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Conservation Area Management Plans Statement of Consultation

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1 Introduction

What is a Statement of Consultation?

1.1 A Statement of Consultation says how we have prepared our planning documents. It should show that we have met the legal requirements set out by the Government⁽¹⁾.

1.2 It says who we consulted and when this happened. The Statement of Consultation summarises the responses that were sent to us and, where relevant, explains how we have changed our documents as a result of these comments.

1.3 This document allows people that sent us comments to see how we have dealt with them. People who did not send us comments but want to understand more about how we have prepared our plans may also find this document interesting and useful.

1.4 This Statement accompanies the conservation area management plans for the following areas:

- Broadwater
- Old Town High Street
- Orchard Road
- Shephall Green
- St Nicholas/Rectory Lane
- Symonds Green
- Town Square

What are conservation area management plans?

1.5 The conservation area management plans will help guide any changes and secure the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of our conservation areas.

1.6 The preparation of a management plan follows designation and / or review of an area and preparation of a character appraisal. These three steps should be carried out on a regular basis to ensure that designations and proposals are kept up-to date. This is in accordance with the requirements of legislation⁽²⁾.

1.7 The plans are intended to supplement policies within the Stevenage District Plan Second Review (2004).

1.8 Further details may be found by reading the consultation documents which are available online.

1 The Town and County Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended).

2 Planning [Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas] Act 1990 s.71 and 72; s.71 specifically requires the local planning authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas and to submit these proposals for public consideration.

How do we decide who to consult?

1.9 We are required by law to write a document called a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI says which groups and organisations we will consult and how we will involve members of the public in our planning documents.

1.10 We adopted our SCI in December 2006. It is available on our website (www.stevenage.gov.uk). The SCI says that we will use some or all of the following methods in consultations.

- You can see our plans at our offices, in local libraries and on our website.
- We will write to people who have told us they are interested in our planning documents. (We will do this each time there is a consultation).
- We will write press releases and put adverts in the local newspaper.
- We will send out leaflets and brochures.
- We will set up exhibitions or displays and hold meetings.
- We will give presentations and host workshops.

1.11 We should also follow best practice which suggests that, for conservation area proposals, we should write to all properties contained within each relevant area.

1.12 We have a database which holds details of people, businesses and organisations that have told us they are interested in our planning documents.

1.13 Legislation⁽³⁾ specifically requires us to hold public meetings as part of the consultation process for conservation area management plans. Minutes from these meetings are published within the appendices.

3 Planning [Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas] Act 1990 s.71(2)

2 Public consultation

2.1 This section of the statement says who we consulted, when this happened and what people said. It also shows how we have taken these comments into account when writing our plans.

2.2 The Government says that we must consult certain organisations when we prepare our planning documents. We should also ask groups that have an interest in the future of Stevenage for their comments and think about the best way(s) to involve local people and businesses.

2.3 We have carried out a formal consultation on the conservation area management plans. More details on this consultation are set out below.

When was this consultation?

2.4 The consultations were approved by the Council's Executive on 22 November 2011.

2.5 The first consultation began on 8 December 2011 and ended on 23 January 2012 for the following conservation areas:

- Broadwater
- Old Town High Street
- Orchard Road
- Shephall Green
- Town Square

2.6 The second consultation began on 1 February 2012 and ended on 14 March 2012 for the following conservation areas:

- St Nicholas/Rectory Lane
- Symonds Green

2.7 Copies of the consultation documents are available on our website.

Who was consulted?

2.8 We asked 1,573 people, businesses and organisations to tell us what they thought. Relevant stakeholders were identified from the details on our database and we sent letters to every property located within a conservation area.

What did we do?

2.9 We sent a letter or email to a selection of the people, businesses and organisations on our database and to every property within a conservation area.

2.10 We made copies of the consultation document available at our main office, and at the libraries in Stevenage town centre and Old Town High Street.

2.11 The document was put on the Council's website (www.stevenage.gov.uk). It was placed on the conservation area web pages, as well as the specific consultation area 'Have Your Say'. Our consultation portal was used to provide easy access to view the document and to make comments online, where possible. Comments could also be made by letter or fax.

2.12 We put a Public Notice in a local newspaper, The Advertiser, on 8 December 2011 and attended a public consultation event⁽⁴⁾ in the Town Square on Saturday 10 December 2011. Posters were also placed within each of the conservation areas to advertise the consultation period.

2.13 Public meetings were held and the documents were presented and invited for comment. Minutes of these meetings are published in the appendices. Actions from these meetings are also included. Table 1 shows the attendance at each of the public meetings:

Table 1 Public meetings

Conservation area	Date of meeting	Number of attendees
Broadwater	9 January 2012	11
Old Town High Street	12 January 2012	24
Orchard Road	12 January 2012	24
Shephall Green	16 January 2012	140
St Nicholas/Rectory Lane	21 February 2012	9
Symonds Green	21 February 2012	9
Town Square	9 January 2012	11

Broadwater and Town Square Public Meeting

(See Appendix 2)

2.14 The general discussion at this meeting focused on the maintenance of trees and parking issues within the Broadwater Conservation Area. Clarification of local authority enforcement powers in conservation areas was provided. No changes to the management plan were proposed.

Old Town High Street and Orchard Road Public Meeting

(See Appendix 3)

2.15 The general discussion at this meeting focused on further clarification of local authority enforcement powers in conservation areas. Other topics under discussion included traffic management, shop front advertising, the public realm and signage. One attendee considered that the management plan should include larger scale projects such as the re-configuration of the Trinity Road/Sish Lane overpass.

Shephall Green Public Meeting

(See Appendix 4)

2.16 A number of local residents and users of the Shephall Centre expressed alarm at the public meeting as they were previously unaware of the potential development of the site. The Shephall Green Conservation Area Management Plan states that the potential development of the Shephall Centre⁽⁵⁾ is an issue for continued management of the conservation area. The Centre had previously

4 The Cafe Choice Event 2011.

5 Previously known as the Broadhall Centre

been allocated as a potential housing site within a different planning document⁽⁶⁾. No applications had been submitted for development of the site but, based on evidential work, it was considered feasible that the site could deliver approximately 32 dwellings. As no application has yet been considered, the exact layout of the site and the re-provision of the Centre had not been discussed in detail.

2.17 Council Officers clarified that the Shephall Green Conservation Area Management Plan does not, and cannot, allocate (or unallocate) land for development⁽⁷⁾. The plan outlines the potential issues and threats to the ongoing management of the conservation area and provides guidance for the preservation and enhancement of the area's special character. Development of sites within conservation areas require additional consents and all of the management plans are intended to guide such developments towards the features which make these areas special.

2.18 Other topics relating to the conservation area included parking, traffic management, the bollards on the Green, hedgerows and trees, satellite dishes and signage. Council Officers provided further clarification on the consent process in conservation areas.

2.19 It was proposed that the reference to the Shephall Centre site be removed from the plan but no further changes were identified.

St Nicholas/Rectory Lane and Symonds Green Public Meeting

(See Appendix 5)

2.20 The general discussion at this meeting focused on the importance of green space in the area of Symonds Green. Further emphasis on the Green Links which lead northwards and southwards from the common was proposed for the management plan. A number of queries relating to traffic management and the effects of noise from the A1(M) in Symonds Green were raised.

2.21 At every public meeting, a number of recent schemes were cited as poor examples of development in conservation areas and some members of the public questioned the appropriateness of specific planning permissions. It was proposed that enquiries are directed to the planning team in writing so that further information can be provided from each case officer.

2.22 As a result of comments made at the meetings some further enquiries were made by Council Officers and, where requested, this was communicated back to local residents. Council Members also resolved to investigate areas outside of the Borough Council's jurisdiction, such as joint working with Hertfordshire County Council.

Who responded to the consultation?

2.23 We were sent 24 written responses by the end of the consultation and a total of 118 comments. The list below shows who sent comments:

Table 2 Written respondents to the consultations

Mr J. Amess	Mr N. Barker	Mr A. Bentley	Mr A. Brown	Mr B. Clare
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6 The Site Specific Policies Development Plan Document, November 2008

7 This can only be achieved through the Site Specific Policies Development Plan Document or its equivalent

Mrs S. Fogg	Mr E. Fletcher	Friends of Forster Country	Mr & Mrs Harris	Mr A. Harris
Mrs S. Howes	Mrs H. Kerr	Ms L. Lewing	Mr D. Mair	Miss P. Maryan
Mrs McCarthy	Natural England	PHD Chartered Planners	Mr and Mrs Ramsden-Cooke	Rectory Lane Residents Association
M. Selby	Mr E. Stroud	Ms Tompkins	Mr I. and Mrs J. Undrell	

2.24 Table 3 illustrates the number of written comments we received per conservation area:

Table 3 No of written respondents by conservation area⁽⁸⁾

Conservation areas	Written response	Emailed response	Online response	Total
Broadwater	0	1	1	2
Old Town High Street	0	1	1	2
Orchard Road	0	2	1	3
Shephall Green	2	2	4	8
St Nicholas/Rectory Lane	3	5	0	8
Symonds Green	1	0	1	2
Town Square	0	0	0	0

2.25 A summary of all of these responses and how they have been considered by the Council in producing the final version of the document is contained within the appendices.

2.26 We also received a petition entitled 'Petition against 32 dwellings being built on Shephall Centre land'. The petition was signed by 664 people from the Shephall Community Association and was received on 23 January 2012. Further details are provided under the Shephall Green public meeting section. The petition will be kept on record by the Council and future discussions regarding potential development of the site will consider the submitted petition.

8 The total number of responses equals 25, reflecting the response from Natural England which summarised comments for both St Nicholas/Rectory Lane and Symonds Green

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Summary of responses

Conservation Area Management Plans Statement of Consultation

Summary of responses

Table 4 Consultation comments (comments received at the public meetings are also recorded where relevant to the content of the Management Plans)⁽⁹⁾

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
Broadwater Conservation Area Management Plan					
1	Parking	-	Ms L. Lewing	Grass verge parking is not enforced. Patrons of the Man in the Moon public house use on-street parking instead of the car park provided.	Noted. Comments passed to Transport team at Stevenage Borough Council.
2	Speed humps	-	Miss Maryan	The number of speed humps along Broadwater Crescent is excessive. The removal of alternate humps should be considered.	
3	General	-	Comment made at public meeting.	There should be more emphasis on a balance between parking and the protection of open spaces. People still need places to park.	Noted. It is considered that the chapter 'Transport Issues' and paragraph 9.31 of the Management Plan address this issue.
Old Town High Street					
4	Introduction	1.6	PHD	Needs to be a clear link between BEAMS appraisal and the management plan.	The management plan summarises the detail contained within the appraisal document throughout.
5	Conservation areas and planning procedures	2.5	PHD	A more exhaustive list of developments requiring planning permission should be included.	The detail contained within the management plan is intended to be a broad overview. To avoid confusion contact details are provided so that householders can access further information as required.
6	Conservation areas and planning procedures	2.8-9	PHD	The importance of trees should be emphasised more.	It is considered that the information provided in this section reflects an equal balance of the issues relating to planning procedures in conservation areas.
7	In context	4.2	PHD	The impending revocation information should be included here.	Noted. This section has been amended accordingly.

9 No comments were received on the Town Square Conservation Area Management Plan

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
8	An analysis	6.23	PHD	We welcome the recognition of the importance of large Victorian villas and propose further wording on the importance of garden land, trees and landscaping.	It is anticipated that our emerging Amenity Tree Management Policy will further highlight the importance of trees town-wide.
9	An analysis	6.24	PHD	Do not consider the boarding up of a property is a weaknesses. Site being considered for development, this does not indicate a weakness in demand for this type of property.	Noted. Buildings with boarded windows and doors are a weakness in the appearance of an area. Text amended for clarification.
10	An analysis	6.25	PHD	Recommend the TPO designation of significant trees within the conservation area.	Anyone is able to propose a TPO. It is recommended that proposals are forwarded to the Council arboricultural officer.
11	An analysis	6.26	PHD	No evidence to support the threat of additional vacant properties.	Noted and amended.
12	Development issues	7.16	PHD	Inaccurate to say proposals have been received for land. Text amendment proposed.	Application received in 2007 for development to rear of 6 Ditchmore Lane.
13	Open space and public realm issues	10.0	PHD	This section should acknowledge the positive role of privately owned open space. At Ditchmore Lane, there is a marked contrast between land within the conservation area and the land that abuts the area.	See comments to ref. 8.
14	Management Plan	10.0	PHD	Needs re-numbering.	Noted and amended.
15	Management Plan	10.2	PHD	All historic plots should be retained, not just burgage plots. Text amendment proposed.	The burgage plots were specifically mentioned in the appraisal document as a key feature and are included as a result.
16	Management Plan	10.3	PHD	Residential development to the rear of Ditchmore Lane villas should avoid large building footprints. Text amendment proposed.	It is considered that the current wording allows sufficient flexibility within the sites whilst safeguarding the Ditchmore Lane frontage. See also comments to ref. 8.
17	Management Plan	10.4	PHD	Text amendment proposed to reflect comments against ref. 13.	See comments to ref. 13.

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
18	Management Plan	10.22	Mr and Mrs Ramsden-Cooke	Shop signage should be monitored and strictly enforced. Officers should be empowered to make on-the-spot fines.	The Council is not able to place an on-the-spot fine for a breach of the planning regulations. Infringements will be considered during our ongoing monitoring of the conservation area. However, this is a lengthy process. More expedient action would occur as a result of direct notification to the Council.
19	Management Plan	10.26	PHD	In support of this intention.	Noted.
20	General	-	Comment made at public meeting	Content of Management Plan should be broader and consider large scale solutions to local issues. For example, the re-design of the Sish Lane/Trinity Road junction.	Given current budgetary restraints across the district, this plan aims to direct achievable small scale interventions. Specifically regarding the re-design of the Sish Lane junction - this issue is not addressed within the five year programme identified by the Highways Authority.
21	General	-	Comment made at public meeting	Church Lane is dreadful and a rat-run. More should be done about this.	Noted. Comment passed to Transport team at Stevenage Borough Council.
Orchard Road					
22	An analysis	6.2	Mr A. Brown	Please clarify position on windows and doors, this is not enforced.	Presently, the Council has no control over the replacement of windows and doors. It is hoped that the management plan will guide minor alterations and promote the benefits of retaining traditional architectural features.
23	Development issues	7.2	Mr A. Harris	Support re-use of existing buildings but this should be emphasised within the plan.	It is considered that the re-use of buildings is discussed at various points throughout the management plan.
24	Development issues	7.5	Mr A. Harris	Local residents haven't been asked about this and there is no evidence to suggest there are parking problems along this road.	Local landowners of buildings proposed as potential housing allocations were contacted to determine whether sites might be viable for development in the future. Further information is included within the Old Town Area Action Plan. Please see our website for further details.
25	Management Plan	9.9	Mr A. Harris	I support this intention but there is little enforcement of this.	Presently, the Council has no control over the replacement of windows and doors. It is hoped that the

