

Report of the Head of Planning and City Regeneration

Planning Committee – 5 November 2019

Approval of Mumbles Conservation Area Review Addendum for Public and Stakeholder Consultation

Purpose:	This report provides an overview of the Mumbles Conservation Area Review Addendum and seeks authorisation to undertake public and stakeholder consultation.
Policy Framework:	City and County of Swansea Local Development Plan (2018).
Consultation:	Legal, Finance, Access to Services.
Recommendation(s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) That the Mumbles Conservation Area Review Addendum 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 an additional 6 week public and stakeholder consultation exercise on the Mumbles Conservation Area Review Addendum. A copy is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.2 This follows the initial public and stakeholder consultation exercise undertaken during the summer of 2018. During this consultation there was strong support for the enlargement of the conservation area and many respondents suggested the inclusion of the 'northern seafront approach' along Mumbles Road (no's 420 – 488, even numbers only) into the expanded Conservation Area.

- 1.3 As a result of this, it is necessary to undertake an additional 6 week public and stakeholder consultation exercise to ensure that those with interests within the additional area have the chance to consider the proposals.
- 1.4 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 policies HC1 and HC2 of the Swansea LDP (2010-2025), 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 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 Review Addendum

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 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 As a result of the initial public and stakeholder held during the summer of 2018, there was strong support for the inclusion of an area defined as the 'northern seafront approach' and subsequently it is a requirement to undertake a further 6 week public and stakeholder consultation exercise.

3.4 The Addendum seeks to include the 'Northern Seafront Approach' comprising 420-488 (even numbers) Mumbles Road within the expanded conservation area boundaries. The area is considered to have a character and special interest similar to the area around Southend Gardens that meets the test for designation as a conservation area.

3.5 The 'Northern Seafront Approach' comprises traditional buildings that line the west side of Mumbles Road facing Swansea Bay on the approach into Mumbles and are considered to have a positive character. These linked buildings display a pleasant variety of scale from low two storey cottages to more grand three storey town houses all joined into a continuous frontage. Whilst many of these buildings have modern windows they retain traditional patterns of fenestration and whilst they have been re-roofed they retain a traditional roofspace punctuated by some remaining chimneys.

3.6 The area has many similar characteristics as the adjoining 'Seafront' character area defined in the draft Mumbles Conservation Area Review. Therefore this area comprising 420-488 Mumbles Road (even numbers) is considered to warrant inclusion within the enlarged Mumbles Conservation Area and further consultation will be required.

3.7 The implications of expanding the Conservation Area to include the 'northern seafront approach' is 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 will not stop change.

4.0 Additional consultation

4.1 The additional consultation will last 6 weeks and will include a drop-in opportunity for residents and stakeholders within the area to discuss the proposals (in the same manner as the main consultation). Comments made during the summer of 2018 on the Mumbles Conservation Area Review will stand.

- 4.2 The public and stakeholder consultation process will make use of a variety of consultation methods and will be focussed on the relatively small area proposed to be added to the Conservation Area review. This will include direct notification via letter, posting on the Council web page, publication of a press notice, etc. A drop in session will be organised in an accessible venue within Mumbles conservation area, most likely in Oystermouth Library, and will be timed to maximise attendance.
- 4.3 Following on from this additional consultation, the responses will be reviewed and incorporated into the engagement report for the conservation area review document including the final expanded boundary to be reported to Planning Committee as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the LDP.
- 4.4 The council website will be updated to reference the Mumbles Conservation Area Review Addendum.
- 4.5 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 As noted in the original committee report for the initial consultation exercise, 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 management service and the Design and Placemaking 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 Mumbles Conservation Area Review Addendum will be consulted upon against the adopted Local Development Plan (2010-2025). The Supplementary Planning Guidance document will need to be taken into account as a material consideration in evaluating future planning applications.

6.2 The additional consultation for the addition of the area into the Conservation Area review was not approved as a recommendation on the original (3rd April 2018) Planning Committee Report authorising the 2018 consultation, hence this further report to Planning Committee. It is envisaged that future Conservation Area reviews will include a recommendation approving any additional/ re-consultation.

6.3 The final Mumbles Conservation Area Review incorporating the initial and additional consultation exercises will be reported to the Planning Committee for adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance in due course.

7.0 Equalities and Engagement Implications:

7.1 An EIA screening was undertaken for the 2018 consultation 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.
- It is not considered that the additional consultation focussing on a small area of properties and businesses raises any new EIA issues.

Background Papers:

None

Appendices:

Appendix A: Plan showing initial extended conservation area boundary and area of additional consultation.

Appendix B: Mumbles Conservation Area Review Addendum