

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Decision Made: 8 March 2024

Over-arching Conservation Management Plan

Issue for Decision

To seek approval for the Over-arching Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan being publicly consulted on, and for this to be facilitated by the Head of Development Management via delegated powers.

The document has been drafted to address concerns that there was limited guidance on the 22 Conservation Areas that do not have either a Conservation Area Appraisal or Management Plan.

Decision Made

That

1. The Overarching Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be approved for public consultation; and
2. Delegated powers be given to the Head of Development Management to allow for public consultation, as required under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990.

Reasons for Decision

Writing, consulting, and getting approval for a full Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) takes several months to complete, and therefore it was considered that a quick short-term solution could be to provide an Over-arching Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) in the interim, for those areas that currently have no appraisal or management plan. This will provide general guidance and information prior to the completion of a new full CAAMP for each individual Conservation Area. Once the full CAAMP has been completed, the CA can then be removed from the Over-arching CAMP.

The Over-arching CAMP is expected to improve awareness of the positive aspects of Conservation Areas within these communities, which are recognised for their unique heritage character, and enable positive and informed enhancements to benefit residents and visitors.

For Conservation Areas that do not have an appraisal or management plan, the new Over-arching CAMP will ensure that informed and justified planning decisions are easier to make. The report brings together legislation and other information from Local Plan, SPDs, and Historic England guidance, rather than proposing or creating additional restrictions for the owners of properties within the CA's.

For the Conservation Areas that currently have Appraisals and Management Plans, some of these are dated, or are not as comprehensive as the Over-Arching CAMP. It is therefore recommended that the produced document can help support the existing CAAMP's until there the review of the CAAMP can be undertaken, as required under the Planning Act 1990.

General Note

Conservation Areas, a designated heritage asset, do not stop or prevent development, but are a way of ensuring that any development or change to the area retains or enhances the character and setting of the settlement. The proposed CAMP provides guidance to ensure that we protect and enhance our conservation areas until they have their own CAAMP, as required under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The CAMP does not consider implementing Article 4 Directives but does provide guidance about what they are, and where they already exist (in Appendix 1 to the report).

Consultation and Guidance

A hybrid event briefing was held with invitations sent to the Parish Councils who have conservation areas that have no appraisals or management plans, and the Planning Committee. The attendance was good (11) and a discussion was undertaken by all, raising their concerns, and the general support for the document. Queries were raised regarding the implementations of Art. 4 Directives, and it was advised that this was currently being reviewed separately. Concern was raised that some of the existing CAAMP's had older or less comprehensive Management Plans, and it was raised whether this document could help support these existing plans, until they could be reviewed.

To run alongside the CAMP, a revised and up-dated guidance for Owners/ Occupiers within CA's will be issued which is hoped to provide answers to some of the frequently asked questions, queries and misunderstanding regarding CAs.

This should help us to improve communication with residents and conservation area stakeholders.

As part of the engagement, it is proposed to hold a few workshops as part of the general consultation process with parish councils (which councillors and public are welcome to attend) to provide additional information and guidance about how we can work together, with supporting bodies, to enable the best management of conservation areas.

The document should sit along existing plans, and where there is a conflict, the full CAAMP for the CA will have president, with the over-arching plan 'filling in the blanks' or providing additional information. The Case Officers (Planners) will have to give the new plan as much weight when they are assessing the application as they would to any other full CAAMP.

This was presented to the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee on 6 March 2024 with the Committee supporting the recommendations. Appendix 1 to the report was amended following Committee comments, with the changes on page 20 in relation to electric vehicle charging

points.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development could choose not to approve the report recommendations.

This option was not selected as an over-arching conservation management plan will enable Planning to make informed, justified decisions that would otherwise be difficult to undertake and will improve awareness of the positive aspects of Conservation Areas within these communities.

Background Papers

Draft Programme showing proposed timeframe for completing CAAMP and undertaking review of the CA boundary's, as required under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

I have read and approved the above decision for the reasons (including possible alternative options rejected) as set out above.



Signed: _____
Councillor Paul Cooper, Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development

Full details of both the report for the decision taken above and any consideration by the relevant Policy Advisory Committee can be found at the following area of the [website](#)

Call-In: Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call-in form signed by any three Members to the Proper Officer by: **5pm on 20 March 2024**