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## Cambridge City Council



To: Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth  
Report by: Head of Planning Services  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Environment Scrutiny Committee 15/3/2011  
Wards affected: All Wards

### **PRO-ACTIVE CONSERVATION** **Not a Key Decision**

#### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 This report reviews 2010-11 work on the Pro-active Conservation programme started in 2008-9, together with related unprogrammed projects. It seeks agreement on future strategy. Approval is being sought to carry forward unspent funds from 2010-11 into the 2011-12 financial year.
- 1.2 The recommendations use the available resources to ensure that Cambridge is as well provided as possible in terms of historic environment strategy, policies, and guidance. They focus on completion of the Historic Environment Strategy, providing full coverage of up-to-date Conservation Area Appraisals, and extending the Suburbs and Approaches studies programme through using volunteer help.

#### **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to approve:
  - a) the programme of consultations on completed drafts
  - b) the focussing of new work on the Historic Environment Strategy SPD, and on exploring the potential for partnership projects, pending the bringing forward of a detailed programme for 2011-12 to the Committee for approval in July 2011;
  - c) any new project work prior to July 2011 to be subject to the approval of the Executive Councillor in consultation with the Chair, Historic Environment Champion, and Spokes.

### **3. Background**

#### **The Pro-active Conservation programme**

- 3.1 A 3-year programme of work of pro-active conservation work was agreed in April 2008, to conclude in 2010-11.
- 3.2 It was noted (report to Environment Scrutiny Committee, 8 April 2008) that: "4.2.....In using the new resources to develop proactive conservation a variety of matters might be targeted: a. Review existing Conservation Area boundaries. b. Designation of new Conservation Areas. c. Prepare Conservation Area Management Plans. d. Rapid appraisal of sensitive areas subject to change. e. Buildings of Local Interest. f. Protection of buildings at risk. g. Building Conservation Plans", and also that " 6.2 The budget figures for each subject area are initial estimates and there may be a need for some reallocation between them as they are refined.
- 3.3 The Pro-Active programme was held up by two long periods of staff illness (total exceeding 1FTE for 12 months) in 2008 and in 2009-10. Taking into account the £21,000 carry-forward from 2009-10 agreed by Council in July 2010, there is a total of £53,410 in the 2010-11 budget, of which £21,600 has been spent during the year.
- 3.4 In 2010-11 in-house capacity has not kept pace with the quantity of consultants' work, and there have been technical problems. Consultations on drafts already received will extend through 2011-12. The programme was reviewed by Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 14 September 2010. It was agreed that the work programme should be prioritised, and buying in consultant support to enable officer work on the Historic Environment strategy, with arboricultural expertise to support Conservation Area appraisals would be a sensible approach.

#### **Overview**

- 3.5 This programme has provided an exceptional opportunity to tackle both policy needs and practical issues. The work to date has focused on Conservation Area Appraisals and designation, on Suburbs and Approaches studies, plus some work on buildings at risk. The funds have been used to pay for consultants' work on the assessment and drafting of area appraisals and studies, and for architects' survey and specification work on two war memorials. Completion of the

Conservation Area Appraisals will for the first time ensure that all Conservation Areas have an Appraisal. The Appraisals and Studies together will provide a sound evidence base for the Historic Environment Strategy SPD and Local Plan documents.

## **Review of 2010-11 projects**

### Conservation Area Appraisals

- 3.6 The Trumpington Conservation Area Appraisal and boundary review: were approved in October 2010. The revised Appraisal is awaiting desk-top publishing prior to being put on the website.
- 3.7 Mill Road and St Matthews, and a possible new Conservation Area for Romsey. Separate draft Appraisals were commissioned; the public consultations have been completed. There is very strong support for a Conservation Area in Romsey, with Burnside identified as an area for possible inclusion. There is also strong support for a single Conservation Area for Mill Road, St Matthews and Romsey. It is suggested that the draft Appraisals be combined and revised. See report elsewhere on this agenda.
- 3.8 West Cambridge Conservation Area Appraisal: the public consultation has been completed. See report elsewhere on this agenda.
- 3.9 Howes Place Conservation Area Appraisal: The draft Appraisal document has been subject to two consultations. Further consideration has been deferred pending the issuing of the NIAB site planning permission. This is likely to be after April 2011.

### Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 3.10 This city-wide policy document will deliver the strategy required by PPS 5. The preliminary consultation identified key issues: significance; climate change; growth; access; managing change; quality of change. The assessment of significance will build on the full coverage of Cambridge's Conservation Areas with existing or draft Appraisals, and on the Suburbs and Approaches studies. The SPD will address Conservation Area management issues identified in the Appraisals, in the context of the Localism Bill and neighbourhood planning. The "Conservation and Sustainability in Historic Cities" event (October 2010) took forward one of the key issues identified in the preliminary consultation. The drafting of the SPD has been held up due to a combination of work pressures and complications in buying in cover. It is now being taken forward in tandem with the work on the Skyline Strategy SPD.

