EAST PECKHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

TOPIC PAPER 6

TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIONS

Version: Final Draft for Committee **Date:** 24 June 2026

SUMMARY

East Peckham's transport network is constrained by a combination of rural geography, limited public transport provision, poor active travel infrastructure, and strategic traffic pressures.

The parish is highly dependent on private vehicles: **90.7% of households own at least one car**.

The only year-round scheduled bus service through the village itself (Route 6) operates every 90 minutes, Monday to Saturday only, with no evening or Sunday journeys. Route 208 (Go-Coach, Mon–Sat) provides the sole bus connection to Tonbridge town centre, terminating at Branbridges Road on the south-eastern edge of the parish — not the village centre.

A Department for Transport (DfT) Connectivity Score of **45.05** (against 64.81 for England and 55.35 for Tonbridge & Malling) confirms the extent of the connectivity deficit. Without significant infrastructure improvements, any new development is likely to exacerbate existing issues.

1. LOCATION — STRATEGIC TRANSPORT CONTEXT

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

- 7 miles south of the M20 motorway
- 3 miles north of Paddock Wood (mainline rail)
- 6 miles east of Tonbridge (mainline rail and A26)
- 9 miles south-west of Maidstone
- 11 miles north-east of Tunbridge Wells
- 15 miles south-east of Sevenoaks

1.2 Mainline rail services (London, Ashford) are available at Paddock Wood (~4.5 km) and West Malling (~7 miles). The Medway Valley Line runs between Paddock Wood and Strood, with Beltring Halt within the parish boundary.

2. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

2.1 Rail

2.1.1 The parish contains **Beltring Halt** on the Medway Valley Line. Despite appearing on maps as a rail asset, Beltring is effectively non-functional as a commuter facility:

- **Usage:** 14,532 entries/exits in 2024/25 (~40 per day), making it the 2,333rd most used station out of 2,586 in Great Britain (RailwayData). It ranks among the least used stations in the UK.
- **Location:** ~2.5 km from the village centre with no safe, illuminated, or continuous pedestrian or cycle connection.
- **Facilities:** Unmanned halt with no car park, no cycle lockers, no shelter beyond a basic platform structure.
- **Connectivity:** The Medway Valley Line provides connections to Maidstone East and Paddock Wood. Journey times to London require a change at Paddock Wood.
- **Frequency of trains:** About 2 per hour,1 per hour on Sunday (in both directions).

2.1.2 Paddock Wood Station (~4.5 km) offers mainline services to London Victoria/Charing Cross and connections to Tunbridge Wells. Access from East Peckham requires travel along the A228 dual carriageway, for which there are no safe pedestrian or cycle corridors. Bus connections to Paddock Wood are limited (see Section 1.2 below). The combination of distance, road danger, and infrequent bus connections makes Paddock Wood rail access car-dependent in practice.

2.1.3 Tonbridge Station also offers connections to London and further afield such as Gatwick.

2.2 Bus Services

2.2.1 Bus service information below is derived from the **DfT Bus Open Data Service (BODS)**, downloaded 12 June 2026, and confirmed by Kent County Council correspondence received 12 June 2026 regarding the hail & ride arrangement on Seven Mile Lane / Hale Street. Services are divided into year-round scheduled services (Section A) and school-day-only services (Section B).

Hail & ride — Seven Mile Lane / Hale Street

KCC has confirmed a formal hail & ride arrangement at Seven Mile Lane / Hale Street, East Peckham (National Public Transport Access Node (NaPTAN) IDs: kntjtada and kntjpwtw). Passengers may board or alight anywhere along this road section by flagging the bus. There is no fixed stop infrastructure at these locations. Services confirmed to use this hail & ride section: Routes 6, 207, 4, HRC1, 506.

