

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 28 NOVEMBER 2017

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR DEVELOPMENT
MANAGEMENT AND COUNCIL SUPPORT

WESTMILL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND
MANAGEMENT PLAN

WARD(S) AFFECTED: Mundens and Cottered

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To enable Members to consider the Westmill 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 Westmill 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 Westmill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be supported for adoption.

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 Westmill Conservation Area is one of a series of reviews being undertaken and this is a recently completed 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 Westmill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan
- 2.1 The Westmill Conservation Area was first designated in 1978 and revised/redesignated in 1981. This Appraisal document was completed in 2017 and went through a period of public consultation from 11th July 2017 to 12th September 2017 (extended to 18th September at the request of the PC to allow consideration at their scheduled meeting). There was a public meeting held on 11th July 2017 at the Westmill Village Hall at which about 30 persons attended. A small number of representations have been received. Firstly the Parish Council is in agreement with the document and its proposals. Secondly two other representations have been received; one requesting a further listed building be included in the document and another requesting a minor conservation area boundary change that is better related to the physical features on the ground. Some earlier concerns of the PC and others did not materialise which emphasises, on this occasion, the benefit of early consultation, negotiation and discussion. The headline issues are set out in the following paragraphs:
 - 2.2 The document as further revised following consultation

considers the conservation area boundaries and proposes a number of alterations. These are: (a) Exclude agricultural storage area to east of River Rib being the site of the former railway station. (b) Exclude Nos. 1-4 Wilstone. (c) Following consultation a minor modification to boundary to rear of The Berries to better reflect physical features on the ground.

- 2.3 The document identifies the key environmental features and the manner in which they can be controlled. In relation to Westmill 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.
- 2.4 *Listed buildings and structures in their curtilages:* These are protected by legislation and have been identified. Two listed structures (tombs in the churchyard) are on the Council's Heritage at Risk Register and some discussion regarding these has taken place.
- 2.5 *Non listed buildings of quality worthy of protection:* A number have been so identified. 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 should Members decide to proceed with this option.
- 2.6 *Other unlisted distinctive features worthy of protection.* A number have been identified and include walls and other features which are important to the character of the village.
- 2.7 *Important open land and spaces.* The following particularly important open spaces have been identified: pasture south of road and east of Westmill Bury, Football Ground and river, pasture north of High Street and east of St Mary's church, St Mary's churchyard, central greens, linear grass sward south side of High Street, pasture rear of Westmill Bury, triangle to front of Westmill Bury, linear strip east of Westmill Bury Farm opposite Football ground, pasture and pond to west of approach access to Westmill Bury, Children's play area and pasture to south and east of Minstrel Cottage.
- 2.8 Trees play a particularly important role in many locations.

- 2.9 *Enhancement proposals to deal with detracting elements.* Several have been identified and the Parish Council has been active in pursuing some of them.
- 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 Westmill 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.
<http://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=21548&optionId=0&J=6>

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