
Hersham Placemaking Engagement Consultation Statement



April 2025



Elmbridge
Borough Council

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1. Introduction

1. Placemaking is an approach that will inform and facilitate the delivery of council and community-led projects and initiatives. It is a collaborative process that empowers communities to shape and improve their neighbourhoods in partnership with key stakeholders such as Elmbridge Borough Council. This commitment was initiated through the council's 2030 Vision and the Local Plan.
2. The purpose of the engagement was to gather opinions, concerns and aspirations about Hersham from the Hersham community. The engagement took place from 23 September to 17 November 2024.
3. This consultation statement summarises the engagement methods and community engagement activities that the council led, the feedback received and how this feedback will inform future initiatives in Hersham.

2. Hersham background

1. Hersham Placemaking is part of the council's three-year Transformation Programme, providing an opportunity for the council to consider and identify ways to improve the area for the benefit of local communities.
2. The council recognises the importance of working with communities to help shape future strategies and their local areas. As such, to facilitate this consultation, promotion of the Hersham engagement has been underway since July 2024.

3. Hersham engagement

1. Ensuring comprehensive engagement, the council embarked on various methods to engage the community during the consultation.



2. The council ran promotions across various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Nextdoor, Instagram, LinkedIn and WhatsApp, in advance of and during the consultation period, with dedicated pages on the EBC website bringing together details and updates about the engagement event, news and Committee updates <https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/shaping-elmbridge/shaping-elmbridge-shaping-hersham>.
3. Informal updates were shared throughout this period with the 'Save Hersham' Group, Councillors, local media, and the community through the residents' newsletters <https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/news/2024/shaping-hersham>.
4. Both schools in the area – Three Rivers and Burhill – were also notified, along with the Hersham GP surgery asking them to display and/or share the information with parents and patients.
5. A QR code to access the survey was provided on the posters and hard copies were made available at the Hersham Community Centre, upon request and by post.
6. Additionally, the council sent out email invites to approximately 215 individuals in Hersham (who had given permission to be contacted by signing up to the Local Plans database).
7. Consultation was undertaken with the Hersham Community over the period 23 September to 20 October 2024 (4 weeks), this was later extended to 17 November (7 weeks). This involved drop-in sessions, attended by officers from Elmbridge Borough Council to respond to questions and requests for further information.
8. All events were held at the Hersham Centre for the Community on the dates shown below:
 - Wednesday 2 October 11.30 to 1.30pm
 - Wednesday 9 October 4.30pm to 6.30pm
 - Saturday 9 November 2pm to 4pm
9. In addition to the drop-in sessions, an online survey was made available throughout the consultation period to enable wider input from the Hersham community. Two versions of the survey were made available on the council's website – one version was in the 365 Microsoft format (this did not require registration) and the second version was for those individuals wanting to sign up

to the placemaking database (this did require registration via the council's online consultation portal).

4. Engagement response

Survey summaries

Q1. Who responded?

188 responses were received in total to the survey. 167 surveys were completed using Microsoft 365 (this included 40 written responses received either by post or via the ballot box at Hersham community centre, which were inputted into 365 by officers) and 21 responses via the council's online consultation portal.

Of the 188 responses received- 165 were residents, 4 work in the area, 1 business and 18 'other' e.g. living outside of the Hersham Ward boundary.

In addition, four submissions were received from Surrey County Council, Hersham Village Society, Hersham Residents Association, and an individual response.

The Hersham Groups response related primarily to the planning applications in the area and the need for discussion and involvement with the community, which went beyond the remit of this consultation. As such, where comments related to the survey they have been summarised below under the relevant survey question.

Q2. Do you agree with the draft placemaking boundary?

