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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANTS TO CARRY OUT CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SANDWICH WALLED TOWN CONSERVATION AREA</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>8 June 2017</b>
<b>Decision to be taken by:</b>	<b>Mike Davis, Director of Finance, Housing and Community</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Alison Cummings, Principal Heritage Officer</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>Councillor Conolly, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources and Performance</b>
<b>Decision Type:</b>	<b>Executive Non-Key Decision</b>
<b>Call-in-to be Suspended:</b>	<b>No (<i>Call-in does not apply to non-key Officer decisions</i>)</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>
<b>Delegated Authority:</b>	<b>Authority delegated by Cabinet at its meeting held on 1 March 2017 (CAB 155 (iii) (E) to ‘continue to delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Housing and Community, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources and Performance, to authorise projects up to £50,000 that have been included in the Capital and Special Revenue Projects programme; authorise the allocation of funds to projects from the Capital and Special Revenue Contingencies; authorise virements between regeneration projects and apply Growth Point reserves to regeneration projects.’</b>

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**Purpose of the report:** To carry out a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for the Sandwich Walled Town Conservation Area.

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**Recommendation:** That approval be given to a project to engage consultants to undertake a Conservation Area Character Appraisal on Sandwich Walled Town Conservation Area, and for a maximum of £20,000 to be allocated from the Special Revenue Contingency for this purpose.

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## 1. Summary

1.1 This report seeks approval of a project to engage consultants to carry out an appraisal of the character and appearance of the Sandwich Walled Town Conservation Area, and to formulate a management plan for its preservation or enhancement. Approval is sought for a maximum of £20,000 to be allocated from the Special Revenue Contingency Fund for this purpose.

## 2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Sandwich Walled Town Conservation Area is one of the largest and most complex Conservation Areas in the District. The Sandwich Informal District Plan for

Conservation dates from 1973 and is out of date with current good practice and guidance. Consequently the document has limited value in supporting Dover District Council in fulfilling the statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to preserve or enhance Conservation Areas.

- 2.2 Local planning authorities are required to review their conservation areas, 'from time to time' and to formulate and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. In addition, the Dover District Heritage Strategy (DDHS) has identified that gradual and cumulative changes over time can erode the character and appearance of a Conservation Area. Regular monitoring, surveying and identification of vulnerabilities and opportunities for positive change are therefore essential.
- 2.3 Sandwich, like many historic towns with a high number of historic buildings and important archaeological remains, is recognised as being significantly vulnerable to small scale development. In order to ensure that the District has a firm and robust basis for assessing the relative merits of any new development proposals, it is essential that a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is undertaken.
- 2.4 The DDHS highlighted the lack of character appraisals for the District's Conservation Areas, and recommended that a programme was set in place to address this deficit. Building on the recent work by Rummey Design (Sandwich Town Review and Design August 2016), proceeding with the Sandwich Walled Town Conservation Area Appraisal is advantageous as it will both help inform further projects identified in the report and by others, including A New Vision for Sandwich, and support funding bids, for example to the HLF.
- 2.5 Due to the complexity of the Conservation Area and limited in-house resource it is recommended that external consultants are engaged through a competitive tendering process. The consultants will be required to provide information and analysis that is relevant and proportionate to the significance of the Conservation Area and which will be used to formulate an appraisal and management plan that can be adopted by DDC as a Local Development Document.

### 3. **Identification of Options**

- 3.1 That external consultants are appointed through a competitive tendering process and that £20,000 is allocated from the Special Revenue Contingency for the purpose of engaging the successful consultants to carry out a Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan for the Sandwich Walled Town Conservation Area.
- 3.2 External consultants are not appointed and funds are not allocated to this project.

### 4. **Evaluation of Options**

- 4.1 A Conservation Area Character Appraisal would be used to identify opportunities for environmental improvements, inform new development and act as an evidence base for the evaluation of new proposals. It would also be used by Planning Inspectors in appeal situations. The existing Informal District Plan is not conversant with current legislation or guidance and is of limited benefit.
- 4.2 In view of the above it is recommended that consultants are appointed and funding is allocated.

### 5. **Resource Implications**

£20,000 from the Special Revenue Contingency Fund.

6. **Corporate Implications**

- 6.1 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.

7. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Sandwich Walled Town Conservation Area Appraisal - Consultants Brief.

8. **Background Papers**

The Dover Heritage Strategy 2013

Contact Officer: Alison Cummings, Principal Heritage Officer