

**CABINET MEMBER FOR TOWN CENTRES, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND
PROSPERITY**

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, ROTHERHAM.
S60 2TH**

Date: Monday, 28th November, 2011

Time: 10.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are likely to be considered under the categories suggested, in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended March 2006) to the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
3. The Designation of a new Conservation Area - Letwell (report herewith) (Pages 1 - 7)
 - Jon Bell, Conservation Officer, to report.
4. Sustainability Appraisal of Core Strategy Publication Version (report herewith) (Pages 8 - 15)
 - Ryan Shepherd, Forward Planning, to report.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Town Centres, Economic Growth and Prosperity
2.	Date:	28 November 2011
3.	Title:	The Designation of a new Conservation Area - Letwell
4.	Directorate:	Environment & Development Services

5. Summary

Within the Borough there are 26 existing Conservation Areas. The Local Planning Authority has a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to review the exercise of its functions in respect of the designation of conservation areas and to consider the designation of further parts of its area as conservation areas. Additionally, ENV2.10 of the Unitary Development Plan identified a potential twelve further settlements for designation as Conservation Areas.

Public consultation on these twelve settlements has been carried out as part of this years draft Local Development Framework Core Strategy consultation that included public drop in sessions throughout the Borough.

This proposal will create a new Conservation Area to include the whole of the village of Letwell, commencing a rolling programme of Conservation Area designation which will consider all eleven settlements referred to above.

6. Recommendations

That the proposed Letwell Conservation Area be approved as shown on the attached map and as described in the Letwell Conservation Area Appraisal.

7. Proposals and Details

Background

Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 every Local Planning Authority has a duty to consider designating Conservation Areas. Since 1967 over 8000 have been designated in England alone.

Within the Borough of Rotherham there are currently 26 Conservation Areas. The first, in the town centre, were designated soon after the passing of the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. However, the majority were designated by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council following local government reorganisation in 1974.

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural interest, the character of which is desirable to preserve or enhance. Conservation Areas can be of many different kinds, from town centres to villages and even stretches of canals. They are often, but not exclusively centred on listed buildings. It is the character of the area, including its landscape qualities rather than the presence of individual buildings which justifies designation as a Conservation Area.

Our experience of historic areas depends on much more than the quality of individual buildings – on the historic layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares; on a particular mix of uses; on characteristic local materials; on appropriate scaling and detailing of contemporary buildings; on the quality of advertisements, shop fronts, street furniture and hard and soft surfaces; on vistas along streets and between buildings; and on the extent to which traffic intrudes and limits pedestrian use of spaces between buildings. Conservation area designation is seen as the means of recognising the importance of all these factors and of ensuring that conservation policy addresses the quality of townscape in its broadest sense as well as protecting individual buildings.

Character Appraisals are intended to recognise the conservation area's special historic, archaeological and architectural interest through maps, photographs and analysis of the area's development.

Within Conservation Areas the controls on development are more restrictive than elsewhere. Council must give special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character or appearance of the area via the following controls:-

- Apart from very small buildings, consent is required for the demolition of buildings.
- Trees within the area are protected and works cannot be carried out unless six weeks written notice is given to the Council
- Development which can be carried out without the need for planning permission is more limited.
- The Council must advertise any planning application which proposes development likely to affect the character and appearance of the area.

Rotherham Borough Conservation Area Review

In Rotherham the process of Conservation Area Review began in 1992 when the Report of Survey examined existing Conservation Areas and proposed new Conservation Areas. In the Unitary Development Plan the settlements listed below were identified as potential Conservation Areas:

- Maltby (Church)
- Letwell
- Stone
- Firbeck
- Ulley
- Thrybergh
- Upper Whiston
- Morthen
- Hooton Roberts
- Throapham
- Brookhouse
- Chesterfield Canal (Turnerwood)
- Chesterfield Canal (Norwood)

Appraisals have now been carried out on all the areas identified. With the exception of both of the areas of the Chesterfield Canal, it is considered that all have individual merit and therefore potential for designation as additional Conservation Areas. The Chesterfield Canal was discounted as the vast majority of the lock structures and bridges are adequately protected as listed buildings.

It is proposed to carry this out through a rolling programme of designation starting with those that are considered most meritorious and/or where there is perceived threats to the area through development.

