

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING,  
INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Decision Made: 9 November 2023

**Sutton Valence Conservation Area - Proposed Extension**

**Issue for Decision**

To seek agreement to the proposed extension to the Sutton Valence Conservation Area was identified as part of the regular review of the conservation area boundary which was undertaken with the conservation area appraisal.

**Decision Made**

That:

1. The extension to the Sutton Valence Conservation Area as set out in the "Sutton Valence Conservation Area Proposed Boundary Alterations (December 2021)" document at Appendix 1 be agreed; and
2. Delegated powers be given to the Head of Development Management to undertake the necessary statutory requirements to implement the agreed boundary changes.

**Reasons for Decision**

Sutton Valence was designated in September 1971 and the boundary has not been reviewed since that time. The records relating to the designation are no longer available. The existing boundary is shown on the plan within the supporting document.

This report has been prepared following the previously approved Sutton Valence Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2021. The Appraisal recommended that in due course, consideration should be given to an extension of the conservation area, to encompass the outer perimeter of the castle and this is the subject of this report.

The proposed extension will add approximately two hectares to the conservation area. It is the area which it is believed was contained by the outer curtain wall of the castle with the addition of the two roads – Tumblers Hill and Baker Lane which have clearly been dug out and may have been quarries that provided the stone for the castle. There have been sufficient archaeological finds to suggest that this is an accurate assessment of the extent of the castle.

The existing conservation area incorporates the site of the castle keep, which is on the extreme southern edge of the site. Its location within the site is presumably to take advantage, from a security point of view, of the excellent views over the surrounding area that its elevation at the top of the ridge would give. There are two buildings within the area of the proposed extension. These

are the Old Parsonage which is now a private house, and Tumblers Plat which is an modest house from the second half of the 20th century. There is also a historic garden associated with the Old Parsonage and this is referenced in the Kent Historic Gardens Compendium as being of national significance.

Primarily however the extension is to protect what may prove to be a very important area of archaeological interest. It has yet to be fully investigated but traces of other buildings and the outer curtain wall warrant that the site should be protected.

The consideration for the Council as the Local Planning Authority is as per para 191 of the NPPF, which states:

*191. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.*

It is considered that the information provided within the Sutton Valence Conservation Area Proposed Boundary Alterations Dec 2021, provides sufficient details to meet this requirement.

Pursuant to s.69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ("1990 Act") the Council, as the local planning authority, is under a duty (from time to time) to review the conservation area. Pursuant to s.70(5) of the 1990 Act the Council must give notice of any variation to the conservation area to the Secretary of State and Historic England. Pursuant to s.70(8) such notice of any variation, with particulars of its effect, must be published in the London Gazette and in at least one newspaper circulating in the area of the Council, by the Council.

The matter was considered by the Planning Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee on 8 November 2023 with a recommendation made to approve the report recommendations.

### **Alternatives considered and why rejected**

Option 2 – To not approve the report's recommendations. If not approved there is a risk that harm to the archaeology of the castle site could occur as it would not be protected by Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990.

This option was rejected as the proposed expansion of the conservation area was subject to public consultation and the majority of respondents supported the proposal.

### **Background Papers**

None.

I have read and approved the above decision for the reasons  
(including possible alternative options rejected) as set out above.



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Councillor Paul Cooper, Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure  
and Economic Development

Full details of both the report for the decision taken above and any consideration  
by the relevant Policy Advisory Committee can be found at the following area of  
the [website](#)

Call-In: Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please  
submit a call-in form signed by any three Members to the Proper Officer by: **5pm**  
**on Thursday 16 November 2023**