

Cabinet

14 December 2011

Conservation Area Character Appraisal Programme.

Boundary amendments and character appraisals for Edmundbyers, Eggleston, Ireshopeburn/Newhouse/West Blackdene, Muggleswick, Newbiggin and Shildon Conservation Areas



Report of Corporate Management Team

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Purpose of the Report

- 1 To inform that the Durham City Character Appraisal is underway and that public scoping events, including workshops, will be held during February/ March 2012 to ensure early public awareness, contribution to and understanding of the Appraisal process. This will be the first stage in the process of several engagement exercises during this intensive programme, prior to final Adoption targeted for the end of 2012.
- 2 To approve amended boundaries and character appraisals for the Edmundbyers, Eggleston, Ireshopeburn/Newhouse/West Blackdene, Muggleswick, Newbiggin and Shildon Conservation Areas.

Background

- 3 The Council has a statutory duty under s69(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate any areas which they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest as Conservation Areas, and to review these from time to time. The Council has a further duty under s71(1) to formulate and prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of those areas.
- 4 There are currently 94 designated Conservation Areas within County Durham, many of which have not been reviewed since their original designation. The Design and Historic Environment Team is therefore undertaking a programme of reviews of all the existing areas, and preparing character appraisals as part of our proactive management of the historic environment.

- 5 The appraisal process allows for a review of whether designation is still warranted, and whether any extensions or amendments to the designated boundaries are required to strengthen the special interest of the area. This will support objective G7 of the RED Service Plan to enhance, conserve and maximise the value of Durham's built environment.
- 6 Character appraisals for seven conservation areas were adopted by the Council between December 2009 and March 2010. This report seeks approval for amended boundaries to a further seven conservation areas (which includes the merger of two areas into one designation), and approval of six accompanying character appraisals. Copies of each appraisal which include revised boundary maps are attached as Appendices A-F.
- 7 Each character appraisal is an individual evidence based document that investigates, evaluates and records the unique significance of each area by assessing the diverse individual architectural and historic features that contribute to its overall special character. It also considers whether the boundary remains appropriate. Through this it increases our understanding of each designated area; guiding proposals for future management of change and aiding consistent decision making. The appraisal process has been undertaken with reference to PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment, the accompanying DCLG Practice Guidance and the English Heritage publication Evaluating Place.

Recommendations and Reasons

- 8 The Edmundbyers Conservation Area was designated by Wear Valley District Council in 1993. The proposed revised conservation area boundary would rectify anomalies with the current property boundaries and also extend the boundary to the northwest to include a group of historic buildings on Hepple Hill. These buildings were suggested for inclusion by the public during the 2010 consultation and are judged to be of sufficient merit to warrant their protection within the conservation area. A second proposal to remove a field to the south of Swinburn Cottage from the boundary has not been proceeded with, following objections from the neighbouring properties.
- 9 The Eggleston Conservation Area was designated by Teesdale District Council in 1987. The proposed revised conservation area boundary would rectify anomalies with the current property boundaries and also extend the boundary to include further properties on Green Bank, a development site to the north of the village hall and the site of the former school. The revised boundary would also include Collingwood House which is a Grade II listed building and makes a strong contribution to the setting of the existing conservation area and forms a group with the Grade II* listed bridge adjacent and Grade II* listed Eggleston Hall to the north-east. Part of the house is already within the designated 1987 conservation area boundary, and the complete property is shown as being within the conservation area boundary in the 2002 Teesdale Local Plan.

- 10 The Ireshopeburn Newhouse and the currently separate West Blackdene Conservation Areas were designated in 1993 by Wear Valley District Council. The proposed boundary amendments would combine these into one designated conservation area, with extensions added between the two settlements, to include an open space to the north of West Blackdene, and also to include a group of historic buildings at Short Thorns to the west of Newhouse. The Short Thorns extension was incorrectly shown on the appraisal map at the beginning of the consultation period, but was corrected during the process and re-issued to the affected residents.
- 11 The Muggleswick Conservation Area was designated by Derwentside District Council in 1994. The proposed boundary amendments would add an area to the west of Muggleswick Park into the designated area, and also to rectify anomalies in the boundary to reflect the current property boundaries.
- 12 The Newbiggin Conservation Area was designated by Teesdale District Council in 1987. The proposed boundary amendments would add the Newbiggin Beck and surrounding trees into the conservation area and also rectify anomalies in the boundary to reflect the current property boundaries.
- 13 The Shildon Conservation Area was designated in 1993 by Sedgefield Borough Council. The County Council has significant land holdings within the conservation area which is centred around the Locomotion Museum. The proposed boundary amendments would extend the conservation area to the east to include the Grade II listed signal box and a larger section of the railway tracks, and also to extend the area to include the open space adjacent to the Welcome Building. A proposal to exclude the space between Hackworth's House and the cricket ground is not being proceeded with, as this area is believed to have archaeological interest.

Background Papers

Appendix A: Edmundbyers Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Appendix B: Eggleston Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Appendix C: Ireshopeburn/Newhouse/West Blackdene Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Appendix D: Muggleswick Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Appendix E: Newbiggin Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Appendix F: Shildon Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Appendix G: Summary of consultation responses

Appendix H: Report to REDMT July 2011

Copies of Appendices A to G have been deposited in the Members Room Library and are also available electronically.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance –

The cost of preparing and advertising the changes to the boundaries of the conservation areas is being met by the existing Design and Historic Environment Team budget

Staffing –

None

Risk –

Ensures that we have a statutorily compliant planning service

Equality and Diversity –

None

Accommodation –

None

Crime and Disorder –

None

Human Rights -

Inclusion within a designated conservation area affects a homeowners permitted development rights

Consultation -

A formal six week public consultation on the proposed changes to the conservation area boundaries and the draft character appraisals was held from 9 September until 21 October 2011 following on from an initial consultation phase in 2010. As part of this process information sessions were held in various local venues to publicise the proposed boundary changes and gather comments on the appraisal documents. Local councillors, Area Action Partnership members, Parish Councils, the AONB partnership and English Heritage were also consulted on the proposals. Information on the proposals was also included on the County Council website for the general public and individual responses were sent to all written comments. A summary of the consultation responses received is attached as Appendix G.

Procurement –

None

Disability Discrimination Act –

None

Legal Implications –

The Council has a statutory obligation to review existing conservation area designations and prepare proposals for their preservation and enhancement. This report supports those statutory functions.