

## EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD SHEET

**Name of decision maker:** Councillor Stephen Holmes

**Portfolio:** Planning & Regeneration

**Date of Portfolio Holder Decision:** 30 April 2012

**Title of Decision:**

Public Consultation for Hemel Hempstead Conservation Area Appraisal, 30<sup>th</sup> April to 25<sup>th</sup> May 2012

**Decision made and reasons:**

To undertake a public consultation on the Draft Hemel Hempstead Conservation Area Appraisal, which is being undertaken as part of the Heritage Improvement Strategy by Forum Heritage Services.

**Reports considered: (here reference can be made to specific documents)**

Draft Appraisal will be available from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2012

**Has budget been approved? (provide budget codes):**

Yes- DD405 3950

**Officers/Councillors/Ward Councillors/Stakeholders Consulted:**

Should the decision be approved consultations will take place with:

- Residents within the proposed area
- Visitors to the public exhibition in Hemel Hempstead Town Centre to be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> May

Dacorum Borough Council

- Dacorum Borough Councillors
- Corporate Director – Housing & Regeneration
- Assistant Director – Planning, Development & Regeneration
- Group Manager – Strategic Planning & Regeneration
- Group Manager – Environment Services
- Trees & Woodland Manager

Hertfordshire County Council

- County Councillor
- Head of Landscape
- Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre
- Transportation Planning and Policy
- Archaeology

Others

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- Natural England
- English Heritage
- Chilterns Conservation Board
- Chilterns Conservation Board, Planning Group
- Chiltern Society
- Residents' Association
- Heritage Improvement Strategy Stakeholders Group
- Dacorum Heritage Trust
- Disability Groups
- Relevant Local Societies
- BEAMS

**Monitoring Officer comments:** No comments to add to the report.

**Section 151 Officer comments:** The consultation exercises will be undertaken within existing budgets. There are no significant financial implications of revising the boundaries, should the consultation exercise result in the proposals being approved as set out in the background report.

**Implications:**

Without adequate public consultation, the draft appraisal is more likely to be viewed as restrictive due to lack of awareness of its recommendations.

**Risk:**

The intention of this consultation is to comply with legislation and best practice and therefore avoid the risk of non-compliance.

Without this piece of work, which is an integral part of the Heritage Improvement Strategy and Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan, the required data and understanding of the Old Town's heritage assets will be missing.

The Appraisal will flag up proposed changes to the conservation boundary (see consultants note below). If approved, the removal of part of the Conservation Area (Section to the north of Nos. 108 (west side) and 111 (east side) High Street) is unlikely to impact on the public consultation exercise – there may only be resistance to the proposal in which case the status quo would be maintained.

The proposed extensions (Area to the rear of Nos. 75 to 85 High Street (east side) incl. Nos. 9, 10 and 11 Sun Square and Area to the rear of Nos. 41 to 51 High Street (east side), including sections of footpath (formerly highway) will have implications for the removal of Permitted Development rights, the protection of trees and control over demolition in these proposed areas. As these represent only minor changes to the boundary the risk is considered to be minimal.

Within the current Conservation Area, the Draft Conservation Area Appraisal may propose

- a) some revisions to the current list of buildings of buildings of special architectural or historical interest

and will include:

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- b) a list of locally listed buildings and
- c) recommendations for Article 4 Directions in the Conservation Area.

However, the number of buildings which are not listed in the Conservation Area is small and therefore the risk is again considered to be minimal

**Value for Money:**

The cost of the consultation has been kept to a minimum by being shared with other public consultations in May on other aspects of the Town Masterplan.

**Options Considered and reasons for rejection:**

Not to consult on the draft, which would fail to engage with the public on this process of raising awareness of the importance of Hemel Hempstead's heritage.

