



Historic England

Local Heritage Listing

Historic England Advice Note 7



Summary

Local lists play an essential role in building and reinforcing a sense of local character and distinctiveness in the historic environment, as part of the wider range of designation. They enable the significance of any building or site on the list (in its own right and as a contributor to the local planning authority's wider strategic planning objectives), to be better taken into account in planning applications affecting the building or site or its setting.

The advice supports local authorities and communities to introduce a local list in their area or make changes to an existing list, through the preparation of selection criteria, thereby encouraging a more consistent approach to the identification and management of local heritage assets across England. A local list can celebrate the breadth of the historic environment of a local area by encompassing the full range of heritage assets that make up the historic environment and ensure the proper validation and recording of local heritage assets. They also provide a consistent and accountable way of identifying local heritage assets, to the benefit of owners and developers who need to understand local development opportunities and constraints.

Civic Voice, the national charity for the civic movement in England, is also producing advice on local heritage listing (forthcoming).

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It is one of a series of Historic England Advice Notes.

[HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/local/local-designations](https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/local/local-designations)

Front cover

Killingworth hippopotamus sculpture,
North Tyneside, Newcastle upon Tyne.

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Introduction

- 1 The purpose of this Historic England Advice note is to provide information on local heritage listing to assist community groups, owners, applicants, local authorities, planning and other consultants, and other interested parties in implementing historic environment legislation, the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). In addition to these documents, this advice should be read in conjunction with the relevant Good Practice Advice and Historic England advice notes. Alternative approaches may be equally acceptable, provided they are demonstrably compliant with legislation and national policy objectives.
- 2 The advice in this document, in accordance with the NPPF, emphasises that work in designating and taking decisions related to local heritage lists should be no more than is necessary, and that activities to conserve or invest need to be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected and the impact on the significance of those heritage assets. At the same time those carrying out this work need enough information to understand the issues (NPPF, paragraph 192).
- 3 Creating a local heritage list is a way for local councils and communities to identify and celebrate historic buildings, archaeological sites and designed landscapes which enrich and enliven their area. Local heritage lists sit within a continuum of measures for identifying and protecting buildings and areas of heritage or townscape interest, which includes World Heritage Sites at the international level, national designations such as listed buildings, scheduled monuments and historic parks and gardens (see the [National Heritage List for England](#)), and conservation areas, as well as buildings and sites which have been identified locally as having some heritage interest meriting consideration in planning decisions. Inclusion on a local list delivers a sound, consistent and accountable way of identifying local heritage assets to the benefit of good strategic planning for the area and to the benefit of owners and developers wishing to fully understand local development opportunities and constraints. Local lists thus complement national designations in building a sense of place and history for localities and communities. Local heritage listing is intended to highlight heritage assets which are of local heritage interest in order to ensure that they are given due consideration when change is being proposed. This advice does not cover intangible cultural heritage which does not have a formal system of protection.

Definition

In some areas, local planning authorities have created a 'local list' of '**non-designated heritage assets**' as suggested in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 39). Non-designated heritage assets are 'buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by local planning authorities as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated'.

The National Heritage List for England

The National Heritage List for England (NHLE) is the official and up-to-date database of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites in England, including listed buildings, scheduled monuments, protected wrecks and registered parks, gardens and battlefields. More information about the different designation regimes and how to search the list can be found in [the listing pages of the Historic England website](#). Information on conservation areas can be found on local planning authority websites.

- 4 This advice describes how making a local heritage list, backed by the National Planning Policy Framework, can help to recognise local distinctiveness and character to ensure these qualities are taken into account when changes affecting the historic environment are proposed.
- 5 Just like heritage assets designated nationally, and conservation areas designated locally, local heritage lists have an important role in celebrating heritage that is valued by the community at the local level. These lists sit alongside Historic England's [National Heritage List for England](#).
- 6 This document draws on good practice across the country in developing a new local heritage list, or making improvements to an existing one. Importantly, this advice should be seen as a starting point. In order to remain flexible enough to respond to local needs, decisions on the ways in which assets are identified, and the system adopted for managing the local heritage list, are matters for local planning authorities and their communities. This advice does, however, set out methods for setting up and managing a local list to provide ideas on how this might be done.

1 The Role of Local Heritage Listing

7 Local heritage listing is a means for a community and a local planning authority to identify heritage assets that are valued as distinctive elements of the local historic environment. It provides clarity on the location of assets and what it is about them that is significant, helping to ensure that strategic local planning properly takes account of the desirability of their conservation. Sometimes it may also help identify overlooked assets of high significance, which may warrant consideration for designation at the national level, too. The process of preparing a local heritage list not only allows communities to identify local heritage that they would like recognised and protected, but it is also an opportunity for local authorities and communities to work in partnership. Creating a local heritage list also helps to improve access to clear, comprehensive and current information about the historic environment at the local level through resources such as Historic Environment Records (HERs) which can speed up the planning process.

National Planning Policy Framework and Heritage Assets

8 Aside from national designation, the NPPF in [paragraph 126](#) advises local planning authorities to set out ‘a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment’ in their Local Plan. Emphasis is placed on ‘sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets’ and recognising that heritage assets are an ‘irreplaceable resource’ and should be conserved ‘in a manner appropriate to their significance’.

9 The [definition of heritage assets](#) in the NPPF includes local heritage listing.

10 Heritage assets are not only those designated under statutory regimes, but those that may be recognised by the planning authority as having heritage significance. [Paragraph 135](#) of the NPPF states that such assets can merit consideration in planning matters, with the authority taking a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

2 Protection of Locally Listed Heritage Assets

- 11 In deciding applications for [planning permission](#) that affect a locally listed heritage asset or its setting, the NPPF requires, amongst other things, both that local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the [significance](#) of such heritage assets and of putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation and the consideration of the positive contribution that conserving such heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality ([NPPF paragraphs 126 and 121](#)). Whilst local listing provides no additional planning controls, the fact that a building or site is on a local list means that its [conservation](#) as a heritage asset is an objective of the [NPPF](#) and a material consideration when determining the outcome of a planning application ([NPPF, paragraph 17](#)). Local heritage listing also demonstrates explicitly that a building makes a positive contribution to the character of a conservation area, and locally listed heritage assets within conservation areas also benefit from the general control over demolition afforded by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Where a local list exists, it is good practice to have a relevant policy in the Local Plan which explains how assets on the list will be dealt with.
- 12 While local heritage listing can be a legitimate response to an actual or perceived threat to a heritage asset, including the threat of demolition, the level of protection afforded is influenced by the manner in which the local heritage list is prepared. The sounder the basis for the addition of an asset to the local heritage list – particularly the use of selection criteria – the greater the weight that can be given to preserving the significance of the asset. The degree of consultation on the list and the inclusion of assets on it also increases that weight. However, the absence of any particular heritage asset from the local list does not necessarily mean that it has no heritage value, simply that it does not currently meet the selection criteria or that it has yet to be identified.
- 13 Where changes do not require planning permission, an authority may consider whether the exercise of permitted development rights would undermine the aims for locally listed heritage assets. In cases where it would, authorities may consider the use of an Article 4 Direction (in tandem with the local listing process) to ensure any permitted development is given due consideration. [Paragraph 200](#) of Government’s Planning Practice Guide gives guidance on the use of Article 4 Directions ([Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management](#) also gives brief advice on Article 4 Directions).

3 Local Listing and Conservation Areas

14 Conservation areas are created by a local planning authority to recognise an area of special architectural or historic interest which deserves careful management. Most local authorities have a conservation area within their boundaries and they are generally valued by those living and working in them as special places. Conservation areas may often contain buildings, archaeological areas or designed landscapes which are of local interest, although not protected by a national designation (see Historic England Advice Note 1: [Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management](#) for further information).

