Development Control Committee
16th June 2009

Rockingham and Weldon Conservation Area Review

SYNOPSIS
For Members to endorse the review of the Rockingham and Weldon Conservation Area boundaries and to adopt the associated Conservation Area Appraisals and subsequent Management Plans as planning guidance.

1. Relevant Background Details
1.1 Within the Borough of Corby there are a total of ten Conservation Areas. Conservation Areas are defined as ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. Local Authorities are required to designate Conservation Areas, keep them under review, and to designate further areas as appropriate.

1.2 It is the quality and interest of areas, rather than that of individual buildings, which should be the prime consideration in identifying Conservation Areas. The more clearly the special architectural or historic interest is defined and recorded; the sounder will be the basis for planning policies and development control decisions, as well as the formulation or proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of an area.

1.3 The definition of an area’s special interest should derive from an assessment of the elements that contribute to it; including historical development, prevalent building materials, archaeological significance and green features.

1.4 When designating Conservation Areas, consideration should be made to a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the “preservation and enhancement” of the area that will subsequently be enforced;
   - Extra publicity is given to planning applications affecting Conservation Areas and the Council must take into consideration the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character of the Conservation Area when determining such applications
   - Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of any significant unlisted building in a Conservation Area
   - 6 weeks written notice must be given to the Council before works are carried out to any tree in the area
   - The display of advertisements may be somewhat more restricted than elsewhere
   - The Council or the Secretary of State may be able to take steps to ensure that a building in a Conservation Area is kept in good repair
   - Limited financial assistance may be available for the upkeep of a building in the Conservation Area through grant schemes with English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund

1.5 Permitted development rights will also become restricted within the Conservation Area, as outlined in the amended Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order that came into force in October 2008, whereby:
• Extensions will not be permitted beyond the side wall of a dwelling house and more than one storey if proposed at the rear
• Roof alterations will not be permitted
• Building structures will not be permitted between the side elevation of the dwelling and boundary
• The chimney, flue, soil or vent pipe will not be permitted on a wall or roof slope which fronts a highway and is part of the principal or side elevation

2. Report

2.1 A specialist Listed Buildings and Conservation Consultant was appointed to appraise Rockingham and Weldon and to prepare Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans in line with recent English Heritage guidance and the resolution of the Local Plan Committee on 18th June 2008. Work began in September 2008 and the consultant conducted detailed research of each area and carried out interviews with local residents.

2.2 The Appraisals and Management Plans provide in-depth analysis of the history and development of the area. They also provide a list of buildings identified as Local Interest Buildings, which are unlisted buildings considered to be of townscape merit. A number of negative issues that detract from the character of the area are also identified and these issues are addressed in the Management Plan.

2.3 Copies of the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans are available to view in the Members room or on the Council’s website at the following link:

http://www.corby.gov.uk/EnvironmentAndPlanning/Conservation/Pages/ConservationAreas.aspx

2.4 On the 18th February 2009, the Local Plan Committee considered the content of the draft Conservation Area Appraisals and Managements Plans for Rockingham and Weldon. Members endorsed the draft conservation documents for public consultation. Public consultation took place in February/March 2009 for six weeks. Comments received during and after the public exhibitions at Rockingham and Weldon were mostly positive and in agreement with the proposed extensions to the Conservation Area boundaries.

2.5 As a result of the consultation process, the proposed Conservation Area boundaries were amended to address the following;

• The extended area suggested in the draft Rockingham Appraisal and Management Plan was reduced to focus on the immediate settings of Rockingham Castle. The reason for this change was that various safeguards are currently in operation that provides an appropriate means of managing the historic environment.
• The extended area suggested in the Weldon Appraisal and Management Plan has been revised to align with the boundary of the Weldon Park planning application.

2.6 At Local Plan Committee on the 15th April, Members supported the revised boundaries and Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. The amended Conservation Area boundaries can be found in Appendices A and B to this report.

3. Adoption Procedures

3.1 Subject to the approval of this committee, the Conservation Area Appraisals, Conservation Area Management Plans and amended boundaries will become Council Policy and a material consideration in the planning process. A notice will be placed in the London Gazette and advertised in the local newspaper confirming the adoption of the amended Conservation Areas.
4. **Options to be considered**

There are two options:

1. To support the recommendation outlined in the report to allow the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans to be formally adopted; or

2. To reject the recommendation, meaning that the ability of the Council to resist development which would neither preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be reduced.

5. **Issues to be taken into account:**

   **Policy Priorities**
   
   Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans enable sustainable management of the historic environment. By designating the Conservation Areas, the tighter controls on development and demolition will help to preserve the core history and heritage of both areas.

   **Financial**
   
   None directly from this report

   **Legal**
   
   The Planning and (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

   **Performance Information**
   
   None directly from this report

   **Best Value, Human Rights, Equalities, Sustainability and Community Safety**
   
   These are basic requirements in a sustainable community.

6. **Conclusion**

   6.1 The Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans have derived from the results of public consultation, in-house consultation, historic development and from a detailed qualitative assessment of the area.

   6.2 The documents have been revised to reflect the issues raised during the public consultation period. The amended character appraisal defines the special interest of each village, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and provides sound guidance for future proposed physical change in both areas.

   6.3 Comments received regarding the proposed boundary changes have been taken into account. It is considered the changes to the Conservation Area boundaries are appropriate and will more effectively protect the important character of each area.

7. **Recommendation**

   7.1 Is it recommended the Members approve the revised boundaries illustrated on the plans within Appendix A and B to the report, and endorse the adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans as planning guidance.

**Background Papers**

1. Rockingham and Weldon Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans

2. Local Plan Committee Reports 18th February 2009 and 15th April 2009.

**Appendices**

A: Map of Weldon Conservation Area

B: Map of Rockingham Conservation Area

**Officer to Contact**

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