

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 27 October 2014
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Member for Economic Growth and Planning

Report Title

Altrincham Conservation Area Appraisals

Summary

The Council published draft Altrincham Conservation Area Appraisals for consultation between the 03 February to 17 March 2014.

This report summarises the responses received to this and seeks approval of the final documentation for their adoption as Supplementary Planning Documents.

Recommendation(s)

That the Executive :

1. Note the consultation responses and amendments made to the Conservation Area Appraisals;
2. Adopt the five Altrincham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisals as Supplementary Planning Documents, as set out in Appendix 1 ;
3. Delegate responsibility for approving any minor amendments to the wording of the document, to the Corporate Director for Economic Growth, Environment and Infrastructure, prior to their publication.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Rob Haslam (Head of Planning Services)
Extension: 4788

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	The Conservation Area Appraisals contribute to a number of Corporate Priorities, in particular: Economic Growth and Development and Safe Place to Live - Fighting Crime.
Financial Implications	The preparation of the conservation Area Appraisals has been funded from the Strategic Planning budget, within the EGEI Directorate's overall budget.
Legal Implications:	The appraisals are being produced in accordance with the requirements of s69(2) Planning (Listed

	Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Once adopted, planning decisions will be taken in accordance with the appraisals, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
Equality/Diversity Implications	The Core Strategy Equality Impact Assessment has been applied to the preparation of these Conservation Area Appraisals and is considered to be compatible to the work to be carried out under the appraisals because they will help to deliver some of the objectives and policies of the Core Strategy.
Sustainability Implications	The main strategic objective of the Conservation Area Appraisals is the same as the objective of Policy R1 of the Trafford Core Strategy which was found to be sustainable. Additionally SA has been carried out in relation to the proposed boundary changes.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	None / None / None directly
Risk Management Implications	The appraisals support the delivery of the Council's Core Strategy and Development Management function. If the appraisals are not progressed it could undermine the delivery housing and economic growth in the borough.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	None
Health and Safety Implications	None

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Conservation Areas play a key role in ensuring that the Borough's heritage assets are safeguarded for the future, where possible enhanced and that change is appropriately managed and tested for its impact on the historic environment.
- 1.2 In November 2012, consultants were appointed to undertake the preparation of nine draft Conservation Area Appraisals. The commission was split into two discreet parts, the first relating to the five Altrincham Conservation Areas with the second relating to The Devisdale, Bowdon, South Hale and Ashley Heath conservation areas.
- 1.3 Those relating to the five Altrincham Conservation Areas have now been through a process of consultation from 03 February to 17 March 2014. The Appraisals have been updated in light of this consultation and are with Executive for adoption as Supplementary Planning Document(s). Upon adoption they will replace the current suite of planning guidance for Conservation Areas in these areas. Once this process has been done, the associated Management Plans will be finalised for consultation and will follow the same process.

2.0 Purpose of Conservation Area Appraisals

- 2.1 There are a total of 21 Conservation Areas in Trafford, however as English Heritage guidance sets out, designation is not sufficient to preserve and enhance these areas. Instead local authorities need to develop policies which clearly identify what features of the area should be preserved or enhanced and set out how this should be done.
- 2.2 This requires a clear assessment and definition of an areas interest and the action needed to protect it. Such assessments help to generate awareness and encourage

local property owners to take the right sort of action. The appraisals may also identify areas where enhancement through development may be desirable.

- 2.3 Through the production of these documents the Council will be able to manage change in their historic areas in a way that will preserve and enhance them. In addition, the CAAs will form part of the necessary evidence base for the Local Plan: Land Allocations, in that they will provide the basis for any changes required to the boundaries of Conservation Areas. They will also form part of the evidence base for other documents such as the emerging Altrincham Business Neighbourhood Plan.

