

Conservation Areas

Supplementary Planning Document



Approved for adoption by
Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning
on the 4 March 2011
following public consultation

[This page is intentionally blank]

Contents

Para	Topic	Page
A. About this document		
A.1	Introduction	i
A.2	What status does this document have?	i
A.3	Consultation	i
1. Purpose of this Document & Introduction		
1.1	What are Supplementary Planning Documents	1
1.2	What is the purpose of this SPD	1
1.3	What is the policy background for this SPD	1
1.4	What is this SPD About	3
2. Conservation Area Review Process		
2.1	Conservation Areas	5
2.2	The need for Conservation Area Appraisals	5
2.3	Prioritisation Review	6
2.4	Process of Review and Designation	6
2.5	Defining Conservation Area Boundaries	8
2.6	Public Consultation	9
2.7	Conservation Area Management Plans	10
2.8	The need for Conservation Areas Management Plans	10
2.9	Aims of the Aylesbury Vale District Wide Strategy	10
2.10	Aims of the Conservation Area Specific Management Plans	11
2.11	Using the Management Plans and District Wide Strategy	11
2.12	Ongoing Survey in Conservation Areas	11
3. Key Challenges of Conservation Area Management		
3.1	Development Adjacent to, or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area	13
3.2	Development within the Conservation Area	13
3.3	Incremental Change	13
3.4	Maintenance	15
3.5	Ambience and Behaviour	15
3.6	Change of Use	16
3.7	Trees	16
4. Overcoming the Challenges		
4.1	Effectively Managing Change in Conservation Areas	17
4.2	Development within Conservation Areas	17
4.3	Applications within Conservation Areas	18
4.4	Managing development adjacent to, of affecting the setting of Conservation Areas	25
4.5	Influencing Incremental Change : Community Led Conservation	26
4.6	Managing Incremental Change : Imposing additional Controls	28
4.7	Further Guidance	29

Contents

This SPD was produced taking account of Government Guidance up to
November 2010.

About this document

A.1 Introduction

- A.1.1 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) which replaces over time the Local Plan for the District.
- A.1.2 This SPD is the primary link between the Planning Policy and AVDC's Conservation Area appraisal documents and Conservation Area management plans, and formalises the process by which AVDC designates and appraises Conservation Areas, management plans and additional guidance on managing development within Conservation Areas. Conservation Area appraisals and management plans play an important part in informing decisions on appropriate size, scale, form and design of new development within the district.

A.2 What status does this document have?

- A.2.1 This document is a SPD under Part 5 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

A.3 Consultation

- A.3.1 Public consultation on the draft Conservation Areas SPD took place between the 20 January 2010 and 3 March 2010. The responses to the consultation have been analysed, and changes have been made to the document in response to these comments.
- A.3.2 This SPD was adopted on the 4th of March 2011 and forms part of The Local Development Framework for Aylesbury Vale District.

Introduction & Purpose of this Document

1.1 What are Supplementary Planning Documents?

1.1.1 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide additional detail on issues that the Council considers need amplification. It forms part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) which sets out the planning policy for the District .

1.2 What is the Purpose of this Supplementary Planning Document?

1.2.1 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared to provide additional guidance to parties about the interpretation and application of National Conservation Area policy and legislation and the Council's environment policies.. The Conservation Area SPD explains the policy framework for this guidance and summarises the process by which Conservation Areas within Aylesbury Vale District Council AVDC are designated, appraised, monitored and managed.

1.3 What is the Policy background for this Supplementary Planning Document?

National Planning Policy

1.3.1 Current legislation relating to Conservation Areas is contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Government guidance on the Conservation Areas is contained within Planning Policy Statement 5 'Planning for the Historic Environment'. This PPS replaced PPG 15 and PPG 16 in 2010.

Regional Planning Policy

1.3.2 Policy BE6 of the South East Plan (the Regional Spatial Strategy) promotes the key messages in national policy of preservation, conservation and where appropriate enhancement of the historic environment. In doing so it also highlights the sensitivity of historic assets to new development proposals, and emphasises the importance of Conservation Areas.

Local Planning Policy

1.3.3 The Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP) was adopted in 2004 and covers the period to 2011. There are two key policies in the AVDLP that deal with Conservation Areas (GP.53 and GP.57). The Local Plan is in the process of being replaced by the Local Development Framework(LDF). Both of the Local Plan polices above are 'saved' and will continue to be used until replaced by the Local Development Framework (LDF).

Introduction & Purpose of this Document

Other Local Guidance: Conservation Area Appraisals

- 1.3.4 Conservation Area Appraisals contain the written justification for designation. They are an essential tool within the planning process and are used to inform design proposals and planning decisions within a Conservation Area.

Other Local Guidance : Conservation Area Management Plans

- 1.3.5 Due to the number of Conservation Areas within the District and the length of time it would take to produce management plans for each one, AVDC has adopted a two stage approach to Conservation Area Management Plans:

Stage 1: Aylesbury Vale District Wide Strategy (AVDWS)

The AVDWS identifies key management issues which are found throughout the District, and sets out short, medium and long term goals for their monitoring and management.

Stage 2: Conservation Area specific Management Plans

Individual Conservation Area Management Plans draw on the Conservation Area Appraisal and the AVDWS to provide detailed design guidance and identify the management issues specific to each Conservation Area.

English Heritage Guidance

- 1.3.6 The 2009 English Heritage publication "Heritage at Risk: Conservation Areas" outlines the most common risks facing Conservation Areas and identifies best practice in relation to the effective management of Conservation Areas.

Introduction & Purpose of this Document

1.4 What is this Supplementary Planning Document About?

1.4.1 The Council shares the objectives of the planning system to protect and manage the built historic environment. Careful management of new development and monitoring change within the District's Conservation Areas is crucial to ensuring the future preservation and enhancement of the historic built environment. The SPD is made up of four main sections :

Section 1

- Introduction and Purpose (this section)

Section 2

- Conservation Area Review - setting out the Councils approach

Section 3

- General Principles of Conservation Area Management- setting out the broad approach to common themes in Conservation Area Management

Section 4

- Achieving the General Principles- setting out the advisory and regulatory powers available to the Council, and how local communities can preserve and enhance their areas.

