

Meeting: Strategic Planning Advisory Panel  
Date: 14 March 2006  
Subject: Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy for Harrow School conservation area  
Responsible Officer: Executive Director (Urban Living)  
Contact Officer: Lucy Haile/Tom Wooldridge  
Portfolio Holder: Planning, Development and Housing  
Key Decision: No  
Status: Part I  
Appendices:  
1 Harrow School Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy

## **Section 1: Summary**

### **Decision Required**

The Panel is invited to

- (1) Consider the revised draft of the Harrow School Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy and subject thereto,
- (2) Recommend the said revised draft to the Portfolio Holder for formal adoption

### **Reason for report**

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 advises Local Planning Authorities to review their conservation areas and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement and the appraisals and strategies within this report seek to fulfill that objective. In addition, Members agreed a programme of completing conservation area appraisals and management strategies and this report seeks to meet that programme as well as seeking to improve the Council's performance against the new Best value Performance Indicator (BVPI219) which assesses the number of conservation areas with up to date appraisals.

## Benefits

The Council will be working towards its statutory requirements and towards improving its performance against BVPI 219 on conservation areas.

## Cost of Proposals

Costs to be contained within the existing Planning and Development Services budget.

## Risks

Not having specific proposals for individual conservation areas reduces opportunities for seeking external grant funding for projects and increases the likelihood of losing planning appeals

## Implications if recommendations rejected

Delays to the programme leaving conservation areas without any guidance for longer and impacting on BVPI 219.

## **Section 2: Report**

### 2.1 Brief History

- 2.1.1 On 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2004 the Unitary Development Panel resolved to recommend to Cabinet the contents of the draft Harrow School Conservation Area Character Study be approved for the purposes of public consultation. The Planning, Development, Housing and Best Value Portfolio Holder agreed with this recommendation on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2004. Government guidance in PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) asks for wide consultation when formulating proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas, and English Heritage's recently published, "*Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*" encourages public consultation and involvement to ensure that the resulting documents have more weight within the planning framework. This report seeks to agree the final version of the study to be adopted by the Council.
- 2.1.2 Copies of the Draft Study were sent to all 14 members of the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, Harrow School staff, Harrow Hill Trust, the Forum, Harrow Heritage Trust, Stanmore and Harrow Historical Society, Don Walker – a local historian, English Heritage and Ward Councillors. It was also sent to the only resident of a private dwelling house in the Conservation Area, the Vicar of St. Mary's. The draft study was also published on the Council's webpage.
- 2.1.3 There were three letters, two emails and 1 fax in response. Two replies enclosed a copy of the Draft with minor errors highlighted.
- 2.1.4 The Harrow School Archivist highlighted a number of factual errors. These have been corrected in the second draft. She recommended the use of a well researched and referenced local history book to check further dates and facts.

Also, she emphasised the importance of the school being established as a free school to the development of the School and Town. The historical development section has been altered in line with both points.

