EAST PECKHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

TOPIC PAPER 5

AMENITIES AND SERVICES

Version: Final Draft **Date:** 25 June 2026

This Topic Paper provides an analysis of the key amenities and community facilities in East Peckham. It includes their use, how they serve the local community and any issues relating to their long-term sustainability.

SUMMARY

East Peckham's village centre supports a genuine day-to-day amenity base: the Post Office, shops, Co-op, green spaces and playing fields are all used weekly or more often by a large majority of residents. The Pharmacy is also well used. However, the parish has **no GP practice or dentist,** and access to healthcare is the single most-cited specific service concern in the 2026 Residents Questionnaire (73% of respondents), behind only the cross-cutting concerns of overdevelopment and loss of green space.

Community life is sustained largely by a voluntary sector running at least 17 regularly-meeting clubs and groups, three community halls, and the village's annual events programme — infrastructure that is valuable but inherently fragile. This paper draws on the 104-response 2026 Residents Questionnaire (as at 16/6/2026), the 2021 Census, and the connectivity evidence shared with Topic Papers 1 and 6 to set out what East Peckham has, what it lacks, and what residents say is missing.

104	**0**	**73%**	**52%**
RESIDENT SURVEY RESPONSES (2026)	GPs OR DENTISTS IN THE PARISH	CITE GP/HEALTHCARE ACCESS AS A TOP CONCERN	WANT MORE PHARMACY/HEALTHCARE PROVISION

- **Core amenities are heavily used:** shops (93% weekly+), green spaces (89%), playing fields (70%) and the Post Office (68%) are all in frequent use — these are the assets the NDP should prioritise protecting.
- **Healthcare is the clearest gap:** no GP or dentist in the parish; 73% of residents cite healthcare access as a top concern and 52% want more pharmacy/healthcare provision — the single most requested facility type.
- **Youth and teenage provision is the second clearest gap:** 42% want more facilities for teenagers and 35% want more youth facilities, against only 7% wanting more childcare/nursery provision — the unmet need is concentrated in older children and teens, not the very young. However there is a current lack of survey responses from key demographics that might change this conclusion.
- **Community infrastructure depends on volunteers:** at least 17 regularly-meeting clubs and groups operate from three halls.

Survey still open

All percentages and counts in this paper drawn from the "2026 Residents Questionnaire" are based on 104 responses received as of June 2026. The survey was still open and actively collecting responses at the time of writing, so this is an interim, incomplete dataset. Figures may shift — potentially materially on lower-volume questions — as further responses are received, and should be treated as indicative rather than final until the survey closes and the full dataset is re-analysed.

1. LOCATION AND SETTLEMENT PATTERN

1.1 East Peckham lies at the eastern edge of the Tonbridge & Malling Borough (TMBC) boundary, approximately:

- 7 miles south of the M20 motorway
- 3 miles north of Paddock Wood
- 6 miles east of Tonbridge
- 9 miles south-west of Maidstone
- 11 miles north-east of Tunbridge Wells
- 15 miles south-east of Sevenoaks

1.2 Paddock Wood, West Malling and Tonbridge railway stations provide access to London and beyond; these and the larger towns nearby offer more substantial services and amenities than are available within the parish itself. *See Topic Paper 6* for the full transport and connections evidence base.

1.3 Settlement Pattern

1.3.1 East Peckham is a rural parish made up of **nine distinct hamlets** with **1,349 households** at the 2021 Census (OA best-fit, 3,282 residents — *see Topic Paper 1 for demographic evidence base*). This dispersed, multi-hamlet structure means that the concentration of services in the village centre serves a population that is, in practice, spread across a wider and less walkable area than a single nucleated village of the same size. There is a link here to the footpath network and its accessibility.

2. KEY SERVICES AND AMENITIES

2. 1 The provision of key services is concentrated in the village centre. This section sets out what is available.

2.2 Education and Childcare

2.2.1 East Peckham has a Primary School on Church Lane/Pound Road, a children's nursery, and a public library. School capacity is examined in detail in Section 3.2.