Introduction & Purpose of this Document

[This page is intentionally blank]

Conservation Area Review

2.1 Conservation Areas

- 2.1.1 Conservation areas can include groups of listed or unlisted buildings, historic village greens and open spaces, important trees, unusual distinctive historic field patterns closely associated with an historic settlement (where these have district wide significance), historic parkland, linear features such as canals or railways, well preserved archaeological remains and/or surviving historic street patterns.
- 2.1.2 When defining a Conservation Area it is the special architectural or historic interest of the whole area, rather than the merits of individual buildings and features, that is important. Interest may be characterised by uniformity of architectural style or variety.
- 2.1.3 A Conservation Area review is the process by which an appraisal is written. The process includes site survey work, consultation and the preparation of maps and plans.
- 2.1.4 A Conservation Area appraisal is a document produced to explain the reasons for a Conservation Area designation and defines the special architectural and historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 2.1.5 Whilst trees are offered some protection within Conservation Areas, Conservation Area designation is not intended as a tool to protect the wider natural environment. There are more appropriate designations for the protection of nature conservation sites and historic landscapes.

2.2 The need for Conservation Area Appraisals

- 2.2.1 Every Council has a statutory duty to review its Conservation Areas "from time to time" (P(LBCA)Act 1990).
- 2.2.2 To effectively manage Conservation Areas it is essential that the area is reviewed and the special character and appearance of the area is clearly defined in an appraisal document
- 2.2.3 Conservation Area appraisal documents are important. They allow the local authority to:
 - a. Explain the reasons for and justify designation.
 - b. Define the special architectural and historic interest of the area.
 - c. Engage the local community in Conservation work.
 - d. Provide a document which the local community can contribute to and helps instil a sense of pride in their environment.

Conservation Area Review

- e. Increase public awareness of issues relating to the historic built environment.
- 2.2.4 Appraisals are also useful for planning and design professionals as they can:
- a. Inform decisions regarding management of the area.
 - b. Guide the form and content of new development.
 - c. Aid decision making in relation to planning appeals
- 2.2.5 Many of the District's 120 Conservation Areas have not been reviewed since their original designation. Aylesbury Vale District Council has adopted a rigorous method of Conservation Area review, which conforms to the latest English Heritage guidance. AVDC's Appraisals clearly define the character and appearance of each Conservation Area, and identify the special architectural and historic features of a place that are considered desirable to preserve.

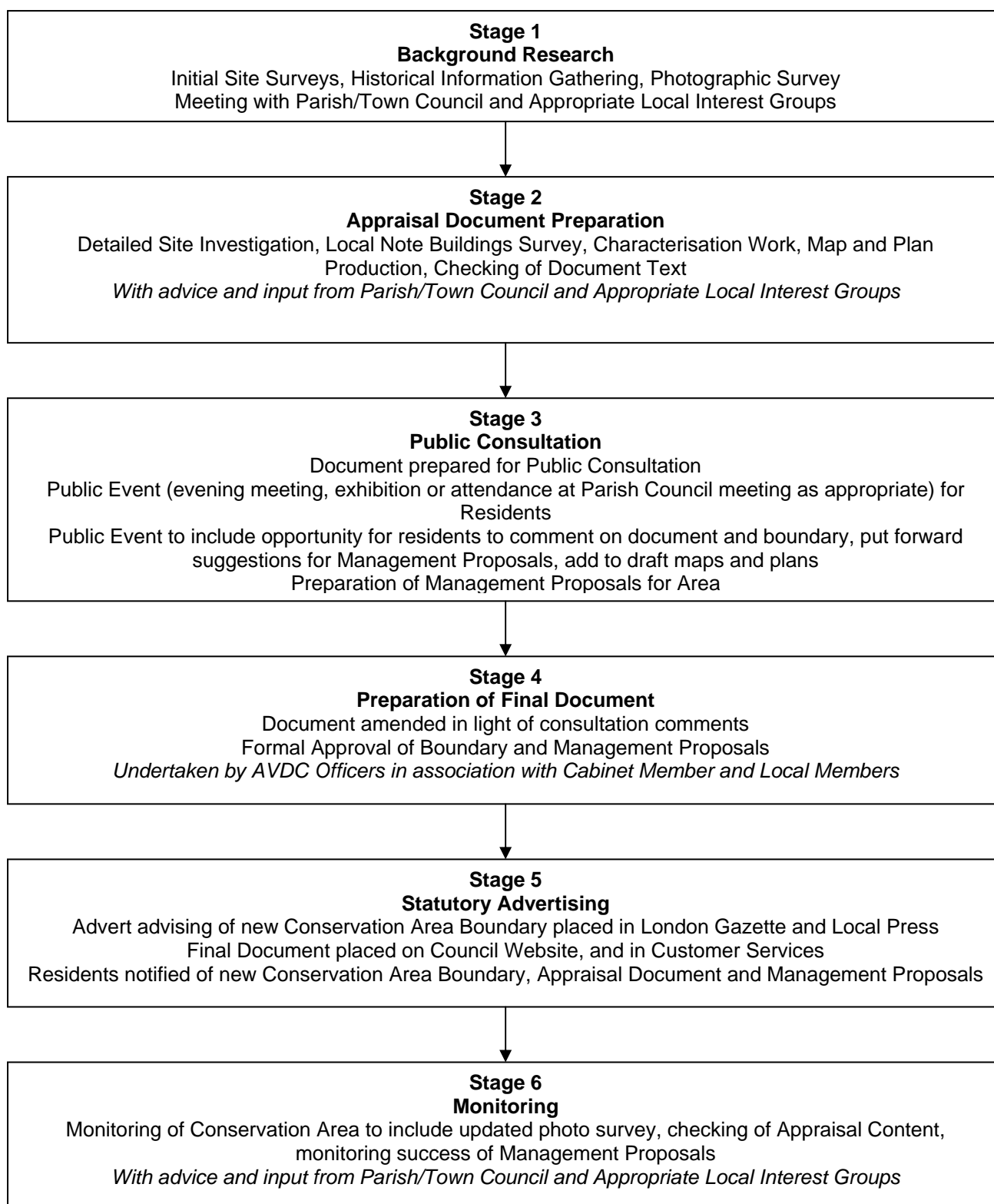
2.3 Prioritisation of Review

- 2.3.1 There is an agreed priority list for the review of the District's Conservation Areas. Conservation Areas are prioritised based on a number of factors such as the date of designation and the date of last review. The list also takes into account District Wide Growth Strategies.
- 2.3.2 AVDC will continue to review its Conservation Areas in the order set out on the current priority list unless circumstances necessitate further revisions to the list. A rolling programme of Conservation Area review will be published on the District Council's website and updated annually.

