

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 5 APRIL 2016

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR DEVELOPMENT
MANAGEMENT AND COUNCIL SUPPORT

THUNDRIDGE AND WADESMILL CONSERVATION AREA
APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

WARD(S) AFFECTED: Thundridge and Standon

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To enable Members to consider the Thundridge and Wadesmill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan following public consultation.

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:</u> That	
(A)	the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Thundridge and Wadesmill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be supported;
(B)	authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the document which may be necessary; and
(C)	the Thundridge and Wadesmill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 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 Thundridge and Wadesmill Conservation Area is one of a series of reviews being undertaken and this is the latest one for consideration.
 - 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 are reviewed and, where appropriate, practical enhancement proposals are suggested.
 - 1.4 Once Members have considered each document and it has been adopted by the Council, it becomes a 'material consideration' in the process of determining planning applications.
- 2.0 The Thundridge and Wadesmill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan
- 2.1 The Thundridge and Wadesmill Conservation Area was designated in 1988. The document was completed in 2015 and went through a period of public consultation from 13 January 2016 until 24 February 2016, with a public meeting held on 13 January 2016 which about 25 persons attended. The headline issues are set out in the following paragraphs:
 - 2.2 *General content:* The draft document considers the conservation area boundaries to be appropriately drawn and no changes to it are proposed. The document identifies the key environmental features and the manner in which they can be controlled. In relation to Thundridge and Wadesmill 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.
 - 2.4 *Non listed buildings of quality worthy of protection:* Several

have been identified that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and these should be retained through the planning process. Some non-listed residential buildings have good quality architectural features of high quality whose formal protection could be achieved through the introduction of an Article 4 Direction which is a course of action the Council has yet to consider.

- 2.5 *Other unlisted distinctive features worthy of protection:* A number have been identified and include walls and railings which are important to the character of the village. Included are some structures on the Council's Heritage at Risk Register where, without prejudice, grant assistance may potentially be available.
- 2.6 *Important open land and spaces:* Several important open spaces that materially contribute to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area that should be protected through the planning process have been identified. One such area is bounded by the access running due east from South Lodge and extending to the River Rib which provides an important setting to the historic core to the north dominated by the church tower on the sky line.
- 2.7 *Enhancement proposals to deal with detracting elements:* Some have been identified and include untidy areas in need of improvement. 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 Responses were received from the Parish Council who fully support the draft proposals and additionally suggest an assessment be undertaken for the nearby village of High Cross. Other responses were received from local residents including one general response of support and another being an objection from the owners of No. 3 Ermine Street concerning the possible proposal to make their property

subject to an Article 4 Direction.

- 3.2 A summary of comments received through the consultation process and officer responses are set out in the table included as **Essential Reference Paper B**.
- 3.3 **Essential Reference Paper C** is a copy of the Great Amwell Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan as it appeared at the consultation draft stage with any track changes to text and alterations to plans that incorporate any necessary changes. Further minor changes will be incorporated reflecting the status of the final document once Members have considered it for adoption.
- 3.4 **Conclusion.** In summary, and for reasons set out in **Essential Reference Paper B**, it is considered appropriate that the reference to the potential of an Article 4 Direction in respect of No. 3 Ermine Street remain in the document. It is recommended that the Thundridge and Wadesmill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted and be used in the process of determining planning applications.
- 4.0 Implications/Consultations
- 4.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper A**.

Background Papers

None

Contact Member: Councillor S Rutland-Barsby, Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support
suzanne.rutland-barsby@eastherts.gov.uk

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