PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA FOR EASTON MAUDIT

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek Members’ agreement to recommend proceeding with formal consultations with interested parties upon the proposed designation of a conservation area as shown on the Appraisal Map attached to the Draft Easton Maudit Conservation Area Character Appraisal comprising Appendix 1 to this report, and upon the Draft Character Appraisal.

2. Background

2.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any “areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Furthermore, Government policy as set out in the guidance note Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) indicates that all designated conservation areas require an associated formal character appraisal. An authority’s justification for designation, as reflected in a systematic assessment of an area’s special interest and its character and appearance, is a factor which the Secretary of State will take into account in considering appeals against refusals of conservation area consent for demolition, and appeals against refusals of planning permission. Character appraisals of all conservation areas will, by the same token, render relevant Borough of Wellingborough Local Plan Policies G1.1 (relating to design standards respecting local character), G11 (covering demolition in conservation areas) and G12 (dealing with new buildings and alterations in conservation areas) more capable of effective implementation.

2.2 It should be noted that any conservation area designation made will result in Section 71 of the above Act coming into effect, namely that the Council will come under a further duty to prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the area “from time to time”.

2.3 The proposal to consider designation of Easton Maudit as a conservation area is included in the Borough of Wellingborough Local Plan as well as the approved service plan for 2006/07.

3. Discussion

3.1 Detailed preparatory work has now been carried out and the accompanying Appendix 1 comprises a Draft Easton Maudit Conservation Area Character Appraisal.
3.2 The proposed designation of the conservation area would be subject to consultation with the Ward Councillor, the Parish Meeting, English Heritage, the County Council, the Civic Society and the Compton Estate. All residents within the draft designation area would also be notified and asked to comment as part of the consultation process.

3.3 A finalised draft conservation area designation, taking account of consultation responses, would then be brought to Committee for final ratification.

4. **Legal Powers**


5. **Financial Implications**

If a conservation area is duly designated it would be equally eligible for the possible funding of environmental enhancements along with existing conservation areas. However, there is currently no budgetary provision for projects of this nature.

6. a. **Implications for Staffing**

None

b. **Implications for Sustainable Development**

The statutory controls sought would have positive sustainability implications. The Council's Community Plan seeks to promote attractive and sustainable places through protection and improvement of the built environment. Clearly the avoidance of inappropriate change or development is consistent with this objective. Also, current Government guidance (PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development) indicates that the planning system should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of development by protecting and enhancing the historic environment.

c. **Implications for Equal Opportunities**

None

d. **Implications for Community Safety**

None

e. **Implications for Health Improvement**

None

f. **Implications for Property**

Designation of a conservation area introduces extra statutory controls in respect of the necessity for planning permission and conservation area consent and relating to, for example, use of traditional materials and
quality of design. It is not considered that these implications would be unduly onerous or problematic in property management terms.

**Risk Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of risk</th>
<th>Consequences if realised</th>
<th>Likelihood of occurrence</th>
<th>Control measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Pressure on Council resources relating to the setting up and future administration of the conservation area</td>
<td>Question over ability to meet existing targets</td>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>Conservation officer will absorb new conservation area into routine workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Were the conservation area not to be successfully designated, there is a risk of:</td>
<td>The Council would lose credibility</td>
<td>Fairly likely</td>
<td>Proceed with designation as proposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. the Council being criticised for not carrying out its legal duty to designate, and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B. insensitive development taking place in the village</td>
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7. **Recommendation**

7.1 The Committee is invited to recommend that consultation should now take place with interested parties upon the proposed designation of a conservation area as shown on the Appraisal Map attached to the Draft Easton Maudit Conservation Area Character Appraisal comprising Appendix 1 to this report, and upon the Draft Character Appraisal.

8. **Author and Contact Officer**

Alex Stevenson, conservation officer, sustainable development.

9. **Consultees**

Interim development control manager, planning policy manager, legal services
manager and head of financial services.

