

Amblecote, Brierley Hill, Wollaston & Stourbridge Town and Wordsley

Brierley Hill Area Committee – 1st February 2007

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Public Consultation on Four Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals

Purpose of Report

1. To seek the views of Brierley Hill Area Committee and those attending the meeting upon draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals (that include proposed boundary changes and management proposals) prepared 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).

Background

2. At their meeting of 15th January 2007 Development Control Committee endorsed the preparation of draft Appraisals, including management proposals for the four canal-based conservation areas listed above and approved the undertaking of public consultation (of which this report forms a part) directly upon the completion of the drafts. The results of the public consultation and the finalised documents are to be reported thereafter to Development Control Committee for consideration including as appropriate a recommendation that the Council's Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration approve the finalised documents for publication and the implementation of any necessary revisions to conservation area boundaries.
3. The undertaking of Conservation Area Reviews and the formulation of proposals for the enhancement of conservation areas including public

consultation is a statutory duty for local authorities as is their designation. The provisions of Sections 69 and 71 of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act apply.

4. The performance of all local authorities in designating conservation areas, defining the special architectural or historic interest that warrants designation (through up-to-date character appraisals), and publishing management proposals for the areas (based on the character appraisals) is now also the subject of a three-part heritage "Best Value Performance Indicator" (BVPI 219 a-c) introduced in 2005-06. The four canal-based conservation areas (listed above) were designated between 1976 and 1987 and their review is clearly now required. In addition the Council's adopted 1999 document entitled - *A Strategy for Dudley's Canals* is also currently being reviewed and the Appraisals will contribute to that process.
5. The purpose of BVPI 219 is to measure local authorities' performance through analysis of the percentage of conservation areas within a local authority area having up-to-date (within the last 5 years) appraisals and management proposals.
6. Such Appraisals are in line with government policy as expressed in Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG 15) *Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994) and English Heritage detailed guidance (2005). The detailed format and content of the draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals will be based on the guidelines issued by English Heritage in *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas* (2005) and *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals* (2005).

Finance

8. The preparation of the proposed Conservation Area Character Appraisals is allowed for within existing work programmes and budgets.

Law

9. 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

10. 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.

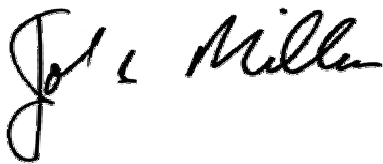
Recommendation

11. It is recommended that:-

Area Committee make comment upon the draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals, including proposed boundary amendments and 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).

(To facilitate comments there will be a short presentation at the meeting, exhibition material will be displayed and feedback questionnaires will be provided).



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List of Background Papers

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