

CABINET

10 December 2007

URBAN CHARACTER AREA APPRAISALS

Report of the Head of Regeneration and Planning Policy

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

That the Draft Character Appraisal documents at Appendix i to this report (available through the Council's website) be approved as supplementary planning documents (SPD) subject to the incorporation of the proposed amendments listed in the schedules attached to this report as appendix ii as agreed by Hedge End, West End, and Botley, Eastleigh Local Area Committee, Bishopstoke, Fair Oak and Horton Heath and Bursledon, Hamble-le-Rice, Hound.

Summary

Following discussion at 4 Area Committees (HEWEB, ELAC, BIFOHH and BHH) a detailed schedule of proposed amendments to the draft Urban Character Area Appraisals was agreed, for recommendation to Cabinet for adoption as SPD. The purpose of the proposed SPD(s) are to provide better guidance to planning applicants and the Council when considering new development in residential areas.

Statutory Powers

Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Introduction

1. Like the earlier pilot study in Chandler's Ford and Hiltingbury in 2005 the main purpose of the urban character appraisal work is to identify features which give residential areas their distinctive character and provide guidance for applicants, Area Committees and Council staff when planning applications are made, resulting in new residential development which fits better into its existing surroundings. The work is intended mainly to inform proposals for smaller scale development and infill schemes, not larger scale development, where development briefs are likely to provide more appropriate guidance. It is proposed that in their final form, the Character Area Appraisals be formally

adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). (Full text of documents may be found on the Council's website).

2. Following consultation carried out in July and August this year the work has now been considered by the relevant Area Committees, and a detailed schedule of comments and suggested detailed amendments has been agreed, covering generic issues and specific local proposals.

Description of the Work

3. A detailed description of the work was provided in the last report, but Members are reminded that the study (carried out by Roger Evans Associates) has focused on residential areas, with the bulk of the time available being used to analyse housing areas built up to the 70's, the older areas being judged to have most capacity for change. More recent areas have been mapped in summary form. Non residential areas and Conservation Areas (with the exception of the Bursledon Special Character Area which extensively overlaps the Conservation Area) are excluded from the work as these are being reviewed separately. The work is also generally limited to residential development within urban settlements, excluding small groups of houses outside the urban edge.
4. Under the procedure introduced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the Council may adopt a version of the document(s) after consultation as SPDs, which must include a sustainability appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (see appendix iii). These SPDs will form part of the Local Development Framework. The target date for adoption is December 2007.

Consultation

5. Copies of the draft documents were sent to The Town and Parish Councils, placed in local libraries and posted on the web. Consultation details were published in the local press and the Borough News and 4 public exhibitions were held (1 in each local area). Members of the public were invited to comment on the appraisals and in particular identify any particular features which made a particular contribution to the character of individual areas.
6. A total of 96 people visited the exhibitions, with 41 at HEWEB, 3 at ELAC, 35 at BHH and 17 at BIFOHH.
7. A number of commentators suggested generic changes to the work, mainly in the way the documents are set out, requesting clearer guidance and identifying those things in particular which give particular places a distinctive and strong sense of character.
8. A number of 'place specific' comments were received from those with a detailed knowledge of the areas, at the time of the consultation and during the last cycle of Area Committees.
9. A summary of comments with a list of amendments agreed by the Area Committees is attached as appendix ii. Proposed changes have been based

on the principle that the overall brief of the work remains as set out in paragraph 3 above.

10. One of the recommended amendments to the draft study for the BHH area concerns the future of the Crowsport Special Policy Area which is currently under review for possible inclusion in the Hamble Conservation Area. At the time of writing the outcome of the consultation exercise is uncertain and will not be resolved until Spring 2008. Under the circumstances it is proposed that the character area work for Crowsport remain in the Appraisal document until the outcome of the Conservation Area work is decided, with a note to the effect that it will be removed from the text in the event of inclusion in the Conservation Area (to avoid duplication of policy guidance).
11. In the event of a decision not to include Crowsport in the Conservation Area ,it is recommended that the Special Policy Area policies and detailed guidance should remain in the Character Area Appraisal document with a summary description in the appendix, which would confer SPD status to this Special Policy Area, allowing the stand alone SPA guidance to be superseded. The principle of including other SPA documents (with the descriptive text in summarised form in the appendix) within the Character Area Appraisals is also promoted in the schedule of amendments at Appendix 2.
12. Timetable:

Staffed Exhibitions in local areas took place:

- Hedge End 2000 Centre on 23rd July
- Civic Offices on 26th July
- Fair Oak Village Hall on 30th July
- Hamble Memorial Hall on 2nd August

Report consultation results and recommended amendments to Area Committees and Cabinet:

Committee Dates:

- | | |
|-----------|----------------------|
| • HEWEB | 22 nd Oct |
| • ELAC | 30 th Oct |
| • BIFOHH | 7 th Nov |
| • BHH | 8 th Nov |
| • Cabinet | 10 th Dec |

Print and publish adopted document	21 st Dec
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Financial Implications

13. It envisaged that the cost of the work required to prepare the Character Area Appraisals will be completed within available financial resources, subject to proposed amendments requiring no fundamental changes to the scope of the study.

14. Risk Management

Late adoption of the work as SPD may have an adverse impact on the Council's Planning Delivery Grant. Extending the scope of the work significantly could cause delay. If guidance is not formally adopted in its final form, its value as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications would be greatly diminished.

Conclusion

15. Amendments to the draft Urban Character Area Appraisal work, taking into account information gathered from the consultation exercise will help to ensure that the documents make a positive contribution to the encouragement of residential development which takes better account of the local character of each area and opportunities to enhance it.

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Appendices: 3 (see website for appendix i)

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 – SECTION 100D

The following documents disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report:

Chandler's Ford and Hiltingbury Character Area Appraisal 2005