

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 2 September 2013

Portfolio:	Strategic Planning and Environment
Subject:	Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy
Report of:	Director of Planning and Environment
Strategy/Policy:	Fareham Borough Local Plan
Corporate Objective:	Protect and Enhance the Environment

Purpose:

This report summarises the outcome of public consultation on the draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Strategy for Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area and proposes its adoption.

Executive summary:

This report relates to the Council's programme for the review of the adopted conservation area character assessments. It recommends adoption of the revised Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy which has taken into account the outcome of the draft document consultation and guidance produced by English Heritage.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that:-

- (a) The Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy, as set out in Appendix A to this report, be adopted as evidence in support of the Fareham Borough Local Plan Review (June 2000), the policies contained within the Fareham Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy and the emerging policies of the Fareham Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites & Policies.
- (b) Delegated authority is granted to the Director of Planning and Environment in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Environment to make minor factual and formatting alterations prior to publication of the adopted document.

Reason:

The documents continue the Council's programme for re-appraisal of the adopted Conservation Area Character Assessments which currently play a key role in helping to identify the heritage significance of conservation areas and in preserving and enhancing their character and appearance through the development management process and in liaison with statutory undertakers.

Cost of proposals:

The operation of the management strategy will be undertaken through existing officer resource and departmental budgets. Any environmental improvement works will be subject to the availability of additional funding.

Appendices: A: Draft document consultation comments, responses and action table

B: Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy

Background papers: Individual responses to the public consultation.

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date: 2 September 2013

Subject: Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy

Briefing by: Director of Planning and Environment

Portfolio: Strategic Planning and Environment

INTRODUCTION

1. This report seeks adoption of the revised Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy document for Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area following public consultation. This continues the programme of re-appraisal of the Council's adopted character appraisal documents. The first Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area Character Assessment was adopted in 2003.
2. English Heritage guidance concerning conservation area management advises Local Authorities to produce conservation area character appraisals and management strategies and to keep them up to date.

THE ROLE OF CHARACTER APPRAISALS

3. A Conservation Area Character Appraisal identifies the qualities of a conservation area that give it heritage significance. Character can derive from the age and style of individual buildings, the way groups of buildings are arranged, the spaces between them, their historical significance in the development of an area and their use. Other factors such as; open spaces, landscaping, trees and important views all interact to form the overall character of an area. In order to make informed decisions about development that affects the character of a conservation area it is essential to have a clear understanding of its heritage significance through an up to date character appraisal document.
4. The appraisal documents also have a general role to play in informing local residents and others about the history of the borough's older settlements and those aspects of their character and appearance that it is important to protect.

THE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

5. In line with current English Heritage guidance the updated character appraisal has been amended to include a management strategy that sets out the Council's approach to the conservation of the conservation area. It outlines the procedures currently in place to manage change and proposes additional measures and

opportunities for enhancement as identified by the appraisal.

6. The draft management strategy (as published for public consultation) proposed measures and enhancements to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area including the following:
 - Monitoring by photographic survey every four years and periodic street audit.
 - Liaison with other bodies, including statutory undertakers and other Council departments who are responsible for, or undertake, works or re-instatements that are likely to affect the character and appearance of the conservation area.
 - Opportunities for enhancement including:
 - Titchfield Abbey Garden Centre - Improvements to signage, removal of derelict greenhouses to improve the setting of the scheduled ancient monument, listed buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area;
 - Improvements to road junction of Fishers Hill and Mill Lane to improve the setting of the scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area;
 - Removal of unsightly agricultural building to the east of Fernhill Farmhouse to improve the setting of the scheduled ancient monuments, the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area;
 - Improvements to the gates at the entrance to the monastic barn.

THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

7. Public consultation on the draft Character Appraisal and Management Strategy was undertaken between 13th May and 10th June 2013. It comprised:
 - A display in the Titchfield Community Centre where copies of the document and a comment sheet were made available. The display was periodically manned by an officer of the Council for a number of morning, afternoon and evening sessions to help with enquiries.
 - A letter posted to all residents and premises within the conservation area boundary notifying them of the draft document, the display in the community centre and the period of consultation. Consultation letters were also sent to the Fareham Society, Fareham Local History Group, Titchfield Residents Association, Catisfield Residents Association, Titchfield Local History Society, English Heritage, Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Mills Group, Hampshire Wildlife Trust and other relevant statutory undertakers.
 - Placement of an advertisement by site notice at locations within the conservation area boundary notifying of the draft document, the display in the community centre and the period of consultation.
 - Details on the Council's website, including the draft document for download, a copy of the display material from the community centre and access to an online comment sheet. A link to the Council's web site was included on all the consultation material.

8. The consultation asked for comments on the following:
- **Question 1.** The key features identified in the character appraisal to be preserved or enhanced;
 - **Question 2.** The proposed opportunities identified in the character appraisal for enhancing character and appearance;
 - **Question 3.** The key views identified in the document and any additional views thought to be of importance;
 - **Question 4.** Any general comments.

THE OUTCOME OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

9. In total 16 representations were received from; English Heritage, Catisfield Village Association, Hampshire County Council, an interested landowner/development interest, and a number of local residents. Their comments raised a wide range of issues with some responses related to the specific questions asked in the questionnaire while some raised other issues. A summary of the views received is set out below and a more detailed table of comments is attached at Appendix A. The table includes an officer response indicating amendments made to the document where appropriate, or other actions.

