NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EVIDENCE BASE

The top ten points from each of the seven topic papers

Residents' drop-in, Saturday 7 November 2026, Jubilee Hall. Take this sheet away with you. The full papers are on the Parish Council website (eastpeckham-pc.gov.uk, Neighbourhood Plan pages). Figures are from the topic paper unless stated. Nothing has been decided. Residents have the final say in a referendum.

Topic Paper 1: Demographics *Who lives in East Peckham, and how that is changing*

1. **A stable village of about 3,300 people.** 3,282 residents in 2021; the population has been broadly stable since 2001.
2. **One in four residents is aged 65 or over.** 25% of residents are 65 or over (821 people), against about 18% in England.
3. **The oldest groups are growing fastest.** 383 residents are 75 or over and 98 are 85 or over; the 70 to 74 cohort is the largest.
4. **A large wave is about to cross 65.** 1,225 residents (37%) are aged 50 to 74 and will pass 65 during the plan period.
5. **By 2041 nearly a third will be over 65.** Projection v2.0: 3,402 residents in 2041, 31% aged 65 or over (1,057 people).
6. **Far more pensioners per worker than the borough.** 465 pensioners per 1,000 working-age residents, against about 330 in the borough.
7. **Retired residents nearly doubled in ten years.** Retired adults rose from 415 (2011) to 751 (2021); 27.5% of adults are retired.
8. **Most people work outside the parish.** Jobs density 59% (England 77%): most working residents commute out, and many work from home.
9. **Health and care needs are above average.** 16% of residents are disabled; 9.9% provide unpaid care, 3.8% for 50+ hours a week.
10. **The village school is nearly full.** East Peckham Primary is 97% full (203 of 210) and was oversubscribed in two of the last three years.

Topic Paper 2: Natural Environment *Green Belt, three rivers, flood risk and wildlife*

1. **Almost the whole parish is Green Belt.** About 95% of the 1,289-hectare parish is Green Belt; only 65 hectares is inside the built-up boundaries.
2. **Three rivers meet here.** The Medway, the Bourne and the Coult Stream meet on the parish floodplain; the Coult Stream runs through the village.
3. **Over half the land is in Flood Zone 3.** 57% of parish land is in Flood Zone 3 and 99.9% of land parcels touch a flood zone.
4. **The highest share of homes at flood risk in the borough.** 244 of 1,400 homes (one in six) are at medium or high risk of river flooding, the highest share in the borough (EA 2025).
5. **Floods in 2000, 2013-14 and 2019-20, and no barrier.** Major floods in 2000, 2013-14 and 2019-20; no barrier protects the village, only the Coult storage area.
6. **Climate change will make flooding worse.** Peak winter rainfall is projected to rise 10 to 20% by 2040 and 20 to 30% by 2080.
7. **Ancient woodland is small but irreplaceable.** 46.6 hectares of ancient woodland, led by Peckham Fields Wood (26.5 ha); irreplaceable under national policy.
8. **An unusually rich wildlife record.** 190 protected or priority species records within 1 km, including Nightingale, Turtle Dove, Water Vole and Otter.
9. **Henham Woods meets the Local Wildlife Site test.** Kent Wildlife Trust recommends Henham Woods / The Scrub (4.85 ha) as a "candidate Local Wildlife Site".
10. **Good farmland, high water table, poor drainage.** Mostly Grade 2 farmland on a high water table; soakaways proved unviable at Church Lane in 2024.

Topic Paper 3: Housing *The homes we have, the homes we need, and the numbers*

1. **The housing numbers, as they stand today.** TMBC's draft Local Plan proposes 228 homes (EP1 156, EP2 72); the NDP's indicative figure is 48 to 2042.
2. **Mostly big family houses.** 74% of homes have three or more bedrooms; only 5.7% have one and only 6.8% are flats.
3. **Four in five homes have spare bedrooms.** 81% of households have at least one spare bedroom and 49% have two or more.
4. **Very little has been built recently.** Only 9.4% of rated homes were built since 2012; half date from before 1967; 15 built since 2022.
5. **Older homes cost more to heat.** 38.5% of homes are EPC A to C (England 49%); fuel poverty rose to 10.9% of households by 2023.
6. **Owned outright, and increasingly so.** 42.5% of homes are owned outright (up from 32.7% in 2001); 11.7% are social rented.
7. **What residents said in the Housing Needs Survey.** Housing Needs Survey (281 returns): 53% want bungalows for older people, 43% affordable rented homes; 18% want none.
8. **A measured local need for 33 homes.** The survey identified need for 11 affordable homes and 22 homes for older owners, all from parish households.
9. **New planning rules shape what the plan can say.** Since March 2026 a neighbourhood plan cannot plan for less housing than the Local Plan, but can choose sites and types.
10. **Every site is a balance of constraints.** Any site must balance flood risk, Green Belt, heritage and access to services; residents decide at referendum.

Topic Paper 4: Heritage and Conservation *Nine hamlets, four Conservation Areas, 96 listed buildings*

1. **Nine historic hamlets, not one village.** Roydon, Hale Street, Snoll Hatch, Little Mill, The Pound, Beltring, Goose Green, Peckham Bush and Chidley Cross, with open gaps between them.
2. **96 listed buildings.** Five are Grade II* and 91 Grade II: farmhouses, oasts, barns, cottages, churches, the war memorial and wartime pillboxes.
3. **Four Conservation Areas.** Roydon, Little Mill, Snoll Hatch and Bullen Corner; only Bullen Corner has a full published Conservation Area appraisal.
4. **More than a thousand years on record.** First recorded in 975 AD; in the Domesday Book in 1086; East Peckham named as a separate parish from 1293.
5. **From the ridge to the valley.** The village began on the ridge around St Michael's (c.1300) and Roydon Hall (1535); Holy Trinity Church followed in 1841.
6. **Hops and orchards built the village.** Hop growing moved the village onto the plain; Beltring has the world's largest group of Victorian oasts.
7. **The Pound: a village centre built for the vote.** The Pound grew in the 1850s from 40-shilling freehold plots sold to give working men the vote.
8. **The Green Belt froze the hamlets in 1967.** The centre doubled in the 1960s (650 to 1,061 houses); the 1967 Green Belt has frozen the hamlets since.
9. **Estates filled the gaps with pattern-book designs.** Post-war estates used pattern-book designs instead of red brick, Kent peg tile and weatherboard; Hale Court shows a better way.

10. **Eleven pubs in 1950, two today.** Eleven pubs in 1950, two now; the paper supports a Local Heritage List for unprotected local landmarks.

Topic Paper 5: Amenities and Services *What the village has, what it lacks, and what residents say is missing*

1. **The shops and green spaces are used every week.** Shops are used weekly by 93% of survey respondents, green spaces by 89%, playing fields 70%, Post Office 68%.
2. **No GP and no dentist in the parish.** No GP or dentist in the parish; 75.4% of residents name healthcare access as a top concern.
3. **The pharmacy is the most wanted service.** More pharmacy or healthcare provision is the most requested facility (52%).
4. **Community life runs on volunteers.** At least 17 clubs and groups meet in three halls; volunteering has fallen since Covid.
5. **The primary school has 7 spare places.** East Peckham Primary is 97% full and Reception was oversubscribed in two of the last three years.
6. **Neighbouring schools are full too.** Nearby primaries are at or over capacity; Paddock Wood's new school is for its own growth.
7. **Teenagers are the biggest gap.** 41.5% want more facilities for teenagers and 36.4% more youth facilities; only 7% want more childcare.
8. **What residents worry about most.** Top concerns (2026 survey, 236 responses): overdevelopment 88.6%, green space 81.8%, flooding 76.7%, GP access 75.4%.
9. **Among the hardest places in England to reach services.** In the bottom 15% of English neighbourhoods for physical access to services; only 14% use the bus weekly.
10. **No single information channel reaches everyone.** Social media reaches 73%, word of mouth 62%, the Parish Magazine 53%: consultation must use several channels.

Topic Paper 6: Transport and Connections *Buses, roads, walking and cycling in a car-dependent parish*

1. **Nine in ten households have a car.** 90.7% of households have a car and 56% have two or more; only 9.3% are car-free (England 23.5%).
2. **The village bus runs hourly in the daytime, then stops.** Route 6 runs roughly hourly on weekdays between about 09:00 and 15:00 and every 90 minutes on Saturdays; no evenings, no Sundays.
3. **The only bus to Tonbridge runs right through the village.** Route 208, the only bus to Tonbridge, runs through the village centre: 9 weekday trips (07:20 to 17:40, last bus back 16:52), 4 on Saturdays, none on Sundays or in the evening.
4. **Beltring Halt (railway) is little used.** Beltring Halt has about 40 passengers a day and no safe route from the village; Paddock Wood station is 4.5 km away.
5. **Well below average connectivity.** DfT Connectivity Score 45.05 against 64.81 for England and 55.35 for the borough.
6. **The A228 carries heavy traffic through the parish.** The A228 carries over 20,000 vehicles and 1,000 lorries a day; Maidstone Borough objected on transport grounds.
7. **Floods close the roads in and out.** More than 15 roads flood, including Hale Street, Pound Road and Old Road; 8 flood wardens against 15 recommended.
8. **Pavements too narrow, parking on them.** Pavements are often under 1.5 m wide, with widespread pavement parking and single-sided pavements on key routes.
9. **Flat land, but almost nowhere safe to cycle.** Only about 1 km of marked cycleway, beside the A228; TMBC did no cycling audit.
10. **The walk to the Co-op is 15 minutes, or 35.** The Co-op is 1,045 m from The Pound: 15 minutes for an adult, 35 with a walking aid.

Topic Paper 7: Utilities and Infrastructure *Water, sewers, power, broadband and waste: what has capacity and what does not*

1. **No spare drinking water in our zone.** South East Water's Cranbrook zone, which supplies the village, has no spare capacity until at least 2030/31.
2. **The water company says it cannot supply extra growth.** South East Water forecasts a 5.3 Ml/d borough shortfall by 2041/42; none of its interim schemes is in our zone.
3. **Hosepipe bans four years out of five.** Hosepipe bans in 2022, 2023, 2025 and 2026, against a stated standard of once in ten years.
4. **Our sewerage system is rated 'Very Significant' risk.** Southern Water rates our sewer system 'Very Significant' for flooding and overload, with no scheme, cost or date to fix it.
5. **All three local rivers fail good status.** All three Environment Agency water bodies in the parish fail good status; the Bourne is rated Poor.
6. **One village transformer is already overloaded.** One local transformer runs at 100 to 120% load with no upgrade planned; Mereworth substation is in deficit by 2040.
7. **Gas is fine, but new homes will not use it.** Gas has capacity, but from March 2027 new homes need low-carbon heating, adding load to electricity.
8. **Mostly good broadband in the village, poor on the fringe.** 89% of postcodes have superfast broadband but 44% of the land area has none; no Openreach full-fibre plan.
9. **Good recycling, but the tip is nearly full.** Recycling 48.4% (England 42%), but the North Farm waste sites will be full within five years with no replacement sited.
10. **Our capacity depends on other people's growth.** Water, power and waste capacity is shared with Paddock Wood, Tenterden, Kings Hill and Maidstone growth.

Find out more

All seven topic papers, the survey results, the briefing papers and the latest updates are on the Parish Council website. Point your phone's camera at the code, or type the address:

eastpeckham-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplan