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Report

Subject : Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans

Report to : The Cabinet

Date : Wednesday 25 February 2009

Author : Principal Conservation Officer

Cabinet Member for Planning: Councillor P Clegg

1. Report Summary:

Members will recall that Amesbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was approved by Cabinet at its meeting in October 2008. This report briefly describes the background to the conservation area appraisals and management plans for a further eight conservation areas: Downton, Durrington, Wylde, Steeple Langford, Dinton, Hindon, Broad Chalke and Tisbury. These have recently been presented to the Southern, Northern and Western Area Committees, and a recommendation is now being made for the final draft of the documents to be approved by Cabinet.

2. Background:

There are 70 conservation areas in Salisbury District covering historic settlements and small villages. A conservation area is described in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as "an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

Conservation areas are designated by the local authority and designation is the recognition of an area's special qualities, which the council intends to safeguard as an important part of the district's heritage. It is the accumulation of an area's positive architectural or historic attributes, rather than the quality of its individual buildings, which makes it worthy of conservation area status. The attributes might include: the landscape setting of the area; the grouping of traditional buildings and the resultant spaces and sense of enclosure; the scale, design, type and materials of the buildings; historic boundaries; public realm; landmarks, views and vistas; and the present and former pattern of activities or land uses.

Conservation area designation allows for strengthened planning controls, gives protection to trees, and provides control over the demolition of unlisted buildings.

3. Planning Policy Context:

The local planning authority is required by legislation (the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) to periodically review its conservation areas. A character appraisal of each conservation area should be carried out in order to identify the particular attributes that make each conservation area special. Guidance is provided to the local authority in carrying out this task from English Heritage in its publication *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals* and its companion document *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas*, both published in August 2005.



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There is also guidance from central government in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994)*, which advises that the local authority should formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas. This is achieved via management plans for each conservation area.

Salisbury District Council has encapsulated the broad principles of the government guidance in its existing local plan policies (policies CN8-CN17). This will shortly be reviewed as the council starts to produce new policies through the Local Development Framework. Planning applications that affect the character of conservation areas should be considered on their individual merits, in the light of the local plan policies, and taking into account all other material considerations. The appraisals and management plans are used to guide and inform the decision-making process.

Conservation area appraisals and management plans and are seen as the first steps in a dynamic process, the aim of which is to seek the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of conservation areas and to provide a basis for making decisions about their future management.

4. Purpose and Scope of Document:

In summary, each appraisal and management plan aims to:

- Identify those elements of the conservation area which contribute to its character;
- Identify elements which detract from the character;
- Propose measures to maintain or improve the positive character, local distinctiveness and sense of place of the conservation area.

Until recently the only published appraisal was the Old Sarum Airfield Conservation Area (produced at the time of designation). The first batch of nine conservation area appraisals and associated management plans have recently been presented to the area committees for their comments. Northern Area Committee expressed a wish for the Amesbury Conservation Area and Management Plan to be fast tracked, due to imminent pressures from development in the conservation area, and that is why this matter was brought before Cabinet in October in advance of the other eight documents.

The process that has been undertaken in producing the final documents are outlined later in the report. It has been a lengthy process of preparation, consultation, and reconsultation, prior to the final drafts being produced. Whilst the draft documents have carried some weight to date in the determination of planning applications and for use in planning appeals, it is hoped that the documents will obtain Cabinet's final endorsement, and thus enable them to be given full weight as material considerations in the planning process.

5. The Completed Documents:

The final draft documents contain an executive summary at the beginning. The first part of the documents contain the appraisal, which attempts to explain the character of the conservation area, and identifies such things as the architectural qualities of the buildings, prevalent local materials, the importance of open spaces and views, as well as the negative elements that exist.

The second part of the documents contain the management plan, and this identifies such things as buildings at risk, proposals for enhancement, and suggested changes to the boundaries of the conservation areas (NB. Most of the conservation areas were designated more than 20 years ago, and it was necessary to propose amendments to a number of the conservation areas in order to take account of the changes to their character that had taken place in the intervening period).

6. Article 4 Directions:

The proposed management plan for Amesbury presently makes suggestions for Article 4 Directions, i.e. the removal of certain householders' permitted development rights. At present, there are a number of alterations that householders can make to their properties without the need for planning permission, even in conservation areas, for example replacing windows. The character of conservation areas can be completely eroded by piecemeal, uncontrolled changes to domestic properties. Each conservation area has been assessed to determine what the potential threats are, and whether the conservation area would benefit from such alterations being controlled.

