

CABINET

11 FEBRUARY 2020

PRESENT: Councillor A Macpherson (Leader); Councillors S Bowles (Deputy Leader), P Irwin, H Mordue, C Paternoster, Sir Beville Stanier Bt, P Strachan, J Ward and M Winn

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of 14 January, 2020 be approved as a correct record.

2. LITTLE HORWOOD CONSERVATION AREA

As part of an on-going programme, the Conservation Area at Little Horwood had been reviewed. The Conservation Area had originally been designated in 1991. The review had been the subject of public consultation. A map showing the proposed revised Conservation Area boundary was submitted together with details of the representations received and the Council's response. A copy of the Appraisal Document was submitted also.

By way of context, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 defined a Conservation Area as..."an area of special architectural Interest, the character and appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance." The Act placed three duties on local authorities:-

- To designate those areas considered to be of special architectural or historic interest as Conservation Areas.
- To review all Conservation Areas from time to time.
- To formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Areas.

The Conservation Area Document for Little Horwood:-

- Defined the special interest of Little Horwood.
- Identified those features which made Little Horwood of sufficient interest to warrant designation.
- Laid out some settlement specific management proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area.

The proposed Conservation Area boundary at Little Horwood had been drawn to include those elements and features which were considered to be of architectural or historic interest, or which positively contributed to the special character or appearance of the area as a whole.

The Cabinet report, available to view in full on the Council's web site indicated that some of the proposed changes to the Conservation Area boundary related to minor alterations where the existing boundary cut through properties. In these cases, the

proposed boundary had been altered to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding. The most significant changes to the existing boundary were:-

- The proposed inclusion of the Moated site, a description of which and rationale for inclusion of which were included in the Cabinet report.
- Archaeological Notification sites to the south-east, east and north-east of the Moated site.
- Hill Farm, Winslow Road and the immediate curtilage, including a small field to the rear of nos. 3, 5, 5A and 7 Church Street.

The report summarised the consultation process, from which it was noted that objections had been raised to the proposed inclusion of the scheduled Moated site, the proposed inclusion of the Garden of Peace, the proposed inclusion of the private paddocks to the west of Wood End, and the proposed inclusion of Hill Farm and the fields that backed onto the western side of Church Street. The reasoning behind the objections was detailed in the Cabinet report. A number of residents had also queried the role of Conservation Areas as they felt that AVDC did not enforce the legislation that accompanied designation. However since publication of the report for consideration by Cabinet, the objections from the Parish Council had effectively been withdrawn in that the Parish Council had indicated that it would support the proposed changes.

The following site specific issues had been raised within the Little Horwood Conservation Area Management Plan and during the consultation:-

- Maintaining the rural character of the village especially through the preservation of the hedges, trees and banks that lined the carriageways. Also it was important to maintain the connection between the village and surrounding countryside gained in part through views from the village out into the surrounding landscape and also from outside the village looking in.
- Maintaining the integrity of the key open spaces within the village, in particular, The Green, the churchyard and around the Moated site.
- Recognising the key role played by St. Nicholas's Church and the Moated site. The setting of both of these buildings was fundamental to the identity and character of the village as a whole.
- Maintaining the rural character of the village through the rationalisation of signage and street furniture. This could be achieved through undertaking a street furniture audit.
- Encouraging the retention of historic features (particularly windows and doors) where they survived on buildings, especially those buildings which were not listed and were therefore not protected by legislation.
- Where new development was deemed acceptable, ensuring that its form, layout, massing, materials and design reflected and respected the key characteristics of the built historic environment of the village as identified within the Management Plan.
- Overhead wiring around the village and in particular on The Green. Efforts should be made to see if these cables could be placed underground and the poles removed.

The Cabinet report contained three possible options with a brief commentary on each:-

- **Option 1** - To approve the revised boundary as recommended and justified within the draft Conservation Area Appraisal Document and shown on the map submitted.
- **Option 2** - To remove Hill Farm and adjacent fields to the west of Church Street, the paddocks between the moated site and Wood End and the Garden of Peace from the proposed designation, but include the Moated site within the Conservation Area.
- **Option 3** – To retain the existing 1991 Conservation Area boundary with only minor alterations to ensure that the boundary accurately followed extent boundaries.

