

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
25 JULY 2017	PUBLIC REPORT

Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Hiller - Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development	
Contact Officer(s):	Jim Daley Principal Built Environment Officer Sam Falco Senior Conservation Officer Simon Machen Director of Growth and Regeneration	Tel: 01733 453522 Tel: 01733 454408 Tel. 01733 453475

THE CITY CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM : Jim Daley - Planning Services	Deadline date : N.A.
That Committee:	
1. notes the outcome of the public consultation on the City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (Appendix 2)	
2. recommends that the Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development considers and approves the proposed boundary change (Appendix 3)	
3. supports the adoption of the City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as the Council's planning guidance and strategy for the City Centre Conservation Area	

1 ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 A review of the City Centre Conservation Area was carried out in 2011 as part of the Council's on-going review of all 29 of Peterborough's designated Conservation Areas. A detailed written appraisal has been prepared for the area and, following public consultation it is now proposed that the City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal is formally adopted as the Council's planning guidance and strategy for the area.

2 PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 This report is submitted to the Committee for approval of the City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, as appended. The report provides an update on the outcome of the public consultation on the Draft City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.
- 2.2 This report is for the Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.5.1.5 to be consulted by and comment on the Executive's draft plans which will form part of the Development Plan proposals at each formal stage in preparation.

3 TIMESCALE

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If Yes, date for relevant Cabinet Meeting	N/A
Date for relevant Council meeting	N/A	Date for submission to Government Dept <i>(please specify which Government Dept)</i>	N/A

4 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The draft Appraisal was subject to public consultation from 22 May to 30 June 2011 and following a review and further amendments further consultation took place from 31 August to 15 October 2012. A copy of the document was published on the Council's website and a letter and newsletter was sent to all properties in the conservation area and other interested parties, including Planning Agents Forum, City Centre Retain Business Forum, Greater Peterborough Partnership, Cabinet and Ward members, Opportunity Peterborough, Historic England and Peterborough Civic Society.
- 4.2 Six external representations were received and these are summarised with the Conservation Officer's response in Appendix 2. The Appraisal has been further revised to correct factual and spelling errors. The approved version will be available on the Council's web site.
- 4.3 It is proposed to amend the boundary of the conservation area to include Nos. 5-27 odd Cowgate and King Street and the full extent of Long Causeway Chambers and Long Causeway east of Queensgate in recognition of the contribution to the character and the integrity of the conservation area. (Appendix 3)

5 ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

- 5.1 The City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal fulfils the Local Planning Authorities obligations under Section 71 the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to 'formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of ...their conservation areas'. The Appraisal identifies the special character of the City Centre Conservation Area and confirms that it merits designation as a conservation area. It also includes a Management Plan (as required by regulations) which identifies works and actions to secure the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Adoption of the City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal as the Council's planning guidance and strategy for the Area will:

- fulfil the Local Planning Authorities obligations under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to prepare and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas.
- provide specific Conservation Area advice which will be used as local design guidance and therefore assist in achieving the Council's aim of improved design standards and the delivery of a high quality planning service.
- have a positive impact on the enhancement of the Conservation Area by ensuring that new development in the historic environment is both appropriate to its context and of demonstrable quality.

7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

1. Do nothing – this would be contrary to Government guidance (Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990) and Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, English Heritage 2005

8 IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no specific financial implications for the City Council identified in this report at this present time.
- 8.2 The Appraisal and Management Plan identify works to conserve and enhance the City Centre Conservation Area. The implementation of some of these works will however require

the involvement of the City Council, specifically in relation to future works to the public realm. This may have cost implications but these cannot be quantified at this time. Works will also involve co-ordination across Service Departments of the Council. These works would typically be those carried out in the public highway, including repaving, lighting and street furniture renewal such as litter bins, safety railing, signage and on adopted landscape / verge managed by the Council.