10. **Background Papers**
Service Plan for 2006/07.
APPENDIX 1

EASTON MAUDIT DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

1 ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

1.1 The village of Easton Maudit is located about seven miles south of Wellingborough and eleven miles from Northampton. Most of the southern half of the parish of 730 hectares is on Boulder Clay at 90m – 110m AOD, but streams in the north draining towards Grendon Brook have cut deep-sided valleys through limestone, silts and clays [RCHME, Vol II, 1979]. The parish is two miles north to south and one mile east to west with the village itself located to the north. It is bounded on the east by Bozeat, north by Grendon and west by Yardley Hastings, lying on the borders of Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire and west of the road between Wellingborough and Olney. With the exception of the (former) rectorial lands, it is owned by the Marquess of Northampton *(currently the seventh Marquess) [VCH IV 11, 1937 OUP].

1.2 It appears that the place name is essentially topographically-derived relative to an “East Farm” perhaps associated with Denton and Whiston lying to the west. The second element is linked to John Maled *(Latin: Maledoctus = dunce) who held the manor in 1166 and whose family name was also being spelt Mauduit (1242) and Maudut (1268). The village name is therefore recorded as having evolved from Eston(e) (1086), Estun (12th century), through Estone Maudeut (1298), Estone Juxta Boseyate (1305), Eston Mauduyt (1377), to Esson Mawdett in 1611 [Gover, et al].

1.3 Records of manorial succession commence with William Peverel, the Conqueror’s natural son, and the Countess Judith, his niece, who “held in Eston 2 ½ virgates at the general survey [Whellan]. In 1206/07 John Mauduit granted land in the parish to Gilbert, son of Richard de Easton and Christine, his mother. By 1402 the manor had been transferred to the Trussell family. Subsequently passed to the Earls of Oxford, it was then sold to Christopher Yelverton (buried in the church) in 1578 who was Sergeant-at-law (1589), Sergeant to the Queen (1598), Judge of the King’s Bench (1601/02) and Speaker of the House of Commons (1597) [VCH].

1.4 Ironically, two of the most interesting historic features of the village no longer exist. The first element is the settlement’s extent in the immediate post-medieval period. Bridges [Ref] records 30 houses in 1741 whilst in 1874 Whellan notes “from foundations of houses, dovecotes and walls of wells which have been discovered, it is supposed to have been a much larger place... Tradition says that there were once many weavers shops here.” VCH indicates population levels of 192 in 1871 and 129 in 1931, but suggests that the parish “once housed a considerably larger number of inhabitants” and that it was said to have “suffered considerable depopulation since the enclosures by Sir Christopher Yelverton in the time of Charles I (probably 1636).” The existence of a larger village is indeed archaeologically corroborated by the RCHME [Ref] which recorded “slight remains of former house sites within and around
[the village], notably to the west of the former pond, (see Appraisal Map), and suggested that the remains “may relate to the known decrease in population in the 17th century”. The footpath TD1, to the west, appears to follow the route of an old lane associated with the western houses – seen as a hollow way. The remains are embanked and ditched closes with traces of house sites at their eastern ends.

1.5 The second element which has a bearing on the origins and development of the settlement, but which now no longer exists, is the manor house, formerly sited immediately to the east of the church. This appears to have been a late-medieval building, rebuilt by Henry Yelverton on acquiring the manor in 1578, and subsequently pulled down directly after the sale of the estate in 1801 to his neighbours the Comptons of Castle Ashby. The house and its associated grounds were fairly extensive, taking up all the land to the north, east and west of the church, but the only clue in the landscape today as to its former existence is the occasional large parkland cedar tree in the fields around the church to the north of the present proposed conservation area.

1.6 It appears, therefore, that as a result of the fundamental socio-economic changes which the settlement experienced in the 17th century, both its population and its physical extent reduced markedly. The agrarian/subsistence economy thus implied is reflected in Whellan’s recording of the following local employment in 1874:

Humphrey Cooper, parish clerk
Thomas Labutt, higgler *(hawk or peddler of provisions)
Miss Emma Longland, schoolmistress
Samuel Silby, shopkeeper, and
James Adcock, John Allebone, William Church (The Lodge), George Coles and John Perry Davison, farmers.

