

## **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

**DATE OF MEETING: 17 OCTOBER 2023**

**TITLE OF REPORT: CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL ACTION PLAN**

**Report of: Executive Director – Place**

**Cabinet Portfolio: Planning Policy and Place**

**Key Decision: No**

**Confidentiality: Non Exempt**

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To provide an update on the Action Plan following the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's task & finish group which reviewed the process around the production of Conservation Area Appraisals.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

2. That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes and provides comments on the following draft Action Plan following the Overview & Scrutiny Committees task & finish group which reviewed the process around the production of Conservation Area Appraisals.

## **BACKGROUND**

3. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee established a task & finish group to consider the process around the production of Conservation Area Appraisals.
4. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee in June 2023 received feedback from the task & finish group. The group made 16 recommendations to assist the process going forward.
5. The Chief Executive and the Executive Director – Place thanked the task & finish group and said their work had been really helpful. The Executive Director agreed to return in the Autumn to provide an update on the actions against each of the recommendations.
6. It was commented that the Council was a very "lean" organisation, and it was possible that in house support would not always be available and that Parishes should be encouraged to use outside consultants.
7. A query was raised about the appraisal reports. It was agreed that all reports should be created on Microsoft Office compatible platforms. The quality and standard of the reports was also discussed. The meeting was told that the Conservation Area Appraisals should be robust enough to provide the evidence required should they be needed to be used in a planning appeal.
8. It was discussed that Historic England published a best practice guide Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management – Advice Note 1. This is an important guide, and Parish and Town Councils should consider this advice in addition to any guidance from the Council.
9. Attached at Appendix 1 is the draft Action Plan. A Word document conservation area appraisal template has been drafted and is attached at Appendix 2.
10. The Action Plan refers to additional guidance note(s). These are being developed, and it is expected these will be published on the Council's website

before the end of the year. The templates and guidance notes will be living documents, and so will be updated in light of new questions which may be raised during their use.

11. Appendix 3 reproduces a note previously sent to all Parish and Town Councils on Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

12. The alternative option is not to produce an Action Plan.

## **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040**

13. The Corporate Plan includes under the Place objective to 'ensure new development is well designed creating safe, inclusive environments and taking account of character, local distinctiveness and sustainable design principles'. A conservation area appraisal helps to understand the significant and important character and local distinctiveness of the Conservation Area.
14. This Action Plan, and the guidance which flows from it, will help provide ensure we deliver best customer service and advice to our Parish and Town Councils. This forms part of the objective of building a resilient Council.
15. The production of conservation area appraisals helps the promotion of culture and heritage which is part of theme three in the 2040 Vision.

### **Service Plan**

- Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan? No
- Is the proposal being funded from current budgets? Yes
- Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?  
Yes

### **Legal and Constitutional Issues**

16. There are no legal or constitutional issues arising from this report.

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

17. There are no financial or resource implications arising from this report.

### **Risk Management**

18. There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

## **EQUALITIES**

19. There are no Equality issues arising from the recommendations in this report.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

20. No direct carbon/environmental impacts arise from the recommendations in this report.

## **ACTION**

21. Subject to any comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committee the Action Plan will be finalised.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1:** Action Plan

**Appendix 2:** Word version template of a conservation area appraisal

### **Appendix 3: Note on Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.**

#### **Background Papers**

Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management; Historic England Advice Note 1 (Second Edition); February 2019.