

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Conservation Advisory Group. 14th December 2005
Conservation, Sustainability &
Community Planning Portfolio Holder.

AUTHOR/S: Conservation Manager

PROPOSED PLANNING GUIDANCE. "THATCH AND THATCHING IN SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE" – INITIAL DRAFT DECEMBER 2005.

Purpose

1. To present an initial draft supplementary planning guidance note on Thatch and Thatching policy for the consideration and approval of members to enable a consultation draft to be finalised and seek authority to initiate appropriate consultation.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. Quality, Accessible Services	The draft "Thatch and thatching planning policy guidance document" will be a useful planning tool which will assist in the implementation of the Council's planning policy and the conservation of key elements of the historic environment.
Village Life	Thatched cottages are a feature of many of the district's village and their retention in a form which preserves locally distinctive patterns will support the efforts to maintain local heritage.
Sustainability	The preservation of historic buildings and the use of traditional, renewable materials is a fundamental component of the achievement of sustainability.
Partnership	The achievement of the viable preservation of historic buildings and techniques requires a series of effective partnerships between the local authority and both property owners and local craftsmen.

Background

3. Members will recall that they considered a report on the direction and proposed content of the "Thatch and thatching planning policy guidance document" in July. The resultant document, attached as Appendix 1, is now presented for consideration prior to initiating the consultation exercise.
4. The intention is that the document will incorporate 'planning guidance principles' which should be considered by members prior to the consultation exercise as they are hoped to eventually be presented to Cabinet for adoption as Council Policy.
5. The document seeks to present best practice and inform the existing South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 – Policy EN23 – Roofs which focuses on the Retention of Thatch and locally traditional roofs.

Considerations

6. The initial draft focuses is intended to be presented for adoption initially as Council Policy prior to subsequently being adapted to become a Supplementary Planning Document supporting the Local Development Framework.

7. Appendix 1 is the outline of the document, which will be well illustrated and is, therefore, presented for consideration by members, prior to being finalised in the consultation document.
8. The proposed guidance is intended to ensure that surviving regional characteristics and actual historic fabric is not compromised or lost by proposed alterations or ill-considered repairs.

Options

9. The Conservation Advisory Group are requested to either :
 - (a) Support the direction and proposed content of the “Thatch and thatching planning policy guidance document” and recommends that the Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder authorises officers to complete the draft of the document and undertakes an appropriate consultation exercise, reporting the results back to the Conservation Advisory Group for consideration prior to presentation to Cabinet for initial adoption as Council Policy.
 - (b) Suggests an alternative direction and proposed content of the “Thatch and thatching planning policy guidance document” and recommends that the Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder requires officers to re-consider the draft of the policy guidance document and reports the results back to the Conservation Advisory Group for consideration.

Financial Implications

10. None specific.

Legal Implications

11. Once adopted the guidance note would have the status of Council Policy which will enable it to be used to support planning control policy as well as enhancement initiatives. It will then be subsequently adapted to become a supporting document to the Local Development Framework.

Staffing Implications

12. None specific.

Risk Management Implications

13. None specific

Consultations

21. This report is the first stage of the Consultation exercise. The document will subsequently be subject to the statutory consultation process.

Conclusions/Summary

22. The above outline policy guidance will both help guide property owners and assist in the management and maintenance of these historic buildings and well as eventually become part of the Local Development Framework as a SPD. Members support is required at this initial stage in order to ensure that the status and consequent strength of the proposed policy is clear, unambiguous and appropriate.

Recommendations

23. That the Conservation Advisory Group consider Appendix 1 and recommend that the Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder authorises officers to complete the draft of the "Thatch & Thatching in South Cambridgeshire" planning guidance document and undertakes an appropriate consultation exercise, reporting the results back to the Conservation Advisory Group for consideration prior to presentation to Cabinet for initial adoption as Council Policy.

Appendix 1 :

"Thatch and Thatching in South Cambridgeshire" – Initial Draft – December 2005.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Draft

"Thatch and thatching planning policy guidance" document – SCDC July 2005

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