

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

AREA 1 PLANNING COMMITTEE

11 June 2009

Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Council

1 CONSERVATION AREAS

Summary

Conservation Area Appraisals have been prepared for central Tonbridge and for the Quarry Hill area of the town. Both Appraisals conclude that the boundaries of the Conservation Areas should be revised.

1.1 Quarry Hill Conservation Area

- 1.1.1 The Planning and Transportation Advisory Board (PTAB) at its meeting on 27 May 2009 considered a draft Conservation Area Appraisal for the Quarry Hill Area of Tonbridge. One of the results of the Appraisal has been a recommendation that the boundaries of the area should be changed for the reasons explained under **ANNEX A**. PTAB commends these changes to the Area Planning Committee.
- 1.1.2 Under the Constitution, whilst the consideration of Conservation Area Appraisals is a matter for the Executive, changes to the boundaries of Conservation Areas is a matter for Council having regard to the recommendations of the relevant Area Planning Committee. The issue of changing the boundaries of the Quarry Hill Conservation Area is therefore a matter for this Committee to consider.
- 1.1.3 The Conservation Area Appraisal including the proposed boundary changes was the result of successful collaborative working with the Tonbridge Civic Society, the Tonbridge Historical Society, local Members and other stakeholders. One particular issue that arose through stakeholder engagement was whether the Conservation Area should be extended to include Woodlands Road. This is not recommended for the reasons explained in Annex A.
- 1.1.4 At this stage, the Conservation Area Appraisal and proposed draft changes to the boundary are being recommended for approval for the purposes of public consultation which will take place during late June and through July. The response to consultation concerning the boundary changes will then be reported back to this Committee which will make recommendations to Council. PTAB will then consider any responses to consultation relating specifically to the content of the Conservation Area Appraisal before that document is finally adopted.

1.2 Tonbridge Conservation Area

- 1.2.1 Last year PTAB considered a comprehensive Conservation Area Appraisal for the centre of Tonbridge which was subject to public consultation over the summer. Cabinet approved the document in November 2008. However, as with Quarry Hill the Tonbridge Conservation Area Appraisal also included some changes to the boundary though not as extensive as at Quarry Hill. These changes, which are explained under **ANNEX B**, were also subject to consultation in the summer of last year and are commended to your Committee by PTAB. The response to consultation, specifically in respect of matters relating to the boundary changes, are summarised under **ANNEX C**. Copies of the original representations may be inspected at the Council offices and will be available on the evening of the meeting.
- 1.2.2 There is only one controversial issue which is the proposal to delete part of the modern Haydens housing estate from the Conservation Area. Although the Haydens estate is an attractive development in its own right, this does not in itself merit Conservation Area designation which requires that the area be of “special architectural or historic interest”. When originally designated the Haydens was in fact an area of private open space and this was the reason for its original inclusion. For this reason PTAB considered that the residual area of open space on the Yardley Park Road frontage should continue to be included in the Conservation Area together with the houses fronting on to it, but that the remainder of the estate should be excluded. This remains the recommended position.
- 1.2.3 Inclusion within a Conservation Area does not in itself prevent development and change. Equally, control over new development will remain under planning powers and the Haydens area will remain as part of the setting of the Conservation Area and be covered by design guidance in the Appraisal which refers to the importance of the setting of the area. It will also be covered by the Character Area Appraisal that will be prepared later this year for that area. Neither ownership, nor management, of the open space will be affected by the omission of the remainder of the estate from the Conservation Area.
- 1.2.4 The Conservation Area Appraisal approved by Cabinet last year was predicated on the boundary changes taking place. It is for this Committee to recommend to Council that the revisions to the boundary of the Tonbridge Conservation Area now be approved.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 Once the boundary changes have been agreed they need to be advertised.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 None

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 It is important to review the boundaries and other changes within conservation areas to ensure they remain relevant and robust for use in the planning system.

1.6 Recommendations

- 1) That the proposed boundary changes to the Quarry Hill Conservation Area be approved for the purposes of public consultation.
- 2) That the proposed boundary changes to the Tonbridge Conservation Area be recommended to Council for approval.

Background papers:

contact: Brian Gates

Nil

Steve Humphrey
Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure