



A brief guide to our Draft Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2026 February 2016 Pre-submission consultation

Hackbridge & Beddington Corner is a neighbourhood going through rapid change: There are plans for 1,000+ new homes; the accompanying increase in population will in turn increase demand for schools, medical services, shopping, waste collection and so on. You might argue that the best way to achieve this would be to knock down anything old and replace it with new, as cheaply as possible. There are neighbourhoods all over Britain, which prove how disastrous that approach can be.

Neighbourhood Planning

It doesn't have to be like that. In 2011 the Localism Act devolved more decision-making powers from central Government to local communities. For example, it gave local residents an opportunity to form a neighbourhood forum, in which they could draw up their vision of how they want their neighbourhood to be developed. The Hackbridge and Beddington Corner Neighbourhood Development Group (H&BC NDG) was one of the first of these groups to be formed and officially recognised, and over the past five years we have been writing our Neighbourhood Plan. It reflects many people's opinions, as we have consulted residents and businesses. Taken as a whole, the document expresses the "look and feel" of Hackbridge and Beddington Corner, as its people want to see it.

We refer to the document as a Draft Neighbourhood Plan, as we are still consulting the community about it.

A summary of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan

As we began to work on our draft plan, we found that there were six main themes which we felt were most important, and our ideas were grouped under these headings.

Housing and the built environment

This has been a rapidly-developing scene as we have worked on the plan. New homes have appeared and much more development is to come, notably on the cleared site of the old Felnex industrial complex. We want to see housing with spaces where neighbours can meet – the opposite of the "ghetto". We also want to see housing on a human scale: we are concerned that, in designating Hackbridge a "district centre", Sutton's planners intend to allow much higher building – up to nine or ten storeys in places, such as alongside Hackbridge Station. Assuming the Neighbourhood Plan is approved in the referendum and adopted by the Borough, H&BC NDG will expect would-be developers to study our 12-point check-list of planning criteria, designed to help make new developments human-friendly and environment-friendly.

While the Plan has been in development, H&BC NDG has observed several building projects and has had the opportunity to meet developers and express to them our aspirations. New developments are often on a scale inappropriate to the surrounding architecture. In some cases designs have been modified, softening their impact on neighbours.

Local economy

Retail businesses have been developing, especially at Hackbridge Corner, and H&BC NDG believes the current business mix could be improved. Why doesn't our neighbourhood have a quality baker and confectioner, for example? There is also a case for a community shop, run at least partly by local volunteers. The giant shadow hanging over all this, of course, is "The Supermarket"! One of the "big five" retailers was about to sign a deal to develop a supermarket opposite Hackbridge Station, but then withdrew. Will one of the discounters move in?

Retailing aside, we are concerned at the erosion of employment premises from many of the mixed developments in the neighbourhood. As these have been redeveloped, the percentage of employment use has been falling.

Environment

Hackbridge should be a sustainable suburb. The way we use our environment affects everyone, from our immediate neighbours to the rest of the world. Our buildings, commerce and transport operations should be designed to give a positive legacy for others.

Unfolding in the near future, the Wandle Valley Regional Park will provide an important green space on our doorstep. Within the neighbourhood, too, are valuable green spaces, which need to be fostered and protected.

Energy, waste and water

Use of energy and water in this neighbourhood, as in all London suburbs, tends to be wasteful and inefficient. We call for planners to insist on better use of renewable energy sources and more imaginative handling of water, such as use of grey water. We call on the local authority to increase the percentage of waste material, which is recycled.

Movement

Getting around the neighbourhood is a risky and often unpleasant experience, in which pedestrians and cyclists can feel threatened by motor vehicles. Shared cycle and footpaths need to be extended. We call on developers and public transport operators to create a transport hub, to make it easier for people to move between bus and train.

The new-look Hackbridge Corner is at best a "mixed bag": it has more of the feel of a local centre than before, and some drivers understand and respect courtesy crossings; but safety needs have not been met to everyone's satisfaction, and hence a traditional zebra crossing has been restored. The "sense of place" which is starting to emerge here needs to be developed further, possibly around the existing community centres at All Saints and BedZED.

Conservation, community and identity

The character of Hackbridge and Beddington Corner as a neighbourhood is expressed mainly by three things: its buildings, especially how they have evolved over the past 300 years or so; its people, and the way the buildings contribute to their life as a community; and the River Wandle, which is a constant presence, but often not noticed. Any development must offer the best for all three of these local characters.

We have lost much of the historic heritage already, and this must stop. It is unnecessary, after all: though the Queen's Head has closed, for example, the style of the building has been respected sensitively in the redevelopment for residential use.

As the population of the neighbourhood grows, services will be needed to support it. Obvious examples include: additional health facilities, such as a drop-in centre; a district library; educational amenities such as a local museum; and a farmers' market.

While the Wandle Valley Regional Park promises much on our doorstep, we also need to see better access to the river within the neighbourhood itself. Improved riverside paths will benefit everyone. This is a very brief introduction to the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. Please look at the document in full at <https://hackbridgendg.com/plan/>

Sutton Council's Local Plan

You may recently have received information about the Local Plan for Sutton. Don't confuse this with the Neighbourhood Plan for Hackbridge and Beddington Corner! The Local Plan, prepared by the Council, sets out the planning strategy and policies for the whole of Sutton for the next 15 years (2016-31). The Draft Neighbourhood Plan, which we have prepared, is for Hackbridge and Beddington Corner and, if approved, will be in force for ten years (2016-26).

It is a good thing that both plans are happening at the same time, because if we had gone out last year, our plan would now be out of date. We too now need to review the Local Plan and see how this might affect our Neighbourhood Plan.

Consultation

Your views really do matter, because as a resident or local business, you know what you would like or need in your community. Every response we get back, we either have to change our plan accordingly or state a reason why we haven't. This will be visible for everyone to see.

How to comment

You can view our plan and comment on our website www.hackbridgendg.com/plan

A hard copy of the plan can be found at the following locations:

- All Saints Community Centre – New Road, Mitcham, CR4 4JN
- Hackbridge Café – London Road, Hackbridge
- Wallington Library – Shotfield, Wallington, SM6 0HY
- BedZED Pavilion – 24 Sandmartin Lane, Hackbridge, SM6 7DF
- Sutton Council offices – 24 Denmark Road, Carshalton, SM5 2JG

You can also email us your comments to hackbridgeandbc@gmail.com or post to: Hackbridge NDG, 24 Sandmartin Lane, Hackbridge, Surrey, SM6 7DF

What happens next?

- We will look at all your comments and amend our plan if needed.
- If there are lots of changes, we will go out to the community again for comments.
- Our updated plan will then be submitted to Sutton Council who will put it out for formal consultation.
- Our plan will be reviewed by an Independent Examiner.
- A referendum will take place where you can vote on our plan.
- If more than 50% of votes are yes, Sutton Council will bring our plan into legal force.