2.4 Process of Review and Designation

- 2.4.1 Aylesbury Vale District Council has established a rigorous methodology for undertaking the review or designation of Conservation Areas within the District (see diagram below). This methodology ensures that a consistent and justifiable approach is adopted to the review and designation of Conservation Areas across the District.

Conservation Area Review



Conservation Area Review

- 2.4.2 Both reviews of existing Conservation Areas and designations of new ones follow the same process, starting with a blank canvas. All the buildings and features in the settlement are surveyed, and the character and appearance of the whole Conservation Area defined. When the Conservation Area is large, it may be necessary for analysis purposes to break it down into identity areas (areas that show common characteristics) and then compare and contrast the identity areas.

2.5 Defining Conservation Area Boundaries

- 2.5.1 Since the publication of English Heritage's first guidance on Conservation Areas in 1990 attitudes towards Conservation Areas, and their designation and management, have evolved considerably. Therefore, it is almost inevitable that some areas within the existing Area will be removed (as they would not nowadays be included), and others will be included.
- 2.5.2 Conservation Areas are intended to recognise areas of historic or architectural character. Boundary decisions must be based primarily on qualitative decisions relating to character. The principles that Aylesbury Vale currently apply to define Conservation Area boundaries are listed below:

Inclusions:

- a. Conservation Area boundaries are drawn to include those elements and features (modern or historic) which are considered to be of architectural or historic interest, or which positively contribute to the special character or appearance of the area as a whole.
- b. Conservation Area boundaries must follow clear, extant features on the ground, to minimise possible confusion in the future.
- c. Contrived boundaries will be avoided. Wherever possible boundaries will reflect the natural pattern of settlements and will avoid "dog-tooth" boundary lines.
- d. Planned areas of landscape will be recognised generally as integral to the setting of any Conservation Area. However, unless of proven historical or associative interest, large areas of undeveloped land will not be included within Conservation Area boundaries. Village greens and well-preserved mediaeval strip fields are examples of areas that may be included. Enclosure fields and ridge and furrow are not generally of sufficient district wide significance unless they are of some specific historic interest as well.

Exclusions:

- e. In general, large, modern cul-de-sac developments on the edges of settlements are not included within Conservation Areas. This is because the form and scale of these developments, whilst clearly "of

Conservation Area Review

their time”, do not tend to reflect the function, grain and layout of historic areas, and therefore form distinct areas of a very different character and appearance.

- f. In rare cases, large pockets of insular, modern, cul-de-sac development are situated within historic areas. Where these cul-de-sacs form a distinct character area and are not easily visible from the wider settlement their contribution to the character or appearance of the area as a whole (either positive or negative) will be extremely limited. For this reason it may be considered appropriate to exclude this area from the Conservation Area.

Case-by-case decisions:

- g. Smaller pockets of modern development are considered on a case by case basis in terms of their visual character and impact on the area as a whole. The definition of what constitutes a large or small pocket of development will vary according to context, settlement size, and the scale of building as a proportion of the Conservation Area or individual Identity Area.
- h. Where small areas of development do not positively contribute to the character or appearance of the area as a whole but sit within an area of clear historic or architectural interest and form a clear relationship with that area, these may be considered for inclusion.
- i. Where small areas of development do not positively contribute to the character or appearance of the area as a whole and sit on the edge of a Conservation Area, or have a very limited visual relationship with the rest of the area it may be appropriate to exclude them from the Conservation Area boundary, unless this will result in a contrived or inappropriate boundary.

2.5.3 Areas, buildings, trees, green spaces and other elements which make a clear positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area are identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal. Where the Council identifies areas within or immediately adjacent to Conservation Areas which do not positively contribute to the character of the area, but which may, in the future, offer scope for improvement these will be identified in the Conservation Area Management Plan for the Conservation Area.

2.5.4 More details regarding the process of Conservation Area boundary review can be found in Appendix B of the Aylesbury Vale District Wide Strategy.

2.6 Public Consultation

2.6.1 There is no statutory requirement for local authorities to undertake consultation on the designation, review or appraisal of a Conservation Area (although there is a requirement to consult on individual Conservation Area Management Proposals). However Aylesbury Vale

Conservation Area Review

District Council considers that community involvement should be an integral part of the Conservation Area review process. Detailed arrangements for each review will be tailored to suit the particular area.

- 2.6.2 Public consultation provides the local community with the chance to be involved in evaluating what makes an area 'special', and comment on whether it should be designated and where the boundary should be drawn.

2.7 Conservation Area Management Plans

- 2.7.1 Conservation Area Management Plans are short documents which address issues specific to individual Conservation Areas. Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, published by English Heritage, recommends that management plans should include mid to long-term strategies and objectives for addressing the issues and recommendations arising from the Conservation Area appraisal.

2.8 The need for Conservation Area Management Plans

- 2.8.1 Every Council has a statutory duty to 'formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas' from time to time (P(LBCA)Act 1990).
- 2.8.2 Conservation Area Management Plans will be prepared at the same time as Conservation Area appraisals, and will be sent out to consultation at the same time as the appraisal document.

2.9 Aims of the Aylesbury Vale District Wide Strategy

- 2.9.1 The AVDWS is a strategy document relevant to all Conservation Areas within the Aylesbury Vale District, and is based on an understanding of local character and distinctiveness of the area as a whole. It provides a mechanism for the effective management of all AVDC Conservation Areas.
- 2.9.2 The AVDWS is published as a background document with this SPD. The AVDWS provides guidance on:
- a. Those elements of the historic environment which make significant contributions to the character and local distinctiveness of specific areas of the District, or of the District as a whole.
 - b. Conservation Area management issues, whether District wide or relevant to particular areas within the District.
 - c. The development and implementation of management strategies within Aylesbury Vale.

Conservation Area Review

- d. The development and implementation of Conservation Area specific management strategies during the Conservation Area review process.

2.10 Aims of the Conservation Area Specific Management Plans

- 2.10.1 The Conservation Area specific management plans, produced as part of the Conservation Area Appraisal process will be subject to full public consultation, and will:
 - a. Reference the AVDWS and identify management issues that are specific to the individual area.
 - b. Provide detailed design guidance for each Conservation Area, or Identity Area, where appropriate.
 - c. Engage the local community in identifying short, medium and long term management strategies that might be adopted in the individual area.

