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**Wards Affected: Amblecote, Brierley Hill, Wollaston & Stourbridge Town and Wordsley**

**Development Control Committee – 15<sup>th</sup> January 2007**

**Report of the Director of the Urban Environment**

**Preparation of Four Conservation Area Character Appraisals**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To seek endorsement for the preparation of draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals, including 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).
2. To seek approval to undertake public consultation directly upon the completion as drafts of the four Conservation Area Character Appraisals with Management Proposals listed above. The results of the consultation and the finalised documents to be reported thereafter to Development Control Committee for consideration including an appropriate 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.

**Background**

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 Appraisal 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).
  7. Character Appraisals, to carry full weight when the Council is making planning decisions need to be subject to effective public consultation. It is proposed, therefore, that once the draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals have been compiled the public and relevant internal and external stakeholders (including Members of Development Control Committee, Ward Councillors and other Members as appropriate) will be fully consulted on the draft documents in order that comments and suggestions can be fully taken into account.

## **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*".

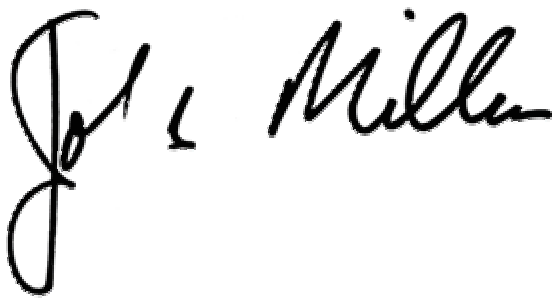
## **Equality Impact**

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:-

- i) Committee endorse the preparation of draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals, including 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).
- ii) Committee endorse the undertaking of public consultation directly upon the completion of drafts of the four Conservation Area Character Appraisals with Management Proposals listed above. (The results of the consultation and the finalised documents 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 implements any necessary revisions to conservation area boundaries).



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### **List of Background Papers**

- Dudley MBC, *A Strategy for Dudley's Canals*, July 1999.