Appendix L: Inception report

1. Introduction

This inception report outlines the key methodology, analytical approach, current progress and proposed outputs for the *Socio-Economic Trends and Growth in Conservation Areas* research project. The report is structured as follows: in Section 2 we articulate our understanding of the research specification from Historic England; in Section 3 we set out the research questions that we seek to address through this work; in Section 4 we discuss some of the key research challenges that shape the approach adopted; in Section 5 we detail the research methodologies that we intend to utilise to address the research questions and provide an update about current progress; in Section 6 we set out our analytical approach; in Section 7 we highlight what will not be included in the analysis and why; in Section 8 we set out the research outputs and schedules for those outputs.

2. Our understanding of the research

Historic England have commissioned a piece of research to investigate whether and, if so, how the socio-economic characteristics of Conservation Areas have changed over time and whether Conservation Area designation promotes and facilitates sustainable, long-term growth, i.e. 'good growth'. We appreciate that in order to analyse the extent to which Conservation Areas promote and facilitate 'good growth', it will first be necessary to identify appropriate dimensions of 'good growth' and then identify suitable indicators of these dimensions that are available at (or can be constructed at) suitable spatial levels over a suitable temporal period. We note that "The concept of good growth is a relatively new one and […] a clear, measurable definition does not exist." We understand that an important part of this study will consist of selecting metrics of 'good growth' by drawing upon existing research in this field, whilst recognising the limitations posed by data availability.

We appreciate that the results of this research will be of relevance to many different user constituencies and will inform Historic England's annual report, *Heritage Counts*. We therefore understand that the methodology employed here must be rigorous and transparent and the results must be presented in an easily interpretable way. However, we are also clear that the methodology does not necessarily need to be limited to descriptive statistics but, rather, there is scope to undertake *appropriate* statistical analyses. Indeed, we note from research commissioned to inform previous rounds of *Heritage Counts* that authors have employed a range of statistical analysis techniques[1]. In Section 5 of this application we set out our proposed methodology.

3. The research questions

In this research project we seek to address the following research questions:

1. What is the profile of Conservation Areas across selected indicators of 'good growth' at a baseline point in time?

[1] For instance, in their study of the associations between heritage and wellbeing, Fujiwara et al (2014) employ ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to test for associations between life satisfaction and heritage participation, controlling for a range of determinants of wellbeing. Similarly, in their study of the economic value of heritage, Ozdemiroglu et al (2014) use both parametric and non-parametric econometric models to examine factors associated with people's willingness to pay towards protecting selected heritage sites.

2. How has the profile of Conservation Areas changed over time on the selected indicators of 'good growth'?
3. How do the changes observed over time on indicators of 'good growth' in Conservation Areas compare to changes in non-Conservation Area locations?

The overarching aim of these three research questions is to understand whether Conservation Areas are characterised by sustainable, long term growth (i.e. 'good growth').

4. Key research challenges

Historic England acknowledges that Conservation Areas are "very diverse and their boundaries do not align with administrative boundaries", which presents problems in terms of both data collation and analytical approach. We wish to highlight a number of challenges relating to the diverse and non-standard definitions of Conservation Areas. We present our responses to these challenges within our discussion of the proposed methodology in the following section.

The diverse nature of Conservation Areas means that we will encounter problems in comparing areas on a like-for-like basis. Based on our initial review of the digitised boundaries provided by Historic England we recognise that Conservation Areas will vary greatly in terms of a number of important factors, including their areal size, population size, population density and primary economic function, as well as their geographical location. In our discussion of the proposed methodology set out below we offer a suggestion for how Conservation Areas could be grouped into meaningful categories to aid the analysis. However, we are aware that the diverse nature of Conservation Areas will still pose analytical challenges in terms of the construction of appropriate counter-factuals and, in particular, the difficulty in selecting appropriate *non*-Conservation Areas to act as a set of *comparator areas*. When analysing change over time in socio-economic indicators, it is preferable to compare change observed in Conservation Areas with change observed in a selection of comparator areas that are as similar as possible to the Conservation Areas at a baseline point in time. In our discussion of the proposed methodology, below, we set out how we envisage dealing with the difficultly of selecting comparator areas.

