



To: Executive Councillor for Planning and Sustainable Transport
Report by: Head of Planning Services/Head of Joint Urban Design
Relevant scrutiny committee: Environment Scrutiny Committee 13/3/12
Wards affected: All

PRO-ACTIVE CONSERVATION WORK 2012-13 Not a Key Decision

1. Executive summary

1.1 This report reviews what has been completed in 2011-12 on the Pro-active conservation work programme, which itself was originally started in 2008-9. The purpose of the report is to report what work has been completed, what is outstanding, what is proposed for 2012-13, and the current and proposed budget to support the programme.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to approve the following:

- a) To note Appendix 1 which comprises an update of the programme of Pro-active conservation work undertaken in 2011-12 and agreed work still to be completed.
- b) To agree Appendix 2 which comprises proposed projects of pro-active conservation work to be undertaken by the City Council in 2012-13 and beyond, including the required budget carry over from 2011-12 as noted herein to support the programme.

3. Background

3.1 For the past four years, a series of projects have been completed in regards to pro-active conservation work including reviews of several conservation areas and their boundaries, and various Suburbs and Approaches studies.

3.2 The following report details firstly the work undertaken in 2011-12, the work still being completed (much of it being report at the same

Environment Scrutiny Committee as this report), and finally the work proposed for 2012-13 and beyond. The information is presented in a series of tables for ease of reference. The tables are attached as Appendices 1 and 2.

- 3.3 A glance back since 2008 reveals the following achievements so far in respect of the Pro-active conservation programme (not including the two Conservation Area Appraisals and three Suburbs and Approaches Studies being considered at the March, 2012, Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting):
- Completion of four Conservation Area Appraisals, including for Trumpington, Mill Road and St. Matthews (now “Mill Road”), Chesterton and Ferry Lane, and West Cambridge
 - Completion of four Suburbs and Approaches Studies, including Huntington Road, Madingley Road, Barton Road and Newmarket Road.
 - The total expenditure for the Pro-active conservation work to date is £59,719.03.
- 3.4 The Conservation-side of the Urban Design and Conservation Team is not at full compliment at this time. However, alongside day-to-day application review work and other tasks, the team has managed to progress and complete a range of pro-active project work in 2011-12. The budget allocated in 2008, and subsequently carried over in later years, has helped fund much of the pro-active conservation work. However to support the future pro-active work listed herein will require the appointment of a Principal Design and Conservation Officer post, a position which has been vacant owing to an absence in the team for most of 2011 and still to be filled.
- 3.5 The proposed project work for 2012-13 and beyond is proposed to focus on a range of work but also on document storage, including improvement of data bases in digital format and related data collection needed. It will also include a number of Conservation Area reviews, many of which are quite dated. In addition, given the very high priority to preserve and enhance the historic environment in the city, future conservation work will be focused on support to the Local Plan review in this coming year and thereafter.
- 3.6 As noted earlier, the Pro-active Conservation Programme has been supported by a budget since 2008. The proposed budget carry over will enable the proposed work program to be completed in full; no extra funding is expected to be necessary. A number of the projects e.g. IT data bases and Conservation Area reviews for example as set out in Appendix 2, will require the services of part-time/casual

professional staff as it cannot be accommodated with existing work loads and resources. The budget will help cover the costs of these additional resources.

- 3.7 The Executive Councillor is requested to agree a carry over into 2012-13 of £30,271.95 (the current budget balance). This provides sufficient monies (with some refinement down on some project costs) to fund a work program cost estimated at £29,000 (see Appendix 2). It should be noted that while all this work is listed for 2012-13, it will be the case that some of the larger projects e.g. certain Conservation Area reviews, will likely need to be completed in 2013-14. However, most, if not all, of these projects will be commenced in 2012-13.
- 3.8 Some flexibility may be necessary in respect of the final amounts allocated to individual projects, and so there may be a need to re-allocate monies across projects as necessary. If this is required, officers will ensure the Executive Councillor is in agreement with doing so first and minor variations in budget expenditure will not be reported for Environment Scrutiny Committee consideration.

4. Implications

Staff

- 4.1 The pro-active conservation work programme will result in additional workload arising from the need for all team members to support each project and share work loads and responsibilities. The appointment of additional resources in the form of part-time/casual workers is needed to ensure the pro-active work programme can be delivered.

Finance

- 4.2 The financial implications are set out within the report above.

Environmental

- 4.3 The environmental implications are positive as a result of undertaking the Pro-active Conservation work programme, such that it helps secure the long-term quality of the city's historic environment.

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.

5. Background papers

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

- Pro-active Conservation Programme March 2011, as reported to and agreed at the Environment Committee meeting of March 3, 2011

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Pro-active conservation work completed in 2011-12 and currently being completed

Appendix 2 - Appendix 2 – Pro-active conservation work for 2012-13 (and beyond)

7. Inspection of papers

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

Author's Name: Glen Richardson
Author's Phone Number: 01223 - 457374
Author's Email: Glen.Richardson@cambridge.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Pro-active conservation work completed in 2011-12 and currently being completed

The following was agreed at the Environment Scrutiny Committee on 15th March 2011. The “Suggested Future Programme” included the following:

Project 2011/12	Status	Estimated Cost
Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document	The Local Plan Review is now underway and the topics proposed to be addressed in the SPD will be addressed in the Local Plan review.	Officer time
Mill Road & St Matthews Conservation Area Appraisal	The consultation was completed in June 2011 and the revised boundary and appraisal published thereafter.	Project was paid for out of previous financial years
Howes Place Conservation Area Appraisal and designation	Still awaiting the signing of the related s106 Agreement in respect of ???? Re-consultation on the initial appraisal is required as the initial consultation on the work was carried out in 2009 and so needs minor updating.	Project was paid for out of previous financial years
Riverside & Stourbridge Common Conservation Area Appraisal	The second round of consultation requested at the October 2011 Environment Scrutiny Committee has now been completed. A report and recommendation will be considered at the March 2012 meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee.	Project was paid for out of previous financial years
New Town & Glisson Road Conservation Area Appraisal and Hills Road Suburbs and Approaches Study	The consultation will end on the 3 rd February, 2012. A report and recommendation will be going to March, 2012, Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting.	Project was paid for out of previous financial years
Long Road and Trumpington Road Suburbs & Approaches Studies	A 4 week consultation period will end on 7 th February. A report and recommendation will be going to March, 2012, Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting.	Project was paid for out of previous financial years
Castle & Victoria Road Conservation Area Appraisal	The associated maps are in the process of being produced for the document to go to public consultation in February/March, 2012. A report and recommendation will be taken to the June, 2012, Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting.	Project was paid for out of previous

		financial years
Abbey and/or Arbury area studies – with possible collaboration of Cambridge Past Present and Future	This project was not progressed owing to a reduction in staffing, however it involved a type of web-based data collection/input by local communities on behalf of the Council. Such studies in effect represent “character” studies of what is valued in a given area and what should be improved or protected. The Urban Design and Conservation Team does not have either the funding or the resource to be able to support such studies at the present time. Additionally, the Local Plan review represents an appropriate forum for residents, members and interest groups to input into issues and suggestions for their area, at both a local and city-wide scale.	
Tree Studies for CAs	Arboriculture work is no longer part of the Planning Services but is now part of Streets and Open Spaces. <i>(Tree Officers are undertaking the measurement of all the tree canopies in the city using 2008 aerial photographs. Samples on the ground will then be taken which will include consideration of species and condition. The work will show the character, heights, etc. of trees, including trees in Conservation Areas. The results of this work will be available to add to the Conservation Area Appraisals.)</i>	Being undertaken by Streets and Open Spaces
Suburbs and Approaches Studies for Milton Road, Histon Road, Brooks Road, Perne Road, Mowbray Road, Fendon Road, Queens Road	Due to the need to prioritise Local Plan work and the fact that other studies completed or being completed were considered a higher priority, these studies have not been completed. These studies are not considered a high priority at this time as it is unlikely that the streets to which they relate will be subject to significant redevelopment/development pressure any time soon. However, <u>members may wish to consider the merits of undertaking some of these studies as part of the deliberation at committee</u> and thereafter a cost, procurement arrangement and timeline can be prepared as required. If it was deemed by members that some of these studies should be undertaken, budget amounts for other proposed work (see Appendix 2) would have to be re-allocated and that work not undertaken.	For consideration in the event members choose to progress any

Appendix 2 – Pro-active conservation work for 2012-13 (and beyond)

(Priority indicator – High, Medium, Low)

Proposed Project	Project Outline	Estimated Cost	Priority
Local Plan Review	Planning Services will be heavily focusing on the review of the Local Plan in 2012-13. The Urban Design & Conservation Team will be making important contributions to this work at all stages e.g. Issues and Options report, drafting of policies, site specific assessments, etc..	Officer time	H
Review of Roof Extensions Design Guide (guidance is related to Policy 3/14 in the 2006 Local Plan)	A large number of roof extensions came forward in 2011. The guidance was referred to a number of times in providing comments to City Development officers and in respect of responding to enquiries which came forward from householders & members of the public. The referenced legislation within the guide is now out of date (a caveat has been added to the on-line copy of the document noting same) and the photographs of “good” examples need to be updated, a task which should not be overly onerous or time consuming. However, before any review is undertaken, the policy position on this subject will need to be clarified as part of the Local Plan review.	Officer time – by Urban Design & Conservation Team	M
Shopfront Design Guide – review (referred to in Policy 3/15 of the 2006 Local Plan)	This document is referenced regularly in comments made to City development on planning applications affecting shopfronts. There needs to be a brief review of the document to ensure that it still has relevant information and that examples are shown to illustrate good shopfronts, both past and recent, built in the city. However, before any review is undertaken, the policy position on this subject will need to be clarified as part of the Local Plan review.	Officer time – by Urban Design & Conservation Team	M
Improved use Information Technology (IT) for cataloguing Listed Building information	The Conservation Officers have not traditionally used IT for record keeping. The improved use of IT within the team could ensure that there is improved customer access to information, for example listed building descriptions which are currently in paper form. The information is available on-line through the English Heritage website, but there would	£5,000	M