2.3 Shops and Retail

2.3.1 In the village centre:

Village Stores and Butchers	Post Office and Newsagents
Co-op Local	Pharmacy (Field)
Coffee shop / wine bar	Beauty salon
Hairdressers	

2.3.2 Away from the village centre:

Shell fuel station	Brookside Garden Centre
Travis Perkins	Coop convenience store at fuel station

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2.4 Community Halls and Places of Worship

2.4.1 Community halls:

The Village Hall	Jubilee Hall
Methodist Hall	

2.4.2 Places of worship:

Holy Trinity Church of England	Baptist Church
The Methodist Church	St. Michael's Church
Salvation Army	

2.4.3
The nearest Catholic Church is Paddock Wood or Tonbridge, with the constraints regarding public transport considered in *Topic Paper 6.*

2.5 Pubs, Food and Takeaways

2.5.1 Pubs:

Bush, Blackbird and Thrush	The Man of Kent

2.5.2 Food outlets and takeaways:

The Red Fort Ghurka Restaurant and takeaway	Khan Spice Restaurant and takeaway
Chinese takeaway	The Pound Fish Bar
The Village Grill	Branbridges Café
East Peckham Kebab and Pizza	

2.6 Leisure, Recreation and Green Space

Playing Fields	Children's play areas
Outdoor adult exercise equipment	Biking track
Tennis courts	Walking routes
Allotments	Fishing along the river

2.6.1 The Salvation Army continues to have a significant presence as part of the local community as well as offering a place to worship.

2.6.2 There are also two Almshouses that are operated as part of a registered charity.

2.7 Community Groups and Annual Events

2.7.1 At least **17 regularly-meeting community groups and clubs** currently operate in the parish:

Baby and Toddler Group	Table tennis
Rainbows, Brownies and Guides	Historical Society

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Beavers and Cubs	Music groups (Big Band and Silver Band)
Evergreens	Community Choir
Short Mat bowls	Russet Players Amateur Dramatics
Coffee Mornings	Pilates, Yoga and Tai Chi
Craft Club	Fiction Clubs
WI	Book clubs
Community Fridge	

2.7.2 The Parish Council also hosts several annual community events, including the **Summer Fete**, the **Halloween Walk**, and the **Christmas Lights Switch-On**.

2.8 Resident Usage of Key Amenities

2.8.1 The 2026 Residents Questionnaire asked respondents how often they use each of the following amenities. The results, ordered from most to least frequently used, give the clearest evidence yet of which assets genuinely serve the day-to-day life of the parish:

Amenity	Used weekly or more often	Never used
Shops	**93%**	1%
Green spaces	**89%**	1%
Playing Fields	70%	7%
Post Office	68%	1%
Chemist/Pharmacy	38%	2%
Sports Facilities	23%	33%
Takeaway(s)	23%	12%
Pub	19%	19%
Community halls (other use)	19%	24%
Library	15%	35%
Bus service	14%	41%
Places of worship	12%	63%
Primary School	9%	86%
Allotments	3%	96%

Survey evidence note

Usage and priority figures in this paper are drawn from the East Peckham NDP Residents Questionnaire 2026 — an interim dataset of 104 responses collected online up to June 2026. The survey remains open at the time of writing, so these figures are not final and should be re-checked against the full dataset once the survey closes. The sample is also skewed slightly older than the parish as a whole: 60% of respondents are aged 55 or over, compared with an estimated 48.5% of the adult (16+) population from the 2021 Census (Topic Paper 1). Figures should be read as indicative of engaged

residents at this point in time rather than a final, population-representative survey, but the sample size and consistency with independently-sourced census and connectivity data (Topic Papers 1 and 6) support its provisional use as evidence.

2.8.2 The four most-used amenities — shops, green spaces, playing fields, and the Post Office — are used weekly or more by over two-thirds of respondents and should be treated as the core assets the NDP must protect. At the other end, low usage of the Library (15% weekly+, 35% never), the bus service (14% weekly+, 41% never) and Allotments (3% weekly+, 96% never) does not necessarily indicate low value — low usage of the bus service is consistent with the limited service frequency documented in *Topic Paper 6*, and the Primary School's 86% "never use" figure simply reflects that most respondents do not currently have a child at the school. These figures should prompt further investigation into whether under-use reflects awareness, opening hours, or service frequency rather than a genuine absence of demand.