It should be noted that the proposals for Article 4 Directions must undergo a separate, legally-prescribed consultation with individual landowners, which needs to take place within a six-month period. Due to current resources and changes brought about by local government reform, it is not being proposed to take this part of the document forward at present.

7. Methodology and Public Consultation:

Conservation consultants were employed by the council to produce the draft conservation area appraisals and management plans, and began carrying out surveys of twelve conservation areas from September 2005 onwards. The survey work was carried out in accordance with the guidance mentioned above. The draft documents were reformatted and illustrated by council officers in preparation for public consultation.

It is central government advice that conservation area appraisals and management plans should form part of the evidence base of the Local Development Framework, therefore, the consultation exercise followed the procedure for the evidence base as set out in the approved Statement of Community Involvement.

The first stage of the public consultation exercise, involving four conservation area appraisals and management plans (Amesbury, Dinton, Steeple Langford and Hindon), was undertaken in July/August 2007, and ran for six weeks. Letters and CDs, containing copies of the documents were sent to a number of people, including the chair and vice chair of the relevant area committee, ward members, portfolio and deputy portfolio holder, parish and town councils, and local organisations. Copies of the documents were placed on the council's website. An advert was placed in the Salisbury Journal and site notices were displayed in the conservation areas. A presentation was made to the parish and town councils, and exhibition panels were produced.

A second consultation exercise was carried out in February 2008 for a further five conservation area appraisals and management plans (Broad Chalke, Wylde, Durrington, Tisbury and Downton).

Following the main consultation exercise, a further consultation was carried out directly with owners/occupiers affected by proposed changes to the boundaries of the conservation areas. This process, which has involved further amendments to the boundaries, has only just been completed.

A summary of the responses received for the consultation on the Amesbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan can be found in Appendix 1. Officers examined all of the responses received in conjunction with the consultants, and amendments were made to the document where necessary. The table in Appendix 1 shows the actions that were taken to address the issues that were raised.

The eight conservation area appraisals and management plans now being presented to cabinet for approval are: Downton, Durrington, Wylde, Steeple Langford, Dinton, Hindon, Broad Chalke and Tisbury. The Downton document was supported by Southern Area Committee at its meeting on 15 January 2009. The Durrington, Wylde and Steeple Langford documents were supported by Northern Area Committee on 29 January 2009, and some amendments were suggested and have subsequently been made. At the time of writing this report the Hindon, Dinton, Broad Chalke and Tisbury documents had not yet been presented to the Western Area Committee on 19 February

2009: officers will provide an update to the Portfolio Holder regarding this prior to the Cabinet meeting.

8. Recommendation(s):

- (1) Approve the conservation area appraisals for Downton, Durrington, Wylde, Steeple Langford, Dinton, Hindon, Broad Chalke and Tisbury; and
- (2) Approve the recommendations in the associated management plans, including the proposed boundary changes to the conservation areas.

9. Background Papers:

Minute of the meeting of the Southern Area Committee on 15 January 2009 regarding the Downton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

Draft minute of the meeting of the Northern Area Committee on 29 January 2009 regarding the Durrington, Wylde and Steeple Langford Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.

10. Appendices:

<http://www.salisbury.gov.uk/planning/conservation/conservation-area-appraisals.htm>

Appendix 1  [Downton conservative area appraisal](#)⁹ 1.7mb

Appendix 2  [Durrington conservation area appraisal](#)¹⁰ 1.6mb

Appendix 3  [Wylde conservation area appraisal](#)¹⁴ 2.6mb

Appendix 4  [Steeple Langford conservation area appraisal](#)¹² 1.5mb

Appendix 5  [Dinton conservation area appraisal](#)⁸ 2.8mb

Appendix 6  [Hindon conservation area appraisal](#)¹¹ 1.8mb

Appendix 7  [Broad Chalke conservation area appraisal](#)⁷ 5.2mb

Appendix 8  [Tisbury conservation area appraisal](#)¹³ 1.4mb

11. Implications:

- **Financial:** There are no financial implications in respect of this report. All the work has been completed, and the costs already contained within existing budgets.
- **Legal:** A further report would need to be brought before committee and cabinet in respect of the Article 4 directions which have their own statutory procedures (and human rights implications).
- **Human Rights:** Consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's own consultation procedures.
- **Personnel (POD):** N/A
- **Climate Change:** N/A
- **Community Safety:** N/A
- **Environmental:** N/A
- **ICT:** N/A
- **Equalities:** N/A
- **Council's Core Values:** Being environmentally conscientious.
- **Wards Affected:** Wards within the Downton, Durrington, Wylde, Steeple Langford, Dinton, Hindon, Broad Chalke and Tisbury conservation areas.