Responses to Question 1

10. There were 16 comments made relating to this question. Seven were in broad support of the key areas identified. Other comments received related to the importance of preserving the rural character of the countryside, views and footpaths, the degree of detail that should be included, and the lack of local knowledge of the history of the area.

Responses to Question 2

11. There were 25 comments made in response to this question. There was overall support for the opportunities set out in the document. One comment requested more information about what the improvements to the junction of Fishers Hill would involve and how this may impact on parking. More general comments received in relation to this section included the view that proposed improvements were not extensive or ambitious enough, greater engagement with local interest groups was required, new buildings and extensions should be restricted and that any enhancements should reflect the existing character of the area. A need for more information about the area and greater public access was also identified.

Responses to Question 3

12. There were 13 comments made in response to this question with general support for the views and their protection and/or enhancement identified in the document. Specific comments included the need for careful consideration of the impact of development in respect of views, and the desirability of information boards on the footpaths for interpretation. Two comments considered that view no.1 from the top of the western side of the valley behind the Holiday Inn is not important as it is partially obscured from the footpath by trees.

Responses to Question 4

13. There were 13 responses to this section relating to general comments about the document and the Conservation Area. These raised issues such as ensuring that there is no more development, the need for more information and interpretation about the area's history, the importance of the area being retained as countryside, and the importance of the areas biodiversity and habitat. Conversely one comment suggested that harm caused by further urban encroachment as identified in the document should be reviewed in light of the potential for new development to the east (rear) of the Holiday Inn and north of the A27.

Buildings at Risk

14. The Council has been informed that owing to the use of the Monastic Barn by the Titchfield Festival Theatre, which will result in maintenance and a regular presence on the site, the building is now to be removed from the English Heritage 'Heritage at Risk Register'.

Archaeology

15. Corrected information has been received concerning the archaeological designations, their area of coverage and status, to update the text and maps.

Specific Highway and Traffic Matters

16. A number of comments were received that are more specifically about the management of the highway and traffic. These include such issues as yellow lines, parking, speed and safety, traffic volumes, drainage and lorry routing. These issues will be raised with the Highway Authority. This liaison process is identified within the Management Strategy of the document.

Development and Planning Matters

17. With regard to wider planning and development issues, these will be considered through the normal planning process having regard to the saved policies contained within the Fareham Borough Local Plan Review (June 2000), the policies contained within the Fareham Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy, the emerging policies of the Fareham Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites & Policies and the evidence set out in the Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy. This approach is identified within the Management Strategy of the document.

NEXT STEPS

18. The Character Appraisal and Management Strategy document has been amended following the responses to the consultation and is attached at Appendix B. It is recommended that the Executive agrees to the adoption of the Titchfield Abbey Character Appraisal and Management Strategy. The document will then be published on the Council's website and those consultees who asked to be kept informed will be notified.
19. Following adoption the Character Appraisal and Management Strategy will be used as evidence in support of the saved policies of the Fareham Borough Local Plan Review (June 2000), the policies contained within the Fareham Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy and the emerging policies of the Fareham Local Plan Part 2:

Development Sites & Policies. As such, the content of the documents is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

ACTIONS FOLLOWING PANEL MEETING

20. When the Strategic Planning and Environment Policy Development and Review Panel considered the draft appraisal and management strategy document, a couple of specific issues were raised by Members. These are being followed up by officers. The next two paragraphs describe situation at the time of drafting this briefing paper.
21. An additional interpretation board at Titchfield Abbey to give more detailed information about the history of the buildings and other features within the wider landscape context was suggested. English Heritage has responded positively to the possibility of an additional interpretation board in the abbey grounds, stating, "In principle it makes perfect sense to install a panel at the abbey which would help to contextualise the abbey and enable visitors to better understand its relationship with other elements of the local historic environment - the barn and the fish ponds spring immediately to mind. The location of the sign will obviously need to avoid known areas of archaeological sensitivity and should, I expect, follow the design of the existing panels." And, "Your councillors should be aware that as well as the cost of producing the panel there is likely to be a requirement for an archaeological watching brief to cover the works." The possibility of English Heritage being able to provide funding either in this or the next financial year is currently being explored.
22. Concern was expressed that the increased flooding of the River Meon could pose a risk to the integrity of the Anjou Bridge. Officers agreed to investigate with the Environment Agency and/or landowner whether the management of the valley floor would lead to ever worsening flooding and whether this could potentially lead to damage of the Anjou Bridge. Enquiries have been made with the Environment Agency and a response remains outstanding.

CONCLUSION

23. The Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy continues the Council's programme for re-appraisal of the adopted Conservation Area Character Assessments which currently play a key role in helping to identify the heritage significance of conservation areas and in preserving and enhancing their character and appearance through the development management process.
24. The document has been prepared following best practice guidance set out by English Heritage and has taken account of the comments raised by the community of Titchfield and other interested organisations.

Reference Papers:

Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management – English Heritage (2011)

Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area Character Assessment (2003)

Titchfield Abbey Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy - Consultation Draft (March 2013)