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# Referendum set to shape developments

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A community-designed framework for what could help shape future planning developments in Hackbridge and Beddington Corner is set to go to a public vote.

Councillors at a housing, economy, and business (HEB) committee meeting agreed, on September 25, to hold a referendum for the area's proposed neighbourhood plan.

Having been in the pipeline for several years, it aims to act as guidance for what objectives must be met by developers who submit plans to Sutton Council for sites within the area.

If voted through by the public then it would form part of the larger Sutton Local Plan framework amid major regeneration plans for the area.

Representatives from the Hackbridge and Beddington



A conceptual visualisation of the New Mill Quarter development and a bird at Beddington Farmlands



Corner Neighbourhood Development Group (HBCNDG) spoke at the meeting to discuss their views.

Lisa Armstrong said: "The plan captures what we love about our neighbourhood, what problems we are struggling with, and how we'd like to deal with those problems."

"It's taken us a while – seven years – to get to this point because it's been a journey that we've been determined to do ourselves. We want this plan to be written by residents and not by an outside consultant."

"We've walked around Hackbridge many times, try-

ing to understand it, photographing the good bits and the not-so-good bits, and consulting with our neighbours by holding events alongside the Hackbridge Carnival at the train station and in the heart of Hackbridge."

It comes as an independent examiner David Hogger, from Intelligent Plans and examinations (IPE), published a report which assessed the neighbourhood plan.

He recommended the proposals go to a referendum while also suggesting a "large number" changes to the framework.

These included reference

to the specific affordable housing need in Sutton identified in the local plan, as well as cutting out the need to retain land north of Hackbridge station in employment use.

At the meeting, Ms Armstrong said HBCNDG accepted the amendments overall but the group was "disappointed" by some of them.

Mentions were also made of two former members of the group that have since died, including one of the founders Peter Lloyd who passed away in March this year.

Sutton Council will now look to secure a £20,000 funding boost from central government to host the referendum, which will be held "like a local election or by-election".

It needs more than 50 per cent of the total votes to get approved, amid fears of voter apathy and low turnouts, or it would need to be started all over again.

However, concerns of getting thrown out through the vote were quashed as "unlikely".

A date for the referendum will be published in due course.

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