3. ACCESS TO SERVICES AND SCHOOL CAPACITY

3.1 Geographic Accessibility

3.1.1 East Peckham scores above average on accessibility deprivation relative to both national and district benchmarks:

Indicator	East Peckham	England avg	TMBC avg	Direction
Department for Transport (DfT) Connectivity Score (0–100)	45.05	64.81	55.35	Lower = more isolated
Indices of Deprivation (IoD) 2025 Geographical Barriers rank	4,641	17,061 (avg)	9,952 (avg)	Lower rank = more deprived

3.1.2 The DfT Connectivity Score of 45.05 places East Peckham well below the England average, reflecting limited public transport provision, the rural road network, and distance from major service centres. The IoD Geographical Barriers rank of 4,641 out of approximately 32,000 LSOAs in England confirms that East Peckham is among the quarter most poorly served communities in England for physical access to services. See *Topic Paper 6* for the full transport evidence base.

3.2 Primary School Capacity

3.2.1 *(See Demographics Paper, Section 8.2–8.4, for the full roll, capacity, and admissions-demand evidence base; this summary uses the same DfE sources and is consistent with it.)*

3.2.2 East Peckham Primary School (URN 118290) is a community school with no religious character, 1-form entry, 30 places per year, 210 total capacity (Reception–Year 6). Its Kent County Council (KCC) admissions-planning comparator is Hadlow Primary School (URN 118273).

3.2.3 The school's spare capacity has fallen sharply and its admissions demand has reversed. DfE published school capacity statistics show roll climbing from a 15-year low of 158/210 (75.2% full, 2020/21) to 203/210 (96.7% full) by 2024/25 — just 7 spare places, the tightest position in the whole series. Over the same period, Reception-entry demand has moved from comfortably undersubscribed (no year reached a demand ratio of 1.00 between 2016/17 and 2021/22) to genuinely oversubscribed in two of the last three admissions cycles (2023/24 and 2025/26: 37 first-preference applicants for 30 places, ratio 1.23). This shift is dateable to a change of headteacher in May 2022, and a comparator check (Hadlow Primary moved in the opposite direction over the same period) suggests the cause is school-specific rather than an area-wide effect. On current trends, new Reception-age children in the parish are not guaranteed an in-parish place,

and some would likely need to be educated outside East Peckham — a reasonable planning inference, not a settled fact.

3.2.4 Capacity across the wider KCC admissions planning area is similarly constrained, though headroom is not literally zero. KCC's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026–2030 (approved by Cabinet, 4 December 2025) forecasts the Hadlow and East Peckham planning group (combined Year R capacity 60) at a current surplus of 3 places (2024/25), oscillating between small surpluses and deficits (-2 to +5) through to 2034/35. KCC's own assessment is that it will "monitor the situation carefully" but anticipates "sufficient places in neighbouring planning groups to meet the demand" — consistent with the Demographics Paper's independent DfE-census finding of a combined actual Reception roll of 53 against 60 capacity (surplus of 7, January 2025). Both sources agree the current position is a small surplus, not zero spare capacity — but one forecast to tighten into deficit in several years of the plan period, leaving little genuine room to absorb new housing-driven demand.

3.2.5 Neighbouring planning groups offer little practical relief. In the adjacent Kings Hill planning group (Discovery School, Kings Hill School, Mereworth Community Primary School and Valley Invicta Primary School at Kings Hill — all four sit within this single KCC group, not as separate areas), two of the four schools are confirmed over capacity on the latest DfE figures: Discovery School (636/630, 101%) and Valley Invicta Primary School at Kings Hill (224/210, 107%); Kings Hill School Primary and Nursery is essentially full (419/420, 99.8%); Mereworth itself stood at 207/210 (98.6%) in 2024/25. KCC's own forecast for this group shows a 2-place deficit by 2028/29, widening to around 30 places from 2031/32 onwards, with a potential need for an additional permanent form of entry later in the plan period.