15 Heritage assets can be added to a local heritage list regardless of whether they are sited in conservation areas. Nonetheless, conservation area appraisals and management plans may provide a useful starting point for the preparation of a local list. One aspect of the appraisal process with particular relevance to local heritage listing is the identification of unlisted buildings that make a ‘positive contribution’ to the character of a conservation area. More information about this can be found in Historic England Advice Note 1: [Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management](#)

16 The demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas requires planning permission. This, and the evidence of planning appeals, indicates that local

heritage assets in a conservation area are more strongly protected from demolition than those which are not; however, even local heritage assets located outside conservation areas enjoy relatively strong protection from demolition.

Local Lists and Archaeology

The majority of archaeological sites and landscapes remain undesignated – scheduling is at the discretion of the Secretary of State, who may decide that it is not appropriate, even for sites of national importance. Even in cases where they are added to a local heritage list, the interest and significance of archaeological assets may therefore be national or regional. So a local list can highlight both locally and nationally important, but unscheduled, archaeological sites, helping them to be given the right level of consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 139 of the NPPF requires archaeological areas considered to be of national importance but not scheduled to be treated in the same way as designated heritage assets. Historic England has commissioned the [National Importance Programme](#) to develop consistent criteria for the identification of this ‘equivalent significance’ by local authorities, and to support the proportionate management of such important sites in decision-taking.

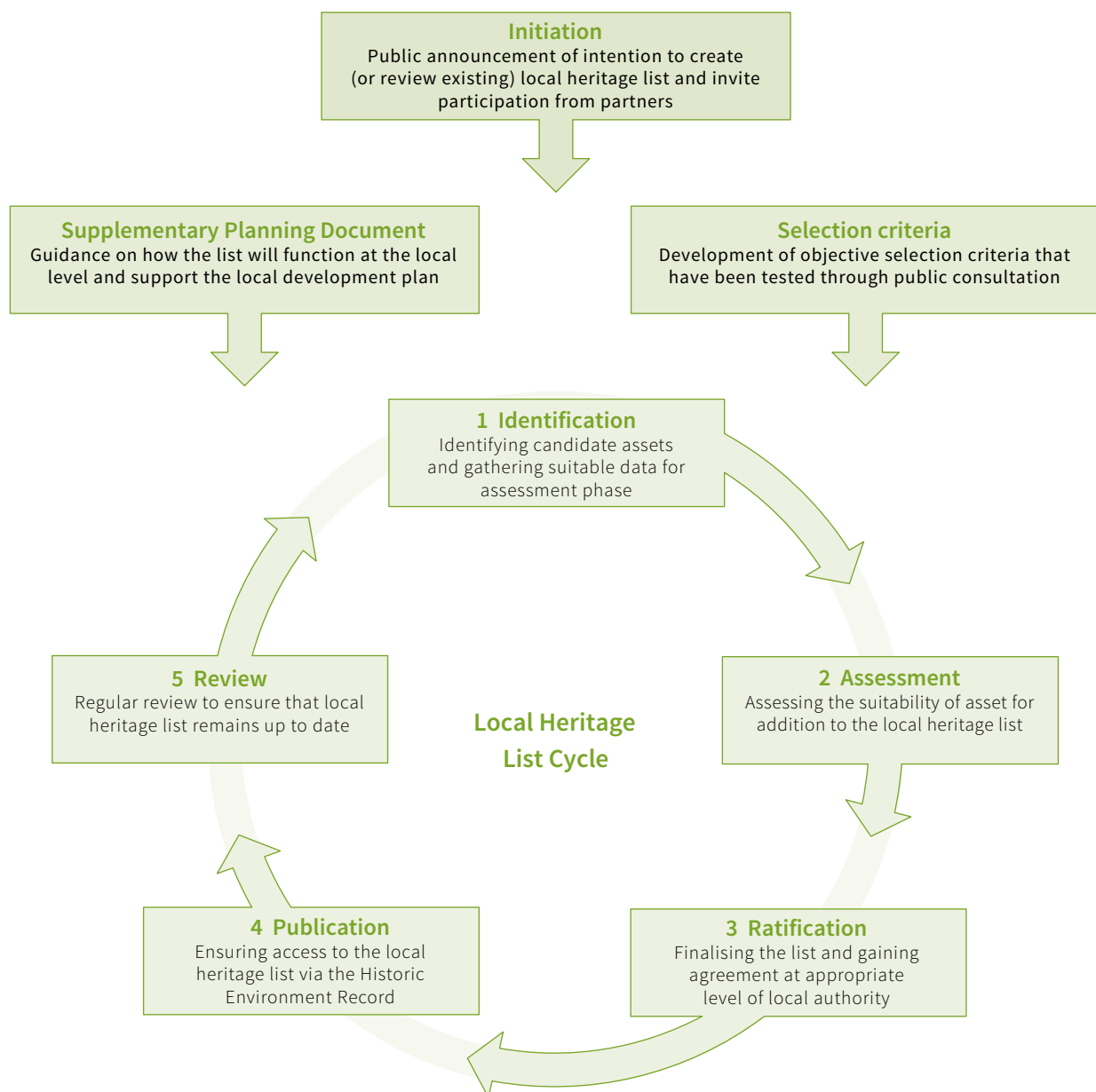
4 Local Plans and Local Heritage Listing

