

Conservation Areas Work Programme Update

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 & Christopher Rainsford, Principal Conservation Officers
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report identifies the work undertaken to date in respect of the conservation areas work programme and advises Members of the timescales for the public consultation and adoption of four conservation area appraisals and management plans.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update the committee on progress of the two-year work programme for Maidstone's conservation areas as agreed at the meeting of this Committee on 10 September 2019.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the contents of the report be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee	8 September 2020

Conservation Areas Work Programme Update

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 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 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 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.
- 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.
- 2.3 The work programme also included revision of the Boughton Monchelsea conservation area boundaries, which was finalised under delegated powers on 25.03.20.
- 2.4 In accordance with the agreed work programme, draft documents have been prepared for Sutton Valence and three Maidstone conservation areas – Town Centre, Chillington House and Ashford Road. These will be made available in draft on the Council’s website for public consultation (<http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/primary-areas/heritage-and-landscape/tier-3-primary-areas/conservation-areas>).
- 2.5 The table in Appendix 1 sets out the status of each conservation area to include the new draft documents.

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, 2019/2020

- 2.9 The boundaries of Boughton Monchelsea The Green and The Quarries Conservation Areas have been extended following a public consultation. The revised boundaries were formally adopted under delegated powers on 25.03.20.
- 2.10 A draft appraisal and management plan has been prepared for Sutton Valence Conservation Area. This is due for adoption in December 2020.
- 2.11 The 2009 Maidstone Centre appraisal has been revised and a management plan drafted. This is due for adoption in December 2020.
- 2.12 The 2010 Maidstone Ashford Road appraisal has been revised and a management plan added. This was originally intended for 2020/21, but was brought forward during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is due for adoption in December 2020.
- 2.13 A draft appraisal and management plan has been prepared for Maidstone Chillington House Conservation Area. This was also brought forward from the 2020/21 period. This is due for adoption in December 2020.

Upcoming work, 2020/2021

- 2.14 The above draft documents are available on the Council's website for public consultation. Following this meeting, they will be publicised by contacting Ward Members, Sutton Valence Parish Council, Maidstone BID, Maidstone Museum, and other groups and stakeholders relevant to each conservation area.
- 2.15 Following a period of not less than six weeks the documents will be amended in light of comments received and reported to the Head of Planning and Development for delegated approval. The final adopted documents will be added to the website accordingly.
- 2.16 Elmstone Hole Conservation Area will have an appraisal and management plan drafted in accordance with the agreed work programme, due to be completed in February 2021.
- 2.17 An appraisal and management plan will be drafted for Yalding Conservation Area, which was initially proposed for the work programme but substituted for Sutton Valence following Member discussion. This is due to be completed in February 2021.
- 2.18 If additional resources are made available in 2021, work will proceed on conservation areas in the rural service centres. These areas were identified as the next highest priority in the 2019 report.
- 2.19 Upcoming work completed in 2020/2021 is expected to be reported to Members in September 2021.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The work will be mainly be carried out by the part-time conservation officer, who is employed on a temporary contract due to end in early 2021. In addition to the conservation area work, officers will be carrying out project work in relation to the Local Plan review.
- 3.2 The project has been resourced in 2019/2020 by money allocated from the Business Rates Retention Scheme, which has been used to increase the hours of the part-time officer. This funding will not be available after March 2021, and consequently the resourcing of further conservation area work will be subject to review.

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.

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: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 If the Committee agrees the recommendations of this report, the stakeholders will be notified in relation the proposed consultation exercise for the CAAMPs produced for Sutton Valence and Maidstone Centre, Chillington House and Ashford Road Conservation Areas, and officers will proceed with work on Yalding and Lenham Hole Conservation Areas.

7. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Maidstone Conservation Areas status September 2020

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None