

OVER HULTON DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION: FAQs

WHAT IS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

The Neighbourhood Plan is a document which will help determine planning applications across Over Hulton. It is the first document of its kind to have been prepared for the area. It is important to note that the Neighbourhood Plan has been drawn up over the past three years by the local community and is a result of extensive consultation and engagement. Although it has not been prepared by Bolton Council, it will be used by them to help determine future planning applications in the area.

WHY HAS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN BEEN PREPARED?

The purpose of the Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan is to help improve the quality of life and environment for the community as a whole. The Neighbourhood Plan is set in the context of the Bolton Core Strategy. This establishes policies for the Bolton metropolitan area as a whole in respect of future development, facilitates and the environment, for example. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to develop this further and make policies for land use and development more specific to Over Hulton. The Neighbourhood Plan thus seeks to influence the form and quality of any proposed new development, such that it reflects the character and qualities of the area, as well seeking to protect important green spaces and moving towards a more sustainable future. Importantly, because the Neighbourhood Plan has been produced with extensive input from the local community, it reflects local issues, concerns and aspirations. It has very real potential to influence change for the better – and more so than any other documents prepared before.

CAN'T THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN BE USED TO STOP DEVELOPMENT?

No. Government policy does not allow this. But, the Neighbourhood Plan can be used to make sure that future development in Over Hulton reflects the characteristics and qualities of the area that we value and enjoy, and brings as many benefits as possible to the local community.

WHAT DOES THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DO?

It gives local residents a say in planning decisions and sets out policies which will be used by Bolton Council to determine planning applications. It covers a large number of important local issues including housing and design, landscape, green space and heritage assets, access, local services and facilities. It also allows the local community to identify important infrastructure projects that should be improved and which could be funded through development or in partnership with other delivery partners, such as the highways authority.

AREN'T THERE ALREADY POLICIES IN THE CORE STRATEGY FOR OVER HULTON?

Bolton Council adopted a Core Strategy in 2011 which establishes the scale and direction of growth to be accommodated across the Bolton metropolitan area. Since then the Government has issued and updated new national planning guidance. Work on a new Bolton Local Plan, reflecting national policy, is currently on hold. The Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan will thus present up-to-date and more locally based policies than set out in the Core Strategy, and which specifically respond to the Over Hulton context.

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WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

The Neighbourhood Plan has been drafted following consultation feedback on issues and emerging ideas. It is now being consulted upon by the Neighbourhood Forum before being submitted to Bolton Council to commence independent examination of the Neighbourhood Plan.

WHAT ARE THE POLICIES IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

The policies respond to key concerns raised during previous consultation events. In summary, the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan seek to:

- Establish design guidance that promote the highest quality of development in and around Over Hulton.
- Make it easier, more attractive and convenient for all people of all ages to be able to move around Over Hulton, particularly by foot and by bicycle.
- Conserve, manage and enhance the natural environment, including protecting important open spaces and areas of biodiversity.
- Protect, support and strengthen important local services and facilities, as well as important local historic features.

These themes and policies were developed and tested through earlier consultation events to make sure the Neighbourhood Plan reflects local opinion.

HOW WILL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS BE PAID FOR?

Bolton Council receives financial contributions from developers (Section 106 Planning Obligations) to fund on and off-site infrastructure works. The Council is considering whether to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy. If so, this will be chargeable on new developments over a certain size, with 15% of all monies ring-fenced for spending on projects in Over Hulton. If and when the Neighbourhood Plan is made, and if the Community Infrastructure Levy is in place, this will increase to 25%. This will help pay for improvements to things such as important road junctions, green spaces and play facilities, walking and cycling routes, and improved community facilities. The Neighbourhood Plan includes a set of projects that we would like to see funded.

WHO HAS PREPARED THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Neighbourhood Plan has been led by a Steering Group set up by the Neighbourhood Forum and has involved significant consultation with local residents, businesses and Councillors over the last three years.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

All comments received will be reviewed and any changes made as appropriate to the Neighbourhood Plan. It will then go to Bolton Council who will formally consult on the Neighbourhood Plan and appoint an independent examiner to review it. If the examiner is happy that the Neighbourhood Plan has followed due process, a referendum will take place.

WHAT IS THE REFERENDUM?

Everyone who is eligible to vote in the Parish will have the chance to say whether they think the Neighbourhood Plan should be used to begin shaping future change and determining planning applications. If more than 50% of the votes cast agree with the Neighbourhood Plan then it will become part of formal planning policy for Over Hulton.