



Report of the Head of Planning and City Regeneration

To

Planning Committee – 3 April 2018

Approval Of Draft Mumbles Conservation Area Review For Public And Stakeholder Consultation

Purpose:	This report provides an overview of the draft Mumbles Conservation Area Review and seeks authorisation to undertake public and stakeholder consultation.
Policy Framework:	City and County of Swansea Unitary Development Plan (Adopted November 2008). The final Mumbles Conservation Area Review document to be adopted to the Local Development Plan (LDP) expected to be the approved plan by Autumn 2018.
Reason for Decision:	To approve the draft conservation area review documents (Appendix A) as the basis for public and stakeholder consultation.
Consultation:	Legal, Finance, Access to Services.
Recommendation(s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) That the draft Mumbles Conservation Area Review document is approved for public and stakeholder consultation;2) A schedule of responses to the representations received is reported back to Planning Committee for consideration and final approval as SPG.
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report seeks authority to undertake a 6 week public and stakeholder consultation exercise on the draft Mumbles Conservation Area Review. A copy of the draft document is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.2 Once the consultation process is concluded, a schedule of responses to all representations received will be reported to this Committee for consideration, along with an amended version of the guidance document.

2.0 Background and Legislative/ Policy Context

- 2.1 Conservation Areas are designated by the Local Planning Authority under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The principal considerations are the architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
- 2.2 Designation as a Conservation Area does not mean that no change can occur or that only traditional designs are allowed, rather that there is a greater level of design and development control linked to policy EV9 of the City and County of Swansea Unitary Development Plan (and policies HC1 and HC2 of the emerging Swansea LDP) and the main consideration is whether any change 'preserves or enhances' the character of the conservation area.
- 2.3 In order to be effective a Conservation Area Appraisal needs to comprise:
 1. A 'Character Appraisal' which is an up to date record of the character of buildings and spaces including positive and negative features.
 2. A 'Management Plan' which indicates how the character of the area will be preserved and enhanced by a variety of means including Development Control, management of the public realm and spaces, plus possible environmental enhancements.
- 2.4 The City and County of Swansea has 31 Conservation Areas in a variety of rural and urban locations. Whilst the legislation sets out a duty to review the Conservation Areas from 'time to time', this has not occurred and as a result the only published information available are informal notes which comprise boundary plans and a very limited description of the area (often less than a single side of text). As a result there is a lack of up to date information on the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas to guide those preparing and assessing development proposals in these sensitive and historic areas.
- 2.5 The Ffynone and Uplands Conservation Area Review and Morrision Conservation Area Review have been completed with the documents being completed and adopted in 2013 and 2017 respectively.
- 2.6 The Mumbles Conservation Area Review has been prepared to provide an up to date assessment of the character and issues affecting the designated

Mumbles Conservation Area. It will be used to help assess and determine planning applications in this area and may allow for the commencement of the process of introducing Article 4 Directions to provide greater control of various permitted development rights for selected properties.

3.0 Mumbles Conservation Area

3.1 Mumbles Conservation Area was first designated in 1969. Since this time the area has never been reviewed or updated.

3.2 The Draft Mumbles Conservation Area Review (attached as Appendix A) seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the area and identify the issues which threaten its special qualities; and
- Provide guidelines to prevent harm and achieve the enhancement of the area.

3.3 The review briefly sets out the historical development of the area. Mumbles has a long and rich history with evidence as far back as the Romans having a villa on the site of All Saints Church. Medieval Mumbles was a village based on fishing, focused around the narrow streets and cottages called 'slades' that led steeping up Mumbles Hill. Notably, the opening of the Swansea to Mumbles railway in 1804 brought further changes to the village, with the first regular horse drawn rail passenger service in the world introduced in 1807 when the area began to develop as a tourist resort.

3.4 The review explains the townscape and built form of the conservation area including listed buildings, buildings of local character and special heritage characteristics. The review identifies the following positive issues and assets:

- Overall Character and Setting of the Conservation Area with clusters around the seafront with Swansea Bay and the wooded headland forming strong visual boundaries to the historic settlement;
- Variety of historic townscape including the contrasting built heritage qualities of the Character Areas from the three storey seafront streetscape to the predominantly two storey area of terraces and the Newton Road shopping area;
- Individual building and structures of particular heritage merit and/or locational impact which enlivens the streetscape with focal buildings;
- Significant townscape groups of buildings including Victorian and Edwardian terraces of commercial and residential buildings that combine to create an attractive variety of scale and design; and
- Long distance views from the Conservation Area to the coastal setting.

