

EGERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2021-2040

BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT

Prepared by the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on behalf of Egerton Parish Council

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GLOSSARY/ACRONYMS

ABC	Ashford Borough Council
ACRK	Action with Communities in Rural Kent
ENPSG	Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
EPC	Egerton Parish Council
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
HNS	Egerton Housing Needs Survey 2018 (undertaken by ACRK)
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
KCC	Kent County Council
MUGA	Multi-use Games Area
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Policy Guidance
PRoW	Public Rights of Way
RoWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan (KCC)
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
The Plan	Egerton Neighbourhood Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 This Statement has been prepared by the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (ENPSG), a sub-committee of a qualifying body Egerton Parish Council (EPC), to accompany its submission of the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) to Ashford Borough Council (ABC) under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations.

1.2 The Plan has been prepared by EPC, a qualifying body, for the Neighbourhood Area covering the whole of the parish of Egerton (see Map1, Appendix 1). The documents which constitute the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents are:

- Egerton Neighbourhood Plan 2021-40 and Appendices, dated April 2021;
- Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area;
- This Basic Conditions Statement, dated April 2021;
- A Consultation Statement, dated April 2021, detailing the extensive consultation with Egerton residents, local businesses and other stakeholders, and statutory bodies throughout the plan development process;
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report undertaken by Ashford Borough Council and concluding that neither a full SEA or HRA are required at this time, dated March 2021;
- An Evidence Base (see Appendix 2)

1.3 The policies described in the Plan relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area. The period covered by the Plan is 1st January 2021 – 31st December 2040.

1.4 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations 2012 (and as subsequently amended), this Statement addresses how the Plan meets each of the basic conditions required of the Regulations:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- having special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest;
- having special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area;
- contributing to the achievement of sustainable development;
- in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Ashford Local Plan 2030; and
- not breaching and otherwise being compatible with Regulations, including human rights requirements.

2. Background

2.1 The parish of Egerton comprises a series of communities spread over approximately 2,800 acres (4.8 square miles). It is rural, relatively secluded, and with outstanding views over the Weald and towards the North Downs. The main settlement is situated on a Greensand ridge with its centre designated (1976) as a conservation area and dominated by the 13th Century church tower. There are currently 84 listed buildings in the parish; and more than 50 historic farmsteads in Egerton are listed on the Kent Historic Environment Record. In 2013 the population was 1,075. A primary school, Millennium Hall, Games Barn, Sports Pavilion, recreation area, skate park and playing fields are all located within or on the edge of the main settlement, as is a garage, and an inn and village stores/post office (both of which are currently closed pending sale agreements). Although most of the land is farmed, a number of other small businesses operate within the parish. The nature of the roads, the seclusion and the lack of public transport, have resulted in the establishment of a number of clubs and societies. These bring cultural, social and healthy activity in to the community, making a major contribution to its sustainability and establishing a strong community spirit. In 1995 Egerton was Ashford's Community of the Year, and in 2001 was both the winner for Southern and South East England in the Regional Village of the Year and runner up in the National Village of the Year.

2.2 Egerton Parish Council (EPC) commenced preparation of the Plan in 2017 and formed a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (ENPSG) which included both Councillors and volunteers from the parish. After designation of the Neighbourhood Area in 2017 (see Appendix 1), the Steering Group held a series of workshops with residents to establish their vision for the future of Egerton and their priorities for the Plan (see Consultation Statement for further details on all community engagement). In May 2018 the Steering Group initiated a **Call for Sites**, as a result of which 10 sites were put forward for residential or small scale business use. A **Housing Needs Survey** (HNS) was undertaken on behalf of the Parish Council by Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK). The HNS identified a local housing need, in addition to one site for

development included in Ashford Borough Council's 2030 Local Plan, for rentable affordable housing and for older people's housing for local people to downsize.

