

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 8 APRIL 2014

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING
AND TRANSPORT

MUCH HADHAM CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND
MANAGEMENT PLAN

WARD(S) AFFECTED: MUCH HADHAM

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To enable Members to consider the Much Hadham 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 Much Hadham 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; and
(C)	the Much Hadham 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 Much Hadham Conservation Area Appraisal be agreed; and
(B)	the Much Hadham 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 Much Hadham's Conservation Area is one of 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 Much Hadham Conservation Area Appraisal

2.1 Much Hadham's Conservation Area was designated in 1981. The Much Hadham Conservation Area Appraisal was completed in 2013. There was a period of public consultation for six weeks during January, February and March 2014. A public meeting was held on 22nd January 2014 at which about 30 members of the public were in attendance. The draft appraisal document had been resented to the Parish Council previously. Responses were received from 4 members of the public 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 include the entire site of Moor Place, including its ancillary and curtilage buildings, objects and pasture land from Kettle Green Road to the avenue approach.

2.3 It identifies the key environmental features and the manner in which they can be controlled. In relation to Much Hadham 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.

- 2.4 *Listed buildings and structures in their curtilages:* These are protected by legislation and have been identified in the Appraisal. Some are in a poor condition and these have also been identified in the Council's recently updated Buildings at Risk Register. It is considered important their condition improves. Potentially this could occur through the planning process or possibly from grant assistance. Officers will approach owners as Members agreed when considering the Buildings at Risk Register in March 2013.
- 2.5 *Non listed buildings of quality worthy of protection:* A number have been identified that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and these should be retained through the planning process.
- 2.6 *Other unlisted distinctive features worthy of protection:* A number have been identified and include walls and railings. These are important to the rural qualities and character of Much Hadham. Most are protected by virtue of being within the curtilages of Listed Buildings or above prescribed heights (which means that it is necessary to seek consent before demolition is undertaken). However some are unprotected in law from demolition. Protection could formally be achieved through the introduction of an Article 4 Direction. Prior to considering such a course of action, the Council will seek to establish ownership and discuss the matter further with respective owners.
- 2.7 *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.
- 2.8 *Enhancement proposals to deal with detracting elements:* A number have been identified and include historic walls, an untidy site and broken bollards which are in need of repair. 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 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. These relate to the inclusion of Moor Place and important views.
- 3.2 **Essential Reference Paper C** is a copy of the Much Hadham Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan as it appeared at the consultation draft stage with track changes to show how the final document will appear.
- 3.3 In summary it is recommended that the Much Hadham 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

Contact Member: Cllr Mike Carver – Executive member for Strategic Planning and Transport
mike.carver@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Kevin Steptoe – Head of Planning and Building Control , ext 1407
kevin.steptoe@eastherts.gov.uk