

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Report to Cabinet**

**8 December 2017**

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Foxt Conservation Area Designation and Character Appraisal - draft for public consultation</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>Councillor E Wain, Portfolio Holder for Planning Development and Property</b>
<b>OFFICER:</b>	<b>Executive Director, Dai Larner</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>Ipstones</b>

**Appendices**

**Appendix 1 – Proposed Foxt Conservation Area boundary**  
**Appendix 2 - Draft Foxt Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

**1. Reason for the Report:**

1.1 To advise Members of the proposed conservation area boundary and accompanying draft character appraisal for Foxt, for the purposes of public consultation.

**2. Recommendation**

2.1 That Cabinet be recommended:

2.1.1 To approve the proposed conservation area boundary for Foxt for the purposes of public consultation.

2.1.2 To approve the draft conservation area character appraisal for Foxt for the purposes of public consultation.

**3. Executive Summary**

3.1 Foxt is a hamlet that contains clusters of buildings that originate from the 17<sup>th</sup> century but sit within a much older framework of crofts and passageways. Its relative isolation and landform have been an influence over the lack of development that has led to a well-preserved settlement. The area's architectural and historic interest has been

identified within the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD and a possible conservation area designation around Foxt is a key action point (7.5.3).

- 3.2 As a result of this, a consultant has been appointed to assess the heritage value of the hamlet and recommend a suitable conservation area boundary around Foxt. In order to justify the designation and identify the special architectural and historic interest of the area, an accompanying draft character appraisal has also been prepared.
- 3.3 Both the proposed boundary and character appraisal need to be subject to public consultation prior to formal adoption by the Council.

#### 4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 This report concerns the best practice management of the District's heritage value, significance and future enhancement. This in turn, is related to the Council's corporate aim 3: To help create a strong economy by supporting further regeneration of towns and villages whilst maintaining the area's distinct identity and raising the quality of places.

#### 5. **Options**

- 5.1 There are two principal options:

##### **Option 1 - Do Nothing**

It is a statutory duty for Councils to periodically review and determine whether any of their areas warrant conservation area designation. Through the Churnet Valley Masterplan, Foxt has been identified as an area that potentially retains sufficient architectural and historic interest to warrant designation. Failure to progress this designation through the public consultation process would not meet the statutory requirements and a key action point arising from the adopted SPD (Churnet Valley Masterplan)

##### **Not recommended**

**Option 2** – Recognise the special architectural and historic interest within Foxt and approve the proposed conservation area designation and accompanying character appraisal for wider public consultation. This would allow the local community to engage and comment on the proposed designation and the contents of the character appraisal and be involved in recognising the area's heritage value and significance. This option would allow the Council to meet its statutory requirements and fulfil a key action point arising from the adopted Churnet Valley Masterplan.

##### **Recommended**

#### 6. **Implications**

- 6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

No implications

## 6.2 Workforce

No implications

## 6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Diversity and Equality Policies.

## 6.4 Financial Considerations

The cost of undertaking this work are to be met from existing budgets.

## 6.5 Legal

It is a statutory duty for local authorities to determine which parts of their area are worthy of conservation area status and to review these areas from time to time (Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

## 6.6 Sustainability

The sustainable retention and reuse of buildings is intrinsically linked to the designation and positive management of conservation areas.

## 6.7 Internal and External Consultation

In accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement April 2016, it is proposed to consult the following groups on the proposed conservation area boundary and draft appraisal.

- Statutory Bodies
- Parish/Town Councils
- Ward Councillors
- Council Officers
- Local amenity groups or societies
- Local residents
- Local landowners

In addition to this, it is also proposed to distribute a copy of the boundary and appraisal to local Council offices and libraries. A leaflet regarding the proposed boundary and draft appraisal will also be circulated to all residents within the proposed conservation area. A press statement will be prepared and a copy of the boundary and appraisal will be available to view and comment upon on the Council's web site. Following receipt of comments, a

further report will be prepared for the Council to consider. The public consultation will be carried out during December/January 2017/2018.

## 6.8 Risk Assessment

No significant issues have been identified.

## 7. **Background and Detail**

- 7.1 Under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it is a statutory duty for local authorities to determine which parts of their area are worthy of conservation area status and to review these areas from time to time. The Churnet Valley Masterplan identified the possibility that Foxt may warrant conservation area designation and this became a key recommendation from the Masterplan (7.5.3).
- 7.2 To respond to this recommendation, the Council appointed consultants (Mel Morris Conservation) to review the possible heritage value around Foxt and determine if any parts contain sufficient special architectural and historic interest to warrant designation. This review has been completed and a proposed conservation area boundary is included in Appendix 1.
- 7.3 The proposed conservation area boundary has been drawn to follow well-defined distinct physical boundaries. It centres around the 'Old Town' which contains highly distinctive and irregular tear drop shaped enclosures and crofts with clusters of buildings dating or originating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. To the south (east and west) the boundary is widened to include the striking terrain and wider landscape setting around the hamlet.
- 7.4 The designation of an area is a commitment from the local planning authority to protect the historic and architectural elements that make the place special. Designation seeks to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area by imposing additional planning controls over demolition, advertisements, development and the protection of trees.
- 7.5 In order to recognise, preserve and enhance the area's special character, the Council, public and local agents need to understand and identify what are the elements that determine the area's historic significance. In response, a draft character appraisal has been completed for Foxt. This document has been prepared in accordance with Historic England's best practice and sets out the history and distinctive characteristics of the area. The preparation of character appraisals is invaluable when making informed development control decisions. They have been used to defend the Council's position in the event of refusal of planning permission and in fighting any subsequent planning appeals.

