

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 7 JUNE 2016

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGEMENT AND COUNCIL SUPPORT

BUNTINGFORD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND  
MANAGEMENT PLAN

WARD(S) AFFECTED: Buntingford

**Purpose/Summary of Report:**

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

<b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:</u> That:</b>	
<b>(A)</b>	<b>the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Buntingford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be supported;</b>
<b>(B)</b>	<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</b>
<b>(C)</b>	<b>the Buntingford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted.</b>

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 Buntingford 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 Buntingford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

- 2.1 The Buntingford Conservation Area was designated in 1968 and reviewed in 1981 and again in 2000. This Appraisal document was completed in 2015 and went through a period of public consultation from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 to April 12<sup>th</sup> 2016 with a public meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 at Buntingford Town Council offices at which about 30 persons attended. The headline issues are set out in the following paragraphs:
- 2.2 The document as revised following consultation considers the conservation area boundaries and proposes a number of alterations. These are:

Include field to east of Little Court; extend Chapel End footpath including the River Rib and its treed banks south to the bridge.

Exclude the following areas: area south of the town consisting of the Fire Station, the Co-operative store and car park to the east of Station Road and residential development on the west of Station Road being The Gables and nos. 1 - 14 Rib Way; group of 13 lock up garages to rear of High Street and south east of car park; No. 15A Norfolk Road; No. 131 High Street; Nos. 2- 4 Garden Road;

Nos. 2 - 6 and Layston House, The Causeway; Nos. 1 - 10 Bridewell Close.

The document identifies the key environmental features and the manner in which they can be controlled. In relation to Buntingford 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. Two are on the Council's Heritage at Risk Register.
- 2.4 *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. 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. Article 4 directions remove permitted development rights for certain types of development within sites in a conservation area.
- 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 town. Some are in need of repair or rebuild. Without prejudice and as set out in the document grant assistance may be available to assist in such cases.
- 2.6 *Important open land and spaces.* The following particularly important open spaces have been identified: Green spaces around St Richard's church; River Rib and adjacent footpath; 'shared space' junction of High Street/Church Street.; Layston Court Gardens; Land to the east of Wyddial Road and around Little Court.
- 2.7 *Enhancement proposals to deal with detracting elements.* A number have been identified. As set out in **Essential Reference Paper B**, the Buntingford TC has offered to

pursue the majority: their initiative and co-operation is much appreciated.

- 2.8 *Other significant proposals.* The Appraisal notes the diminishing quality of several historic terraces damaged principally by the exercise of householder Permitted Development Rights and suggests an initiative involving the preparation of an experimental improvement scheme (see paragraph 7.12 of appraisal document).

A potential redevelopment has been identified (see paragraph 7.13).

The issue of A Boards on the High Street is raised and it is suggested discussions take place with the interested parties in the first place.

### 3.0 Implications/Consultations

- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**

- 3, 2 A summary of comments received through the consultation process and officer responses are set out in the table is included as **Essential Reference Paper B**

- 3.3 **Essential Reference Paper C** is a copy of the Buntingford Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan as it appeared at the consultation draft stage with any subsequent track changes to text and alterations to accompanying 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.

### Background Papers

Written representations received through the consultation process.

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