

## THE EXECUTIVE

27 MARCH 2007

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION

<b>Title:</b> Barking Abbey and Barking Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan	For Decision
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>It is an expectation of the Government and best practice that local authorities have an appraisal and a management plan for of each of their conservation areas in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance 15 (Planning and the historic environment). Currently the conservation areas in LBBD do not have appraisals. The purpose of an appraisal of an existing conservation area is to re-assess and evaluate it and to determine how it is conserved and managed in the future. The community will be involved in the appraisal process. A series of appraisals and management plans will be put to the Executive over the next few months. The first one to be completed is the Barking Abbey and Town Centre Conservation Area. The appraisal will be adopted by the Council and reviewed every five years.</p> <p>Further work will be required (adding the comments from English Heritage, maps/photos/etc) to fully explain the information prior to consultation.</p> <p>The purpose of the appraisal is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• determine the conservation and management of the conservation area</li><li>• inform heritage and conservation policy of the emerging Local Development Framework Plan</li><li>• provide appropriate guidance to help determine planning applications relating to conservation area</li><li>• meet the requirements of Best Value Performance Indicator 219 (BVPI 219)</li><li>• enable engagement through public consultation</li></ul> <p><b>Wards Affected</b> Abbey, Gascoigne</p> <p><b>Implications</b></p> <p><b>Financial:</b> The financial resources for developing and consulting on the conservation area appraisal can be met from within existing Spatial Regeneration budgets. There is potential for additional costs arising from the management of the conservation area. These costs will be identified as part of the adoption of the conservation area appraisals by the Council.</p> <p><b>Legal:</b> It is not a legal requirement to prepare conservation area appraisals but the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out local authorities' responsibilities to preserve and enhance conservation areas. For example Conservation Area Consent is</p>	

required from the local authority for certain types of work in a conservation area and failure to obtain this can lead to enforcement action.

**Risk Management:**

The risk of not producing the appraisals is that the conservation areas could decline in quality and the Council would not meet the requirements of BV219. There is no risk identified in the Council approving the recommendations of this Executive Report.

**Social Inclusion and Diversity:**

Where there is a well-understood and interpreted local heritage the social inclusion and community cohesion implications are likely to be highly positive. There may be potential tensions where improvements have been made or are planned to for example the public realm in order to improve perhaps accessibility for disabled people. These may not be sensitive to the needs of a conservation area. The appraisal and the management plan will address this so that such issues are managed in an appropriate way.

**Crime and Disorder:**

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a responsibility on local authorities to consider the crime and disorder implications of any proposals. A conservation area that is well cared for can contribute to the local identity of an area and encourage a sense of pride in the local environment. The appraisal assesses the existing condition of conservation area and involves the community in the preparation of the management proposals. The appraisal can help determine how to protect the historic features.

**Recommendation**

The Executive is recommended to:

1. Approve the draft conservation area appraisal and authorise the Corporate Director of Regeneration to make any non-material changes necessary for wider consultation; and,
2. Agree that the consultation process as detailed in the report can be carried out.

**Reason**

The implementation of the recommendations will assist the organisation in meeting the Council's performance indicators. It will also contribute to the community priority of Raising Pride in the Borough.

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## 1. Background

- 1.1 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a conservation area as an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The Act sets out the local authorities powers to designate conservation areas and their responsibilities to conserve and enhance them. PPG15 sets out Government policy on conservation areas and historic buildings. It defines the purpose of a character appraisal as to clearly identify what it is about the character or appearance of the area which should be preserved or enhanced, and to set out the means by which that objective is to be pursued, and that the clear assessment and definition of an area's special interest and the action needed to protect it will help to generate awareness and encourage local property owners to take the right sort of action for themselves.
- 1.2 A local authority's performance on the preservation of conservation areas is measured by the Department Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Best Value Indicator BV219 which requires appraisals to be carried out in order to provide a sound basis for their designation and management and to inform the Local Development Framework.
- 1.3 The London Plan policies on heritage issues (4B.10 to 4B.17) set out how to safeguard the historic environment, historic views and encourage sensitive management in local plan policies. The relevant policy in the emerging Local Development Framework is The Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings BP2.
- 1.4 Linked to this is work being undertaken to update the LBBDD list of Listed Buildings. Currently there are thirty seven statutorily protected buildings and structures (ie protected by law). These are listed by English Heritage. There are forty seven locally listed buildings or Buildings of Merit which means they not protected by law but are recognised for their architectural importance, townscape value or historic association. The number of locally listed buildings may change as each building is assessed to consider its continued inclusion on the list and any more that should be added.
- 1.5 The appraisals are being prepared in line with English Heritage's 'Guidance on conservation area appraisals' published in February 2006.
- 1.6 There are currently four conservation areas in the borough Dagenham Village, The Chadwell Heath Anti aircraft Gun site of Whalebone Lane North, Abbey Riverside on Abbey Road, and Abbey and Barking Town Centre. As this report is about the Barking Town Centre one, this is described below:

Barking Abbey and Barking Town Centre- originally designated on 8 October 1975 as the Barking Abbey Grounds and Town Quay and extended and renamed on 26 May 1992. It includes Abbey Green and part of East Street and centres on the Abbey ruins. It includes a number of statutory and locally listed buildings including the local landmarks of St Margaret's Church (Grade I), Curfew Tower (Grade II). The main issues are that the Barking Town Centre is a designated Zone of Change in the London Plan as part of the Thames

Gateway so it is important to consider the conservation area in the context of the ongoing redevelopment of the town centre.

