

## **Dover District Local Plan to 2040**

### **Eythorne Parish Council Regulation 19 Consultation Response**

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The Local Plan document interestingly contains a Leaders Forward in which is stated “there’s a need for a substantial number of new homes to be built within the district”. It goes on to state that “we can enjoy a wonderful, world class countryside and the protection of it is fundamental to achieving successful, sustainable growth for existing and new residents, businesses and visitors”. It is therefore critical that such a ‘need’ is met with due consideration of the actual needs of any specific area and a comprehensive assessment completed to ensure sympathy to and protection of the area in which existing residents have lived and enjoyed for decades. To get this wrong will mean any new development will carry detrimental outcomes in perpetuity and have significant negative effects for a lifetime.

1.2 It is the opinion of Eythorne Parish Council that the above considerations, including the Leaders Forward, have been overlooked in putting forward development proposals in the new Local Plan for areas SAP28 and SAP29 and, as was its position at Regulation 18 consultation, objects to these two areas being included in the Local Plan 2040.

#### **2. Housing Allocations Suitability**

2.1 Both SAP28 and SAP29 areas are currently open countryside and consequently would be classed as greenfield development. Why develop greenfield land when a brownfield land stock of some 174 hectares already exists within the Dover district supporting some 5000 new homes, 10 years worth of the new local plan period. The geographical location of Elvington and Eythorne means they currently enjoy a valuable rural outlook between them (see photos below), overlooking productive agricultural land which provides a welcome relief between the built up areas of both villages. Such a valuable attribute will be lost as a result of SAP28 and the two villages will very much become one with the potential 300 homes identified, creating a sprawl of the existing built up areas and converting a part of our world class countryside into tarmac, bricks and mortar, without any credible justification.



**Existing countryside view across proposed SAP28 Housing Allocation – View 1**





Existing countryside view across proposed SAP28 Housing Allocation – View 2

2.2 More than ever before is the importance of greater self sufficiency in food production and hence the Government Food Strategy policy paper. The headline to this paper states, *this strategy sets out what we will do to create a more prosperous agri-food sector that delivers healthier, more sustainable and affordable diets for all*. To fulfil such a vision requires investment and development but more importantly to **retain** existing resources and production. The local plan proposals for SAP28 and SAP29 flies directly in the face of such a vision and the Parish Council strongly opposes DDC in casting aside any consideration of the food strategy intentions and the opportunity for food security.

2.3 Furthermore, the expansion of the built up areas proposed by SAP28 and SAP29 are both outside of the Settlement Confines defined and reviewed in 2021. Within the documentation of the 2021 review, Dover District Council (DDC) state the following:

*1.3 Settlement confines are the boundary lines between areas of built or urban development (the settlement) and non-urban or rural development (the open countryside). Although settlement confines do not preclude all development beyond the confines, they do give clarity as to where new development within the confine or directly adjacent is likely to be acceptable in planning terms.*

*1.4 Settlement confines are long-established planning tools. The concept is consistent with the NPPF objective of achieving sustainable development as the establishment of confines helps to deliver patterns of development that facilitate walking or cycling to local facilities, together with the use of sustainable modes of transport by concentrating new development in or close to established sustainable settlements. Confines also protect the open countryside, in part by clearly defining where development would be considered acceptable and what would constitute new isolated homes in the countryside.*

It is therefore completely nonsensical to propose such large scale development in respect of SAP28 and SAP29 given they are located wholly outside the settlement confines and consequently they totally contradict the will of DDC to protect the open countryside. Furthermore, neither development proposal can be regarded as affording sustainable modes of transport when alternatives to the motor vehicle simply do not exist in the established settlements.

2.4 To explore the sustainable aspects further, the following table is a comparison of the facilities and amenities which actually exist within Eythorne and Elvington to those which the local plan site allocations policies of SAP28 and SAP29 state and on which the sustainability assessment was based.

Facility/Amenity	Actual	Local Plan
<b>EYTHORNE</b>		
Two village halls	X (One village hall)	✓
Primary School (also serves Elvington)	✓	✓
Woodpecker Court (post 16 education)	✓	X
Two churches	✓	✓
Public House	✓	✓
Cafe	✓ (weekends only)	✓
Post Office	X	✓ (separate facility implied)
Village Shop (with Post Office counter)	✓	✓
Playground	✓	✓
Garage Servicing & Repairs	✓	X
<b>Elvington</b>		
Village Hall	✓	✓
Church	X	✓
Village Shop	✓	✓
Food Takeaways (2No.)	✓	✓
Hairdressers	X (Barber's)	✓
Recreation Ground	✓	✓
Allotments	✓	X

It can therefore be seen that the statement of facilities/amenities within the local plan is somewhat inaccurate given that, of the 17 categories identified, 7 were quoted incorrectly, i.e. 41%. Significantly the overstatement in the local plan accounts for 24% of the total number of categories and therefore results in a negative outcome when judging how sustainable the new developments can be.

2.5 Although the local plan emphasises the local amenities which exist within Eythorne and Elvington what it doesn't do is identify the services and facilities which do not exist nor are available in close proximity thus adding a significant negative outcome on the sustainability, and indeed suitability, of SAP28 and SAP29. For example there is no GP surgery, no conveniently located secondary education or higher education, no nearby supermarket outlet and no public transport provision. Consequently, the major services required by families e.g. education, health and food shopping, and in particular those of any new developments, all will need to be accessed using non sustainable forms of transport. Crucially at the end of October 2022 the bus service for Elvington and Eythorne to Dover was withdrawn removing all public transport provision from the two villages. This only serves to exacerbate the need for motor vehicle usage and strengthens the traffic predictions noted in 3.2 below.

2.6 Since the withdrawal of the bus service at the end of October 2022, there are already signs of this having a devastating impact on the local community. The service was relied upon by some to get to work, travel to university, visit Dover leisure centre to utilise a membership, access medical services and visiting family and friends. All these activities have been curtailed with no other safe and viable travelling alternatives available.

Under such circumstances it is impossible to imagine how any new developments in the area can be regarded as sustainable growth and not have significant detrimental impacts on the existing community and its infrastructure.

2.7 To suggest the sites are within 200m of a Public Right of Way or cycle path in the sustainability assessment is a misleading metric as not only does this not consider if the PROW/Cycle path is suitable for the destination required, the actual number of PROW's and cycle paths are limited and indeed some PROW's prohibit cycling thus resulting in very limiting value to new development.

2.8 Given also that the Eythorne Elvington CP School is already over subscribed in school places, this will promote the need to travel well beyond the village settlements to gain primary education and only serves to highlight how absurd it is to promote new development on the scale suggested.

2.9 The proximity of the Pike Road Industrial Estate does provide some opportunity for local employment however there has not been any new development, and hence increased employment opportunity, at the site since the 2002 local plan. In fact a granted planning application in 2013 for new development has not to this day been implemented.

### **3. Highways and Transportation**

#### **3.1 On Site Highway Design**

3.1.1 At this early stage in the process it is not possible to predict the types of housing to be provided, where they are located and the road layouts required to support SAP28, SAP29 and SAP30. However, the Regulation 19 document makes reference to certain guiding highway related criteria in each case and which should be met in the development design. The criteria for each allocated area is as follows (paragraph prefix's refer to the Regulation 19 document):

##### 3.1.1 (i) SAP28

c) Community facilities, employment opportunities, and a new small convenience shop in an accessible location to meet the day-to-day convenience shopping needs of new residents;

f) Suitable access arrangements will be provided from Adelaide Road and Terrace Road, with associated improvements and traffic calming measures to both Adelaide Road and Terrace Road where necessary. Proposals should also investigate the opportunity to deliver a further site access from Wigmore Lane;

g) The following will be required in relation to wider strategic and local highway mitigation measures, to be informed by a Transport Assessment in accordance with Policy TI2:

- i. Consideration of the need for traffic management improvements to Church Hill, including a review of parking restrictions;
- ii. A review of the impact on the surrounding rural road network, and mitigation where necessary;

h) On and off-site sustainable transport measures including new and improved pedestrian links and cycle paths to connect the site with the services and facilities in Eythorne and Elvington; and public transport provision, informed by a Travel Plan which will be required in accordance with Policy TI2.

##### 3.1.1 (ii) SAP29

b) Primary vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access to the site shall be provided from Beech Drive;

c) A pedestrian crossing point is to be provided across Sweetbriar Lane to allow connection to the existing footway network and enhance access to services in the southern area of the settlement;

d) A Transport Statement is required in accordance with Policy TI2 to identify any additional off-site highway improvements and sustainable transport measures that are necessary to serve the development;

##### 3.1.1 (iii) SAP30

No highway specific criteria stated.

3.1.2 Clearly it will only be possible to fully appreciate the implications of the above requirements as and when planning applications/master plans are drawn up but it is possible to reflect on the suitability or not of the existing highway infrastructure and the likely consequences of such development proposals on it and the following paragraphs seek to do that.

The Regulation 19 document also stipulates the following new access arrangements for each land allocation:

SAP28 – new development access onto Adelaide Road and Terrace Road

SAP29 – new development access onto Beech Drive

SAP30 – new development access onto Chapel Hill

#### **3.2 Traffic Generation**

3.2.1 The volume of traffic, or trip generation rates as it is known, will vary according to the type of development proposed and the mix of housing therein. As stated above site specific Transport Assessments (SAP28) and Transport Statements (SAP29) will need to be produced to verify the likely trip rates from development proposals.

3.2.2 The District Council's policy T12, included within the Regulation 19 document, states in Section 10.8: *Traffic generated by development should normally be targeted towards the primary and secondary route network in the District. Other routes should not be subject to inappropriate levels of traffic generation or unsuitable traffic movements.* In terms of judging whether a development meets such criteria where it does not connect directly to the primary or secondary route network, appears to rely on the quantum of inappropriate levels of traffic generation or unsuitable traffic movements. In the case of SAP28 and SAP29 which do not connect to the primary or secondary network, trip rate determination and validation is crucial in judging any level of inappropriateness of the additional traffic movements to the local road network from the development proposals. Therefore the Parish Council insists that any traffic assessment or statement is underpinned by some form of traffic modelling of the existing road network as opposed to an interpretive assessment of the additional traffic movements and in turn the subjective assessment of its affect.

3.2.3 The additional traffic movements as a result of development will materialise from the following three key activities:

- (i) motor traffic movements generated by trips involving people in the household, by any private motorised mode, involving a household vehicle or another vehicle (e.g. visitor's vehicle, taxi, work vehicle)
- (ii) motor traffic movements generated by servicing, such as plumbers etc. and personal visits to an address made by people not part of the household (e.g. friends and family)
- (iii) home deliveries to people in the household

It is therefore clearly apparent that a development consisting of homes with a greater number of bedrooms will have the potential to generate traffic to higher numbers than those with fewer bedrooms. It is this key fact which makes any advance impact assessment of development proposals difficult.

3.2.4 However, it would appear that the development design criteria set out for SAP28 in Regulation 19 by DDC somewhat pre-empts a forgone conclusion that connection of the future development to the existing local road network is acceptable as the criteria goes on to suggest mitigation measures rather than requiring the test of *'inappropriate levels of traffic generation or unsuitable traffic movements'* to be undertaken. The very mention of the need for traffic calming measures for Adelaide Road and Terrace Road and traffic management improvements to Church Hill suggests the development of SAP28 will cause problems, namely speeding, on the immediate local road network but not to the level of it being *inappropriate or unsuitable*. It should be noted that traffic calming is a measure to discourage speeding of motor vehicles and in the context of the local plan reference it is an inappropriate solution when simply considering increased volumes of traffic.

3.2.5 For an initial idea of the number of additional traffic movements the new developments would generate it is assumed that a figure of 1.5 motor vehicle movements per day per household be applied. This would therefore equate to an additional 450 vehicle movements per day from SAP28 and 75 from SAP29, these having the greatest impact. These figures are for indicative purposes only as the key is to ensure, as mentioned above, that a more robust traffic modelling approach is taken to determine the likely detrimental effects.

3.2.6 So how does this compare with the existing motor vehicle movements. Data obtained via the Speedwatch initiative shows that the average traffic volume per day along Adelaide Road towards Eythorne is 992, this was recorded over the course of two weekly periods on five occasions from 3<sup>rd</sup> January to 26<sup>th</sup> September in 2022. From the above given the additional traffic movements from SAP28 and SAP29 of 525, it can be seen that this will increase traffic movements over the existing situation by some 53%. The Speedwatch data also shows that 15.5% of the existing traffic volume per day were speeding beyond the 35mph base line speed. Alarming, the top recorded speed of 60mph was recorded on four of the five recording periods. Clearly there is high potential from any new development to exacerbate these problems.

3.2.7 Notwithstanding the assessment of the existing local highway infrastructure in 3.3 below and the identification of sub-standard geometry, the potential situation in Adelaide Road detailed above is of great concern and clearly demonstrates the test of *'inappropriate levels of traffic generation or unsuitable traffic movements'* is very much the outcome.

