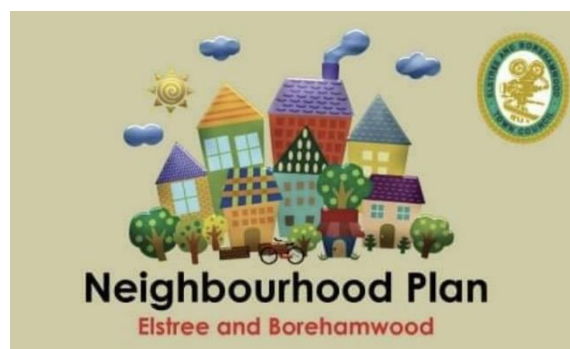


Elstree and Borehamwood Neighbourhood Plan

Launch event 5th March 2022



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Introduction

Elstree and Borehamwood Town Council is supporting the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for the area, which covers the whole parish. A neighbourhood plan is a document that sets out planning policies, which will be used to determine planning applications within the area and also how land is used.

Creating a Neighbourhood Plan is an interesting activity as it is one way to have a real say in how an area is planned and developed. It is vital that the local community are as involved as possible as ultimately the document will help to shape what Elstree and Borehamwood are like in the future.

Neighbourhood Plans can cover a variety of topics and issues, ranging from protecting green spaces and influencing the type and design of housing that is built, to conserving local heritage and widening opportunities for walking and cycling.

To officially launch the project, the Town Council hosted a display in March, explaining what neighbourhood planning is and how the area might benefit from one.

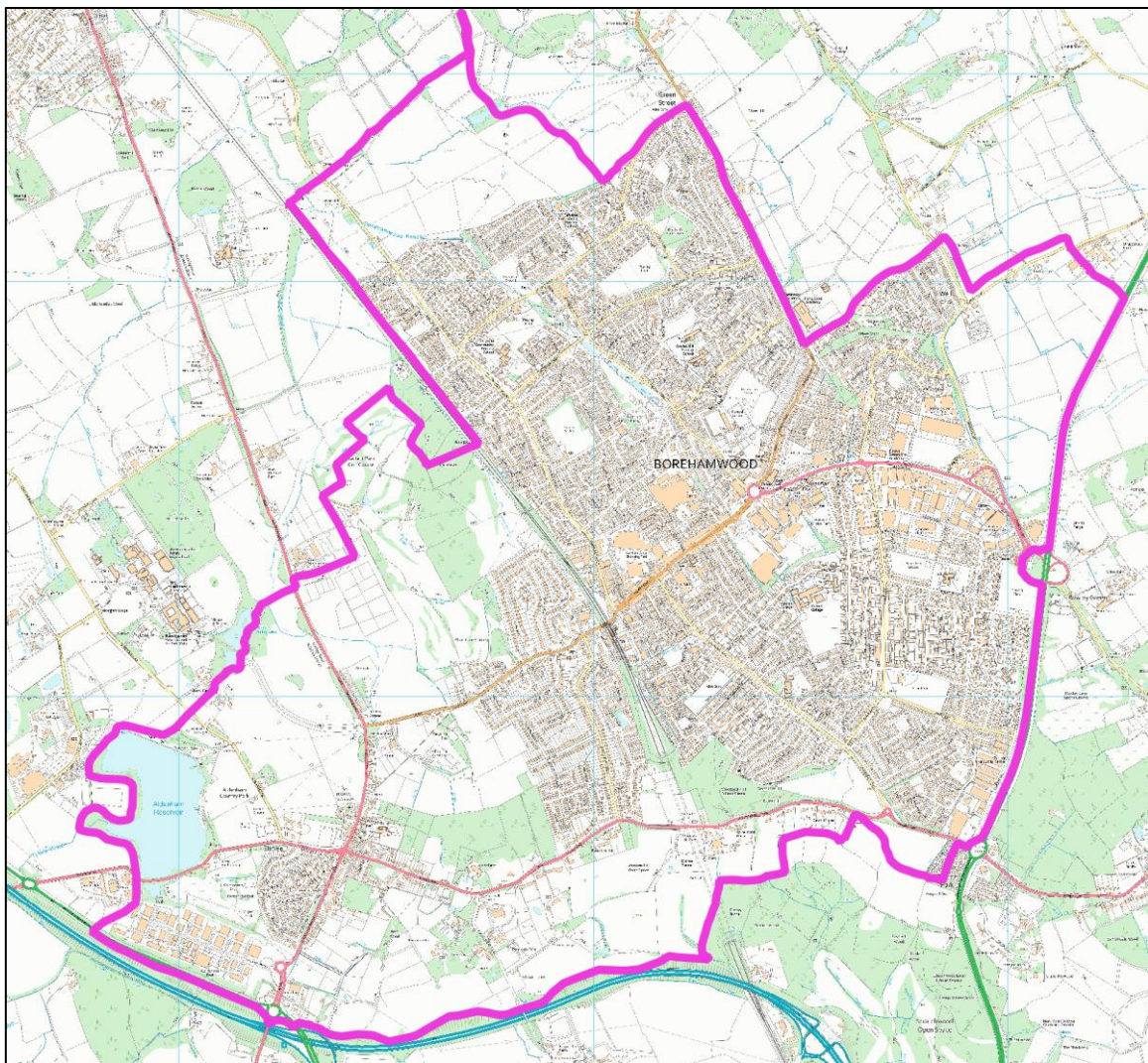
The first step in the process will be to assemble a Steering Group and lots of people put their name forward at the event. Others may also come on board as the project progresses.

An initial task for the Steering Group will be to work out how best to engage the community on this important piece of work. This will help us to understand what is important to local people and what challenges are faced, that we might address through the neighbourhood plan.

Once we have an overarching vision and objectives for the area, we can begin to consider how to deliver it through planning policies and other projects.

This document provides an overview of the event in March with a summary of comments received. It is followed by some detail on the next steps and some general questions about neighbourhood planning. All the information from the event will be available to view on part of the Town Council website dedicated to the neighbourhood plan.

If you have further questions about the Elstree and Borehamwood Neighbourhood Plan, please contact Alison Eardley: ajeardley@btinternet.com or call 07930 325965. Alison is the independent planning consultant who is supporting the process.



Map showing the neighbourhood area

About the event

An event to launch the start of the Elstree and Borehamwood Neighbourhood Plan took place on Saturday 5th March 2022. The event marked the beginning of the project and was an initial opportunity for local people to come along and find out about neighbourhood planning. There will be plenty more opportunities to learn about the plan and to get involved as the project takes shape.

Visitors were invited to place a dot on the map of the neighbourhood area, showing where they live. There was a good geographic spread of attendees for this first event.



A series of display boards presented information about neighbourhood planning. Copies of these can be found later in this report.



A vision for the area

An important part of the project will be establishing a vision for how we want the area to look and feel in 10 to 20 years. This will help us to decide how we might achieve that.



Common issues raised in other areas

Themes raised:

- Protect the Greenbelt.
- We need a Town Manager to co-ordinate projects related to the town, including road works, general ward issues etc.
- Theatre – is the location of the current venue working for the wider community user groups? Should it be a separate venue or move location?
- We need to engage with everyone – visit schools, talk to youth groups – get the message out to the younger generation in particular, as they will be most affected by any plans.
- Engage with young people and their families – colleges, universities, schools.
- The area needs an ‘identity’.
- Can we make a video of the area and the opportunity presented by the neighbourhood plan?
- Protect green spaces.
- Plant more trees.
- We need a greater variety of shops.
- More activities for teenagers. More/improved children’s playgrounds.
- The roads are busy – keep them less congested as new buildings are added. Especially around housing areas.
- Stop overcrowding of parking spaces.
- There are many communities within the area – need to involve each of them.
- Want to avoid Borehamwood feeling like another London suburb.
- Any new housing should be of a high quality for warmth and noise reduction.
- More affordable housing needed.
- Less cramped housing estates.

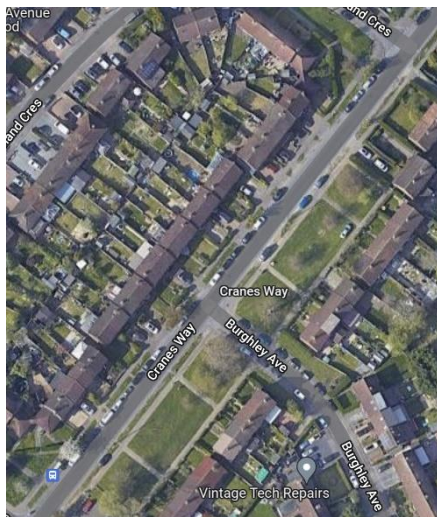
As we talk to more individuals and groups around the area, the Steering Group will need to consider the key themes emerging in order to propose a draft vision for the area. This will need to be shared back to the community to gauge support and develop it into a shared vision. From this, a set of objectives can be formed, which in turn can be delivered by planning policies or associated projects.

