
CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISALS

**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor David Lyonette,
Regeneration and Planning Portfolio**

Responsible Director(s) - John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek delegated authority for the Director of Development and Environment to approve future Conservation Area Character Appraisals for consultation purposes.
2. This recommendation has been considered by Cabinet on 30 August 2005, which agreed to recommend it to Council.

Background

3. Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 emphasises the need for the local development plan to include firm conservation area policies, based on a clear definition of the special architectural or historic interest that warranted designation. PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment stresses the need for local planning authorities to make an assessment of the special interest, character and appearance of all conservation areas in their districts.
4. Character Appraisals for conservation areas are seen as a tool to assist in the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Through the character appraisal, areas (or buildings) of special landscape or historic/architectural character can be highlighted as possessing particular interest, and being worthy of preservation and enhancement. Features of special interest, such as historic walls, stiles, open spaces, trees or historic surfaces, i.e. cobbles, Yorkshire flags or setts – can be particularly highlighted through the character appraisal, which can then be included in future Supplementary Planning Guidance.
5. The Environment Scrutiny Review Action Plan adopted by Cabinet highlighted the need for Conservation Area Character Appraisals to be undertaken. Piercebridge is the first in a programme of 16 Conservation Area character appraisals to be undertaken over the next few years. In future it is proposed to carry out consultation on the more straightforward Appraisals prior to reporting them to Cabinet for final approval. It is therefore recommended that the Director of Development and Environment is given delegated authority to approve future Conservation Area Character Appraisals for consultation purposes. Appraisals would still come to Members for approval after consultation.

Financial implications

6. There are no direct financial implications of this report.

Outcome of Consultation

7. No consultation was required in the production of this report.

Legal Implications

8. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

9. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

10. The issues contained within this report do represent a change to Council policy.

Conclusion

11. Character Appraisals are an important tool in the preservation, enhancement and management of Conservation Areas. Over the next four years 16 Appraisals will be produced and each one will be subject to formal consultation. In the interests of establishing an efficient process it is recommended that authority to approve draft appraisals for consultation be delegated to the Director of Development and Environment.

Recommendation

12. It is recommended that the Scheme of Delegation to officers, included in the Council's Constitution, be revised in respect of planning matters to grant the Director of Development and Environment, or his/her nominated officer, delegated powers to approve future Conservation Area Character Appraisals for consultation purposes.

Reasons

13. The recommendation is supported by the following reason: to enable the Director of Development and Environment to exercise his discretion as to whether future Conservation Area Character Appraisals warrant Cabinet approval prior to consultation.

John Buxton
Director of Development and Environment

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the production of this report.

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