

CABINET
13 September 2022

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: PROPOSED NEW CONSERVATION AREA FOR CHESFIELD PARK

REPORT OF: *SERVICE DIRECTOR - REGULATORY*

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: *EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORT*

COUNCIL PRIORITY: RESPOND TO CHALLENGES TO THE ENVIRONMENT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To consider a proposed new conservation area around Chesfield Park and a draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) for public consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the draft CAAMP for the proposed conservation area around Chesfield Park is noted.
- 2.2. That approval is given for public consultation to take place on the draft proposal to designate a conservation area and the draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan around Chesfield Park.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To ensure that the conservation areas and historic assets within North Hertfordshire are appropriately assessed and designated to inform decision making for planning applications and in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. The Council could refrain from undertaking any further work on conservation areas or local assets, but this would not reflect national policy or legislation which requires local authorities to review and monitor conservation areas from time to time and conserve local and designated assets.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. Executive Members and Deputies have been briefed on the relevant matters in this report.
- 5.2. This report seeks approval to consult with stakeholders and the local community before a decision is made to designate a new conservation area around Chesfield Park.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. Conservation areas are designated by the Council in its role as local planning authority. They exist to manage and protect the special architectural and historic interest of a place. Local planning authorities have a duty to review past designations from time to time to determine if any further parts of the area should be included within conservation areas or no longer merit that designation.
- 7.2 The emerging Local Plan Policy SP13: Historic Environment, states that the Council will pursue a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment through periodic reviews of Conservation Areas and publication of detailed guidance. In paragraph 4.160 of the supporting text of that Policy it states that: *“Over the lifetime of this Plan, we will carry out a programme of work relating to our Conservation Areas with priority for locations with potential development pressures and where there have been significant changes since the designation was first made. The reviews will include the production of character statements and will provide opportunities to consider amending boundaries”*.
- 7.3 In a [report](#) to Cabinet in January 2021, it was reported that a Heritage Assessment had been prepared in association with the strategic housing allocation of North Stevenage, NS1 and that one of the recommendations was that:
“North Hertfordshire District Council should consider designating a conservation area based upon Chesfield Park and Chesfield Church to adjoin the St Nicholas/Rectory Lane Conservation Area in Stevenage and preserve the significance of Chesfield Park.”

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. Consultants (Place Services) were appointed in July 2021 to undertake the preliminary work to establish whether the Chesfield area is of sufficient special or historic interest to designate as a conservation area. The work concluded that the Chesfield area is of sufficient interest to progress the designation of a conservation area.
- 8.2. A draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) has been prepared for the proposed new conservation area and is attached as Appendix A. The CAAMP provides an overview of the proposed Chesfield Conservation Area, outlining its suitability for designation, the proposed boundary and a description of its special interest.
- 8.3. The proposed Chesfield Conservation Area comprises the landscaped country park of Chesfield including the central house and garden (Chesfield Park), and a farmstead complex, including the former manor house, and ruined church to the north (Chesfield Manor). The proposed Conservation Area is bounded on each side by substantial treelines, with the exception of the south-eastern edge where there are arable fields.

- 8.4. Historic England recommend that local communities are engaged and consulted when carrying out conservation area appraisals, as the perspective of people living and working in the area will add depth to the appraisal and generate support and understanding for future plans.
- 8.5. It is proposed that public consultation on the draft CAAMP take place in October and November 2022. The draft CAAMP and the proposed conservation area boundary will be made available on the Council's website and a drop-in session will be arranged locally where the consultants will be available to explain the draft proposals. The Council will work with the local Parish Councils to promote the consultation period.
- 8.6. The outcome of public consultation will be reported to Cabinet and may subsequently lead to the designation of a new conservation area.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Under the Terms of Reference for Cabinet, the Constitution states that it may exercise the Council's functions as Local Planning Authority and receive reports on strategic planning matters, (except to the extent that those functions are by law the responsibility of the Council or delegated to the Service Director: Regulatory).
- 9.2. Section 69 of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to designate areas which they consider possess architectural or historic interest worthy of preservation or enhancement as Conservation Areas. As part of this, section 71 of the Act requires the local planning authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas, such as in the form of an appraisal document. It is also the Local Authority's duty to ensure that special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the conservation when making planning decisions, as per section 72 of the Act.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. The costs for the conservation area work are being met from the planning fees reserve. £120k had originally been earmarked for conservation work over an anticipated three years, and there is approximately £100k left, as £20k was spent in 2021/22.
- 10.2. There are no specific revenue implications arising from this report.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. Sustainable Development of the District is identified as a Corporate Risk. The preparation of a draft CAAMP for the designation of a new conservation area will assist in promoting sustainable development in the future.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment,

victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 12.2. Section 8.5 refers to the key engagement of the community in developing CAAMPs. This engagement should advance equality of opportunity/foster good relations in consultation with all demographics within the area (including those who exhibit protected characteristics).

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. The designation of a new conservation area and the preparation of a CAAMP for the proposed new conservation area will assist in the management of the historic environment.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1. There are no new human resource implications arising from the contents of this report. The public consultation process will be undertaken by the consultants.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 Appendix A – Proposed Chesfield Conservation Area - CAAMP

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 17.1 Ian Fullstone, Service Director of Regulatory
01462 474480 ian.fullstone@north-herts.gov.uk

Contributors

- 17.2 Clare Skeels, Senior Planning Officer
01462 474424 clare.skeels@north-herts.gov.uk
- 17.3 Debbie Coates, Principal Strategic Planning Officer
01462 474353 deborah.coates@north-herts.gov.uk
- 17.4 Nigel Smith, Strategic Planning Manager
01462 474847 nigel.smith@north-herts.gov.uk
- 17.5 Louise Symes, Strategic Projects & Infrastructure Manager
01462 474359 louise.symes@north-herts.gov.uk
- 17.6 Nurainatta Katevu, Legal Regulatory Team Manager
01462 474364 nurainatta.katevu@north-herts.gov.uk
- 17.7 Jodie Penfold, Group Accountant

01462 474332 jodie.penfold@north-herts.gov.uk

17.8 Rebecca Webb, HR Services Manager
01462 474481 rebecca.webb@north-herts.gov.uk

17.9 Reuben Ayavoo, Policy and Communities Manager
01462 474212 reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1 [Cabinet report : Conservation Area Summary Report and Next Steps, 26 January 2021, Agenda Item 10](#)