

East Herts Council Report

Meetings

Council

Date of Meeting: 22 July 2020

Report by: Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Report title: Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Ward affected: Little Hadham

Summary: To enable Members to consider the Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) and Management Plan following public consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL that:

- (a) The responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be supported;**
- (b) The Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth, be authorised to make any further minor and consequential changes to the document which may be necessary; and**
- (c) The Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted.**

1.0 Proposals

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable Members to consider the Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) and Management Plan. The Patmore Heath Conservation Area was first designated following adoption in 1990. The CAA considers the Patmore Heath conservation area boundaries and proposes a number of alterations. Of particular significance is the proposal to extend the conservation area to include part of Gravesend. Another small but important proposed inclusion relates to the former Mission Hall, now in a poor condition.
- 1.2 Elsewhere, Heath House and parts of the wider landscape to its rear and to the rear of The Hunting Box and extending north are proposed for exclusion as they are considered to be part of the wider landscape whose inclusion would be contrary to current Historic England advice. These areas are located within The Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt and thus protected by Adopted District Plan Policy GBR2. Additional paragraphs drawing attention to this fact are now proposed which should satisfy objectors concerned about their proposed exclusion.
- 1.3 The central heathland is a most important feature. Its management, particularly in relation to the future of mature trees, has been discussed between the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, others and the Council. The Heath is grazed as Common Land and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Nature Reserve; it is an outstanding example of grass heathland. The agreed management (plan) for the heath will protect its important acid grassland. This will involve the loss of some trees and the retention of others. A brief explanatory note has been added to the Appraisal Plans and keys.
- 1.4 A number of non-listed buildings have been identified for retention and protection where an Article 4 Direction to protect selected features is an option for future consideration.
- 1.5 Other distinctive features such as walls worthy of protection have been identified.
- 1.6 Several enhancements are also proposed including restoration/

appropriate reuse of the former Mission Hall and the potential for selective improvements to overhead services, the latter being an option the Parish Council may wish to consider. Another suggestion relates to improving property boundaries but this would be entirely on a voluntary basis by property owners. Other features identified include listed buildings and any associated important curtilage listed buildings which are protected by their own legislation; important trees and hedgerows and important water features and selected views.

- 1.7 A copy of the Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, together with accompanying plans and keys is included at **Appendix C**, presented as appearing at the consultation draft stage with any subsequent track changes to text and necessary hand written modifications to plans and keys. Additional paragraphs are now also proposed underlining the protection afforded by the adopted District Plan. Further minor changes will be incorporated reflecting the status of the final document once Members have considered it for adoption.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 East Herts has a rich environmental heritage which currently includes 42 Conservation Areas. The East Herts District Plan refers to the ongoing review of its conservation areas, a requirement which is also set out in national legislation.
- 2.2 The review of the Patmore Heath Conservation Area is the last of the existing reviews being undertaken and this is now presented for consideration.
- 2.3 Once Members have considered the document and it has been adopted by the Council, it will become a 'material consideration'¹ in the process of determining planning applications.
- 2.4 The Local Member and Chair of the Parish Council (at their request) met with Officers on 17 February 2020. This meeting and discussion was useful, providing all parties an opportunity

¹ A material consideration is a matter that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision.

to better understand the concerns that were raised in response to the consultation.

3.0 Reason (why recommendation of report is sought).

- 3.1 The report is sought to comply with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires that conservation areas should be reviewed and that proposals for their preservation and enhancement (Sections 69 and 71) should be published.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 There are no alternatives because the legislation referred to above is a requirement on local planning authorities.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 As set out above legislation places an obligation on local planning authorities to undertake such reviews. If not undertaken the risk could be reputational/political. Some proposals (e.g. removing areas of the wider countryside) from a conservation area may be unpopular and occasionally create political involvement at local level.

6.0 Implications/consultations

- 6.1 The Appraisal document was completed in 2019 and went through a period of public consultation from 22 October 2019 to 3 December 2019. Leaflets were distributed to properties advising of the public meeting held on 22 October 2019 at which over 20 persons attended.
- 6.2 A summary of representations with officer comments are included at **Appendix A: Summary of representations and Officer Comments**. **Appendix B** provides copies of submitted representations, redacted to omit personal details.

Community Safety

Not applicable

Data Protection

Representations have been redacted to omit personal details

Equalities

Not applicable

Environmental Sustainability

The District Plan seeks to deliver sustainable development and the CAA document seeks to protect and secure the character of the area.

Financial

The cost associated in preparing this Appraisal is met from within existing staffing and operational budgets. The Appraisal suggests enhancement works which generally will be the responsibility of others. Any grant assistance for historic buildings may be sought from existing EHDC resources. Other actions such as the possible introduction of an Article 4 Direction might result in additional cost.

Health and Safety

Not applicable

Human Resources

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Legal

Preparation of the Appraisal fulfils statutory requirements.

Specific Wards

Little Hadham

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

- 7.1 **Appendix A:** Summary of representations and Officer Comments
- 7.2 **Appendix B:** Submitted representations, redacted to omit personal details
- 7.3 **Appendix C:** Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan document with track changes; Historic Plan; Revised Character Analysis Plan; Revised Character Analysis Key; Revised Management Plan; Revised Management Plan Key

Contact Member

Councillor Jan Goodeve - Executive Member for Planning and Growth

jan.goodeve@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

Sara Saunders Head of Planning and Building Control Contact Tel No. 01992 531656

sara.saunders@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

John Bosworth Conservation Officer

john.bosworth@eastherts.gov.uk