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
26	Management Plan	Parking	Mr A. Bentley	Changes to High Street parking restrictions have created issues along Orchard Road. Need to consider impact on surrounding areas.	management plan will guide minor alterations and promote the benefits of retaining traditional architectural features. Noted. Information has been passed to the Transport team.
27	Development issues	-	Mr A. Bentley	Several sites are proposed for development by 2020.	Noted. The Orchard Road Conservation Area is located within the Old Town Area Action Plan. Please see our website for further details.
28	Management Plan	-	Mr A. Bentley	Overall support for the plan's intentions.	Noted.
29	General	-	Mr A. Brown	Why are 6 houses in Essex Road included within the conservation area?	For further details on the importance of buildings located within the conservation area, please see the Orchard Road Conservation Area Appraisal available on our website.
30	General	-	Mr A. Brown	Why have properties not in the historic maps been included in the conservation area?	
Shephall Green					
31	Conservation areas and planning procedures	2.1	Mrs H. Harris	Council have allowed old houses to have modern improvements such as UPVC windows. Erecting bollards did not preserve or enhance the Green's character.	Presently, the Council has no control over the replacement of windows and doors. It is hoped that the management plan will guide minor alterations and promote the benefits of retaining traditional architectural features. The bollards were installed following a public consultation in 2010. They present the most appropriate design as they have the least visual impact when compared with other fencing options.
32	A brief history	Fig. 4	Mr D. Mair	Modern housing should never have been allowed on the green and no development of Council houses should have been allowed within 1000m of the conservation area.	It is intended that the management plan will guide future development.
33	An analysis	6.2	Mrs H. Harris	A significant view is spoiled by the bollards.	The bollards were installed to prevent erosion of the Green following a public consultation in 2010. They

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
					present the most appropriate design as they have the least visual impact when compared with other fencing options.
34	An analysis	Fig. 5	Mr and Mrs Undrell	Significant tree is located o/s no. 18 Shephall Green.	Noted, re-surveyed and amended.
35	An analysis	6.5	Ms H. Harris	Parking pressure, cluttered signage and poor quality of verges not evident. Shephall Green is NOT one-way. No Through Road sign should be moved.	<p>Parking pressure in the area is an ongoing issue.</p> <p>Since the original appraisal signage has been successfully rationalised. Document amended accordingly.</p> <p>Text regarding access to Green is accurate.</p> <p>The comment regarding the 'No Through Road' sign has been passed to the Highways Authority.</p>
36	An analysis	6.6	Mr D. Mair	Traffic is also a weakness and the electricity sub station has a detrimental visual impact.	<p>Noted and amended accordingly.</p> <p>We are writing to the Electricity provider to seek a re-design of the sub-station surround.</p>
37	An analysis	6.8	Mr D. Mair	In support of this statement.	Noted.
38	Development issues	7.5	Mr B. Clare	There should be no pre-ordained development allocations within a conservation area.	Development allocations are controlled by other adopted policies of the Council. Local residents can be personally advised of future consultations on these documents by contacting the Planning Policy team.
39	Development issues	7.5	Mrs H. Kerr	Consider that this section of the document should be removed until the Strategic Development Plan which proposed this site is in place.	The Site Specific Policies Document (2008) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. We are currently working towards a new Local Plan. If the site is removed as a housing allocation in the future we will remove the reference in future iterations of this Management Plan.

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
40	Development issues	-	Comment made at public meeting	This site should be removed from the plan.	One of the key purposes of the Management Plan is to guide future development. This site is a current housing allocation (in another plan). Redevelopment of this site could have a significant impact on the conservation area and this should be reflected in the Management Plan. If the site is removed as a housing allocation in the future we will remove the reference in future iterations of this plan.
41	Development issues	7.5	Mr E. Stroud	When was this announced/decided?	The Site Specific Policies Document (2008) consulted on proposed housing allocations across the town. To be personally advised of future consultations on these documents please contact the Planning Policy team.
42	Development issues	7.6	Mr B. Clare	Community centre is major part of the fabric and 'being' of Shephall Green. All community centres should be protected. There are specific issues relating to access, parking, trees and hedgerows for this site.	The Council is currently carrying out a comprehensive review of all its assets under an Asset Management Strategy and as such recommendations and proposals will be put forward for resolutions to be made for disposal / redevelopment as and when reviews are carried out. The Shephall Centre is due to be reviewed under this process with recommendations being made to the Asset Management Steering group.
43	Development issues	7.6	Mrs H. Kerr	Consider that this section of the document should be removed until the Strategic Development Plan which proposed this site is in place.	See comments to Ref 39.
44	Development issues	7.6	Mr D. Mair	Community centre provides good space during the day but during the evening it is noisy and anti-social. Would welcome development similar to The Grove on this site.	Noted.
45	Development issues	7.6	Mr E. Stroud	Already a congested access.	Noted. All planning applications are required to demonstrate highway implications. We seek advice from Hertfordshire County Council (as the Highways

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
					Authority) on all applications that propose changes to an access road.
46	Development issues	7.6	Mrs McCarthy	Oppose development of the Centre.	Noted. See also Ref 42.
47	Development issues	7.5 & 7.6	Mrs H. Harris	Inaccuracies in text. Amendments proposed. Community centres are essential to communities.	Noted. See also Ref 42.
48	Transport issues	8.1	Mr B. Clare	Proposals on this site would stress the use of the local road.	Noted. All planning applications are required to demonstrate highway implications. We seek advice from Hertfordshire County Council (as the Highways Authority) on all applications that propose changes to an access road.
49	Transport issues	8.1	Mrs H. Harris	Inaccuracies in text. Amendments proposed.	Noted.
50	Transport issues	8.2	Mr B. Clare	In support of this statement.	Noted.
51	Transport issues	8.5	Mr B. Clare	Lorries accessing building sites have caused most damage.	Noted. Our Transport team monitors access to building sites as issues are notified.
52	Transport issues	8.5	Mrs H. Harris	There is no evidence now or within previous 18 months of significant erosion. Bollards make Green look like a modern park.	The bollards were installed to prevent erosion of the Green following a public consultation in 2010. They present the most appropriate design as they have the least visual impact when compared with other fencing options.
53	Transport issues	8.6	Mrs H. Harris	Location of road is insignificant, schools create excessive traffic.	Council Members are working with Hertfordshire County Council to resolve this issue.
54	Transport issues	9.30 & 9.31	Mr E. Stroud	What happened to the off-street parking for Greenside School promised as part of The Grove development?	Council Members are working with Hertfordshire County Council to resolve this issue.
55	Management plan	9.37	Mrs H. Harris	Bollards has affected views and created modern park.	See Ref 52.

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
56	Management plan	9.42	Mrs H. Harris	Shephall Green is not a museum.	Noted. The Management Plan aims to ensure that the local character is maintained through the effective management of change and that opportunities to enhance the area are maximised.
57	Appendix 2	-	Mrs H. Harris	Inaccuracies in description of 7 & 8 Shephall Green.	Re-surveyed and re-confirmed.
58	General	-	Mrs S. Howes	Drop down bollard should be in place. Greenside mini buses should go through Heathcote entrance. Parking should be provided next to The Grove development.	Drop down bollards are already in place. Council Members are working with Hertfordshire County Council to resolve remaining issues.
59	General	-	Mr and Mrs Undrell	Boundary hedge in vicarage garden is in a poor state of repair. Rubbish bins should be replaced and additional ones provided. Seat outside the lynch gate should be reinstated. Roof to well requires repair. Oppose development of the Centre.	Hedgerow: Current legislation enables us to enforce hedgerow maintenance only in specific circumstances. Bins and seats: As funds become available it is hoped that street furniture is addressed. Well: Repairs are ongoing. Centre: Noted. See also Ref 42.
St Nicholas/Rectory Lane					
60	Introduction	Fig 1	Friends of Forster Country J. Amess	Priority Field and all of the Avenue should be included within either the Rectory Lane of Old Town conservation areas.	The conservation area boundary extension was proposed by professional consultants and we consulted on this in 2007. It is outside of the remit of this plan to extend boundary designations.

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
61	Conservation areas and planning procedures	-	J. Amess	Propose inclusions of a restriction on height and width of boundary fences.	There are restrictions on boundary fences within national legislation. We will continue to take enforcement action against breaches of this legislation where it is expedient to do so. Separate national legislation is in place with regard to hedgerows.
62	In context	4.2	Friends of Forster Country	Is EoEP still extant?	Yes. We have amended the text to emphasise the proposed revocation.
63	A brief history	-	J. Tompkins J. Amess	Errors in text.	Noted and amended.
64	A brief history	-	J. Amess	Propose extension to area to include Saunders Green.	The conservation area boundary extension was proposed by professional consultants and we consulted on this in 2007. It is outside of the remit of this plan to extend boundary designations.
65	A brief history	5.6	J. Amess	Error in text.	Noted and amended accordingly.
66	An analysis	6.4	J. Tompkins	Trees and hedgerows have been removed for new developments. How will this document reverse the trend?	This plan cannot reverse decisions that have already been made. It is hoped that the plan will emphasise the importance of trees and hedgerows and encourage their retention.
67	An analysis	6.9	J. Amess	Suggest that after roadworks have been completed, repair holes should blend aesthetically.	Roadworks are expected to reinstate sections of the highway in an appropriate manner. We would advise specific complaints to be directed to the Highways Authority.
68	An analysis	Fig 6	Friends of Forster Country	Propose additional hedgerow as 'significant'.	Re-surveyed and re-confirmed. Note to re-assess at next evaluation.
69	An analysis	Fig 7	Friends of Forster Country	Rooks Nest House should be shown as a landmark building and additional 'significant' views proposed.	Re-surveyed and re-confirmed. Rooks Nest House is a landmark building in the historical sense but in terms of legibility, the property is not considered to be a landmark building.

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
					Additional view added towards church. Significant viewpoints across North Hertfordshire lie just beyond the conservation area boundary.
70	An analysis	6.9	Friends of Forster Country	Propose additional bullet to protect Green Belt.	The Green Belt is protected through national legislation. We consider that the new NPPF outlines the importance of the Green Belt.
71	An analysis	6.11	M.Selby	The adverse impact of the current traffic issues on pedestrians and cyclists should be given prominence in the plan.	Noted and Chapter 8 amended accordingly.
72	Development issues	-	Rectory Lane Residents Association	New development is a concern, considering the inconsequential landscaping at the Woodfield development.	Noted. It is hoped that the plan will emphasise the importance of landscaping in the area.
73	Development issues	-	J. Amess	Propose that new road names should have local significance.	Noted. A new process for appropriate public consultation is being formulated.
74	Development issues	7.4	M.Selby	Disagree with statement. Poor example.	Noted and amended.
75	Development issues	7.4	J. Tompkins	The Woodfield development is not to be surrounded by trees. How will this document reverse the trend?	This plan cannot reverse decisions that have already been made. It is hoped that the plan will emphasise the importance of trees and hedgerows and encourage their retention.
76	Development issues	7.6	M.Selby	A more forceful statement of principle regarding preservation of the open countryside is needed.	Our emerging planning policies will direct the protection of principle open spaces and the Green Belt.
77	Development issues	-	M.Selby	The Country Park proposal should be mentioned.	This proposal was included within the Spatial Strategy for the Stevenage Core Strategy. This document was withdrawn in February 2012.
78	Transport issues	-	Rectory Lane Residents Association	Transport issues are the most relevant for this area.	Noted. This is reflected in Chapter 8.
79	Transport issues	-	M.Selby	The long history of traffic problems and failure to address them needs to be stated more prominently.	The Management Plan should aim to manage future change in an appropriate manner. We cannot reverse past decisions.

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
80	Transport issues	-	M.Selby	The major contribution of the St Albans Drive link road to the traffic problem should be mentioned.	Surveys have shown that the traffic problem along Rectory Lane is directly related to traffic moving along Almonds Lane.
81	Transport issues	8.6	M.Selby	The traffic calming proposal should not be reported in the Plan as though it were a realistic option.	The traffic calming solution is proposed within the current Urban Transport Plan for Stevenage.
82	The Management Plan	9.3	J. Tompkins	Why was planning permission granted for Whitethorns? Too many rooflights. How will this document reverse the decision?	This plan cannot reverse decisions that have already been made. Residents are encouraged to discuss specific planning applications with the Development Management Team.
83	The Management Plan	9.5	J. Tompkins	The Council has promoted development exceeding 2 storeys in height. How can you prevent further high level development?	This plan cannot reverse decisions that have already been made. The Management Plan will be a material consideration in the determination of future planning applications.
84	The Management Plan	9.7	J. Amess	Modern designs should not be built near to more historic buildings.	The right approach is to be found in examining the context for any proposed development in great detail and relating the new building to its surroundings through an informed appraisal. This plan aims to direct developers to the most important details, views, landscape etc in order to provide the most appropriate option for a site. A superficial copy of historic features in new buildings can erode the character just as much as a modern building. We need to ensure a careful balance determined on a case-by-case basis.
85	The Management Plan	9.18-9.27	Rectory Lane Residents Association	Supported.	Noted.

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
86	The Management Plan	9.27	M. Selby	Details of the appearance of public boundaries should be part of the initial public discussion of any planning application.	Boundary treatments are presented within the Design and Access Statement for each application. Public comments can be submitted during the consultation period.
87	The Management Plan	9.30	M. Selby J. Amess	Regulations regarding a 20m.p.h speed limit have changed. This should be investigated again.	Noted. The 20m.p.h limit is advisory only. Text amended for clarification.
88	The Management Plan	9.33	Friends of Forster Country	We would like to see FoFC inscribed benches within Forster Country.	Noted. The Council is supportive of all appropriate projects which aim to improve the amenity value of the public realm.
89	The Management Plan	9.35	Friends of Forster Country	Supported. FoFC seek to designate a footpath route with emblematic signs.	Noted. See Ref 82.
90	The Management Plan	9.41	J. Amess	Recommend installation of high kerbs to avoid erosion of verge.	High kerbs and bollards are considered where they do not pose a risk to public safety.
91	The Management Plan	9.42	Mr E. Fletcher	Highways repairable at public expense should be available to the public to pass without let or hindrance.	Noted. Text amended for clarification.
92	The Management Plan	9.42	Mr J. Amess	North-east entrance to St Albans Drive should be closed.	Surveys have shown that the traffic problem along Rectory Lane is directly related to traffic moving along Almonds Lane.
93	The Management Plan	9.43	Mr J. Amess	Parking enforcement required to stop vehicles parking on footpath.	These comments have been passed to the Parking Enforcement Team.
94	The Management Plan	9.56	Friends of Forster Country	Would like to add references to local historical books and emphasise green lung for all of Stevenage.	Referenced titles are listed as appropriate to the content of the management plan. Text amended to reflect importance of green space to Stevenage and wider Hertfordshire area.
95	The Management Plan	-	M. Selby	Should emphasise importance of aesthetic impact of a development.	It is considered that the selection of measures proposed within the plan provides a variety of guidance which

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
96	The Management Plan	-	J. Tompkins	Unless the plan contains concrete commitment to prevent further destruction of the area then it may as well be de-designated.	can be used to secure appropriately designed developments. The plan provides guidance to ensure the future management of the area.
97	The Management Plan	-	Rectory Lane Residents Association	Promote idea of a Design Champion, and have residents willing to take part.	This response will be passed to the Highways Authority if required (<i>awaiting confirmation from respondent</i>).
98	Appendix 2	-	N. Barker	4 Rectory Croft should not be listed.	This property is not listed and we do not have a local list. Our consultants consider it to be of local importance as identified in Appendix 2.
99	General	-	Friends of Forster Country	Broadly supportive of plan.	Noted.
100	General	-	Natural England	Supportive of objectives and recommendations, particularly where these relate to the protection and enhancement of Wildlife Sites.	Noted.
101	General	-	Natural England	Recommend reference to the potential presence of protected species associated with older buildings.	Noted and amended accordingly.
Symonds Green					
102	Transport issues	8.1	Mrs S. Fogg	Speeding cars are an issue.	Noted. Comments passed to Transport team at Stevenage Borough Council.
103	Transport issues	8.2	Mrs S. Fogg	Lorry parking signage is unsightly and signage needs to be improved to address speeding.	Traffic management signs must be of a prescribed size and colour. The signs have been installed to remedy a cited issue with lorry parking.
104	Transport issues	8.3	Mrs S. Fogg	Cars cross common land and use it as a car park in summer.	Noted. Comments passed to Transport team at Stevenage Borough Council.
105	The Management Plan	9.27	Mrs S. Fogg	Flood lights at the Crooked Billet Public House are a complete detriment to the area. Why were they permitted?	Our Enforcement Team will pursue this as appropriate.