3.2.6 Capel Primary School sits in a different KCC group again — the Paddock Wood planning group, alongside Paddock Wood Primary School itself — and was at 211/210 (101%, over capacity) in 2024/25. This group is under the most acute pressure of any in the wider area: KCC's own plan records "significant housebuilding in recent years" driving forecast deficits "throughout the Plan period," reaching close to 50 places by the early 2030s, and confirms a new primary school is being established in Paddock Wood specifically to meet that town's own demand from 2028-29 onwards — confirming this new school has no spare capacity to offer East Peckham and was never intended to.

3.2.7 Every 100 new homes (50% affordable) is estimated to generate demand for approximately 25–35 additional primary school places in East Peckham. This is broadly consistent with DfE's national pupil-yield methodology — which finds affordable housing generates a higher pupil yield than market housing — though the precise figure has not been independently verified against Kent's own published local multiplier and should be treated as indicative rather than confirmed.

3.2.8 Taken together: no primary school within practical reach of East Peckham currently has comfortable spare capacity, several are already over their published capacity, and the one new school being delivered in the wider area (Paddock Wood) is earmarked for a different town's own housing growth. The nearest schools with any headroom cannot readily absorb a significant new housing yield in East Peckham without capital infrastructure investment — consistent with KCC's stated policy that primary children should be educated within their immediate local community wherever possible.

3.2.9 Sources: DfE "School capacity" 2024/25 release; DfE "Primary and secondary school applications and offers" 2026/27 release (school-level dataset); DfE "Schools, pupils and their characteristics" 2024/25 and 2025/26 releases; Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026–2030 (KCC Cabinet, 4 December 2025); GIAS (cross-check only). Full citations in the Demographics Paper change log.

4. ABSENCE OF SERVICES: HEALTH

4.1 GP and Dentist

4.1.1 There is **no GP practice and no dentist located within East Peckham parish**. Residents must travel to neighbouring settlements for primary healthcare and dental treatment. For GP services East Peckham residents are reliant on surrounding practices (Paddock Wood, Hadlow, Yalding, Wateringbury, or Marden). Many of these books are now closed to new patients.

4.1.2 There is a very active Pharmacy which also acts as a vaccination centre, and attracts customers for vaccination from a very wide area.

4.2 Hospitals

4.2.1 The nearest hospitals are located at Pembury (Tunbridge Wells) and Maidstone.

4.2.2 Nationally, the 65+ age group accounts for 40% of NHS hospital admissions and occupies two-thirds of inpatient beds. East Peckham's significantly older demographic profile (25.0% aged 65+, compared with ~18–20% across England, Kent and TMBC — *see Topic Paper* 1) means this national pressure bears disproportionately on local residents, with the 75+ and 85+ sub-groups requiring the most intensive support.

4.3 What the Survey Tells Us

4.3.1 Healthcare access is not a marginal concern in East Peckham — it is central to how residents experience the parish:

- **73% of respondents** cited "Access to GP or healthcare" as one of their main concerns about the future of the parish — the single most-cited specific service concern, behind only the cross-cutting concerns of overdevelopment (88%), loss of green space (87%), and flooding/drainage (78%).
- **52% of respondents** said "Pharmacy or healthcare provision" was the facility East Peckham most needs more of — the top-ranked specific request of any kind in the survey.
- **38% of respondents use a chemist/pharmacy weekly or more often**, and only 2% never use one — indicating that the pharmacy provision is heavily relied upon despite residents simultaneously saying they want more of it. This points to unmet capacity rather than lack of awareness or demand.

4.4 Transport Constraints on Healthcare Access

4.4.1 Topic Paper 6 examines the constraints of transport and connections in detail. The combination of no GP or dentist in the parish, limited public transport, and an ageing population profile compounds the accessibility challenge: only **14% of survey respondents use the bus service weekly or more often, and 41% never use it at all** — consistent with the finding in *Topic Paper 6* that the only year-round bus service through the village runs daytime only, Monday to Saturday, with no Sunday or evening journeys. As more residents pass the age threshold for driving reduction or cessation, the absence of local healthcare provision combined with limited public transport will become an increasingly significant barrier to independent living.