Letwell

The village of Letwell lies to the east of Dinnington, in rolling farmland approximately 15km south east of Rotherham Town Centre. The village is washed over Green Belt and is designated as an area of High Landscape Value. The built up area of the village covers approximately 7 Hectares and is inhabited by approximately 42 households.

Within the settlement envelope there are no shops or public house, however, there is a church, St Peters, on the western edge of the village and also a village hall built in 1870 which has long been a focal point for social activities in the village.

Historically Letwell receives no mention in the Domesday Book. The first mention of Letwell in written records came during the early part of the 12th Century by which time the village was in the possession of landlords from Tickhill Castle. By 1379, the Poll Tax return for the village mentions 42 inhabitants. The area in the following centuries was extensively farmed, the surrounding field pattern determined by the medieval strip system of farming ended by the Enclosure Acts of the 19th Century

which saw the scattered strips amalgamated into compact blocks which farmers could cultivate more efficiently. In the last 60 years the landscape has changed yet again with smaller fields merged to create fields suitable for modern machinery and in response to government policy and EU subsidy.

Architecturally the village has developed around four roads, Gildingwells Road, church Road, Ramper Road and Barker Hades Road. A map of the village from 1615 shows the village developing around Barker Hades Road and unusually not around the Church of St Peter's which for centuries stood detached from the settlement. The majority of the buildings on Barker Hades Road were constructed during the Georgian period giving the village much of its impressive character today. This period of building also included the two farms, North and South Farm, which illustrate the link with the village's agricultural past. Of the two, only South farm is worked today, the North Farm complex having been converted to residential use in the 1990's.

Architecturally and historical, Letwell can be divided neatly in two. The area to the east of the junction with Ramper Road is old Letwell and has changed little since the first Ordnance Survey map of 1850. These buildings are almost exclusively built of course squared or rubble limestone with clay pantile roofs. This uniformity of building style is unusual in Rotherham and gives the buildings a significant group value which should be preserved.

To the west of Ramper Road, with a few notable exceptions, all buildings date from the 20th Century. Included within this part of the village are two pairs of Airey Houses, architectural curiosities built after the Second World War to provide temporary accommodation.

Within the village 14 of the properties are listed buildings. In the Borough as a whole, this is second only to Wentworth. As well as the listed buildings there are also a number of significant unlisted buildings that contribute to the character of the settlement.

Overall, Letwell is a remarkably well preserved agricultural village. Negative factors such as inappropriate window and door replacement are rare. Replacement and renovation works have generally been of a high standard. This has been achieved partly because of the high proportion of listed buildings but also because of the attitude of residents who tend to have a positive attitude towards the ideals of conservation.

In view of the above it is considered that Letwell clearly meets the criteria for Conservation Area designation. The proposed boundary covers a larger area than that proposed in the past. The area to the west of Ramper Road has been included to incorporate St Peter's church but also the 20th Century housing. It is felt that despite its more recent architecture this section of the village still manages to contribute to the "character" of the settlement.

By designating the village as a Conservation Area it will help ensure that the character of the settlement is retained and that future development is of a suitable quality that will enhance and not detract from its current appeal.

Consultation

There is no statutory requirement to consult prior to the designation of a conservation area, although consultation is seen as desirable to ascertain local opinion and generate local support for the designation and associated policy proposals. As regards Letwell, consultation has already been conducted via:-

- The 2011 Local Development Framework public consultation exercise into the Draft Core Strategy and Sites and Policies documents. This has taken place throughout the summer of 2011, including twenty public drop-in sessions throughout the Borough. All proposed Conservation Area boundaries and appraisals were made available on the Council's website
- Consultation with Letwell Parish Council. Discussions with the Clerk to the Parish have been extensive. To assist in the process, the Parish Council have recently included details of the proposal (including links to RMBC's website) in their Parish newsletter which is received by every household in the village.

Proposed Conservation Areas have been shown on the LDF's Proposal map. Consultation as part of the impending LDF was used as an ideal opportunity to test public opinion. In the case of Letwell, public opinion has been unanimously in favour of the proposal. In addition, Letwell Parish Council have consistently lobbied over the years in order to gain Conservation Area status for their village.

The only post designation requirement is to place a notice in a local paper and the London Gazette. English Heritage will also require notification of any future designations.

