

**REPORT TEMPLATE: FORMAL BODIES & MEMBER ONLY EXECUTIVE
- REGULATORY REPORTS**

HARINGEY COUNCIL

Agenda item: **[No.]**

Planning Applications Sub-Committee

On 11th September 2006

Report Title: **Conservation Area Character Appraisals – Public Consultation**

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable): **Not applicable**

Report of: **Assistant Director, Planning Environmental Policy and Performance**

Wards affected: **All**

Report for: **Non-key decision**

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To note the need for adopted character appraisals for the borough's conservation areas and the benefits they would provide to the Council in performing its planning function of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of its conservation areas.
- 1.2. To seek endorsement to commence a programme of public consultation on draft conservation area character appraisals.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Sub-Committee notes the need for and benefits of having adopted character appraisals for the borough's conservation areas.
- 2.2. That the Sub-Committee approves the commencement of a programme of public consultation on draft character appraisals for the borough's conservation areas.

Report Authorised by: **Shifa Mustafa, Assistant Director, Planning Environmental Policy and Performance.**

Signature: *Shifa Mustafa* Date: *17/8/06*

Contact Officer: **Sue Cooke, Team Leader, Design and Conservation Team**
Telephone: 020 8489 5511
e-mail: sue.cooke@haringey.gov.uk

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1. Government advice expresses the need for local planning authorities to adopt and publish up-to-date conservation area character appraisals to define the special

architectural or historic interest that warrants their designation. This is now the subject of a “best value performance indicator”, BV219, against which the Council’s performance is measured.

- 3.2. Currently, the borough’s 28 conservation areas do not have up-to-date conservation area character appraisals. It is therefore the intention of the Council to commence a programme of publishing draft character appraisals for the borough’s conservation areas for the purposes of public consultation, with a view to future adoption. The programme will begin with public consultation on character appraisals for 9 conservation areas in Tottenham, which will be shortly followed by consultation on character appraisals for Muswell Hill and Crouch End conservation areas.

4. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development.

- 4.1. Not applicable.

5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 5.1. The following documents were used in the preparation of this report; -

- Haringey Unitary Development Plan, Proposed Modifications (April 2006)
- Haringey Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance 2: Conservation and Archaeology (September 2003)
- Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994)
- Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- English Heritage Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals (February 2006)
- English Heritage Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas (February 2006)
- ODPM Best Value Performance Indicators 2005/06

- 5.2. The Design and Conservation team and documents are located at 639 High Road, London N17 8BD. Anyone wishing to inspect the background papers in respect of the following report can contact Sue Cooke on 020 8489 5511.

6. Background

Government Policy and Advice for Conservation Areas and Character Appraisals

- 6.1. Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) expresses the need for local planning authorities to assess the special interest, character and appearance of all conservation areas in their districts to assist in setting out planning policy and to inform development control. English Heritage has published guidance on undertaking such assessments, which advises that it is vital that the special interest justifying conservation area designation is clearly defined and analysed in a written appraisal of its character and appearance.

- 6.2. English Heritage guidance on the management of conservation areas advises that conservation area policies should be supported by adopted and published character appraisals which define the specific character that is to be preserved and enhanced.

Best Value Performance Indicator 219

- 6.3. A local authority's performance in designating conservation areas, defining the special architectural or historic interest that warrants designation through up-to-date character appraisals, and publishing management proposals for the areas based on the character appraisals is now the subject of a three-part heritage "Best Value Performance Indicator", BV 219.

The Benefits of Appraisal

- 6.4. PPG15 states that a clear, comprehensive appraisal of the character of a conservation area provides a sound basis for local plan policies, development control decisions as well as for the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of an area.
- 6.5. The content of appraisals will be taken into account by the Secretary of State when considering planning appeals against refusals of conservation area consent and planning permission, and the presence of adopted appraisals would strengthen the Council's enforcement position when requesting a listed building urgent works notice from the Secretary of State.
- 6.6. Where funding is sought for grant-aid, such as a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), an appraisal is necessary to demonstrate the value of the conservation area.

Conservation Area Character Appraisals for Haringey

- 6.7. Haringey has 28 conservation areas, which have been designated because of their special architectural and / or historic interest. They vary in age, size, character and style. They include areas such as Highgate, parts of Crouch End, Muswell Hill, Tottenham High Road and Stroud Green.
- 6.8. Currently 5 of the 28 conservation areas have adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance that relate to the whole or part of their area. However, the 28 conservation areas do not have up to date conservation area character appraisals. It is therefore the intention of the Council to commence a programme of publishing draft character appraisals for all the borough's conservation areas for the purposes of public and stakeholder consultation, with a view to future adoption. Once adopted the character appraisals will be invaluable in supporting the Council in its planning function of preserving and enhancing its conservation areas.
- 6.9. English Heritage's guidance on conservation area appraisals advises that if a local authority has many conservation areas, priority should be given to preparing appraisals for those where the pressure for change is greatest. It notes that these are often in historic retail (high street) or commercial centres, areas where significant development proposals are anticipated, areas where pressure for residential development is high, or areas of economic decline in need of regeneration.
- 6.10. Haringey is in receipt of substantial heritage lottery funding (HLF) for environmental improvements in the Tottenham High Road and Bruce Grove areas. The HLF

regime requires that the Council carry out character appraisals and create management plans for the relevant Tottenham High Road conservation areas. These are the North Tottenham, Tottenham Green, Scotland Green, Bruce Grove, Seven Sisters / Page Green, and South Tottenham High Road conservation areas.

6.11. Currently, 9 draft character appraisals have been prepared for the Tottenham area. In view of the above it is considered expedient to publish appraisals for the following 9 Tottenham conservation areas for the purposes of public consultation: -

- North Tottenham Conservation Area
- Bruce Castle Conservation Area
- Tottenham Green Conservation Area
- St. Ann's Conservation Area
- Scotland Green Conservation Area
- Clyde Circus Conservation Area
- Bruce Grove Conservation Area
- Seven Sisters / Page Green Conservation Area
- South Tottenham High Road Conservation Area

6.12. The Design and Conservation team are currently in the process of preparing draft character appraisals for the Muswell Hill and Crouch End Conservation Areas, which it intends to commence public consultation on in October / November this year. This will be followed by consultation on draft appraisals for the remaining Conservation Areas in due course.

7. Description

Aims / Contents of Appraisal

7.1. The Council has prepared 9 draft appraisals for the above mentioned conservation areas. The main aims of the draft appraisals are to: -

- Set out the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area and to describe the special character and appearance that it is desirable to preserve or enhance;
- Identify through an audit of the built heritage of the area, buildings and other elements that positively contribute to the character, and elements and buildings that detract from the character of the area and any sites where an opportunity to enhance the character of an area may exist;
- Examine the existing boundaries of the conservation area and consider the potential for other areas to be included and, if appropriate, where existing areas should be excluded; and
- Identify areas subject to pressure for change that would be adverse to the character and appearance of the area as a result of permitted development and identify any areas where the removal of permitted development rights would safeguard the essential character and appearance of the area.

7.2. The content of the appraisals is based around a uniform structure within which the character of the conservation area is assessed. The appraisals include:

- Planning history, including the conservation areas original designation date;
- An appraisal of the historical development of the area, including historical maps, from pre 1800 to the present day;
- An assessment of the character and appearance of the area, with separate analysis of the character of particular sub-areas within the conservation area;
- An audit of the elements within the conservation area, including statutory and locally listed buildings, buildings, shop fronts and streetscape elements that make a positive contribution to its character, as well as elements that detract from its character, sites that present an opportunity to enhance the area's character.
- An identification of potential future development pressures that could harm the character of the area and where enhancement could be achieved.
- Potential for conservation area boundary review and the introduction of article 4 directions.

8. Consultation

8.1. There is no statutory consultation requirement for conservation area character appraisals. The statutory consultation period for planning policy documents is currently four to six weeks. The Council's approved corporate consultation strategy states that a minimum consultation period of one month should be used to give people enough time to be consulted. It is therefore proposed to work to a six week consultation period for the appraisals, commencing with the 9 Tottenham appraisals on Monday September 18th 2006.

8.2. To achieve meaningful public consultation exercise the following techniques will be used:

- **Haringey Council Website:** the draft appraisal's will be posted on the Council's website, and representations will be able to be submitted electronically.
- **Mail out:** the following will be notified of the draft appraisals' publication in writing and given the opportunity make comments: conservation area advisory committees / groups, local amenity societies; environmental groups; residents' associations; chamber of commerce and local business organisations.
- **Haringey People Article:** in the October edition.
- **Weekend Workshop:** with the Tottenham Conservation Area Advisory Committee.

Adoption

8.3. Once public consultation has been completed and the appraisals have been revised accordingly the appraisals will be presented, along with an accompanying consultation report, to the Sub-Committee for formal adoption. Following adoption, the appraisals will be published as printed documents and made available on the Council's website.

Management Proposals

8.4. Once the appraisal process has been completed, proposals for the future management of the conservation areas will be developed. These will take the form of mid to long-term strategies for preserving and enhancing the conservation areas, addressing the issues and recommendations for action arising from the appraisals and identify any further or detailed work needed for their implementation.

9. Summary and Conclusions

- 9.1. Government advice expresses the need for local planning authorities to adopt and publish up-to-date conservation area character appraisals to define the special architectural or historic interest that warrants their designation. This is now the subject of a three part heritage “best value performance indicator”, BV219, against which the Council’s performance is measured. The Council intends to commence a programme of publishing draft character appraisals for the borough’s conservation areas for the purposes of public consultation, with a view to future adoption. Once adopted, the appraisals will be invaluable in assisting the council in preserving and enhancing its conservation areas.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1. As per section 2.

11. Comments of the Director of Finance

- 11.1. Any costs associated with the public consultation process will need to be contained within existing approved budgets for the Planning Policy and Transportation Group.

12. Comments of the Head of Legal Services

- 12.1. The Head of Legal Services has been consulted and they have no specific comments to add.

13. Equalities Implications

- 13.1. Parts of the borough suffer from high unemployment levels and a relatively high crime rate, and a number of the borough’s wards are within the top-ten most deprived in the country. There is a need to protect and enhance the local historic environment to help stimulate regeneration in the borough. The adoption of character appraisals for the borough’s conservation areas will assist in this regard.

14. Use of Appendices

- 14.1. No appendices included. The draft appraisals that will be the subject of public consultation are available for viewing on the Council’s website under the Design and Conservation web pages within the Planning section.