The Natural Environment

Those attending were asked about the natural environment including which spaces are important to safeguard and how the environment might be improved.

Themes raised:

- We need to protect the Green Belt.
- Try to stop littering.
- We need to protect our green spaces and Green Belt from development.
- Aldenham Reservoir should be maintained as a community asset.
- All new builds should have solar panels (or other renewable energy sources) and electric vehicle charging points.
- The village green is under threat.
- Our local parks should be kept in good order including improving playground equipment and wildlife friendly areas.
- No building on the Green Belt (raised many times).
- Brownfield sites should be prioritised for development – there are lots of potential sites locally including unused/vacant offices – is Brownfield Register up to date?
- Support growing local food. Also composting - including at a larger scale.
- Expand the recycling capability – both in terms of the range of items that can be collected and the locations to collect them from.
- Manage sympathetically our wilder open spaces, for instance Red Road Park.
- There are numerous verges that provide a habitat for a range of flora and fauna – collectively these should form part of the wider green network of ‘spaces’ and ‘wildlife corridors’. For example, the area along Stangate Crescent and the A1; and the greenery along Cranes Way.
- I am deeply concerned that the Media Quarter could return. This is an important area of green belt that keeps the hamlet of Well End separate and characterful.



Examples of spaces that form part of the wider green space network, providing and connecting habitats.

There have been sightings of muntjac deer and foxes along Stangate Crescent.

Getting Around

The strategic route network and projects relating to it largely fall outside the scope of the neighbourhood plan as they are dealt with by the Transport Authority (either Hertfordshire County Council or National Highways). Despite this, we can consider how to encourage more walking and cycling, which in turn may help to reduce congestion and air pollution, while supporting healthy lifestyles. Attendees were asked for suggestions as to how walking and cycling opportunities might be improved.



Themes raised:

- We need to improve the quality of the public rights of way network. Many of the paths are not very well maintained and left as wild tracks for 7+ months of the year.
- The rights of way network is an important recreational amenity, but many paths are in a poor condition and require capital investment to improve surfacing.
- We should have a cheap or free hop on/hop off bus all around the town.
- I have a deep concern about the impact of the proposed 'Hertsmeare Studios' and 'Film College', the hotel and car park on the local area including:
 - Increased & overwhelming traffic on Rowley Lane and Studio Way. There will only be one entrance to the site via Studio Way roundabout.
 - The quiet neighbourhood will be disturbed, with noise and increased parking from outside visitors/ employees.
- As a pedestrian, walkways and buses are important.
- Keep pathways clear for walkers, e.g. Rowley Lane.
- We need to enhance access to open spaces.
- Encourage cycling.
- Improve public transport, especially to interlink the villages.
- I am concerned about the loss of riding stables.
- We should encourage people to walk more, particularly for shorter journeys, e.g. school.
- Could we install CCTV along the walking routes?
- Some housing areas have been built without the infrastructure to support them, causing slow traffic, congestion etc.
- The town's bus shelters are of a 30-year-old design and look very tired. They need replacing with more modern and stylish infrastructure, which enhances the appeal of the bus network.
- On-street parking, which restricts visibility at junctions, is an endemic problem. Neither the highways authority nor the police are tackling this.
- What will the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) enlargement mean for Borehamwood? Concerned it will lead to more cars coming to the area to avoid the charge.
- Street lighting is so poor that you need to carry a torch to go out.

The Town Centre

Many town centres and local centres have struggled during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Neighbourhood Plan us with an opportunity to think about how we could provide spaces that everyone can enjoy and that will attract more people.



Themes raised:

- Lots of resident refer to the Shenley Road are as 'the village'.
- As a three tier (local authority) area, will the neighbourhood plan be able to influence what happens in the town centre?
- I am happy with the town centre on the whole. We have a small area that needs attention.
- Can we make the streets safer? Anti-social behaviour in parts of the town.
- I moved to Borehamwood to get away from London. People here are more friendly and the local businesses and shops are more welcoming.
- Can we explore multiple uses for shops to help keep them more viable?
- Promote arts and crafts.

Community facilities

The area benefits from a range of community facilities. Are there any still required or others that could be improved or expanded?

