

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**17 November 2010**

**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 CHARACTER AREA APPRAISALS SPD (BOROUGH GREEN AND EAST PECKHAM) AND BULLEN CORNER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL – ADOPT FOR CONSULTATION**

**Summary**

**Character Area Appraisals are being undertaken for the whole Borough pursuant to a policy in the Managing Development and the Environment DPD. This report recommends approval of Character Area Appraisals for Borough Green and East Peckham and a Conservation Area Appraisal for Bullen Corner for the purposes of public consultation which will take place in the spring of 2011.**

**1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1 The background for the Character Area Appraisals SPD is explained in the separate report on the response to consultation on the first tranche of documents. The purpose of this report is to introduce the next set of Character Area Appraisals dealing with the Rural Service Centres of Borough Green and East Peckham which accompany this agenda.

1.1.2 These form part of the second tranche of consultation documents. It will be my intention to report the Appraisals for Snodland and Walderslade to your next meeting in February which will then complete the second tranche which will be subject to public consultation in March next year. The third, and final, tranche dealing with the Medway Gap and West Malling, will then be reported to the following meeting of the Board on 1 June 2011 which will also consider the responses to consultation on the second tranche documents

**1.2 The Process**

1.2.1 To remind Members, the first task is to determine, in consultation with local Members, Parish Councils and other local interest groups the general extent of each discrete character area – the way in which the urban area or rural service centre can be sub-divided into areas of identifiable character. This was done at

two initial Stakeholder Meetings. This was mainly a desktop exercise using maps and aerial photographs but checked on site where necessary. However, any such sub-division was provisional and dependent upon the next task which was the detailed, street-by-street appraisal of each area, the boundaries of which may have been refined as a result. Local Members, Parish Councils and other local interest group were invited to join the technical assessors on a walkabout, so that features regarded as important locally could be identified. Once the initial appraisals were complete a Second Stakeholder Workshop was arranged in each village at which the initial findings of the Appraisals for the area were discussed and refined before the draft set of Appraisals were prepared.

- 1.2.2 Formal consultation under Regulation 17 will take place next March following PTAB in February. As before, this will involve a press release, posters, and a small scale, manned, public exhibitions/displays which will be promoted in each of the villages as well as direct consultation with statutory consultees, local stakeholders and other parties who have confirmed their continuing interest in the project. As mentioned in the separate report, we will also be giving consideration as to how we can improve the level of local participation through other techniques and communication with local people.
- 1.2.3 The response to consultation will be reported back to this Board on 1 June 2011, which will then recommend adoption of the revised Appraisals to Council via Policy Overview Committee and Cabinet. In the case of East Peckham, the opportunity has also been taken to prepare a Conservation Area Appraisal for the small Bullen Corner Conservation Area which will be subject to consultation at the same time. This draft Conservation Area Appraisal also accompanies these papers.

### 1.3 Other villages

- 1.3.1 As reported previously, for resource reasons, we do not intend to carry out Character Area Appraisals of the remaining villages at this stage, though it has previously been indicated through the Parish Partnership Panel that we will be able to provide support to any Parish Council which wishes to take forward its own character assessment in the form of a **Village Design Statement**, though this would need to be produced to a format compatible with the rest of the character area appraisal work. Action with Rural Communities in Kent has indicated its willingness to assist any Parish Council that wishes to take this matter forward, and we would be relying to a great extent upon that assistance. However, I would urge caution at this stage until there is greater clarity about the function and role of the Coalition Government's proposals for the role and content of Neighbourhood Plans because otherwise there may be much wasted effort.

## 1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 SPD's are prepared pursuant to, and have to follow the procedures set out in, the Town and County Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004 (as amended).

## 1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 The cost of this exercise is covered by existing budgets with the external costs being covered by a contribution from the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant.

## 1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 The greatest risk is that, because of the scale of the overall project, we will not be able to deliver on programme. However, the phased approach means that documents can be adopted in a series of tranches and can therefore start being used at the earliest opportunity. The deferment of public consultation on the second tranche from January until March next year is a response to this pragmatic and practical approach to programming.

## 1.7 Recommendation

- 1.7.1 The draft Character Area Appraisals for Borough Green and East Peckham and the draft Conservation Appraisal for Bullen Corner are approved 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

Core Strategy and MDE DPD

Steve Humphrey

Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation
a. Has an equality impact assessment on the policy (to which the activity relates) already been carried out?	No	
b. Is the decision in line with the policy?	No	
<b>Note:</b> If the answer is 'no' to either of the above questions, then the activity must be 'screened' for equality impacts using the questions below.		

<b>Screening for equality impacts:</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
c. Does the activity have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	The Appraisals simply describe the character of the built environment. The Design Guidance has to be read alongside other LDF policies which specifically address disability and other equality issues. The Tonbridge and Malling Access Group and other similar organisations will be consulted on the draft documents.
d. Does the activity make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	No	The Appraisals simply describe the character of the built environment. The Design Guidance has to be read alongside other LDF policies which specifically address disability and other equality issues. The Tonbridge and Malling Access Group and other similar organisations will be consulted on the draft documents.
<b>Note:</b> <i>If the answer is 'yes' to any of the above questions, then a full equality impact assessment is required.</i>		