**EARITH CONSERVATION AREA:
CHARACTER STATEMENT AND BOUNDARY REVIEW**

**(Report by Planning Policy Manager)**


1.      **INTRODUCTION**

1.1     The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the responses to the Earith Character Statement and Boundary Review consultation documents and to consider the Council's response.


2.      **BACKGROUND**

2.1     The District Council is committed to the production of Conservation Area Character Statements to provide an analysis of the special interest of all the District's 60 Conservation Areas. These documents will be used to guide decisions on planning matters and other changes to the fabric of Conservation Areas to ensure that the character and appearance of Conservation Areas is not diminished.  It is also hoped that the publication of these documents will help to increase the general public's awareness of the special qualities that make the District's Conservation Areas unique.

2.2     The existing Earith Conservation Area Character Statement was adopted in March 1979 following a period of public consultation. Under the new Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs), all character statements should be reviewed in a five year rolling programme to ensure that the advice being offered is relevant and up-to-date.

3.      **THE BOUNDARY REVIEW**

        The original boundary of the Earith Conservation Area was very tightly drawn around building groups and did not reflect a thorough or justified examination of the area's historic merit or development. Best and current practice expects Conservation Area boundaries to be drawn on the basis of thorough research and analysis.

        Following the methodology for Boundary Review adopted in 2003, it is proposed that the Conservation Area is enlarged. This would better reflect the historic relationship between the village and the surrounding area. The proposed boundary also includes some of the earlier urban extensions within the village.

        The rationale for the proposed boundary changes is explained and illustrated in the attached document, the Earith Conservation Area Boundary Review.

## 4. THE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

4.1 The contents of the Character Statement follow a previously-agreed pattern, which conveys the special architectural and historical interest of the Conservation Area through maps, photographic illustrations and written text. Specific references are made to:-

- The historical development of Earith

- The essential characteristics of the Conservation Area including important views, focal points and landmark buildings

- The green open spaces, trees and gardens in the Conservation Area

- The architectural styles within the village

- The distribution of construction materials

- Examples of traditional local detailing

4.2 This approach conforms with English Heritage's recent publication *Guidance on conservation area appraisals* 2006.


## 5. THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

5.1 13 written responses have been received from the statutory agencies, local organisations and members of the public consulted. The comments received are presented within Appendix 1 and the Council's response to them is also indicated.

5.2 Many comments related to minor issues of fact or detail, or issues beyond the scope of the document.

5.3 On 25th February 2008, the Development Control Panel endorsed the Character Assessment and Boundary Review.


## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 That the Cabinet considers the responses to comments presented in Appendix 1 and agrees to:

1. Adopt the revised Earith Conservation Area Character Assessment and Boundary Review (as previously circulated) with the amendments contained in Appendix 1 of this paper, which will become a material consideration in planning decisions.

2. Authorise the Head of Planning Services to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations necessary as a result of these changes, after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Earith Draft Character Assessment and Boundary Review

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