- Is the theatre in the right place to serve the community?
- If there is to be an increase in housing, then there needs to be increased facilities e.g. GP surgeries.
- The Mops & Brooms public house is a popular community asset, which should not be stuck in the middle of the studios.
- Strangeways Farm (Equestrian Centre) is a historic and significant community asset.
- More high-profile sports events.
- The museum could be developed, enlarged, and improved. More publicity of this facility too.
- Public loos are needed in the park and other locations around the town.
- We need play parks in Ripon Park and Maxwell Park.
- More adventure/ outdoor activity parks for children and teens, such as treetop activities.
- Anti-social behaviour needs tackling in parts of the town.
- We need better access to healthcare, namely GP Surgeries.
- The children's play areas in the parks are unusable in wet weather/winter as they are full of mud. Notably Ripon Way and Kenilworth.



Ideas for additional engagement

It will be very important to engage the community as widely as possible to gather views about what people would like to see happening in Borehamwood. One of the initial tasks for the Steering Group will be to put together a plan for engagement. This will identify target groups to speak to (e.g. older people, children, teenagers, particular geographic areas) and the best ways to speak to them (e.g. social media, local events, visits, newsletters, podcasts etc.).

Some ideas for engagement were put forward at the event:

- Speaking to younger people – school newsletters, school council, meetings, projects
- Engage the Youth Council
- Speak to students
- Work with teenagers to create a video of the area showcasing their ideas – involve the studios in this
- Roadshow to be taken to different parts of the town to engage those living in different areas
- Work with the local housing associations (Clarion Housing mentioned)
- Engage the wealth of local charities, church groups etc.
- Host events in popular public spaces – cafes, the museum
- Create a podcast or get involved in the existing ones
- Make use of social media
- Interactive activities to encourage participation.

Next Steps

We will be contacting those who have requested to get more involved in the project and organise an initial meeting to discuss the project and the key steps and tasks.

This will enable us to develop a project plan and engagement/communications plan. In turn, this will start the process of speaking to the community to understand their views on the town and wider parish, so that we can develop an overarching vision and objectives for Elstree and Borehamwood.

Once we have agreed this with the community, we can start gathering evidence about the main topics in order to think about how planning policies might help us in delivering the shared vision.

General Questions about Neighbourhood Planning

1. What is a neighbourhood plan?

- It is a planning document that communities can put together to set out how they want their area to develop over the next 15 to 20 years or so.
- It contains planning policies to set out how land should be used (by elected councillors and local authority planning officers) and to inform decisions on planning applications within the parish. Once officially 'made' (i.e., adopted), it becomes part of the Development Plan for the Borough (Hertsmere), sitting alongside the Local Plan. It therefore carries significant weight in the planning system.
- Over 1,000 communities across England now have neighbourhood plans, following their introduction in the 2011 Localism Act.

2. Why do we need a neighbourhood plan for Borehamwood and Elstree?

- The plan can give us a much greater say on what happens in the area over the next 15 to 20 years. Without it, planning decisions will be taken based on the Local Plan, which does not necessarily drill down to the level of detail that might be required.
- The Plan will also help us to attract funding to the area. In Hertsmere Borough, those people bringing forward new developments have to pay something called the Community Infrastructure Levy. The amount paid is based on the sort of development that is coming forward (e.g., housing, office space, hotel, etc.).

The levy is intended to fund the provision, improvement, replacement or maintenance of infrastructure required to support development in an area as set out in its local plan. With a 'made' Neighbourhood Plan, the local community would benefit from an uplift in the level of CIL received, from 15% (capped at £100 per existing property) to an uncapped 25% of CIL receipts from neighbourhood area.

3. What sort of issues could the neighbourhood plan include?

- The document is first and foremost a planning policy document. We are not trying to rewrite the Local Plan though, or indeed national policy. But we do need to be in conformity with it. The value of the neighbourhood plan will be to add extra local detail to existing policy, and also to identify gaps in policy that will help to deliver our vision for our area. Typically, a neighbourhood plan might explore:
 - Housing – some plans allocate sites for housing. Others, where new housing is not required (e.g., because there are already adequate homes being delivered by way of the Local Plan) focus on the sorts of homes required locally. Policies might cover the tenure (rent/private ownership) of homes, affordability issues, density of new development, and the size of homes.
 - Character and Design – many communities prepare Design Guides for their area, which establish criteria against which new developments should be considered. This might include

identifying the look and feel of specific parts of the parish, to ensure that new development is in-keeping with this.