### Holy Trinity War Memorial Shelter

- 3.11 This project has been time-consuming in terms of both assembling funding and gaining approvals, and complicated by the associated tree works. All the required secular approvals have been granted for the repair project, including the tree works (felling of the Western Red Cedar which overhangs the shelter, and planting of a Robinia to replace it). Ecclesiastical approval (a Faculty) has been applied for; a Public Notice (which has to be displayed for 28 days) was posted on 21 February; the proposals are available for public inspection in the Church and at the Guildhall main reception. The project will start on site as soon as possible after the Diocesan Chancellor has made his decision.

### Trumpington War Memorial

- 3.12 Following the survey funded by South Area Committee, and discussions with English Heritage, quotes for works are awaited. The aim is to submit a grant application to the War Memorials Trust in April 2010.

### Buildings of local interest

- 3.13 The updated list of Buildings of Local Interest is being prepared for delegated decision by the Director of Environment. This list will be published on the Council's website.

### Supplementary information

- 3.14 The programme of preparing supplementary information (<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/planning-and-building-control/historic-environment-and-trees/supplementary-information.en>) has been on hold, pending further offers of volunteer help. It has not yet been possible to circulate the draft document on Historic Street signs.

### Draft Conservation Area Appraisals and Suburbs and Approaches Studies

- 3.15 Consultations on the following draft documents have been delayed due to technical mapping problems:-

Riverside Conservation Area Appraisal  
Newmarket Road Suburbs and Approaches study  
New Town and Glisson Road Conservation Area Appraisal  
Hills Road Suburbs and Approaches study

### Arboricultural assessments for Conservation Areas

- 3.16 Commissioning of tree studies for conservation areas has been delayed due to the season (the studies need to be carried out when trees are in leaf), and unavailability through injury of one of the likely tenderers.

### New Suburbs and Approaches and / or Area studies

- 3.17 New Suburbs and Approaches studies have not yet been commissioned, due to an offer received from Cambridge Past Present and Future (CPPF). CPPF offered to provide volunteers to help carry out assessments of Conservation Areas. As all the Council's Conservation Areas are now covered by approved or draft Appraisals, officers suggested that CPPF's volunteers might look at parts of Cambridge which are not Conservation Areas.
- 3.18 The CPPF offer prompted a re-think of the agreed approach. There is potential for voluntary work on characterisation, suitably guided and supported, to achieve much greater coverage than the 3 to 5 Suburbs and Approaches studies by consultants which might be obtained with the allocated £10,000. Abbey Ward was suggested as a suitable area for study. Abbey Ward Councillors were approached, and supported the idea.
- 3.19 The CPPF offer predated the Localism Bill, but the potential approach (supporting local communities to characterise their areas) meshes closely with evolving national policy. It has been suggested that a first joint project might take place in Arbury, to support the Council's North Area pilot, with one for Abbey being concurrent or following soon after. If this (or these) projects could be used to develop a template for use in neighbourhoods across the city, this would be an excellent way of both generating neighbourhood interest and building up a city-wide characterisation.
- 3.20 A Heritage Lottery Grant application was submitted towards the purchase of a web-based system for interactive heritage management, which could have supported area-based initiatives. Although the application was unsuccessful, it led to an extremely useful meeting with the HLF. It was suggested that the Fund would entertain application(s) for grant aid towards employing additional staff

on a project-by-project basis for the type of outreach work envisaged in the potential partnership with CPPF.

### **The need to carry the programme forward into 2011-12**

- 3.21 The proposed work programme remains a very high priority in terms of effective use of the Council's resources. The Historic Environment Strategy SPD is urgently needed to meet PPS 5 requirements, to address key challenges and difficult choices facing Cambridge, to provide context for and link with the Skyline Strategy and Arboriculture Strategy, and to provide formal Local Plan context for Conservation Area Appraisals and other historic environment policies. The SPD will address Conservation Area management issues raised in the draft Appraisals. It will also provide the basis for designating / redesignating Conservation Area boundaries to correspond with Appraisals. The suggested funding for the SPD provides for consultancy support and consultation costs. The costs associated with designation / redesignation need to be covered.
- 3.22 The draft programme provides for consultations on, and Committee consideration of, the draft Appraisals already received (see para 3.15). While the draft Conservation Area Appraisals and Studies will inform the Historic Environment strategy, full value will not be obtained from the work already carried out unless the draft Appraisals are taken through public consultation, approved, and published on the website. Full coverage of the Conservation Areas with Appraisals will both meet the Council's Statutory duties and provide all potential applicants in these areas with accessible guidance, so improving the service and reducing requests for general pre-application advice. It will enable agents and clients to obtain key information needed for Design and Access statements, so ensuring that they come to pre-application meetings sufficiently prepared to enable these to best make use of officers' limited time.
- 3.23 Suburbs and Approaches studies will inform the Historic Environment strategy, and, as assessments of local distinctiveness, will inform planning decisions. The technical specification for mapping has been refined to the extent that it is now possible to commission further Suburbs and Approaches studies.
- 3.24 Carrying forward funding would ensure public consultation on the projects listed in para 3.15. It would support Historic Environment input into any potential neighbourhood plan work such as is being suggested for Mill Road.

## **Suggested Future Programme**

3.25 The Proposed Work Programme comprises:

### Historic Environment SPD

Preparation and consultation in parallel with Skyline Strategy SPD.  
Capacity to deliver this depends on providing cover. Draft to  
Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee in September  
Public consultation September-October. To Environment Scrutiny  
Committee March 2012

Mill Road, St Matthews and Romsey Conservation Area Appraisal  
In-house re-drafting April-May. Capacity dependent on providing  
cover. Consultation to include East Area Committee 23 June or 18  
August 2011. To Environment Scrutiny Committee October 2011

### Howes Place Conservation Area Appraisal

Dependent on NIAB site planning application. To Environment  
Scrutiny Committee June or October 2011.

### Riverside Conservation Area Appraisal

#### Newmarket Road Suburbs and Approaches study

A combined consultation (web, meeting, and public exhibition), to  
include display at East Area Committee on 23 June or 18 August  
2011. To Environment Scrutiny Committee October 2011.

### New Town and Glisson Road Conservation Area Appraisal

#### Hills Road Suburbs and Approaches study

A combined consultation (web, meeting, and public exhibition), to  
include display at South Area Committee on 11 July or 26 September  
(both provisional). To Environment Scrutiny Committee October 2011  
or January 2012.

#### Long Road Suburbs and Approaches study

#### Trumpington Road Suburbs and Approaches study

A combined consultation (primarily web-based), to include display at  
South Area Committee on 11 July or 26 September (both provisional).  
To Environment Scrutiny Committee October 2011 or January 2012.

### Castle and Victoria Road Area Conservation Area Appraisal

A consultation (web, meeting, and public exhibition) to include display  
at North and West Central Area Committees in September or  
November, and in November or January respectively. To Environment  
Scrutiny Committee March 2012.

#### Abbey and / or Arbury area studies

Projects to be developed in consultation with CPPF April-June 2011.

#### Tree studies for Conservation Areas

Quotes will be obtained for studies to support the West Cambridge and Conduit Head Road Conservation Area Appraisals.

#### Suburbs and Approaches studies

Quotes will be obtained for further Suburbs and Approaches studies of the following:

Milton Road; Histon Road; Brooks Road; Perne Road; Mowbray Road; Fendon Road; Queen Ediths Way.

## **4. Implications**

### **Staff**

- 4.1 The staffing implications are set out in the report. The programming of public consultations and of publications remains dependent primarily on graphics and mapping capacity.

### **Finance**

- 4.2 The financial implications are set out in the report. The suggested programme is dependent on carrying forward the funding.

### **Environmental**

- 4.3 The environmental implications are set out in the report.

### **Community Safety**

- 4.4 There are no direct community safety implications.

### **Equalities and Diversity**

- 4.5 There are no direct physical equality and diversity implications. Involvement of local people in the work should follow the guidance set out in the Statement of Community Involvement. The suggested approach seeks to maximise the engagement of the public in their local historic environment.

## **5. Background papers**

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

Report to Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee

14 September 2010, agenda item 7



Reports to Environment Scrutiny Committee:

4 April 2008, agenda item 10 Area based Conservation Studies

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/councillors/agenda/2008/0408env/10.pdf>

4 November 2008, agenda item 5 Suburbs and Approaches Studies

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/councillors/agenda/2008/1104env/05.pdf>

4 November 2008, agenda item 6 Programme for future Conservation Area Appraisals, designation and review

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/councillors/agenda/2008/1104env/06.pdf>

23 June 2009, agenda item 16 Pro-active Conservation Programme

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/councillors/agenda/2009/0623EnvA/16.pdf>

16 March 2010, agenda item 7 Pro-active Conservation Programme

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/councillors/agenda/2010/03%20March/0316env/07.pdf>

22 June 2010, agenda item 13 Pro-active Conservation

[http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/democracy/Published/C00000177/M00000281/AI00001139/\\$ProactiveConservation.docA.ps.pdf](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/democracy/Published/C00000177/M00000281/AI00001139/$ProactiveConservation.docA.ps.pdf)

Report to Development Plan Steering Group, 12 October 2009, agenda item 5 Draft Planning Policy Statement 15

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/councillors/agenda/2009/1013dpsg/05.pdf>

Council meeting minutes, 11 September 2008, item 08/66

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/councillors/minutes/2008/0911CNL.pdf>

Planning Policy Statement 5

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps5>

Planning Policy Statement 5 Practice Guide

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/pps-practice-guide/pps5practiceguide.pdf>

Understanding Place- Historic Area Assessments: Principles and Practice

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/understanding-place-principles-practice/understanding-place-haa.pdf/>

## **6. Appendices**

None.

## **7. Inspection of papers**

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

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