

**QUESTION BY A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC
UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12**

Council Meeting: Wednesday, 24 September 2025

Question from: Michael Beazley

Question to: Councillor Patient, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Action and Housing

QUESTION

Council guidance was issued in 1992. Since 2000, The Mill Bank Group's volunteers have worked hard to look after public spaces, sometimes benefitting from cooperation with council officers. Mill Bank was "Best Small Village" in Yorkshire with gold awards from Yorkshire in Bloom during 2010-2020. However, Council guidance has since been frequently breached; planning controls and guidance are no longer effective; council maintenance and repairs have degraded the heritage character of the village.

Will the council work with the Mill Bank Group to issue guidance, to protect and enhance the character of the village?

RESPONSE

In terms of the planning and conservation aspects of your question, the Council as Local Planning Authority (LPA) is committed to protecting and enhancing our heritage and fulfils its statutory duties in relation listed buildings and conservation areas, through its dedicated Conservation Team of two officers to give specialist expertise and advice on heritage matters. Nevertheless, with limited resources, our small team must prioritise work areas in relation to ensuring planning applications receive appropriate heritage advice and concentrating on assets at greatest risk. Mill Bank and Cottonstones has not been identified as a Conservation Area at Risk on Historic England's Risk Register and we are not aware of any particular matters of concern within this area.

Unfortunately, there is not the resource available to review the guidance in relation to Mill Bank at this time. Nevertheless, we are happy to offer support to community groups that wish to explore updating guidance themselves.

We always actively encourage best practice for repairs and development within conservation areas. However, households still have an extensive range of permitted development rights in conservation areas (subject to certain criteria) including for fences, gates, solar panels, replacement of doors and windows, and outbuildings

without the need to apply to the LPA for planning permission. Where permission is required, our Conservation Officers provide advice on the suitability of schemes to ensure they comply with national and local heritage policy.

It should be noted that although works within the Highway do not come under planning control, we work closely with our colleagues in Highways and Public Services on best practice for repair works within conservation areas wherever possible.