

## **ROCHFORD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides details of the second Conservation Area Appraisal prepared for Rochford and seeks Members' agreement to arrangements for public consultation prior to final publication.
- 1.2 Conservation Area Appraisals are currently being prepared for the remainder of the conservation areas and it is anticipated these will be completed by March 2007.
- 1.3 A copy of the Rochford appraisal has been placed in the Members' Library and circulated under separate cover to all Members.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 A Local Authority's performance in designating conservation areas, defining the special architectural or historic interest through character appraisals, and publishing management proposals is now measured by a new Best Value Performance Indicator. BV219 requires Local Authorities to:-
  - list their total number of conservation areas;
  - indicate the percentage with an up-to-date character appraisal; and
  - indicate the percentage with published management proposals.
- 2.2 Arrangements are in hand to ensure that Rochford District achieves 100% coverage of character appraisals and management plans by the end of the 2006/07 financial year. This report outlines the details of the second appraisal for Rochford. The first appraisal completed was for Rayleigh; this is currently subject to public consultation.
- 2.3 Conservation area character appraisals cannot be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). The conservation area policy SPD will, though, provide guidance on the historic environment, expanding on policies in the Rochford Core Strategy, and will make specific reference to the character appraisals.
- 2.4 Character appraisals and management plans are then crucial to informing the preparation of conservation area SPDs, and will be an essential tool informing development control, as well as performing an educational and informative role for the local community.

### **3 ROCHFORD APPRAISAL**

#### **3.1 The appraisal document considered the:-**

- planning policy framework
- materials and detailing
- use of buildings
- origins and development of the town
- materials and detailing.

#### **3.2 At the core of the document are sections identifying character zones and spatial inter-relationships and a detailed area analysis, together with an assessment of the contributions each building makes to the conservation area.**

#### **3.3 Finally, the document provides a series of management proposals emerging from the character analysis. At this stage, the proposals are intended for discussion and public consultation.**

### **4 CONSULTATION**

#### **4.1 Good practice advice from English Heritage is that involving the community should be an integral part of the appraisal process. Therefore, prior to publishing the final version of the document, it is proposed to undertake community consultation as follows:-**

- produce and circulate a short summary leaflet
- consult community groups including the Rochford Hundred Amenity Society and the Chamber of Trade
- consult the Parish Council
- make the document available on the Council's website
- issue a press release.

#### **4.2 Following consultation, the results will be reported back to Members and a section added to the appraisal document to explain the consultation process and how the responses were considered and taken into account.**

#### **4.3 It is anticipated that consultation will take place during the autumn (there are no statutory timescales) and that, all being well, the outcomes can be reported back to Members before the end of 2006. It will then be possible to finalise the contents of the management plan.**

**5 FUTURE CONSULTATIONS ON CONSERVATION APPRAISALS**

- 5.1 It is suggested that in order to reduce the time taken to finalise the remaining conservation appraisals and management plans, that once a draft has been prepared for each it be circulated to all Members for information, but immediately be subject to a period of public consultation with the results then being reported back to Members for a final decision on content and management proposals.

**6 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The Rochford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is the second in a series of appraisal documents that will cover all the conservation areas in the district. These documents will feed into the policies and proposals dealing with conservation that will be included in the emerging development plan and supplementary planning documents.
- 6.2 The timetable for the completion of the Rochford appraisal is suggested as:-
- consultation - autumn 2006
  - report to Committee – December 2006
  - publication – early 2007.

**7 RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) That the Rochford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be approved for consultation.
  - (2) That the results of the consultation be reported back in December 2006.
  - (3) That the remaining eight conservation area appraisal documents be circulated to all Members of the Council for information when available, but subjected to immediate public consultation prior to being reported to the Committee for final approval of the management plans.

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**Background Papers:-**

Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, English Heritage, 2006.

Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, English Heritage, 2006.

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