



# **ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

## ***Panel Report***

### **Public**

**Date of Meeting:** 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012

**Title:** Botchergate Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan

**Report of:** Overview and Scrutiny Officer

**Report reference:** OS 17/12

### **Summary:**

This report provides Members of the Panel with the comments from the small Task Group which considered the responses to the consultation of the above plan.

### **Recommendations:**

Members are asked to:

- Agree the response of the Task Group and refer to the Executive for their consideration.

**Contact Officer:** Nicola Edwards

**Ext:** 7122

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. The Botchergate Conservation Area report is included in the current forward plan to be available for consideration by the Environment & Economy O&S Panel on 21<sup>st</sup> June. Members who sat on this Panel last year may recall that the initial report and proposals were considered by scrutiny in depth on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011 prior to the public consultation.
- 1.2. The Minute extract from that meeting is attached at Appendix 1 for information.
- 1.3. Therefore the Chair of the Panel agreed that rather a small group of Members from the Panel should meet with the Heritage Officer to consider the response to the consultation which is the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel at this point.
- 1.4. An invitation was circulated to all Panel Members and Cllrs Bowditch, Layden and Nedved volunteered to undertake this task. A meeting was arranged for 13<sup>th</sup> June 2012 with the Council's Heritage Officer and Principal Local Plans Officer.
- 1.5. Should any Member of the Panel wish to have a copy of the consultation document then they should contact the Overview and Scrutiny Officer.

## **2. Task Group Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

- 2.1. The Heritage Officer explained to Members that following approval of the draft by council on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2011 a period of public consultation ran from 3<sup>rd</sup> January to 5<sup>th</sup> March 2012. This comprised of an exhibition at Carlisle Library (30<sup>th</sup> January – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2012 – periodically staffed); and an unstaffed exhibition at both the Civic Centre (13<sup>th</sup> February – 5<sup>th</sup> March). The draft was also on the City Council website along with a comments form which could be downloaded.
- 2.2. A design workshop event for local retailers, business representatives, community representations and officers and Members from both city and county councils was held at Greystone Community Centre, Botchergate on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012.
- 2.3. 43 individual responses were received and there were no objections raised to the proposed modifications to the conservation area boundary.
- 2.4. Task Group Members were given the opportunity to ask questions to clarify any issues within the report and looked closely at the consultation responses and the response to these.

## **3. Task Group Comments for the Executive**

- 3.1. During the course of the meeting of the Task Group, the following points were raised and it is recommended that these points are presented to the Executive for their consideration:
  - Members were encouraged that those historical buildings outside of the boundary were taken into consideration, for example surviving buildings of note in the Lancaster Street area

and agreed that the implementation of this policy should have a positive impact on the surrounding area.

- Members had concerns about the City Council’s capacity to undertake enforcement on breaches of planning control or the neglect of listed buildings. However they were encouraged that there were examples where effective communication with property owners had resulted in positive action and would like to see this continue.
- Members had a lengthy discussion about the signage and hoardings to the impromptu car park opposite the Tait Street junction, and would like to see positive action to address this within the action plan which will be produced should the document be adopted by Council. Officers indicated that there was an ongoing enforcement issue regarding the lack of appropriate change of use consents on this site.
- Members agreed that the area could be substantially enhanced with improved streetscape, noting the St Nicolas Street, London Road, Botchergate example which is contained within the report and reproduced below. Again Members would like to see this addressed within the Action Plan. Officers indicated that it may be desirable to encourage County Council colleagues to reinstate Botchergate into the current LTP3 (Local Transport Plan).
- In considering the document Members noted that instances of very poor design made the area look inconsistent and shabby - for example the use of scaffolding like pipes for bollards – and small enhancements would improve the area. Again this should be included within the Action Plan and the suggested improvements that are feasible in the short-term be acted upon as soon as possible
- Members were in agreement that the consultation period was robust and following scrutiny of the responses to the consultation agreed with the changes included in the revised document to address any views or concerns.



Fig 63. The junction of St Nicholas Street, London Road and Botchergate. Pedestrian movement and the aesthetics of the area are extremely compromised at present by the primacy given to road traffic.



Fig 64. A number of possibilities exist to improve the streetscape through expansion of the pavement, decluttering and appropriate planting (Illustrative purposes only).

**Extract from Minutes of E&E O&S Panel 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011  
EEOSP.68/11 BOTCHERGATE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT  
PLAN (DRAFT)**

The Assistant Director (Economic Development) (Mrs Meek) submitted report ED.35/11 and advised that the Executive had considered the draft Botchergate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan at their meeting on 26 September 2011 (EX.123/11).

The Executive had decided:

“1. That the Executive had considered Report ED.30/11 concerning the draft Botchergate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and made the papers 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.”

Mrs Meek advised Members of the purpose of the Botchergate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and stated that the current appearance of Botchergate was an issue of perennial concern for both elected Members and the public. Policy DP2 of the Local Plan (regeneration) specified that proposals would be developed for the regeneration of the economic, social and environmental capital of the district. Botchergate was named under the policy and the Botchergate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was the first step in taking forward the objectives of the policy by providing more detail to guide future development of the area, and to support private investment. The Conservation Area was centred on the linear strip of Botchergate, being also the key southern approach to the City.

Mrs Meek further advised that the appraisal included a recommendation to modify the boundary and therefore proposed consultation on that matter. She outlined the areas where alteration to the boundary was proposed.

The Heritage Officer (Mr Higgins) took the Panel through appendices in the report and explained the proposed changes.

The Panel thanked officers for the detailed report and requested that consideration be given to moving the proposed boundary to Collier Street so that everything on the right hand side of Collier Street was inside the conservation area.

A Member asked that the wording in the report be clarified to make it clear what the conservation area protected in Botchergate.

**RESOLVED** - That the proposed boundary be moved to include all of the buildings on the right hand side of Collier Street.