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
106	The Management Plan	9.28	Mrs S. Fogg	Signage needs to be reviewed.	Noted. It is hoped that as funds become available signage within the public realm is addressed.
107	The Management Plan	9.29	Mrs S. Fogg	Distinctive signs should not include advertising more cheap beer and food.	All current signage is permitted within current Government legislation.
108	The Management Plan	9.30	Mrs S. Fogg	Anti-social behaviour around bench. Dog fouling also an issue.	Two bins are supplied for the disposal of waste. After a re-survey of the area a particular issue was not observed. Please contact the Stevenage Borough Council Environmental Services Team during periods of decline.
109	The Management Plan	9.34	Mrs S. Fogg	Current signs advertising cheap beer and food are detrimental to the area.	Our Enforcement Team will pursue this as appropriate.
110	The Management Plan	9.36	Mrs S. Fogg	Crooked Billet signage is detrimental to the area. Why has this been allowed?	
111	The Management Plan	9.41	Mrs S. Fogg	Support directional signage enabling visitors to locate points of interest.	Noted. It is hoped that as funds become available signage within the public realm is addressed.
112	The Management Plan	9.42	Mrs S. Fogg	Traffic flow is becoming a problem.	Noted. Comments passed to Transport team at Stevenage Borough Council.
113	The Management Plan	9.43	Mrs S. Fogg	Depends on what type of use you wish to promote on the green. Ball games are not allowed. Football tournaments should not be allowed. Fouling of dogs should not be allowed. Dogs should be kept on a leash. Any new uses need to be discussed with residents.	The Green is an important recreational space that contributes to our landscape's beauty, character and history. It is of historical and cultural significance and should be enjoyed as such. No new uses are proposed. Text amended for clarification.
114	Transport issues	-	Comment made at public meeting	Issue with parking at northern end of Symonds Green.	Noted. Comment passed to Transport team at Stevenage Borough Council.
115	General	-	Comment made at public meeting	A 'Friends Of' style organisation is needed to support voluntary work and seek funds for local works.	The Council would welcome local voluntary group work.
116	General	-	Comment made at public meeting	The Green Link between Symonds Green and Fishers Green should be highlighted within the plan.	Noted. Text amended accordingly.

Ref.	Chapter/section	Paragraph number	Representation	Main issues	Council response
117	General	-	Natural England	Supportive of objectives and recommendations, particularly where these relate to the protection and enhancement of Wildlife Sites.	Noted.
118	General	-	Natural England	Recommend reference to the potential presence of protected species associated with older buildings.	Noted and amended accordingly.

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Meeting Minutes - Broadwater and Town Square

Conservation Area Management Plans Statement of Consultation

Meeting Minutes - Broadwater and Town Square

Table 5 Public meeting minutes - Monday 9 January 2012⁽¹⁰⁾

Comments						
	P	Comment from Member of Public	M	Comment from Council Member	O	Comment from Council Officer
P		Query around how much this affects work on trees. Does this include trees inside and outside gardens, cutting down and pruning?				
O		Includes all trees and all work. Only criteria is measurement of trunk from 1m above the ground; if it is 75mm or more then it does require an application. Minor work can be exempt from formal application every time, if agreed by the arboricultural officer.				
M		Support the conservation area as a way to protect green infrastructure. Need to balance need for more parking and protection of open spaces.				
M		Do the conservation area regulations apply to natural trees or those planted as part of landscaping? Surely it is better to chop down dangerous trees then keep having to ask for permission to prune/look after them?				
O		Applies to both types of trees. Trees are exempt if they are dying, dead, dangerous, or causing long-term damage. There may be some leeway to have a 5 year review rather than asking for permission every 6 months – need agreement from arboricultural officer.				
M		Agreement with arboricultural officer does offer more flexibility.				
M		Question the cost of applying to do tree works?				
O		There are no costs involved and application is easy to complete.				
P		Boundary of conservation area is drawn around garden fence – why did this not extend to include the tree beyond this? Raised the issue that it is unfair to have to get permission to prune a tree located just inside the boundary, when a tree just outside can be cut down without conservation area consent. Concern that flats may be built here.				
O		The history behind the conservation area boundary designation can be investigated. The boundary was drawn up by BEAMS who are an independent professionals.				
M		Just because a tree is outside the conservation area does not mean we want to chop it down. Being in the conservation area does not determine whether flats are built or not.				
M		Trees are often retained during development, via the planning process. Members' are very keen on this. Valley Way example cited.				
P		Verge parking is a problem, but where else can people park? Cars have been damaged from parking on the street. Even with the speed humps, speeding problems do still exist – it is only cars which need to slow down for the speed humps, buses, vans etc. speed over them anyway. What alternatives are there?				
O		Have spoken to Engineering Manager about this – he accepts that people need somewhere to park and they are trying to provide off road spaces. A parking study is also being undertaken for this area.				
P		Speed humps have made things worse as people try to get around these – speed cameras would be better, as they would stop everyone from speeding.				
M		Agreed that there are parking problems in this area. The parking study won't necessarily solve all of these, but will put forward recommendations/suggestions for the future. The conservation area designation will not increase prosecution for parking on verges. We would prefer a 20mph limit, but police do not want this, as they cannot spend time enforcing.				

10 Comments made regarding the content of the Management Plan are further recorded in Appendix 1.

Comments	
M	Councillors are concerned about parking and are trying to solve the problems for the whole of Broadwater. Areas, such as Bedwell Crescent, do have a ban on verge parking and the area is much better to live in as a result. Need to work closely with residents, the police, everyone to get the right solutions.
M	Speeding is the biggest problem on Hertford Road – people use it to avoid Broadwater Crescent. Will work to solve this.
M	Acknowledges increased traffic and speed on Hertford Road, but these measures have also made it safer.
M	Although Bedwell is better because of no verge parking, problems have deferred to surrounding areas, so need to be wary of this and learn from these experiences.
P	Query relating to the plans for Marymead Springs. Previously there were plans to cut down trees because they were dangerous. The residents stopped this. Some trees were removed, and replanting was promised, but since then no replanting has occurred, and some trees are still dangerous and are not being managed.
M	SBC is just about to provide tree management plans. Councillor Gardner has meeting relating to this tomorrow, and will raise the issue of Marymead Springs.
P	Keen to be involved in these discussions/consultation.
M	Suggested local residents could get together and help to look after the trees and funding may be available from local Councillors. Councillor Gardner to keep in touch.
P	Query relating to how we propose to make people look after their properties/clean up their gardens.
O	We have power under the S.215 Act, where gardens are really bad, to serve notice. If residents still will not clean up their gardens, we can enforce this and make arrangements for it to be done. Officer clarified that we would have to be made aware of sites before this action can be taken.
M	If it is an SHL tenant, they are required by their lease to look after their gardens/property, so please report it if this is not being done.
P	Query relating to permission that was granted last summer for a house to be converted into flats. Why was this allowed to happen even though this was within the conservation area and there were objections?
O	Internal works are not affected by conservation area status.
P	It was a double storey extension. Details of this to be sent in with formal comments on the management plans.
M	Any works which would harm the town square would be strongly resisted by everyone. Must maintain this area, even with the regeneration scheme, which needs to happen.
M	Emphasised this point and discussed the important reasons behind Queensway South being added to the conservation area.
M	Hope management plans will help us to apply for funding from English Heritage to improve these areas. Feels that the long-term gain will outweigh the short-term inconvenience (i.e. submitting tree apps)

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Meeting Minutes - Old Town and Orchard Road

