

Report to Scrutiny Panel

Name of Scrutiny Panel	Economy and Environment	
Meeting Date	2nd March 2011	
Subject	Conservation Strategy for Calderdale	
Wards Affected	All	
Report of	Director, Economy and Environment	
Type of Item (please tick✓)	Review existing policy	
	Development of new policy	✓
	Performance management (inc. financial)	
	Briefing (inc. potential areas for scrutiny)	
	Statutory consultation	
	Council request	
	Cabinet request	
	Member request for scrutiny (CCFA)	

Why is it coming here?
This issue is on the Scrutiny Panel work programme and an update is being reported prior to the production of a draft Strategy.

What are the key points?
The conservation function within the Council is being reviewed with the aim of setting clear priorities in accordance with those of the Council and the aspirations of English Heritage.

Possible courses of action
Panel to note the update and endorse the way forward.

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Should this report be exempt?
No

Report to Scrutiny Panel

1. Background

- 1.1 On 1st September 2010 the Scrutiny Panel recommended to Cabinet that a Conservation Strategy should be developed on the basis of the ideas and objectives outlined in the scoping report.
- 1.2 On 6th December 2010 Cabinet approved the preparation of and approach to a Conservation Strategy for Calderdale.
- 1.3 The Conservation Team and senior managers have consulted with English Heritage twice and produced a draft set of priorities.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 It is proposed to start detailed consultation with a small group of stakeholders including the Portfolio Holder, Heritage Champion, other Members and representatives from local amenity groups.
- 2.2 More general consultation will be undertaken with local groups, agents, other Council Services and West Yorkshire Archaeology Service to seek their views on priorities and the new approach prior to formulating the Strategy in detail. It is suggested that the Priorities attached as Appendix A should be sent out and comments and other ideas invited. A list of potential local groups is attached as Appendix B.

3. Options Considered

- 3.1 The options considered include the methods of consultation as suggested above and the stakeholder group and wider groups to be consulted.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Conservation Strategy for Calderdale is progressed on the basis of the ideas set out in this report.

5. Appendices

Appendix A – Priorities for Conservation
Appendix B – List of Amenity Groups

6. Background documents

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- PPS5 Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment 2010

7. Documents available for inspection at -

Planning Services, 2nd Floor, Northgate House, Northgate, Halifax HX1 1UN.

Appendix A

Draft Conservation Service Priorities and Strategy

Introduction

The Conservation Service within the Council is being reviewed with the aim of establishing clear priorities in accordance with those of the Council and the aspirations of English Heritage.

Overall Objective for the Conservation Service

"To conserve the historic environment of Calderdale, and the settings of its significant places and buildings."

Priorities of the Conservation Service

1. To secure a sustainable future for designated heritage at risk within Calderdale
2. To seek and promote excellence in design
3. To develop an appropriate understanding, recognition and consideration of the value and significance of the historic environment of Calderdale

Implementation

In order to continue the development of a first class service to the public, the Conservation Strategy will be implemented as follows:

Heritage at Risk

- **Prioritise** action to address key 'at risk' heritage assets particularly those owned, managed or otherwise affecting Council functions
- Establish a priority list of all heritage at risk, and develop a **methodology for action**
- Make use of **enforcement** powers to protect heritage assets and as a negotiating tool for ameliorative action
- Promote and empower **volunteers** where their local knowledge and expertise can help to identify potential buildings at risk and can assist in assessing the significance and value of those buildings

Excellence in Design

- Delivery of **specialist advice** through taking a key role in major pre-application discussions and design panel work relating to sensitive sites; and through conservation and design input to planning, listed building and other applications. Conservation advice to the public will continue to be a significant function although

resources will need to focus on more complex cases and promote the use of design guidance for more routine cases

- Promote design excellence by the production of **design guidance**, to be available in leaflet form and on the Council's website
- Assist in the production of **development briefs** for key sites, where appropriate
- **Training** will be delivered to planning and enforcement officers and Planning Committee members to ensure more robust recommendations and decision-making when assessing design
- Develop a closer working remit with **other technical experts** within the Council in order to benefit from the available range of interdisciplinary skills
- Seek **improved ways of working** with local and other design / architectural practices using the model adopted by Regional Design Panels

Developing an Understanding, Recognition and Consideration of the Historic Environment

- Develop a rolling programme of **Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans**. Priority will be given to appraising existing Conservation Areas particularly those considered most at risk or vulnerable to development pressure. New ways of working will be explored in order to improve efficiency including greater use of volunteers. Designation of new Conservation Areas or extensions to existing Conservation Areas will not be prioritised until existing Conservation Areas have been appraised
- Develop and strengthen involvement and activity with **local interest groups**, such as those dealing with sustainability / renewable energy, where this has implications for the historic environment
- **Training** will be delivered to planning and enforcement officers and Planning Committee members to ensure a greater understanding, recognition and consideration of the historic environment

Appendix B

List of Potential Consultees:

- All Members
- Ward Forums
- Town & Parish Councils
- Local Civic Trusts
 - o Brighouse Civic Trust
 - o Calder Civic Trust
 - o Greater Elland Civic Trust
 - o Halifax Civic Trust
 - o Luddenden Conservation Society
 - o Ryburn Civic Trust
 - o Sowerby Bridge Civic Society
 - o Sowerby Bridge and District Neighbourhood Council
 - o Todmorden Conservation Group
- History Societies or Other Conservation Groups
 - o Alice Longstaff Gallery Collection
 - o Brighouse History Society
 - o Greater Elland Historical Society
 - o Halifax Antiquarian Society
 - o Hebden Bridge Local History Society
 - o Lightcliffe & District Local History Society
 - o Midgley History Society
 - o Mytholmroyd History Society
 - o Northowram Village Society
 - o Pennine Horizons
 - o Todmorden
- Other Council Services e.g. Building Maintenance, Building Control etc
- Regular planning agents