

Committee:	Planning	Agenda Item No.:	7
Date:	8 <sup>th</sup> October 2008	Category	*
Subject:	Markland and Hollinhill Grips Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan - Start of Public Participation	Status	Open
Report by:	Head of Planning (written by Temporary Assistant Conservation Officer)		
Other Officers involved:	Creswell Townscape Heritage Initiative Project Officer		
Director	Director of Strategy		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Member for the Environment		

## **RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS**

### **Environment - Promoting and enhancing a clean and sustainable environment.**

One of the Council's priorities for its aim for the environment is to protect, enhance and improve the natural and built environment in a sustainable way.

The proposed Markland and Hollinhill Grips Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan seeks to ensure that the historic and natural environment of the Markland and Hollinhill Grips Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced by defining its special character and appearance and by setting out appropriate policies and proposals. As a result, the proposed Markland and Hollinhill Grips Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will form an extremely important policy tool in the Council's efforts to protect and enhance the built and natural environment in a sustainable way.

### **TARGETS**

Achieving the milestones set in the Historic Environment Scheme by March 2011 is a specific target in the Corporate Plan. Within this target, preparing and adopting the Markland and Hollinhill Grips Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan by January 2009 will achieve one of the milestones.

## **VALUE FOR MONEY**

Preparing and adopting Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans aids efforts for a more efficient planning determination process as the additional guidance they contain enables applicants to better prepare their proposals, which in turn reduces the need for amendments, and enables the district to gain better developments.

In addition to this, the proposals for enhancement that the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans contain, aids efforts to secure external funding for the District.

## **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To seek Committee approval to carry out a public participation exercise on the draft Markland and Hollinhill Grips Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. In addition, to carry out consultation on whether the conservation area boundary should be amended as suggested during the initial stakeholder process.

## **THE REPORT**

### **Background Information**

Members will be aware that the process for the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans was set down in the Historic Environment Scheme that was approved by the Council at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

This process involves the following stages:

- Stage 1 - Evidence gathering
- Stage 2 - Prepare draft conservation area appraisal and management plan addressing issues raised at initial consultation stage
- Stage 3 - Public participation on draft appraisal and management plan
- Stage 4 - Final document prepared and reported to Planning Committee and then Council for adoption as Council Policy setting out how representations have been taken into account. Procedure for speaking at Committee clearly identified

Stages 1 and 2 of the process have been completed, with the stakeholder (local experts) meeting held at the Creswell Social Centre, Elmton Road, Creswell on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2008. The main issues raised were:

- Damage to and future protection of the promontory fort (Scheduled Ancient Monument)
- Flooding and drainage issues at Boler's Corner and within the Grips
- Lack of interpretation and signage
- Public access – footpaths & bridleways
- Management of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Site (RIGS)
- Poor state of the old railway viaduct and incompleteness of infilling scheme along the former railway

Appendix 1 contains a list of attendees and the note of the meeting.

## **ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan issues**

The draft Markland and Hollinhill Grips Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan seeks to define the special character and appearance of the Markland and Hollinhill Grips Conservation Area by assessing the built form and landscape value. It also provides guidance on the implementation of certain saved policies in the Bolsover District Local Plan and where appropriate proposes schemes for the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.

In the preparation of the draft document, the issues raised at the stakeholder meeting have been considered and where appropriate incorporated in the draft document.

In considering when the proposed schemes for the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area should take place, regard has been paid to the Council's Historic Environment Scheme and its approved conservation work programme.

Therefore, given that the preservation proposals contained in the draft Markland and Hollinhill Grips Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, such as investigating opportunities for providing archaeological interpretation are largely dealt with through current but non-programmed work, it is considered at this stage that they do not require prioritisation above existing work programme management plan actions.

The exceptions are the proposed remediation works to tackle the threat of further flooding at Boler's Corner and the monitoring of archaeologically important sites which are seen as priority actions.

The enhancement proposals, which are generally less urgent than preservation proposals, given that they pose less immediate threat to the conservation area, are considered to be desirable but not able to be delivered before the next available date within the work programme management plan actions without additional resources.

A copy of the draft document is contained at Appendix 2.

### Conservation Area boundary issues

The present conservation area boundary has been considered in accordance with the Council's statutory duty to review the boundary of existing conservation areas from time to time and the suggestions made at the stakeholder meeting.

The suggested extensions are:

- Land adjacent Hollinhill Lane – former 'sheepwash' site
- Land east of Boler's Corner, to include Lower Mill Farm and other properties
- Former railway line, Markland Grips

Further research is needed to assess the historic importance of these areas and whether their inclusion in the existing conservation area is justified.

In addition, officers consider that the sewage treatment works at Hollinhill Lane should be excluded in its entirety from the conservation area. The reasoning behind its original inclusion in the conservation area is not clear. The site is not a particularly attractive or complementary use to the aims and objectives of conservation area designation in general.

The suggested boundary changes are described in more detail in the document and are shown on the site map.

