

**Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan Work
Programme Report**

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) Christopher Rainsford and Jeremy Fazzalero – Principal Conservation Officers
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report identifies the work undertaken to date in respect of the conservation area appraisal and management plan work programme, advises and provides an update of those activities currently in progress. It also recommends the next work programme to commence in 2022 subject to resourcing.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the progress of the two-year work programme for Maidstone's conservation area as agreed at the meeting of the SPI committee on 10 September 2019. To recommend the next work programme subject to resources.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

- That the contents of the report be noted; and
- The recommendations on the future work programme as set out in 6.1 of this report are agreed, with final approval for adoption of conservation area appraisals and management plans delegated to the Head of Planning and Development.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee	8 February 2022

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan Work Programme Report

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.	Head of Planning and Development
Cross Cutting Objectives	The report recommendations support 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 5	Head of Planning and Development
Financial	The current programme was originally funded with £24,000 from the Business Rates Retention Scheme and was used to increase the hours of the part-time officer from two to three days per week. This came to an end at the close of 2021.	Head of Planning and Development
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 and the The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.	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.	Head of Planning and Development
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 would be carried out as part of the development of individual management plans to consider issues such as	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer

	accessibility.	
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 Planning and Development

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There are 41 designated conservation areas in Maidstone Borough. Of these only 13 had an appraisal, management plan or both prior to the implementation of the current programme. Since the implementation of the programme seven combined appraisals and management plans have been added and two more will be added on completion of work associated with the public consultation events which concluded in December 2021
- 2.2 In September 2019 Members agreed a two year work programme covering 2019-2021 for the production of documents for additional areas, to be resourced through the Business Rates Retention Scheme. That programme came to an end in December 2021 with all work completed on programme.
- 2.3 The work programme also included revision of the Boughton Monchelsea conservation area boundaries, which was approved under delegated powers on 25 March 2020.
- 2.4 Adopted appraisals and management plans are:
- Harrietsham
 - Lenham Elmstone Hole
 - Maidstone Chillington House
 - Maidstone Ashford Road
 - Maidstone Town Centre
 - Sutton Valence
 - Yalding
- 2.5 Appraisals and Management plans undergoing public consultation are:
- Lenham Village
 - Headcorn

These have been signed off by the Head of Planning.

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).

WORK COMPLETED TO END OF 2021

- 2.9 The drafting of the nine appraisals and management plan authorised by the Committee was completed in October 2021 with the final two documents, under this programme, being sent out for public consultation in November 2021. The consultation period ended on 22 December and the comments will be reviewed and the documents amended as necessary prior to being signed off by the Head of Planning.

PLAN OF WORK

- 2.10 The next priority is to produce appraisals and management plans for the rural service centres not already covered, Marden and Staplehurst.
- 2.11 In addition to the above, it is recommended that a checklist be provided to enable parish councils to assist in progressing work on conservation area appraisal management plans in their areas.
- 2.12 It is then proposed to move on to Hollingbourne, the one larger village which does not currently have an appraisal and management plan for its conservation area. Any actions arising from the resulting Management Plan, such as boundary changes and Article 4 Directions will clearly divert resources away from completing the programme as proposed
- 2.13 There is also a need to update the list of locally scheduled heritage assets. This will entail a considerable exercise in public consultation and internal administration to carry out but it is an undertaking made in the Local Plan Review.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 As there is no longer funding for this area of work the future programme will be subject to the capacity of the full-time Principal Conservation Officer (PCO) and the new part-time PCO who will be funded from the Recovery and Renewal fund which will enable the continuation of the original 2 days per week for another financial year. This means that work on this programme will be balanced against competing priorities of caseload, specialist input into the Local Plan review, which is a high priority for the department, and other work objectives.

3.2 Alternative options include:

- Putting the programme on hold.
- To prioritise other conservation areas based on different priorities, or considerations not covered by this report.

It is anticipated that, given the anticipated resource over the next year, one appraisal and management plan can be completed during this period, depending on current workload and the size of the conservation areas in question and whether any appraisal work has already been undertaken.

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 should take priority over Article 4 Directions, as an amended boundary would then necessitate a review of the Article 4.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The preferred option is to continue with a much reduced programme of work to complete one large Conservation Area in 2022/23, starting with Staplehurst. This will enable the Council to continue to fulfil its duties in relation to the requirement to produce and review appraisals and management plans for its designated conservation areas.

Alongside this the team will produce a checklist and scope the resource implications for providing a training workshop and managing the process to enable Parish Councils and/or local interest groups to start the assessment process in their local conservation area. The work will commence in April 2022.

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.

6 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 If the committee agrees the recommendations in this report and supports additional resources, the relevant members and Parish Councils will be informed of the plans for the 2022 works programme and the work will be programmed to commence from April 2022
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7. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Maidstone Conservation Areas status

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None