5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Community Connectedness, Cohesion and Engagement

5.1.1 Historically, East Peckham has demonstrated a real sense of community spirit and a significant willingness to help and support neighbours and community organisations. Experience since COVID-19 suggests that the willingness and availability of people to volunteer has decreased, though it remains a cornerstone of village life.

5.1.2 How residents currently find out what's happening (2026 survey, tick all that apply):

Channel	Share of respondents
Local social media (Facebook etc.)	73%
Word of mouth / friends or neighbours	62%
Parish Magazine	53%
Notice boards	34%

Channel	Share of respondents
Posters and banners	34%
Parish Council website	33%
Flyers or leaflets	33%
Other local organisation websites	12%

5.1.3 No single channel reaches a majority of residents on its own — even the most-used channel (social media) reaches only 73%. Effective community engagement and NDP consultation therefore requires running multiple channels in parallel rather than relying on any one method. Only **15 of 104 respondents (14%)** proactively volunteered their contact details to help with the Neighbourhood Plan. While this is a narrow proxy and not a full measure of village-wide volunteering activity, it is consistent with the qualitative post-COVID decline in volunteer availability, and underlines that active engagement capacity should not be assumed to be large.

5.1.4 There is an inherent tension between maintaining central access to key services and the pressure for new, appropriate development sites — a tension made explicit by residents themselves: 88% cite overdevelopment and 87% cite loss of green space as top concerns for the parish's future (*see Section 5.6*).

5.2 Social Infrastructure and the Voluntary Sector

5.2.1 The current and projected social profile of East Peckham means there is a need to cater for both the young and the old simultaneously (*see Topic Paper 1 for the full demographic evidence*). Much of the support and services available to elderly residents comes through the voluntary sector — the 17+ clubs and groups identified in Section 2.6, operating from three community halls. The impact of the potential loss of any of these services, or the premises they operate from, could be significant. The Neighbourhood Development Plan needs to consider how the voluntary and community sector is supported and how any at-risk premises and services are preserved.

5.2.2 22% of survey respondents specifically said East Peckham needs more activities for older residents — directly evidencing the pressure described in *Topic Paper 1* (821 residents aged 65+ in 2021; Old-Age Dependency Ratio of 465 per 1,000 working-age residents, the highest in the district).

5.3 Education and Younger Residents

5.3.1 In order to promote better age balance across the community, more families need to be able to move to East Peckham — but the Primary School cannot accommodate a large new influx of children, and there is no surplus capacity elsewhere locally (*Section 3.2*). The survey evidence sharpens where the real gap for younger residents lies:

- **5.3.2 Childcare/nursery provision:** only 7% of respondents want more — a relatively low priority. However there is a current lack of survey responses from key demographics that might change this conclusion.
- **5.3.3 Facilities for teenagers:** 42% want more — the second-highest specific request in the entire survey.
- **5.3.4 Youth facilities (broader):** 35% want more.

5.3.2 The unmet need for younger residents is concentrated in provision for older children and teenagers, not under-fives — a distinct policy consideration from general "leisure" or "childcare" framing.

5.4 Health, Care and the Ageing Population

5.4.1 Older people need to be able to access healthcare, and any loss of mobility or ability to drive makes this more challenging — particularly given the absence of a GP or dentist in the parish (*Section 4*). Cross-referencing *Topic Paper 1*: 16% of residents are classified as disabled under the Equality Act 2010, and 9.9%

provide unpaid care (3.8% providing 50+ hours per week). As the 75+ and 85+ sub-groups shift in size through the plan period, demand for accessible local services, domiciliary support, and dementia-friendly design will remain elevated even as the overall 65+ share stabilises.