Second, it is evident from the digitised boundaries provided by Historic England that some Conservation Areas have very low populations, such as small, rural hamlets. Areas of low population size pose a challenge for tracking change over time in socio-economic indicators because the indicators tend to have larger standard errors and are therefore regarded as being 'less reliable' than those in higher population areas. In the discussion of our proposed methodology below we offer a suggestion for how to deal with this important research challenge.

Third, we appreciate that the date of designation may vary considerably between the Conservation Areas. Whilst in one respect it would be desirable to compare changes in the indicators of 'good growth' before designation and after designation in each Conservation Area, this may not be feasible given data constraints. In another respect, however, assigning each Conservation Area its own baseline time point would be problematic for the analysis because different macro-economic dynamics are at play at different points in time and these macroeconomic dynamics may skew the interpretation of trends observed in Conservation Areas (and comparators).

Our responses to these challenges and other are presented in the following methodology section.

5. Proposed research methodology

Our proposed methodology is designed with the objective of facilitating both 'snapshot' and temporal trend analyses of Conservation Areas and selected comparator benchmarks in a way that allows for a degree of distributional analysis (i.e. assessing variation between different areas) whilst acknowledging that it is not feasible to consider each Conservation Area as an independent unit within the scope of this project (due to the large number of diverse and non-standard geographical areas, circa 10,000). Our methodology consists of a number of phases and each is discussed here.

Phase 1: Review the comprehensive list of Conservation Areas

The first phase of this project will entail reviewing the comprehensive list of Conservation Areas across England that have been provided by Historic England. The review will consist of an assessment of Conservation Areas' geographical boundaries (including their physical locations and the resultant spatial patterning) and the associated population distribution. These initial data exploration checks will assist the research team in confirming the remainder of the methodological processes proposed below or, if necessary, informing revisions to the methodologies to better reflect the entirety of the Conservation Areas across England.

Phase 1 is already in progress and we have received shapefile data for all of the Conservation Areas boundaries held by Historic England. We have run an initial review of these boundaries and identified two issues to explore further.

1) We have identified a number of boundaries that relate to canals, waterways and heritage railways rather than residential or commercial neighbourhoods which we are planning to explore in the study. We recommend that these are excluded from the analysis.
2) We have identified 16 Local Authorities where the Conservation Area boundary matches the Local Authority boundary exactly i.e. the entire area is classified as a Conservation Area. We suspect that the boundary data is incorrect for these areas as we are not aware that any Local Authorities are fully designated conservation areas. The Local Authorities affected are as follows:

Region	LA
East	Castle Point
North West	Bolton
North West	Burnley
South East	Maidstone
South East	Sevenoaks
South East	South Bucks
South East	Thanet
South East	Winchester
South East	Wokingham
South East	Worthing
South West	North Dorset
South West	South Hams

South West	Weymouth and Portland
West Midlands	Redditch
West Midlands	Wolverhampton
Yorkshire and Humber	Sheffield (excluding Peak District)

We have sent these back to Historic England for further review.

Phase 2: Review existing literature on measures of 'good growth' and review the relevant data landscape

The second phase of this project (which can run in parallel with Phase 1) involves a review of relevant academic and practice literature concerning measures of 'good growth' and a review of relevant data sources. Our aim in this project for Historic England is to identify a selection of key dimensions of 'good growth' and then to select one or more relevant indicators to measure each dimension. The final selection of dimensions and indicators will be informed by the review of literature and the review of data availability, however at this stage we envisage dimensions relating to person-level outcomes (e.g. education and employment/unemployment); property-level outcomes (e.g. house prices and turnover); place-level outcomes (e.g. crime); and outcomes related to economic activity (e.g. job density). We would seek to liaise closely with Historic England throughout the process of selecting dimensions and indicators of 'good growth'. As part of this we will undertake an analysis of gaps in data availability.

Phase 2 is already in progress and we are compiling a list of key sources to include in the literature review.

