

Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:
A.5

Meeting Date: 21st November 2013
Portfolio: Economy and Enterprise
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and Budget Framework: Yes
Public / Private: Public

Title: BOTCHERGATE AND WIDER PUBLIC REALM
Report of: Economic Development Directorate
Report Number: ED4013

Purpose / Summary:

The report outlines the actions contained in the Botchergate Conservation Area Management Plan and wider public realm issues in Carlisle, and updates Members on how these are being progressed further to an update made in November 2012.

Recommendations:

Continued ongoing work and future action points are noted.

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** Botchergate Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan was adopted in July 2012 and included three strands of work – Conservation Area Review; Public Realm Improvements; and, Protection of Historic Fabric. This report offers an update on these aspects and also on wider public realm issues in Carlisle.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1** The implementation identified three strands of work for the Botchergate conservation area
- Conservation Area Review – This was completed and the new Conservation Area boundary has been reported through Council.
 - Public Realm Improvements – these cover a wide range of issues all affecting the main thoroughfare through Botchergate. The public realm issues here are common to other parts of the City and are discussed below in the wider context of public realm initiatives arising over the last year.
 - Protection of Historic Fabric – This recognised the ongoing work in relation to development proposals for Botchergate where the Council's regulatory functions in relation to Environmental Health and Planning are required and continue to promote the historic qualities of the area.

Conservation Area Review

This was executed at the end of 2012 and the new boundary is now established.

Public Realm Improvements

Signage and Street Clutter

As reported in November 2012 there is now a number of public realm initiatives in development within the City. In June 2013 the County Council Local Area Committee established a 'Decluttering Task and Finish Group' (DT&FG). This group, which has both City and County Officer and member representation on it, met in July to identify initial areas for public realm audit. While Botchergate was recognised as a future potential area for action, the initial audit was directed to be restricted to three City Centre Streets – Scotch Street, English Street and West Walls. The Group identified superfluous and defunct signage and street furniture and reported back to the Local Area Committee (LAC) in October 2013. No funding is specifically identified for removal of the items identified (up to 1/3rd of total signage could be removed) but a request is to be made to the next LAC for a financial sum to be included in the next financial year.

Other public realm schemes which are likely to be brought forward in 2014 include the implementation of parts of the Caldewgate/Shaddongate public realm works outlined in the adopted 2009 Carlisle Urban Design Guide and Public Realm Framework. Ideas for this area are in development and would include public realm improvements on the Shaddongate/Caldewgate approaches to the City, potentially stretching towards Castle Way. Section 106 agreement from the Sainsbury's scheme is dedicated to this area, including funds to facilitate cycle access improvements.

In parallel work is underway to audit information point and directional signage in the City. The work is reviewing signage ranging from vehicular signage on approaches e.g. 'Welcome to Carlisle' signs; arrival point signage at key points such as the Station or at main car parks; pedestrian fingerpost signage and also information point signage at key points. This would compliment the information point signage successfully installed as part of the 2011 Roman Gateway Scheme. Some entry point signage on vehicular routes has been removed in advance of appropriate replacement as its condition was judged to be very poor. New signage would potentially include reference to the 'sense of place' suite of designs recently developed for City-wide use.

Public Realm Improvements

Initial exploratory work is underway regarding public realm improvements associated with the Old Town Hall phase II works, which could improve the immediate area outside of the OTH; the adjacent Greenmarket/Bandstand area; and Rickergate – focused on the area around the Civic Centre and the new potential arts centre at the Former Fire Station on Warwick Road.

Physical improvements to Botchergate would be likely to be tied to County Council relocation to the William Street Car Park site and improvements arising from this.

Street Furniture

Review of provision has continued as part of the Decluttering task and Finish Group and as part of the assessment of existing signage as part of the wider signage appraisal.

Protection of Historic Fabric

A number of improvements have been made to the built environment in Botchergate, largely by private initiative, since 2012. 93-95 Botchergate (former Sherwood Hotel) has been comprehensively refurbished at first and second storey, with shopfront refurbishment proposed for 2014. On the adjacent corner of Tait Street (91 Botchergate) the Shaha

restaurant has had its upper floor windows replaced. A small sum was allocated from Conservation funds to facilitate an improved specification here.

Enforcement activity remains ongoing against a variety of breaches of listed building consent, advertisement consent and breaches of planning regulations.

3. CONSULTATION

3.1 The approved BCAAMP was subject to significant consultation in 2011-12. Emerging public realm proposals as described above are being drawn up but have yet to be publically consulted on.

4. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 While public realm improvements in Botchergate have not taken place in the past year, significant progress has been made in assessing public realm issues in the wider City Centre. Following the establishment of the DT&FG and the receipt of its recommendations by LAC, it is likely that the County Council will seek to allocate funding to decluttering and public realm improvements in 2014. Broader improvements outwith Botchergate, notably at Caldewgate/Shaddongate, will be likely to be further developed, consulted on and implemented in 2014/early 2015. Several strands of complimentary public realm work, notably gateway signage, information points and integration of this with Phase II of the Old Town Hall should see improvements in place in 2014.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

5.1 The proposed initiatives accord with two Strategic Objectives (Economic Development 2013-16) of –

- Supporting the growth of more high quality and sustainable business and employment opportunities –

Key Action - 7 Develop Public Realm improvements; and,

- Develop vibrant sports, arts and cultural facilities, showcasing the City of Carlisle –

Key action – 1 Deliver the Old Town Hall project

The objectives of the scheme are:

To enhance the experience of Carlisle for its users, including visitors, residents and workers who navigate the City and use its public realm.

Provision of new and rationalised gateway signage and interpretation and key arrival and nodal points will enhance the experience of users of these facilities and will assist in their appreciation and understanding of the economic, social and cultural offer of the City.

Its outputs will be physical improvements to key gateway and nodal points and prioritized public realm improvements e.g. Rickergate, Green Market to complement executed schemes – e.g. Castle Street, Old Town Hall Phase 1 etc.. as funding allows.

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**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: ED.36/12

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's - The preservation or enhancement of the conservation area and public realm will help to deliver the objectives of the Carlisle Plan.

Community Engagement – The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Botchergate was subject to extensive public consultation between January and March 2012

Economic Development – The Conservation Area priorities and work on the public realm provides the basis for delivering economic growth and guiding development proposals.

Governance – Botchergate Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan was adopted in July 2012 and included three strands of work – Conservation Area Review; Public Realm Improvements; and, Protection of Historic Fabric.

Local Environment – County Council Local Area Committee established a 'Decluttering Task and Finish Group' (DT&FG), which has both City and County Officer and member representation on it.

Resources – Work on the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan along with public realm initiatives are drawn up from the Council's Investment and Policy team with cooperation from partners.