1.7 Substantive 20th century development was limited to four interwar council houses at the southern end of the High Street (Nos. 33 – 36), and three later properties to the west in the Grendon Road (The Monks, Orchard House and The Conkers). In view of the relatively compact form thus maintained, the present proposed village conservation area boundary is drawn around the entire built-up area.

2. KEY ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE

2.1 The village is of linear form along a single street, with houses concentrated at the north end adjacent to the church. Although it is not possible to accurately plot the configuration of streets and dwellings which comprised the original larger pre-17th century settlement, the layout as seen today appears to be organic, perhaps responding to the watercourse to the west. However, the alignment of the village street relative to the parish church does suggest conscious planning, and this inter-relationship remains the most significant aspect of the layout as seen today.
3. ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

3.1 With the exception of the Grade I listed Church of St Peter and St Paul, all listed buildings are Grade II and are concentrated at the north end of the village (see Appraisal Map). Dating of the secular entries (based on the original building programme rather than on any subsequent extensions), spans from the late-medieval (c. 1500) former “hall house” at No. 22 to the mid-19th century dwellinghouses at Nos. 25 and 26. Each of the four centuries within this time period is represented by buildings on the statutory list, with a slight concentration in the middle of the 18th century when the imposing Limes Farm and Manor Farm and barns were constructed. Domestic building heights vary from single-storey with attic, seen at the thatched No. 10, to the three-storey Old Vicarage.

3.2 The parish church was entirely rebuilt in the 14th century, probably replacing a Norman structure of which no trace remains. It is an excellent example of Decorated Gothic of c.1320. Apart from the upper part of the tower and spire, and the later north chapel, the church was complete as we see it today by 1350. [Gyles Isham].

3.3 Originally thatched and dating from the late-16th century, the Old Vicarage was considerably altered in the 19th century with an extra storey added and the roof slated. A south wing was constructed in 1852. Architecturally undistinguished, its historic interest lies in its literary associations. The property was the home for 29 years of Dr Thomas Percy (1729-1811) where he produced his most important work including the Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, published in 1765. Among his many visitors were Shenstone and Garrick, Goldsmith and Doctor Johnson. Johnson’s name is still associated with the vicarage by a raised terrace known as “Johnson’s Walk” [Isham, op cit]. Dr Percy was succeeded in the living by his friend and correspondent, the philologist Robert Nares in 1782, which he held until 1805. Nares was Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum. [VCH IV 11].

3.4 “Other Buildings of Note” are shown on the Appraisal Map in black edging. As examples of good quality vernacular architecture, they complement the formally listed buildings and help to create continuity and a “sense of place” in the historic streetscape. The precise dating of this class of building is, however, difficult to establish in view of likely alterations since original construction, but it appears that collectively they lie within the basic time parameter indicated above.

4. SPACES: TOWNSCAPE ENCLOSURE AND GREEN SPACE

4.1 The spatial character of the single main village street varies markedly along its length. To the south there is a distinct sense of openness engendered by the views over the adjoining pasture land to the west, acknowledged by the “Vista” symbols on the Appraisal Map, as well as by the grassed roadside verges shown in blue notation as “Important Open Space”. In contrast, however, the section to the north is developed relatively densely on both sides of the street, forming a traditional enclosed streetscape, the intimacy of which is enhanced by the “Visual Stop” which the parish church forms at the top end.
In the latter case particularly, intermittent spaces between buildings and setting back of frontages from pavement-edge, for example at Silby’s yard and Nos. 2 & 3 respectively, create a pleasing sense of informality. Two red “Glimpse” symbols indicate fleeting views through gaps in the built form to the fields beyond.

4.2 In common with many other villages in the Wellingborough area with historic merit, the stone walling (shown in black dot notation on the Appraisal Map) which occurs both in the street(s) and on the edges of the Appraisal area, provides an overall sense of continuity and enclosure when read together with the vernacular buildings. This harmonious relationship is underpinned by the ubiquitous traditional coursed rubble stonework.