	<p>be a distinct advantage to local stakeholders to be able to hold this information locally. While an electronic copy exists in a database, it has also not been confirmed by English Heritage as being a true copy of the information. In addition, it should be possible to store building/site photographs against the list description which will help with any enforcement issues which may come forward. An important reason for undertaking this work is to ensure the resilience and continuity of the information in the Council's possession. There is therefore a strong business case to develop better digital storage of information.</p> <p>Having all the information from the "Greenbacks" in an electronic format would also help support links with internal GIS system and the Annual Monitoring Review (AMR). The descriptions would need to be typed up and then thoroughly checked for accuracy before being stored and linked to other data sets/software.</p> <p>Finally, the AMR showed a discrepancy between the 2010 and 2011 figures of number of listed buildings. A baseline number needs to be established.</p> <p>The appointment of a casual/part-time individual to undertake this work will be necessary as there is not the capacity in the team to undertake the detailed tasks required, nor is it priority work; the Local Plan review and application review must remain the priority for the team.</p>		
Buildings of Local Interest (BLIs) (Policy 4/12) – update of information	<p>The city has a list of over 1,000 BLIs. The original list was drawn up using information provided by English Heritage Grade III buildings, which never made it in to the "Greenbacks", with later additions. Not all of the buildings have a list description.</p> <p>If the Council is to help safeguard these buildings, it is important to understand what is special about them. Some BLI's have been reviewed by students/work experience personnel but the information prepared has yet to be checked by a Conservation Officer for accuracy or completeness. It would be more appropriate in future to get a</p>	Dependent on future Local Plan policy being determined first	M

	<p>conservation professional to finish off all the descriptions so that the list is finalised and any others put forward could be added in a more timely fashion. The Guidance document referred to in Policy 4/12 of the Cambridge Local Plan has never been drafted. Such a document may give more weight to the policy and protect more of the BLIs from development. The policy is seen as weak as it cannot protect buildings outside of conservation areas.</p> <p>Before any review is undertaken, however, the policy position on this subject will need to be clarified as part of the Local Plan review.</p>		
Historic core public realm audit & project definition	An audit of the city's historic core public realm would enable the City Council to work with the County Council on maintaining the historic character of the streets in the core of the city. A cross-service, cross-council working party could draw together the information and recommended projects which could be included in a list of major infrastructure projects to be considered as part of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) work which will run in parallel with the Local Plan review. The audit can also be cited in conservation area appraisals and referred to when dealing with planning applications.	Budget would form part of CIL work & Historic Core Conservation Area review (see next item)	M
Conservation Area reviews (Policy 4/11)	<p>English Heritage recommends that conservation areas are reviewed every 5 years to ensure that they are relevant and that existing boundaries are appropriate. A number of appraisals are more than 5 years old and should be reviewed, such as:</p> <p>Brooklands Avenue (2002) The Kite (1996) Historic Core (2006) Newnham Croft (1999) Southacre (2000)</p>	<p>Estimate of consultant costs:</p> <p>£3,000 £4,000 £10,000 £3,000 £3,000</p> <p>Note: such costs could be less if a "bulk purchase"</p>	M

	<p>For information the following represents all the other Conservation Area Appraisals and their dates:</p> <p>Trumpington (2010) Mill Road (2011) Station Area (2004) Historic Core (2006) Storeys Way (2007) De Freville Avenue (2009) Old Chesterton (2009) Ferry Lane (2009) Conduit Heat Road (2009) West Cambridge (2011)</p> <p>The Council's GIS officer is mapping all of the existing conservation area appraisal boundaries to ensure that all of the existing conservation areas are supported by up to date mapping. If there are any areas left which have not yet had a written appraisal, these will take priority over the review of those listed above.</p>	<p>procurement is followed</p> <p>Officer time – GIS team</p>	
Wall Painting Signage	<p>A number of signs painted directly onto the elevations of buildings have been identified. There is an interest in having these protected through repair and long term retention. A small cost is allocated for the potential to procure support to look for opportunities to protect and enhance such signage and work with individual building owners directly.</p>	£1,000	M

TOTAL £29,000

Note: the current balance is in cost code 22425-0470-75897 (pro-active conservation work is £30,271.95).