- 17 Local authorities have to make a **Local Plan**, setting out planning policies which will guide planning decisions in their area, including those covering historic buildings and areas. Local plans have to be consistent with planning law and national policy and guidance and are expected to set out a positive and clear strategy for the conservation, enjoyment and enhancement of the historic environment (NPPF, Paragraphs 126 and 157) and this could usefully include policy on locally significant heritage assets and local listing. A local heritage list can thus support the Local Plan and inform a proactive strategy for the historic environment. The clarity which all lists – local and national – will bring helps to deliver better decision-taking.
- 18 A local heritage list may be produced as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The clarity that a local list brings can make the processing of applications more efficient and hence bring forward successful development through the local planning process at an increased rate. The broad options for the contents of the SPD are:
- the list of heritage assets themselves, with a description of their significance
 - the selection criteria for those heritage assets; also acting as a means of assessing other assets in the area which are not locally listed, but which may come to the attention of the local authority as a consequence of a planning application
 - management guidelines that are area- or asset-specific
- 19 The Localism Act 2011 has increased the role of communities in determining how planning decisions are made at the local level, including those involving heritage assets. Communities can play a key role in preparing neighbourhood plans which establish the general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood and work in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan may indicate buildings and sites which merit inclusion on the local list. The Act also requires local authorities to maintain a list of **assets of community value** that have been nominated by the local community. As long as they meet the requirements set out in the Act, assets on a local heritage list may also qualify as assets of community value. Further information on the **Localism Act** can be found on the Communities and Local Government website.

5 Setting Up and Running a Local List

20 There is a logical order for setting up and running a local list (the ‘local heritage list cycle’) which supports the selection criteria by providing the processes and procedures against which assets can be nominated and

their suitability for addition to the local heritage list assessed (Figure 1). As no single approach can be expected to apply to all areas, the cycle can be individually tailored to take account of local circumstances.



6 Initiating a Local Heritage List

21 When preparing a new local heritage list, or updating an existing one, public meetings, exhibitions and web-launches can be effective forums for bringing together interested partners before the process of identifying heritage assets gets underway. Initiating a local heritage list in this way will develop awareness, encourage community involvement and helps ensure that the process remains transparent.

The Value of Working in Partnership

22 Local heritage lists built on a strong partnership between local authorities and the community are more likely to reflect the breadth of opinion on the historic environment in an area. Town and parish councils can play a vital part in helping to establish and eventually formalise the list. The community can play an important role in supporting the overall process, especially the development of selection criteria and the nomination of assets. Many government, non-government and commercial organisations also have an interest in, and maintain records on, potentially suitable assets and may be able to add to local knowledge if included in the process. The [Historic England Archive](#) and local Historic Environment Records are particularly helpful.

