

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 25 OCTOBER 2016

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR DEVELOPMENT
MANAGEMENT AND COUNCIL SUPPORT

WALKERN CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL
AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

WARD(S) AFFECTED: WALKERN

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To enable Members to consider the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals following public consultation and consideration of the comments received.

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE: That Council</u>	
(A)	note the responses to the public consultation and support the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals;
(B)	delegate authority 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)	support for adoption of the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals.

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 Walkern Conservation Area is one of a series of reviews being undertaken.
- 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 Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals.**
- 2.1 The Walkern Conservation Area was designated in 1981 but has not been reviewed since, prior to this Character Appraisal and Management Proposals document.
- 2.2 The production of Management Proposals is a statutory duty under s.71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The associated Character Appraisal is a necessary stage in the devising of Management Proposals as it analyses and describes the character and appearance of the conservation area that the Management Proposals seek to preserve and enhance.
- 2.3 S.71 of the Act requires that Councils put the Management Proposals to a public meeting, considers the responses received and makes any appropriate amendments before adopting the document.
- 2.4 The Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals were drafted in early 2016 and put to a public meeting in Walkern on the 9 June 2016. The meeting featured an exhibition showing the proposals and a Conservation Officer was there to answer any questions.

The meeting was very well attended with over 30 residents coming to view the proposals. There followed a period of public consultation from 9 June and 22 July 2016.

- 2.5 The 'Consultation Draft' document included a number of amendments to the boundary of the Conservation Area. These are designed to make the Conservation Area more logical and defensible, particularly in the context of Planning Appeals. They are detailed in 8.1 of the Management Proposals on p. 41. A large map showing these boundary amendments was displayed at the public meeting and has been included, along with the revised document, in Essential Reference Paper C to this report.

3.0 **Public consultation responses.**

- 3.1 Two 'Comment Forms' were handed in at the public meeting and a further three emails were subsequently received with comments. These are detailed in **Essential Reference Paper B**. The headline comments are:

- 1/ Factual corrections to the text and minor queries,
- 2/ Strong support for maintaining the character of Walkern and the boundary amendments to remove the fields to its north and south,
- 3/ Questions relating to a small development site on the corner of Beechcroft Lane and the High Street,
- 4/ Questions relating to the large development site on Froghall Lane (this site is not in the Walkern Conservation Area),
- 5/ Support from the Parish Council for the document, in particular s. 8.15 – the Schedule of Enhancement Proposals (no further management proposals were suggested by the PC).

- 3.2 The above comments have been carefully considered by officers, as detailed in Essential Reference Paper B, and the document has been revised appropriately. These are:
- 1/ Factual corrections made and text clarified were appropriate to answer minor queries,
 - 2/ No revisions required,
 - 3/ The Character Analysis map on p.23 has been amended to better reflect the outcome of the recent Planning Appeal

on this site,

4/ Not relevant to this document so no revisions required,

5/ Text revision to reflect that the Parish Council did not suggest any further management proposals for inclusion on the Schedule.

4.0 **Adoption of the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals document.**

4.1 No other relevant considerations have come to light since the public consultation and, as amended under 3.2 above, the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals document is recommended for adoption by the Council. It can be found at Essential Reference Paper C to this report.

4.2. Further minor changes will be incorporated reflecting the status of the final document once Members have considered it for adoption.

4.3 Implications/Consultations. Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper A.**

Background Papers

Representations received from the 2016 consultation exercise.

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