4.3 Perhaps the most significant green space in townscape terms is the site of the former pond (see general location indicated on the Appraisal Map), containing two large oak trees and a beech. This wide grassed area links with grass verges on either side of the road to the south (shown in blue notation on the map) which in turn include a row of mature lime trees adjacent to Limes Farm and Nos. 7-9. The following landscaped/treed areas are also of notable townscape value:

- the mixed deciduous and coniferous trees in the churchyard, which is shown in the special “Area Identity” notation on the Appraisal Map in recognition of its significance as a place of tranquil retreat;
- the ancient tree-stump immediately opposite the church entrance;
- the large cypress west of the church, almost certainly a vestige of the landscaped gardens of the former Easton Maudit House; and
- the pine in the Vicarage gardens clearly visible from the Grendon road.

5. BUILDING MATERIALS

Common building materials and features of special architectural or historic interest visible from the public domain include the following:

- **Walling**
  Regular coursed limestone with occasional ironstone pieces; red brick; ashlar gable parapet and kneelers (seen at Limes Farmhouse).

- **Roofing**
  Plain tiles; “Castle Ashby” terracotta; Welsh slate; pantiles; longstraw thatch (block-cut ridge).  
  Chimney features include stone, with red/brown brick weathering; red brick (typically on stone houses); decorative stoneware chimney pots; circular terracotta pots.

- **Windows/Doors**
  Casement, including leaded.

- **Free-standing walling**
  Limestone, with capping in terracotta, cock-and-hen stone or half-round mortar; flat rubble stone wall tops around churchyard with convex mortar capping; red brick.

- **Other Features**
  Patterned fretted Victorian barge-boards to verges and dormer heads; dormers, hipped or gabled, set back on purlins; exposed rafter feet;
thatch extending to broad porch on two elevations with rustic timber supports, “cottage ornee”-style (No. 10); timber porches with waney oak fronts; timber paintwork in cream or white on shutters, garage doors, windows, etc [Estate colours?]; stone window sills with lintels in either stone or oak, some in shallow-arch form; chestnut paling fencing; plank doors; plank straight-topped timber gates.
Agricultural cart sheds, etc. – limestone; weathered asbestos corrugated roof covering; red rubbed-brick 3-centre arched openings.

6. EXTENT OF LOSS, INTRUSION OR DAMAGE TO BUILT ENVIRONMENT

6.1 The 20th century barns and silos associated with Limes Farm are inevitably utilitarian structures lacking in architectural quality. Whilst they are intrusive in an otherwise unspoilt traditional historic environment, the impact is mitigated as a result of their positioning set back from the village street and by the fact that in landscape terms their cladding materials are gradually mellowing with organic patination.

6.2 Up until the fourth quarter of the 20th century, the Vicarage enjoyed extensive rear gardens running westwards to the village stream. This relationship was severed at that time, however, by the somewhat arbitrary erection of three dwellinghouses due west of the Vicarage, accessed directly from the Grendon Road (see Appraisal Map). The limestone facing material on two is not traditionally formed and laid (i.e. it is not regular coursed cropped rubble) and the third is faced in Bradstone reconstructed stone material. Although their building materials are therefore not locally distinctive, the three properties in question are, structurally, divorced from the historic village core and thereby have only a limited impact on the character of the proposed conservation area as a whole.

7. NON-RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

These are limited to:
- The Church of St Peter and St Paul.
- Limes Farm. This is the sole working (arable) farm in the village.
- Manor Farm. No longer a working farm, the premises are given over to a riding school and stables. Horses can often be seen either led or ridden along the access way to the east of the main street and this visible activity is recorded on the Appraisal Map by the arrowed “Transparency” symbol.
- The village hall, formerly the village school (see Appraisal Map).

As already suggested, the parish church as a “land use” is an extremely significant aspect of the proposed conservation area’s character both as a building type and as regards its apparent influence on the plan form. The two farms with their imposing barns in turn demonstrate the historic traditional agrarian function of the settlement.