23 The management of any locally listed asset will also be easier if it is included on the list with the knowledge of the owner. As a minimum, owners should be advised of the intention to locally list an asset, including an explanation of the planning implications, but it may also be worth putting in place a process for handling appeals. Local listing is a good opportunity to develop a dialogue with owners and to provide them with information on the local importance of their property.

Assets of Community Value (ACV)

The [Localism Act 2011](#) allowed communities to ask their local council to list certain assets, for instance, shops, pubs or other local facilities, as being of value to the community. If an asset is listed as an ACV, and comes up for sale, the community then has six months to put together a bid to buy it. [Civic Voice](#) has published further information on ACVs, and the [Campaign for Real Ale \(CAMRA\)](#) has published advice specifically relating to pubs. Local authorities are responsible for the nomination process. There may be some overlap between ACVs and local heritage assets.

Figure 1 (page 7)

Creation of a local heritage list as a robust management framework (local heritage list cycle).

7 Defining the Scope of the Local Heritage List

Criterion	Description
Age	The age of an asset may be an important criterion, and the age range can be adjusted to take into account distinctive local characteristics or building traditions.
Rarity	Appropriate for all assets, as judged against local characteristics
Aesthetic Interest	The intrinsic design value of an asset relating to local styles, materials or any other distinctive local characteristics.
Group Value	Groupings of assets with a clear visual design or historic relationship.
Archaeological Interest	The local heritage asset may provide evidence about past human activity in the locality, which may be archaeological – that is in the form of buried remains – but may also be revealed in the structure of buildings or in a manmade landscape. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.
Archival Interest	The significance of a local heritage asset of any kind may be enhanced by a significant contemporary or historic written record.
Historical Association	The significance of a local heritage asset of any kind may be enhanced by a significant historical association of local or national note, including links to important local figures. Blue Plaque and other similar schemes may be relevant.
Designed Landscape Interest	The interest attached to locally important historic designed landscapes, parks and gardens which may relate to their design or social history. This may complement a local green space designation , which provides special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities for their current use.
Landmark Status	An asset with strong communal or historical associations, or because it has especially striking aesthetic value, may be singled out as a landmark within the local scene.
Social and Communal Value	Relating to places perceived as a source of local identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence, sometimes residing in intangible aspects of heritage, contributing to the ‘collective memory’ of a place.

24 Local heritage listing has the capacity to include all types of heritage assets; although local lists have long been developed successfully for buildings, all heritage asset categories can benefit from the approach. Selection criteria are essential in defining the scope of the local heritage list and should take account of the range of assets in an area. This includes recognition that local distinctiveness may lie as much in the commonplace or everyday as it does in the rare and spectacular. Local Lists will be more effective if supported by objective criteria and both criteria and content have been tested through public consultation.

Developing Selection Criteria

25 The [selection guides](#) and supporting documents produced by Historic England and dealing with listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields and protected wreck sites set out further information on the types of criteria that can be adapted to local heritage listing. While local heritage lists covering buildings are the most well-established, it is worth considering whether other asset categories should be included, and what criteria they should meet.

26 Although criteria used for national designation can be readily adapted for local use, location-specific criteria may also be important in order to identify the heritage assets which are valued locally.

27 Table 1 sets out some examples of selection criteria commonly used by local planning authorities to support local heritage listing.

Table 1 (page 9)

Commonly applied selection criteria for assessing suitability of assets for local heritage listing (such criteria are often adapted from those used for national designations which refer specifically to historic or architectural interest).

What to consider

Wider Context

28 The preparation of an overarching statement setting out local historic distinctiveness can be a useful aid to developing local selection criteria. This might take the form of a statement which succinctly identifies local characteristics – Historic England Advice Note 1 on [Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management](#) sets out a similar process for Conservation Areas. The preparation of such a statement is also a good opportunity to encourage community involvement. The statement could cover the following themes:

- **Cultural landscapes:** heritage assets associated with a significant period in an area's history.
- **Social history:** assets associated with the social history of an area, including characteristic local industrial, commercial or agricultural activities; intangible aspects of heritage such as traditions and practices; or literary associations.
- **Patterns of settlement:** notable examples of planned or incidental planning including:
 - street plans;
 - characteristic clusters of assets;
 - interrelationship between buildings and open spaces;
 - major infrastructure
- **Local Figures:** assets associated with individuals of local importance including those identified by commemorative plaque schemes.

