihood of any needing to be demolished because they have been left to deteriorate is greatly reduced. There have been too many cases in the past where buildings have been damaged by fire and vandalism after being allowed to decline.