- Local Heritage – some heritage assets in the area are protected by way of being nationally listed, or within a conservation area. There may be other assets, however, which are considered to be important from a historical perspective locally, but which are not listed. We have an opportunity to use the plan to identify these as ‘non-designated heritage’ assets, offering them an additional layer of protection.
- The environment – For instance, we can identify and map out green infrastructure in the parish. These are spaces that provide habitats and corridors for wildlife to move around. There may be areas we can identify as ‘opportunity areas for biodiversity’. We can also protect special green spaces in the community from inappropriate development.
- Community facilities – we can identify where additional/expanded facilities might be supported and provide criteria for the those.
- Economic issues – this might include promoting tourism, homeworking, specific sectors, the town and village centres.
- Getting around the area – promoting ‘active’ travel, by improving walking and cycling opportunities for instance.

It is important to note that our influence is over planning issues. Non-planning issues (albeit related) which fall to other organisations can be considered, but our influence is less. For instance, health provision, education, and strategic transport issues.

4. How does it differ from the Hertsmere Local Plan?

- The Neighbourhood Plan is more locally focussed than the Local Plan, which applies to the borough as a whole. Our policies must conform to the adopted Local Plan (and national) policies but can be used to add additional local detail.
- A new Local Plan is being developed for Hertsmere and we will need to keep a close eye on what that says and how it impacts our area.

5. Can we use the plan to stop further housing development in our parish?

- Neighbourhood planning is not about stopping development, rather shaping it. If housing is allocated, for instance, with the emerging Borough-wide Local Plan, the neighbourhood could not be used to stop that.

6. Who is responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan?

- The Town Council is the official lead body; however, it is vital that the plan is prepared by the community as a whole. One of the purposes of this event is to encourage people to volunteer to take part in the process. We will be setting up a Steering Group to oversee the process and also Working Groups to explore particular topics.

7. What is involved in preparing the plan?

- The main steps are:
 - Developing a vision for our area
 - Researching how best to deliver that vision, including talking to the community and others to get their input
 - Developing planning policies that will deliver the vision
 - Consulting on the draft Plan with the community
 - Amending the Plan based on feedback received
 - Submitting the Plan to Hertsmere to conduct a further consultation
 - Having the Plan examined independently, to ensure that it is fit for purpose
 - Holding a public referendum on the Plan with the community, to determine if there is support for the Plan to be made.

8. How long will it take to write the plan?

- Generally speaking, a Plan might take 18 months to 2 years to complete.

9. What area does our neighbourhood plan cover?

- The Plan applies to the whole of the parish, including the settlements of Borehamwood and Elstree and the rural areas surrounding this.

10. How much will it cost to develop the neighbourhood plan?

- The cost of preparing a plan varies widely depending on the size of the population, the complexity of the plan and any additional technical studies that might be required. A plan for this area may cost in the region of £20-25k. This includes support being provided by independent planning consultants. Much of this cost can be covered using government neighbourhood plan grants and technical support.

Displays from the event

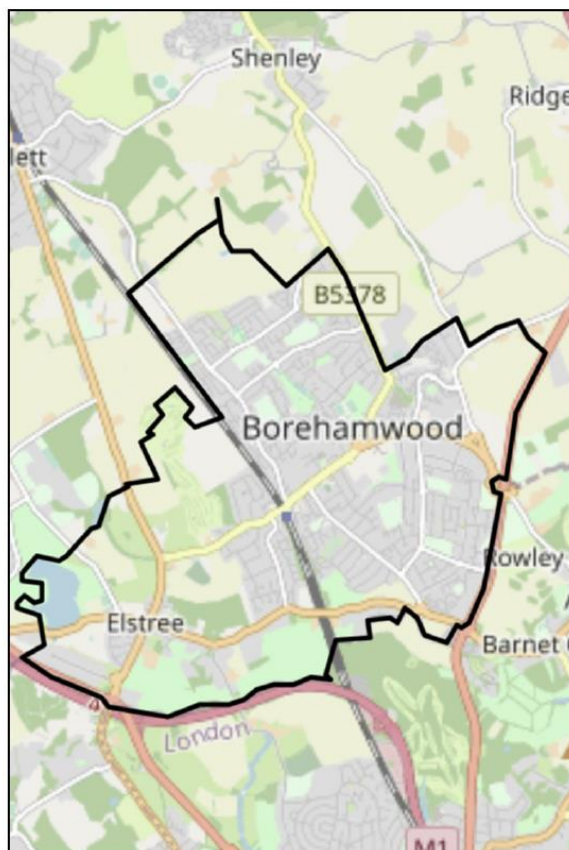
What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

Elstree and Borehamwood Town Council have decided to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish

How are planning decisions taken?