Conservation Area Management Plans Statement of Consultation

Meeting Minutes - Old Town and Orchard Road

Table 6 Public meeting minutes - Thursday 12 January 2012⁽¹¹⁾

Comments						
	P	Comment from Member of Public	M	Comment from Council Member	O	Comment from Council Officer
M						Windows and doors – shame that these are replaced with UPVC. Why do we not control this?
O						Government guidance does not allow us to. If you think Government guidance should be changed you can always lobby to your MP.
M						Street furniture – do we have control over this?
O						This is Hertfordshire County Council's responsibility.
M						Doesn't this document provide guidance for them?
O						Yes, it does.
M						Clarification of Orchard Road Conservation Area – does this cover the other roads too; Essex Road, Orchard Crescent, etc?
O						Yes.
M						If a building was being extended, would they have to put a tiled roof on? Because there was one put in last year that had a felted roof, not tiles. Why was this allowed?
O						Probably, yes. We can investigate further if you would like to ring in with the details. We only have control over this where planning permission is required.
P						Have personal experience of this when recently building an extension on a Victorian house. Trying to rebuild a Victorian house was very difficult and expensive; planning required the same materials to be used, it had to meet Building Regulations, even the internal alterations were affected. It was a lot of work, but the planners were very helpful and it was all worth it in the end as the house looks lovely.
P						Query relating to windows – if window panes fall out, would these have to be replaced with double glazing? If so, this would be a real shame and would not comply with keeping the original building features.
O						Building Regs not planning.
P						How will all of this be monitored? Some of the shop fronts along the High Street are appalling and do not fit in with the character of the area.
O						The survey we are going to be undertaking, of all the conservation areas, will hopefully help us to monitor things such as this. However, if you spot an infringement please let us know.
P						One member of the public was concerned that he did just that 3 years ago and nothing was done.
P						There is only one High Street in Stevenage and we should not be patronising it by defining it as 'Old Town High Street', should just be 'High Street'. It is not a neighbourhood area. It should be considered as important to the town as a whole.

11 Comments made regarding the content of the Management Plan are further recorded in Appendix 1

Comments	
M	There is nothing patronising about the High Street and the way in which we refer to it. It identifies a geographical area. We understand the importance of this area, that is why it had its own area action plan.
P	This document's remit is too narrow – need to consider other things; larger scale projects. Need a total rethink. Roaring Meg is already in decline, but the High Street has no empty units – we should value it more. In some ways, if it's not broke, don't fix it. Mentioned the possibility of removing the overpass between the High Street and Ditchmore Lane, and putting in a zebra crossing at the bottom end of Sish Lane, then having space for social housing between the Coach and Horses and where the Gas Works used to be.
M	Church Lane is dreadful. You see the back end of the High Street and there is nothing else there except car parks. Should think about the back as well as the front of the street. Member of public agreed with this and added Church Lane is currently a rat-run, people speed along this road to avoid the High Street – why? People should be using the High Street.
M	Agreed that Church Lane is not the most attractive part of the Old Town. Mentioned the positive planning at Primett Road, where the level of architecture is significantly better than other areas of Stevenage.
P	In the past SBC has done well in consulting members of the public. A resident of the old courthouse was pleased that before it was made into the health centre, residents asked for old features to be put into the new health centre building and their views were listened to. The building has got these features and now it looks attractive.
P	Street management – Orchard Road. There is a busy pedestrian route from the High Street, through Orchard Road to Julians Road, which is used a lot by school children. There is always a lot of litter along this route. What does the street management scheme include? They do a great job in the High Street but do they do this area as well? More litter bins are required.
M	Cleaning will be the same as in a residential area, not the same as the High Street.
M	An additional bin was put in by the underpass from Orchard Road. Waiting for extendable pole for litter picking on the grass bank.
P	Shouldn't have let takeaway be located on the corner (where the charity shop used to be). Access is difficult and dangerous and this will add to litter problems. Member of public did raise an objection to this. A new entranceway for deliveries will be dangerous.
O	Explained the nature of this development. Explained that no new entrance is being developed, just changes to the existing entrance to make it suitable for lorries. (Officer to send papers relating to this to Springfield House office).
M	Have heard there is no end user for this – is that correct?
O	Yes, there is not end user at the moment.
P	There has been an application put in for extension on a 400 year old building at the back of the florists – how will this be dealt with?
P	Any plans for the green space cut off by Road 10? It was a place where drug use was a common occurrence.
O	No plans for this space. Will be kept as an open space. Area was recently regenerated and high hedges taken away to create a safer environment.
P	Concerned that the 2nd finest house in Orchard Road is not even in the conservation area.
M	The conservation areas are a selling point for properties located here.
P	Agree that the conservation status is a selling point. Are there any plans to put up a plaque to show off the conservation area?
O	Signs are managed by Hertfordshire County Council so it is unlikely this would be able to be done.


Comments	
M	<p>Signage is in the plan. We do want to promote the conservation area as much as possible. One aim of the plan is to be able to bid for money from English Heritage etc. to improve these areas. We want documents to promote the area – i.e. a guided walk around, but we cannot do this without money. Can't promise this will be done in the near future, but it is something we would like to do.</p> <p>Ideally we would want to get rid of 50% of signs in conservation areas because lots are damaged/not needed.</p>
P	Not positive that County Council and Local Authority seem to speak a different language.
M	<p>Hertfordshire County Council have to deal with every road, pavement, sign etc. in Hertfordshire and are extremely stretched. Of course we do talk to each other and try to work together, but they have very limited resources.</p> <p>Road planning is often not very sympathetic to urban planning – we all need to work better to try and resolve these issues in the future.</p>
P	Are the plastic posts outside Tesco the council's responsibility or is that the County Council too?
O	Those may be our responsibility. (Officers to check and respond).
P	Concern relating to graffiti on black and white sign at the back of a building. Would we do anything about this?
M	We are unable to remove this if it is on private property, however, please report to us and we can write to the owners.
P	Concern regarding the two rusty old poles directing traffic to go right at corner – one is so dirty you cannot see what it says, the other is broken. The paving stones in this area are also all cracked.
M	The conservation area monitoring we are going to do will hopefully pick up some of these issues and we can then report them to Hertfordshire County Council where necessary.
P	If, when monitoring, you find things not in keeping etc. what will happen then? If things have been done by previous owners, will the current owners be required to spend money changing these things? If so, shops won't be able to survive and the High Street will become full of vacant units.
O	When a property is put up for sale it would be highlighted if proper planning permission has not been sought for works. Works carried out which predate the conservation area designation or which were deemed to be acceptable will be OK and will not create problems when trying to sell property. Legislation is not retrospective.
P	Shop on opposite side of road to Springfield House (old tax building?) is a very old building, which used to be black and white, now it is a whole variety of colours. I wouldn't be allowed to do this to the signs on my shop. So why was this allowed? Seems to be one rule for one and one for another.
O	Consent is required for some advertisements, but not for all, so it does depend where we can exercise control. Please contact office directly for further advice.
P	Also raised concerns r.e. application for old barns at back of florist.
P	Gardens in Stevenage always look lovely and gardeners should be congratulated.
P	The Avenue is disgusting – lots of glass and litter etc.
P	How will we know what can go into the document, what should be covered by the document – i.e. what we can suggest?
O	Happy to take all suggestions even if you are not sure if they are relevant. Put them in and we can decide from there.

Comments	
P	How will people know whether they need to ask permission – will they have to phone every time they want to do anything to their property?
O	We would prefer people to phone and clarify, rather than just get on with work. Also added that this plan does not cover Building Regulations, so please phone to ask advice on this. If you feel more information on this should be included in the plans please let us know.

As a result of this public meeting, the following actions were taken forward:

Table 7 Actions as a result of the meeting

Officers to investigate who is responsible for plastic posts outside Tesco and let respondent know. (Contact details provided).
Building opposite Springfield house (old Tax Building?) – whether they have planning permission for the colourful signage. Also application for the old barns behind the florists – has this been determined. (Contact details provided).
For someone to look into rusty poles (old signs) and cracked pavings from Springfield house towards Bowling Green. (Member of public did not want to be contacted with information).