Phase 3: Develop and implement a suitable area typology/classification

As emphasised above, due to the large number of diverse Conservation Areas across the country, we believe there is merit in categorising areas into meaningful groups to aid the subsequent analysis and interpretation of the results. We therefore propose that the third phase of the study should consist of designing a methodological approach to group Conservation Areas into suitable categories. Furthermore, in order to enable us to compare Conservation Areas against other relevant benchmarks, we also propose applying the same area typology/classification to all *non-Conservation Areas*.

We propose designing a categorisation to differentiate between different types of area based upon the level of urbanisation and based on whether or not it is an area of Conservation Area designation. Our starting point is to recommend a three-by-two category scheme, generating six mutually exclusive categories in total:

Urbanisation category	**Conservation Area status**	
	Conservation Area	Non-Conservation Area
City/town centre	---	---
Urban residential (i.e. non-city/town centre)	---	---
Rural	---	---

Whilst we recommend considering these three urbanisation categories as a starting point, we recognise that modifications may need to be made once we have concluded the assessment of the comprehensive list of Conservation Areas across the entire country. For instance, we may need to consider whether the 'city/town centre' category should be further sub-divided, for example between large metropolitan areas and smaller market towns. However, in light of the breadth and depth of data that this project will generate and analyse, our recommendation is to limit the number of area categories to the minimum necessary for the analytical purpose.

Members of the research team have previous experience of developing area typologies and we are therefore aware of the various methodological challenges that this task will entail. Whilst the exact methodological approach for allocating areas into one of the (possibly) six categories will be formalised during the course of the research, we envisage utilising a combination of publicly

available datasets, such as population density, jobs and business density, and existing geodemographic classifications available from ONS.

With regards to classifying Conservation Areas into one of the area categories, we envisage constructing the relevant determining indicators (as indicated above) for each individual Conservation Area by assigning, aggregating or apportioning data using the 'best fit' geographical definitions supplied by Historic England. We will then categorise each Conservation Area into one of the area groups. The category assigned to the Conservation Area will then be assigned to all component OAs (and/or LSOAs) that constitute the respective Conservation Area.

With regards to classifying the *non-Conservation Areas*, we envisage constructing the same set of determining indicators for each OA/LSOA that is not covered by a Conservation Area. We will then apply the same criteria to assign each OA/LSOA outside of Conservation Areas to one of the area groups. We acknowledge the approach therefore differs slightly between Conservation Areas (where the entire Conservation Area is categorised and then that category applied to all constituent OAs/LSOAs) and non-Conservation Areas (where the OAs/LSOAs are directly categorised) however this is a necessary function given the subsequent analytical aims and this will not adversely affect the analysis.

Upon completion of this typology/classification work, every OA/LSOA in England will be assigned into one of the mutually exclusive categories according to its level of urbanisation and whether it is located within a designated Conservation Area or not.

Phase 4: Aggregate (i.e. merge) Conservation Areas of the same typology classification within Local Authority Districts

The fourth phase of this study entails aggregating/merging of each particular typology class within each individual local authority district, in order to aid analysis and interpretation (as we explain below). In other words, if a local authority district contains four (contiguous or non-contiguous) 'city/town centre' Conservation Areas, these four areas (or rather the best-fit OAs/LSOAs that constitute the four areas) will be aggregated to form a single analytical unit. This process will be undertaken separately for each of the typology groups. Therefore, if the classification proposed above is utilised, a local authority district such as Sheffield would consist of a single aggregation of 'city/town centre' Conservation Areas, a single aggregation of 'urban residential' Conservation Areas, and a single aggregation of 'rural' Conservation Areas.

The result of this methodological step is that it will reduce the number of analytical units from circa 10,000 individual Conservation Areas to a theoretical maximum of 978 aggregated areas (i.e. 326 districts x 3 typology groups). However, we appreciate that not every local authority district will contain all three types of Conservation Area, and so the actual number of analytical units will in practice be somewhat smaller than 978. Aggregating/merging Conservation Areas in this way ensures that areas are only combined with other similar areas (i.e. an 'urban residential' Conservation Area would not be merged with a 'rural' or 'city/town centre' Conservation Area etc) and areas are only aggregated within the confines of local authority district boundaries (thereby ensuring that areas are only combined with geographically proximate areas that are likely to be subject to the same local authority-wide socio-economic dynamics etc).

