

**Meeting Date: 20 February 2024**

**Issue Title: Conservation Area Appraisal Guidance Note**

**Report of: Executive Director – Place**

**Cabinet Portfolio: Planning Policy and Place**

**Key Decision: No**

**Confidentiality: Non-Exempt**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To update the Committee on progress addressing task and finish group recommendations regarding Parish & Town Council led conservation area appraisals (CAAs), in particular the production of a guidance note.

### **Recommendation**

2. Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
  - note the completion of Guidance Note for Parish & Town Councils at Appendix 1, and
  - agree that the recommendations of the task and finish group, set out at Appendix 2, have been addressed.

### **Background**

3. In 2023 the Overview & Scrutiny Committee established a task & finish group to consider the process of conservation area appraisals (CAAs) led by Parish & Town Councils.
4. In June 2023 Overview & Scrutiny received feedback from the task & finish group. The group made a set of recommendations to improve the process going forward (see Appendix 2, column 1).
5. In October 2023 the Committee were updated on the Action Plan which reviewed progress against each of the recommendations (see Appendix 2, column 2). The Committee was also shown a CAA template.
6. It was noted that some of the recommendations would be addressed in a Guidance Note which at that time was still being drafted. It was agreed to report back to O&S in February 2024.

### **Main Issues**

7. The guidance note for Parish & Town Councils is attached at Appendix 1.
8. Appendix 2 provides a further update on the Action Plan at column 3, where it identifies how the guidance note addresses the task and finish group recommendations.
9. Subject to any comments on the Guidance Note, this completes the actions arising from the task and finish group recommendations.
10. The Guidance Note is a live document, which will be updated and refined in light of experience and feedback.
11. Similarly, the CAA template will continue to be refined.

## **Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

12. The alternative option is not to prepare the guidance, but there are clear benefits to producing the guidance as recommended by the task and finish group.

## **Corporate Governance Considerations**

### **Relevance to the Corporate Plan 2023-2027**

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. The Guidance Note will help provide best customer service and advice to our Parish & Town Councils. This forms part of the objective of building a resilient Council.

## **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**

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

## **Financial and Resource Implications**

16. There are no financial or resource implications arising from this report other than the commitment in terms of officer time to continually update and refine the guidance note and template.

## **Risk Management**

17. The guidance reduces the risk of Parish & Town Councils preparing conservation area appraisals that cannot be adopted due to content or process issues.

## **Equalities**

18. There are no equality issues arising from the recommendations in this report.

## **Climate Change Implications**

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

## **Actions**

20. To publish the Guidance Note on the Council's website.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Guidance Note for Parish & Town Councils

Appendix 2 – Updated Conservation Area Appraisals Process Action Plan