

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 5 NOVEMBER 2013

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING
AND TRANSPORT

HUNSDON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT
PLAN

WARD(S) AFFECTED: Hunsdon

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To enable Members to consider the Hunsdon Conservation Area Appraisal following public consultation.

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE:</u> That	
(A)	the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Hunsdon Conservation Area Appraisal be supported;
(B)	authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the Appraisal which may be necessary;
(C)	the Hunsdon Conservation Area Appraisal be supported for adoption;
<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:</u> That:	
(A)	the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Hunsdon Conservation Area Appraisal be agreed;
(B)	the Hunsdon Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted.

1.0 Background.

1.1 East Herts has a rich environmental heritage which includes 42 Conservation Areas. The East Herts Local Plan commits the Council to review its Conservation Areas, a requirement which is also set out in national legislation.

1.2 The review of Hunsdon's Conservation Area is the second in a series of reviews undertaken in 2012/2013. These reviews can now be presented for Members consideration. In each case a report will be presented when a public consultation exercise has been undertaken in relation to each individual settlement.

1.3 Each document identifies the special character of the respective Conservation Area together with the elements that should be retained or enhanced and those which detract from the identified character. Existing boundaries will be reviewed and, where appropriate, practical enhancement proposals will be suggested.

1.4 Once Members have considered each Appraisal, and the document has been adopted by the Council, they will become a 'material consideration' in the process of determining planning applications.

2.0 Hunsdon's Conservation Area Appraisal

2.1 Hunsdon's Conservation Area was first designated in 1968. The Hunsdon Conservation Area Appraisal was completed in 2013. There was a period of public consultation between August and October 2013. A public exhibition and meeting was held on 12th August 2013 at which about 40 members of the public were in attendance. Responses were received from the Parish Council and from 14 others and other points were raised at the public meeting. The headline issues are set out in the following paragraphs:

2.2 *General content of Appraisal:* The Appraisal sets out a revision to the Conservation Area boundary to exclude properties on Tanners Way and two properties on the High Street. It identifies the key environmental features and the manner in which their quality can be maintained. In relation to Hunsdon the most relevant ones are: Listed Buildings including structures in their curtilages; non listed buildings of quality worthy of protection; other unlisted distinctive features worthy of protection and important open land and spaces.

- 2.3 *Listed buildings and structures in their curtilages:* These are protected by legislation and have been identified in the Appraisal.
- 2.4 *Non listed buildings of quality worthy of protection:* A small number have been identified that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and these should be retained through the planning process.
- 2.5 *Other unlisted distinctive features worthy of protection:* A number have been identified and include the war memorial and street lamps. These are important to the rural qualities and character of Hunsdon. Protection could formally be achieved through the introduction of an Article 4 Direction. Prior to considering such a course of action, the Council would need to establish ownership and discuss the matter further with respective owners.
- 2.6 *Important open land and spaces:* The Appraisal has identified a number of such important open spaces that materially contribute to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area that should be protected through the planning process.
- 2.7 *Enhancement proposals to deal with detracting elements:* A number have been identified and include the impact vehicle parking has on the conservation area and discordant signage. It is accepted that such improvements will often only be carried out with the co-operation of owners and other local bodies and organisations. However the District Council may have a role to play in some instances, for example by offering technical advice; by determining applications and where appropriate offering grant assistance.
- 3.0 Consultation Feedback
- 3.1 The Parish Council '*welcomes the Appraisal and Management Plan and sees the report, once finalised, as an important element of the Planning Policy governing development and redevelopment in the heart of the village to maintain our historical and architectural heritage*'. Furthermore the Parish Council has expressed support for a number of suggested improvements proposed by the Appraisal. The general support of the Parish Council is encouraging and the process of identifying and subsequently achieving physical improvements, implemented at local level, however small, is important,

- 3.2 Other comments received through the consultation process are set out in the table included as **Essential Reference Paper B** arranged in the subject order set out above.
- 3.3 **Essential Reference Paper C** is a copy of the Hunsdon Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan as it appeared at the consultation draft stage with track changes to show how the final document will appear. This also includes the maps.
- 3.4 In summary it is recommended that the Hunsdon Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted and be used in the process of determining planning applications.
- 4.0 Implications/ Consultations Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper A**

Background Papers

None

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