2.2.2 Section A — year-round scheduled services

7 Maidstone ↔ Tunbridge Wells via A26 / Hadlow Arriva Kent Thameside and Surrey (AKSS) | A26 CORRIDOR — runs through Hadlow; does NOT serve East Peckham village

Days	Monday to Sunday (7 days)
Weekday	Approximately every 30 minutes, 05:45–22:25
Saturday	Approximately every 30 minutes, 06:36–23:25
Sunday	Reduced — approximately every 30 minutes, 08:16–17:20

Note: *NEW service effective 31 May 2026, replacing the former Route 7 / National Express 7. Runs the same A26 corridor. High frequency (every 30 min, 7 days) makes this the strongest bus connection through the Hadlow corridor — but it does not serve East Peckham village.*

6X Maidstone Hospital ↔ Tunbridge Wells Hospital via A228 Arriva Kent Thameside and Surrey (AKSS) | A228 CORRIDOR — eastern edge of parish only

Days	Monday to Sunday (7 days)
Weekday	Approximately every 45 minutes, 05:55–21:31 (long operating window)
Saturday	Reduced — approximately every 45 minutes, 06:20–21:35
Sunday	Reduced — approximately every 45 minutes, 06:20–21:35

Note: *Hospital-to-hospital service. Provides the main A228 corridor link and the most reliable connection to Maidstone Hospital and Tunbridge Wells Hospital via the eastern edge of the parish. Does not serve the village centre.*

6 Maidstone ↔ Tunbridge Wells via East Peckham village Arriva Kent Thameside and Surrey (AKSS) | SERVES EAST PECKHAM VILLAGE ★ Only year-round scheduled service through the village itself

Days	Monday to Saturday (no Sunday service)

Weekday	Approximately every 90 minutes, 06:30–17:40 (daytime only — no evening service)
Saturday	Approximately every 90 minutes, 08:00–17:00
Key stops	Seven Mile Lane (hail & ride), Primary School, Co-op, Mascalls Corner; also serves Five Oak Green

Note: *The weekday window of 06:30–17:40 leaves residents without any direct bus connection to Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells outside these hours.*

77 Tonbridge ↔ Maidstone Hospital via Hadlow and Ashes Lane Nu-Venture Coaches | A26 CORRIDOR — does not serve East Peckham village

Days	Monday to Friday only (no weekend service)
Weekday	Approximately every 60–75 minutes, 06:47–17:35 (~8 one-way trips per day; one trip does not run Fridays)

Note: *Serves Hadlow village centre (High Street, Hadlow Square) on the A26 corridor. Does not travel through East Peckham village.*

208 East Peckham ↔ Tonbridge ↔ TW Hospital ↔ Pembury ↔ Henwood Green Go-Coach (GOCH) | VIA TONBRIDGE — only scheduled bus connecting EP to Tonbridge town centre

Days	Monday to Friday and Saturday (no Sunday service)
Route shape	U-shaped corridor: departs East Peckham southward → Tonbridge town centre → Tunbridge Wells Hospital (Pembury Road) → Pembury village → Henwood Green terminus. EP termini: Stone Court Lane / Branbridges Road.
Weekday	~9 one-way departures Mon–Fri from EP: 07:20, 09:30, 10:30, 11:30, 12:30, 13:30, 14:30, 16:40, 17:40. Return from TW Hospital: 07:58, 09:42, 10:42, 11:41, 12:41, 13:41, 14:40, 16:52.
Saturday	4 trips each direction — EP departures: 07:30, 10:28, 13:00, 15:00

Note: *This is the only scheduled bus service connecting East Peckham directly to Tonbridge town centre. Route source: BODS / Go-Coach GOCH; EP to Tonbridge town centre connection confirmed.*

2.2.3 SECTION B — SCHOOL DAY SERVICES (term time only, Mon–Fri)

2.2.4 The following services operate during school term time only (Monday to Friday). They do not run during half-term, Easter, Christmas, or summer holidays. Many are registered as dedicated school contracts and are technically open to the public, but journeys are timed exclusively for school start and end times.

