

Item 08 – Adoption of Conservation Area Appraisal Update and Extensions to Conservation Areas

The attached report was considered by the Development & Conservation Advisory Committee on 11 July 2023. The relevant Minute extract is below.

Development & Conservation Advisory Committee (11 July 2023, Minute 9)

The Design & Conservation Team Leader and the Senior Conservation Officer outlined the report, which set out the updated appraisals for the Eynsford, Farningham, and Kemsing Conservation Areas. These areas had been selected for appraisal due to the time since their last review, and the number of applications received in recent years.

The Officers gave a presentation on the appraisals. They had been updated to the Council's new format, developed in 2019, to be more accessible and concise. They included management recommendations, to support the Council, residents, and local stakeholders, as well as Open Space Assessments, to highlight the contribution of open spaces both within, and in the setting of, conservation areas. A large number of responses were received from the public consultation that ran from mid-January to early March 2023. This feedback and local knowledge was incorporated into the appraisals and proposed changes for the three areas.

The Committee heard a detailed breakdown of the outcome of the appraisals. All three areas were of special interest, and merited their conservation area status. Limited changes were proposed to each of the boundaries. In places small amendments were proposed to follow physical land boundaries, as in several areas they cut through structures and plots of land. The Officers described the principal boundary changes in each area. In Eynsford, two principal extensions were proposed. In Farningham, a plot of land would be removed, as it had been developed since the last appraisal, and there were two principal additions to the conservation area. In Kemsing, two principal additions were proposed, one of which was of historic value and was important to the setting of the church. There was an example of land that was agricultural and did not follow the historic settlement pattern, and thus would be removed from the conservation area, though other protections would still apply. An additional important view would be added to the Kemsing View Map. An Article 4 direction was proposed for Kemsing to prevent the erosion of the front boundary treatments and front gardens that made a strong contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

In response to questions, the Officers explained that there needed to be strong justification for the application of an Article 4 direction, and thus it couldn't be applied unilaterally across all of the district's conservation areas. Officers had been devising a way to expand the local list to the entire district, and this was a project that would be forthcoming. Further clarification was

given on the requirements of the Article 4 direction. It would be specific and applied only to certain properties, and would require residents to submit an application for work to front boundaries, to ensure that development preserved or enhanced the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that it be recommended to Council, that Council:

- a) Adopts the three updated conservation area appraisals for Eynsford, Farningham and Kemsing;
- b) Designates the proposed boundary amendments to each of the above conservation areas; and,
- c) Agrees to the making of a focused Article 4 direction to remove limited permitted development rights that protects boundary treatments and front gardens in the Kemsing Conservation Area.