2.3 A **Local Green Spaces Assessment** to review a long list which emerged from community consultation, was undertaken for the Steering Group by consultants, the South Downs National Park Planning Authority. With advice from Historic England, a list of **Non-designated Heritage Assets** was compiled through community consultation and assessed according to Historic England criteria. The community was also invited to identify **key views** which reflect the parish's distinctive landscape character and should therefore be protected. A short list of 8 is included in the Plan, after advice on assessment from consultants and Ashford Borough Council (ABC). A **Strategic Environmental Assessment** and a **Habitats Regulation Assessment** were undertaken for the Parish Council by Ashford Borough Council.

3. Vision and Key Objectives

3.1 Our **vision** for the future of Egerton is of a rural, relatively secluded community which retains its distinctive character, vitality and sustainability while responding sensitively to social, technical, economic and environmental change. Our **vision** combines the need:

- to **protect** and conserve the quality of community life and the parish environment as identified by its residents;
- to ensure that there is a **sustainable future** for the people who live and work in the parish including access to housing, infrastructure, business and leisure/community facilities; and
- to **develop** housing and supporting infrastructure that is sensitive to the distinctive character of the parish and meets the needs of local people.

3.2 Our **key objectives** for future land use in Egerton are:

- to protect the local environment;
- to maximise the opportunities of the PRow network and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) for health and well-being, tourism and local sustainable transport;
- to ensure a sustainable social and economic future for all residents; and
- to develop appropriate housing to meet local needs.

3.3 Our vision and key objectives align with, and support, the Vision and Strategic Objectives in the Ashford Local Plan 2030, specifically the vision statement:

- *‘Smaller rural settlements will also provide smaller scale new developments, to help sustain local communities. Development within all the rural settlements must conserve and enhance the historic centres and heritage and natural assets’;*

and the Strategic Objectives in SP1 :

- *b) To conserve and enhance the Borough’s natural environment including designated and undesignated landscapes and biodiversity and promote a connected green infrastructure network that plays a role in managing flood risk, delivers net gains to biodiversity and improves access to nature;*
- *c) To conserve and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets and the relationship between them and their settings in a way that promotes distinctive relationships...’;*
- *d) ‘To create the highest quality design which is sustainable, accessible, safe and promotes a positive sense of place through the design of the built form, the relationship of buildings with each other and the spaces around them, and which responds to the prevailing character of the area’.*

4. Conformity with National Planning Policy and Advice

4.1 The Plan has been prepared with regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is mindful of the draft National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) in respect of formulating Neighbourhood Plans. The EPC believes the Plan presents a positive approach to planning for the future, with sufficient flexibility to meet the needs of both current and future generations.

4.2 The Plan aims to meet the required basic conditions, ie

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood development plan;
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
- the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with relevant statutory obligations;
- prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood development plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan.

4.3 The Plan does not contain provisions about development that is ‘Excluded Development’.

4.4 The Plan aims to comply with the key economic, social and environmental objectives of the NPPF in relation to the achievement of sustainable development.

4.5 The Plan has regard to relevant policies within the NPPF in relation to:

- Delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- Supporting a prosperous rural economy;
- Promoting healthy and safe communities;
- Promoting sustainable transport;
- Supporting high quality communications;
- Making effective use of land;
- Achieving well-designed places;
- Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding;
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

4.6 The Plan sets out the following policies [and/or Community Aspirations] to support the relevant policies in the NPPF.

4.6.1 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

The NPPF states ‘To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing needs assessment (para. 60)....the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (para. 61)....where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required (para. 62)....Neighbourhood planning groups should also consider the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites suitable for housing in their area (para. 69)....Local planning authorities should support the development of entry-level exception sites, suitable for first-time buyers (or those looking to rent their first home) unless the need for such homes is already being met within the authority’s area (para. 71)....In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local need (para. 77)....To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities (para. 78).

The Plan sets an objective to provide for both affordable local needs housing and open market housing over the first 10 years of the Plan with the option of review within the 10-year period. The objective is based on the Housing Needs Survey (HNS) undertaken on behalf of EPC by Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) in October/November 2018 which identified the need for both local needs affordable rentable dwellings and older people’s housing to allow down-sizing within the community. Open market housing in excess of the numbers identified in the HNS is expected to be delivered in three ways – 8-9 houses on the New Road site allocated in the Local Plan 2030, up to 8 larger houses

released through down-sizing, and conversion of redundant farm buildings at a rate of 1 per year (the rate of conversion of 2-3 per year is not expected to continue over the full period of the Plan).

Policy D3 – Housing Policy defines the need for both affordable local needs and open market dwellings. An indicative 16 local needs affordable dwellings are identified, based on the 2018 Egerton Housing Needs Survey (HNS) undertaken for EPC by Action with Communities in Rural Kent. 18 open market dwellings will be provided on the land on New Road (Local Plan Policy S30) and on windfall sites across the parish.

Policy D4 – Local Needs Affordable Housing identifies a rural exception site on Gale Field, Egerton Forstal specifically for the delivery of 8 local needs affordable **rentable** dwellings to meet the requirement identified in the HNS.

Policy D5- Land at Orchard Nurseries identifies a site on the edge of the confines of Egerton for the delivery of up to 8 dwellings for local older people wishing to down-size, as identified both in the HNS and the 2015 Survey for the Egerton Parish Plan. By delivering this accommodation, up to 8 larger open market homes will be released to meet part of the requirement for family housing identified in the HNS.

[4.6.2 Supporting a prosperous rural economy](#)

The NPPF states for rural communities: *Planning policies and decisions should enable : a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings; b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses; c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities (para. 83)....Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements....it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport) (para. 84).*

The Plan's vision encompasses current and future development for rural business activity both through policies for land use and development of community facilities. It also recognises the future need for improved internet and telecoms services to support both business development and an increase in working from home.

Policy D6 – Reuse of redundant farm buildings encourages the development of redundant farm buildings for small scale business use - including office space for those working at home rather than commuting - or for residential use, whether long term or for holiday lets or bed & breakfast accommodation to encourage local tourism.

Policies D4 - Local Needs Affordable Housing & D6 – Reuse of redundant farm buildings also aim to deliver affordable accommodation to allow continuity of labour in local businesses and agriculture.

Policy S1 - Community Facilities encourages the maintenance and development of community assets such as the Millennium Hall, the Games Barn and the Sports Pavilion both to encourage activities which contribute to local sustainability through social activity and recreation/exercise, and to create opportunities for revenue generation through commercial hire.

Community Aspiration – Egerton Pre-school aims to deliver a purpose-built pre-school building adjacent to the present primary school, to secure the future of both schools and to ensure ease of transition from pre-school to primary school for local families as well as releasing space and time in the Millennium Hall for village activities and commercial hire.

(See also Plan paragraphs 6.7-8, **Local Services and Businesses essential to sustaining village life** and paragraphs 6.12-13, **Rural Economy and Working from Home**)

4.6.3 Promoting healthy and safe communities

The NPPF states: *Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: a) promote social interaction...strong neighbourhood centre; b) are safe and accessible...; c) enable and support healthy lifestyles (para. 91)....To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities...and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities...; b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve, health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community; c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services...; d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are ...retained for the benefit of the community (para. 92)It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available (para. 94)Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities (para. 96)....Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: a)surplus to requirements; b) ...replaced by equivalent or better provision...c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use (para. 97)....Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way...(para. 98).....The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them (para. 99).*

