



To: Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport: Councillor Kevin Blencowe
Report by: Head of Planning Services
Relevant scrutiny committee: Environment 17/10/14 Scrutiny Committee
Wards affected: All

UPDATE ON PRO-ACTIVE CONSERVATION WORK Non-Key Decision

1. Executive summary

1.1 This report reviews the work that has been completed as part of the Council's pro-active conservation work programme since the last report to committee in March 2013. The purpose of the report is to update members on the work that has been completed, what is outstanding, and what is proposed. The report also notes the spend to date on the programme as well as seeks a steer from the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy on a request to designate Barrow Road a conservation area.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- a) To agree the pro-active conservation programme as set out in Appendix 1.
- b) To agree that existing commitments in the Council's Pro-Active Work Programme as set out in this report should have priority at this time.
- c) To note the request for the designation of Barrow Road as a conservation area, and to agree that such designation is not prioritised for the reasons set out in the report.

3. Background

3.1 Beside the Conservation team's day to day work on Planning and Listed Building applications and involvement in pre-application

consultation, for the past several years a series of projects have been completed under the pro-active conservation work programme including reviews of several Conservation Areas and their boundaries, and various Suburbs and Approaches Studies. The following report details the work completed, the work being undertaken during 2014-15 and future work to follow. The information is presented in a table for ease of reference and is attached as Appendix 1.

- 3.2 Apart from the programme detailed in this report, the Conservation team undertakes a considerable amount of support to the Planning Service in the review of a wider variety of planning applications. The team provided consultation responses on 911 applications in the period between August 1st, 2013, and September 31st, 2014, including 562 full Planning applications; 105 Listed Building applications; 31 formal pre-applications; 56 advertisement applications; and 148 discharge of condition applications. It is also providing advice on a number of substantial development schemes at pre-application prior to formal applications.
- 3.3 The original pro-active conservation work programme was set up in 2008-9. A look back at work completed since reveals the following achievements so far:
- Completion of thirteen Conservation Area Appraisals (either updates or new documents), including appraisals for Trumpington, Mill Road and St. Matthews (now “Mill Road”), Storey’s Way, Conduit Head Road, Chesterton and Ferry Lane, West Cambridge, New Town and Glisson Road, Castle and Victoria, Riverside and Stourbridge Common, Brooklands Avenue (now includes Accordia), Newnham Croft, Southacre, and The Kite.
 - Completion of seven Suburbs and Approaches Studies, Huntington Road, Madingley Road, Barton Road, Newmarket Road, Long Road, Hills Road and Trumpington Road
 - Implementation of Article 4 Directions applying to public houses outside conservation areas and to the Accordia estate.
- 3.4 The project work for 2014-15 is focussing on updating the existing Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisals (most notably the largest of those being the Core Area Appraisal) and on document storage, including improvement of conservation information databases in digital format and related data collection. Supporting the Local Plan review will remain a high priority including Conservation Officer attendance at the examination of the Plan as required.

- 3.5 The available remaining budget to fund outstanding work currently stands at £13,756.41. There is a separate budget for historic wall painting signage restoration with an outstanding balance of £12,620.00. The outstanding and planned project work (separate from wall painting signage) is expected to cost £12,710, which provides for a small amount for statutory advertising costs or contingency within the available budget. The estimated costs of this work is set out in Appendix 1. Much of the originally programmed still outstanding work should be completed in 2015/16, after which time the original budget agreed in 2008-9 will have been spent and any future pro-active conservation work will need to be undertaken by the existing resources available in the Urban Design and Conservation Team.
- 3.6 There has been limited success to date in the restoration of historic wall painting signage, notwithstanding officers have contacted a number of building owners in the past year. Some building owners are reluctant to have such improvements fearing the improvements will limit their ability to make further changes. The next “tranche” of investigations is set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.7 Some flexibility may be necessary from time to time in respect of the final budget amounts allocated to individual projects, and so may require re-allocation of monies across projects. If this is required, officers will ensure the Executive Councillor is in agreement with doing so first, and minor variations in budget expenditure within the overall budget envelope will not normally be reported to Environment Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.8 In March of this year officers received a request to designate Barrow Road as a new conservation area. This request is considered in detail in Appendix 1. It should be noted that while many houses on Barrow Road exhibit architectural merit, surrounding streets are not as consistent in regards to their coherence of architecture. In balancing the request for a designation of Barrow Road, it must be noted that the pro-active work priorities for the Conservation Team at this time are to complete the update of the Historic Core Area Appraisal and to review the most vulnerable Buildings of Local Interest outside of conservation areas for potential Article 4 Directions, as requested by the Executive Councillor at the committee meeting in January of this year. This also needs to be balanced against the limited available budget to undertake already committed pro-active conservation work as well as the significant workload of almost 1,000 annual planning application responses prepared by the equivalent of three full-time conservation officers.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

Funding has been earmarked from the existing Pro-active Conservation Programme budget as noted.

(b) Staffing Implications

Officers in the Urban Design and Conservation Team are leading the work. The Conservation section was reduced to a total of 3 full-time equivalents (FTE) as of the end of July 2014. Together with the very high number of requests for application comments which is driven by planning application submissions and pre-application enquiries, there is limited capacity for undertaking pro-active conservation work. Resources must therefore be targeted to matters of greatest heritage importance.

(c) Equalities and Poverty Implications

There are no direct equality or diversity implications.

(d) Environmental Implications

The environmental implications of the programme are considered to be positive as it supports the quality and continuity of the city's historic environment which contribute to economic success, quality of life and place in Cambridge to the benefit of residents, business and tourism alike.

(e) Procurement

Specialist consultants have been procured to undertake some of the Conservation Area Appraisal work, and the budget accounts for this cost.

(f) Consultation and communication

Consultation with residents and stakeholders is a key part of the Pro-active Conservation Programme. This relates in particular to the review of Conservation Area Appraisals. Officers consult on draft appraisals for example and inform those whose property will be impacted by a new Conservation Area designation and invite comment in reply. Relevant ward members are kept informed as and when area-based projects are undertaken and consulted upon.

(g) **Community Safety**

There are no direct community safety implications.

5. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Report on 2013-14 Pro-active Conservation Programme

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Pro-active conservation work completed in 2013-14 and work currently being undertaken and planned.

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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Appendix 1 – Pro-active conservation work completed in 2013-14 and work currently being completed and planned

Project	Progress to date	Estimated Cost
Local Plan Review	The Urban Design & Conservation Team has been contributing to this work at all stages to date e.g. Issues and Options report, drafting of policies, and site specific assessments, and will continue to support the process at examination.	Officer time
Review of Roof Extensions Design Guide (guidance is related to Policy 3/14 in the 2006 Local Plan)	A draft policy on roof extensions comprises Policy 58 (d) of the Cambridge Local Plan 2014 draft submission and the Roof Extensions Design Guide is now included as Appendix E.	Officer time
Shopfront Design Guide – review (referred to in Policy 3/15 of the 2006 Local Plan)	Policy on roof extensions comprises Policy 64 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2014 draft submission and the Shopfront Design Guide is now included as Appendix H.	Officer time
Improved use Information Technology (IT) for cataloguing Listed Building information	<p>The English Heritage data set of listed buildings in Cambridge has now been reconciled with the Council’s GIS data base, providing more accurate, up to date information on these heritage assets within the city.</p> <p>Work has started on digitising a large number of historic photos to be available for reference regarding changes to historic buildings and places in the city.</p> <p>The use of a Listed Buildings module within the Uniform system to make heritage assets information more accessible is being implemented. It will include hyperlinks to the List descriptions and may be developed for access to the historic photos.</p>	<p>c.£500</p> <p>c.£500</p>
Buildings of Local Interest (BLIs) (Policy 4/12 / Draft Policy 62 & Appendix G)	The mapping and database for the existing list have now been reconciled so that they appear as planning “constraints” consistently. Resulting from this exercise, a set of minor amendments to the list of BLI’s (eg. to address details) is pending. Additionally, a number of additions to the list via for instance, recommendations in the Conservation Area Appraisals, require consideration. This is intended to be undertaken in 2015.	Officer time and £2000 for a temporary contract.
Historic core public realm	This work relates to policy as part of the Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Draft	Officer time

