

Development Control Committee – 19th March 2007

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Finalised Conservation Area Character Appraisals & Management Proposals for four Canal-based Conservation Areas located on the Stourbridge and Dudley Canals.

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is:-
 - a) To report the results of public consultation undertaken in respect of four Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals & Management Proposals for the following canal-based Conservation Areas:
 - Delph Locks (Brierley Hill);
 - Stourbridge Sixteen Locks (Wordsley);
 - Stourbridge Branch Canal (Amblecote);
 - Stourbridge Branch Canal (Canal Street).
 - b) To seek approval for the publication of the finalised Conservation Area Character Appraisals & Management Proposals for the four canal-based Conservation Areas (listed above) and the subsequent implementation of the proposals contained therein by the Director of the Urban Environment. (A copy of the finalised document that includes the Public Consultation Process report is located in the Members Room and individual copies will be made available to Development Control Committee Members.)
 - c) To seek a recommendation from Development Control Committee to the Council's Lead Member for Economic Regeneration that he take the necessary action to implement the revised conservation area boundaries for the four canal conservation areas, as set out in the finalised Conservation Area Character Appraisals & Management Proposals documents.

Background

2. At the meeting of the Development Control Committee on 15th January 2007 the Director of the Urban Environment was authorised to produce draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals with management proposals for the following four canal-based Conservation Areas:
 - Delph Locks (Brierley Hill);
 - Stourbridge Sixteen Locks (Wordsley);
 - Stourbridge Branch Canal (Amblecote);
 - Stourbridge Branch Canal (Canal Street).
3. At the same meeting, the Director of the Urban Environment was authorised to undertake public consultation directly upon the completion of the four draft Conservation Area Appraisals listed above.
4. Character Appraisals need to be subject to effective public consultation, to carry full weight in planning appeals, for example. Accordingly, widespread public consultation was undertaken between 1st February 2007 and 2nd March 2007. Through a widely publicised series of events Dudley MBC sought to engage all members of the local population and various external consultees:-
 - An exhibition, questionnaires and a copy of the draft Conservation Area Appraisals & Management Proposals were made available in **Wordsley Library, Stourbridge Library, The Red House Cone** and **Brierely Hill Library**.
 - Details of the proposals and a copy of the draft Conservation Area Appraisals & Management Proposals were deposited on the council's website together with the questionnaire.
 - A presentation and exhibition was made by Dudley Council to elected Ward Members and the general public at **Brierley Hill Area Committee** on 1st February 2007 and at **Stourbridge Area Committee** on 12th March 2007.
 - A range of external consultees were contacted and provided with copies of the information leaflets and questionnaires and invited to comment.
 - The consultation exercise was the subject of a **press release** and appeared in several local papers.
 - In addition officers manned exhibitions and made themselves available on Wednesday 7th, Wednesday 14th, Saturday 17th, Saturday 24th and Monday 26th February 2007 and Saturday 3rd March 2007 to answer any queries and receive comments locally at **Wordsley Library** , **Stourbridge Library** and **The Red House Cone, Brierely Hill Library** and **The Bonded Warehouse**.

5. To assist the public in expressing their views on the draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals for the four canals a questionnaire was provided. Four specific questions were posed in the questionnaire in relation to each canal, which allows quantitative assessment of the results. Respondents were asked if they 'supported', had 'no opinion' or 'opposed' various propositions posed by the Consultation Draft Character Appraisals and the Management Proposals. Space was provided on the questionnaire for people to make general comments.
6. By the end of the formal public consultation period, on 2nd March 2007 156 questionnaires had been received where at least one of the four questions had been answered or a comment made. For a full summary of the results of the public consultation please refer to the separate *Public Consultation Process Report*.
7. The public consultation exercise aroused considerable interest and there was a very encouraging public response. The questionnaire responses demonstrated that there was substantial support for the Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Proposals for the four canal-based conservation areas. The overall total response to all four questions revealed that less than 1% of the respondents opposed the proposals with the vast majority therefore in support. A slightly higher level of opposition to the boundary proposed for the Stourbridge Canal Arm (Canal Street) conservation area reflected a feeling in some quarters that it was not drawn widely enough and should include Stourbridge Football Ground and Holy Trinity Church Amblecote.
8. Brierley Hill Area Committee considered the draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management proposals at their meeting of 1st February 2007 where they endorsed the draft documents and the conservation area boundaries proposed therein. Stourbridge Area Committee considered the draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management proposals documents at their meeting of 12th March 2007 – substantive comments or observations arising from that meeting will be reported in pre-committee notes.
9. Direct consultation was carried out with Stourbridge Navigation Trust, Dudley Canal Trust and British Waterways and their many useful and constructive observations, suggestions and comments have been incorporated into the four finalised Conservation Area Character Appraisals & Management Proposals. All of the draft proposed boundary changes were supported and as part of the discussions it was additionally suggested that a former boatyard and canal basin lying south of Platts Crescent and adjacent to the Stourbridge Branch

Canal (Amblecote) Conservation Area be included within it. Similarly, it was suggested that number 1 Bradley Road, a Locally Listed former Bank building, be brought into the conservation area. Both suggestions are considered to be justified and the additional areas have been taken into the respective conservation areas as shown in the relevant finalised Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Proposals documents.

10. The results of the public consultation exercise and all comments received (whether negative or not) have been carefully considered and have been accommodated as appropriate in the finalised Appraisal & Management Proposals documents for the four canal-based conservation areas listed above. A copy of the Appraisals & Management Proposals for the four canals can be found in their final form in the Members Room and copies have also been made available individually to Development Control Committee Members and the document is commended to the Committee for formal approval.

Finance

11. The publication of the finalised *Conservation Area Appraisals & Management Proposals* and their subsequent implementation is allowed for within existing work programmes and budgets.

Law

12. Section 69 of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act imposes a duty on Local Planning Authorities to designate as Conservation Areas "*any areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.*" The act also places a duty on local authorities to designate conservation areas where appropriate and from "*time to time*" to review the extent of conservation area designation within their districts. Section 69 also imposes a duty on local planning authorities "*from time to time, to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts and to consult the local community about these proposals*".

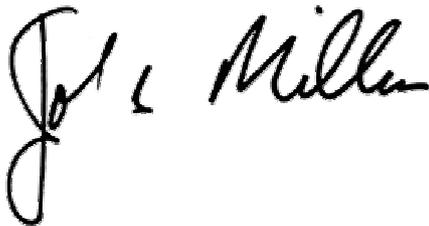
Equality Impact

13. The proposals contained in this report are in full accordance with the Councils equal opportunities policies and should in no way have any impact on different racial groups, disabled people, children and young people, both genders and/or other relevant groups.

Recommendation

14. It is recommended that:-

- Members note the results of the public consultation undertaken in respect of the four draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Proposals documents.
- Development Control Committee approves the publication of the finalised Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Proposals documents and authorises the Director of the Urban Environment to take all necessary steps to implement the proposals contained therein.
- Development Control Committee recommends to the Council's Lead Member for Economic Regeneration that he takes the necessary action to implement the revised conservation area boundaries for the four canal conservation areas, as set out in the finalised Conservation Area Character Appraisals & Management Proposals documents.



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List of Background Papers

- Development Control Committee Report dated 15th January 2007.
- Dudley MBC, *A Strategy for Dudley's Canals*, July 1999.