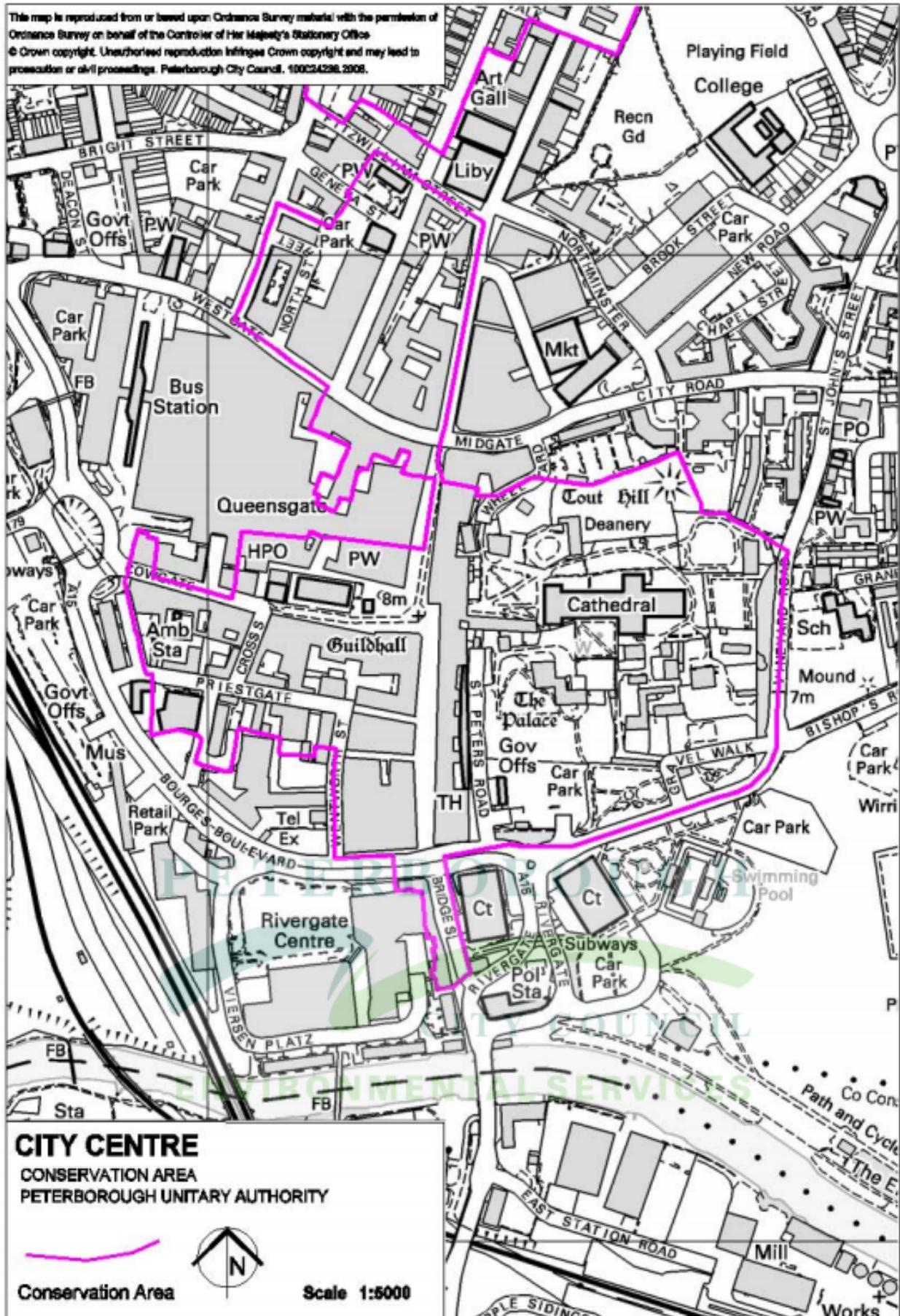
- 8.3 Potential public sector funding partners may emerge for some works, depending on the grant regimes and other opportunities that may exist in the future. Other works, such as the replacement of non-original building features, may be carried out entirely by private owners without public funding.
- 8.4 The City Council will seek to attract additional resources in partnership with other interested parties and funding bodies to help implement works identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, specifically building enhancement schemes.

9 **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, Historic England (2016)

APPENDIX 1 City Centre Conservation Area boundary



APPENDIX 2

Summary of comments received at the 2nd consultation stage of the City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal, together with the Council's response.

- **Historic England**

English Heritage welcomes the appraisal and management plan. The document is comprehensive in scope. The subdivision of the conservation area into 5 'Character Areas' appears logical and will help ensure new developments are appropriate and reinforce the varied character of the different parts of the city. Specific comment on details and text and maps. The Section 7 enhancement opportunities might then also include the potential to open up a new entrance into Queensgate from the end of King's Street. Support for the proposed modest extension of the conservation area in Cowgate.

Response

Comments noted and update and corrections made to the text. The opportunity to provide a public entrance to Queensgate has been explored in the past but is not achievable.

- **Peterborough Civic Society**

The second re-draft is a major improvement. Further update required to reflect implementation of the public realm strategy, the War Memorial and works to trees. Suggest extend the boundary in Westgate, Fitzwilliam Street and Geneva Street and the western side of Long Causeway and Long Causeway Chambers (Building of Local Importance).

Give greater recognition of the problem of the high amount of vacancy at upper floors and setting up of Pilot Schemes in specific streets. Little mention in the Policy Section of how the setting of conservation area could be improved at the western section of Priestgate with Bourges Boulevard.

Street scene issues in Westgate (unattractive shop fronts and advertising) are recognised but does not offer not too many solutions. How much is due to unauthorised development with enforcement a low priority? Could the Cowgate scheme be extended here?

What is the current status of the Cathedral Conservation Plan? Where is the funding, and has a prioritised 10-year schedule of works been prepared?

The Management Plan is noted, but no reference to stand-alone policies relating to Advertisement Control. There should be a policy for an urgent re-survey of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments in the Cathedral Precincts, with further clarity on the Cathedral Precincts map (P44) on what exactly is listed and/or protected as a Scheduled Monument and sections of protected walls.

Response

Comments noted and text corrected.

A conservation area should have definable 'special character'. Conservation areas can include land and properties which do not have architectural or historic character to justify inclusion in their own right. However, it would be expected that such an area provided a 'special character' in other respects to justify inclusion. As part of the appraisal process parts of Westgate, Fitzwilliam Street and Geneva Street were considered for possible inclusion in an extended conservation area. It is considered that these areas do not possess any definable 'special interest' (architectural or historic interest) and to include the area would not add to the special character of the conservation area and fulfil the criteria of conservation area designation.

Over the past few years there has been increased residential use of vacant upper floors in the city centre. The beneficial use of vacant upper floors is encouraged by the local planning authority where feasible. Future public realm works may be the opportunity to help improve the visual transition between Priestgate and Bourges Boulevard to the west.

Unauthorised commercial signage in the city centre is subject to swift Planning Enforcement investigation and where necessary Enforcement action. The adopted Peterborough Shop Front Guidance SPD (2014) provides comprehensive advice on what the local planning authority supports

in terms of replacement shop fronts, the repair of historic shopfronts and advertisement, and has 'raised the bar' in terms of design standards.

A partnership scheme for the replacement of non-original shopfronts and inappropriate signage at properties in Westgate is being developed with landowners. This would be similar to the successful building enhancement work carried out in Cowgate.

The Cathedral Precinct has its own unique identity. The area has a high level of statutory and planning protection. Conservation Plans are an accepted method of providing a basis for decision making on the conservation, and maintenance of historic estates such as diverse as the Peterborough Precincts. Conservation Plans describe a place and define its significance.

The Cathedral Conservation Plan provides a full description of the Precincts, the site's archaeology, heritage value with a gazetteer and an assessment of the site significance. The plan assesses the vulnerability of both of the place and its significance. The plan sets out conservation policies to ensure the long-term protection of the place and retention of its significance. The information will form a key part of any proposals for improving the Precincts as well as understanding the relationship of the Cathedral and its grounds to the rest of the city centre.

The plan was supported by Historic England and Peterborough City Council. The Cathedral Plan is in line with best practice (Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England and the Association of English Cathedrals Advisory Note 4, Conservation Plans for Cathedrals (2002) and other Cathedral Conservation Plans (Rochester, Blackburn, Canterbury)

The Cathedral Conservation Plan assists the Chapter in looking after the Cathedral and Precinct and its historic significant buildings. The plan will help with the prioritisation of works. Policy A1 states..."Management Decisions will be taken in accordance with the principals and policies set out in the Plan, which will be subject to periodic review.

A joint plan between the City Council and The Dean and Chapter is not appropriate. These are matters that are the responsibility for the Dean and Chapter and dealing with their building fabric. Planning Services works closely with both the Dean and Chapter and The Church Commissioners (Bishops Palace) to take a constructive approach to works of repair and conservation of buildings, spaces and fabric of the historic building, including buried fabric. Matters regarding planning control are addressed on a case by case basis taking account of the Conservation Area, City Centre Development Plan Document and the Cathedral Conservation Plan.

- **Peterborough Cathedral**

Support the City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal. Character Area 5 deals with the Cathedral and its Precincts and the assessment primarily draws on the 2011 Cathedral Conservation Plan. The Cathedral Conservation Plan is a public document. Comments made about the text:

Response

Comments noted and corrections made to the text.

