

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 4 FEBRUARY 2014

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING  
AND TRANSPORT

HERTINGFORDBURY CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND  
MANAGEMENT PLAN

WARD(S) AFFECTED:     HERTFORD CASTLE

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

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

<b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE:</u></b> That	
(A)	the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Hertingfordbury 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 Hertingfordbury Conservation Area Appraisal be supported for adoption;
<b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:</u></b> That:	
(A)	the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Hertingfordbury Conservation Area Appraisal be agreed;
(B)	the Hertingfordbury 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 Hertingfordbury's Conservation Area is the fifth 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 Hertingfordbury Conservation Area Appraisal

- 2.1 Hertingfordbury's Conservation Area was first designated in 1968 and redesignated in 1981. The Hertingfordbury Conservation Area Appraisal was completed in 2013. There was a period of public consultation between October and December 2013. A public meeting was held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013 at which about 25 members of the public were in attendance. Responses were received from the Town Council and from 4 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 to the west of St Marys Lane and properties south of the Cole Green Way (former rail line). It identifies the key environmental features and the manner in which they can be controlled. In relation to Hertingfordbury 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 Please note that the character analysis plan attached to this report indicates the proposed deletion of both the area of housing and the allotment gardens to the west of St Marys Lane, from the Conservation Area. However, following consultation and reassessment of this matter, the management plan also attached shows the now proposed extent of deletion in this area, which is of the area of housing only, retaining the allotment gardens within the Conservation Area.
- 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 small 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 Hertingfordbury. 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 untidy sites, monuments in need of repair and boundaries 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 The Town Council is in agreement with the majority of the draft document however they feel that the conservation area boundary should remain unchanged. The general support of the Town 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 Hertingfordbury Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan as it appeared at the consultation draft stage with track changes to show how the final document will appear.
- 3.4 In summary it is recommended that the Hertingfordbury 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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