

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION

**REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND
COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

Report prepared by: Mike Parkinson & Michelle Sadlier
Date Issued: 10 December 2009

1. Bearsted Conservation Areas: Draft Appraisal and Management Plan Documents

1.1 Issue for Decision

- 1.1.1 To consider whether to approve the draft combined Conservation Area appraisal and management plan documents for Bearsted and Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation Areas for public consultation purposes.

1.2 Recommendation of the Assistant Director of Development and Community Strategy

- 1.2.1 That the Cabinet Member agrees that the text of the Conservation Area appraisal and management plan documents for Bearsted and Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation Areas, attached as **Appendix A** to this report, be approved for consultation with relevant bodies and individuals.

- 1.2.2 That the Cabinet Member agrees to delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Development and Community Strategy to make presentational, editorial and minor changes to the texts prior to publication for consultation, including the inclusion of maps and photographs.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 1.3.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local authorities to review their conservation areas from time to time in order to consider the possibility of revising their boundaries and to identify changes and pressures which may affect the original reasons for their designation. In order that informed decisions can be made on planning applications it is important to identify the special character of conservation areas which it is sought to preserve or enhance.
- 1.3.2 The first part of the document, the appraisal, identifies the key elements which combine to produce the special historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Areas, analyses how they

interact and impact upon one another and explains how the areas have developed into their current form. It seeks to identify pressures and developments which threaten the special character of the Conservation Areas and sites and features which detract from their character and appearance. The clear understanding of the Areas' qualities provided in the appraisal offers suggestions for future policies and improvements as well as providing a framework against which decisions on individual planning proposals may be assessed. These are further elaborated in the second part of the document, the management plan.

1.3.3 Resulting from the findings of the appraisal, the management plan contains proposals to preserve or enhance both Bearsted Conservation Areas. The document includes the policy background to the management plan, principles for development control, and suggested boundary alterations. It also contains information on review and good practice procedures.

1.3.4 The Conservation Area appraisal and management plan has been written in accordance with guidelines set down by English Heritage and Planning Policy Guidance Note 15. This has now been drafted (attached as **Appendix A**) for Cabinet Member approval to enable a consultation process to be carried out. The combined documents will be the subject of appropriate consultation in accordance with the aims of the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. This will include the following bodies and individuals:-

- a) English Heritage
- b) Kent County Council Heritage Unit
- c) Ward Members
- d) Bearsted and Thurnham Parish Councils
- e) Any other relevant organizations with an interest in the particular areas, e.g. the Bearsted and Thurnham Amenity Society, Bearsted Woodland Trust, and the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

1.3.5 In addition, copies will be placed on the Borough Council's website, in local libraries and a display will be located in the Gateway. A formal notice will be published in the KM and there will also be a press release. This should ensure that the combined appraisal and management plan documents are brought to the attention of the local public.

1.3.6 Once responses are received changes may need to be made to the documents. These will then be reported back to the Cabinet Member for final approval for publication.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.4.1 The alternative would be not to approve the appraisal and management plan for consultation. However, following this course of action would mean that the Council was not complying with national guidance and best practice.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 1.5.1 The appraisal and management plan will result in clear guidance regarding the important features and character of the two Bearsted Conservation Areas for all parties involved in projects, or decision making within them, and should thus assist in the attainment of corporate objectives.

1.6 Risk Management

- 1.6.1 There is a risk if there is a delay in the production of appraisal and management plan documents for Bearsted and Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation Areas in that the Council would miss an opportunity to provide further robust evidence on the impact of the KIG development proposal on the two Conservation Areas in question. The Inspectors for the KIG Public Inquiry have already indicated their interest in receiving the document at the earliest opportunity.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1. Financial
2. Staffing
3. Legal
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
6. Community Safety
7. Human Rights Act
8. Procurement
9. Asset Management

X

1.7.2 Environmental/Sustainable Development Implications

Conservation Area appraisals and management plans should assist in the attainment of consistent decisions on development proposals and give greater ability to ensure that the high environmental qualities of conservation areas are protected. Management plans will address how sustainability can best be integrated into conservation areas without compromising their special character. The management plans can be instrumental in building partnerships for positive action by the Council with Parish Councils, English Heritage and other parties.

1.8 Background Documents

- 1.8.1 609/102/01 – Bearsted Conservation Area
609/102/02 – Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation Area

NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED

Is this a Key Decision?

Yes

☐

No

☒

If yes, when did it appear in the Forward Plan? _____

Is this an Urgent Key Decision?

Yes

☐

No

☒

Reason for Urgency

How to Comment

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

Malcolm Greer

Cabinet Member for Regeneration

Telephone: 01634 862876

E-mail: malcolmgreer@maidstone.gov.uk

Mike Parkinson

Principal Conservation Officer

Telephone: 01622 602335

E-mail: mikeparkinson@maidstone.gov.uk