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Meeting Minutes - Shephall Green

Conservation Area Management Plans Statement of Consultation

Meeting Minutes - Shephall Green

Table 8 Public meeting minutes - Monday 16 January 2012⁽¹²⁾

Comments						
	P	Comment from Member of Public	M	Comment from Council Member	O	Comment from Council Officer
P		Proposal for 32 dwellings on Shephall Green Community Centre site. Most people are attending meeting as users of the building.				
O		The conservation area management plan does not propose building on this site. The status of the site is not affected by the document. There may or may not be a proposal in the future.				
P		Proposal is to do away with community centres. Site is allocated for development.				
P		Community Hall is within the conservation area. The plan says the area is to be conserved.				
O		Aim of conservation areas is preservation and enhancement, not to preserve the present in aspic. Proposals will be considered on their merits. If there were to be a planning application affecting the site there will be further consultation and publicity at that point.				
P		Are you building on the site?				
O		The site is the subject of a proposed allocation in the Site Specific Policies document which would allow the Council in-principle to consider development. This will be subject to a requirement for a replacement or relocation of the existing centre. The requirement for replacement or relocation is controlled by other adopted policies of the Council.				
P		It isn't easy to find information. The Site Specific Policies (SSP) identifies Broadhall and the adjoining land and other sites like Chells Manor Neighbourhood Centre and The Oval. The Council is devastating facilities. There is no proposal for a replacement in the SSP. Use the hall regularly and considers it outrageous. There has been no consultation and this could be an issue.				
P		Any development will devastate the community and the conservation area.				
P		The Council is not doing anything until it will earn enough money from the site.				
P		Surveyors have been seen on the field. A 700+ signature petition has been collected. The centre is used by football teams, darts teams etc. It is a big part of the community. Decisions shouldn't all boil down to money. Residents deserve to have somewhere to go. If the Council is planning something, please inform the centre. Rumours can discourage activities and make places less viable making it easier for the Council to justify disposal. It is a town-wide facility.				
P		The same has happened at other sites such as Shephall Green School which has been replaced with housing.				
P		Rules are different for the Council. Residents on [Shephall] Green have to go through procedures but the Borough and County Councils can do what they like.				
M		The Council has to follow the same procedures as everyone else. Because it is in a conservation area, approval would be required for the demolition of the community centre. Heathcote School is outside the conservation area. In the case of Shephall Green School, the playing fields were transferred to Barnwell. The new homes were subject to conservation area restrictions / guidance. We will investigate who the surveyors are that have been seen on the field. The SSP [containing the site] was consulted on in 2008 and 2010. It is associated with another document called the Core Strategy. This has been determined to be unsound because North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) will not co-operate on the delivery of new housing. There will be more consultation in the next two to three years.				

12 Comments made regarding the content of the Management Plan are further recorded in Appendix 1.

Comments	
	<p>A site will only be allocated and considered for development if the landowner says it could be. There were no public representations objecting to this site. Allocated does not mean it will happen. The centre is currently viable and the Council's Executive Committee would not knowingly destroy a viable community asset. If a developer does come along they will need to show what happens to the community centre.</p> <p>The centre is a good asset, financially viable and stable. It is inclusive. Being in the conservation area is an added protection.</p> <p>However, because NHDC will not co-operate pressure on housing is increasing.</p>
P	Can it be minuted there are no proposals to build on the land?
M	It [the community centre] is an allocated site. All sites will be reviewed. It is helpful to your case to show there is overwhelming opposition. There are no submitted plans.
P	It comes across that a decision has already been made?
O	There have been no plans submitted for planning permission hidden in a cupboard at the Council.
P	How have the numbers [32 homes] come about?
O	This is a notional estimate that was included in the SSP in 2008 and 2010. We will be consulting again over the next two to three years.
P	Can you confirm nothing had been decided and that when a decision is made a further meeting will be held?
O	Yes.
P	While the site is allocated it is vulnerable. The scout site [on Shephall Green] was vacated to facilitate development at Greenside. At the time there were no plans to build housing. Now housing has been built on the site. The Council can't be trusted and the site should be allocated for community use.
O	All sites are considered on their merits at the time of any planning application.
P	The process the Council has followed has been shown up. The other documents you have mentioned are not referenced in the plan. Local Councillors don't appear to know what is happening. There is a question of the Council's intent ~ it seems clear there is an intention to develop at some point when the time and money are right. Please don't destroy the community. You [the Council] should say there is no intent to build on the community centre rather than seeing it as a nice earner.
P	Changes can be put in place before the plan is adopted. For the preservation of the area, it should be identified that this site [the community centre] is not a good place for housing.
O	As a Council Officer, it is not for me to get into the politics. I am grateful that you've found out and it is regrettable you weren't aware previously. It is not possible for this conservation plan to remove the allocation of a site. However, please reinforce your feelings by providing comments.
P	32 homes on the site can't be sustained. There will be traffic and other impacts. Please take the site out.
O	The allocation in the Site Specific Policies document would still need to be subject to a planning application where these matters would be considered.
M	I am a resident of Shephall Green and on the Council's Executive. I will not let this site go. Only if the community centre is replaced and improved on site, not anywhere else.
P	There were 32,000 visitors to the centre last year.
P	Housing has been proposed on this site since 1991. Was involved in past schemes which, for whatever reasons, were not implemented.

Comments	
P	Can anyone propose to put an application on any piece of land?
O	Anyone can submit a planning application on any piece of land.
P	The pioneers of the New Town would be turning in their grave. The community centre has been here for fifty years or more. Play schemes and the museums have already been cut. Community centres will be next. Will Councillors oppose it? I request a show of hands for those opposed to the development of this site? [There was a show of hands. There was almost unanimous opposition]
M	I have not been kept informed of plans. I will not let this building be destroyed. It has been good for the last 50 years. It is good for the next 50 years.
M	The overwhelming feeling amongst the Councillors in this room is that this facility should be replaced in any scheme. Viable facilities will be retained. Your message is loud and clear. You have done an excellent job to raise awareness and get people to tonight's meeting. I will make sure I get your message in front of others. It is good to see that so many people care about their local community.
P	Are the consultations publicised in the public notice section of the paper? They are too small.
O	Yes. Your point is appreciated but this is a legal requirement. We have also displayed posters within all of the conservation areas where we are consulting.
P	I do not think the church has been notified. This is bad communication. Why is the meeting being held on week five of a six-week consultation? Why now in week 2?
O	We felt it was best to allow time for people to read and digest the consultation document. This meeting was originally scheduled for last week [week 4]. It was moved to allow for the high level of public interest and a local venue. This was the earliest available date. The church was written to.
P	Why can't we extend the consultation period?
O	Government legislation outlines that the consultation should be up to six weeks.
P	An opportunity was missed to improve parking and conservation issues on the Green when the scout hut was disposed of. This was supposed to provide parking for Greenside School. Is money the driving force?
P	The new homes have been detrimental. They have destroyed kerbs and areas of the green. Despite letters asking them to make good the damage, there has been no action.
M	The nature of Shephall Green is more diverse than, for example, the Cotswolds where it is clear which materials should be used to tie in. However, the conservation area requirements still stand.
O	Expert, impartial advice is sought on applications.
P	I think the buildings are sympathetic. It is their construction that caused the damage
O	We will investigate this.
M	The scout hut was part of a Stevenage-wide redistribution of facilities.
M	There was an understanding that the scout hut site would be purchased by Hertfordshire County Council to provide parking. This didn't happen. When the Shephall Green School site was redeveloped, it was argued that the houses should have been nearer the dual carriageway [Broadhall Way] and provided rear access to the properties on Shephall Green. When there were plans to redevelop Heathcote, access would have been provided from Broadhall Way and allowed rear access to Greenside School. Members have monitored parking on the Green and will continue to do so in the future. I am on the management committee for the centre and will support what has been said.
P	How will access to Barnwell / Heathcote / Greenside be managed during construction?
M	This will be a County Council application.