audit & project definition	Submission. Policy 9 (The City Centre) requires the preparation of City Centre Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Discussions have already started with Cambridgeshire County Council on the scoping of the this work and will be progressed in detail in 2015-16. The SPD will help support the City Deal projects in and around the historic core to be progressed with partners.	and funding from others sources, including City Deal
Conservation Area reviews (Policy 4/11)	<p>Three appraisals were updated and approved in 2013, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brooklands Avenue (2002) 2. Newnham Croft (1999) 3. Southacre (2000) <p>The Kite Conservation Area Appraisal was approved earlier in 2014 following re-consultation on, and omission of, a suggested boundary change at East Road.</p> <p>The Historic Core Area Appraisal (2006) is currently being reviewed and updated by officers with the support of a heritage consultant. The draft document is intended to be consulted on in 2015.</p> <p>For information, the following represents all other Conservation Area Appraisals and their dates of approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic Core (2006) Storeys Way (2007) De Freville Avenue (2009) Chesterton and Ferry Lane (2009) Conduit Head Road (2009) Trumpington (2010) Mill Road (2011) West Cambridge (2011) Castle and Victoria (2012) Riverside and Stourbridge (2012) New Town and Glisson Road (2012) Brooklands Avenue (2013) Newnham Croft (2013) 	<p>Consultant fees paid and appraisals complete</p> <p>Paid & complete</p> <p>£4,210 remaining to pay consultant</p>

	<p>Southacre (2013) The Kite (2014)</p> <p>On completion of the Historic Core appraisal and boundary rationalisation, the next tranche of Appraisal reviews on the basis of government guidance that appraisals should be kept up to date and not be more than five years old, would start with Storeys Way. Given limited resources, this work would constitute rapid updates to represent any significant changes rather than being in-depth reviews.</p>	<p>Cost: Officer time</p>
<p>Conservation area approved boundary changes.</p>	<p>Boundary Rationalisation. A priority is to rationalise the boundaries of the Historic Core Conservation Area to reflect the minor changes already approved to boundaries in the reviews of adjoining conservation areas (eg at Brooklands Avenue Conservation Area, at Newnham Croft Conservation Area and at West Cambridge Conservation Area). To do so requires the boundary changes to be collated and advertised. Target date during 2015.</p>	<p>Officer time + cost of statutory advertisements</p>
<p>Sub-division of the Central Core Conservation Area.</p>	<p>Additionally, as the Central Conservation Area has been extended over the years, and several large extensions have been appraised individually (such as the Mill Road area and Riverside & Stourbridge Common), the boundaries of the “central” area have become difficult to understand. It has therefore been intended that the various appraisal areas should be designated as conservation areas in their own right as distinct from the historic core central conservation area. This will require precise checking of mapping and careful drafting of the statutory advertisements required. It will result in separate conservation areas for:</p> <p>Mill Road area Riverside & Stourbridge Common Castle & Victoria Road New Town & Glisson Road Target date 2015.</p>	<p>Temporary resource @ £1,000 + cost of statutory advertisements</p>
<p>Barrow Road – Request for conservation area designation</p>	<p>In March 2014 the then Executive Councillor for Planning and Transport received a request from residents of Barrow Road asking the Council to consider the designation of Barrow Road as a Conservation Area. By letter of the 26th of March the Executive Councillor responded to residents by stating that officers would</p>	<p>Anticipated cost of consultant to carry out draft</p>