8. Finance

Carrying out public consultation as part of the Local Development Core Strategy and Sites and Policies process has involved a significant cost saving.

The designation of new conservation areas does not have any direct financial implications other than the required advertisement in both the London Gazette and the local press.

However, there are implications in relation to the slight increase of planning and advertisement applications for determination due to the more restrictive permitted development rights; for conservation area consents dealing with demolitions; and for tree works which will be met from existing resources. This will also be offset by the resulting increase in planning application fees and the greater certainty in the development control process which would introduce greater focus in negotiation and discussion of proposals.

Clear definition and explanation of the special architectural or historic interest an area possesses will also help in avoiding subsequent unnecessary and expensive planning appeals and/or legal challenges.

Section 77 of the 1990 Act provides for English Heritage to make grants or loans in respect of “any relevant expenditure which has made or will make a significant contribution towards the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of any Conservation Area or any part of any Conservation Area situated in England” Unfortunately, this is probably more theoretical than real given the shortage of English Heritage finance and other priorities. Such grant money as there is tends to go on large set-piece high grade listed buildings.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Without Conservation Area status, the historic character of some of Rotherham’s more idyllic settlements could be further undermined by development which is currently acceptable as permitted development. Since the first designations of Conservation Areas in the late 1960’s and 1970’s, the criteria for designation has changed dramatically. The first designations tended to be of very obvious groups of buildings, often tightly formed around individual special, and often listed, buildings or small areas of strongly similar architectural design. Later it was seen that larger areas, where less obvious origins such as topography, routes and use had produced a special character, could and should benefit from designation. Under evolving criteria, villages such as Letwell are now worthy of consideration for designation.

Heritage resources within the Authority are limited and therefore the funding required to undertake the preparation of long term Conservation Area Management Plans that could promote further investment opportunities may be difficult to obtain. However, funding may become available from English Heritage or through neighbourhood/community planning enabling future preparation of management plans.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Borough’s Conservation Areas are a key component of its vibrant communities which offer opportunities for the future, such as tourism and job creation. The effective protection of Conservation Areas, through analysis and good management, enhances quality of life for all and safeguards the environment. Investment in Conservation Areas with a business/ retail function can support local businesses by creating a climate for inward investment.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- Rotherham Unitary Development Plan (Adopted Version) (June 1999)
- English Heritage Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals (2011)
- Planning Policy Statement 5 : Planning for the Historic Environment (2010)

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Town Centres, Economic Growth and Prosperity
2.	Date:	28 November 2011
3.	Title:	Sustainability Appraisal of Core Strategy Publication Version
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

This report seeks an exemption from Standing Order 47.6.2 to allow orders to be placed with Jacobs Engineering Consultants to prepare the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Publication Version 2012.

6. Recommendations

That Cabinet Member approves the exempting of the proposed appointment of Jacobs Engineering Consultants to undertake the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Publication Version from Standing Order 47.6.2 (requirement to invite at least two oral or written quotations for contracts with an estimated value of £5,000 but less than £20,000).

7. Proposals and Details

At each stage in the preparation of the Local Development Framework the Council is required by national and European Law (EU SEA Directive 2001/42/EC) to undertake Sustainability Appraisal of the proposals.

Jacobs Consultancy were appointed by the Council in January 2011 to undertake the Integrated Impact Assessment of the Draft Core Strategy, following a competitive tendering procedure using the Homes and Communities Agency Panel. Further Sustainability Appraisal is now required to accompany the Core Strategy Publication Version. Attached at Appendix 1 is the Brief that will guide the contract to deliver this work.

Until recently we have not been in a position to appoint consultants to undertake further Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy. The Council undertook significant consultation on the Draft Core Strategy and Sites and Policies documents until September this year and until this was completed and work to analyse the responses begun we were not in a position to know the extent of any further sustainability work which would be required for our Core Strategy Publication Version. The scope of further work also required clarification from a legal standpoint; a legal conference which addressed this took place on 20th October.

The Sustainability Appraisal is required to be completed and consulted upon at the same time as the Core Strategy Publication Version; this will require the consultants to be appointed immediately to ensure completion of the appraisal to coincide with publication of the Core Strategy in February / March 2012. Attached at Appendix 2 is the Revised LDF Timetable presented to Members of the LDF Steering Group on 2nd November 2011.