120 respondents supported the placemaking boundary and 68 respondents disagreed. Of those 68 respondents' reasons for disagreement were as follows, placemaking boundary should:

- be expanded outwards, especially north of the bypass
- include Hersham Back Green and community centre
- include Pleasant Place, as any future redevelopment of the Technology Park will impact on residents living here
- include area around Hersham station
- include Mole Road, which is within 0.16 mile of the shopping centre
- include the entire Longmore Estate as it is in walking distance from all the Hersham facilities
- include retail units, such as the vets and the art school on the Queens Road, the small supermarkets on Molesey Road, and the railway stations
- realign placemaking boundary with old election boundaries

- be expanded beyond the Hersham Village ward boundary, to ensure other areas are not left vulnerable to overdevelopment particularly green belt and flood plains
- exclude important parts of Hersham such as libraries, schools, parks, churches etc. It is the entirety of ward which influences Hersham as a place
- create a boundary of wider influence for the placemaking project to include connections between the village and all the facilities and schools located in and around coronation playing fields to help increase footfall flow into the shopping centre and including Hersham Riverside Park to help improve access to the green space
- include the Hersham county division and not just the Hersham Village Ward
- boundary to be extended to include the Railway line, River Mole, and Seven Hills Road

Q3. What do you value most about Hersham (village ward) and place them in order of importance?

183 responses were received to this question and below is a ranking of those issues of value:

1. Parks and green spaces
2. Good road and rail connections
3. Sense of community/ rural character
4. Range of shops, cafes, bars, and restaurants
5. Range of businesses -independents
6. Leisure and recreational facilities

Q4. How frequently do you use the amenities/facilities in Hersham (Village Ward)?

188 responses were received to this question. The table below shows the frequency of use as follows:

Amenities/ Facilities	Weekly	Often	Rarely	Never
Hersham shops including the supermarket	73.6%	23.6%	2%	0.7%
Hersham Village Green	35.1%	45.9%	15.5%	3.4%
Pubs, bars and restaurants	35.8%	45.3%	16.9%	2%
Recreational facilities	25%	43.2%	20.3%	11.5%

Amenities/ Facilities	Weekly	Often	Rarely	Never
Library	7.4%	35.1%	31.8%	25.7%
Places of Worship	10.1%	16.9%	34.5%	38.5%
Post Office	20.9%	52%	23.6%	3.4%
Centre for the community	12.2%	25%	39.2%	23.6%

Q5. What improvements would you like to see in Hershams Village Ward?

162 responses were received to this question. 42 respondents answered shops, followed by a summary of issues respondents highlighted which have been grouped together below:

Parking and traffic management

- We want free parking
- Reduction in traffic through the village especially larger vehicles such as lorries and HGVs
- More pedestrian crossings. Encourage walking and slow cars down
- More frequent and reliable public transport links to neighbouring towns like Esher, Cobham, Kingston as well as Weybridge and SPH
- Traffic calming measures at Burhill Road and Pleasant Place
- Bus shelters by the village green (side of the community centre and roman catholic church) and bus shelters to have digital displays
- A244 to be restored to its former dual carriageway format, thus reducing the unnecessary, increased traffic congestion
- Removal of restrictive new car parking places in Queens Road and Burwood Road opposite the Green as the road is too narrow and causes problems for drivers and cyclists
- A 20-mph speed limit
- No 20mph speed limit
- More bike lanes, especially on the Queens Road

Development

- A reduction in high rise flats
- Revamped shopping centre for shops/ cafes/ hairdressers etc...
- Retain the Waitrose car parking
- Protection of the character (look and feel) of the village

- Big building projects to be refused
- Don't need older persons housing or more houses in Hersham.
- More housing
- Wider selection of shops
- Shopping centre needs pulling down and replacing, it's not fit for purpose
- More development to attract more people and better transport links
- More useable shops in the centre, and more sustainable choices for retail and housing.
- More affordable housing for working people and families.
- Improvement in urban planning and design
- Improvement in the standard and quality of approved buildings

Maintenance of local infrastructure

- Improved green spaces and playground equipment.
- Improved health facilities
- Improved hours at the community centre and a better range of activities
- Maintenance of the village hall.
- A gym or swimming pool - better fitness and health opportunities
- Support for start-ups, community projects and very small businesses

Q6. What forms of transport do you typically use to get around Hersham Village Ward?