3.5 The review also identifies 7 distinct character areas within the existing conservation area:

- Seafront

- Newton Road
 - Queen's Road and terraces
 - Overland Road
 - Village Lane / Thistleboon Road
 - Castle Grounds and Castle Avenue
 - Wooded hill slopes.
- 3.6 The proposed division into character areas as shown in Section 5 of Appendix A makes it easier to differentiate between distinct parts of the conservation area and will make it easier to manage change.
- 3.7 The management plan which forms part of the Conservation Area Review document sets out key issues and opportunities to preserve or enhance the special character. A key action is the review of the conservation area boundary and it is suggested that significant adjustments should be made to take into account the historic value and interest of areas with potential for conservation.
- 3.8 The areas listed below are considered to have a quality and historic interest commensurate with areas already within the Conservation area. The extent of the current conservation area boundary and the proposed enlarged boundary to the Mumbles Conservation Area to include the areas listed below are set out in Section 4 of Appendix A:
- **Oystermouth Castle area:** The grade II listed Castle, associated grounds and Castle Avenue;
 - **Newton Road area:** From Mumbles Road at the bottom of the hill up to the junction with Castle Avenue;
 - **The residential terraces area:** The planned grid layout of terraces either side of Newton Road;
 - **Overland Road:** The steeper slopes of Mumbles Hill with wooded hill slopes as the backdrop; and
 - **Mumbles Road near the junction with Newton Road:** The area between the current conservation area boundary and the Newton Road junction.
- 3.9 The principle of adding the above areas to the existing conservation area will be a key question during the public and stakeholder consultation. The implications of expanding the Conservation Area to include the above areas are principally a greater level of design and development control to assess whether proposals preserve or enhance the area, as explained in paragraph 2.2. It should be noted that designation of the additional areas listed above will not stop change.
- 3.10 Other recommendations of the management plan include:
- Enhancement of existing buildings. Residents and owners should be encouraged to repair original elements in preference to replacement.
 - Management framework for the public realm. Whilst no enhancement funding is allocated, the draft management plan

identifies that improvements to the public realm can make a significant contribution to the appearance and use of the conservation area by creating high quality attractive streetscape and improved open space. The Council is undertaking further design and feasibility work on a new Coastal Protection scheme which will improve the standard of flood risk protection but also enhance the promenade to create a more sustainable and attractive seafront with regeneration and recreation benefits.

- Preservation / Improvement of key sites. For example, encouraging investment to reuse the historic building stock, improvements to shopfronts and signage, and traffic and parking appraisals.
- Local Listing in the Conservation Area for buildings of local historic or architectural value, group value or visual interest.
- Community involvement. There is scope for further engagement with the community in caring for the local built environment through voluntary projects and conservation education and training.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 The conservation area review will be subject to public and stakeholder consultation period lasting at least 6 weeks in order to grant the document status as supplementary planning guidance. The legislation requires that this includes a public meeting. The consultation will allow Ward Councillors, members of the public, stakeholders and other interested parties to comment on the draft conservation area review.
- 4.2 The public and stakeholder consultation process will make use of a variety of consultation methods to raise awareness and maximise accessibility of the process. This will include direct emails, posting on the Council web page, publication of press notices, articles/adverts in the local media, posters on local notice boards, and targeted consultation of specific national and local organisations. The public meeting will be organised in an accessible venue within Mumbles conservation area and will be timed to maximise attendance.
- 4.3 The draft conservation area review document will be available for download from the Council website. Printed copies and copies in alternative formats will be available on request. All information will also be readily available at the Civic Centre and Mumbles library. There is also potential to use social media to broaden the scope of the consultation.
- 4.4 All comments received will be recorded, evaluated and incorporated into the draft documents where considered appropriate. A summary of the consultation will be incorporated into the final SPG documents once adopted and a full detailed schedule of representations will be made available on request.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from the publication of this SPG, as the cost of the public consultation process can be accommodated within

existing budgets and staff resources. The consultation will, as far as possible, utilise electronic means of publicity and distribution.

- 5.2 The increase in size of the conservation area will result in greater scrutiny of planning applications that currently lie outside the area to ensure that they preserve or enhance the special character of the conservation area. Whilst this will result in an increase in the workload of the development control service and the Design and Conservation Team, it is essential to properly manage the area. Any additional workload will be met from the existing team structures and budget.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 The designation and proposed enlargement of the Mumbles Conservation Area will need to comply with national legislation set out in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The draft Mumbles Conservation Area Review document will be consulted upon against the adopted Unitary Development Plan (2008), but it is anticipated that the final Mumbles Conservation Area Review document will be adopted as SPG to the Local Development Plan which is expected to be the approved plan by Autumn 2018. The SPG will need to be taken into account as a material consideration in evaluating future planning applications.

- 6.2 The weight that can be attributed to the draft SPG for the purpose of determining a planning application increases as the adoption process progresses. Significant weight will be attributed to the final adopted version of the SPG.

- 6.3 Once the conservation area review process has been concluded, then there is scope to protect the special character of important unlisted buildings identified in the Appraisals by means of an Article 4(2) Direction under the General Permitted Development Order. This removes permitted development rights for certain changes which do not currently require Planning Permission such as removal of front boundaries, changing windows, chimneys etc which may undermine the special historic character of the conservation area. This allows potentially harmful changes to be considered as planning applications on a case by case basis. This is a separate and often lengthy and complex process involves an application to the Welsh Government for the removal of permitted development rights and starts with an endorsement by this committee. Prior to any such application the issue will be discussed with the Cabinet Members, the Ward Councillors and would be subject to further community and stakeholder consultation. Further legal implications including compensation issues would then need to be addressed.

7.0 Equalities and Engagement Implications:

- 7.1 An EIA screening has been undertaken to assess whether a full EIA is required. It should be noted that the conservation area review provides a heritage framework for managing change and future projects:

- Where changes are proposed within commercial buildings these will also be subject to national requirements such as Part M of the Building regulations and the Equality Impact Assessment process.
- The potential public realm strategy for the promenade is a separate project that will be subject to a separate EIA screening and will require further consultation and engagement.

Background Papers:

None

Appendices:

Appendix A: Draft Mumbles Conservation Area Review