Given the extensive Integrated Impact Assessment completed by Jacobs in May 2011, there will be significant economies of scale for the same consultancy to undertake this work particularly given the extremely tight timeframe for completion of the Sustainability Appraisal. They therefore have detailed knowledge of the earlier work undertaken (both our consultation documents and the Sustainability Appraisal work carried out by themselves) and direct access to relevant information within their own records.

Due to the technical nature of this work other consultancies undertaking the work would incur additional time and costs derived from reading and taking forward previous sustainability work undertaken by others and reading and understanding our Draft Core Strategy.

8. Finance

The total cost of services required from Jacobs Consultancy is currently being negotiated but is dependent on the amount of work required to be undertaken to Sustainably Appraise the Core Strategy Publication Version to comply with the Test of Soundness used to assess a Local Development Framework by the independent planning inspectorate. Initial discussions indicate that the cost of the study will be

between £5,000 and £10,000. These costs will be met from Forward Planning's budget.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Completion of the Sustainability Appraisal is dependent upon the Forward Planning Team analysing all representations received during the consultation into the Core Strategy and Sites and Policies Development Plan Document from July – September 2011, the preparation of a schedule of changes and the subsequent re-drafting of the Core Strategy for publication purposes. The results from the Infrastructure Delivery Study will not be available until early 2012 and any changes to the Core Strategy arising from this study will need to feed into the publication version of the Core Strategy. The Forward Planning Team are required to complete a Green Belt Review and we are asking the consultants to advise on the methodology and review the outcomes of this work to ensure it is fit for purpose. This is a significant piece of work and could take some time to complete.

Seeking tenders for this work would significantly delay the commencement of this Sustainability Appraisal and potentially impact on the timing and subsequent publication and submission of the Core Strategy. The Localism Bill will bring in a "presumption in favour of sustainable development" if an adopted development plan is not in place by the end of 2012. This could lead to the Council having to grant planning permission for major (Greenfield) development contrary to our priorities, aspirations or locational preferences.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The appointment of consultants with previous detailed knowledge of the project will enable the Council to adhere to its timetable for publication of the Core Strategy in February / March 2012.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Consultation on this report has been undertaken with the Council's legal and financial programme areas. The Senior Manager, Legal and Electoral Services, supports the recommendation for the reasons outlined in the report and, as the contract with Jacobs was originally let in January 2011, Jacobs' prices are likely to be still competitive.

Appendix 1: Consultants brief

Appendix 2: Revised LDF Timetable

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Appendix 1; Consultants Brief

Rotherham Local Development Framework Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Publication Version

3 November 2011

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Introduction

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is seeking assistance for the ongoing Sustainability Appraisal of its Local Development Framework based upon a previously developed local methodology.

Background

Rotherham Borough Council is preparing its Local Development Framework (LDF) which will eventually replace the Borough's Unitary Development Plan which was adopted in June 1999.

Sustainable Development is the core principle underpinning planning and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires LDF preparation to be informed by Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating the requirements of the EU SEA Directive 2001/42/EC). Government Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal of Local Development Frameworks is included in the CLG Plan Making Manual (September 2009).

The Local Development Framework's existing Sustainability Appraisal methodology was developed by ARUP and subsequently by WSP Environmental Ltd, further refinements and an update of the Scoping Report were prepared by Jacobs in their preparation of the Integrated Impact Assessment of the Draft Core Strategy July 2011. These earlier Sustainability Appraisals and reports can be viewed at www.rotherham.gov.uk/forwardplanning. The methodology has been used to inform preparation of the Core Strategy from inception.

The Draft Core Strategy was published for consultation in July until September 2011. For more detail please see www.rotherham.gov.uk/forwardplanning.

The Draft Core Strategy proposed a Borough growth strategy and settlement hierarchy. Broad locations for growth were identified and the Council made clear its intention to undertake a Green Belt Review to meet its own locally determined targets for housing and employment purposes. The Draft Core Strategy also consulted on a full suite of strategic policies to guide future spatial decision-making throughout the Borough and to guide discussions in the wider Sheffield City Region.

The Sustainability Appraisal of the Draft Core Strategy included an assessment of the alternative broad locations for growth and major settlement expansion sites.

It is intended that the Core Strategy Publication Version will be consulted upon early in 2012 date to be determined following further project management of the LDF preparation process. It is anticipated that the Core Strategy will be submitted to the Government in mid 2012.

Preparation of the Preferred Options Sites and Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) is underway. It is intended to undertake consultation on this DPD mid 2012, although consideration will need to be given to the harmonisation in the preparation of the Core Strategy with the Sites and Policies DPD and the availability of resources. A Borough-wide sites survey in 2008, the nearly completed Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and the Employment Land Review (ELR) identified a number of potential allocations. These potential allocations support the Core Strategy and will be subject to a Green Belt Review to ensure a methodical approach to the selection and allocation for future development of those sites that will have the least impact on the Green Belt, is prepared.

Purpose of Commission

The Borough Council wishes to appoint Jacobs consultants to undertake sustainability appraisal of the Publication Version of the Core Strategy.

At the same time we require the Habitats Regulation Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment to be reviewed and updated if necessary.

The use of Jacobs consultants, with your expertise and experience achieved in undertaking the Integrated Impact Assessment of the Draft Core Strategy is considered a valuable opportunity to add benefit to the development and implementation of the process. The role of consultants operating at arm's length on an objective and independent basis is considered particularly valuable.

The commission will ensure the continued development of a Rotherham-specific Sustainability Appraisal to demonstrate that the LDF contributes to sustainability as reflected in compliance with "soundness" testing. The commission needs to:

- Carry forward the Sustainability Appraisal outcomes established in earlier work
- Provide advice on any changes to the Sustainability Appraisal objectives and or methodology necessitated / required by any changes in guidance, legislation or application if applicable.
- Adequately document the appraisal process to give a clear account of its operation, key findings and any changes recommended and/ or made to policy or strategy as a consequence;
- Ensure effective proposals for monitoring and evaluation are in place.
- Consider (SMART) objectives, indicators and targets;
- Be simple to understand and easy to use but sufficiently detailed and robust to withstand scrutiny at any LDF public examination;
- Clearly present findings in a Sustainability Appraisal Report;

Key Deliverables

The commission will require the following outcomes:

1. Sustainability Appraisal of the Draft Core Strategy Schedule of Changes that will feed into the Core Strategy Publication Version.
2. Advise on the Green Belt Review methodology and review the outcomes of this work to ensure it is fit for purpose.
3. Review the comments received from Natural England on the Habitat Regulation Screening undertaken as part of the Core Strategy Final Draft Integrated Impact Assessment and advise on any changes necessary to the emerging Core Strategy.
4. Review and confirm that the Equalities Impact Assessment as appropriate (as required by CLG Duty to Promote Democracy Equality Impact Assessment August 2009) undertaken as part of the Core Strategy Final Draft Integrated Impact Assessment is fit for purpose.
5. Review and confirm that the Health Impact Assessment as appropriate undertaken as part of the Core Strategy Final Draft Integrated Impact Assessment is fit for purpose.

The actual detail of appraisal required will be agreed with the consultants prior to commencement of the commission.

It is expected that the following outputs from the study will be achieved:

- The production of a draft report for comments prior to its finalisation
- One electronic copy of the final report (including a non-technical summary) should be supplied.
- Copies of all relevant background and supporting data should also be supplied. Where GIS data is provided this should be compatible with the Council's MapInfo GIS software
- Copyright of the report will reside with Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

Expertise and Skills

The Council is seeking to work with consultants who can demonstrate a high level of knowledge and practical experience of sustainability appraisal in light of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive to meet the scope and requirements of the commission. The Council requires the consultancy, through its wider experience and expertise, to add value, objectivity, confidence and independent external endorsement to the LDF sustainability appraisal process. This will also embrace skills in utilising appropriate IT applications.

Project Management and Structure of Commission

The client is RMBC who are funding this work.

The Consultant will work with Helen Sleight of the Forward Planning Team, contact details given above, who will be managing this commission.

The consultant will be expected to meet as necessary with members of the Forward Planning Team and undertake liaison with other specialist interest bodies and persons as required. Contact details will be provided at appropriate times and on request.

Programme

The consultant will be expected to begin work as soon as practicably possible following the granting of the contract and a timetable for completion agreed at any inception meeting.

Indicative Budget

We require a complete cost for completion of the project.

Contacts

If you have any queries please contact: Helen Sleight or Ryan Shepherd of the Forward Planning Team: 01709 823831 / 823888

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