- 7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework contains policies regarding the designation of conservation areas and their assessment. These assessments should be taken into account when considering the impact of development. It is important that the Council prepares such documents as they provide the evidence base required to form robust plans and minimise the risk of challenge through planning appeals.

Dai Lerner  
**Executive Director – (Place)**

**Web Links and  
Background Papers**

Foxt Conservation Area boundary  
and Character Appraisals

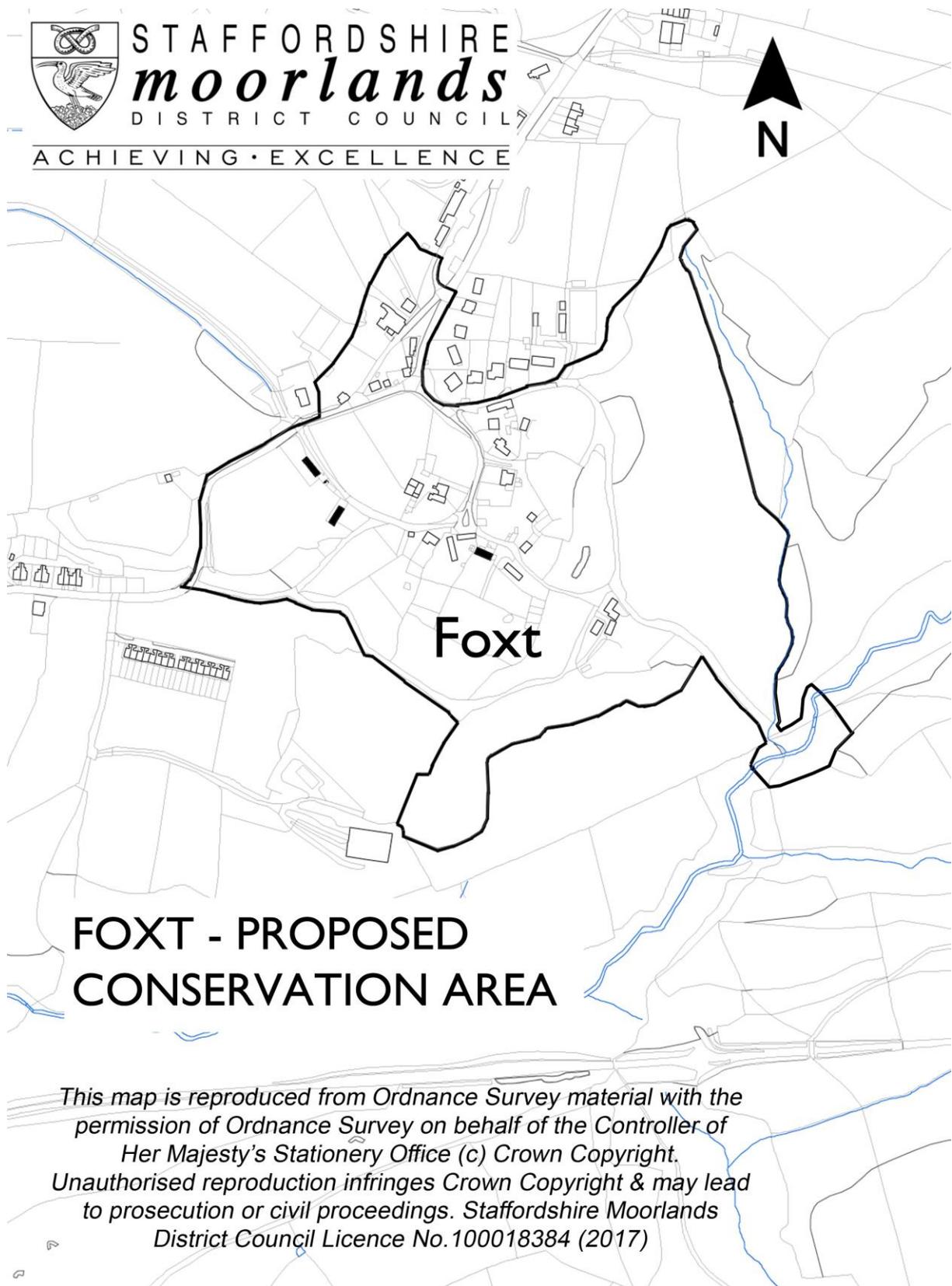
**Location**

Files held electronically

**Contact details**

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## APPENDIX 1 – PROPOSED FOXT CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY



### FOXT - PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA

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