	<p>undertake an initial investigation of the potential for such a designation in the summer of 2014 and thereafter seek a steer from the Executive Councillor whether or not to proceed with formal designation. One of the chief concerns of residents was that without the road being designated as a Conservation Area, houses are vulnerable to demolition without the benefit of planning permission (demolition of buildings in a Conservation Area must be approved via planning permission granted by the Council but those outside do not require planning permission). In the case of 14 Barrow Road the owner sought and gained permission for a replacement dwelling but did not require planning permission for the demolition of the existing dwelling.</p> <p>Officers have undertaken a brief review of the potential for such designation against established guidance. Areas may be designated a Conservation Area if they have attributes of either architectural or historic significance. The review also considered potential designation of Bentley Road and Newton Road as part of a new Conservation Area.</p> <p>Barrow Road does have relevant attributes such as cohesion of architectural treatment based on Arts and Crafts features and a notable street layout incorporating mature trees and gas lighting adding to the quality of the character of buildings and the public realm. These attributes, however, do not on their own infer that the Council must designate the area as a Conservation Area as such a designation needs to be considered within the context of the wider city and the relative quality of buildings and their settings both inside and outside existing Conservation Areas. Consideration could be given to whether Barrow Road alone could constitute a meaningful conservation area and whether parts of the adjoining area are of the necessary special architectural or historic interest to make a conservation area viable together with Barrow Road. The close at the south eastern extremity of Barrow Road does not share the attributes referred to above with the greater part of the road – in particular, the houses are much later. Similarly, Porson Road to the south, is not sufficiently consistent with Barrow Road to form part of a conservation area with it. Part of the northern side of Bentley Road does not share the characteristics of Barrow Road. Newton Road has houses of a similar period.</p>	<p>appraisal is £2000 (funding would have to be reallocated from other work set out in this appendix).</p>
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	<p>The houses of Barrow Road, and to an extent Bentley Road immediately north, do however have some group value in terms of their character and quality given that most are relatively unaltered and include original features.</p> <p>On the basis of this brief review of Barrow Road and surrounding streets, any conservation area in this location would be limited in extent, and possibly then only to Barrow Road.</p> <p>As noted earlier in this report, there are existing commitments and priorities for the Council's Conservation Team as set out in this report that mean that undertaking a detailed study and designation of Barrow Road is not necessarily a priority and that committed work needs to be progressed first.</p>	
Article 4 Directions	<p>Two reports were tabled at the January 2014 Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting, one proposing Article 4 Directions for most Public Houses outside conservation areas to prohibit demolition and one to cover key architectural characteristics of dwellings on the Accordia Estate on Brooklands Avenue. Both reports were agreed by the Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change. Article 4 Directions have now been served, consultation taken place, and the Directions confirmed and advertised.</p> <p>BLI Article 4 – at the meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee on 14 January 2014 the following resolution was agreed:</p> <p><i>“...that the more vulnerable Buildings of Local Interest (BLIs) outside conservation areas be brought forward for Article 4 Directions under delegated authority by the Head of Planning in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning & Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Chair and Spokes”.</i></p> <p>The more vulnerable Buildings of Local Interest are considered to be those outside conservation areas (ie those not subject to control of demolition) and particularly</p>	<p>Complete.</p> <p>£2,500 expected consultant costs and advert costs + officer time</p>

	<p>houses on large plots on the city approaches and former institutional buildings. The initial tranche of these buildings will be proposed for detailed consideration in late 2015, following a review of the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Conservation Area Article 4 – at the meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee on June 11, 2013, the following resolution was agreed:</p> <p><i>That the City Council Conservation team's Pro-active Conservation programme include a phased programme (one per year starting post 2013/14) of introducing focussed Article 4 Directions for Conservation Areas where adopted appraisals have evidenced harm to these area's character or appearance or where specific requests are brought to the attention of the Executive Councillor for Planning & Climate Change.</i></p> <p>The proposed initial programme will focus on the following areas in the years noted:</p> <p>Mill Road (residential areas) 2015/16 Riverside & Stourbridge Common 2016/17 Castle & Victoria Road 2017/18</p>	<p>£2,000 expected consultant costs and advert cost + officer time</p>
<p>Wall Painting Signage/Advertising</p>	<p>A report was taken to the 15th January 2013 Environment Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Councillor agreed to continue with a pilot project of selected locations. One pilot project has now been completed e.g. on Green Street above the rear of the current TKMax store. However several building owners approached in 2013 did not wish such signage to be renewed, therefore officers are pursuing the next priority locations. Officers have contacted three other owners of possible sites (67a Norfolk Street; 36 Sidney Street; and at The Eagle, Bene't Street) and are awaiting responses. Cllr Herbert has had a meeting regarding 105 Cherry Hinton Road.</p>	<p>Balance currently £12,620 (As an example, signage on Green Street cost £2,372 excl. VAT)</p>