- 29 Historic England [advice in support of historic area assessments \(HAA\)](#) also provides useful advice on assessing the historic character of a defined area.

Judging Significance

- 30 Significance has long been assigned through national designations, where it is referred to as ‘special interest’ or ‘national importance’. For a parallel approach, Historic England’s [Conservation Principles](#) provides further detail on assessing the significance of a heritage asset, based around an understanding of an asset’s evidential, historical, aesthetic or communal value.

Local Green Spaces

Local communities also have the opportunity to protect against development of green areas of particular importance to them. The NPPF states that sites may be designated for a variety of reasons, including their setting, nature conservation benefits, or their quietness. Designation can be done through the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan, and anyone can suggest the inclusion of a Local Green Space to their local planning authority or get involved in neighbourhood planning. Designating any Local Green Space would give it protection consistent with that in respect of Green Belt, but will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. More information is included in the [Planning Practice Guide](#).

Village Greens can also be designated. These are defined as areas of land where local people have for at least 20 years openly practised lawful sports and pastimes which might include organised or ad-hoc games, picnics, fêtes and similar activities. Most greens were registered in the late 1960s under the Commons Registration Act 1965, and the statutory criteria are strict. More information is available on [GOV.UK](#).

8 The Local Heritage List Cycle

A Identifying Potential Assets

31 A range of methods can be used to identify heritage assets, though no single method will produce a definitive local heritage list. Existing research publications are rich sources of information on potential local list candidates. Public nomination is also a useful way in which to identify assets and has the added benefit of directly involving the community. The planning authority is likely to be central to determining what is included on the list though it may be compiled outside the local planning authority, by local amenity societies, Conservation Area Advisory Committees and/or local experts.

32 Regardless of the means by which candidate assets are identified, as a minimum, nominations need to be backed by information of sufficient detail and accuracy to demonstrate that they meet the requirements set by the selection criteria.

A strategic approach

33 Before creating a new local heritage list, or reviewing an existing one, it may be useful to have a strategy for its preparation. The approach taken in practice could be based upon any of the following methods:

- Historic theme: looking at the study area in terms of historic themes that are distinctive to the locality (for example industrial, military).

- Asset type: similar to the thematic approach, but structuring the local list based on asset type (for example buildings, parks & gardens).
- Geographic: breaking down the study area into more manageable geographical units, for instance by parish, ward or neighbourhood; especially applicable to local authorities covering large areas or rich in heritage assets.
- Building on existing lists or sources of information: including the old lists of 'Grade III' buildings or existing lists of significant conservation area or landmark buildings.

Surveying existing sources of information

34 Individual HERs may be useful sources of information on non-designated heritage assets, as may local records offices and county archives. Publications and databases held by community, third sector and government and non-government organisations may similarly be potential sources. Assets considered, but rejected, for national designation may be good candidates for local heritage lists, provided they meet the local selection criteria – the [PastScape website](#) is a useful resource for identifying such heritage assets. An assessment carried out for national designation, even if unsuccessful, may provide helpful information for coming to a better understanding of the heritage asset.

Public nomination

35 Public nomination can form a key element of the process. If using public nomination it will be helped if supported by a nomination form to guide those wishing to put forward a building or other heritage asset for consideration. It is also helpful if HER or local authority officers provide advice to nominators on the type and amount of information required to support any application. The types of information that are likely to accompany nominations include:

- Location details: Ordnance Survey (OS) grid references and street address
- Administrative information: may include Parish, District and County details
- Local significance: identification of the significance of the asset in the local context
- Photographs: visual recording of the asset from the public realm, concentrating on significant elements

36 While the collation of supporting information would normally be undertaken by the nominator, the experience of local experts, voluntary organisations or local authority staff may also be a valuable addition in some cases.