2.11 Using the Management Plans and District Wide Strategy

- 2.11.1 AVDC is committed to enhancing its management of the Conservation Areas designated within its district. It proposes to do this primarily through the planning system (see Chapter 3), but also through the implementation of the strategies laid out in the AVDWS and through the production of individual Conservation Area Management Plans.
- 2.11.2 Conservation Area Management Plans for individual Conservation Areas should be read in conjunction the AVDWS, the Appraisal document for the Conservation Area (CAA) and this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

2.12 Ongoing Survey in Conservation Areas

- 2.12.1 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to review the Conservation Areas within the district from “time to time”. The Aylesbury Vale District Wide Strategy has identified that, as part of the review process, Conservation Areas should be monitored regularly to record any changes that may have occurred since the area was last reviewed. Regular monitoring of change in Conservation Areas will inform future Conservation Area Management Plans, and form an important part of the post-designation process.
- 2.12.2 Regular monitoring following review, may be undertaken at limited cost (through rapid area survey) and can:
 - a. Identify risks and pressures within an area

Conservation Area Review

- b. Demonstrate that these risks and pressures are affecting the special character of the area
 - c. Provide an evidence base for further measures to prevent further loss and damage to special character
 - d. Increasing public awareness of the impact of change within Conservation Areas
 - e. Inform future planning decisions
 - f. Formulate appropriate management proposals for the area and focus available resources
 - g. Allow accurate input into national reporting, for example into the English Heritage annual audit: *'Heritage at Risk'*.
- 2.12.3 Monitoring will be carried out by AVDC officers. Parish Councils and local interest groups may be able to help with monitoring if they choose to.
- 2.12.4 For this reason Aylesbury Vale District Council have put together a Methodology for monitoring change within Conservation Areas, based on the English Heritage Research Report by The Conservation Studio, *Measuring Change in Conservation Areas*, which suggested that change might be quantified in terms of percentage survival rates of original building elements.
- 2.12.5 AVDC will regularly monitor the condition of unlisted "Local Note" buildings within the District's Conservation Areas, in order to inform future management plans and identify the risks and pressures facing each area.
- 2.12.6 Whilst carrying out monitoring surveys note will also be taken of any important open spaces monuments or structures that have fallen into disrepair.
- 2.12.7 Monitoring will help the District Council to decide whether a full review of a Conservation Area needs to be undertaken or whether the existing appraisal and management plan are still accurate.
- 2.12.8 Information acquired through the monitoring process will also enable the District Council to assess the effectiveness of the area management plan, and ensure that the management procedures in place are appropriate to the needs of the specific area.

Key Challenges of Conservation Area Management

3.1 Development adjacent to, or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area

3.1.1 In addition to development within a Conservation Area, development immediately adjacent to, or within the setting of, a Conservation Area can greatly influence the character and appearance of the area. Development that does not reflect the traditional form, layout and scale of buildings within the Conservation Area can be particularly problematic.

3.2 Development within the Conservation Area

3.2.1 Any development, be it construction, demolition, alteration or extension, has the potential to impact upon the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Whilst positive change should be welcomed as an important part of the organic growth of a settlement, there is always a risk that development might harm an area's special interest.

3.2.2 Inappropriately scaled infill development, for example the introduction of alien building forms that do not reflect traditional layout and form of historic development, can cause considerable harm to the character and appearance of an area.

3.2.3 The demolition of key historic buildings and structures, particularly those identified in the District's Conservation Area Appraisals as being of local note, can have a considerable detrimental impact on the character of an area.

3.2.4 Unsympathetic alterations and extensions to buildings can damage the character and appearance of a Conservation Area.

3.2.5 The installation of satellite dishes and other electrical equipment on visible building elevations can also adversely affect the character and appearance of an area.

3.2.6 Affordable housing is covered in a separate SPD. Affordable housing, as with all new development in Conservation Areas, should be built in a form appropriate to the character and appearance of the area.

3.3 Incremental Change

3.3.1 The effect of incremental, small-scale change within Conservation Areas can be disastrous, particularly when involving the loss of key architectural features such as chimneys, boundary walls or traditional windows and doors. Incremental change is particularly difficult to manage. Some potentially unsympathetic changes can be controlled through the planning system through the imposition of additional

Key Challenges of Conservation Area Management

planning restrictions (Article 4 directions). Others are simply not legally preventable.

- 3.3.2 On residential properties many of these important features are not protected by Conservation Area legislation. However, Aylesbury Vale District Council recognises that such features contribute a great deal to the character and appearance of our Conservation Areas and recommends that they should be retained wherever possible.
- 3.3.3 Within Conservations Areas, particularly in areas of high architectural uniformity, the replacement of traditional windows and doors can have a considerable detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the area as a whole.
- 3.3.4 The complete removal of front boundaries, and the paving over of front gardens to provide parking can similarly damage the character of an area. In addition, removal of traditional front boundaries (e.g. railings) and replacement with less sympathetic alternatives (e.g. close boarded fencing) has a major negative impact.
- 3.3.5 The loss of area specific decorative building materials (such as pargetting, decorative ironwork or brick detailing) can also affect the overall character of an area, and is often the unforeseen result of other works.
- 3.3.7 Conversion of garages to residential use can be problematic, as it can lead to greater numbers of vehicles being parked on front gardens and roads. This can have a particularly negative impact in areas of high density development, such as historic town centres, where there is limited private space.
- 3.3.8 Security measures, such as tall gates, lighting and cctv are leading to the slow small scale erosion of areas of character, particularly in rural villages. The urbanisation of villages in this way has a negative impact on the character and appearance of an area. In addition, the installation of tall fences and gates reduces passive surveillance of roads and footpaths, which can make an area feel less safe.
- 3.3.6 Non-residential properties, such as offices and shops, currently have much more limited permitted development rights, and as such traditional features on these buildings are offered a greater level of protection than on residential buildings.
- 3.3.9 Changes to historic shopfronts, particularly in areas that are still in commercial use, can also impact a great deal, either positively or negatively on the character and appearance of an area.

Key Challenges of Conservation Area Management

- 3.3.10 The removal of traditional shopfronts, display windows and signage, the installation of brightly lit signs and external lighting in favour of modern alternatives, and even the repainting of frontages in unusually bright colours can have a detrimental impact on the area as a whole.
- 3.3.11 The installation of external roller shutters on shops is increasingly damaging the character and appearance of the District's Conservation Areas. Roller shutters often have bulky shutter boxes and runners which, when retrofitted, protrude from the shop front and look unattractive. There are alternatives to external shutters available, such as internal shutters and toughened glass which can protect shops just as well.
- 3.3.12 The installation of renewable energy technologies, such as solar panels and wind turbines, is increasingly encouraged as part of the government's push to reduce carbon emissions. The Council strongly supports householders and businesses who wish to install renewable energy facilities. However, within Conservation Areas such additions must be made sensitively and it must be recognised that there are some rare cases in which installations will simply not be possible.

3.4 Maintenance

- 3.4.1 The treatment of individual open spaces within and adjacent to Conservation Areas is important, as it can affect the character and appearance of the area as a whole. Neglected spaces, such as disused storage yards, overgrown gardens and poorly maintained areas of car parking can have a significant negative impact on the character of an area.
- 3.4.2 Poorly maintained roads, pavements and street furniture can detract from the special character and appearance of the District's Conservation Areas. Similarly excessive street signage and poorly designed traffic calming schemes damage the visual amenity of historic places.

3.5 Ambiance and Behaviour

- 3.5.1 Road traffic, whilst impacting on the character and appearance of areas in general, is not part of the scope of Conservation Area review or restriction. Issues relating to traffic are a civil matter and are dealt with by the police.
- 3.5.2 Noise pollution similarly is not within the remit of Planning or Conservation Areas legislation. Issues relating to noise pollution are dealt with by Environmental Health.

Key Challenges of Conservation Area Management

- 3.5.3 Light pollution is not specifically covered in Conservation Area legislation. However, when considering the impact of development within Conservation Areas Planning Officers do consider the impact that lighting can have on character and appearance of areas, particularly at night.
- 3.5.4 Graffiti and waste are often raised as issues at Conservation Area consultation. Whilst they fall outside the scope of Conservation Area review and restriction, comments relating to these and other antisocial behaviour issues are recognised as having an impact on the area as a whole and are passed on to the relevant authorities.

3.6 Change of Use

- 3.6.1 Loss of traditional shops and services is proving problematic in many villages. Conservation Area designation cannot prevent the loss of shops and services. However, the importance of traditional shops, services and land use is recognised in the District's Conservation Area Appraisals.
- 3.6.2 Change of use, from example from a pub to a house, generally requires planning permission, and as such is considered with reference to national and local legislation, policy and guidance.

3.7 Trees

- 3.7.1 Residents are required to give the Council 6 weeks written notice prior to carrying out works to trees in Conservation Areas.
- 3.7.2 The most important trees in individual Conservation Areas are identified in the Conservation Area appraisal for that area.
- 3.7.3 Trees of amenity value must be well managed to prevent loss of greenery or screening.
- 3.7.4 Cutting which unnecessarily jeopardises the form of important trees will be discouraged. Where necessary new Tree Protection Orders will be served on at risk trees and enforcement action may be taken if trees are damaged.
- 3.7.5 Guidance on appropriate works to trees in Conservation Areas is available from the Council's Arboricultural Officers or Planning Department.

Overcoming the Challenges

4.1 Effectively Managing Change in Conservation Areas

- 4.1.1 This SPD lays out the general principles by which AVDC manages its Conservation Areas and how it determines Planning Applications which affect Conservation Areas. Further detail is found in AVDC's suite of Development Control documents and guidance leaflets.
- 4.1.2 This SPD should be read in conjunction with the Aylesbury Vale District Wide Strategy, Conservation Area Appraisals and individual Conservation Area Management Plans.
- 4.1.3 AVDC will, where practical and desirable, follow these guidance documents in relation to the management of the District's Conservation Areas.

4.2 Development within Conservation Areas

- 4.2.1 Development within Conservation Areas falls into two broad categories:
 - i. That which is directly managed through the Development Control Process, for example through the removal of some permitted development rights.
 - ii. That which is not directly managed, but which the Local Planning Authority may be able to influence
- 4.2.2 Where the Local Planning Authority is directly responsible for managing development (through the determination of Planning Applications or similar). Under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area when development is proposed. Therefore, proposals must at the very least preserve the existing contribution of the site to the character or appearance of the areas as a whole.
- 4.2.3 PPS 5 expands upon this duty, adding to the provisions in the Planning Act by recognising that new development should make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment that where an element does not positively contribute to the significance of the area, development should enhance or better reveal the significance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.2.4 Proposals for development in Conservation Areas must conform to both the provisions in the Planning Act and in PPS 5. In order to do this proposals on sites which do not positively contribute to the area must be demonstrated to respect their setting and enhance the

Overcoming the Challenges

appearance and character of the area. Where the site already contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area, proposals must be shown to either preserve or enhance the area as a whole.

- 4.2.5 Where formal planning consent is not required for works, the Local Planning Authority will endeavour to use its influence to promote high quality design, for example, by advising residents of appropriate choices of materials for replacement windows.

4.3 Applications within Conservation Areas

- 4.3.1 AVDC will determine all Planning Applications within Conservation Areas in line with government guidance laid out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and Planning Policy Statement 5 (or their replacements).
- 4.3.2 Planning Applications for development within a Conservation Area will not be registered unless accompanied by sufficient supporting information to allow the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area to be judged.

Applications for development within a Conservation Area

- 4.3.3 Applications for development within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area must be accompanied by a Design and Access statement.
- 4.3.4 The Design and Access statement must outline the significance of the site, whether it has a positive, negative or neutral impact on the Conservation Area as existing, and the reasons why the proposed development enhances (on any site) or preserves (on a site which already makes a positive contribution).
- 4.3.5 The Design and Access statement should make reference to AVDC Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, where available.
- 4.3.6 Proposals must pay special attention to the traditional form, scale, layout, architectural detailing and materials used in each individual area, and should make reference to the Council's Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans where available along with any other available design advice documents.
- 4.3.7 New development does not always have to be a copy of the traditional buildings around it. The Council recognises the positive impact that modern design and good quality modern materials can have within historic areas. However, it is important that modern designs respect the scale, form and size of nearby historic buildings and are not out of keeping or overly dominant in the street scene.

