
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2011

**EX.123/11 DRAFT BOTCHERGATE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND
MANAGEMENT PLAN
(Key Decision)**

Portfolio Economic Development

Subject Matter

The Assistant Director (Economic Development) submitted report ED.30/11 setting out a draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Botchergate. She informed Members that the Botchergate Conservation Area was designated in 1994 following work by the Carlisle and District Civic Trust and City Council. Whilst subsequent years had seen significant investments in parts of the Conservation Area, much of Botchergate had suffered from continued economic malaise and a decline in the quality of the built environment and the public realm.

She added that Local Plan Policy DP2 (Regeneration) specified that proposals would be developed for the regeneration of the economic, social and environmental capital of the district. Botchergate was named under that Policy and the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was the first step in taking forward the objectives of that Policy by providing more detail to guide future development of the area.

The current appearance of Botchergate was an issue of perennial concern for both elected Members and the public. It had been a recurrent theme during the 'Key Issues' consultation for the Local Development Framework, which took place between January and March 2011, with numerous representations referring to Botchergate and generally requesting that action be taken to improve its appearance and function as a gateway to the City.

The Assistant Director (Economic Development) indicated that an adopted Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Botchergate would enable the identification of those elements of significance within the area, and provide a sound basis for development control decisions and initiatives to improve the area. It would give greater confidence to potential investors and help to determine a direction for the area. There was no up-to-date guide character of the Conservation Area and work carried out in the early 1990s was in need of updating as a result of the many changes therein.

In conclusion, the Assistant Director (Economic Development) reported that the appraisal would provide an opportunity to consider whether the Conservation Area should be extended or contracted, and also the appropriateness of measures such as Article 4 Directions which could provide more control over some aspects of permitted development.

The Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder sought an assurance that the Botchergate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan would not restrict or stifle proper development of the area.

In response, the Assistant Director (Economic Development) explained that the purpose was to provide certainty in the area so that developers had a clear understanding of the criteria governing future development and regeneration initiatives.

The Performance and Development Portfolio Holder welcomed submission of the report. He emphasised the need to work with private landlords, and particularly absentee landlords, to ensure that properties within the Botchergate area were made more presentable.

The Economic Development Portfolio Holder pointed out that the Council did work with landlords to address such concerns, which work was ongoing. Recent regeneration initiatives illustrated what could be achieved. She added that the Executive welcomed submission of the Appraisal and Management Plan as a clear indication of their intention and desire to improve Botchergate and return the area to its former glory. The Portfolio Holder then moved the recommendations set out in the Assistant Director's report.

Summary of options rejected None

DECISION

1. That the Executive had considered Report ED.30/11 concerning the draft Botchergate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and made the paper available for consideration by the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel.
2. That, subject to any additional information arising from the Scrutiny Panel, the matter be reported back to the Executive on 31 October 2011 to consider referral to Council for approval for public consultation on 8 November 2011.

Reasons for Decision

The Council has a statutory duty to review its conservation areas, together with the existing boundaries and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. An up-to-date appraisal of the character of the Botchergate Conservation Area would provide a stronger framework with which to inform Development Management decisions and with which to direct efforts towards regeneration of the area