

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Built Environment Conservation Area Policy Scrutiny Review

21 September 2010

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to set out the plans and timetable for the agreed scrutiny review into the council's policies for conservation areas.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note contents of the report.
- (2) Agree the dates and the content of the meetings to be used for this scrutiny review:
 - 26 October 2010 – briefing session by CDC officers
 - 14 December 2010 – Q&A session with witnesses based on issues identified; identify emerging conclusions
 - 25 January 2011– Agree recommendations and report

Introduction

- 1.1. In March 2010 the Committee agreed that a review of the Council's Built Environment Conservation Area Policy should be included as a review topic on the work programme for 2010 -2011. The Committee also agreed that it would be best conducted in select committee rather than by a task and finish group and identified the meetings in October and December 2010 and January 2011 as the preferred dates for this work.
- 1.2. The agreed scoping document for this review is attached at Annex 1. A list of the Conservation Areas in Cherwell is attached at Annex 2

(however please note that this document was prepared in March 2009 and is now slightly out of date).

- 1.3. The Head of Planning and Economic Development will be present at the meeting on 21 September 2010 to assist members in their initial consideration of this topic. Further members of the Planning department will be present at the later meetings.

Proposals

- 2.1 The proposed approach to this review is as follows:

26 October 2010

A detailed briefing session by CDC officers to provide information on:

- the different types of conservation area in Cherwell
- the issues facing the built environment conservation areas
- the current procedures for designation and enforcement
- current national legislation (what it allows and what it does not cover)
- possible changes to national legislation
- budget and resource implications (Comprehensive Spending Review)

14 December 2010

- A Q&A session with witnesses based on issues identified at the previous meeting
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee identify emerging conclusions

25 January 2011

- Overview & Scrutiny Committee review and refine emerging conclusions and agree recommendations and report.

Conclusion

- 3.1 In undertaking this Scrutiny Review, members should be aware of two further issues relating to conservation areas.
- 3.2 Firstly, it is possible that there will be changes to the planning system introduced by the new Coalition Government that will directly impact upon the role of a local planning authority in designating conservation areas and considering proposals within them. These are not known yet but will have an impact upon the Council in how we manage conservation areas.
- 3.3 Secondly, there are resource implications which sit behind our decision to designate conservation areas. The Council is required to undertake certain duties relating to the periodic review of, and preparation of management plans for, conservation areas and this has a significant

call on officer time. Furthermore, once conservation areas are designated we have additional applications for “conservation area consent” for development within our conservation areas, for which no planning application fee can be charged.

- 3.4 The extent of our obligations will be set out at the presentation on 26 October, and an awareness of this will need to inform proposals that members subsequently make in response to this Scrutiny Review.

Implications

- Financial:** There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny review will address any specific financial issues.
- Legal:** There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny review will address any specific legal issues.
- Risk Management:** There are no risk implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny review will address any specific risk issues.

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

All

Executive Portfolio

Councillor Michael Gibbard, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Scoping document
2	List of Conservation Areas in Cherwell
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Catherine Phythian, Senior Democratic & Scrutiny Officer
Contact Information	01295 221583 Catherine.phythian@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk