

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 9 OCTOBER 2014

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING
AND TRANSPORT

SAWBRIDGEWORTH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

WARD(S) AFFECTED: SAWBRIDGEWORTH

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To enable Members to consider the Sawbridgeworth 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 Sawbridgeworth 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 Sawbridgeworth 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 Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area Appraisal be agreed;
(B)	the Sawbridgeworth 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 Sawbridgeworth's Conservation Area is the first in a series of reviews undertaken in 2013/2014. These reviews can now be presented for Members consideration at a number of meetings of the Executive. This is the latest. 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 Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area Appraisal

- 2.1 Sawbridgeworth's Conservation Area was first designated in 1968 and redesignated in 1981. The Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area Appraisal was completed in 2014. There was a period of public consultation from May to July 2014. A public meeting was held on 29 May 2014 at which about 15 members of the public were in attendance. Responses were received from 3 respondents including a Local Member 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 'New Town' area on Station Road, the Cricket pitches and pavilions and the Springhall Road suburb. It identifies the key environmental features and the manner in which they can be controlled. In relation to Sawbridgeworth 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. 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.
- 2.4 *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 *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.

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.
- 3.2 **Essential Reference Paper C** is a copy of the Sawbridgeworth Conservation Appraisal 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 Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area Appraisal 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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