### Next stage

Following consideration of these issues and preparation of a draft Markland and Hollinhill Grips Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, it is proposed to progress to Stage 3, with a four week public participation exercise commencing on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2008 until 7<sup>th</sup> November 2008. A public meeting will be held during this period.

During this exercise a separate consultation exercise will also take place regarding the suggested boundary changes to the conservation area.

The outcome of both exercises, stating how the responses have been considered and where necessary incorporated into the document, together with the revised appraisal and management plan, will be reported to the Planning Committee at a future date.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

Financial – cost of the public participation exercise can be met by existing budgets. The draft Markland and Hollinhill Grips Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan does not include proposals that require additional Council funds to deliver them on the timescales proposed.



# Note of Meeting

## Markland and Hollinhill Grips Conservation Area – Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

### Local Experts Meeting

**Venue:** Elmton with Creswell Social Centre  
**Time:** 3pm – 5pm  
**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> June 2008

### Present:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
1	Enid Hibbert	Joint Secretary	Elmton-with-Creswell Local History Group
2	Pam Finch	Joint Secretary	Elmton-with-Creswell Local History Group
3	Jim Russell		Landmark Trust & Clowne Wildlife Group
4	Robin Slaney		Clowne Wildlife Group
5	Duncan McGregor	Councillor	Bolsover District Council and Elmton-with-Creswell Parish Council
6	Brian Betts	Access Group representative	Clowne Community Association
7	Margaret Hewitt	Access Group representative	Clowne Community Association & S.O.R.R.
8	Hilary Wignell	Environment Group representative	Clowne Community Association
9	Enid Glassey	Councillor	Elmton-with-Creswell Parish Council
10	Robert Glassey	Councillor	Elmton-with-Creswell Parish Council
11	Rita Turner	Councillor	Bolsover District Council and Elmton-with-Creswell Parish Council
12	George Webster	Councillor	Bolsover District Council and Elmton-with-Creswell Parish Council
13	D. H. Steinberg	Director	Lower Mill, Hazelmere Road
14	Anne Western	Councillor	Derbyshire County Council
15	Jonathan Moore	Assistant Conservation Officer	Bolsover District Council
16	Chris McKinney	Creswell Townscape Heritage Initiative Project Officer	Bolsover District Council

### Apologies:

Ken Stevenson, Councillor, Derbyshire County Council  
Natural England, East Midlands office

**Note Prepared by:** Chris McKinney

		<u>ACTION</u>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	
1.1	Chris McKinney opened the meeting and explained that the District Council had started an ambitious programme for preparing Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans for the 27 conservation areas in the district. He explained that the Markland and Hollinhill Conservation Area was the ninth conservation area in the programme and that the purpose of the meeting was to meet with local stakeholders, such as local representatives and residents, at an early stage in the process and that he was pleased to see people representing the Clowne, Creswell and Whitwell interests.	
1.2	Jonathan Moore explained that the Markland and Hollinhill Conservation Area was designated in 1991 and that the District Council has a duty to review designated conservation areas from time to time. The purpose of the meeting was to gather information regarding the character and appearance of the conservation area and to identify any management issues. He also explained that it was important to identify any threats and opportunities to the conservation area and that local knowledge is important in this process.	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>JM</b>
2.1	Jonathan explained that the conservation area covered a large area, 63 hectares in total, resulting in it containing a variety of features such as the limestone grips and caves, an iron age promontory fort, sites of importance for nature conservation and a range of topographies.	
2.2	<b>Jim Russell said that the natural interest of the area was very important and that most of the area was identified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Enid Hibbert mentioned the importance of the promontory fort. Cllr McGregor mentioned the importance of the former railway line.</b>	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Boundaries and potential extensions</b>	<b>JM</b>
3.1	Jim Russell asked where the existing conservation area boundary came from. Jonathan explained that the boundary was established when the Council considered designation in 1991 and that it was intended to cover the area considered to be of special architectural or historic interest.	
3.2	Jonathan mentioned that two potential extensions to the conservation area had been suggested to the Council previously, the first on the western edge around the water treatment works and the second on the eastern edge around Boler's Corner.	

3.3 Hilary Wignell advised that Millwood Brook was important and that the suggested extension around the water treatment works should look at the former sheepwash site. She advised that the Clowne Community Association were looking to try and tidy up this area but couldn't find out who owned the sheepwash site.

3.4 Cllr McGregor advised that Boler's Corner was an important area with a number of stone properties that should be protected, in particular Lower Mill Farm. Chris McKinney advised that a number of the buildings at Boler's Corner were already within the Markland and Hollinhill Grips Conservation Area but that the Council were looking at Boler's Corner specifically to make sure that the boundary was appropriate.

3.5 Cllr McGregor also suggested that a further potential extension would be to include fully the former railway line, given that it was an important feature in the area's historical development.

#### **4.0 Identification of possible threats to character and appearance**

**JM**

4.1 Jim Russell and Robin Slaney advised that the ponds by Lower Mill Farm had flooded last year and that they were overgrown again and that this could lead to further flooding, particularly as it appeared that the drainage had worsened following the Markland Campus development. Mr Steinberg advised that he, as owner of the farm, had dredged some of the ponds to try to manage the problem (at least three times a year). Cllr B Glassey advised he had passed a report on the flooding to Derbyshire County Council via Cllr Ken Stevenson. Cllr McGregor advised that flooding was a significant threat to the area and an issue that needed attention. Cllr B Glassey asked what action could be taken. Chris explained that the solution appeared to be a re-examination of the new drainage channels around Boler's Corner with perhaps works to make these perform better. As the waterway and Lower Mill Farm were important features in the conservation area and as flooding is a significant threat to this interest, it would be possible to identify these within the appraisal and to try to prioritise the necessary action within the management plan. This would mean that whilst the work is essentially a highway / drainage responsibility, the Conservation Team could try to assist in pulling the various organisations together to resolve the problem.

4.2 Cllr McGregor advised that the viaduct within the Grips was a threat as it was made from concrete and is decaying and suggested that a new appropriate structure would be better. The group mentioned that the public footpath was not being maintained but that it was being kept open at the moment.

4.3 Cllr McGregor advised that the lack of progress in the approved scheme of infilling of the former railway line between Creswell and the

Grips was a threat as it was preventing the completion of the Frithwood Trail. He added that it would appear that the main problem was that the condition on the planning permission was not being complied with. Chris advised that this information would be passed to the Council's Planning Enforcement Team and that he would find out more about this issue and report back.

4.4 Jim Russell advised that the promontory fort was being damaged by people using motorised bikes. Jonathan noted this and advised that this information would be passed on to the responsible organisations.

4.5 Robin Slaney advised that the recent upgrading of the Grips public footpath to a bridleway had meant that the natural interest of the area was being damaged by horse riders. Margaret Hewitt disputed this and advised that all possible steps were being taken to prevent damage. Jim Russell advised that once the route was accessible to horse riders it became accessible to quad bikes. Chris advised that due to the character of the area a number of conflicts were likely but that the management plan would provide the Council and the various stakeholders with a mechanism to try to balance the sometimes conflicting interests.

4.6 Robin Slaney asked whether detailed ecological assessments of the area were going to be undertaken to inform the appraisal process. Chris advised that due to the existing site assessments for the Site of Special Scientific Interest, the Regionally Important Geological Site, the Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and the Scheduled Ancient Monument, it was considered that further ecological assessments were not required at this stage, particularly given the responsible bodies covering these sites were being involved in the process. However, as actions were being pursued, the need for further and more detailed survey work would be assessed.

**5.0 Identification of possible opportunities to enhance character and appearance** **JM**

5.1 Cllr B Glassey suggested improved access to the area would be an enhancement and asked if this could be investigated. Jim Russell confirmed that the Landmark Trust's entrance is only a concessionary footpath and that they close this when the site is closed. Cllr McGregor added that it would be excellent if the Frithwood Trail could be extended along the infilled area mentioned above, through the Grips over the new viaduct structure and link up to Clowne Linear Park.

5.2 Cllr McGregor also asked the group about their views on the potential re-opening of the operational railway for passenger use, adding that Bolsover District Council supports this initiative. Jim Russell stated he supported the re-opening of the line.

- 5.3 Enid Hibbert suggested that greater interpretation at or near the promontory fort would be beneficial as she thought that not many people knew that it existed.
- 5.4 Enid Hibbert also suggested that the new Creswell Craggs visitor centre should be used to hold or at least display Creswell finds instead of them being held in Matlock where no-one really could appreciate them. Cllr B Glassey suggested that the early human remains found in the Craggs would make an excellent display.
- 5.5 Hilary Wignell suggested that having signage to the Grips from Clowne would be beneficial. Cllr McGregor added that signage from both Clowne and Creswell should be pursued.
- 5.6 Cllr B Glassey advised that seating areas should be looked at to allow local people to properly enjoy the Grips.
- 5.7 Chris explained that these suggestions were all being noted and that this information would feed into Jonathan's work on preparing a draft conservation area appraisal and management plan. He added that now that the Conservation Team had worked on a number of conservation areas, a programme of proposed works and enhancement schemes was being developed and that this was getting longer with every meeting. As a result, the Council has to consider how these should be prioritised based on the available staff resources and that normally new schemes went to the end of the programme unless it was considered that they should be prioritised over existing schemes due to the threat they pose or as funding was currently available for them. Therefore, Chris advised the group to specifically look at the dates proposed in the management plan for the actions and to consider whether they think these appropriate and to let the Council know their views during the formal consultation stage.

**6.0 Next steps**

**JM**

- 6.1 Jonathan thanked everyone for attending the meeting and advised that this information would now feed into the preparation of a draft appraisal and management plan.
- 6.2 Jonathan advised the group that the next stage was to report the draft document to Bolsover District Council's Planning Committee in September with a four week consultation period during September / October. After this, it was intended that the outcome of the exercise and a revised document would be reported to Planning Committee in December with adoption by the Council in January 2009.