- **Business owner**

Agree with the aims of the documents, and would not support wholesale redevelopment of such buildings/areas, but scope to improve access & functionality is vital to ensure buildings are kept in use, and maintained doesn't appear to have been addressed. Where is there an allowance for current & future commercial considerations within the Management Plan particularly where a building has historic interest but not suited to any viable commercial use.

Response

The Conservation Area Appraisal is a specific document about the conservation area. It sets out what is special about the conservation area, so this can be protected and enhanced (also to justify continued designation as a conservation area) and identify actions / works that can improve its character and appearance in the future.

The Peterborough City Centre Development Plan Document sets out policies and proposals for new development and regeneration. This document will drive the future of the city centre as a successful commercial, residential and leisure place.

For statutory listed building there is a specific duty on the local planning authority to ensure that their character and appearance is protected as they are finite resource. This does not mean that change to the building(s) is not possible. Good conservation is about guiding change so that it can enhance but certainly not harm the buildings character. Historic England as the government heritage advisor takes the view - and shared by ourselves - that great weight is placed on securing the optimum viable use of a listed building. Each building and any proposal that would affect the buildings is considered on a case by case basis. For example – No's 55 -49 Priestgate, opposite the Museum are three listed buildings that changed from office use (long term vacant) to residential (affordable homes) in the city Centre. This is a use which the council is keen to promote as it encourages life and economy in the city centre.

At non-listed buildings there will be 'in principle' support for modernisation and improvements (with good design) to ensure their function and use can change with changing demand and maximise opportunities in the city centre. We have to balance proposed work at a listed building with impact to ensure the work does not harm their special character for which they are listed.

- **Landowner**

A thorough and useful document. Comments on text and policy references.

Timing of the consultation is premature ahead of the findings of the Public examination of the PCC 'Planning Policies DPD' as policy changes were being sought to Heritage Policy.

The city centre contains a rich mixture of ancient and modern building design and it is imbalanced to focus strongly on the preservation of C19 and C20 buildings but downplaying the significance of more recent buildings.

The Management Plan specifies a prohibition of shutters. It would be helpful to specify whether these are internal, external or both.

The Management Plan indicates an intention to prepare 'Design Briefs' for Conservation area development. Does capacity exist and if so, what skills will be applied to ensure that conservation priorities are property balanced with commercial and community requirements? An example or template would be valuable. To fulfil the role of a Management Plan it needs to set out the cost, timing of responsible parties to deliver these elements.

The conservation area does not exist separate from the remainder of the city centre. There must be an understanding of what existing beyond the boundary and how a sympathetic transition across the boundary can be achieved. Nationally there is an acceptance of the need to find optimum and beneficial uses for properties and areas that are being conserved

Response

Comments noted and corrections made to the text.

The Inspectors Final Report on the Peterborough Planning Policies Local Plan was that it was an appropriate basis for the planning of the City over the next 15 years, taking account of a number of modifications made, including to Heritage Policy.

C19 and early C20 buildings provide the bulk of the building fabric of the city centre so there is emphasis on their retention, reuse and repair for continuing character and appearance. The contribution made by modern buildings is clear and this is not intended to be downplayed

Management Plan Policy 18 has been amended to specify external security shutters

Other potential re-development sites on the periphery of the Conservation Area, in addition to the Police Station, have the potential to benefit the Conservation Area. (Such as the BT Telephone Exchange building; Wentworth Street public car park, and land to the west of Bourges Boulevard).

Appropriate development briefs for these and other sites, with input from the conservation team, will encourage appropriate development that can enhance the setting of the Conservation Area. A template or example of a development brief is not appropriate in a Conservation Area Appraisal.

The relationship between the Conservation Area and the remainder of the city centre is understood, and the opportunity for development outside in the wider city centre can and does impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. (Particularly the Conservation Areas relationship with modern development of Queensgate and the north Westgate redevelopment area). The Peterborough City Centre Development Plan Document and Peterborough Planning Policies Development Plan Document are important policy documents that provide planning policies across the whole of the city centre, including the conservation area.

• **Resident**

The rejuvenation of the city centre lies with the use of vacant properties as residential properties, and further conversion from office use, as there seems to be little likelihood that business and office use will increase substantially. As a resident in the city centre they are 2 disadvantages; noise nuisance and litter.

