

## **Cabinet – 28 February 2007**

### **Walsall Locks Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Adrian Andrew - Regeneration and Enterprise

**Service Area:** Regeneration – Delivery and Development

**Wards:** Birchills and Leamore, Pleck and St Matthews

**Key decision** Yes

**Forward Plan:** Yes

#### **Summary of report**

This report outlines the role that Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans play in enabling the Council to fulfil its statutory functions in relation to Conservation Areas.

The Council, in line with the requirements of Best Value Performance Indicator 219, is currently undertaking a rolling programme of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.

Conservation Area designation is the main instrument available to Local Planning Authorities to give effect to conservation policies for a particular neighbourhood or area. Designation introduces a general planning control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 stresses the need for local planning authorities to make an assessment of the special character, and appearance of all Conservation Areas in their districts and to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of this special character.

The Appraisals and Management Plans are also essential tools in the continuing development of heritage led regeneration initiatives across the Borough and will provide important data and actions to support external funding bids.

An objective and clear character appraisal will provide a sound basis on which to make fully informed development control decisions and to carry out initiatives to promote the area. The more clearly the special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded, the sounder will be the basis for local plan policies and development control decisions. Such definition also assists in the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of an area.

The format of this appraisal and management plan is based on the English Heritage publication 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals (2006) and Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas (2006)'.

The full Walsall Locks Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been provided as hard copies in each of the group rooms.

## **Recommendations**

Cabinet is recommended to adopt the updated Walsall Locks Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as set out in Appendix A of this report. Cabinet is recommended to note that a draft of the Walsall Locks Conservation Area Appraisal was approved by Cabinet in March 2006.

## **Resource and legal considerations**

There are no financial implications relating to the adoption of this appraisal.

Conservation Areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance (Section 69 (1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Local Authorities are required to designate Conservation Areas, to keep them under review and, if appropriate to designate further areas (Section 69 (2)). Local Authorities are also required to formulate and publish proposals for any parts of their area which are a Conservation Area (Section 71 (1)) and to submit any such proposals to a public meeting and have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting (Section 71 (2) and (3)).

This appraisal and management plan fulfils the Council's duties under Section 69 and 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to 'review our areas from time to time' and to 'formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas'.

The implementation of the recommendations in the management plan will utilise existing Council resources. Some recommendations will require a separate approval following further work and consultation, in which instances, a separate report will be presented to the relevant authorising committee.

## **Citizen impact**

The preservation and enhancement of a Conservation Area creates an asset that is available for all members of the community to learn from and enjoy.

## **Community safety**

No issues.

## **Environmental impact**

Local Planning Authorities are bound in exercising their planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

The Walsall Locks Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan defines aspects of the character and appearance that either contribute to or detract from the nature of the area.

This document will be used to inform development control decisions on planning applications and applications for Conservation Area Consent within the Walsall Locks Conservation Area and provides recommended proposals to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area.

## **Performance and risk management issues**

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 BV 219b has measured the percentage of Conservation Areas in the local authority area with an up-to-date character appraisal. BV219c has measured the percentage of Conservation Areas in the local authority area with an up-to-date management plan.

Together with BV 219a (number of Conservation Areas) this indicator will monitor whether planning and other decisions are based on an informed understanding of the special character of the local historic environment and the needs of the community it supports.

The adoption of this appraisal and management plan will contribute to the Council's outturn in relation to this BVPI.

Failure to adopt will potentially undermine planning decisions and potentially lead to poor performance rates against a key indicator in the Environment Block.

## **Equality implications**

Conservation Area policy is applied equally to all property owners/occupiers within the area of designation.

## **Consultation**

Public consultation has been carried out in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement and in accordance with the requirements of Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

All properties within the conservation area were written to and an exhibition and public meeting were held at the New Art Gallery. All relevant departments within the Council were consulted.

All feedback from the consultation has been considered and relevant comments have been incorporated into the document.

**Vision 2008**

The report has particular relevance to priority 6 of a Vision for Walsall – *Encourage everyone to feel proud of Walsall*. This priority states:

‘Walsall people, deep down, have a pride and loyalty to their community, their town and their borough. They are frustrated at Walsall’s poor image, and at negative perceptions of the Black Country and the West Midlands generally. Local people, local businesses, our schools and colleges want Walsall to be a borough with a strong, positive image, that is known for its good things – its people, its industry, its commitment and pride, its location and its attractions.’