B Assessing Suitability

37 To qualify for local listing nominated assets will need to meet the requirements of the selection criteria. Where possible assessment processes, possibly including public consultation, may be helpful in identifying errors or inaccuracies in supporting information.

38 It is also important to identify assets at the assessment stage that should not be added to the local list. Ensuring that the public has sufficient access to existing records on the local Historic Environment Record (HER), [Heritage Gateway](#) – a tool for cross-searching records including Historic England designation records - or related databases will minimise the likelihood that assets already covered by national statutory designation or currently on the local heritage list will be nominated.

Selection panels

39 Selection panels can be an effective way in which to independently assess nominated assets. Membership could helpfully be drawn from a representative cross-section of the community and not restricted to professionals. The panel's primary responsibility will be the production of a shortlist that can be presented for public consultation.

Specialist knowledge

40 It may occasionally be necessary to seek specialist advice when assessing a particular asset type. The first source of expert knowledge will usually be from within the local authority, with external specialists supplementing this expertise where necessary.

Assets of potential national significance

41 Assets of potential national significance may be identified as part of the local heritage listing process. Such nominations should be referred to Historic England in the normal manner – further information on [how to apply for designation](#) can be found on Historic England’s website.

Finalising the nomination shortlist

42 Before the authority ratifies the final local heritage list, public comment can helpfully be sought. Comments received in response to the publication of the shortlist may be of additional use in assessing the suitability of adding an asset to the local heritage list.

43 Particular attention should be given to responses received from the owners of assets as these will assist in developing future management strategies. The responsibility for assessing such appeals could fall to the selection panel or local authority staff. Ideally the presumption in favour of locally listing the asset will remain; any appeal to remove an asset will be justified if there is evidence that it fails to meet the requirements of the selection criteria.

C Ratification

44 Once the assets on the shortlist for nomination have passed all the necessary checks, final ratification can be sought at the appropriate level within the local planning authority, which might include Committee or Cabinet Member sign-off. Formal ratification ensures public confidence and maximises the influence of the local heritage list as a material consideration. Local planning authorities will have well-established processes for handling activities that support the local plan and these can be followed to identify the appropriate level for ratification.

D Publication

45 Publishing the adopted list in either print or electronic form will ensure that local heritage lists are freely available and accessible. The HER will ideally provide the key point of access to the list and its supporting information.

46 Linking the local heritage list to the local authority planning geographic information system (GIS) will also guarantee that planning applications affecting locally listed assets can take full account of the significance the community attaches to those assets.

HERs and Local Heritage Lists

47 Historic Environment Records (HERs) can play a crucial role in ensuring access to the information supporting local heritage lists as well as acting as a source of information on undesignated assets. Despite the fact that they are non-statutory, the NPPF at paragraphs [141](#) and [169](#) emphasises the importance of HERs in providing the core of information needed for plan-making and individual planning decisions. They are unique repositories of information relating to landscapes, buildings, sites and artefacts. Their content underpins the identification, recording, protection and conservation of the local historic environment and the interpretation of historic environment designation and planning decisions. HER recording guidelines vary across the country. Individual HERs are best placed to advise on how to collect and collate supporting data.

E Review and Updating

- 48 The more regularly updated a list is, the more helpful it will be: revising conservation area appraisals can be a useful trigger to do so. This may include adding new buildings or sites or removing those that no longer fulfil the criteria. The review period is best decided at the local level but could be timed to coincide with the release of new information such as a new or updated conservation area appraisal and will, of course, be dependent upon resources. Reviews can also be made on an on-going basis (as and when nominations are received), or may be held once a set number of nominations have been submitted. Removal of assets from the list may be appropriate in circumstances where an asset no longer meets the criteria for selection, has been demolished, or has undergone changes that have negatively impacted on its significance.
- 49 Lists that have not been reviewed for a period of years are more open to challenge, for example at a planning appeal.

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