



Report of Town Clerk

Conservation Area Management Plan

Access Public

Background

1. A conservation areas management plan (CAMP) is a vehicle for reinforcing the positive character of a historic area as well as for avoiding, minimising and mitigating negative impacts identified as affecting the area.
2. The preparation of a plan may also outline opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance, possibly through the location or design of new development. In some circumstances the proposals for the successful management of the conservation area could inform the development plan.
3. Northumberland County Council officers have indicated that they are considering supporting the development of a CAMP for Berwick-upon-Tweed, possibly via the vehicle of the Conservation Area Advisory Group.
4. The development of a CAMP is, potentially a boon to the town in that a plan can, in some cases, enable bids for funding or proposals for improvement to be more coherently located in an understanding of the townscape. However, it is important to remember that the central principle of current government policy on development control is to enable development where possible; a CAMP should not be seen as a way of preventing development but rather of enabling it.
5. Officers would, however, flag up that there are substantial issues around the idea of a CAMP that address the idea of deliverability. Simply put, a plan without resources is not a plan, but an aspiration. There are many examples in the 2008 conservation area management strategy of unfunded and undelivered aspirations. For instance paragraph 6.5.3 suggests a tree audit in advance of re-planting of trees in Castlegate; paragraph 6.5.8 suggests improvements to pedestrian footways and flow on Bridge Street that resemble proposals that arise from the 2020 Covid response; paragraph 6.5.11 suggests an audit of the 'wirescape' in the town centre; while paragraph 6.5.13 suggests 'aspirational but realistic plans' to recreate the superblocks at the heart of the town centre. This list is neither comprehensive nor critical, although it would be a mistake not to consider the outcomes arising from these proposals, and is also an invitation to council to reflect on whether an undeliverable plan is either desirable or a good use of council time.
6. Council is recommended to engage with the process of developing a CAMP, to seek to support consultation and public engagement, and to provide a perspective that reflects its priorities around the creation of opportunity for all Berwick residents via economic growth and improved transport links.

Recommendation

1. That Councillors provide guidance to Officers.

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Checked by	SC
Town Clerk sign off (if required)	GD