

**PROPOSED ALEXANDRA ROAD, LINKS ROAD, ASHDOWN ROAD,
KINGSDOWN ROAD AND LONGDOWN ROAD CONSERVATION AREA**

<u>Report of the:</u>	Head of Place Development
<u>Contact:</u>	Karol Jakubczyk
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
<u>Annexes/Appendices</u> (attached):	Annex 1: Assessment of Candidate Conservation Area
<u>Other available papers</u> (not attached):	Minutes of the Licensing & Planning Policy Committee Agenda 19 February 2015

REPORT SUMMARY

During February 2015 the Licensing & Planning Policy Committee responded to a question from a local resident seeking the designation of Links Road Epsom as a Conservation Area. The Committee resolved that an initial investigation be carried out within one year to establish whether Links Road and the surrounding streets merited designation as a Conservation Area.

An initial assessment of Links Road and the surrounding street network has now been carried out and is included as an annex to this report. Members are invited to consider the conclusions of this assessment and confirm the way forward.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee considers the conclusion and recommendation of the enclosed Assessment of the Candidate Conservation Area; and that on basis no further action be taken by the Borough Council.

Notes

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Community Strategy

- 1.1 The Borough's Conservation Areas play an important role in defining the local built environment. They are a key heritage asset that contributes towards meeting the Borough Council's key priority of enhancing the visual appearance of the local environment.

- 1.2 The designation of new Conservation Areas provides the Borough Council with an enhanced ability to manage growth and development within the identified area. This can have an additional positive impact upon other key priorities including economic vitality, quality of life and sustainability.
- 1.3 The Corporate Plan includes related planning policy objectives relating to the enhancement of the Borough's visual character and appearance.
- 1.4 The Borough Council's Local Plan includes an emerging Heritage Asset Strategy, which includes Conservation Areas, which will assist in the spatial delivery of the objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council's Key Priorities.

2 Background

- 2.1 Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). A Conservation Area is defined as "an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Historic England provides useful guidance and advice to local authorities regarding the designation of Conservation Areas. Their guidance states that an area has to be identified as having a definite architectural quality or historic interest to merit designation.
- 2.2 The process for designation has to be properly followed otherwise a designation could be challenged. Prior to designating an area, a local planning authority should carry out, or have carried out a Conservation Area Appraisal and ideally include a photographic survey of all buildings included at the time of designation.
- 2.3 During February 2015 the Licensing & Planning Policy Committee responded to a written and supplementary verbal question posed by a resident of Links Road Epsom. These sought the designation of the Links Road as a new Conservation Area – on the basis that this area is comprised of Edwardian properties that were considered (by residents) to be of architectural and potentially historic value. The questions and the Committee's response are set out in the Minutes of the Meeting of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee held on 19 February 2015.
- 2.4 The Committee noted that the adjacent Higher Green and Longdown Lane North Conservation Area is the subject of an up-to-date Appraisal and Management Plan. There were no plans at that point to undertake a review of these documents. The Committee also noted that the Appraisal concluded that the Conservation Areas boundaries were appropriate and that no changes or additions were justified.
- 2.5 Following discussion, the Committee agreed that an initial investigation be undertaken to determine whether an extension or a new Conservation Area incorporating Links Road and the surrounding streets is appropriate. The Committee resolved to receive a report on this matter within twelve months.

- 2.6 An assessment of a candidate Conservation Area, covering Alexandra Road, Links Road, Ashdown Road, Kingsdown Road and Longdown Road has been prepared by the Borough Council's Urban Design and Heritage Advisor Eimear Murphy (of Murphy Associates). A copy of this assessment is included under Annex 1.

3 Assessment of the Candidate Conservation Area

- 3.1 The Assessment of the Candidate Conservation Area was a technical exercise comprised of desk top research and a series of visits to the area. The desk top research charts the growth and development of the area through the use of historic maps and primary data sources; such as local record, newspapers, journals and periodicals. The Assessment has sought to utilize available and accessible data sources to inform its conclusion and recommendation.
- 3.2 The Assessment establishes that the candidate Conservation Area remained as undeveloped open countryside until the second half of 19th Century. Following the arrival of the railway networks in Epsom, new development began to spread slowly southwards towards the candidate area. The Assessment notes that in spite of the spreading development, the candidate area continued to remain largely undeveloped until the first quarter of 20th Century.
- 3.3 The Assessment notes the historic importance of Alexandra Park, which adjoins the candidate area to the immediate north. The Assessment has also sought to identify specific buildings that may be considered of possible interest – this is a critical part in justifying the designation of new Conservation Areas.
- 3.4 The Assessment concludes that the candidate area is attractive and includes some buildings that could be classified as being of individual architectural interest.
- 3.5 However, the overall conclusion is that whilst the area is attractive it is typical of many suburban areas that have developed gradually since the late 19th Century. As such it does not display the qualities, attributes and special values that would warrant designation as a Conservation Area under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 The identification and designation of a new Conservation Area will have significant resources implications for the Council's Planning Policy Team. This would include the preparation of a new Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and the serving of an Article 4 Direction. The Team's current work programme was approved by the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee in September 2014. That work programme did not factor in any additional work required to identify and designate a new Conservation Area.

5 Equalities and Other Legal Implications

5.1 There are no equalities and legal implications associated with this report.

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

6.1 There are no Sustainability Policy and Community Safety considerations associated with this report.

7 Partnerships

7.1 No specific considerations.

8 Risk Assessment

8.1 None required.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 The Committee are asked to consider the conclusions and recommendation of the Assessment of the Candidate Conservation Area; and on that basis resolve that no further action by the Borough Council is necessary.

WARD(S) AFFECTED: College