At the moment, decisions about how land is used in the parish, or how planning applications are decided, are guided by the National Planning Policy Framework and the planning policies contained in the Hertsmere Core Strategy.

In 2011, the government published the Localism Act, which gives communities an opportunity to get more involved in planning at the very local level.



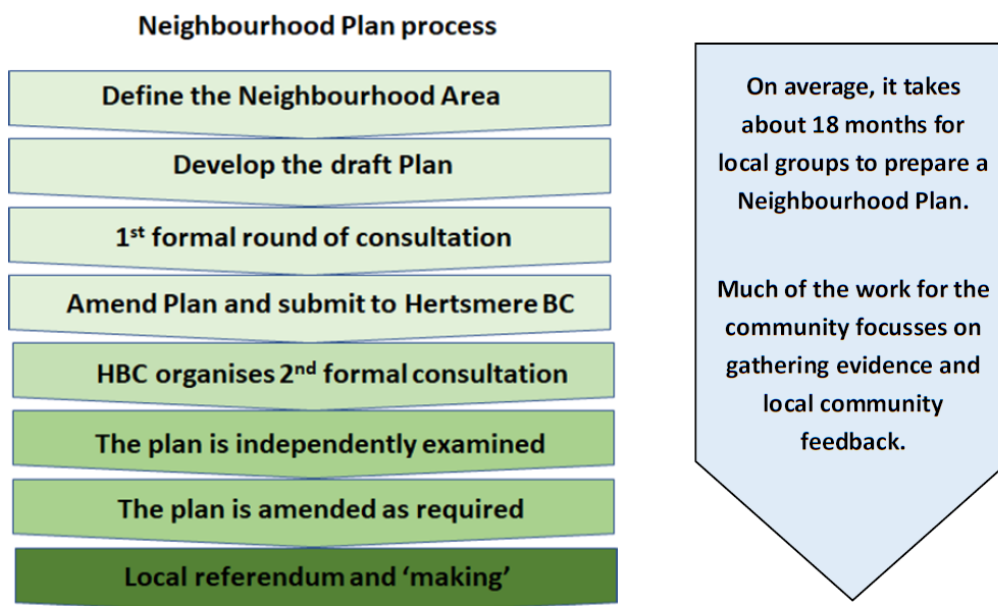
Your opportunity to shape the future of the area

The Neighbourhood Plan will be developed by the community and will relate to the whole parish. It will:

- establish a vision and objectives for the area
- set out how land should be used
- provide additional local detail to help determine the outcome of planning applications

What are the steps involved in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan?

The Neighbourhood Plan is an important document and will be used to help determine planning decisions in the parish of Elstree and Borehamwood. Therefore, the process to develop the Plan is a rigorous one:



Once the Plan has been prepared, there will be two formal rounds of consultation, followed by an independent examination. If this is successful, there will be a local referendum and everyone who is registered to vote will have the opportunity to do so. A simple majority is required to enable the Plan to be 'made'.

Who will pay for the Neighbourhood Plan to be prepared?

The Town Council can apply for government grants to cover most of the activities. There are also some parish monies set aside. Hertsmere Borough Council organises the examination and referendum.

Would you like to volunteer to get involved?

Although the Town Council is the formal lead for the project, it is vital that the project is led by the community.

There are lots of ways to get involved and many different skills are needed:

- ✓ Are you good at chairing meetings?
- ✓ Do you have an interest in improving the local area?
- ✓ Are you a keen photographer?
- ✓ Do you walk or cycle locally?
- ✓ Are you a good note taker?
- ✓ Do you have social media skills?
- ✓ Do you have a specialist skill or knowledge about any of the topic areas?
- ✓ Are you good at organising?

If you would like to be part of the team working on the Elstree and Borehamwood Neighbourhood Plan, please let us know by signing up for further information at the entrance desk.



A Vision for the area

An important part of the project will be establishing a vision for how we want the area to look and feel in 10 to 20 years. This will help us to decide how we might achieve that.

Here are some examples of the issues that people from other communities felt were important when preparing their own neighbourhood plans.



- How would you like Elstree and Borehamwood to look and feel in the future?
- What do you like about the area?
- What could change for the better?

Use the post-it notes to write down your ideas and stick them to the flipchart next to this one.

The Natural Environment -tell us what you think

Our Neighbourhood Plan can include policies that help to protect and enhance the natural environment. Use the post-it notes to tell us what you think about the following issues.

What local green spaces are important to you and why?

Are there particular spaces within the community that you think are particularly special. Perhaps because they provide a haven for wildlife, or they are used for recreation, or maybe they provide a tranquil spot to sit and relax.



Where could we improve the natural environment and how?

Are there areas where improvements would make it easier for animals to move around? Are there particular features of the landscape that you would wish to protect?



Are there views in and around the parish that should be protected?

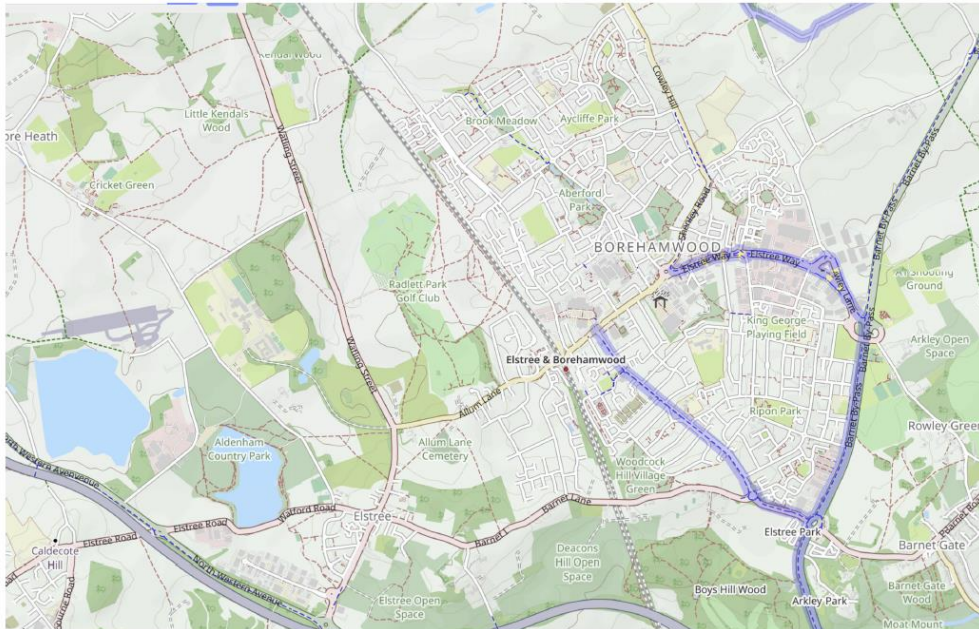
It might be a view across the countryside taking in the landscape. Or it might be a view of a particular building that you think is special. Tell us about the view and why it is important to you.



Share your ideas with us and use the dots to mark them on the map

Getting Around-Tell us what you think

Our Neighbourhood Plan can include policies that encourage more people to walk and cycle locally. Use the post-it notes to tell us what you think about the following issues.



Map Key

- Motorway
- Trunk road
- Primary road
- Secondary road
- Track
- Cycleway
 - National cycleway
 - Regional cycleway
 - Local cycleway
- Footway
- Railway
- Forest
- Common and meadow
- Lake and reservoir
- Bicycle shop
- Bicycle parking

Thinking of walking and cycling in the area, are there any routes that you think could be improved, and how?

Are there paths that could be better linked up and if so, where?

Is car parking a problem - explain why?

Where could we install electric vehicle charging points?

How could public transport, particularly buses, be improved locally?

The town centre—Tell us what you think

Many town centres and local centres have struggled during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Neighbourhood Plan us with an opportunity to think about how we could provide spaces that everyone can enjoy and that will attract more people. Tell us what you think about the following:

How would you like to see Borehamwood Town Centre and Elstree evolve over the next 10 to 20 years?



Use this space and the flipchart to share your ideas:

A large empty rectangular box intended for sharing ideas and using a flipchart.

Community and leisure—Tell us what you think

The area has a lot of facilities already, but we can include support in the Neighbourhood Plan for improvements or new facilities.

Are there any facilities that you think are lacking in the area? Which ones?

Could any facilities be expanded or improved—how?

Is there enough provision for children and if not, what could be improved?

Are teenagers well catered for—if not what could be provided?