After careful consideration, Cabinet was firmly of the opinion that Option 1 should be adopted. Accordingly, having thanked the Heritage Officers for the careful, detailed and considered approach to the Conservation Area review, it was,

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the responses to the consultations contained in the Cabinet report at Appendix 1, be noted.
- (2) That the Little Horwood Conservation Area boundary (Appendix 2, Option1), be adopted.
- (3) That the Management Plan be adopted.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES UPDATE

Members recalled the Council's decision to put a budget in place to enable AVDC to implement a number of environmental initiatives in response to climate change. A cross party steering group had been established to oversee proposals and Cabinet received an update on the current position. A similar report had been submitted to the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee on 10 February, 2020. That Committee had been supportive of all the initiatives considered thus far.

It was reported that the Steering Group had agreed that the initiatives should focus on five specific areas, namely, "community orchards", an Enterprise Day, Climate Change Champions and "who does what" information provision.

Initial research had indicated that there were a number of environmental projects across the Vale and that restricting funding to "community orchards" might minimise the legacy that the Council wished to create. In order to maximise the benefit across the Vale it had been considered that an environmental fund should be created.

AVDC had reached agreement with the local charity "Heart of Bucks" to create an environmental fund, with the charity fund matching by 50%. AVDC had committed £20,000, with £10,000 being committed by Heart of Bucks for community driven environmental projects within the Vale. Grants could be applied for up to a value of £2,500. Larger funds could be provided with appropriate fund matching by the applicant(s). Heart of Bucks would administer the fund and oversee the funds allocated. This would allow the scheme to function independently beyond the life of AVDC.

Two example projects were being considered and would be used to launch the fund to community groups within the Vale. These would be selected by Councillors Irwin and Lyons as they were already actively involved with the scheme and activities within their communities.

The Steering Group believed that young people would play a significant role in reducing the environmental impact of schools and homes within the Vale. As such, two local students had been included in a number of discussions regarding the initiatives. To fully engage young people, an initiative had been agreed, in partnership with Heart of Bucks and Bucks County Council, to provide a schools grants scheme for environmental improvements within schools grounds or their surrounding areas.

It had been recognised at the original Steering Group meeting that businesses within the Vale needed to play a significant role in minimising their environmental impact if meaningful improvements were to be achieved. The agreed approach had been to host an "Enterprise Day" at The Gateway, inviting businesses that traded or operated in Aylesbury Vale to network with operators specialising in services to minimise any detrimental environmental impact. This included AVDC, which provided food waste management services. However after researching the costs of hosting such an event, it had been decided that this could not be achieved within the current budget. Accordingly it had been decided to research events within the Vale that AVDC might partner with.

Contact had subsequently been made with Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) who had recently launched the #netserobucks campaign at their AGM. The campaign had been focused on supporting businesses in reducing or offsetting their carbon footprint. BBF had hosted a Business Expo at The Gateway in 2019, with over 200 attendees. They were again hosting a similar event on 8 March, 2020 and had doubled the number of businesses invited to attend.

The Steering Group believed that education and information provision should be at the forefront of the initiatives. This included Parish/Town Councils, Members and Officers. To provide this across the Vale, it had been agreed that a form of training would be required, providing candidates with information regarding the current climate emergency and the actions that could be taken on a local level to reduce or remove the impact of residents, visitors and businesses. AVDC was currently in the process of contacting organisations that provided the level of training required to enable Parish/Town Councils and Members to best inform their residents.

At this stage AVDC was gathering information from these organisations and would be looking to finalise a partnership over the coming weeks. Once this had been secured the training timings would be finalised and communicated to relevant stake holders. AVDC would be leading the marketing of each initiative, whilst working in partnership with the relevant stake holders in each area. The Council's Marketing and Communications Team was currently working on branding to ensure that a single message was shared across all the initiatives.

The project had begun with a budget of £60,000 and had increased to £70,000 with the match funding agreed by Heart of Bucks. It might be possible to secure some funding from Bucks County Council.

£30,000, inclusive of the Heart of Bucks funding, had been allocated to the community fund. £15,000 had been allocated to the schools competition, and Bucks County Council was considering a contribution towards this initiative.

£2,600 had been allocated to sponsorship of the Business Expo, inclusive of marketing costs on the day. £2,400 would be allocated to marketing material aimed specifically at businesses.

£20,000 remained in the budget and would be used to cover the costs of administering the initiatives, the Climate Champion training and all other marketing costs.

Cabinet was pleased with the progress made with this issue in a relatively short time and the cross party cooperation and having asked that their thanks be conveyed to all those officers involved in this matter, Members

RESOLVED –

That the content of the report be noted and the actions referred to therein endorsed.