No. Respondents	Mode of transport
84	Car
76	Walking
33	Other*
12	Local bus
5	Cycling

*Other- stated they did not use a primary mode of transport but instead alternated between at least two/ three modes of travel e.g., walking and cycling, walking, local bus, and driving.

Q7. In your opinion, what more could Elmbridge Borough Council do to support local businesses?

179 responses were received to this question. Suggestions ranged from:

- More parking
- Free parking for short stay car parks
- Reduce or eliminate car parking charges in council-owned car parks

- Schemes to incentivise landlords to bring empty commercial premises back into use (e.g. subsidise premises for new startup businesses)
- Restrict or help with rent rises imposed by landlords/developers
- Help with grants to modernise shops
- Waive or reduce business rates for start-ups in empty units
- Affordable rents on commercial properties
- Reduce business rates for local independent businesses.
- Provide pop-up spaces in the empty units, for local businesses to build their customer base
- Assist with maintenance of buildings to keep them up to standard and encourage new businesses
- Campaign to improve awareness of Hersham as a location for local business and help build an overall sense of business community
- Creation of an on-line directory of all businesses within the Hersham Boundary

Q8. Are you concerned about the new developments in the area?

175 responded Yes and 14 stated No.

Q9. What are your concerns?

No. Respondents	Concerns
160	Overdevelopment in Hersham
150	Impact on local character
143	losses of amenities/ facilities
149	Local Road Infrastructure already at capacity
134	Increased pollution and congestion
93	loss of biodiversity/ nature conservation
75	Increased flood risk.
15	Other*
40	Poor design in new developments
6	Not concerned

***Other.** 15 answered more housing, no comment, and the need to consider the whole of Hersham, not just the Village Ward boundary.

Q10. What do you like about Hersham shopping centre?

186 responded to this question and 88 answered shops for this question. Concerns related to the range of shops available and more specifically Waitrose and its car park, which allows for the community to park and do their weekly shop and combined with accessing other activities.

Q11. Is there anything you would like to improve about Hersham shopping centre?

172 responded to this question. 71 answered shops and more specifically the need for more variety in the choice of shops available to meet the wider needs of the community as well as the need to modernise the shopping centre. Additional comments related to:

- The smell of the drains and the sewers near the shopping centre/ community centre
- The need for full occupancy of the retail units
- Comments also related to the shopping centre application (which is outside the remit of this consultation) and therefore those comments were not considered

Q12. Hersham Technology Park. Are there any improvements that could be addressed to benefit Hersham Village Ward, through the redevelopment of the Air Products site?

162 responded to this question. 99 showed general support for the redevelopment of this site, while 33 respondents objected to the loss of employment, stressing the need to retain employment to support the continued vitality of Hersham to meet the needs of the local community.

30 individuals did not respond either way.

Those respondents in support of the redevelopment of the site did so for the following reasons and went further to identify the potential redevelopment opportunities for the site as follows:

- more suitable location than Hersham Shopping Centre or the Golf Course
- support mixed use schemes to meet housing needs
- good opportunity for additional infrastructure such as healthcare, education, leisure uses
- no tower blocks
- no to a distribution centre
- more houses
- need new GP surgery or expand current one, and school places
- anything above 4.5 stories would be considered too high
- support for housing and affordable housing – conditional on the need to reduce additional retirement/older persons flats

Q13. Additional comments

113 respondents answered this question. A summary of the comments received are set out below:

- More housing is needed in Hersham
- Hersham station needs better accessibility
- Do not overdevelop Hersham village
- More cycle routes are needed
- Future development within Elmbridge should be allocated equally within the borough
- More reliable public transport
- Limited activities for younger people in Hersham
- There needs to be an infrastructure plan to support future housing developments in Hersham
- Shopping centre refurbishment is needed to stop shops leaving
- Quality of maps used were indecipherable

Drop-in session summaries

At the drop-in sessions, the main areas of concern have been summarised below:

Local services/ facilities

- Odour issues near Hersham community centre/ shopping centre
- Hersham community centre – reduced opening hours and services for the elderly, which is important for their mental health and wellbeing
- Community centre hub to be maintained and make better use of it for the community including a library, computers for young and old, café
- Upgraded healthcare facilities needed
- Want/bring back the village hall
- Need a youth centre
- Want a policeman on the beat!
- Improved maintenance of the green
- Maintain and improve infrastructure (food, other retail and leisure)

Parking and traffic management

- Development needs to be proportionate in keeping with the character of the area, with sufficient parking and infrastructure
- Queens Road- parking spaces outside community centre is causing traffic to build up as both cars are not able to pass by – it is not needed as community centre has car parks!
- Better signage and hazard markings near railway bridge needed.
- Speed restrictions needed along Hersham Road (currently 20mph)
- No blanket 20mph zones!
- Make access to Hersham station more accessible for wheelchair users.
- Potholes dangerous for disabled/blind
- Inadequate public transport in Hersham

Placemaking boundary

- Include the golf course in the placemaking boundary
- Placemaking boundary needs to be the same as the parish boundary or at the least the current ward boundary.
- Include Thrupp's Road and Havers Avenue (if green belt is built on it will affect these areas)
- Include Hersham Conservation area
- Link up Riverside walks from Turner Lane to Hersham Riverside to Field common /Molesey Heath

Development in Hersham

- Percentage of new homes to be built/ should not be all in KT8 and KT12
- Want to identifying sites which are too precious for the survival of the local community e.g., Hersham car park and coronation fields
- To keep Hersham a village than the outside surrounds should change
- Support opportunities for small independent shops- Cobham has them!
- Developments should be community-led
- Development should be in keeping with the existing character
- Basement/ underground car park to be provided for new flatted development
- Provide sufficient visitor car parking spaces in new developments

Hersham Shopping Centre development

- Council car park near Waitrose incorporated into the new development and with the money from the sale of the car park, this should go into community related services/ facilities
- More flats? need to have another GP surgery or expand current one, school places.
- Parking is needed for the school and GP surgery -planning needs to consider the Hersham shopping application

Air Products Site

- Mixed use developments supported
- Health centre hub at air products would be good
- Development must benefit community
- Air products – more car parking required
- Air products – don't want tower blocks, preserve trees
- Air products – do not want a distribution centre here
- Infrastructure improvements/ better access to the site
- Air products site could accommodate Elmbridge Council offices and improved healthcare facilities

- More flats? need to have another GP surgery or expand current one, school places
- Anything above 4.5 stories is too high

Other Comments

- Inadequate communication about the engagement. Letters were not sent to all addresses in Hersham
- Adverts/ posters were not publicised on the Hersham Community Centre notice board
- Map too small/ not detailed enough to see online

5. Overall conclusions

1. 188 responses were received to the consultation. In addition, four submissions were received from Surrey County Council, Hersham Village Society, Hersham Residents Association, and an individual response.
2. Where responses do not correlate to the number of individuals who responded, this was for reasons that not everyone who filled in the survey, responded to all the questions.
3. The feedback received during the drop-in sessions, was helpful and highlighted concerns already observed through the survey and summarised in this consultation statement.
4. It is also acknowledged that the quality of the maps used for the drop-in sessions, were difficult to read, this was a result of printing to a scale that allowed for visible street names, which then distorted the image and resulted in indecipherable boundaries. However, this issue was resolved to some extent, during the drop-in sessions where officers were available to respond to queries and provide further information as needed.
5. Regarding publicity, the Hersham Engagement was published through various social media, in a move to reduce printing costs no letters were posted to individual households, which would have inevitably excluded the Hersham “community” that no longer falls within the Hersham village ward boundary, the subject of the placemaking area.

6. Next steps

Elmbridge Borough Council is reviewing the feedback received from both the survey and drop-in sessions in collaboration with stakeholders, so that we can explore potential opportunities available to the Hersham community, in the future.