

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel  
18 January 2024

## WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

\* Reporting to Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL held on Thursday 18 January 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors K.Thorpe (Chairman)  
R.Platt (Vice-Chairman)

S.Bonfante, J.Boulton, S.Goldwater, T.Kingsbury,  
L.Musk, A.Hellyer, C.Stanbury, J.Cragg, F.Thomson,  
P. Zukowskyj and M.Holloway

OFFICIALS C Barnes, Executive Director (Place)  
PRESENT: C Carter, Assistant Director (Planning)  
M. Wilson, Planning and Implementation Manager  
L. Burnham, Planner  
R. Misir, Democratic Services Officer

---

### 79. SUBSTITUTIONS

The following substitution of Members was made in accordance with Council Procedure Rules:

Cllr Max Holloway for Cllr Rose Grewal

Cllr Julie Cragg for Cllr Sunny Thusu

Cllr Fiona Thomson for Cllr George Michaelides.

### 80. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Grewal, Michaelides and Thusu.

### 81. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

### 82. NOTIFICATION OR URGENT BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER ITEM 8

There were no items of urgent business.

### 83. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel  
18 January 2024

Cllrs Kingsbury, Thomson and Zukowskyj declared non-pecuniary interests as Members of Hertfordshire County Council and Cllr Kingsbury further advised he lived in Danesbury.

84. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PETITIONS

There were no public questions or petitions.

85. WELWYN CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (FP2044)

Officers explained that national planning policy guidance required local planning authorities to review their conservation areas from time to time and determine whether any parts or further parts in their area should be designated as conservation areas. Essex Place Services had been commissioned as heritage based consultants to carry out a review of heritage assets in the borough; the existing conservation area and Welwyn Village had been reviewed, and a draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan had been produced. This sought to analyse the special architectural and historic interest of the Welwyn Village conservation area and identified opportunities for beneficial change and the need for additional protection. The boundaries of the conservation area had also been reconsidered; it was proposed several areas be removed from the conservation area as they were no longer considered to contribute to the special architectural and historic value of the conservation area. The assessment had been carried out in accordance with guidance and best practice guidance from Historic England.

Following consideration at Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel, it had been agreed to consult on the draft documents and there had been an 8 week consultation in line with the statement of community involvement, as well as a public drop-in session. The views of local residents, businesses, local interest groups and statutory consultees had been sought; 24 responses were received from a range of stakeholders and a summary report was included in Appendix 4. Overall, the document had been well received and there were no comments in objection to the publishing of the appraisal and management plan for Welwyn Village. In respect of the appraisal section of the documents, some requests had been made for additional detail or clarification including below-ground and non-heritage assets; inclusion of heritage, assets and wildlife sites; and additional views – there were also comments on the proposed character areas. In terms of the management plan section of the documents, comments were received about issues such as trees maintenance, drainage, archaeology, building heights, transport and parking, and the heritage trail. It had also been commented that residents needed to be aware of their obligations within a conservation area, particularly in relation to retrofitting climate change measures. In conjunction with Place Services, officers had reviewed all comments and amended the draft document as appropriate. A Frequently Asked Questions section had also been added.

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel  
18 January 2024

In terms of the proposed boundary changes, a number of respondents had agreed with the changes including Historic England, while some did not fully agree and about half felt the conservation area should be enlarged, in particular to include the Danesbury Park estate. As a result, the proposed boundary had been reconsidered; to ensure the concept of conservation was not devalued, only those areas of sufficient special architectural or historic interest were included within the revised boundary, but areas outside the boundary might contribute to the setting of the conservation area. Some areas were now to remain such as the listed wall and listed milestone on Church Street. Where areas were still proposed for removal, a section justifying the reasons for removal had been added to the documents.

If the report's recommendations were approved, the document would be used to guide future development in the area and would be a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications. There were some statutory processes to be carried out to amend the boundary, and notification letters would be sent out in line with best practice. Where areas were to be removed from the conservation area, properties would in some cases gain permitted development rights, so long as those rights had not been removed or limited as a condition of previous planning consent. Consent for tree works would no longer be required in those areas and tree preservation orders had been put in place to ensure those trees were adequately protected.

Members raised questions as follows:

- The report stated "*expansion to include the Danesbury Park estate would necessitate the inclusion of a large area of modern housing...*" and a member queried whether this referred to Danesbury House and the mews houses or the whole of Danesbury. Officers explained that this referred to the manor house and immediate surrounding area; should the area immediately surrounding the manor house be included, the new boundary would need to be extended to also include the residential area to the north of Welwyn Village. Due to the geographical location it was not considered appropriate to include it in the Welwyn Village conservation area, and Place Services had said an assessment could be considered at a later stage if warranted.
- It was noted the proposal meant the existing conservation area would reduce in size.
- A member noted that if there was a conservation area in Danesbury Park estate that was linked to the proposal, then there would be a conservation area with two separate non-contiguous areas which did not seem to make sense and in any case, the estate had protections to prevent inappropriate development (eg Listed Building, Local Nature Reserve, Wildlife Site, Green Belt).
- There were some buildings on London Road that were of historic interest and a member asked whether a ribbon development conservation area extension to the south in London Road might be appropriate. Officers said Place Services had considered historic buildings and heritage assets

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel  
18 January 2024

outside the main conservation area but as they were scattered around, they had not been included.

- A member noted the Parish Council had expressed support for the proposal.
- A member noted there had been 24 responses and asked how many consultees there had been; she also asked how many of the respondents who wanted the boundary to be enlarged had come from the areas removed from the proposal. Officers responded that around 400 letters had been sent to addresses in the Welwyn area including approximately 40 statutory consultees and around 10 local interest/resident groups. There had been a public drop-in session, the Council had written to everyone in the conservation area and had utilised the Parish Council's help via its newsletter. Around half the responses received wanted the boundary to be enlarged; the majority of these referred to the inclusion of Danesbury Park.
- A member asked whether all residents in the areas proposed for de-designation had been consulted with, which officers confirmed.
- In respect of Danesbury Park, a member asked whether if a site was designated as a heritage asset it would then receive protection without needing to be listed or within a conservation area. Officers said that within the NPPF there are concepts of designated and non-designated heritage assets; due to the green belt, there were constraints on further built development but it could be a non-designated heritage asset which would be a material consideration in a planning application.
- A member noted the Manor House was a heritage asset and Grade II listed and so would gain protection for the surrounding area. The designation of Danesbury as a country park would further constrain development in the area and it would take time and an assessment to ascertain if further protections were appropriate.
- The Chair reflected the apparently low response rate might indicate people were generally content with the proposal and commented on the Parish Council's support for it and willingness to work with the Council. It was positive Welwyn Hatfield had made changes based on responses received.
- Members commended the very thorough report.

RESOLVED:

(Unanimous)

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel:

1. Noted the results of the public consultation and public drop-in session and
2. Recommended to Cabinet and Council that the Welwyn Village Character Appraisal and Management Plan is adopted and the boundary of the Welwyn Village conservation area is revised as proposed, to remove areas where designation is no longer justified.

Meeting ended at 7.54 pm

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel  
18 January 2024