

Report of	Meeting	Date
Corporate Director Business (Introduced by the Executive Member for Business)	Executive Cabinet	1 October 2009

ST LAURENCE'S CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To present the main findings of the St Laurence's Conservation Area Appraisal Management Proposals Document.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. To endorse the St Laurence's Conservation Area Appraisal.
3. To adopt the Management Proposals as the basis for future improvement and control of development, subject to the availability of funding.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

4. The St Laurence's Conservation Area Appraisal identifies firstly the key characteristics that make the area special and secondly the key issues that give cause for concern. Whilst it is clear that there are several good characteristics, including some fine buildings, there are a greater number of negative issues that create visual harm. The Appraisal and associated Management Plan highlight the opportunities and challenges for the St Laurence's Conservation Area and recommend a number of objectives and associated projects/actions as a means to enhancing the appearance of the area, which will in turn have a beneficial effect on economic vitality and vibrancy.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

5. Section 71 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Council to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their Conservation Areas.
6. Members will recall that a Heritage and Conservation Strategy was endorsed at the 8th January 2009 executive Committee. It promotes a structured and coordinated approach to conserving and enhancing Chorley's historic environment. In accordance with this, St Laurence's Conservation Area review is the second of a programme of reviews of all nine conservation areas within Chorley.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

7. Do nothing – this would be contrary to statutory guidance and result in the continued decline of the quality of the conservation area. It would undermine two Corporate Strategy objectives; to develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live, and to strengthen Chorley's economic position within the Central Lancashire sub-region.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region	✓	Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances	✓	Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	✓
Involving people in their communities	✓	Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	✓

BACKGROUND

9. A detailed analysis of St Laurence's conservation area and the development of management proposals, including public consultation, were undertaken earlier this year. A full copy of the St Laurence's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals is attached to this report.
10. From this evolved a number of 'Management Proposals' recommending further actions including:
- a. Examine opportunities to enhance the public realm and reduce the impact of indiscriminate street parking.
 - b. Encourage the redevelopment of negative sites or buildings.
 - c. Exploring the potential for grant aid to assist with the reversal of inappropriate alterations to buildings, to help with repairs and appropriate improvements, including the reinstatement of original features for buildings within the Conservation Area;
 - d. Changes to the conservation area boundary to enhance and further protect its' setting.
11. **Examine the opportunities to enhance the public realm and reduce the impact of indiscriminate street parking.** One of the key findings of the appraisal and public consultation exercise was the impact of indiscriminate street parking, particularly on residents. Not only does this cause inconvenience for them, it also cause visual blight upon the appearance of the conservation area.
12. **Encourage the redevelopment of negative sites or buildings.** Although relatively small in number, negative sites or buildings can have a serious detrimental effect upon the appearance of an area. Sympathetic redevelopment of sites such as those at the rear of the Swan with Two Necks, Chapel Steps and the adjacent vacant land will be encouraged.
13. **Exploring the potential for grant aid to assist with the reversal of inappropriate alterations to buildings, and to help with repairs and appropriate improvements, including the reinstatement of original features for buildings within the Conservation Area.** There is considerable evidence of a lack of basic maintenance and repair of some properties. Programmes of regular, maintenance for buildings are the most cost-effective way of maintaining them in good order. Further advice is available for property owners in joint a publication produced by English Heritage, the Institute of Historic Building and Conservation and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings entitled 'A Stitch In Time'. Offering grant assistance can help owners to maintain their property to the enhanced standard that conservation area designation warrants. This not only enhances the

appearance of the area, but also enhances property values. The potential for grant aid will be the subject of a separate report to the Executive Cabinet.

14. Changing the Conservation Area boundary to enhance and further protect its setting.

There are a small number of properties currently just outside the conservation area that would benefit from the additional protection that designation brings. The extension of the conservation area boundary will give additional control to both new developments and alterations that can seriously impact upon the setting of the area as a whole. The proposed extension will include the following properties:

- a. 19, 21 & 23 Park Road including the adjacent section of Park Road itself.

CONSULTATION

- 15. The preparation of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals has been the subject of comprehensive consultations.
- 16. A copy of the consultation response report is included in the Appraisal and Management Proposals document.
- 17. All residents within the conservation area boundary, and those just outside it, were invited by letter to a public exhibition held in February 2009. This was followed by a period of six weeks consultation, including further exhibition displays in the Chorley Council offices. The consultation documents and response questionnaires were available at these exhibitions and also via the Council Website.
- 18. Most comments received were either in favour of the report. Where suggestions were made these have been considered and wherever possible incorporated into the final version. Comments regarding other agencies or other departments within Chorley Council or Lancashire County Council have been directed to the appropriate individual or department.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

- 19. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Corporate Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	✓	No significant implications in this area	

COMMENTS OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE

- 20. The proposal would satisfy our legal requirements.

JANE MEEK
CORPORATE DIRECTOR (BUSINESS)

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
St Laurence's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals	July 2009	***	Copy attached, Council Website
Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Ian Heywood	5533	20 August 2009	***