3.0 Key features, issues, threats and development principles which have emerged through these five Conservation Area Appraisals

- 3.1 The appraisals contain a wealth of information about the town's heritage assets, including identifying landmark buildings and other buildings which contribute positively to the conservation area. They have also included an audit of the public realm, in terms of its impact on the heritage of the area; an assessment of key views and vistas in to and out of the conservation areas; an assessment of threats which exist and which may be undermining the heritage asset, and; the identification of "negative" areas which need positive treatment to enhance them.
- 3.2 This information will help shape the associated management plans (which will be subject to separate consultation) and will be used in the consideration of new development proposals within the Conservation Areas. The Management Plans will go through a similar process of internal consultation followed in respect of the CAAs, particularly in relation to transport, infrastructure and building control matters. The final CAAs are available in Appendix 1. Due to the large size of these documents they are only available electronically to view on the Council website.

4.0 Public Consultation

- 4.1 The public consultation process for the CAAs resulted in relatively few comments made by 10 respondents. Due to the large size of the files the draft appraisals can be viewed on the Strategic Planning web pages by following the link. <http://www.trafford.gov.uk/planning/strategic-planning/conservation-area-appraisals.aspx>. The majority of comments were from members of The Bowdon Conservation Group and Altrincham and Bowdon Civic Societies. English Heritage suggested the 5 Conservation Areas could be combined as one area. However it is felt this would be unmanageable and also the areas have different characters making them individually distinct. Other comments were on specific items of detail and are summarised below:-

- Praise for the extensive work carried out in writing the CAAs
 - Suggestions for minor boundary changes
 - Points of clarification and factual corrections requested
 - Changes to character areas, mention of addition points of interest and a need to edit extensive detailed text on general history
 - Addition of a reference to date stones
 - A request to make reference to the Altrincham Strategy
- 4.2 More details on the representations received, a summary of the comments made, the Councils response to the comments made together with any recommended change will be made available in the publically available Consultation Statement that will accompany the Conservation Areas when they are formally adopted. The main changes proposed as a result of the consultation are:-

- Corrections and improvements to the detailed maps on townscape analysis

- Corrections to building dates on some maps and text
- The addition of clearer photographs
- Small changes to 3 CAA boundaries as detailed below
- Changes to the text to improve clarity in several sections
- Removal of very detailed information into a separate appendix

5.0 Proposed Conservation Area Boundary Changes

5.1 In addition to identifying key features, issues and threats, a number of boundary changes are proposed within the appraisals, both in terms of extensions and retractions. Minor changes to these were made as a result of the public consultation to Old Market Place, Stamford New Road and George Street. Appendix 2 of this report contains a map of the proposed boundary changes for each Conservation Area.

6.0 Sustainability Appraisal

6.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process used to assess how sustainable development is being addressed and included in plans and strategies prepared by organisations. As this process was undertaken as part of the preparation of the Trafford Core Strategy (in particular Policy R1) it was considered unnecessary to subject the CAA's to full Sustainability Appraisal, SA has been undertaken in relation to the proposed boundary changes. This was carried out as part of the work on the emerging Land Allocations' Plan.

7.0 Next Steps

7.1 Following the amendments made the final Conservation Area Appraisals are now proposed for adoption as supplementary planning guidance.

Other Options

The production and adoption of CAAs will ensure that heritage assets in Altrincham will be preserved and enhanced. English Heritage guidance sets out, designation is not sufficient to preserve and enhance these areas, the Trafford Core Strategy reflects this guidance in Policy R1, stating that the Council will prepare CAAs. Therefore to not progress with CAAs would be contrary to both government guidance and the Council's own planning policy.

Consultation

The draft CAAs were subject to a period of public consultation in line with both s69(2) Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. In addition to this formal consultation, the consultants met with a number of key stakeholders during the production of the drafts. Comments from these stakeholders have been incorporated into the final Conservation Area Appraisals.

Reasons for Recommendation

To note the comments received to the consultation on the CAAS; to adopt the final CAAs and; to delegate the responsibility of minor changes to these documents, prior to them being adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents, to the Corporate Director Economic Growth, Environment and Infrastructure.

Finance Officer Clearance: PC
Legal Officer Clearance: JL

CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE

Adrian Jones