The reason for reducing the number of analytical units in the proposed way is that it greatly aids the subsequent analysis we intend to undertake. One important factor in this is that by aggregating Conservation Areas into meaningful combined entities we will increase the base population of the analytical units. This is likely to be particularly relevant in relation to rural Conservation Areas which

may each cover only a few houses and therefore may have very small populations. As noted above, areas of small population are problematic for analytical purposes due to the 'unreliability' (i.e. large standard errors) of such areas. By grouping areas of low population together the combined population base increases which increases the 'reliability' of the indicators produced for such areas. A further important factor is that by aggregating each particular type of Conservation Area within each local authority district we will generate one statistic per area type per local authority per indicator of 'good growth' per time point. This will enable us to compare indicator values for the group of, for example, 'urban residential' Conservation Areas in Sheffield, with the equivalent group in every other local authority. It will also be possible to look within a particular local authority district and compare indicator values for one typology group with other typology groups. In short, aggregating areas in the way proposed will facilitate a wide range of appropriate analyses and will aid the interpretation of the results as these results will be presented for local authority districts rather than individual Conservation Areas.

We do, however, recognise that aggregating Conservation Areas in this way introduces some limitations to the study, due to the loss of information about individual Conservation Areas (which may be particularly important if there are wide disparities between Conservation Areas of the same typology classification within the same local authority district). Whilst it is not possible at the present time to comment on the extent to which this is the case (as the relevant data preparation work is a later part of the research project), we believe the areas are unlikely to be vastly different to one another given the relatively close geographical proximity and similar level of urbanisation between the areas to be merged together in any given local authority district. We also recognise the possibility of Conservation Areas straddling local authority district boundaries and we will deal with this accordingly on a case-by-case basis, although we would seek to assign each Conservation Area to one and only one local authority district (for example, based on the proportional split between districts).

In the remainder of this inception report we refer to the aggregated/merged Conservation Areas per typology and per local authority district as '*Conservation Aggregates*'.

Phase 5: Construct appropriate comparator areas

The fifth phase of our proposed work programme consists of constructing a set of appropriate comparator areas against which to benchmark Conservation Areas on indicators of 'good growth'. Members of the research team have extensive experience of undertaking evaluations of area-based regeneration policies (e.g. New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme and the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR)) and are therefore aware of the importance of utilising appropriate comparator benchmarks when assessing patterns and trends in a particular group of geographical areas. Whilst high-level benchmarking can be undertaken using national or regional averages etc, it is more appropriate to compare the results for Conservation Areas with results for other non-Conservation Areas of similar population size and similar characteristics at a baseline point in time. It is outside the scope of this project to design bespoke comparator areas for every single Conservation Area in England (although McLennan achieved this objective for the 39 NDC partnership areas as part of the national evaluation of that programme).

Our proposed approach is to firstly use the English Indices of Deprivation[2] to generate a summary deprivation score on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for each *Conservation Aggregate* and produce a population total for each *Conservation Aggregate*. We will take each type of Conservation Aggregate and each local authority district in turn and use a combination of GIS and statistical software to select an appropriate number of OAs/LSOAs from the *non-Conservation Area* parts of the district that are of the same typology and are similar to the Conservation Aggregate in terms of the IMD score and which, when summed together, contain approximately the same population as the relevant Conservation Aggregate.

Upon completion of this process, each Conservation Aggregate across the country (i.e. 'city/town centre', 'urban residential' and 'rural' in each of the relevant local authority districts) will have a matched comparator group which is similar to the Conservation Aggregate in terms of level of deprivation at the baseline time point and in terms of population size. The comparator groups therefore represent appropriate benchmarks against which to compare trends observed in the Conservation Aggregates.

In the remainder of this inception report we refer to the aggregated/merged comparator groups per typology and per local authority district as '*Comparator Aggregates'*. Each Conservation Aggregate is matched to its own Comparator Aggregate. Therefore, just as there is a maximum possible number of 978 Conservation Aggregates, there is also a maximum number of 978 Comparator Aggregates.

Phase 6: Generate indicators of 'good growth' for Conservation Aggregates and Comparator Aggregates

Having constructed the Conservation Aggregate areas and Comparator Aggregate areas as discussed above, our intention is to aggregate OA/LSOA level data as appropriate to generate the indicators of 'good growth' (defined in Phase 2 of the proposed methodology) to construct measures for each Conservation Aggregate area and Comparator Aggregate area. The relevant indicators will also be constructed for other selected benchmarks, such as national, regional and local authority district.

The research team members have considerable experience of working with census and administrative data at small area level and OCSI has developed the Community Insights and Local Insights tools which draw upon an extensive suite of such data.

[2] The choice of which Indices to use here (i.e. 2000, 2004, 2007, 2010 or 2015) will be based on the time point we use for the baseline analysis, and so will be decided upon in the early stages of the project.

Through our previous experience of working with OA/LSOA level census and administrative data we are aware of a number of challenges that will need to be considered and dealt with appropriately. One such challenge is the issue of *changing geographies* and the impact this has on efforts to construct time series of indicators on a consistent basis. The issue of changing geographies affects both census indicators and administrative indicators. OCSI has an established methodology for distributing small area level data to higher and lower level geographies. A further challenge is the possibility of *changing indicator definitions* over time. For instance, the eligibility criteria for out-of-work benefits have undergone numerous changes over recent years. Our knowledge of the data landscape will inform our decisions on which indicators will be suitable for measuring the identified dimensions of 'good growth', so we will seek to minimise the extent of any inconsistencies over time in either geographies or indicator definitions.

6. Analytical approach

The methodological steps outlined above are designed to generate a wealth of valuable data on patterns and trends in indicators of 'good growth' for Conservation Areas (aggregated to Conservation Aggregates) and relevant comparator benchmarks (Comparator Aggregates as well as national, regional and local authority benchmarks) which are suitable for addressing the research questions set out in Section 3.

In terms of addressing the first research question: "*What is the profile of Conservation Areas across selected indicators of 'good growth' at a baseline point in time?*" we intend to choose a baseline time point (with the decision on time point to be made jointly with Historic England, in the context of the prevailing data landscape) and explore commonalities and differences between local authorities on the selected indicators of 'good growth'. This analysis will therefore be a static 'snap-shot' of the situation at the chosen point in time. As part of this analysis we will consider the distributions of indicator values across local authority districts for each of the Conservation Aggregate categories in turn, and benchmark these data against equivalent indicator values for the Comparator Aggregates and national, regional and local authority averages.

These analyses will therefore reveal: (i) the degree to which each type of Conservation Aggregate area exhibits similar/different scores on indicators of 'good growth' across the 326 local authority districts; (ii) the degree to which each type of Conservation Aggregate exhibits better/similar/worse scores on the indicators of 'good growth' as compared to the equivalent type of Comparator Aggregate and other benchmarks; (ii) and the degree to which each of the types of Conservation Aggregate exhibit similar/different scores to other types of Conservation Aggregate (e.g. are indicators of 'good growth' typically better in 'rural' Conservation Aggregate areas than in 'urban residential' and/or 'city/town centre' Conservation Aggregate areas?). We intend to run these analyses separately for each of the dimensions of 'good growth' defined as part of this study. Please see Section 8 below for our suggestion for how to present this wealth of analysis in a coherent written report. These analyses will situate the Conservation Aggregates within the context of their wider local areas at the specified point in time and will therefore provide the foundation for the subsequent analysis of change over time.

In terms of addressing the second research question: "*How has the profile of Conservation Areas changed over time on the selected indicators of 'good growth'?*" we intend to track change in the indicators of 'good growth' over an appropriate time period for both Conservation Aggregates and Comparator Aggregates. The focus here will be primarily on the Conservation Aggregates, with particular emphasis on the extent to which Conservation Aggregates have followed similar (or alternatively divergent) trajectories over time on the selected indicators. We will discuss the findings

of this distributional analysis and explore any notable outliers that may warrant further attention. Again, analyses will be performed separately for each type of area ('rural', 'urban residential' and 'city/town centre') and separately for each indicator of 'good growth'. The Comparator Aggregates will be used to provide some contextual information to help situate the changes observed in Conservation Aggregates. In this part of the analysis, the trends in individual Conservation Aggregates will *not* be linked directly to the trends in the matched Comparator Aggregate, but rather the distributional analyses of change will be undertaken at a more global level with the change in Conservation Aggregates calculated independently of change in their matched Comparator Aggregate. The analyses proposed here will reveal broad patterns of change across the different types of Conservation Aggregate on the range of selected indicators, with context offered by the Comparator Aggregates.

In order to address the third and final research question: "*How do the changes observed over time on indicators of 'good growth' in Conservation Areas compare to changes in non-Conservation Area locations?*" we will consider trends in each Conservation Aggregate *in the context of the change in its matched Comparator Aggregate*. The aim here is analyse the extent to which Conservation Aggregate areas have experienced better/similar/worse trends over time in the selected indicators of 'good growth' when compared to other similar types of areas of similar population size which are not subject to Conservation Area designation. In other words, we will be comparing areas on a like-for-like basis. The method of constructing Conservation Aggregates and Comparator Aggregates discussed above enables such analyses to be undertaken.

For example, if one of the selected indicators of 'good growth' is recorded crime, we would measure change over time in the recorded crime rate for a given Conservation Aggregate and its matched Comparator Aggregate and then calculate the *difference* between the two change statistics to show whether the Conservation Aggregate area had seen better/similar/worse change in crime than its matched Comparator Aggregate. The differences between the Conservation Aggregates and matched Comparator Aggregates will be assessed across all local authority districts, separately for each of the typology categories. So, for instance, it will be possible to examine how the 'city/town centre' Conservation Aggregate in Liverpool fared over time when compared with this type of Conservation Aggregate in all other local authorities, each measured in the context of the change in the respective matched Comparator Aggregates. We will again look for commonalities/differences between areas of the country on each of the three typology groups separately, and we will look for commonalities/differences between the three typology groups. As per the earlier analyses, this will be undertaken separately for each of the indicators of 'good growth'.

We recognise there will be a number of issues to be considered as part of this phase of the analysis, including, for example, the choice of baseline time point, the choice of post-baseline time point(s), and the possible use of pre-baseline time-points (and, if so, what these should be). We will take decisions on these issues once we have completed the review of the comprehensive list of Conservation Areas and available data sources in Phases 1 and 2 of the methodology discussed above.

We also recognise that, even after merging Conservation Areas to form Conservation Aggregates, there may still be some Conservation Aggregates with very low populations. As noted above, areas with low populations are not well suited to tracking change over time in socio-economic indicators. As such, we may need to implement a population threshold for the analyses described here. If a Conservation Aggregate has a population count below the threshold, that Conservation Aggregate would either need to be excluded from the analysis or potentially merged with a similar Conservation Aggregate from a neighbouring local authority district. These decisions will be informed by the data exploration work in the earlier stages of this project. Similarly, we are aware of

certain Conservation Areas that are relatively large, such as the city of Bath. There may be a need to impose an upper population threshold in addition to a lower population threshold, although again that decision cannot be taken until the initial data exploration has been complete. We would seek to minimise the number of areas excluded from the analysis.

We believe the methodological approach proposed here is best suited to addressing the key research questions in the context of the scope of this study. We do not believe the study in its current specification is well suited to the application of conventional evaluation techniques such as formal propensity score matching, econometric modelling or difference in difference estimation. We give our reasons for this below.

7. What we don't plan to do, and why

There are certain methodological approaches which we believe are ill-suited to the current study and therefore are not part of the proposed methodology outlined in this inception report.

First, we will not construct a single composite measure of 'good growth' by combining multiple indicators. The research team members have extensive experience of developing composite indices (e.g. the Index of Multiple Deprivation) and are therefore well versed in the methodological issues involved, such as standardisation and weighting. Tracking change over time is particularly problematic using composite indices as the standardisation and weighting issues create difficulties for interpreting results and can therefore often obscure the key trends in the underlying data. As such, the analyses proposed above are designed to assess each key dimension of 'good growth' separately. However, as noted in the discussion of research outputs below, we do intend to look across the results from the different dimensions to comment on patterns and trends between dimensions as well as within dimensions.

