



Elstree and Borehamwood Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group Meeting

Wednesday 26 April 2023

Minutes

Attendees

Cllr Clive Butchins
Ilana Gershlick
Norman Shuker
Andrew Grady
Andrew Lewis
Ann Goddard
Dan Smith
Suzanne Alford
Ben Girling
Alison Eardley (Consultant)

1. Welcome and matters arising

The group welcomed Ben to the group, who is new to the group.

IG has not been receiving all the emails. All to post a quick note on the Whatsapp when sending an email, just so everyone knows to expect one.

CB noted that he wishes to stand down as Chair of the group. Decided that we would consider a new Chair at the next meeting. In the absence of anyone coming forward, this may need to be a 'rolling' chair.

Action 1: AE to call to talk through the NDP process and invite to the dropbox and WhatsApp.

2. Feedback from the Community, Youth and Business Surveys

AE talked through the surveys to date, the high level summaries of which are saved in the dropbox.

- Residents Survey – 130 responses
- Youth Survey – 109 responses
- Business – 7 responses

In terms of engaging more widely we agreed that SA would lead in terms of posting on Facebook and keeping the website updated.

Action 2: AE to liaise with SA on content for FB and AE to update website.

Action 3: AE to summarise the findings and slot into the relevant sections of the skeleton Plan

3. Proposed draft vision and objectives for Elstree and Borehamwood

AE has produced a skeleton framework for the emerging plan, which is saved in the drop box.

Proposed objectives:

3.1. The five objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

Objective 1: Protecting and enhancing our rural setting within the Green Belt:

- Protect, preserve and enhance existing green space and provide new ones too.
- Support initiatives to protect and enhance wildlife, biodiversity and habitat provision.
- Maintain and enhance the connectivity of wildlife corridors.
- Maximising opportunities for the reservoir.

Objective 2: Celebrating our unique heritage

- Local heritage assets are identified and conserved for future generations.
- Making the most of our links to the television and film industry.
- Telling the story of our area – how it has evolved and the communities who have settled here.
- Reinforcing our identity and sense of place.

Objective 2: Providing homes to meet the needs of the local community:

- Supporting the provision of affordable homes.
- Influencing new housing that caters for occupants throughout their different stages of life.
- Designing quality neighbourhoods that enable exemplary sustainable design.
- Reducing
- Directing new housing to the most sustainable parts of the area, near to local facilities.

Objective 3: Enabling a thriving economy

- Revitalising the town centre as a safe, friendly and accessible destination offering a mix of retail, housing, local services and entertainment, including into the evening.
- Supporting the television and film industry with greater involvement in the local community and provision of facilities.
- Safeguarding existing employers, including the medical/pharma industries.
- Providing a supportive environment for those working from home.

Objective 4: A walkable and cyclable neighbourhood (a 20-minute town?):

- Encourage walking and cycling, particularly for local journeys.
- Enhancing the network of walking and cycling routes that link key services to housing and ensuring that new developments connect to this.
- Supporting initiatives to tackle congestion.

Objective 5: Celebrating and supporting our communities

- Providing a range of facilities, services and recreational activities to meet the needs of different ages, cultures and interests across the area.
- Supporting our football club.
- Encouraging a friendly and involved community.

For the vision, AE will work on this. Agree to have one overarching vision for the area, but identifying the individual 'settlements' within that (ie. Borehamwood, Elstree and Elstree Village), all of which share facilities and services, but each having their own distinctive characteristics.

Action 4: All to comment on the draft objectives

Action 5: AE to consider an overarching vision to bring to the next meeting

4. Towards a skeleton draft neighbourhood plan for the area – discussion of topic areas, potential policy areas and evidence gathering tasks

AE shared the draft document, which is saved in the dropbox (Folder: Draft Document). Key topic areas, potential policies and leads for each were discussed:

Introduction: This will provide the context for the document, explaining what it is and its purpose. This is largely complete.

The Planning Policy Context: This will set out where the document sits in the planning hierarchy, in relation to the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan for the borough. It will include detail of the Local Plan and how this relates to the neighbourhood area as well as information about the emerging local plan.

Community engagement: This section will provide a brief overview of the engagement and consultation that has taken place to develop the document. The fuller detail of this will come later, in the so-called Consultation Statement, that will be prepared at a later stage in the process.

Sustainability of the Neighbourhood Plan: We may wish to include information about climate change and sustainability. In addition, before we go out to the formal consultation at Regulation 14 (with the draft Plan), we need to have the plan 'screened' by Hertsmere Borough Council to ascertain whether the policies – either individually or collectively – are likely to have a negative impact on the environment.

The screening will require us to send all policies to HBC and they will provide their thoughts on the likely impacts. This will then be shared with the three statutory bodies responsible for this area - Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency – who will consider HBC's conclusions.

They will either recommend that there are unlikely to be significant impacts, in which case no more work is required, or they will suggest that significant impacts are likely and recommend that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is prepared to support the emerging Plan. The general rule of thumb is that a plan that is not allocating sites is unlikely to require an SEA, but the screening will provide the full detail.

We won't be able to go to a screening until we are a bit further along with the policy development.

About Elstree and Borehamwood: This section provides an overview of the area, including historic, geography, people, facilities etc. It is best prepared by someone local to the area.

Action 6: Clive B to lead on this section and to seek support from David Armitage

Opportunities and challenges facing the area: This sets out the key areas that we are seeking to address through the Plan. This is drafted, but could be checked and may need amending.

A vision for Elstree and Borehamwood: This section will include the vision and objectives for the document.