**Background papers**

All on the Walsall Locks Conservation Area file.

**Contact officers**

Simon Tranter  
Regeneration Manager – Strategy and Development  
☎: 01922 652543  
✉: [tranters@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:tranters@walsall.gov.uk)

Claire Hines,  
Principal Regeneration Officer  
☎: 01922 652449  
✉: [hinesclaire@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:hinesclaire@walsall.gov.uk)



Signed: .....

**Executive Director:**

**Date: 19 February 2007**



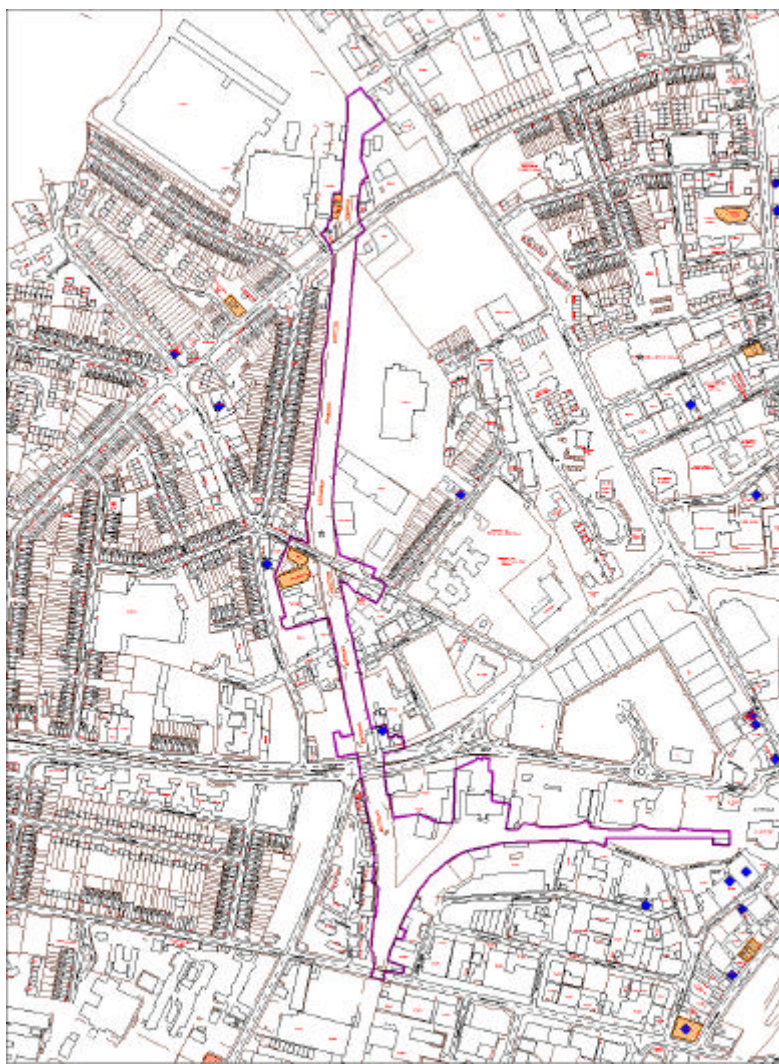
Signed: .....

**Portfolio Holder:**

**Date: 19 February 2007**

## Walsall Locks Conservation Area

Walsall Locks Conservation Area was designated on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 1987 and covers an area of 5.5 hectares. The special interest of this area is that it preserves an important example of the transport infrastructure that was influential in the history of the development of Walsall. The canal still retains most of its historic character and features, and the Conservation Area includes notable examples of canalside buildings that define its heritage townscape. Although it has little industrial use today, the canal now provides an important leisure facility and 'green lung' into the town centre.



*Map identifying the Conservation Area boundary (purple), locally listed buildings (blue) and statutorily listed buildings (orange).*

Over the last seven years or so, Walsall Council has attracted substantial amounts of grant funding for building repair and architectural reinstatement projects in Conservation Areas. The total value of funding amounts available for projects amounts to over £4,581,000. Walsall Council has contributed in the region of £640,000 but almost £4 million has been provided by English Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund, Advantage West Midlands, Walsall's New Deal for Communities and the European Regional Development Fund. In addition to this, private property owners have made financial contributions to works, typically in the region of 10-25% of project costs.