

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

03 June 2008

Report of the Director of Planning Transport and Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD ARE INVITED TO ATTEND A PRESENTATION AT THE TONBRIDGE FORUM ON 2 JUNE 2008.

1 TONBRIDGE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL – CONSULTATION DRAFT

Summary

A draft Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared for the purpose of public consultation. The extent of the Conservation Area has been reviewed and certain changes are proposed which, likewise, need to be subject to consultation.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 I reported to your meeting in June of last year on progress with a programme of reviewing and preparing Conservation Area Appraisals. Progress with this work has been delayed due to a number of staffing factors. However, it has been possible to bring in extra resources, financed by the Planning Delivery Grant (PDG), to take forward work on a Conservation Area Appraisal that was identified as being a priority, namely that for Tonbridge.

1.2 Tonbridge Conservation Area Appraisal

1.2.1 Accompanying this agenda Members (PTAB and Area 1 Planning Committee Members only) will find a draft Conservation Area Appraisal which has been prepared by Tony Fullwood Associates working in partnership and with the guidance of officers. It has been prepared in collaboration with members of the Tonbridge Civic Society and Slade Area Residents Association. It is intended to be a draft for consultation. Subject to Members' agreement, this version will be subject to a period of consultation during late June through to the end of July. Any comments will be reported back to your meeting in October before it is finally adopted.

1.2.2 The Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared in accordance with the format adopted elsewhere in the Borough, but because of the size and diversity of the Tonbridge Conservation Area it has been subdivided into a series of sub-

areas. The special character of each sub-area is described and key features are identified in the text and on separate townscape analysis maps for each sub-area. The physical fabric of the town is analysed and the features which affect the character and appearance of the area, both in a positive and a negative way, are identified.

- 1.2.3 The Appraisal concludes with a set of management proposals for the town. This includes a commentary on the application of planning policy recognising that the document will become an important consideration for development control purposes. Some of the proposals will be of more universal application and it should be noted that others propose further areas of work in the form of more detailed guidance. The proposals also lay the ground for the possible future consideration of small improvement schemes through the Capital Plan process and via development contributions.

1.3 Boundary Changes

- 1.3.1 As part of preparing the Appraisal an opportunity has been taken to review the extent of the Conservation Area, parts of which were designated some 30 years ago by the County Council prior to local government reorganisation in 1974. **ANNEX A** identifies a number of additions and deletions to the current Conservation Area and explains the reasons for them. It should be noted that the draft Conservation Area Appraisal deals with the area as proposed to be changed. These boundary changes will be subject to public consultation alongside the draft Conservation Area Appraisal. The changes will not come into effect until after the Council has considered the response to consultation.

1.4 Consultation Arrangements

- 1.4.1 Public Consultation is intended to start on Friday 20 June for a period 6 weeks ending on Friday 1 August. It will be launched at a meeting organised and hosted by the Tonbridge Civic Society on Tuesday 24 June. This is in addition to the presentation that Tony Fullwood will be giving to the **Tonbridge Forum on 2 June to which Members of this Board and Area 1 Planning Committee are expressly invited**. A leaflet will be distributed to every property in the existing Conservation area notifying them of the proposed boundary changes and telling them where a copy of the draft Appraisal can be seen. It will be available at Tonbridge Castle and at all libraries in the Tonbridge area. It will also be available and downloadable from the Council's Website.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as Conservation Areas any areas of special architectural or historic interests the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Local planning authorities should also review the overall extent such areas from time to time and designate additional areas as necessary. Section 71 requires local planning authorities to

draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and to consult the local community about those proposals. Preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals is recommended in PPG15 as the best means of defining and describing the special architectural and historic interest of an area that justifies its designation and provides a context for the special polices and controls that apply within such areas.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 The cost of the Appraisal is covered by moneys set aside in PDG. The adoption of an up-to-date Conservation Area Appraisal for Tonbridge should assist Development Control in negotiating the most appropriate schemes and be important in appeals in cases where applications fail to comply with the advice it contains. It should be noted that the Management Proposals will require revenue support in the form of staff time and production costs to produce further guidance. This would either be met from existing budget levels or, as the current work has been, funded from Planning Delivery Grant or Housing and Planning Delivery Grant. There may also be potential Capital Plan schemes which emerge as a result of bringing forward enhancement proposals. Any potential schemes would need to be brought forward in the usual way and considered alongside any other potential schemes having regard to the Council's overall budget situation and its Key Priorities.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 There is a risk that without a Conservation Area Appraisal the Council will not achieve the most appropriate form of development in the town and may end up losing appeals if the Council's case is not supported by a robust and up-to-date Appraisal.

1.8 Recommendations

- 1.8.1 The proposed changes to the extent of the Tonbridge Conservation Area (as set out under **ANNEX A**) be adopted for the purpose of public consultation.
- 1.8.2 The draft Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted for the purposes of public consultation.

The Director of Planning Transport and Leisure confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Brian Gates

Nil

Steve Humphrey

Director of Planning Transport and Leisure