

**EAST PECKHAM PARISH COUNCIL
STRATEGIC PLAN
2020/2025**

Introduction

This document is the review of the strategic plan that was adopted in 2015. It is designed to continue EPPC's development and growth in a strategic manner, providing as it does a medium-term vision for the council.

The very nature of the fluid environment that the parish council operates in means that not all strategic decisions that will be taken by the Parish Council and Council Manager over the next 5 years will be included in this plan, but the adopted priorities identified within this plan will aid all decision making. This strategic plan will ensure that the Parish Council will be the best it can possibly be.

The plan and its revision have been heavily informed by feedback and engagement with residents including the community survey which has been published on the council's website and within the pages of the council's monthly newsletter, all of which provides a sound opinion base upon which to identify our future direction and priorities. This is a 5-year rolling plan, which will be updated annually. Future Community surveys will take place on a rolling basis.

The role played by the Parish Council is becoming ever more important with the growth of localism, the devolution of services and the allocation of new powers to parish councils. In addition, government has already made a number of major changes to other systems that impacts upon the Parish Council such as planning, audit, transparency requirements, pensions, data protection and this is set to continue.

The Parish Council strongly believes that it must be in a position where it is fit for purpose, resilient and sustainable. The Parish Council is in a healthy financial position with reasonable reserves however it is important that EPPC should maintain a level of reserves which is prudent, and which provides cover for contingencies.

Decision Making

The full Parish Council is the primary decision making body of EPPC and between monthly meetings, operational decisions are taken by the Council Manager in consultation with the Chairman/Deputy Chairman where appropriate.

This strategic plan is intended to give the Council Manager greater flexibility and allow strategic decisions to be made in areas identified within the action plan. All actions clearly identify the areas where Parish Council decision making has been delegated (and to whom) and areas where it remains with the full Parish Council.

The full Parish Council meets 11 times a year and appoints representatives to a number of advisory committees, groups and organisations to take forward specific issues.

All potential future Parish Council decisions outlined in this plan will be supported by reports with full cost and risk implications highlighted as appropriate to ensure that they are full informed.

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will continue to be the forum for electing the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

Monitoring and Review

The monitoring and review process will take the form of an Action Plan with quarterly reports on progress. Where there is a lack of scheduled progress/activity, remedial actions will be proposed.

The Mission of East Peckham Parish Council is:

‘To develop and sustain a sense of community within the parish of East Peckham by addressing environmental, economic and social issues and delivering quality services to our Parishioners’.

EPPC Vision Statement

East Peckham Parish Council will represent the interests of those who live and work within the East Peckham parish. The Parish Council will communicate effectively with and provide exemplar support and information. The Parish Council will work to promote a relationship with Principal Authorities which recognises the important contribution made by the Parish Council as the first tier of Local Government.

EPPC Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Parish Council are;

- To represent the interests of those working or living in the parish area.
- To promote the health, safety and well-being, both material and cultural of the people within its community.
- To attract and hold the interest of its citizens.
- To develop inherent strength to deal with and work with all other tiers of local regional and national government in a valid partnership.
- To adapt and change in the way in which the people of the local community live, work, shop and enjoy themselves

Key Themes, Priorities and Actions

The Parish Council has identified the following key strategic issues where it will focus its efforts on behalf of its citizens

1. To work with the Police, Community Warden and other authorities to nurture a safe and lawful environment:

- By supporting the police and community warden in the prevention and detection of crime;
- By working with young people wherever possible to engage them in creative activities to divert them from damaging the facilities in the parish;
- By working to develop facilities to provide spaces for young people to gather and socialise.
- By working with the appropriate authorities to ensure the streets and public areas are well lit and where possible designed to minimise crime and by ensuring our streetlights are maintained in a fully functional mode with repairs effected within agreed timescales;
- By working with the appropriate authorities to ensure the footpaths are in a good state of repair and the public rights of way kept reasonably free from undergrowth;
- By supporting people and local organisations in the introduction of traffic calming measures and other road safety initiatives in their immediate locality.

2. To work for the improvement of the built environment:

- By identifying unacceptable building proposals and registering concerns with the planning authority prior to their formal consideration;
- By maintaining the Parish Councils bus shelters and other street furniture in good order and pursuing an appropriate maintenance and renewal plan.
- By working with the PCSO and Community Warden to detect and prosecute perpetrators of graffiti or other vandalism;
- By working with the appropriate authorities to minimise the detrimental effects of litter in the streets and public areas.

3. To work with Statutory and Non – statutory Bodies seeking to improve the quality of life for parishioners:

- By co-operating with neighbouring parishes on issues that affect us;
- By supporting and working with Youth Groups and Elderly Persons organisations.
- By working towards East Peckham becoming a dementia friendly community.
- By co-operating and working with those schools our parishioners attend to improve facilities for the young in the parish.

