

REPORT TO PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE CONSERVATION AREA REVIEWS



Report Reference PL-21-01
Meeting Date 18th October 2020
Agenda Item 8
Prepared by Planning and Facilities Officer

1.0 BACKGROUND

The council has previously allocated budget to undertake reviews of the five Knutsford Conservation Areas and the committee has previously appointed Mel Morris Conservation as the consultant to lead the project. It was agreed that the commission would include a break clause after the first review.

The working group decided to begin the Legh Road Conservation Area review first. The consultant began engaging with Cheshire East Conservation Officers and the County Records Office in August 2020 but suffered delays in getting the necessary access to documents and assistance with the initial preparations for the LRCA until early 2021.

The draft appraisal document for Legh Road was prepared and distributed to the working group and to the Cheshire East Conservation Officers in August 2021 for consideration. The draft appraisal seeks to make some minor adjustments to the conservation area boundary by way of addition and removal of small sections.

Since the submission, the consultant has discussed the draft appraisal document with the CEC Conservation Officers, who are currently fact checking and investigating the enforcement issues raised as a result of the review. The revised draft will be forwarded to the Planning and Facilities Officer once completed. The next stage is the construction of a Management Plan draft document for the Legh Road Conservation Area which the consultant is hoping to complete by the end of November 2021.

2.0 MOVING FORWARD

The Draft Legh Road Conservation Area Appraisal document has been circulated to councillors but at this time has not been made public as it is still in the draft phase and subject to change. The working group have agreed the Legh Road Conservation Area draft document includes significant research, detail and character and are happy with the work produced by the consultant. There are some minor concerns over the boundary changes, but these have been justified as part of the appraisal process and the document is subject to Cheshire East Conservation Officers views and then a public consultation.

The remaining conservation areas are the St John's, Heathfield Square, Crosstown, and Town Centre. The working group agreed they are happy to move forward with the remaining conservation area reviews and due to the length of time taken for Cheshire East Conservation Officers engagement have a desire to see the reviews commence as soon as possible. The working group have agreed an order to complete the remaining conservation area reviews starting with St John's, then the Town Centre, and followed by Heathfield Square and Crosstown.

If the committee approve progression of the remaining conservation area reviews the consultant has recommended entering into discussion with Cheshire East Conservation Officers about when they can provide the necessary support and engagement to gauge a timeframe for the process. The consultant is unable to start the next reviews until 2022.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the committee resolves to approve:

- a) the progression of the Legh Road Conservation Area review
- b) the continuation of the commission with Mel Morris Conservation to complete the reviews for the remaining four areas
- c) the Planning and Facilities Officer engaging with Cheshire East Conservation Officers to ascertain the timeline for the remaining reviews.