5.5 What Residents Say is Missing

5.5.1 Asked directly what facilities or services East Peckham needs more of (tick all that apply, 100 respondents), the ranked results are:

Facility or service	Share requesting more
Pharmacy or healthcare provision	**52%**
Facilities for teenagers	42%
More space for parking	37%
Youth facilities	35%
Public open space	34%
Better variety of local shops	27%
Clubs and societies for adults	23%
Activities for older residents	22%
Community seating/benches	15%
Sports and leisure facilities	15%
Play areas	13%
Allotments	8%
Child care/nursery	7%

5.5.2 Healthcare provision is, by a wide margin, the most-requested facility type — 10 percentage points clear of the next-highest request. Parking, public open space and youth/teen facilities form a clear second tier of priorities.

5.6 Resident Priorities and Concerns

5.6.1 Asked about their main concerns for the future of the parish (tick all that apply, 104 respondents), residents ranked:

Concern	Share citing
Overdevelopment	**88%**
Loss of green spaces	**87%**
Flooding and drainage	78%
Access to GP or healthcare	**73%**
Traffic and road safety	65%
Sufficient and suitable village services	53%
Public transport	45%

Concern	Share citing
Lack of housing for older residents	34%
Parking	32%
Lack of affordable housing	31%
School capacity	30%
Lack of high-speed internet/mobile access	29%
Lack of local employment	16%

5.6.2 Healthcare access (73%) sits firmly among residents' top four concerns for the parish's future — alongside overdevelopment, green space loss, and flooding — and ahead of traffic, transport, housing and school capacity. This consistently strong signal, repeated across two separate survey questions (Sections 4.3 and 5.5), is the clearest single message in this evidence base.

6. SUMMARY AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

6.1 East Peckham faces amenity and service challenges at multiple levels. The table below summarises the key evidence and implied planning considerations:

Issue	Evidence	Planning consideration
No GP or dentist in the parish	73% cite GP/healthcare access as a top concern; 52% want more healthcare provision — the top-ranked request	NDP should support and safeguard any opportunity for new healthcare floorspace; engage the ICB on provision for the plan period
Heavy reliance on core amenities	Shops 93%, green spaces 89%, playing fields 70%, Post Office 68% used weekly+	Protect and enhance these high-footfall assets;
Under-used legacy assets	Library 15%, bus service 14%, allotments 3% used weekly+	Investigate whether low usage reflects awareness, hours or service frequency before assuming an absence of demand
Gap in teen/youth provision	42% want more facilities for teenagers; 35% want more youth facilities; only 7% want more childcare/nursery	Identify sites or premises for youth-focused provision as a distinct policy from general leisure or childcare
Ageing population pressure on care and activities	22% want more activities for older residents; 821 residents aged 65+; OADR 465 (Topic Paper 1)	Support voluntary/community sector services for older residents; protect the premises they rely on Consider conversation with Almshouse charity.
Reliance on the voluntary sector	17+ active community groups; only 14% of survey respondents proactively offered to help	Consider how to sustain and attract volunteers; protect the most fragile community-run services and venues
Overdevelopment and green space loss are residents' top concerns	88% and 87% citing these respectively	Any growth strategy must explicitly address amenity and green space protection

Issue	Evidence	Planning consideration
Car-dependent access to services	Bus service used weekly+ by only 14%; DfT Connectivity Score 45.05 (Topic Paper 6)	Service and amenity planning cannot assume public transport access; consider community transport options
No single engagement channel reaches a majority	Best channel (social media) reaches only 73% of respondents	Any consultation or engagement strategy should run at least 3–4 channels in parallel

6.2 Survey data: East Peckham NDP Residents Questionnaire 2026 — INTERIM dataset, 104 responses collected online up to June 2026; the survey was still open and accepting responses at the time of writing. Tabulated directly from raw response data; figures should be re-verified against the final dataset once the survey closes.

6.3 Census data: ONS Census 2001, 2011, 2021 (Nomis API), parish-scaled — see Topic Paper 1 for full demographic evidence base.

6.4 Connectivity and deprivation: DfT Connectivity Scores 2024; ONS Indices of Deprivation 2025 — see Topic Paper 6 for full transport evidence base.

6.5 Education: KCC Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026–2030.

6.6 Source: Office for National Statistics, licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right 2023.

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