

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
26th MARCH 2009**Stourport Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas Boundary Amendment**

OPEN	
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:	A Better Environment For Today and Tomorrow
CORPORATE PLAN AIM:	A Sustainable Environment
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Stephen Clee
HEAD OF SERVICE:	Head of Planning, Health & Environment
CONTACT OFFICER:	Simon Roper-Pressdee, Ext. 2536
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – Existing and Proposed boundary for the Stourport-on-Severn Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree a draft amendment to the existing boundary for the Stourport-on-Severn Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas (PSiCA).

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE that:

- 2.1 **The boundary amendment as shown in Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report be approved for the purposes of offering grants from the Stourport-on-Severn Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Conservation Areas are designated by Local Authorities under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and comprise “areas of special architectural and/or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”
- 3.2 The Heritage objectives contained within the Adopted Wyre Forest District Local Plan are to preserve and enhance conservation areas, and the District’s Listed Buildings, to safeguard the particular characteristics of the District’s urban and rural environments and to promote appropriate development which secures the beneficial re-use of historic buildings and environments. Further to this, the Adopted Local Plan states that the District and County Councils will undertake such schemes as resources permit.
- 3.3 In 2007, English Heritage approved a three-year grant scheme, the Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas (PSiCA), to assist in the regeneration of Bridge Street in Stourport, through providing grants for repair and reinstatement of architectural detail to historic buildings within the Bridge Street area, including the junction with New Street, York Street and High Street.

- 3.4 In a report to Cabinet on the 28th June 2007, a protocol for approving grants under the Bridge Street Scheme was approved.
- 3.5 Since the Scheme started, two grants have been offered, amounting to a total of £17,297.
- 3.6 English Heritage gave their approval for the extension of the boundary in December 2008, to increase the area and thus potential for take-up of grants.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Stourport-on-Severn Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas (PSiCA) has been running since 2007/08, making grants available for the repair of historic buildings, and the reinstatement of historic detailing, within the boundary shown in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The Bridge Street area has seen much disruption to businesses over recent years, through highways works, including the repairs to the Severn Bridge, and the Bridge Street Partnership Scheme. Whilst these have provided substantial benefit to the built fabric and townscape of this area of Stourport-on-Severn, unfortunately, taken together with the current “credit crunch” and general financial situation, they have lead to difficult conditions for owners and traders over consecutive years, and as such building repairs are low priorities due to a lack of available funds and commitment. Even though grant rates are high, at 60% for repair works, and 80% for reinstatement works, there has been a very low rate of grant applications, with £17,297 allocated to date. A sum of £116,000 remains in the capital programme for 2009/10 to be allocated to schemes.
- 4.3 In order to spread the potential for the grant scheme, and to encompass more buildings, and therefore increase the potential for take-up, it is proposed that the boundary for the Partnership Scheme be widened, as indicated in Appendix 1 of the report. The extended area would encompass the key streets within the historic core of Stourport-on-Severn.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Funding for any approved grants will arise from a 50/50 split between English Heritage Capital funding and the Conservation budget within the approved Capital Programme.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The extension of the boundary for the Stourport-on-Severn Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas has been drawn up in accordance with the requirements of English Heritage, and lies within Adopted Conservation Areas.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 As the PSiCA runs into year 3 in 2009/10, there is an increasing risk that grant monies will not be taken up; extending the boundary of the scheme should reduce this risk.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Stourport-on-Severn Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas was approved by English Heritage in 2007, and subsequently implemented, making available grant assistance match-funded through a split between English Heritage and the Council, for the repair of historic buildings, and the reinstatement of traditional and historic detailing.
- 8.2 Over the past two years, two grants have been awarded, amounting to a total of £17,297, indicating the financial difficulties within the Area.
- 8.3 To increase the potential for take-up of the grant scheme, it is proposed to widen out the boundary of the Partnership Scheme, to take in the rest of High Street, York Street and New Street, as shown in Appendix 1 of this report.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1 Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 There are no background papers.