Spatial strategy: This first chapter will set out a spatial strategy for the plan area, stating where development is appropriate and where it is not. It will include one policy (Policy EB1: Location of development) and will seek to safeguard green belt and direct development to the most sustainable locations i.e. within the settlement boundaries. **CB** noted the need to restrict garden grabbing, which can be included here.

Action 7: AE to lead on this section

Housing: This section will largely be underpinned by the Local Housing Need Assessment findings and information gained from the community. It will include one policy (Policy EB2: Meeting local housing needs) setting out the type, mix, and size of housing to be prioritised locally to meet local housing needs. It will also include guidance on affordability.

Action 8: AE to lead on this section. Evidence is largely in place.

Character, heritage, and design: This chapter will include three policies:

Policy EB3: Character and Design of development: To be underpinned by the Design Guidance that Jasper is working on. It will set out expectations for new development in terms of how they designed and how they are contributing to the overall look and feel of the areas in which it is located.

Action 9: ALL to consider the design guide once Jasper has prepared it.

Policy EB4: Energy efficiency and design: This is a policy that seeks to ensure that development is built to the highest standards in terms of sustainability and energy efficiency.

Action 9: Clive B to lead on this section. Evidence is largely in place.

Policy EB5: Conserving heritage assets: We have an opportunity to identify heritage assets (buildings, structures etc.) that are not nationally listed but which are important locally. Horse steps mentioned, The Old Plough. Could also include detail on a heritage centre, links to the film and television industry.

Action 10: Clive and Alison to lead on this section and to speak to David Armitage and Paul Welsh to understand their priorities when it comes to heritage, and to suggest any potential assets.

Employment in Elstree and Borehamwood: This section will contain policies seeking to safeguard existing employment and also provide the environment to support new opportunities including home working.

Depending on what is required, possible policies could include:

Policy EB6: Safeguarding existing major employment and supporting sustainable expansion

Policy EB7: A thriving town centre destination

Policy EB8: Supporting start-ups, flexible work spaces and homeworking

Action 10: Clive and Alison to lead on this section – Need to call some of the larger businesses/ employers to talk through their needs in the future; speak to local agents to understand whether any particular type of premises are in demand or in short supply/over supply; speak to the studios. Also to speak to the Clerk about benchmarking – AE will supply the template in any case and we can collect the useful information. Lesley Crisp at the borough council also mentioned as a useful contact here.

Environment and green space: This section will include policies related to the natural environment and likely to include:

Policy EB9: Green and blue infrastructure and delivering biodiversity net gain - Rafi (volunteer) might be able to assist us with this one as his company specialise in monitoring green infrastructure.

Policy EB10: Local Green Spaces – This will be a policy designating particular areas as ‘local green space’, which is reserved for smaller spaces that are ‘demonstrably special to the community. This might be for one or more of the following reasons: recreational use, historic significance, biodiversity / wildlife value, beauty and/or tranquillity. We need to identify the spaces, map them, photograph them and justify them against the criteria (close to the community served, demonstrably special and small in size). Local Green Spaces are protected to the level of Green Belt from inappropriate development.

Policy EB11: Locally significant views: We can, if we wish, identify views in the area that we consider to be special and which should be safeguarded from development (or at least if development happens, it should incorporate the view into the overall design).

Views noted so far include northwards from the top of Woodcock Hill, which affords views to St Albans cathedral.

Action 11: Ilana and Alison (with Rafi?) to lead on this section

Policy EB12: Aldenham Country Park: A policy to underpin the long term ambitions for the park and reservoir. Agreed to wait for the outcomes of the two planning applications before progressing further.

Action 12: Suzanne, Clive and Alison to lead on this section

Getting Around: We have limited influence over strategic transport issues – such as roads – and we can’t cover issues like enforcement or speed limits etc. We can however include policies to support

active travel (walking, cycling, riding) and ensuring that any new development is well-connected to the active travel network. There might be links with the work of Herts CC too, for instance contributing to the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Policy EB13: Improving walking and cycling opportunities Could map out the existing 'movement route' network and identify the key routes that link homes to local facilities. These should be the ones to prioritise in terms of making sure they are accessible, pleasant, greened, safe. Then identify areas where better connections could be made, or general improvements.

The cycle route from Holiday Inn to South Mimms was mentioned as being particularly challenging for cyclists (fly tipping, safety, unpleasant).

Action 13: Andrew Lewis (?) and Alison to lead on this section. Need to identify any local walking/cycling groups

Community facilities: This chapter would include policies related to improving local facilities, which might include Policy EB14: Providing a range of community facilities and Policy EB15: Spaces and activities for children and teenagers. We could include a policy supporting the safeguarding from change of use of local pubs.

Action 14: Pat Strack (?) and Alison to lead on this section.

Other Policy Areas: depending on the outcome of the survey, there may be other areas too that we wish to include.

5. Preparation for local event (s) in June to share progress and gain community feedback

Action 15: Alison E to populate the skeleton document with the survey findings and to contact individuals about their topic areas.

We agreed that an event/events in June/ July would provide a useful opportunity to share what we have done so far, including feedback from the survey and other engagement activities, the draft vision and objectives and the potential policies to deliver these.

Action 16: Clive to contact Dan Salter re: having an area at the Civic Festival and to approach 96 Shenley for space there.

6. Next steps and AOB

Next meeting (via Zoom): Tuesday 16th May 7pm

Suggestion to invite representatives from the Youth Council to attend a future meeting. Action 17: AE to speak to the Youth Council co-ordinator.