

# ENVIRONMENT CABINET MEMBER MEETING

## Agenda Item 42

Brighton & Hove City Council

**Subject:** Portslade Old Village Character Statement

**Date of Meeting:** 16 September 2010

**Report of:** Acting Director of Environment

**Contact Officer:** Name: Sanne Roberts Tel: 29-2261

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**Key Decision:** No

**Wards Affected:** North Portslade; South Portslade

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The report seeks approval of the Portslade Old Village Conservation Area Character Statement, following public consultation. The Character Statement seeks to define the character and appearance of the conservation area, which is important to preserve and enhance. A clear, comprehensive appraisal provides a sound basis for development control and for future initiatives to improve the area. It will assist in securing the preservation and enhancement of the city's historic built environment, which is given high priority by the Council.
- 1.2 The report also recommends changes to the conservation area boundary and an Article 4(1) Direction to control unsympathetic alterations to single family dwellinghouses.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Portslade Old Village Conservation Area Character Statement be adopted, subject to any minor grammatical and non-material text and illustration alterations agreed by the Director of Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment.
- 2.2 That an Article 4(1) Direction is made for unlisted dwellings in the area under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (1995), as recommended by the Portslade Old Village Conservation Area Appraisal and detailed in annex 3.
- 2.3 That the proposed boundary changes, as set out in the Character Statement and illustrated in annex 4, be approved and formally designated.

#### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The Portslade Old Village Conservation Area was designated in 1974. It was last reviewed in 1997 when a brief character statement was produced.
- 3.2 The character statement (as amended following consultation), which is appended at annex 2, is in line with current guidance from English Heritage (2006) and is

informed by historic research and on-site analysis. It describes the character of the area noting three distinct character areas: the Church and Villas; Easthill Park and the Brewery and Village centre.

- 3.3 The review suggested a number of boundary changes and an Article 4(1) Direction to control incremental alterations to unlisted single family dwelling houses within the area, noting a threat to traditional architectural features such as timber sash windows. The proposed Article 4(1) Direction is appended in annex 3, and the boundary changes in annex 4. The boundary changes include three areas suggested for deletion, as they no longer meet current tests for inclusion within a conservation area.

## 4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A draft Portslade Old Village Conservation Area Character Statement was approved for public consultation at the Cabinet Member Meeting on 11 May 2010. Formal public consultation was carried out between 20 May 2010 and 30 June 2010. Copies of the draft statement were made available on the council's website, at CityDirect Offices and at the Mile Oak and Portslade Libraries. Local residents, businesses, Ward Councillors, Portslade Community Forum, local and national amenity societies, English Heritage and other key stakeholders were engaged in consultation. Posters were placed in the area. It was also reported to the Conservation Advisory Group (CAG). Consultation was also undertaken at the Easthill Park and Play event on 17 June.
- 4.2 A total of eighteen representations were received and these are summarised at annex 1, which also sets out how the character statement has been changed, or not, in response to each of the representations.

### **Main issues arising from the consultation**

- 4.3 The results of public consultation were broadly supportive of the Portslade Old Village Conservation Area Appraisal and its recommendations, including the proposed boundary changes. The main issues raised during consultation related to the proposal to include North Road and Southdown Road in the conservation area and the possible inclusion of flint walls to the west of the area. As a result it is recommended that Southdown Road be included in the conservation area but North Road and the flint walls to the west are not included. The ward councillor is supportive of this approach.
- 4.4 The Southdown Road/North Road area comprises housing built for brewery workers and is an important part of Portslade's historic development. Concerns were raised about the extra planning restrictions that designation and the proposed Article 4(1) Direction would involve, such as restrictions on alterations to front boundary walls. There was a lack of strong support for the inclusion of North Road and it was noted that this street has been subject to past alterations. But the properties on Southdown Road are locally listed and remain largely unaltered. No objections were received to their inclusion in the conservation area.
- 4.5 Representations were received suggesting the inclusion of the **flint walls to the west of the conservation area**, along the High Street and extending to the city boundary. It is agreed that these walls form an important part of the setting of the conservation area, as reflected in their inclusion in the council's list of

buildings of local interest. However, they are located within a suburban context which is disconnected from the character of the conservation area and is of little special architectural or historic interest in itself. As such, the area does not warrant inclusion in the conservation area. The importance of the walls to the setting of the conservation area has been emphasised in the Character Statement, which also recommends that possibilities for introducing a grant scheme for repair work to flint walls should be explored.

## **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Costs will comprise staff time and local press notices. These will be met from within the existing revenue budget.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Derek Mansfield* *Date: 16/08/10*

### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The council has a duty under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 from time to time to review its area to determine whether any parts or further parts should be designated as conservation areas. There is no statutory requirement for public consultation prior to designation but it is highly desirable that such consultation should take place. The proposed Article 4(1) Direction would be made under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (1995) and provides a means through which to fulfil the council's obligation to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. No adverse human rights implications are considered to arise from the Report.

*Lawyer Consulted: Alison Gatherer* *Date: 16/08/10*

### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 None have been identified. An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been carried out because the report does not concern matters of new primary policy.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The proposals in this report have no substantial impact upon the four priorities of the UK's Sustainable Development Strategy.

### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 None have been identified.

### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The failure to maintain the character and appearance of the area and its historic buildings could lead to significant adverse publicity for the council.

### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The proposals accord with the corporate priority to protect the environment whilst growing the economy. More specifically the guidance is a response to the council's priority to protect the historic built environment and to secure new uses for redundant historic buildings.

### **7. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 7.1 None considered.

### **8. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 Portslade Old Village Conservation Area does not have an up-to-date, in depth character appraisal. A review of the Portslade Old Village Conservation Area would accord with the council's adopted Conservation Strategy (2003), and with national and Government guidance (English Heritage Guidance 2006, Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment).
- 8.2 The results of public consultation are broadly supportive. The recommendation to adopt the Statement and implement its recommendations has taken account of the representations received during public consultation and the changes made to the document are a result of those comments. The revised wording of the character statement is attached in appendix 2. The making of an Article 4(1) Direction will help preserve the character and appearance of the unlisted dwellings in the village through controlling incremental change.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Table of responses to public representations
2. Portslade Old Village Conservation Area Character Statement with proposed amendments highlighted
3. Proposed Article 4(1) Direction
4. Plan showing proposed boundary changes

### **Documents In Members' Rooms**

None

### **Background Documents**

1. Letters of representation
2. Minutes of the Conservation Advisory Group 29 June 2010