## **2. Content**

2.1 The appraisal is in two main parts, Part One- Conservation Character Appraisal and Part Two- Management Proposals. The first part provides a general introduction to conservation areas, goes on to give a description of the historical development of the conservation area, then describes the conservation area in more detail (topography, views, layout, use etc). There are two further sub-sections outlining possible issues and opportunities for enhancement. The Management Proposals in Part Two are a list of action points suggesting ways to preserve the conservation areas for the future and are to be developed with the relevant community groups.

## **3. Financial Implications**

### **3.1 Capital Issues**

There are no direct capital financial implications arising from this report.

### **3.2 Revenue Issues**

This report has no direct revenue implications. Developing the appraisals will be undertaken by Spatial Regeneration staff. Consultation will be carried out with a small number of targeted groups, will take the form of informal meetings and as such will incur minimal cost. These costs will be met from within existing Spatial Regeneration budgets. The Council will explore possibilities for funding enhancements to the conservation area. Opportunities include:

- Section 106 agreements with regard to improvements to the public realm, given the scale of development which is likely to happen in and around the town centre
- the conservation area appraisal is intended to guide future development much of which will be funded by property owners
- English Heritage operates a Conservation Area Partnership Scheme in conjunction with Local Authorities. Funding for the scheme is limited and much of the current funding is committed. The schemes are funded 50/50 by the Local Authority and English Heritage and work on a one to three year timescale to fund improvements which are part of a previously agreed strategy. The scheme requires a strong degree of commitment from the Borough.

3.3. Implementation of management proposals may have revenue implications. When the appraisals are to be formally adopted by the Council the financial implications will be explicitly set out. Where possible management and maintenance should be considered at the outset and projects linked to planning obligations to ensure adequate funding is available to manage areas on the basis of lifetime costs.

## **4. Consultation**

### **4.1 Consultation Process**

The consultation will be carried out when the appraisals are complete. Meetings / workshops will be held with stakeholders / expert groups from the Local Development Framework consultation data base such as the Barking Historical Society, Chadwell Heath Historical Society, the Marks Gate Agenda 21 Group, Friends of ZE1 and London Thames Gateway Development Corporation.

Comments will be sought on draft appraisals, proposed aims, proposed management actions.

There is ongoing liaison with English Heritage to progress the work. English Heritage have already commented on the draft appraisals and their comments are being taken into account. Details of the consultation will be advertised and responses recorded.

### **4.2 Consultation**

The following were consulted during the preparation of this report.

#### **Councillors**

Lead Councillors:

Councillor Little (Portfolio Holder for Heritage)

Councillor Rush (Portfolio Holder for Parks and Open Spaces)

Ward Councillors:

Abbey Ward, Councillors Alexander, Bramley and Fani

Gascoigne Ward, Councillors Flint, McKenzie and Rush

#### **Internal**

##### **Resources Department**

John Tatam, Corporate Director of Resources

Muhammad Saleem, Divisional Director Legal Services

Robin Hanton, Group Manager – Corporate /Legal

Alex Anderson, Group Manager, Group Manager Regeneration and Customer Services Finance

##### **Children's Services**

Roger Luxton, Director of Children's Services

Christine Pryor, Head of Shared Services and Engagement

Michael Freeman, Group Manager Asset Management and Capital

##### **Regeneration**

Tim Lewis, Group Manager Development and Building Control

Stephen Knell, Access Officer

##### **Customer Services**

David Woods, Corporate Director of Customer Services

## **Adult & Community Services**

Ann Bristow, Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services  
Heather Wills, Head of Community Services, Libraries and Heritage  
Sandra Rodney, Group Manager Equalities and Diversity

**External** Andrew Hargreaves English Heritage

## **Background Papers**

- Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) Planning and the historic environment
- Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals by English Heritage
- LBBD Heritage Strategy 2002
- Unitary Development Plan 1995
- Emerging Local Development Framework

## **Appendix**

(available in the Members' Rooms in the Town Hall, Civic Centre, and Barking Central Library)

**Appendix A-** Draft Barking Abbey and Barking Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

A paper copy of the above can be obtained from Francesca Cliff tel. 0208 227 3910 (direct line) and will shortly be available on the Councils website.