

Meeting: EXECUTIVE

Agenda Item:

5

Portfolio Area: Environment and Regeneration

Date: 10 July 2012

**CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLANS - SUPPLEMENTARY
PLANNING DOCUMENTS (x7)**

KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Conservation Area Management Plans Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are intended to supplement policies set out in the District Plan Second Review (2004) with regard to ensuring the effective management of change within, and securing the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of, the conservation areas.
- 1.2 The SPDs will support the policies of the current District Plan and will also support future iterations of local plan documents.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the draft responses to the representations received, as set out in the appended Statement of Consultation be approved.
- 2.2 That the 7 Conservation Area Management Plans Supplementary Planning Documents be adopted as material considerations in the determination of planning applications registered on or after 11 July 2012.
- 2.3 That the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Transport be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration, to make such minor amendments as are necessary in the final preparation of these documents.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The management plans provide guidance to enable the effective management of change and secure the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area. This is in accordance with Sections 71

and 72 of the Planning [Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas] Act 1990. Section 71 specifically requires the local planning authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas and to submit these proposals for public consideration.

- 3.2 At the November 2011 Executive, Members approved a public consultation on the draft Conservation Area Management Plans. Consultation is a statutory requirement for Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 3.3 Consultation in this instance was undertaken in accordance with the council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement 2006 and comprised:
- Letters sent to each household or business within a conservation area
 - Letters sent to national agencies and other key stakeholders
 - Advertisement on the front page of our website with the ability to view the plans and provide feedback
 - Adverts in the Advertiser and Comet newspapers
 - Posters in each of the conservation areas
 - Attendance at the Café Choice event in December 2011
 - Public meetings¹
- 3.4 A total of 25 responses were received, 6 by post, 11 by email and 8 online.
- 3.5 The appended draft Statement of Consultation provides a summary of all of the consultation responses and how we have addressed each comment. It also illustrates how we have addressed points raised at the public meetings.
- 3.6 Copies of each response are available on request from the Planning Policy team. The following section provides a summary of the representations we received by conservation area. The suggested Council response is set out in the draft Statement of Consultation.

Broadwater (Marymead) Conservation Area

- 3.7 A total of 2 responses were received, 1 by email and 1 online.
- 3.8 Both responses relate to parking issues with one further issue related to the number of speed bumps along Broadwater Crescent. Parking was also raised as a major issue at the public meeting.

Old Town High Street

- 3.9 A total of 2 responses were received, 1 by email and 1 online.
- 3.10 One response concentrated on the analysis and commentary relating primarily to land at Ditchmore Lane. The second respondent provided commentary on advertising along the High Street. At the public meeting one attendee considered that the content of the plan should be broader, with major schemes such as junction re-configurations included.

¹ Public meetings are statutory for Conservation Area Management Plans (Section 71 of the Planning [Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas] Act 1990).

Orchard Road

- 3.11 A total of 3 responses were received, 2 by email and 1 online.
- 3.12 One respondent required clarification on the reasoning for designation of this area and also on the enforcement of changes to windows and doors. A further respondent supported the general principles of the plan but noted that parking restrictions along the High Street have displaced parking to the Orchard Road area. The final respondent considered that there were no parking issues along Orchard Road.
- 3.13 At the public meeting there was general support for the plan.

Shephall Green

- 3.14 A total of 8 responses were received, 2 by post, 2 by email and 4 online.
- 3.15 The main issue raised was the allocation of the Shephall Centre for housing. Parking also featured as an issue. One respondent considered that the new bollards were detrimental to the overall appearance of the area.
- 3.16 We received a petition from the Shephall Community Association signed by 664 people. The petition was entitled 'Petition against 32 dwellings being built on Shephall Centre land'. This petition has been passed to the Estates Team for consideration alongside the Asset Management Review.
- 3.17 At the public meeting, a number of local residents and users of the Shephall Centre expressed alarm as they were previously unaware of the potential development of the site. The Centre had begun the process of being allocated as a potential housing site within the local development framework.
- 3.18 Officers have clarified that the Shephall Green Conservation Area Management Plan does not, and cannot, allocate (or de-allocate) land for development. The plan outlines the potential issues and threats to the ongoing management of the conservation area and provides guidance for the preservation and enhancement of the area's special character. Development of sites within conservation areas require additional consents and all of the management plans are intended to guide such developments towards the features which make these areas special.

St Nicholas/Rectory Lane

- 3.19 A total of 8 responses were received, 3 by post and 5 by email.
- 3.20 The main issues raised relate to requests for more forceful protection of the Green Belt, the traffic issues along Rectory Lane and the landscaping and design of new developments.

