

ITEM

ITEM

Environment Policy Development Group – 9 January 2007

- 1. TOTNES CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL**
- 2. TOTNES CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Report of Head of Planning and Building Control

**Statutory Powers: Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act
1990**

Financial Implications: None

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present the final draft of the Totnes Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (prior to seeking adoption by the Full Council) and to set out a framework for the future approval and adoption of conservation area appraisals and management plans.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive be requested to **RECOMMEND** to the Council:

- (a) That the amended draft Totnes Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted.
- (b) That in the future, conservation area character appraisals be approved for consultation and adopted under delegated authority by the Head of Planning and Building Control in consultation with the relevant ward members and the appropriate Executive Member.
- (c) That in the future, conservation area management plans be approved for consultation and adopted under the delegated authority by the Head of Planning and Building Control in consultation with the relevant ward members and the appropriate Executive Member.

Background

1. Planning legislation places a duty on the Council to safeguard its historic built environment. The recommended methodology is to appraise regularly the value of our towns and villages through Conservation Area Appraisals which should provide a basis for action and control. The Government has recently introduced new Performance Indicators for local authorities based on the number of Conservation Areas within the district (BV219a), the percentage of these which have an up to date character appraisal (BV219b), and the percentage that have management proposals in place (BV219c). There is therefore a new incentive to produce Conservation Area Appraisals and management plans.

2. There are a total of 46 conservation areas lying within the South Hams outside the boundary of Dartmoor National Park. So far, seven of these have Appraisals in place. These documents describe the conservation area's townscape quality and character and how it has developed; define what is positive and what is negative and identify opportunities for positive change. Totnes is one of the most important historic towns in Britain and in terms of its historic built environment is the jewel in the South Hams crown. The complexity of the Conservation Area Appraisal reflects this as does the priority of its appraisal and management plan.
3. The Management Plan builds on the contents of the Conservation Area Appraisal, setting out a consistent, positive planning approach for the area. Because this is the first Management Plan for a South Hams Conservation Area, it was taken (in draft form) to the Environment Policy Design Group in January together with the draft Conservation Area Appraisal prior to going to public consultation.
4. In order to ensure that the documents have the backing of the local community, they were subject to public consultation which took place in May and involved notification of consultees, notification of those affected by boundary changes to the conservation area and well publicised exhibitions at Follaton House, The Guildhall and Totnes Public Library.
5. The responses received following the public consultation principally concerned details of the text and format rather than the content. These comments have been addressed (see Appendix C). In response to some comments, an Executive Summary of the appraisal has also been produced and this is attached for consideration (see Appendix D).
6. Members are invited to consider the final drafts of the Totnes Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan in the light of the officer comments (see Appendix A &B).
7. Owing to the recently introduced requirement to produce a management plan and the introduction of the best value performance indicators mentioned above, the draft Totnes Appraisal and Management Plan were first submitted to the Environment Policy Development Group (on February 23 2006) prior to consultation. The amended draft is being submitted for consideration prior to be taken before the full Council.
8. In the Council meeting of 20th December 2001, delegated authority was granted to the Chief Environment and Development Officer to approve and adopt conservation area appraisals in consultation with the Ward Member(s) and the Chairman of the Development Control. The purpose of this was to streamline the production of the Appraisals and, in particular, to minimise the period of time between completion of the 'consultation draft' and adoption of the 'final draft'. It is proposed that future appraisals be approved and adopted under a similar delegated system.

9. Five years ago, there was no requirement or intention to produce conservation area management plans and delegated authority for their approval and adoption was therefore not considered at the above council meeting. As their content should not be contentious, members are invited to consider whether these could be approved and adopted under similar delegated powers. Where a management plan requires the provision of new unallocated Council resources there will be a requirement to submit this aspect of the plan to Executive.

Strategic Risk Assessment

Risk	Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse impact of development on corporate priority CP3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up-to-date guidance reflecting Council policies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertain or inconsistent development advice in conservation areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up-to-date guidance to provide equal access to advice for all customers and stakeholders.

Conclusion

10. Officers conclude that the Totnes Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan form a vital link in the planning framework and recommend that they be recommended to the Council for adoption.
11. It is recommended that future appraisals and management plans be approved for consultation and subsequently adopted under delegated powers.

Stephen Munday
Head of Planning and Building Control

Environment PDG
 9 January 2007

Background Papers

Appendix A. Totnes Conservation Area Appraisal (Amended Draft)

Appendix B. Totnes Conservation Area Management Plan (Amended Draft)

Appendix C. Comments and responses for Public Consultation

Appendix D. Executive Summary of the Appraisal