- 2.1.5 English Heritage asked that unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the area and neutral and negative elements be highlighted. This has been addressed in the revised document, and is particularly highlighted through a map entitled 'Map of Landmark, Neutral and Negative Buildings'. They also asked for greater clarity in photograph captions and that there should be a greater consistency about which photographs show historic views and the date of these views. This has been addressed in the revised document since all photographs are current and the location or subject of the photograph is clearly labelled. The use of current photographs also addresses the Harrow School Estates Bursar's comment that perhaps more photographs of how things appear today, rather than historically, may be more helpful.
- 2.1.6 The Stanmore and Harrow Historical Society welcomed the principle of the appraisal that is to conserve the area as it is as far as possible. They also highlighted some minor typological and factual errors which have been corrected in the second draft.
- 2.1.7 The Head Master of Harrow School wrote in with a number of comments. Firstly, he pointed out that the policies and proposals section did not address important problems, namely: traffic, badly surfaced pavements outside Speech Room, guard rails, poorly placed and maintained Local Authority signs which are a visual nuisance, and the Grove Hill street lights. These have now been addressed in the Management Strategy. He suggested grants for Harrow School in order to maintain the area. In order to progress this particular concern, a proposal has been put forward to work with Harrow Heritage Trust and the School to provide grant aid assistance for repair works. He also stated that the need for Harrow School to expand should be recognised and that the Local Authority should work with the School in order to limit any negative impact on the Conservation Area. The revised draft incorporates this by proposing to work with all potential developers to identify suitable sites for new buildings to alleviate pressure on sites in the central conservation area. The Head Master states he can see little value in an audit of street elements as the draft suggested. So, the revised document includes justification for this. Before any work is agreed he suggests an on-site inspection by Conservation. This proposal has been added. Finally the Head Master highlighted a few typological and factual errors, which have been corrected.
- 2.1.8 A local resident stated the most significant point in the appraisal was that 'Harrow on the Hill has not been surveyed since the mid-1980s and some buildings may not be sufficiently recognised', which relates to whether more buildings should be added to the statutory list. The document has been revised to reflect this since the Management Strategy states the Council will encourage the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to resurvey the Harrow on the Hill Area and will consider the introduction of photo surveys every four years as a means of monitoring change. Also he states that both the Hill and the School are inextricably linked. Thus the Management strategy proposes to consider application of relevant proposals to the wider Hill area.

- 2.1.9 With the advent of new guidance on the preparation of conservation area appraisals from English Heritage in 2005, mentioned above, the study has been further revised. This has meant that although the substance has not been changed significantly, a planning policy context has been added, the historical development altered to increase focus on how the current townscape has developed and a greater emphasis placed on graphic presentation by increasing the number of maps, tables and current photographs of the area. It has been split into two sections: the conservation area appraisal and the management strategy. A greater emphasis on resolving problems and enhancement, including monitoring proposals, is included in the management strategy.
- 2.1.10 All 14 members of the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee were informed of the revised draft, as well as Harrow School staff, Harrow Hill Trust, the Forum, Harrow Heritage Trust, Stanmore and Harrow Historical Society, Don Walker, English Heritage, Ward Councillors and the Vicar of St. Mary's. A copy of the revised draft was sent out to the previous respondents. The revised draft was made available on the Council's website, and the Planning Services Reception at Garden House. To date no comments have been received. A public meeting is due to be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2006 at St. Mary's Church Hall. Any comments from all public consultation and the public meeting will lead to a revision of the documents, if necessary, and will be reported in an addendum to the Committee.
- 2.1.11 A copy of the final version, to be agreed for adoption by the Council, is attached as **Appendix 1**.

## 2.2. Options Considered

- 2.2.1 This approach to adopting the appraisals and management strategies followed extensive consideration of the options for producing such documents, and their eventual status. Following the consideration of options at the SPAP meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005, Cabinet resolved on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2005 that non-SPD appraisals which would be linked to an overarching conservation area SPD would be the best approach. The production of the "Harrow Conservation Areas SPD" is dealt with as a separate item on the agenda. These appraisals follow that agreed structure and have been re-written to link them to the emerging overarching SPD, as well as the existing policy framework.

## 2.3 Consultation

- 2.3.1 This report sets out the detailed consultation undertaken on the conservation area appraisal and management strategy.

## 2.4 Financial Implications

- 2.4.1 The costs associated with the study mainly relate to its initial drafting, which has already been undertaken within existing resources. There are cost implications for the printing of the final study, but making significant use of the Council's website should reduce the need to produce significant numbers of these documents. In addition, the Council already charges a small fee for printed copies, which helps to recoup the costs of the initial printing. These amounts are

therefore likely to be minimal and can be contained within the existing Planning and Development Services budget.

2.5 Legal Implications

The Harrow School Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy, when adopted, will be a material consideration in the determination of development applications within its area.

2.6 Equalities Impact

None

2.7 Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

None

### **Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents**

English Heritage "Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals".  
Report and Minutes of the Unitary Development Plan Advisory Panel 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2004  
Decision of the Planning, Development, Housing and Best Value Portfolio Holder on  
7<sup>th</sup> April, 2004  
Letters in response to the consultation