Overcoming the Challenges

Managing Infill Development

- 4.3.8 Gap sites provide opportunities for new development within historic areas. However, the development of such sites must be undertaken with care, and new development must respect the character and appearance of the surrounding historic area, especially with respect to height, scale and span.
- 4.3.9 AVDC's work on Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plan programme will help to inform the District's approach to the Local Development Framework as a whole. Each Conservation Area Appraisal defines the materials, plot forms, and building shapes, sizes and styles that are locally distinctive. Individual Conservation Area Management Plans will include appropriate design guidance that infill development in the area will be expected to follow.
- 4.3.10 In some Conservation Areas the gaps between buildings can be so important that development is simply not possible without causing considerable harm to the area. Important green spaces, both public and private, are identified in Conservation Area Appraisals. Similarly, important views, including glimpsed views between buildings and long distance/landscape views, are identified.
- 4.3.11 The pattern of development along a street is often crucial to the character and appearance of an area. The development of new buildings within historic areas can be beneficial, but only when the new building reflects the size, scale, positioning and massing of nearby historic buildings.
- 4.3.12 Detailed information relating to the layout and form of development within individual Conservation Areas is included within the Conservation Area Appraisal documents. All new development within Conservation Areas should aim to enhance the character and appearance of the area. As part of the on going Conservation Area Management Plan programme AVDC will produce Conservation Area specific design checklists, identifying those features which are essential, desirable and appropriate in new developments. Reference should be made to these documents, where available, to inform the design of new development.

Managing Demolition of buildings and structures

- 4.3.13 The demolition of structures within Conservation Areas currently requires Conservation Area Consent. Planning permission is often required for replacement buildings or structures following demolition.
- 4.3.14 In general, Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of buildings within Conservation Areas will only be approved where there is an acceptable proposal for replacement. Where the demolition of a

Overcoming the Challenges

building or structure will result in an unsightly gap in the Conservation Area, there will be a general presumption in favour of retention.

- 4.3.15 Existing buildings have an inherent value. This may be historic, architectural or simply in terms of the embodied energy contained within them (i.e. the energy that it has taken to create the materials used to build them).
- 4.3.16 There is a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings and structures which are considered to contribute positively to the visual character and appearance of the Conservation Area, particularly in the case of listed buildings and buildings identified as being of Local Note (including curtilage structures and outbuildings), unless it can be demonstrated that any proposed replacement structure will enhance the character of appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.3.17 Where Conservation Area Consent is granted to demolish there are likely to be conditions attached to the approval relating to the timing of demolition.
- 4.3.18 Where Planning Permission is sought for a replacement structure, consideration of how the new building will contribute to the character and appearance of the area will need to be included in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 4.3.19 There is a general presumption in favour of demolition of unsympathetic extensions to buildings, where the intention is to return the building to its original state or where the proposed replacement will enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Managing Alterations and Extensions

- 4.3.20 In general alterations and extensions within Conservation Areas should preserve or enhance the character and/or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.3.21 All proposals to extend or alter buildings within Conservation Areas should conform with guidance set out in the "Alterations and Extensions to buildings within Conservation Areas" Design Guide issued by AVDC and the Aylesbury Vale Conservation Area Management Plan District Wide Strategy (paragraphs 12.3.1-12.3.8). Reference should also be made to the form and character of the settlement as identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal and individual Management Plan, where available.

Windows and Doors

- 4.3.22 Wherever possible existing windows, particularly when these are original to the building, should be considered for renovation and

Overcoming the Challenges

repair, rather than replacement. Where renovation is not possible, then careful consideration must be given to the form of replacement windows or doors.

- 4.3.23 AVDC recognises that it is important to ensure that all buildings are energy efficient. However, where window and door replacement is proposed for reasons of energy conservation, special attention must be paid to the need for a building to 'breathe'. This is particularly important in traditionally built houses, where it is necessary for a certain amount of air circulation to prevent the building from becoming damp.
- 4.3.24 Wherever possible AVDC will promote the retention of traditional windows and doors through the Conservation Area review process by working with local communities. AVDC will also regularly monitor recently reviewed Conservation Areas to identify any particular features which are at risk and might benefit from the provision of Article 4 protection.
- 4.3.25 AVDC will continue to advise homeowners and tenants of the importance of repairing windows and doors, and on choosing appropriate traditional replacements where repair is not possible. AVDC will produce detailed design guidance relating to the sympathetic replacement of windows within Conservation Areas.
- 4.3.26 The detailing of new windows is important within Conservation Areas, whether for replacement windows, new additions to existing buildings or within new build infill development. AVDC will promote the use of sympathetic windows, designed to reflect the traditional materials and window forms found in the specific area.

Important Boundary Features

- 4.3.27 Applications are required for the total demolition of historic boundary walls or railings. In general there will be a presumption in favour of retaining structures that are considered to make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.3.28 The partial removal of front boundary features (including walls, hedges and fences) is not the subject of development control in the same way as total demolition. When considering partial removal of historic boundary features, particularly those identified in the District's Conservation Area Appraisals as being important, every effort should be taken to retain some part of the original boundary or a suitable traditional alternative.
- 4.3.29 AVDC will actively promote the retention and maintenance of traditional boundary treatments within the District's Conservation Areas through the Conservation Area Review Process and by working

Overcoming the Challenges

with local communities. Where traditional features have been lost AVDC will offer advice to owners and tenants regarding appropriate reinstatement works that might be undertaken.

Garages and Parking

- 4.3.30 The provision of parking within Conservation Areas can often be problematic, especially within urban environments. Generally parking and garages should be located to the rear of historic buildings and should be visually unobtrusive.
- 4.3.31 Careful consideration should be given to the design of new garages within the historic environment. Proposals must reflect the overall character of the area, the rural or urban nature of the settlement, the local vernacular architecture and the materials that are common to the place.
- 4.3.32 To prevent flooding problems the full paving over of front gardens in order to provide off street parking requires planning permission in all areas (i.e. not just within Conservation Areas).
- 4.3.33 Within Conservation Areas is not generally considered to be appropriate to pave over front gardens to provide parking. When designing parking areas that are easily visible every effort should be taken to limit the loss of visible green space, especially where this positively contributes to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.3.34 AVDC will seek to ensure that parking and garaging provision within Conservation Areas is visually unobtrusive. AVDC will aim to avoid the loss of important front boundary features and gardens for the provision of car parking through the publication and distribution of design guidance leaflets.

Building Materials

- 4.3.35 The Conservation Areas within Aylesbury Vale cover a wide variety of settlements. Whilst the majority of building materials are found District Wide there are a small number of area specific building materials identified in the Conservation Area Appraisals (for example Witchert walling, which is found in a wide geographical band across the southern-central portion of the District).
- 4.3.36 These area specific materials will be identified in Conservation Area appraisals and must be retained wherever possible, as they are key to the character and appearance of these areas.
- 4.3.37 Planning permission for development within Conservation Areas will often be granted subject to a condition that appropriate matching materials are agreed by the planning authority in writing.