- 3.21 At the public meeting there were concerns raised regarding the design of new developments in the area.

Symonds Green

- 3.22 A total of 2 responses were received, 1 by post and 1 online.
- 3.23 The response related to use of the Green, anti-social behaviour and transport related issues. The respondent also considered that advertisements at the local public house are detrimental to the overall character of the conservation area.
- 3.24 Transport was also the main topic covered at the public meeting. Recommendations were also proposed for further emphasis on the significant contribution of green space to the appeal of the area.

Town Square

- 3.25 We did not receive any responses relating to this plan.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 All of the representations received have been duly considered. It is not considered that there are any views expressed which merit any major change to the original draft plans. It is recommended that the amended Conservation Area Management Plans be adopted as appended.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.1 The costs associated with adopting these SPDs can be met from the budget for 2012/13.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 There are no direct legal implications at the current time. The consultation process is in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and its associated regulations.
- 5.2.2 The public meetings accord with s.71(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.3.1 None. The Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by the Planning Policy team showed that we do not expect our documents to have adverse impacts on the grounds of race, age, disability, religion, etc.
- 5.3.2 In accordance with our Statement of Community Involvement, the SPDs have been made widely available for members of the public to view throughout the

consultation periods, in a number of highly accessible, public places. The SPDs were also made available in differing formats, where required, and council officers were available to answer any questions raised. The document has been produced using as clear and simple language as possible and avoiding the use of jargon.

5.4 Risk Implications

- 5.4.1 In line with Government advice, the conservation policies in the Stevenage District Plan 2nd Review 2004 are no longer saved, in favour of national guidance. The National Planning Policy Framework provides overarching guidance for conservation areas but more detailed management plans provide greater clarity at the local level.
- 5.4.2 Whilst current national policy provides an extra level of management through the requirement for conservation area planning consent, these plans provide more weight to the area-specific guidance contained within each SPD.

5.5 Policy Implications

- 5.5.1 As previously mentioned, these documents provide new policy guidance. In developing the versions of these SPDs we have consulted with the following internal teams:
- Development management
 - Transport and engineering
 - Green spaces policy and development
 - Estates
- 5.5.2 The comments provided from these teams have been incorporated within the report.

5.6 Planning Implications

- 5.6.1 The SPDs build upon policies TW8 and TW9 of the SDP2R and will become a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications.
- 5.6.2 The preparation of the SPDs is considered to be compliant with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and the DCLG Plan Making Manual.

5.7 Environmental Implications

- 5.7.1 The adoption of these SPDs will improve the quality of life for local residents through:
- An improved environment in which to live and work;
 - Increasing safeguards against inappropriate development and repair work;
 - Highlighting the important contribution of open space;

- Strengthening links with the past and improving local knowledge such as in understanding settlement patterns, historic way of life and traditional building techniques;
- A possible increase in property value arising from the well preserved character and appearance.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Stevenage Conservation Area Review, BEAMS, 2005
- Retail Development in Historic Areas, HELM, 2005
- Heritage Works, English Heritage, 2005
- Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, English Heritage, 2006
- Traffic Management and Streetscape, Department for Transport, 2008
- Broadwater (Marymead) Conservation Area Appraisal, BEAMS, 2009
- Old Town High Street Conservation Area Appraisal, BEAMS, 2009
- Orchard Road Conservation Area Appraisal, BEAMS, 2009
- Shephall Green Conservation Area Appraisal, BEAMS, 2009
- St Nicholas/Rectory Lane Conservation Area Appraisal, BEAMS, 2009
- Symonds Green Conservation Area Appraisal, BEAMS, 2009
- Town Square Conservation Area Appraisal, Stevenage Borough Council, 2010
- The Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan, 2010
- The Stevenage Green Space Strategy, 2010
- Stevenage Urban Transport Plan, 2010
- Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, English Heritage, 2011

APPENDICES

- Statement of Consultation

The following appendices may be viewed on the website with the agenda for this meeting using the following link –

<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/council-meetings/55597/> -

- Broadwater (Marymead) Conservation Area Management Plan SPD*
- Old Town High Street Conservation Area Management Plan SPD*
- Orchard Road Conservation Area Management Plan SPD*
- Shephall Green Conservation Area Management Plan SPD*
- St Nicholas/Rectory Lane Conservation Area Management Plan SPD*
- Symonds Green Conservation Area Management Plan SPD*
- Town Square Conservation Area Management Plan SPD*

*For Council Members, hard copies may be viewed in the Members' Library