### 3.3 Existing Local Highway Infrastructure

3.3.1 The existing local highway in the immediate vicinity of SAP28 and mentioned in the local plan as being the roads the development will be accessed from are Adelaide Road (USRN 11303549) and Terrace Road (USRN 11301228) both leading to, in the predominant direction, Church Hill (USRN 11300241). Both Adelaide Road and Church Hill are classified as C roads whilst Terrace Road is Unclassified.

3.3.2 The development area SAP29 is identified to be accessed via Beech Drive (USRN 11300097) which is an Unclassified road. It is worthy of note that the additional traffic movements generated by SAP29 will need to be considered alongside SAP28 as it is realistic to foresee that traffic from SAP29 will predominantly travel towards Sweetbriar Lane, Terrace Road, Adelaide Road and Church Hill. It is felt unlikely that traffic will take a route via Milner Road to exit Elvington unless the journey is specifically to access the local retail in Adelaide Road. In addition Sweetbriar Lane at its southerly end where it joins Terrace Road is very narrow, approximately 4m in width, has substandard visibility, contains concealed entrances and supports on street parking, all of which would render this route unacceptable for additional motor vehicle movements.



3.3.3 It would be useful to understand the characteristics of each of the local road network which will be affected by the proposed developments and details are as follows:

#### 3.3.3 (i) Adelaide Road

This road essentially runs north/south and is a C class single carriageway rural road at an average 5.5m wide. It has a narrow metalled footway, 1.4m in width, along its eastern side with footways on both sides as it approaches Eythorne. It does have significant elevation towards Elvington and this will result in higher vehicle speeds in a southerly direction (refer to Speedwatch data above).

It is mainly a 30mph route with a section from the built up area in Eythorne to Church Hill being within a 20mph zone. It has street lighting and is a designated bus route with unregulated on street parking. It is also the primary road for access to the Eythorne Elvington CP School.

It has substandard forward visibility around the left hand bend where it adjoins Church Hill and the adjoining Barfreestone Road to the west does not have adequate side road visibility in the northerly direction despite being within a 20mph zone, refer to photo below which was taken at an x distance of 2.4m. The substandard elements of this bend/junction cannot be improved within the limits of the existing publicly maintainable highway. It should be regarded as a significant hazard when considering the effects of the increase in traffic that would be generated by SAP28 and SAP29 despite the 20mph zone being in place.



#### 3.3.3 (ii) Church Hill

In addition to the lack of forward visibility around the bend Church Hill also has a narrowing carriageway mid way which at its narrowest is approximately 3.5m in width. Although it acts as a natural calming feature it would become a hazard with greater traffic volumes and be a likely point of conflict. It is within a 20mph zone with street lighting, on street parking and a footway on its eastern side.

At its southern end where it meets the Shepherdswell Road it has a mandatory Stop at the junction given the lack of junction visibility to the west on Shepherdswell Road.

#### 3.3.3 (iii) Terrace Road

This road is within a 20mph zone and has traffic calming features throughout its length. It is 4.9m in width although it facilitates on street parking throughout the northern side, as shown below, effectively narrowing the road to single track. There are no opportunities to remove the on street parking to off street. The road has street lighting.



#### 3.3.3 (iv) Sweetbriar Lane

The section of road from Beech Drive to Milner Road is a more traditional access road with only a few properties directly fronting the road on its southwestern side. It is also within a 20mph zone and has traffic calming features throughout between Roman Way and Milner Road. It has street lighting. As mentioned above it is entirely feasible to foresee that the additional traffic generated by SAP29 will exit the area via Sweetbriar Lane and Terrace Road. However, the southerly end of Sweetbriar Lane becomes almost single track as its width does not permit vehicles in opposing directions to pass without having to give way. The narrowness of this section of road is demonstrated in the photo below and taken from a drivers' perspective. It contains concealed vehicular entrances and has sub-standard forward visibility. It supports a narrow footway along its south western side but given the narrowness of the road this presents a hazard for pedestrians despite the provision of the footway.



#### 3.3.3 (v) Beech Drive

This is an existing cul-de-sac within a 20mph zone and is a standard 4.8m wide minor access road. It is traffic calmed and has street lighting.

The local plan currently identifies that SAP29 will have its primary vehicular, pedestrian and cycling access from Beech Drive.

#### 3.3.3 (vi) Wigmore Lane and Shepherdsweil Road

During the mid 2010 decade traffic calming was installed along parts of Wigmore Lane and Shepherdsweil Road to discourage rat-running to and from the A256/A2. The traffic calming was intended to encourage traffic to use both

strategic routes rather than the unsuitable road network, but more direct route, through Eythorne and Shepherdswell. The principle of the traffic calming in this location will be completely undermined by the additional traffic movements both SAP28 and SAP29 will generate particularly as this traffic emanates from within the villages as opposed to outside of them, where a choice of route would be present, unlike the situation of additional movements from within.

