

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

10 February 2011

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES

**BRIDGEND TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA: DRAFT
CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN AND SUPPLEMENTARY
PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR BRIDGEND TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE
INITIATIVE**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to;
- present Members with a draft conservation area management plan for Bridgend Town Centre Conservation Area and request agreement of its contents and general approach;
 - request approval for public consultation on the draft supplementary planning guidance which relates to development within part of Bridgend Town Centre Conservation Area and the award winning Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme area.

2. Connections to Corporate Improvement Plan/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 A conservation area management plan for Bridgend town centre and supplementary planning guidance when adopted will contribute towards the Authority's statutory duty to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas. The most relevant community strategy themes and corporate improvement objectives are as follows;

New Opportunities; "To create vibrant and thriving town centres", "To promote economic growth and environmental sustainability and

Proud Past; "To continue to promote Bridgend as a place to visit"

3. Background

- 3.1 It is a local authority's statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area and to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of the conservation area.
- 3.2 The Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme in Bridgend Town Centre has increased awareness of the qualities of the built heritage by ensuring high quality repair, reinstatement and new work, and has

improved the image and character of the area, and reinforced its local distinctiveness. Phase 1 of the THI scheme for Bridgend has been running for five years, and has already had a substantial impact on the character of Dunraven Place in particular. As Members are aware, Phase I of the scheme was pivotal in the authority recently receiving the 2010 RTPi Wales Award for conservation-led regeneration. Phase II of the scheme has recently commenced following a further grant approval of £532,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

- 3.3 The Heritage Lottery Fund requires this Authority to demonstrate its commitment to conservation in order to sustain any improvements from the Bridgend Townscape Heritage Initiative in the longer term. To satisfy this requirement, a conservation area management plan must be agreed and adopted for Bridgend Town Centre Conservation Area. It will also consequently fulfil some of Bridgend County Borough Council's statutory duties in relation to conservation areas.

4. Current Situation/Proposal

- 4.1 A conservation area management plan has been prepared which identifies Bridgend County Borough Council's general approach to addressing a range of issues affecting the character and appearance of the conservation area. It identifies actions, including the preparation of design guidance, to inform future planning policy and planning decisions to ensure the conservation area's preservation or enhancement. A draft management plan framework was previously agreed by Planning and Development Control Committee on 16th October 2008 and has since been updated in light of the most recent conservation area appraisal by GVA Grimleys (2009), the emerging local development plan and draft masterplan for Bridgend town centre and the most recent visitor perception survey. A copy of the currently proposed conservation area management plan and programme for action is contained in **Appendix A**.
- 4.2 Consultation on the draft document has been undertaken with partners represented on this Authority's Town Centres Operational Group. The management plan and programme for actions if agreed will be circulated to key stakeholders and building owners in the town centre to ensure a partnership approach to its implementation
- 4.3 It is proposed that Members agree the conservation area management plan and programme to enable this authority to take necessary action to protect the investment that has been made.
- 4.4 Phase II of the THI aims to consolidate and extend the enhancements already achieved in Phase I. In association with Phase II, design guidance has been prepared, a copy of which is included in **Appendix B**. The guidance sets out general principles relevant to the restoration of buildings and the replacement of shop fronts. It also identifies six

character areas within the THI area to help interpret the general principles according to the particular identity of groups of buildings. For each character area completed, approved and suggested schemes are illustrated. It is intended that these will inspire creative restoration and enhancement to the overall benefit of the conservation area by showing what might be achieved with the assistance of THI grant and beyond the life of the grant scheme.

- 4.5 The document is a key part of the successful bid for THI funding, as it helps to demonstrate the commitment of Bridgend County Borough Council to the conservation-led regeneration of Bridgend Town Centre. The intention is to adopt this document as Supplementary Planning Guidance and to enable this there is a requirement that the document is the subject of public consultation. Following any necessary revision, and formal adoption by Members it will be used as a material consideration both in development control and in the consideration of applications for financial assistance under the THI scheme.

5. Effect Upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

- 5.1 In addition to supporting the Authority's statutory duties with regard to conservation areas, the proposal for a conservation area management plan concurs with policies EV31, EV34, EV35, EV36 and EV38 of the Adopted Unitary Development Plan. Conditions of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant require Bridgend County Borough Council to demonstrate its commitment to conservation and to sustain its investment in the conservation area for the longer term.
- 5.2 The draft Conservation Area Management plan and design guidance for the Townscape Heritage Initiative is in accordance with one of the strategic objectives of the draft Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan "Enhance the quality of the environment and historic character of the town centre."

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.1 A screening exercise has been undertaken on the contents of the conservation area management plan, the actions contained in the programme and the supplementary planning guidance. There is likely to be a low impact on some groups including disabled people and Welsh speaking individuals. Account will be taken of these requirements in the arrangement of any consultation events and appropriate consultation will be undertaken with all relevant groups and through the translation of relevant literature. Events planned will take account of equality of access for all specified groups.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The offer of £532,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for Phase II of the THI scheme is subject to Bridgend County Borough Council agreeing a management plan for the conservation area. If a management plan is not agreed, there is a risk of forfeiting the grant offer from the Heritage Lottery Fund, as well as other match funding in the common fund and any subsequent private sector investment.
- 7.2 In order to draw down the full grant award, it will be necessary to attract additional match funding over and above that currently awarded. Total match funding currently available is £285,000 which will allow draw down of £285,000 of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant awarded.
- 7.3 The proposed actions are based on the level of resources currently allocated to these service areas within Bridgend County Borough Council. Progress will be monitored and reviewed in the event that resource levels change.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 The Development Control committee is requested to:
- 8.1.1 Approve the draft conservation area management plan and programme for action for development control purposes and as the Authority's general approach to the management of Bridgend Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 8.1.2 Approve the draft Bridgend Townscape Heritage Initiative supplementary planning guidance for the purposes of public consultation and, subsequently receive a further report.

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Background documents

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