Overcoming the Challenges

- 4.3.38 “Matching” materials do not necessarily have to be reclaimed or second hand. Traditionally made modern materials are, in many cases preferable to reclaimed ones.
- 4.3.39 Reclaimed materials often have dirt, staining or paint on them which gives a patchwork effect that detracts from the building.
- 4.3.40 Great care must be taken in sourcing new materials. In some cases it may be necessary to specifically commission the production of appropriate bricks or tiles to exactly match the existing. When choosing materials look at the exact dimensions, colour, inclusions, texture and patterning of the existing. When considering new brick, flint or stonework it is also necessary to take into account the precise mortar mix to be used and the width of joints and pattern of laying.
- 4.3.41 In certain Conservation Areas there are other important decorative features identified in the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans as being of particular local importance. These features must be preserved wherever possible, as they add considerably to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.3.42 AVDC will identify important and distinctive architectural features in each Conservation Area Appraisal and individual Management Plan, and will promote the retention and repair of these features wherever possible, through the production and distribution of design guidance leaflets.

Managing the Installation of Satellite Dishes

- 4.3.43 The positioning of Satellite dishes within Conservation Areas is the subject of Planning Controls. Satellite dishes should be positioned so that they are not easily visible from the public highway and do not detract from the character or appearance of the building on which they are mounted. Residents should consider mounting dishes on free standing supports or outbuildings as an alternative to mounting dishes on visible elevations and include details of options considered with all requests for pre-application advice or planning permission. It is important to bear in mind that in rare cases it will not be possible to find a position that is both visually unobtrusive and suitable for the satellite's location.

Managing the Installation of renewable energy technologies

- 4.3.44 The Council strongly supports homeowners and businesses who wish to install renewable energy technologies. However, there is a risk that poorly sited solar panels, wind turbines and so on can have a considerable detrimental impact on the character or appearance of an historic area.

Overcoming the Challenges

- 4.3.45 The installation of renewable energy technologies should be undertaken with care. Equipment should be positioned so as to minimise its visual impact.
- 4.3.46 When considering the positioning of new equipment all possible options should be considered, for example, the use of free standing equipment within the grounds of important buildings, or the installation of equipment on curtilage buildings, might be more appropriate than installation on the main building.
- 4.3.47 The installation of renewables on principle elevations and roofs, clearly visible from the public highway, will not generally be considered appropriate.
- 4.3.48 Much can be achieved in terms of energy efficiency through the careful review of new technologies and community facilities. However, when considering renewables householders should also look carefully at more traditional forms of energy saving, for example the installation of heavy curtains in winter can dramatically reduce fuel bills.
- 4.3.49 Interventions which are appropriate in a modern building may be very damaging to an historic building. When considering options for energy saving in historic buildings, it is important to engage the services of an individual or company who is experienced in working with listed and historic buildings.

Shopfronts and Signage- including advertisements

- 4.3.50 In a number of the urban Conservation Areas around the District (Aylesbury, Buckingham, Wendover, Winslow) there are a large number of well preserved historic shopfronts. Most date from the mid 19th century onwards, but there are also examples of early 19th and even 18th century shopfronts still surviving.
- 4.3.51 Within the rural Conservation Areas there are also a number of village shops, post offices and other services which have historic shopfronts and signage.
- 4.3.52 Historic shopfronts add considerably to the character and appearance of urban Conservation Areas, and are a particularly important feature of the streetscape. Where historic shopfronts survive every effort should be made to preserve these important features.
- 4.3.53 Where an application is made which affects an historic shopfront, there will be a general presumption in favour of retention. The granting of permissions for the removal or substantial alteration of a well-preserved historic shopfront should be wholly exceptional.

Overcoming the Challenges

- 4.3.54 Where the loss of an historic shopfront has already occurred every effort will be made to ensure that any new shopfront or signage is of a traditional form and enhances the character and appearance of the area.
- 4.3.55 External roller shutters, especially non-perforated or pin hole varieties, are not considered appropriate within Conservation Areas. In some cases the installation of internal perforated shutters may be possible. In all cases, shutters should be seen as a last resort, as they are visually damaging and can increase the sense of fear felt in an area.
- 4.3.56 For further information relating to traditional shopfronts and signage please refer to the AVDC Design Guidance leaflet " Shopfronts and Signage". This includes information regarding appropriate designs for replacement shopfronts in historic areas and on the traditional materials found in the Vale.

4.4 Managing development adjacent to, or affecting the setting of Conservation Areas

- 4.4.1 Section 72 of the P(LBCA)Act 1990 recognises the importance of areas around and adjacent to designated Conservation Areas. The act states that the setting of a Conservation Area should be a material planning consideration in the handling of Planning Applications.
- 4.4.2 In line with government guidance AVDC will pay particular attention in the exercising of planning functions to the effect of proposals on the setting of, or views into or out of a Conservation Area.
- 4.4.3 Development will not be permitted where it will have an adverse impact on the character or appearance, or views into or out of the Conservation Area. The most important views into or out of each Conservation Area are identified within the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.
- 4.4.4 Future development of areas adjacent to a Conservation Area should pay particular attention to the special character of the designated area, particularly in relation to the form, layout, scale, design, density, position in plot, building line and massing of buildings.
- 4.4.5 Applications to develop in areas adjacent to Conservation Area boundaries should be accompanied with a written statement outlining the way in which the proposals are considered to preserve or enhance the setting of, or views into and out of the Conservation Area. In addition, sufficient supporting information should be submitted in order to enable the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area to be judged

Overcoming the Challenges

4.5 Influencing Incremental Change: Community Led Conservation

- 4.5.1 Incremental Change within Conservation Areas is not automatically managed through the planning system. The active management of small scale change within Conservation Areas is the responsibility of the people who live and work in that area.
- 4.5.2 Residents and Community Groups can contact the District Council for support and advice relating to all aspects of community led conservation.
- 4.5.3 Community led conservation involves guiding positive change, not negative enforcement. Residents can take responsibility for maintaining their own properties, contacting the District Council for advice relating to repairs and alterations, keeping their personal space tidy and getting involved in community activities such as litter picking.
- 4.5.4 The local community, residents' associations, Parish and Town Councils and Local Amenity Societies, in conjunction with the Local Planning Authority, can increase awareness of the risks and challenges that face their individual Conservation Areas, discourage negative change and encourage positive improvements through engagement with the local community.
- 4.5.5 The period of public consultation that all Conservation Area Appraisals and individual Management Plans offers an important opportunity for the District Council to engage the local community. Wherever possible AVDC will promote the retention of important architectural features through the Conservation Area review process and highlight the positive impact that local communities and individuals can have on the character and appearance of their Conservation Area through careful change and improvement.