### **3.4 Sustainable Transport**

3.4.1 The opportunity for sustainable travel in and around Eythorne and Elvington is limited as very few cycle paths exist and the public transport bus service 92/92A Dover to Elvington, serving both villages, has had its funding subsidy withdrawn, as from October 2022, by Kent County Council leaving the service in serious doubt as to whether a commercial alternative will ever exist.

The nearest rail station is Shepherdswell which provides an hourly service direct to both Dover and Canterbury. However, the Shepherdswell station is approximately 2.5 miles from Elvington and is not therefore safely nor sustainably reached other than by motor vehicle.

### **3.5 On site development highway design**

3.5.1 It is not possible to determine at this stage how each development area will be laid out and therefore what the likely highway infrastructure will be. However, Kent Design Guide – Designing for Movement does offer some guidance on road layouts and their respective technical design requirements based on housing numbers.

3.5.2 In respect of SAP28 the local plan currently identifies that access to the site will be from Adelaide Road and Terrace Road. Given the characteristics of Terrace Road it is unlikely any development proposals would identify a major road access and more likely to include a minor access way/cul-de-sac approach. This would then reduce the housing numbers below 300, albeit slightly below, for the access onto Adelaide Road. Such an approach would require a highway design at some point along the road network to Major Access Road design standards. The key design principles for a Major Access Road are:

- i) it serves between 50 and 300 dwellings
- ii) has two points of access
- iii) carriageway width of 5.5m
- iv) have a target speed of 25mph
- v) achieve junction visibility splay of 2.4m x 45m

It is very obvious that the above SAP28 highway design requirements are at best comparable to but in most cases more onerous than the existing standards on the adjoining local highway network. Given also that sections of the existing network will be required to sustain far higher traffic movements than just that of SAP28 and SAP29, it is wholly inappropriate to subject the local network with any increase in traffic movements and consequently greatly compromise highway safety.

3.5.3 Similarly, the on site highway design criteria for SAP29 will be superior to the characteristics and geometry of the existing highway network it would connect to and again render any suggestion of additional traffic inappropriate for the location identified.

### **3.6 Concluding Summary**

3.6.1 In consideration of the above and other representations made by the Parish Council during the Regulation 18 consultation, Eythorne Parish Council strongly objects to the District Council's Regulation 19 submission containing the future development of local plan areas SAP28 and SAP29 on the following grounds and therefore calls for the Planning Inspectorate to remove both areas from the approved local plan document:

- a) the development areas contradict the District Council's intentions to promote sustainable growth
- b) the development areas, without good reason, contravenes the District Council's policy and NPPF objectives of achieving sustainable development and protecting the open countryside
- c) the development areas are wholly outside the existing settlement confines and will erode valuable open countryside without any overwhelming reason or justification
- d) the consequence of the local plan proposals in respect of SAP28 and SAP29 conflicts with the Government's food strategy as it removes existing productive agri-land and weakens our national food security position



- e) the development areas will place significant demand on services which are already oversubscribed or unavailable to the existing community
- f) there are no local employment opportunities to sustain any further demand for jobs
- g) the existing local highway network features many hazards and sub-standard geometric elements which will develop into a greater compromise on highway safety given the substantial increase in traffic movements generated
- h) parts of the existing local highway network already suffer from excessive vehicle speeds and as such this problem will be significantly exacerbated by the substantial increase in traffic movements generated
- i) the existing highway network characteristics of on street parking and additional traffic calming will promote greater traffic conflict and the potential for driver rage, as a result of the higher incidence of conflict from the additional traffic generated
- j) the local plan suggestion of traffic calming to roads not currently traffic calmed is suggested without foundation as the following criteria, applicable to any proposed traffic calming scheme, has not been proven:
  - i) to contribute to casualty reduction
  - ii) to reduce excessive speeding
  - iii) to improve environment and quality of life issues
- k) the existing local highway infrastructure simply cannot sustain a 53% increase in traffic whilst avoiding the unacceptable consequent dangers to the travelling public as a result
- l) given the absence of any sustainably recognised transport facilities in and around Eythorne and Elvington none of the proposed development areas can meet the local plan aspirations of sustainable development or sustainable transport being realised

Eythorne Parish Council

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