

EAST PECKHAM PARISH COUNCILS REPRESENTATION TO TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCILS LOCAL PLAN 2011- 2031 CONSULTATION

East Peckham Parish Council has correlated its view for the future of East Peckham with the Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan. We find many areas of commonality which we welcome, and we agree with the key objectives of the plan. It is Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councils urgent duty to properly plan for new homes for the future, however whilst the Parish Council has no objection in principal to the inclusion of Church Lane as a potential site for housing, this should not be at the expense of other factors such as:

1. The quality of life for current residents should not be adversely affected.
2. Focus should be on creating jobs and grown in areas that need support.
3. Development in rural parts of the region will tend to pull away focus from areas that need regeneration.
4. Development of agricultural land could be short sighted given the decreasing proportion of home grown produce.
5. Huge overbearing houses can change the character of the community. East Peckham would be best served with a mixture of starter homes for young people and suitable property for downsizers. In East Peckham there is a need for a mix of housing including affordable housing schemes. The sizing of homes should not be about financials to suit landowners and developers, but built according to what is needed, where they are needed and not simply for more commuters. The prevalence of a dormitory village mentality is eroding away the rural way of life in East Peckham resulting in a reduction of participation in local events and activities, further erosion of community spirit by inappropriate development would not be welcome.
6. New housing must be supported by improvements to the existing infrastructure. There is little confidence that any new mass housing will have suitable infrastructure in place. We see a great danger in Church Lane being identified for development then the site being slowly developed over a long drawn out period making the area an eyesore with the promised infrastructure never materialising.
7. Church Lane has a high-water table, there is flooding with some regularity. Green areas help mitigate the effects of climate change and help reduce flood risk. The suggestion of building on an area prone to flooding could be counterintuitive. Building on an area with a high-water table will increase flood risk, not only to the houses themselves but to surrounding settlements. Agricultural land that floods naturally reabsorbs water. paved driveways do not.
8. The character of the ancient rural hamlets that make up East Peckham must be preserved together with their open spaces. If the open spaces are permitted to be developed, then the settlements will merge into a small town but without the benefits of a properly planned town. The urbanisation of these hamlets will

cause a loss of general amenity to existing residents who will no longer be living in the rural community they were raised in or that they chose to move to but find themselves living in a conurbation. However, it is likely that each hamlet making up East Peckham could cope with some small increase in housing.

Summary

East Peckham Parish Council has no objection in principal to the inclusion of Church Lane in the Local Plan as a potential housing development site however this is dependent upon conditions being put into place which would mitigate the following:

- a. Any adverse effect on the existing community. If the development proceeds, then there must be benefits to East Peckham and its existing community. The development must be what the community needs
- b. Flood Preventative Measures to deal with increased rainwater runoff.
- c. Improvements to existing infrastructure
- d. Any negative impact the proposed development might have on wildlife and green spaces