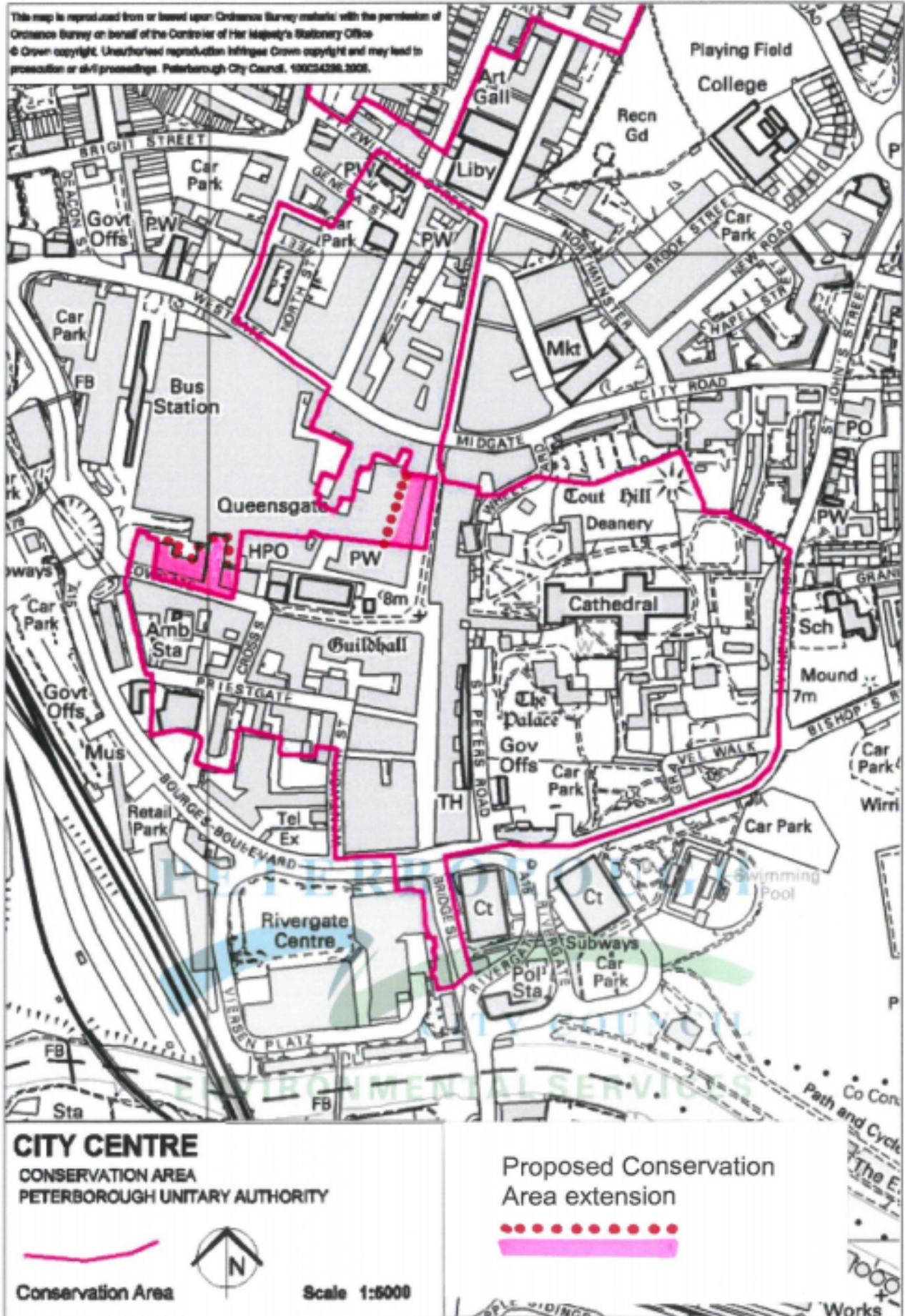
Noise nuisance from refuse collection and delivery vehicles and from late night revellers. Unless these issues are addressed residents will move out and result in owners being unable to keep high value tenants which will stifle further investment and properties lying vacant.

Suggest an overnight ban on HGV movement with the facility to grant specific exceptions where necessary and bin cages where possible, not allowing bins/refuse bags to be left out overnight, and a policy that local users are responsible for cleaning of non-public areas with enforcement.

Response

Comments noted and forward to City Centre Management Team.

APPENDIX 3 Proposed City Centre Conservation Area Boundary extension to include Nos. 5-27 odd Cowgate and King Street, and the full extent of Long Causeway Chambers and Long Causeway east of Queensgate



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