

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**27 May 2009**

**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)**

**1 CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS**

**Summary**

**The programme for the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals has been reviewed in the light of the decision to prepare a comprehensive set of Character Area Appraisals of the entire Borough. A draft Conservation Area Appraisal of the Quarry Hill area of Tonbridge is recommended for approval for the purposes of Public consultation. Boundary changes to this area and to the Tonbridge Conservation Area are commended to the Area Planning Committee for consideration.**

**1.1 Revised Conservation Area Appraisal Programme**

- 1.1.1 The programme for preparing Conservation Area Appraisals agreed in June 2007 has been reviewed in the light of the decision, in the context of the Managing Development and the Environment DPD (MDE DPD), to undertake a comprehensive character area appraisal of the whole Borough (see separate Report). The preparation or review of Conservation Area Appraisals will now become an integral part of that process.
- 1.1.2 Last year a Conservation Area Appraisal of central Tonbridge was undertaken. This has been followed by an Appraisal of the Quarry Hill Area (see below). The next Appraisal to be prepared would have been one for Aylesford and Tony Fullwood Associates had provisionally been commissioned to take this forward, but this does not now fit well with the programme for the preparation of the Character Area Appraisals (see separate report). The intention now is for the next Conservation Area Appraisal to be prepared to be one for Hildenborough as an integral part of carrying out the Character Area Appraisal of the entire village. This will be undertaken later this year. Subject to the availability of finance after April next year it is then the intention to go on to prepare one for Hadlow as part of undertaking the Character Area Appraisal of that village.
- 1.1.3 Conservation Area Appraisals of Cobdown Farm, Larkfield Church and Holt Wood will be undertaken this year as part of preparing the Character Area Appraisal of

the Medway Gap Urban Area. Bullen Corner will be prepared as part of undertaking the Character Area Appraisal of East Peckham which will not be until next year.

## **1.2 Quarry Hill Conservation Area Appraisal**

- 1.2.1 Following the successful completion of the Conservation Area Appraisal for central Tonbridge, Tony Fullwood Associates has assisted in the preparation of one for the Quarry Hill area of the town. The aim was to ensure that all Conservation Areas in Tonbridge had an up-to-date Conservation Area Appraisal prepared on a consistent basis. Enclosed with this agenda Members will find a draft of the Conservation Area Appraisal. This has been prepared in collaboration with your officers and with the Tonbridge Civic and Historical Societies, local members and other stakeholders. 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 the Board in the autumn.
- 1.2.2 As part of preparing the Appraisal an opportunity has been taken to review the boundary of the Conservation Area. As a result, some quite significant additions are proposed along Brook Street. Details of the changes and the justification for them are set out under **Annex A**. One particular issue that arose through stakeholder engagement was whether the Conservation Area should be extended to include Woodlands Road. The consultant advises against this for the reasons also set out in **Annex A** and I support this view.

## **1.3 Legal Implications**

- 1.3.1 The Council's Constitution indicates that whilst the consideration and approval of a Conservation Area Appraisal is an executive function and therefore a matter for this Board and the Cabinet, decisions on boundary changes are a Council matter and subject to the recommendation of the relevant Area Planning Committee. It is therefore necessary for the proposed boundary changes to be considered by Area 1 Planning Committee prior to being published for public comment. Any comments specifically relating to the boundary changes will then be considered by the Area Planning Committee which will make a recommendation to Council and this will need to be done before this Board considers any comments on the Conservation Area Appraisal. All of this will be done in the autumn.
- 1.3.2 This procedure means that the proposed changes to the Tonbridge Conservation Area which were considered by this Board to be acceptable last year now need to be ratified by the Area Planning Committee and recommended to Council before the changes to the Conservation Area boundary can be advertised and the Conservation Area Appraisal can be finally published.

## **1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.4.1 The cost of preparing the Conservation Area Appraisals is covered by the Planning Delivery Grant.

## **1.5 Risk Assessment**

1.5.1 There is a risk that the Council might start losing appeals unless its Conservation Areas and their Appraisals are up-to-date.

## **1.6 Recommendations**

- 1) Members note the revised programme for the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals as an integral part of preparing the Character Area Appraisals of the Borough.
- 2) The proposed changes to the boundary of the Quarry Hill Conservation Area and the Tonbridge Conservation Area be commended to Area Planning Committee No 1.
- 3) Subject to the relevant boundary changes being agreed by Area Planning Committee No 1, the draft Quarry Hill Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted for the purpose 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:

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Tonbridge Conservation Area Appraisal

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