Route	Operator	From / To (via EP)	Days	Trips/day
774	Arriva	Bennett Memorial (TW) ↔ West Malling — Beltring Rd corridor	Sch days	2 (AM + PM)
775	Arriva	Bennett Memorial (TW) ↔ Kings Hill — A228 corridor	Sch days	2 (AM + PM)
776	Arriva	TW Railway Station ↔ Hadlow Square — A26 corridor	Sch days	2 (AM + PM)

Route	Operator	From / To (via EP)	Days	Trips/day
77X	Arriva	Weald of Kent School ↔ West Malling — A228 corridor	Sch days	2 (AM + PM)
207	Hams Travel	Claygate (Tonbridge area) ↔ TW — EP hail & ride Seven Mile Lane	Sch days	2 (AM + PM)
4	Hams Travel	Aylesford ↔ Bennett Memorial (TW) — EP hail & ride Seven Mile Lane	Sch days	2 (AM + PM)
HC4	Hams Travel	EP Branbridges Road ↔ Hugh Christie School, TW — ORIGINATES IN EP	Sch days	2–3
771	Hams Travel	West Malling → TW via A26/Hadlow — 1 trip PM only	Mon–Fri	1 (PM only)
773	Hams Travel	West Malling → TW via Kings Hill/Ashes Lane — 1 trip AM only	Mon–Fri	1 (AM only)
HRC1	Hadlow HRCS	West Malling ↔ Hadlow Rural CS — EP hail & ride Seven Mile Lane	Sch days	2–3
67	Brookline	Hale Street EP ↔ Holmesdale School, Snodland — via Kings Hill	Sch days	2 (AM + PM)
4A	Brookline	East Malling ↔ EP via Wateringbury — TERMINATES IN EP	Sch days	2 (AM + PM)
506	Nu-Venture	Oakwood Park (Kings Hill) → EP hail & ride → Five Oak Green	Sch days	1 (PM only)
5	Unknown	Donald Ham, EP → Mascalls School — REGISTERED, NO BODS DATA	Sch days?	Unknown

Route 5 — Donald Ham, East Peckham → Mascalls School

Route 5 is registered with the Office of the Traffic Commissioner (OTC) as a school service originating in the Donald Ham area of East Peckham and serving Mascalls School (Paddock Wood). The route is not published in the DfT Bus Open Data Service (BODS) and no timetable data is available from national sources. This service was not included in the June 2026 BODS download and is listed here for completeness.

2.3 Overall Assessment — Public Transport

2.3.1 East Peckham is poorly served by public transport relative to its size and connectivity needs. The key constraints are:

- **One year-round village service (Route 6):** Every 90 minutes, Monday to Saturday, last departure ~17:40. No evening service. No Sunday service. Connecting to Maidstone Hospital (A&E) or Tunbridge Wells Hospital outside these hours requires a private vehicle or taxi.
- **Route 208 — the only bus to Tonbridge:** Route 208 (Go-Coach, Mon–Sat) is the only scheduled bus service connecting East Peckham to Tonbridge town centre, running a U-shaped corridor via Tonbridge then Tunbridge Wells Hospital then Pembury to Henwood Green. It runs ~9 departures on weekdays (from 07:20) and 4 on Saturdays. It does not serve the village centre stops — it terminates at Stone Court Lane / Branbridges Road on the south-eastern edge of the parish.

- **No direct rail access:** Beltring Halt is effectively non-functional for regular commuting. The nearest usable stations (Paddock Wood, West Malling) require car access.
- **School services do not substitute:** Up to 14 school-day-only services (including Route 5, which has no BODS data) are timed exclusively for school journeys and cannot be relied upon for employment, healthcare, or retail access.
- **Evening and weekend gaps:** No year-round bus service operates through the village on Sundays or after 17:40 on weekdays. Route 208 Saturday service provides Tonbridge connectivity but does not reach the village centre.
- **New A26 route (Route 7):** The replacement Route 7 (from 31 May 2026, every 30 minutes, 7 days/week) improves the Hadlow/A26 corridor significantly but does not serve East Peckham village.

3. TRAVEL BY ROAD

3.1 Car Ownership (2021 Census, parish-scaled)

3.1.1 The car ownership data below is derived from the 2021 Census and scaled to the parish boundary (×0.857 ratio, total 1,352 households). The scaling does not affect percentage distributions.

Car/van ownership	No. of households	Parish share	England avg (2021)
No car or van	126	9.3%	23.5%
1 car or van	468	34.6%	41.5%
2 cars or vans	487	36.0%	24.5%
3 or more cars or vans	271	20.1%	10.5%
Total households	**1,352**	**100%**	

3.1.2 Key findings: 90.7% of households in East Peckham own at least one car or van — significantly above the England average of 76.5%. The proportion of households with two or more cars (56.1%) is more than double the England average (25.2%). Only 9.3% of households are car-free, compared to 23.5% nationally. This exceptionally high car dependency reflects the limited public transport provision and rural location of the parish: for most residents, a private vehicle is the only practical way to access employment, healthcare, retail, leisure, and education.

3.1.3 Trend data: Car ownership has grown across all multi-car categories between 2001 and 2021 (3+ car households: 189 → 271). The proportion of car-free households has fallen from 14.2% (2001) to 9.3% (2021), consistent with the demographic shift towards older outright homeowners who are more likely to be multi-car households.

3.2 DfT Connectivity Score

3.2.1 The Department for Transport Connectivity Score represents ease of access to services (0–100, higher = better), calculated using journey planning algorithms considering actual transport networks, service timetables, and destination values at different times of day:

Area	Connectivity score
East Peckham	**45.05**
Tonbridge & Malling (TMBC)	55.35
England	64.81

3.2.2 East Peckham scores 19.8 points below the England average and 10.3 points below the TMBC average — a significant connectivity deficit placing it among the less-well-connected communities in the South East.

3.3 Indices of Deprivation — Geographical Barriers

3.3.1 The IoD 2025 Geographical Barriers sub-domain measures physical accessibility and proximity of local services (travel time by walking and public transport to retail, education, health, employment, and leisure destinations). Lower rank = more deprived:

Area	IoD 2025 Geographical Barriers rank	Interpretation
East Peckham	**4,641**	More deprived than 85% of English LSOAs on this measure
TMBC average	9,952	Above national median
England average	17,061	National midpoint (of ~32,000 LSOAs)

3.3.2 A rank of 4,641 (out of ~32,000 LSOAs in England) places East Peckham in the bottom 15% nationally for physical access to services. This reflects the compounding effects of rural location, limited bus provision, absence of walkable town-centre facilities, and reliance on private vehicles for virtually all service access.

3.4 Road Network and Traffic Pressures

Strategic arterial routes

3.4.1 East Peckham is served by two main strategic access routes:

- **A228 corridor:** Provides strategic transit northward toward the M20, Kings Hill and Maidstone, and southward toward Paddock Wood and Tunbridge Wells. Carries over 20,000 vehicles per day, including more than 1,000 HGV movements generated by Paddock Wood's major distribution and commercial hub. The volume and mix of traffic creates safety hazards and a "community severance effect" along this route.
- **A26 corridor:** Connects the wider parish network westward to Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. Subject to recurring peak-hour congestion, particularly at the Colts Hill roundabout.

3.4.2 Evidence from neighbouring authorities emphasises that these roads are highly vulnerable to external, cross-boundary growth. Maidstone Borough Council formally objected to TMBC's proposed East Peckham allocations during Regulation 18 consultation, citing a total *"lack of sustainable travel options"* and warning that development at this location would inevitably increase vehicular traffic on shared cross-boundary routes including the A26 and the A26/A228 interchange. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has separately acknowledged that expansion of Paddock Wood will exacerbate pressure on these same routes.

3.4.3 There have been 4 fatalities on the A228 (Boyle Way) within the last 12 months (to June 2026). There is frequent experience of unsafe road use, that also creates noise nuisance for many in the village arising from cars and motorbikes using the road for nuisance races. There is a Public Space Protection Order by TMBC in place.

Internal rural lanes

3.4.4 The narrow rural lanes within the parish (Snoll Hatch Road, Addlestead Road, Tonbridge Road, Bells Farm Road, Bush Road, Hatches Lane) experience significant pressure as an opportunistic rat run for commuter traffic bypassing A-road congestion.

3.4.5 East Peckham village consists of nine distinct, semi-isolated hamlets. The internal rural roads connecting them frequently lack pavements, suffer from structural degradation from HGV and agricultural traffic, and are subject to frequent and often prolonged emergency utility closures. Routes from East

Peckham towards Tonbridge pass through neighbouring Hadlow and Capel parishes, including via Three Elm Lane and Hartlake Road, which concentrate a dangerous mix of fast commuter traffic, HGVs, and agricultural machinery on roads unsuitable for such volumes — a safety issue for East Peckham residents using this corridor, even though these specific roads lie outside the parish boundary.

Village road network

3.4.6 The core village road network (Hale Street, Old Road, Pound Road, Church Lane) experiences kerbside and pavement parking throughout. Car parking provision is limited: a free car park for approximately 20 cars is available at the Methodist Church Hall, with further parking at the Jubilee Hall/playing fields. The industrial estates on Brandbridges Road attract considerable HGV and commercial traffic, increasing non-local traffic on Hale Street.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL TRAVEL BARRIERS

3.1 East Peckham sits at the confluence of three watercourses: the River Medway, the River Bourne and the Coult Stream. The Coult Stream flows through the centre of the village, before joining the River Medway near Stoneham Lock. A further minor watercourse, the Boroughs Oak Stream, flows through the Hale Street area.

3.2 Large portions of the parish sit within Flood Zone 2 or 3 (see *Topic Paper 2, Section 5*). Flooding has a direct, frequent and geographically wide-ranging impact on the road network: it is not confined to a single route, and it both blocks access between parts of the village, and out of and into the village.

Extent of Road Flooding

3.3. A significant number of roads in the village flood extensively from all water ways and surface water runoff from higher ground north of East Peckham. The list of roads affected by flooding includes: Addlestead Road, Snoll Hatch Road, Pound Road, Old Road, Hale Street (both ends of the road), Brandbridges Road, Medway Meadows, junctions of Crown Acres, Orchard Road, The Freehold and Fellmead. Tonbridge Road, Smithers Lane, Hatches Lane and Bullen Lane are also affected as are large parts of Church Lane. Additionally, whilst Bush Road is only partially flooded, Stanford Lane which is necessary in order to exit the village also floods. **NOTE: WE NEED TO DESCRIBE THE FREQUENCY OF THE FLOODING**

3.4 Flood Defence Infrastructure and Property-Level Protection

3.4.1 East Peckham has no comprehensive flood barrier or reservoir scheme protecting the village, with no future plans for new flood defence infrastructure, other than the minor protection offered by the Coult Flood Storage Area (FSA). The Leigh flood barrier, which protects Tonbridge and Hildenborough from Medway flooding, does not extend protection to East Peckham

3.4.2 Separately from village-wide defences, the Environment Agency has delivered a property-level flood resilience programme for East Peckham, completed and reported in March 2024:

3.4.3 119 properties in East Peckham “at significant risk of river flooding” have been fitted with property flood resilience (PRF) measures, with 92% of eligible property owners signing up to the scheme. Measures installed include flood doors, demountable barriers, automatic airbricks and pumps

3.4.4 This is significant corroborating evidence that the Environment Agency recognises East Peckham as a priority area for flood mitigation at property level. It also clarifies the limits of what has been achieved: PFR measures protect the inside of a property from floodwater ingress, but they do not prevent the roads themselves from flooding. A resident’s home may now be internally protected while the road outside, and the only route in or out, remains impassable.

3.5 Emergency Response Capacity and Historic Flood Events

3.5.1 Kent County Council’s county-level flood assessment identifies East Peckham and Yalding as Kent’s most flood-prone area (see *Topic Paper 2, Section 5*). This matters operationally as well as statistically. East Peckham currently has 8 flood wardens. For a village the current size of East Peckham, the recommendation is for 15 flood wardens. Advice is that flood wardens should not enter flood water more

than ankle deep, yet the modelled water depth on Hale Street alone is 400mm (independently confirmed by EA-supplied hydraulic modelling to flood to hazardous depths (400mm, rising to 1m in places) — which is more than ankle deep. The remainder of the village experiences flood water up to a greater depth of 600mm. The current flood warden complement is therefore little more than half the recommended strength, and the depths involved already exceed what wardens can safely manage unaided.

3.5.2 This capacity constraint is set against a long history of serious flooding in the village. Historic flood events recorded for East Peckham include:

- **1968:** The village was devastated by flooding.
- **2000:** A major flood event triggered a full evacuation of residents due to a significant risk of flooding from a nearby reservoir.
- **2013/14:** The Christmas 2013 floods caused property flooding in East Peckham. Kent.
- **2019–20:** A further major flood event inundated East Peckham. EPPC's Local Green Space Submission records this as the third major flood event to affect the parish within a twenty-year period.
- **January 2025:** Environment Agency flood warnings were active for the River Medway and River Bourne at East Peckham, including Hale Street, as river levels remained high following heavy rainfall on 6 January 2025, with further flooding of roads and low-lying land expected after additional heavy rain on 27 January 2025.

3.5.3 Source: East Peckham's Emergency Plan (Kent Prepared, Kent Resilience Forum); East Peckham Parish Council records;

3.5.4 When any of the roads identified in Section 3.1 are closed, internal traffic bottlenecks severely and emergency vehicle access is compromised. Localised populations, including residential estates that depend on a single flooding route for access — for example, those reached only via Hale Street — can be temporarily cut off. The extensive flood threat constrains the range of locations where new residential development would be safe and connected, particularly for elderly or mobility-impaired residents. Any development proposal must demonstrate sequential flood risk assessment and safe access/egress routes during flood events (see Topic Paper 2, Section 5.9, for the wider Sequential Test implications of East Peckham's flood risk profile).

4. CYCLING AND CYCLEWAYS

4.1 Despite East Peckham's generally flat topography, which in principle favours cycling, the parish offers extremely limited safe cycling infrastructure:

- **Marked cycleway:** One short section (~1 km) of the dual A228 between the Branbridges roundabout and the Hop Farm roundabout, where the east pavement is designated as a shared pavement/cycleway. Physical separation from fast-moving traffic is provided only by a kerb. The cycleway/footpath does not continue along the Boyle Way bypass.
- **Rural lanes:** The mix of rat-run commuter traffic, heavy agricultural machinery, and industrial HGVs on rural lanes creates a high perceived risk that deters cycling for all but the most confident riders. Local Transport Note LTN 1/20 (Cycle Infrastructure Design) requires viable cycle routes to be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable, and attractive — mixed traffic cycling is deemed unacceptable on roads with speed limits above 30 mph.
- **No cycling audit:** TMBC did not undertake a cycling audit of East Peckham in preparation for its Local Plan 2025/6.

5. PUBLIC FOOTPATHS AND RIGHTS OF WAY

5.1 Village Pavements

5.1.1 TMBC undertook a limited walking audit of roads in the village centre and adjacent estates (Old Road, Pound Road, Church Lane, Hale Street, Fellmead, Stockenbury, Orchard Road, The Freehold, Whitebine

Gardens and Golding Gardens) in preparation for the Local Plan. The audit (East Peckham Walking Audit Aug 2025) identified consistent issues:

- **Pavement parking:** Widespread on Old Road, Pound Road, The Freehold, Orchard Road, Fellmead, Stockenbury, Whitebine Gardens and Golding Gardens, reducing effective pavement width.
- **Effective pavement width:** Frequently below 1.5 m across the village, due to pavement design, pavement parking, and vegetation encroachment.
- **Discontinuous pavements and pinch-points:** Multiple locations throughout the village. The primary school pavement is specifically highlighted as a concern.
- **Single-sided pavements:** Key arterial routes connecting hamlets — including Snollhatch Road, Addlestead Road, and Church Lane — only have pavements on one side.

This is part of the evidence base for the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), which is being prepared as part of the Local Plan and will replace the Cycling Strategy. There will be a need to take account of the LCWIP when its available.

5.1.2 The KCC walking audit comment on Snoll Hatch ("limited width requires users to frequently give and take and to step into the carriageway") is representative of conditions experienced across many parts of the village, particularly in wet weather or when wheeled users (pushchairs, wheelchairs, mobility scooters) are involved.

5.2 Long-Distance Routes

5.2.1 The parish benefits from three long-distance footpath routes that bring visitors and provide recreational access:

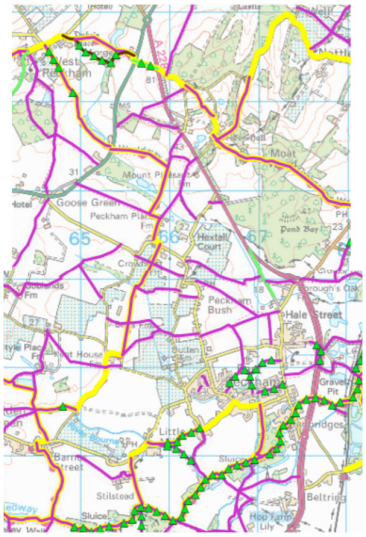


- **Wealdway (83 miles):** Gravesend to Eastbourne, crossing three AONBs. Runs north–south through East Peckham Parish, joining the Medway Valley Walk south of Golden Green.
- **Greensand Way (108 miles):** Haslemere (Surrey) to Hamstreet (Kent), following the Greensand Ridge. Crosses the northern edge of the parish near St Michael's Church at Roydon.
- **Medway Valley Walk (28 miles):** Tonbridge to Rochester. Crosses the southern borders of East Peckham Parish, passing the Hop Farm and Branbridges leisure facilities. Short diversions provide access to the Man of Kent pub and the village shops.
- **East and West Peckham Pilgrimage Trail (7 miles):** Circular route connecting East Peckham Church and St Michael's Church at Roydon, developed and waymarked locally. Links several village pubs.
- **East Peckham River Walk:** Circular walk promoted by KCC (Explore Kent programme):

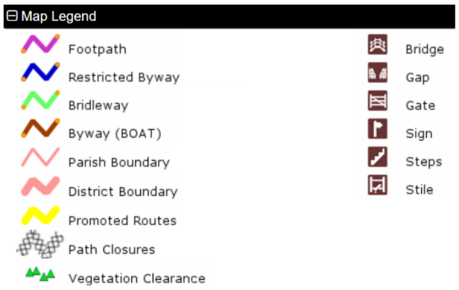


5.3 Local Footpath Network

5.3.1 The parish has an extensive network of footpaths and public rights of way (PRoW) crossing fields, orchards and woodland.



Public Rights of Way Map, KCC



5.3.2 While valued for recreation and linking hamlets, significant limitations exist:

- **Accessibility barriers:** Narrow bridges with steps are common on the footpath network (MR 530, 531, 533, 538, 543, 545, 547, 548), limiting utility for mobility-impaired users, pushchairs and cycling.
- **Seasonal waterlogging:** Extensive stretches cross low-lying clay fields that become heavily waterlogged and virtually impassable in winter, including MR538 (linking Hale Street with the village centre), MR535 (Pound Road to playing fields), and MR537/538 (The Freehold to playing fields).
- **Settlement separation:** The footpath network is essential for maintaining the distinct character of East Peckham's nine hamlets and preventing visual coalescence. Preserving the rural experience of these paths — and the separation they provide between settlements — is a core spatial quality of the parish.

6. ACTIVE TRAVEL WITHIN EAST PECKHAM

6.1 Active travel options are severely constrained. The table below shows estimated walking times from the village centre (The Pound crossroads) to key destinations at four evidence-based walking speeds, reflecting the range of mobility in an ageing community:

Walking speed	Profile	15-min walking range
1.2 m/s	Younger, fully mobile adults	~1,080 m
1.0 m/s	Residents aged 65–79	~900 m
0.75 m/s	Residents aged 80+ or with minor mobility impairment	~675 m
0.5 m/s	Users of wheeled walking aids	~450 m

6.2 Selected distances from The Pound to key points, and estimated walking times (one way):

Destination	Distance (m)	Adult (1.2)	65+ (1.0)	80+ (0.75)	Mobility aid (0.5)
Post Office	375	5 min	6 min	8 min	13 min
Jubilee Hall	530	7 min	9 min	12 min	18 min
School junction	640	9 min	11 min	14 min	21 min
Village Hall	820	11 min	14 min	18 min	27 min
Co-op / Petrol station	1,045	15 min	17 min	23 min	35 min
Man of Kent	1,470	20 min	25 min	33 min	49 min
Hale Street / Brookside	1,480	21 min	25 min	33 min	49 min

6.3 Active travel summary:

- **Village centre reachable:** Within approximately 20 minutes' one-way walk for most mobile adults in the main residential areas. Hale Street/Smithers Lane is already an outlier, requiring 21 minutes or more even at a fast walking pace.
- **Elderly residents:** For a resident aged 80+ or using a walking aid, the Co-op (1,045 m) is at or beyond a 35-minute round trip. Many key facilities become effectively unreachable on foot for this group.
- **Pavement quality:** Many of the measured routes have pavements that are insufficiently wide to be safe, and footpath surfaces (including across the playing fields) are unsuitable for elderly, mobility-impaired, or pushchair travel, especially in winter.
- **New housing for older residents:** There is a very narrow geographical zone within which new housing specifically designed for older residents would be appropriate in terms of safe, accessible walking distance to village facilities. Expanding the built-up area much beyond current boundaries would challenge this entirely.

7. SUMMARY AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The evidence presented in this Topic Paper paints a consistent picture of a rural parish that is structurally car-dependent, poorly served by public transport, and facing transport challenges that will intensify as the population ages. Key planning implications are:

Issue	Evidence	Planning implication
Car dependency	90.7% of HH have ≥1 car; only 9.3% car-free	Development proposals cannot rely on mode shift to achieve sustainability; must demonstrate how car use is managed
One viable year-round village bus (Route 6)	Mon–Sat daytime only, every 90 min — no evenings, no Sunday	Employment, healthcare and social trips cannot be made by bus outside service hours — significant constraint on car-free living
Route 208 — Tonbridge connection	Only bus to Tonbridge town centre; Mon–Sat, 9 weekday trips from 07:20, 4 Saturday trips; terminates at Branbridges Road, not village centre	Provides meaningful daytime connectivity to Tonbridge but does not serve the village core; no Sunday or evening service
No safe rail access	Beltring Halt: 40 users/day; no safe walking route to Paddock Wood	Rail-based commuting is not a realistic alternative for most residents without a car
Elderly and mobility-impaired residents	25% aged 65+; 16% disabled; walking range severely limited	Any specialist elderly housing must be within a narrow zone close to the village centre; design standards must address accessible routes and surface quality
Flood risk to road network	Hale Street, Old Road, Pound Road, Brandbridges Road and others regularly flood and close (Section 3.1)	Development relying on affected routes must demonstrate safe alternative access and egress during flood events
A228 HGV pressure	20,000+ vehicles/day incl. 1,000+ HGVs	Additional development traffic on an already-stressed corridor requires mitigation before consent
Pavement quality	Most pavements <1.5 m; widespread pavement parking; no cycling infrastructure	Active travel policies must address real baseline conditions, not theoretical distances; cycle audit required before any cycle-linked development
Cross-boundary impacts	Maidstone BC formal objection to TMBC East Peckham allocations	Any strategic allocation must address cross-boundary transport modelling and mitigation

7.0.2 Bus service data: DfT Bus Open Data Service (BODS) TransXChange archive, downloaded 12 June 2026. Compiled by Oxygene Group / EPPC NDP Team.

7.0.3 Hail & ride confirmation: KCC letter received 12 June 2026 (NaPTAN IDs kntjtada, kntjpwtw — Seven Mile Lane / Hale Street).

7.0.4 Car ownership: 2021 Census, Nomis TS045, LSOA aggregate scaled to parish by ratio 3,282 ÷ 3,828 = 0.857.

7.0.5 DfT Connectivity Score and IoD 2025 Geographical Barriers: Department for Transport / Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

7.0.6 Rail usage: ORR / RailwayData — Beltring Station 2024/25 entries and exits.

7.0.7 Walking audit: East Peckham Walking Audit Aug 2025 (TMBC). Active travel distances and times: EPPC NDP Team original survey, June 2026.

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