

APPENDIX D

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 1 NOVEMBER 2011

Title:

**A PROGRAMME FOR UNDERTAKING CONSERVATION
AREA APPRAISALS (PHASE 1)**

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Adam Taylor-Smith]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

The purpose of this report is to establish a programme for undertaking Conservation Area Appraisals (CAAs). This is broken down into three phases:

- Phase 1 - identifying a programme of CAAs by using the scoring matrix.
- Phase 2 - Undertaking the CAAs by following English Heritage guidelines.
- Phase 3 - Implementation of the management plans and environmental enhancement schemes.

Phases 2 and 3 are likely to happen in parallel, given the amount of CAAs which need to be undertaken in the borough (41 outstanding). The purpose of this report is to seek Executive approval for this programme of CAAs.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

It relates to the Council's environment priority to protect and enhance Waverley's unique mix of rural and urban communities.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no equality and diversity implications.

Climate Change Implications:

None directly. However, it is recognised that the historic environment and heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations (Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) , 2011).

Resource/Value for Money Implications:

The work will be completed within existing officer resources but will require input from a range of stakeholders.

Legal Implications:

None for Phase 1. However, long term CAAs will be used as a material consideration when considering planning applications.

Background

- There are 45 conservation areas (CAs) within Waverley Borough Council;
- Four CAAs have been completed (Wrecclesham 2002; Bramley 2005; Farnham 2005 and Chiddingfold 2007).
- CAAs define and record the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation area. They also set out a long term management plan for the CA.
- The Council is required under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Section 71(1)), PPS5 and the draft NPPF to complete appraisals for each area.
- CAAs can inform stakeholders such as developers, Parish and Town Councils when developing and assessing planning applications.
- The expectation is that each CAA will be adopted by Waverley as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- Phase 1 of the process sets out the methodology for determining the order in which the CAAs will be undertaken.

Introduction

1. Waverley has a rich built heritage, including over 1,700 listed buildings, 490 Buildings of Local Merit and 45 Conservation Areas. Whilst it is for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to identify and designate CAs, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 71, also requires that:

“It shall be the duty of a LPA from time-to-time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.”
2. Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) details the importance of protecting heritage assets which is also reflected in the draft NPPF.
3. Of the 45 CAs within Waverley, only four CAAs have been completed (Wrecclesham, Bramley, Farnham and Chiddingfold). The last, Chiddingfold was adopted in October of 2007. Given the requirements of the Act, it is considered pertinent to set out a programme to undertake CAA on the remaining 41 CA within Waverley with the aim to appraise the character of those conservation areas; identify the qualities which should be preserved and enhanced, and produce proposals for enhancement. There will also be opportunity to review the conservation area boundaries.
4. CAA will be undertaken by the Planning Projects Team with input from Parish and Town Councils, Amenity Societies and other relevant stakeholders, including residents. This report sets out the programme for undertaking CAAs within Waverley (Phase 1).

The Stages of the Conservation Area Appraisal Programme

5. It is considered that there will be three phases of the CAA programme:

- Phase 1 (the focus of this report)
6. Undertaking 41 CAAs within Waverley will take a significant period of time and it would be impossible to undertake all of them in one go. Therefore a robust methodology of assessment has been employed to prioritise the order in which the CAAs should be commenced. Each CA is subject to different development pressures, some have additional planning policy protection (for example green belt or AONB policies) and others are in need of environmental improvement (for example within the public realm), these form the basis of the methodology for scoring each CA. The report at Annexe 1 describes the methodology, includes the resultant matrix (also found at Annexe 2) and a score sheet for each CA.
 7. This process has identified that the CAs within the centre of the three main settlements (Cranleigh, Godalming and Haslemere) obtained the highest scores (around 27). This is unsurprising given that these settlements have larger conservation areas, greater development pressure, more users and subsequently need more care and maintenance. It is therefore concluded that CAA's should be undertaken in these areas ahead of other settlements.
 8. The lowest scores were in rural villages which are protected by policies such as Green Belt, AONB and AGLV where development pressure is generally low.
 - Phase 2 - Undertaking the CAAs by following English Heritage guidelines.
 - Phase 3 - Implementation of the management plans and environmental enhancement schemes. Currently the Farnham Conservation Area Management Plan Steering Group (FCAMP) is actively taking steps to produce an action plan for the Farnham Town Centre CA (following adoption of the CAA in 2005).

Conclusion

9. Phase 1 has been completed and a matrix prioritising the CA developed (see Annexe 2). Godalming Town Centre CA has the highest score (28.5) and is considered most in need of a CAA. It would therefore be advantageous to commence a CAA within 2011/12. However, it has been some time since Waverley has undertaken a CAA (the last being in 2007), and new guidance has been published by English Heritage (Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management). It is therefore considered prudent to undertake a pilot CAA in order to set out, test and review the methodology (including public consultation), in a smaller CA (with a lower score) before rolling it out across the board.
10. It is therefore concluded that the first CAA to be undertaken as part of phase 2 should be Wheeler Street, Witley (score 24). It is a relatively compact CA which will enable the methodology to be easily tested and reviewed. A draft project plan is attached at Annexe 3.

11. Following the adoption of Wheeler Street, Witley CAA, the methodology can then be rolled out to the Godalming Town Centre CA with the hope of commencing this early in 2012/13. Longer term it is suggested that at least two CAA be undertaken each year, more if the CAs are smaller. The suggested five year programme (based on two per year) is shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Proposed five year rolling programme for commencement of CAA

Conservation Area	Score	Year CAA to be commenced
Wheeler Street, Witley	24	2011/12
Godalming Town Centre	28.5	2012/13
Milford	23	2012/13
Haslemere	28	2013/14
Godalming Crownpits	26.5	2013/14
Cranleigh Centre	27	2014/15
Witley	25	2014/15
Godalming Ockford Road	28.5	2015/16
Alfold	24.5	2015/16

12. A further Executive report will then be presented in 2015/16 to agree the programme for the following five years.
13. Phase 3 will implement the management action plans identified as part of the CAA and will be ongoing once the CAA has been adopted. Currently a management plan is being developed for the Farnham Town Centre Conservation Area as a separate document to the CAA (completed in 2005). The expectation is that this will begin to be implemented in 2012.

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

14. The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered this report at its meeting on 27 September and endorsed the recommendations below.

Recommendation

It is recommended that

1. the methodology employed to prioritise the Conservation Areas in need of Conservation Area Appraisals be agreed;
2. Wheeler Street, Witley be used as a pilot study to set out, test and review the methodology for undertaking CAA; and
3. the initial five year rolling programme for undertaking CAAs be agreed (as set out in Table 1).

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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