

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

22 February 2011

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 (WALDESLADE AND SNODLAND)-
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 Development Plan (DPD) which itself forms part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). This report recommends approval of Character Area Appraisals for Walderslade and Snodland for the purposes of public consultation which will take place in the spring of 2011.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Policy SQ1 in the Managing Development and the Environment DPD (MDE DPD) seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the environment and character of the Borough. This policy is to be supported by a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which it is intended will ultimately contain, in a series of separate volumes, Character Area Appraisals for the main built-up parts of the Borough. The purpose of this report is to introduce the next set of Character Area Appraisals dealing with Walderslade and Snodland which accompany this agenda.
- 1.1.2 These form part of the second tranche of consultation documents. The other two documents in the second tranche deal with Borough Green and East Peckham which were approved for the proposes of public consultation at the November meeting. The third, and final, tranche dealing with the Medway Gap and West Malling are in the course of preparation and will be reported to the meeting of the Board in July.
- 1.1.3 The primary purpose of the Character Area SPD is to provide an analysis of the positive and negative character of identified areas of the Borough in order to provide an evidential context for development control decisions, both by the Council and by planning inspectors. By engaging local communities in this process it is a move towards the spirit of the Localism Bill.

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. This was done at 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 settlement or area at which the initial findings of the Appraisals were discussed and refined before the draft set of Appraisals were prepared.
- 1.2.2 Formal consultation under Regulation 17 will take place in March. As before, this will involve a press release, posters, and a small scale, manned, public exhibition which will be promoted in each of location as well as direct consultation with statutory consultees, local stakeholders and other parties who have confirmed their continuing interest in the project. In the light of the relatively poor attendance at some of the previous exhibitions, it has been decided that this time we will not only advertise through local media but there will also be a letter to all properties in each area. The response to consultation will be reported back to this Board in June, which will then recommend, via Cabinet, adoption of the revised Appraisals by Council on 12 July.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 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).

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 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.

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 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 is a response to this pragmatic and practical approach to programming.

1.6 Recommendation

- 1.6.1 The draft Character Area Appraisals for Walderslade and Snodland be 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 of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper 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 polices 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. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper 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 polices 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.

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.