Comments	
M	Proposals for the Heathcote site did include access from the A602. The Health authority pulled out meaning access from Broadhall Way was not necessary. Now the site will be used for education. Collenswood, Heathcote and Shephall Green Schools were all good. Now there is only one school. The Valley School playing fields have been sold. It is an uphill struggle at County Hall.
M	We will be consulted by the County Council as part of any application and we will make sure we raise these issues.
P	We have to park on the Green. All spaces are taken by Greenside School. It stops people from visiting. More should be done to help residents.
P	Agree this is still a problem. There is a fire safety and access issue.
M	We will take this issue away. We are not allocated money to solve parking problems. Wherever we have tried to introduce residential parking permits there has been strong opposition as residents have to pay. I am not sure we can stop parking to allow disabled children to get to school.
P	If access to the school is so important, the scout hut site should have been used for parking.
P	The vehicles dropping children at the school can be parked outside for 45 minutes with the children stuck on board.
M	The County Council said they did not need the [scout hut] site for parking.
P	What were the timings of the sale and disposal of the site?
M	I have picked up the point of children in buses waiting for 45 minutes and agree this is wrong. I will look into the timings of the disposals.
P	Can Greenside parking be put into the Heathcote redevelopment?
M	I will be pushing for that.
M	We should be aware this [development at Heathcote] is a £4.5m project. It will not get you far. The cost of a new school is £15-18m. This gives an idea of the amount of money being spent.
P	There are parking issues on Hydean Way too with ambulances for Greenside waiting here as well.
M	I was not aware of this. I will do a survey one morning.
P	I do want to say something positive. My dealings with the planning officers at the Council have always been positive and efficient.
P	The posts around the Green have been a good idea but where is the emergency access. Is a removable barrier / post(s) needed?
P	There is no means of getting on to the Green.
P	Could you get access to the rear of properties from the remaining land adjacent to [the former] Shephall Green School?
M	Your local County Councillor will look at this issue when applications come in. Under the Building Schools for the Future programme we would have looked for Greenside to go to a more opportune position. This is not going to happen at present. Residential parking permits would cost £300-400 per year. I don't think we could override priority for school access.
P	It is school employees that park on the road.
P	The car parking facilities within the school grounds are not being used.
M	These matters will all be looked at. I know parking is an issue.

Comments	
P	Why aren't the hedgerows protected when trees are? Some people have removed hedgerows and replaced them with gates.
O	We can't stop hedgerows being removed if this happens in isolation from other works. It is only if they are being replaced by something that needs permission, such as a fence. This is Government legislation. I agree it would be good to be able to control this.
P	What about skylights or satellite dishes?
O	Some works are permitted development. We can only control things if an application is required whether we like it or not.
M	Replacement doors are another good example of something we can't control. Approach the Development Management team if you have a query either about your own home or someone else's.
P	What about signage?
O	Again there is a difference between deemed consent and express consents. Where signs are of a certain size or include illumination we have more control.
P	What are the rules around trees? We have an issue with subsidence.
O	Trees are normally protected by conservation area rules. Work can be done if trees are dead, dying or dangerous. We do not TPO our own trees as we are considered to be the responsible authority. If there is a subsidence issue attributed to a tree on Council owned land you would need to take that up with the Council (Parks and Amenities section) just like you would with a private individual.
M	There are posts missing around the cedar tree outside 31 Shephall Green. People are parking cars here and churning up the ground.
M	We will pass that to the relevant team at the Council.

As a result of this public meeting, the following actions were taken forward:

Table 9 Actions as a result of the meeting

Officers to investigate whether surveyors have been accessing the community centre grounds.
Damage to kerbs / the Green from construction of new homes at former scout hut site. Ascertain whether letters have been sent and if further action required.
Ensure issues surrounding access to and parking at Greenside School are fully considered when we are consulted on any relevant Hertfordshire County Council applications.
Officers to investigate need for further posts around cedar tree at 31 Shephall Green and / or any removable posts or barriers to allow emergency access if road is blocked by parked vehicles.

A decorative graphic consisting of several thick, black, wavy lines that sweep across the page from left to right, positioned above the main title.

Meeting Minutes - St Nicholas and Symonds Green

Conservation Area Management Plans Statement of Consultation

Meeting Minutes - St Nicholas and Symonds Green

Table 10 Public meeting minutes - Tuesday 21 February 2012⁽¹³⁾

Comments						
	P	Comment from Member of Public	M	Comment from Council Member	O	Comment from Council Officer
M						Were parts of Great Ashby taken out of the St Nicholas Conservation Area after they were developed?
O						Some small parts of St Albans Drive were formerly within the conservation area. The same is true of part of the Chancellors Road development. This was taken out of the conservation area in 2007.
M						<p>The conservation area is an attractive part of the Symonds Green ward. I moved to Symonds Green in 1975 prior to the development of Blakeney Road which resulted in the loss of part of the common. There is also an important link across the back [west] of the conservation area from Symonds Green to Fishers Green.</p> <p>I have two questions. Firstly, I receive comments relating to car parking at the northern end of Symonds Green Lane and that this should be kept clear as a footpath or lane to Clovelly Way. Does the document comment on this issue?</p> <p>The second question is in relation to the pond. This is a fundamental part of the characteristic of the area. It has been cleared out in the past but this need to be done again. A "Friends of..."-style organisation is needed to assist with hands on work.</p>
O						The characteristics of the lane are mentioned but this particular issue can be brought out more in the report. The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) recognises the importance of the pond. The Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) are seeking to complete the relevant activities of the BAP.
M						The last BAP meeting was seeking clarification on the connection between the two ponds and whether they perform any engineering role in relation to run-off from the A1(M). The BAP recognises that the ponds are very important both visually and for wildlife. Julia Knight [Green Spaces Policy & Development Manager] is looking to initiate "Friends of..." groups in relevant areas including Symonds Green.
M						Does the document highlight the Green Link [between Symonds Green and Fishers Green]? This should be protected.
O						The Green Link is protected by existing District Plan policies and I would imagine this will be carried through into the new plan. We will look at mentioning this in the document.
M						This area is very picturesque. It is disappointing there is no budget for the ponds. Individual Councillor's locality budgets would not be able to sustain the level of input that is required. There must be national or European pockets of funding. Are these being explored?
M						In the past the lack of Conservation Area Management Plans has hindered access to heritage funding. Their adoption will increase our credibility. "Friends of..." groups may have access to different funds than the Council is able to access. This needs to be explored. We also need to take into account long-term changes such as water levels. It isn't necessarily possible to restore everything to how it was 30 years ago. In these matters, the partnership with the HMWT is very important.
M						With regards to alterations to buildings, is there any recourse for people that have changed windows in properties in the conservation areas?
O						Doors and windows can be changed without permissions. These documents will help us as previously we had no powers. They will allow us to encourage appropriate replacements and provide guidance to maintain the conservation area.

13 Comments made regarding the content of the Management Plan are further recorded in Appendix 1.

Comments	
M	I have always found this element of the conservation area legislation baffling.
P	There is a perceived issue relating to traffic speed on Symonds Green Lane ~ with vehicles to and from the pub [Crooked Billet]. Are there means of slowing traffic without resorting to speed humps? This would be much appreciated.
O	We can certainly pass your comments to our engineering team to approach the County Council.
M	A survey will determine whether there is a problem. Either horizontal or vertical physical works or a localised purge on speeding by the police can provide a solution.
P	Noise from the A1(M) is an issue. Can the existing concrete acoustic screen be improved?
O	Again we can ask our engineers to investigate.
M	We can't use noise within a conservation area as a means to do this. The noise would have to be above generally acceptable levels.
M	The local ward councillors will be happy to take this up with the Highways Agency. Also the issue of speeding. There was a recent issue in Clovelly Way where the police attended. This provides a short-term fix when word gets around.
M	Acoustic fences are effective but expensive.
M	The acoustic fences at Whitney Wood were locally funded through the JMP [Hertfordshire Highways Joint Member Panel]. It might be possible to provide a locally funded solution.
M	It is a long stretch from Todds Green to Symonds Green. It is likely to be expensive.
P	What steps will be taken to reverse the precedent of destroying tree-lined frontages along Rectory Lane?
O	The Management Plans can't reverse what has already been done.

As a result of this public meeting, the following actions were taken forward:

Table 11 Actions as a result of the meeting

Officers to investigate potential speeding issue on Symonds Green Lane.
Officers to investigate noise levels from A1(M) at Symonds Green.