Second, we are not intending to use the 'date of designation' as a central part of our analyses. There are a number of reasons not to utilise the designation date centrally in the analysis. One such reason is the difficulties this would pose for comparing change across multiple Conservation Areas spread across the country. As we wish to analyse the degree to which Conservation Areas have exhibited similar/different trends to one another, as well as relative to comparator benchmarks, it is highly preferable to select a single 'baseline' date for all areas and track change around that date. Another such reason is that the date of designation is defined locally and so is subject to local variations in the timing of decision making, and therefore there is potentially a lack of standardisation in the approach to designating areas as Conservation Areas. A further reason is that, unlike area-based regeneration initiatives (such as the New Deal for Communities programme), designation of Conservation Area status does not necessarily result in significant government inward investment to the area in order to address specific and measurable social and economic objectives. As such, the actual date of designation does not necessarily imply a sizeable immediate change in for the socio-economic conditions of the areas Although we do not anticipate using the date of designation as a central part of our analyses, we may well utilise this information for certain case study Conservation Areas to contribute to the context of the areas under discussion.

Third, we are not intending to use information on the *quality* of Conservation Area management as a central part of our analysis. It is not feasible to incorporate this information into the methodological approach proposed here which depends upon grouping individual Conservation Areas into Conservation Aggregates. Furthermore, Historic England recognises in the Invitation to Tender that the only information about management quality is in the form of proxies for the implementation of good conservation and good Conservation Area management principles. Given the lack of formal,

standardised measures of 'quality' available, and the resultant dependency on proxies, we do not intend to place great emphasis on this information. As with the date of designation, however, we may utilise this information for certain case study Conservation Areas to contribute to the context of the areas under discussion.

Fourth, and finally, we will not undertake any statistical modelling (i.e. regression analyses) as part of this project. Although the research team members have previous experience of applying a range of statistical modelling techniques, at both individual person-level and neighbourhood-level, we would argue that this is not the best use of resources to achieve the stated research objectives. This methodology would be more appropriate if Historic England were seeking a *formal evaluation* of Conservation Areas. In any case, applying a modelling approach for an evaluation purpose would pose numerous challenges in terms of methodology and in terms of interpretation of any model results. In part this is because of the need to look across multiple indicators of good growth rather than just a single outcome indicator, and in part because of the limitations noted above concerning baseline time points, dates of designation and limited measures of management quality. Our methodology here therefore explicitly excludes any statistical modelling.

8. Proposed research outputs and timetable

<u>Outputs</u>

The outputs of the research will be disseminated in a series of reports. This inception report outlines our methodological approach and is the first report in the series. Below we highlight the additional reports that will be written.

Interim report:
The interim report will summarise the results from phases 1-4 of the methodology. This will include identifying indicators of good growth and data collection gaps from the literature review, developing the typology for Conservation Areas and furthermore presenting a small selection of headline socio-economic data for the typology groups.

A draft final report:
The draft final report will incorporate findings and analysis from all of the phases of the research methodology, containing detailed technical material presented in an accessible way, with a mixture of analysis, range of data visualisations (including GIS mapping and a range of chart options including but not limited to bar charts, line charts, box and whisker, quadrant plots) underlying data tables and case studies to illustrate research conclusions.

The report will consist of various sections:

- Research methodology - detailing approach to conservation area and comparator area typology
- Exploring the concept of "good growth" and highlighting gaps in data availability.
- A profile of Conservation Areas across selected indicators of 'good growth' at a baseline point in time
- Multiple chapters analysing the different dimensions of "good growth" addressing the research questions: "*How has the profile of Conservation Areas changed over time on the selected indicators of 'good growth'?*" and "*How do the changes observed over time on indicators of 'good growth' in Conservation Areas compare to changes in non-Conservation Area locations?*" These sections will make use of local case studies to supplement the data analysis.

- A chapter drawing across the key dimensions for commonalities or differences.
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Data appendix presenting good growth trends across all of the Conservation Aggregates and Comparator Aggregates for each of the Local Authorities in England

The final report:
The final report will build on the draft report following recommendations and input from Historic England stakeholders and will include an executive summary of the key findings and recommendations that is accessible to the general reader.