

COMMITTEE: PLANNING
DATE: 17 MAY 2010
SUBJECT: Draft Guidance Manual for the Designation and Review of Conservation Areas
REPORT OF: The Planning Policy Manager

Ward(s): All

Purpose: To seek authority to go out to public consultation on proposals for the draft Guidance Manual for the Designation and Review of Conservation Areas.

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Recommendation: Members are asked to authorise public consultation on the draft Guidance Manual for the Designation and Review of Conservation Areas.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of the draft Guidance Manual is to provide explanatory information and guidance on the designation and review of the boundaries of conservation areas in Eastbourne. The document sets a common framework of criteria that will be used to objectively determine the boundaries of all conservation areas.

2.0 Guidance Manual for the Designation and Review of Conservation Areas

2.1 According to English Heritage guidance conservation areas should be assessed against local criteria in order to ensure that a consistent, specific and objective approach is used throughout the Borough. There are currently no express criteria for the designation or review of conservation areas, although there are a number of English Heritage guidance documents which provide advice on undertaking formal assessments of a conservation area's special architectural or historic interest. The advice contained in these guidance documents inform the tailored criteria set out in Appendix A of the Guidance Manual.

2.2 It is important that conservation areas are seen to justify their status and the concept of conservation areas is not devalued by the designation (or retention) of areas lacking special interest. The establishment of consistent local standards is therefore important in order to justify more rigorously why a particular heritage asset or feature has been included within a conservation area, which can be defended on appeal. LPA's which have not carried out these reviews have been criticised by Government Inspectors for failing to undertake this process. Conservation area boundary reviews may conclude that the boundaries of conservation area have been drawn too tightly or too widely.

Consultation Plan

- 3.0** Internal consultation of the draft Guidance Manual has been carried out; the Conservation Area Advisory Group has also been consulted and overall they are supportive of the draft Guidance Manual.
- 3.3 Subject to approval of the recommendations in this report, it is proposed to carry out public consultation on the draft Guidance Manual in compliance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. Consultation will be carried out with local amenity groups and historic societies via a letter drop, residents and occupiers of the Borough's Conservation Areas will be notified via a notice published in the local newspaper (Eastbourne Gazette).
- 3.4 Copies of all documentation and any supporting information will be available to view and download on the Council's website at www.eastbourne.gov.uk and at the Council's main office at 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne during office hours for the whole consultation period. Copies of the relevant documentation will be sent to all statutory consultees and any other targeted groups where appropriate. A notice will be placed in the local newspaper (Eastbourne Gazette) and on the Council's website at www.eastbourne.gov.uk. This will advise where and when the document can be inspected, how copies can be obtained, what the closing date is, and where to send representations. The consultation period will last for 12 weeks.
- 3.5 A further report will then be brought to this committee, outlining the results of the public consultation and making final recommendations.

4.0 Financial and Staffing Implications:

- 4.1 The cost of the consultation will be met from within existing budgets and will largely consist of staff time.

5.0 Other Implications

- 5.1 There are no youth, sustainability, anti-poverty, equality or community safety implications as a direct result of the draft documents.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The draft Guidance Manual establishes the framework through which designation and the boundaries of the Borough's conservation areas can be assessed objectively in order to ensure that the designation of these areas are firm, can be justified and are defensible.

Sandra O'Brien
Conservation Officer

Background Papers:

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

Eastbourne Borough Plan (2001 – 2011)
Statement of Community Involvement (June 2009)