**Portfolio Holders Signature**

**Date:**

**Details of any interests declared and any dispensations given by the Standards Committee:**

**For Member Support Officer use only**

Date Decision Record Sheet received from portfolio holder: 24/04/12

Date Decision Published: 30/04/12

Decision No: PH/025/12

Date of Expiry of Call-In Period: 08/05/12

Date any Call-In received or decision implemented:

**BACKGROUND**

The Hemel Hempstead Conservation Area Character Appraisal stems from two initiatives:

- 1) The Council's Conservation Strategy is providing a full assessment for all the Conservation Areas (23 in all) within Dacorum. There are currently Conservation Area Character Appraisals for Hemel Hempstead Old Town and Berkhamsted which form Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991 – 2011. These are both being reviewed as part of the Conservation Strategy. The Strategy includes a programme for the review and production of Conservation Area Character Assessments for all 23 Conservation Areas. As part of this programme, Conservation Area Character Appraisals for Aldbury, Bovingdon, Chipperfield, Frithsden, Great Gaddesden and Nettleden have already been completed and have been through formal consultation processes.
- 2) The provision of this Conservation Area Character Assessment for Hemel Hempstead is also part of the Council's LDF and Heritage Improvement Strategy. The Heritage Improvement Strategy will maximise the potential and economic benefit

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of heritage within Hemel Hempstead town centre. This supports the creation of an attractive, vibrant and sustainable town through the development and implementation of the Town Centre Masterplan. The Conservation Area Appraisal therefore supports the objectives of the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan and the Old Town project objectives to regenerate the Old Town heritage assets by preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The document identifies the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and includes proposals for extending the boundaries of the Conservation Area, for revising the current list of buildings of special architectural or historical interest, for providing a list of locally listed buildings and making recommendations for Article 4 Directions in the Conservation Area.

The consultation process is proposed to commence on 30<sup>th</sup> April and ending 25<sup>th</sup> May 2012, with two public exhibition days to be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> May.

An advert will be placed in the Gazette to inform the general public of the consultation process.

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal will be available to view at the Council's Offices in Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring, Community Centres and local Libraries.

### Note from the Consultant:

#### Hemel Hempstead Conservation Area – Suggested boundary changes

**Red** denotes removal from the CA

**Light blue** – proposed inclusion

#### Proposal for removal

##### Section to the north of Nos. 108 (west side) and 111 (east side) High Street

This section of the conservation area takes in an arbitrary section of Gadebridge Park which forms an important part of the setting of the entire western section of the present conservation area. There does not appear to be any clear justification for the inclusion of this small section and it would be considered very much part of the setting and approach to the High Street in any event as well as forming part of the setting to Grade II listed buildings particularly (but not exclusively) to the east side of the High Street.

The present line does not follow clearly defined boundaries within or to the edge of the park or the roadside and there is no visible change in character within or outside the conservation area at this point. The alternative option is to bring the entire Gadebridge Park into the Old Town Conservation Area. The latter cannot be justified and there are other existing land use planning designations and possible further designations (historic parks and gardens for example) which would serve the purpose of protecting Gadebridge Park in addition to the issues of setting to Grade I (St Mary's church) and Grade II\* and Grade II listed buildings.

It is proposed to bring the boundary back to the northern property boundaries of Nos. 108 (west side) and 111 (east side) High Street respectively. This is a far more logical and

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defendable boundary to the Old Town Conservation Area and does not prejudice the continued protection of areas taken out of the conservation area although blanket TPOs or individual TPOs for Gadebridge Park trees may be considered appropriate.

Proposed inclusion:

**Area to the rear of Nos. 75 to 85 High Street (east side) incl. Nos.9, 10 and 11 Sun Square**

The conservation area boundary presently cuts through the centre of the development known as Sun Square. It is suspected that the conservation area was drawn prior to this development. The inclusion of Nos. 9, 10 and 11 and part of No.4 (the boundary presently passes through this building) will regularize this boundary to include all of the development known as Sun Square, a section of Chapel Street and a small area of hardstanding used as private parking to the east side of Chapel Street. This would then form a sensible and logical boundary which better reflects the original extent of historic development relating to the boundary plots of the High Street properties.

**Area to the rear of Nos. 41 to 51 High Street (east side), including sections of footpath (formerly highway)**

This area comprises a series of plots running back from the High Street and includes a series of open and closed garden spaces and areas used for parking. It also includes two sections of what were previously highway now (due to their width and scale) reduced to footpaths linking the High Street to the network of later (mostly) Victorian Streets to the east of the Old Town centre.

Presently the boundary follows an illogical path truncating these sections of the historic plots from their related buildings on the High Street. The proposed amendments would regularize this situation and afford protection for these spaces which are of historic and potential archaeological significance and form the setting of important Grade II\* and Grade II listed buildings to the east side of the High Street.

James Webb

Forum Heritage Services

04.04.2012