

## OUR SURVEY: THE RESULTS

In April a survey about future development in Boughton Aluph and Eastwell parish in the years running up to 2030 was delivered to all the households in the parish, and an impressive 46% replied. The survey asked for views about 9 objectives which have been proposed as possible main headings for the Neighbourhood Plan which will be drafted in the next few months (and on which we will be asking for your views). Here are just a few of the main findings:

**Draft objective 1: To preserve and protect the rural character of our parish by preventing urban sprawl.**

The strength of response to this makes it the obvious central focus of our Neighbourhood Plan. More than 90% of respondents are concerned about the development of Ashford encroaching into the parish. Similar numbers also think it important to maintain the existing rural/urban boundary, and to protect local wildlife and its habitats (over 80% want to see the recreation of wildlife meadows and corridors in the parish). Respondents also feel strongly (92% say it is important) about being able to walk from their home into the countryside, with a heavy majority (88%) using the local countryside for walking.

**Draft objective 2: To meet local housing needs without overburdening our local infrastructure, including roads.**

**Draft objective 3: To support high-quality design and innovation in all forms of development which contribute to the safety and well-being of residents.**

These two proposed objectives are also clearly supported by residents, who want small-scale development of high quality, including off-street parking, homes designed to fit visually with existing streetscapes, and housing schemes designed to improve safety while discouraging anti-social behaviour. Brownfield sites are favoured, and greenfield sites strongly opposed. In line with this, respondents do not show particular favour for any of the 7 potential development sites put forward under Ashford Borough Council's 'Call for Sites' for their Local Plan, but the strongest opposition is directed towards the two proposals for large-scale developments on greenfield sites (at Lenacre Hall Farm and Ashford Golf Club). A concern which comes across strikingly is about the impact of any new housing development on parish infrastructure - evidently this must be a key factor in all planning decisions

**Draft objective 4: To ensure that future development of Eureka Park is sustainable, of high quality design, and maintains the parkland setting to successfully interweave business and residential development.**

Respondents (91%) are keen that the parkland setting of Eureka Park be maintained, with 86% seeing it as important to minimise the visual impact of business on adjacent homes through creative design and layout. There are extremely clear concerns about the management of traffic and pollution: for example, 96% see the management of the impact of HGV traffic, and of additional traffic generally, as important, and 94% want any new development to incorporate adequate parking for residents, employees and customers of Eureka Park. 63% of respondents had concerns about new housing development on the Eureka Park site.

**Draft objective 5: To conserve and enhance the rural and historic environment, and preserve our important green spaces.**

Residents overwhelmingly support the protection of views and landscapes (e.g. 91% in the case of views of the North Downs), of local historic buildings and features (e.g. 88% in the case of Eastwell Towers/Lodge and flanking walls), and public green spaces (e.g. 95% in the case of the children's play area in Goat Lees).

**Draft objective 6: To promote healthy living by making the most of our countryside, and to encourage social interaction between different members of the community through access to the countryside.**

The neighbourhood already appears particularly strong on its use of the countryside. 98% of respondents can walk from home to open countryside within 20 minutes, and 88% report using the local countryside for walking or rambling (51% once a week or more).

**Draft objective 7: To work with Kent County Council to improve road safety and ease traffic congestion.**

This is a major concern for most residents. For example, more than 1,000 expressions of concern have been flagged through the survey about each of the A251, Trinity Road, Wye Road, the A28 and Sandyhurst Lane. Weight and speed restrictions are seen as the most important measures to encourage road safety, and there are majorities in favour of traffic calming measures, safer pedestrian crossings, additional pavements, and designated cycle routes. There is a particularly high number (95%) who are concerned about increased traffic and congestion arising from any new development (and 84% are very concerned).

**Draft objective 8: To provide all residents with access to high-quality, cost-effective superfast broadband in excess of 25Mbps.**

53% of respondents report problems with the performance of their broadband connection, and 88% of those operating a business in the neighbourhood (most of whom work from home) see high-speed internet connectivity as essential to growing their business.

**Draft objective 9: To support existing businesses and to attract high-quality business development in our parish which promotes innovation, including support for start-up business.**

12% of respondents own a business in the parish, and apart from internet connectivity their main planning concerns involve road infrastructure, transport links and office space. Residents generally do not see large-scale industry as appropriate for the neighbourhood, and there is no very strong support for any particular type of business development (e.g. 52% see hospitality enterprises as appropriate to the area).

The full survey report is available at [www.pariahplan.uk/consultation](http://www.pariahplan.uk/consultation)