Promoting good maintenance

- 4.5.6 As with Incremental Change, it is primarily individuals and local communities that are responsible for ensuring that their Conservation Areas are well maintained. Local Parish and Town Councils, Amenity Societies and Community Groups can help to promote the positive impact that regular repair and maintenance can have on the character and appearance of their Conservation Area.
- 4.5.7 Public consultation offers an important opportunity for the District Council to engage the local community. Wherever possible AVDC will promote good maintenance practices during public consultation events.

Overcoming the Challenges

Neglected spaces

- 4.5.8 AVDC will identify any neglected spaces within or adjacent to Conservation Areas in the individual Conservation Area Management Plans. The Council has limited powers of enforcement in relation to such areas, but will offer support and advice to individuals and groups responsible for these sites. Any gap sites present within or adjacent to Conservation Areas which might benefit from sensitive development will also be identified in the individual Management Plans.
- 4.5.9 Neglected spaces do not include areas under active management, such as meadows or woodlands. Many such areas appear to be neglected but are actually the subject of careful management.
- 4.5.10 AVDC will, as part of the ongoing Conservation Area Management Plan programme, compile and review a list of neglected spaces and potential gap sites within each of the District's Conservation Areas. AVDC will actively promote the improvement of these sites, and will work with local communities to offer advice to owners and tenants regarding the improvement and maintenance of Conservation Areas.

The public realm- maintenance of roads and pavements, street clutter and traffic calming

- 4.5.11 Each individual Conservation Area Management Plan will include a streetscape audit of signage, road surfaces, kerbs and traffic calming, identifying those features which positively contribute to the character of the Conservation Area and those which detract from it.
- 4.5.12 The District Council are not responsible for the installation and maintenance of most of the signs, roads and pavements throughout the District. This responsibility lies with the County Council. AVDC are actively seeking to set up an agreed Protocol for Highways Works within the District's Conservation Areas with the Local Highways Authority at Buckinghamshire County Council. The protocol is due to be published in 2011.
- 4.5.13 The District Council will aim to ensure that traditional street surfaces and kerbs are identified in individual Conservation Area Management Plans. If circumstances necessitate the removal of portions of traditional surfaces or kerbs then the Council will seek agreement from the Local Highways Authority that suitable replacements are used. Where new roads are to be built in historic areas we will recommend to Local Highways Authority that suitable paving and kerbs are used to ensure that the development sits well within the historic context.
- 4.5.14 AVDC will continue to provide advice to local individuals and groups, including Parish and Town Councils, regarding appropriate street

Overcoming the Challenges

furniture, and will produce short explanatory leaflets with examples of good practice.

4.6 Managing Incremental Change: Imposing Additional Controls

- 4.6.1 Under UK planning legislation householders and some other property owners have permitted development rights, which allow for certain types of alterations to be undertaken without the need for planning consent.
- 4.6.2 As identified above, many of these alterations can have an unintended negative impact on the character or appearance of the area.
- 4.6.3 Where appropriate, Local Planning Authorities are able to restrict permitted development rights for clearly specified alterations within Conservation Areas. This is done through the use of Article 4 directions.
- 4.6.4 The aim of an article 4 direction within a Conservation Area is to encourage the retention of high quality architectural features and to preserve and enhance the character of the built heritage.
- 4.6.5 Once an Article 4 direction has been applied, certain works which would not normally require planning permission, such as changing windows in an unlisted house, become the subject of consent.
- 4.6.6 Article 4 areas are registerable as local land charges. As such, any Article 4 direction areas will show up in land charges searches undertaken during property sales.
- 4.6.7 The selective designation of Article 4 Directions can be beneficial to protect architectural, historical and archaeological features within Conservation Areas. However, such designations must be based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis, and should only be considered where a clear threat, need or potential benefit is identified for the area.
- 4.6.8 The Council recognises that the imposition of additional planning restrictions places a great burden, as well as increased costs, onto both residents and the local authority. Therefore, the use of additional controls needs to be proportionate and tightly targeted. The wholesale imposition of Article 4 directions on large numbers of buildings, or indeed whole Conservation Areas, should be avoided.
- 4.6.9 Living in a well maintained Conservation Area often increases property values and improves the general desirability of the area. As

Overcoming the Challenges

such the retention of important features which are characteristic of an area can be beneficial to individual property owner financially as well as to the area as a whole. For this reason it is considered that the additional financial burden of Article 4 directions can in part be discounted against increased property values.

4.6.10 AVDC will monitor the condition of important building elements within the District's Conservation Areas. If it becomes clear that certain features or elements of the historic streetscape are at risk of irreversible damage or loss then the Council will consider placing Article 4 Directives on the area.

4.6.11 AVDC will regularly monitor recently reviewed Conservation Areas to identify any particular features which are at risk and might benefit from the provision of Article 4 protection.

4.7 Further Guidance

Design Guides

4.7.1 AVDC already publishes a wide variety of design guidance leaflets covering all aspects of development control and conservation. The Council will continue to produce and update detailed design guidance as and when the need arises.

4.7.2 The AVDC Conservation Area District Wide Management Plan identifies those features which commonly prove problematic within the District's Conservation Areas. Individual Conservation Area Management Plans will include more detailed information on management issues specific to each area and will include detailed design checklists for each area, to aid applicants, agents and planning professionals.

4.7.3 Concept statements and site specific design guidance is produced on an ad hoc basis, as and when it is considered that a particular site or scheme might benefit from detailed advice. AVDC will continue to produce concept statements for sites as and when necessary.

4.7.4 Leaflets and information relating to trees and tree care within Conservation Areas are available from the Council's Arboricultural Officers or the Planning department.

[This page is intentionally blank]

For an audio copy or large print
version of this booklet
please telephone 01296 585454



Planning
AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL
The Gateway Gatehouse Road Aylesbury Bucks HP19 8FF
Tel: 01296 585679 Text Relay : Prefix number with 18001
www.aylesburyvalcdc.gov.uk