4. To further develop the Jubilee Hall, playing fields and opens spaces in EPPC's ownership:

- By maintaining the Playing Fields and other open spaces and by working with the various authorities and agencies to improve the natural environment and sustain bio-diversity;
- By developing the facilities at the Playing Fields for the use of parishioners;
- By developing and sustaining a plan for other open spaces in EPPC's ownership
- By maintaining and improving the children's play spaces including the replacement of play equipment on a rolling basis.
- Maintain and improve council owned land, buildings and parish amenities and acquire as appropriate additional land or buildings
- By continuing to build financial reserves to achieve these objectives.

5. To improve the environment in the Parish:

- By developing and sustaining an active footpaths policy and by working with the PROW in order to maintain our current network of footpaths in good order;
- By identifying opportunities to open or re-open bye-ways in conjunction with PROW

6. To manage the affairs of the Council on an efficient and effective basis:

- By ensuring all decisions are taken on a value for money basis;
- By being a good employer and treating employees as valued members of the team;
- By ensuring all legal obligations are observed and good practice followed in respect of the financial management of the Council;
- By developing and implementing policies and procedures that ensure good governance of the Council's affairs;
- Consult with residents and organisations to enhance the life of our community and improve our internet facilities.
- Maintain Local Council Award Scheme Quality Status
- By working towards achieving Local Council Award Scheme Gold Status.
- By adopting and updating appropriate financial policies including the management of reserves.
- By ensuring that Council is fully compliant in relation to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

7. Planning

- Necessary infrastructure in all its forms, i.e. roads, education, medical, utilities, drainage etc must be put in place for a development before that development starts. The current infrastructure must also be assessed and shortcomings taken into account.
- Protecting the environment in all its forms must be a priority. The countryside needs protection and designations' such as AONBs, SSIs etc must be used to do so. Pollution and climate change are now recognised as national and internal priorities and must be given due recognition.

8. Highways

- Rapid reporting to Kent Highway Services of any highway faults within the parish, i.e. potholes, drainage issues, overgrown vegetation etc.
- To lobby Kent County Council to restrict HGVs to areas where they have legitimate business and restrict them to roads allowing them access for this purpose.
- To support legislation for it to be made an offence for HGVs to use electronic GPS navigation systems that do not identify routes unsuitable for HGVs.
- To support and promote Kent County Council's new policy for 20mpoh speed limits which involves local support and considers local benefits and needs.
- To support the setting up of a Parish Speedwatch scheme. A parish scheme would require the support, demand and commitment of a sufficient number of community volunteers who would operate and run a scheme.

9. Health and Well Being

- To have a Parish Council representative/s on the East Peckham DFC Steering Group.
- To promote health and wellbeing through local community activity.

10. Community Leadership

- Represent local views on issues of common interest.
- Respond to county and national consultations as appropriate
- Make representations to Kent County Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Government Department, MP's other appropriate associations and bodies as appropriate on issues of concern to those living and working within East Peckham parish.
- Issue media releases as and when necessary.
- Strong lobbying and influencing in respect of issues of common concern.
- Parish Council representation at key events and groups
- Raising issues of common concern and scale to the appropriate bodies.

11. Funding

- Maximise return on EPPC reserves,, investing as appropriate
- Retaining and attempting to increase paying users of parish council facilities
- Ensure hire charges are fair and sustainable
- Annual Review of parish council fees and charges
- Adequate budgeting setting process.
- Ensure EPPC is provides its citizens with value for money
- Looking for ways in which to generate additional income
- Seek, explore and apply for funding from principal authorities, partnerships and other bodies.

12. Staff

- Financially support staff training and qualifications as appropriate where they are in line with the strategic aims of the Parish Council
- Staff to attend conferences and other events as appropriate to ensure they are best equipped to support and develop the Parish Councils Role within the community.
- Periodic staff audits to be undertaken to review EPPC staff resources, job descriptions, rates of pay and subsistence rates.

- Review existing staffing levels in light of the Strategic Plan
- Review of the Parish Councils IT and communication hardware needs and renewal/purchase of equipment as appropriate and maintain an IT and Communications Policy which will be periodically reviewed

ACTION PLAN 2020 - 2025

- Consider the provision of additional storage in the Jubilee Hall
- Develop a contingency plan against for Jubilee Hall Building maintenance
- Consider the renovation of the car park area at the Jubilee Hall
- Consider improving the landscaping of the playing fields
- Review the potential for further bookings for the Jubilee Hall and Playing Fields
- Consider new facilities to the playing fields
- Consider in conjunction with the appropriate authorities facilities for the youth and elderly.
- Review and identify financial projects in order of preference and the policy for financial reserves.
- Support groups and organisations whose activities enhance community life.