

Conservation Areas Work Programme

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Deanne Cunningham, Team Leader (Heritage, Landscape and Design) Paul Robertshaw, Principal Conservation Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report assesses the priorities for Maidstone's conservation areas and sets out a work programme for the next two years.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to re-establish the conservation areas work programme, and to seek agreement to a priority list for producing appraisal and management plans for those areas not yet covered, and then to complete high priority actions arising from existing management plans, such as boundary revisions.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That:

1. The work programme and priorities for conservation area appraisal and management plans for the period 2019 to 2021, set out in paragraph 2.10, be agreed.
2. Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning and Development to effect proposed boundary alterations to Boughton Monchelsea The Green and The Quarries Conservation Areas, following consultation with affected bodies and landowners.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
SPI Committee	10 September 2019

Conservation Areas Work Programme

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council's overall achievement of its aims as set out in section 3.	Head of Planning and Development
Cross Cutting Objectives	The report recommendations supports the achievements of the Heritage is Respected cross cutting objective by preparing appraisals and management plans for the borough's conservation areas .	Head of Planning and Development
Risk Management	Refer to section 3 of the report	Head of Planning and Development
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	There will be Staffing implications and these are set out in section 3	Head of Planning and Development
Legal	Accepting the recommendations will fulfil the Council's duties under the Planning (Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.	Cheryl Parks Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
Privacy and Data Protection	Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The preservation of the historic environment is of a positive benefit for all members of the community, helping achieve a strong sense of belonging. Community engagement and an equalities assessment and would be carried out as part of the development of individual management plans to consider issues such as accessibility.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer

Crime and Disorder	No direct implications have been identified.	Head of Planning and Development
Procurement	No procurement will be required	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There are 41 designated conservation areas in Maidstone Borough. Of these 13 have an appraisal, management plan or both. From 2009 combined appraisal and management plans were produced to improve efficiency. Following this, the work programme for the production of further documents was paused due to reduced staffing although specific funding was later identified for work at Boughton Monchelsea and Linton.
- 2.2 Funding of £24,000 has been allocated from the Business Rates Retention Scheme to continue the conservation areas work programme which is considered an important priority.
- 2.3 A conservation area appraisal analyses the character of a conservation area and features that are desirable to preserve or enhance; a management plan sets out a strategy for the management of the conservation area including recommended actions, such as boundary changes or the introduction of Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights.
- 2.4 Article 4 Directions have been issued in part of five conservation areas.
- 2.5 The table in Appendix 1 sets out the status of each conservation area.

Policy considerations

- 2.6 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to review their conservation areas from time to time, to formulate and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement and consult the public in the area in question, taking account of views expressed (Sections 69[2] and 71[1 and 2]).
- 2.7 National planning policy guidance advises that a conservation area appraisal can be used to help authorities to develop a management plan and appropriate policies for the Local Plan, and that a good appraisal will consider features that made a positive or negative contribution to the area, thereby identifying opportunities for beneficial change or planning protection (PPG, Para 025).
- 2.8 Historic England advises that an up to date conservation area appraisal and management plan is the most appropriate way for a local authority to fulfil the above duties (Designation, Appraisal and Management of Conservation Areas, January 2019).

Priorities and work suggested work programme

2.9 The table in Appendix 2 sets out the current known issues and priorities for the borough's conservation areas.

2.10 The proposed work programme for 2019-2021 is as follows:

2019/2020

Implementation of boundary revisions for Boughton Monchelsea Conservation Areas.

Appraisal and management plans for Maidstone Town Centre and Yalding.

2020/2021

Appraisal and management plans for Maidstone Chillington House, Maidstone Ashford Road and Lenham Elmstone Hole.

2.11 The Boughton Monchelsea management plan approved by Members in April 2017 included an assessment of potential boundary changes to two of the three conservation areas. The recommendations included in that report were not taken forward but are now considered a high priority for implementation following further consultation.

2.12 Maidstone Town Centre and Lenham Elmstone Hole Conservation Areas are included on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register and have therefore been prioritised. Completing an appraisal and management plan would assist in reducing the risk level for each.

2.13 The Environment Agency is implementing extensive flood resilience measures to numerous properties in Yalding, including listed buildings and those within the conservation area. These have the potential to affect the character and appearance of the conservation area and therefore the preparation of an appraisal and management plan is considered important.

2.14 Rural service centres and larger villages are subject to Local Plan related pressures and are considered the next priority for future ongoing work, and would require the identification of further resources.

Other considerations

2.15 A request has been received to review the boundary of Sutton Valence Conservation Area to include additional land near the castle. The production of an appraisal and management plan for the area would need to precede any boundary change.

2.16 Loose Parish Council has offered to assist with the production of an appraisal for the Loose Valley Conservation Area. This would need to be project managed by an MBC Conservation Officer.

2.17 Following the boundary extension agreed in April 2017 for Linton Conservation Area, the Parish Council have requested the other actions identified in the management plan, including introducing an Article 4

Direction, be taken forward. This work would require the input of Mid Kent Legal Services and the identification of further resources if taken forward.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 If Members want to move forward with a programme for conservation area appraisals and management plans, boundary reviews and Article 4 Directions it will be necessary to prioritise areas in relation to current known pressures. A proposed work programme is therefore put to Members in this report for consideration and agreement.
- 3.2 An alternative option is to prioritise other conservation areas based on different priorities identified above, or considerations not covered by this report. The table in Appendix 2 outlines current known priorities and will assist in determining a finalised programme.
- 3.3 The work will be carried out by the full-time conservation officer and the part-time conservation officer, who is employed on a temporary contract due to end in January 2020. In addition to the conservation area work, officers will be carrying out project work in relation to Call for Sites which is a high priority for the department. Article 4 Directions, if taken forward, will also need input and support from colleagues in Mid Kent Legal Services.
- 3.4 It is anticipated that four appraisal and management plan documents can be completed over a two year period, depending on the size of the conservation areas in question and whether any appraisal work has already been undertaken.
- 3.5 The project has been allocated £24,000 from the Business Rates Retention Scheme, which will be used to increase the hours of the part-time officer from two to three days per week. This arrangement will be subject to review if the officer's temporary contract is not extended beyond January 2020. If officer resources are reduced then there would be an option to use available funding to employ an external consultant.
- 3.6 If Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights are taken forward this will require an extensive consultation exercise which may result in additional threats to a conservation area should residents choose to implement inappropriate works prior to them being restricted. In terms of additional actions, boundary changes will take priority over Article 4 Directions, as an amended boundary would require a review of the Article 4.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 In order to fulfil the Council's duties in relation to its designated conservation areas it is necessary to publish further appraisals and management plans, as well as review the boundaries of existing conservation areas.

- 4.2 Due to identified pressures the work programme has been set out to prioritise those areas most in need of an up to date appraisal and management plan.
- 4.3 Following previous consideration and recommendations it is desirable to review the boundaries of the Boughton Monchelsea conservation areas as a priority.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 If the Committee agrees the recommendations of this report, stakeholders will be notified in relation to the proposed Boughton Monchelsea boundary revisions, and officers will proceed with work on Maidstone Centre and Yalding conservation areas.
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7. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Maidstone Conservation Areas Status
 - Appendix 2: Conservation Area Priorities
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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.