Policies S1- Community Facilities, Policy S2 – Community Open Space at Egerton Forstal and Policy S3 – Public Rights of Way, and the supporting paragraphs, aim to ensure that community buildings and spaces provide a safe environment for social, cultural, recreational and sporting activity for the village today but also ensure that facilities remain available, and adaptable if necessary, to future needs. Use of Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) for walkers (for work, recreation or tourism) and continuing encouragement of cycling where safe, will help reduce dependence on private cars for local journeys and thus help to reduce the local carbon footprint over time. There is also a proposal for Community Open Space in Gale Field behind the proposed affordable housing. The site will be gifted to the parish for use by residents of the Forstal and Crockenhill, now and in the future, for whom there is currently no safe open space – specifically for parents or carers with younger children or older residents. In addition to the already protected playing fields and recreation area, which include a cricket pitch and nets, a

football pitch, skate boarding ramps, swings and a children's play area, the plan notes a project to raise funds to construct a multi-use games area (MUGA).

Policy P6 – Light Pollution and Dark Skies aims to protect and benefit people, wildlife and the environment by ensuring that light pollution is kept at minimum safe levels.

Policy P3 – Local Green Spaces identifies five spaces (from a much longer list identified by the village) which are considered of key importance to community safety, health and well being and which maintain the rural character of the village, and its historic setting.

Community Aspiration – Footpath AW368 – aims for minor improvements to the footpath which connects Egerton Forstal and Crockenhill with the main village, to allow safe increased use for those able to walk to village amenities and the school, and for recreation and health.

Community Aspiration – Egerton Pre-school -reflects the strongly held view of the community that a thriving pre-school provides the much-needed first step in local children's education, and a natural feeder for the Egerton Primary School.

4.6.4 Promoting sustainable transport

The majority of NPPF statements on sustainable transport are not applicable to small scale development in a rural community as proposed in the Plan. For this reason, the Plan does not contain formal transport policies but does highlight the narrow, winding nature of all roads in the parish and a number of issues which will require action by appropriate bodies such as:

- Inadequacies in public transport (para 6.23);
- Unsuitability of the village road network for HGVs and suggested reductions in speed limits, which should form part of a Highways Improvement Plan to be presented to Kent County Council (see para 6.24);
- Cycling (para 6.25).

Community Aspiration – Additional Parking aims to provide a permeable surface for additional parking beside the Sports Pavilion, where the current provision for the cricket pitch and nets, the football pitch and the skate ramps is only 2-3 cars. Cycle racks will also be installed, and electric charging points if feasible.

4.6.5 Supporting high quality communications

The NPPF states: *'Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections'* (para. 112).

A key objective of the Plan is the 'provision of essential services and utilities such as high-speed broadband and adequate mobile phone signal'

The Plan states: 'Mobile telephone coverage in the parish is poor and high-speed broadband is not widely available in the parish (para 3.25). Good, reliable mobile phone coverage and high-speed or superfast broadband availability over the whole of the parish is essential to replace the current inconsistent and unsatisfactory provision. Efficient mobile phone technology and consistent high-speed or superfast broadband provision will increasingly be essential for business use and for working at home as an alternative to commuting, as well as for everyday living in rural areas....Expansion and improvement will ultimately be a commercial decision taken by private providers...but Egerton Parish Council should treat as a priority the need to encourage providers to improve both mobile phone reception and broadband coverage' (para. 7.43)

4.6.6 Making effective use of land

The NPPF states; '*Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions (para. 117) ...Planning policies and decisions should: a) encourage benefits from both urban and rural land...taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains; b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production; c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs....d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings....'*(para. 118).

The key objectives for land use in the Plan are:

- To protect the local environment;
- To maximise the opportunities of the PRow network and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) for health and well-being, tourism and local sustainable transport;
- To ensure a sustainable social and economic future for all residents; and
- To develop appropriate housing to meet local needs.

Protection of the local environment is supported by Policies PI – Distinctive Landscape Character and Biodiversity, P2 – Trees, hedges and woodland, P4 - Key views and vistas, P5 – Local non-designated Heritage Assets, P6 – Light Pollution and Dark Skies, DI – Development Principles, D7 – Water Supply and Drainage, and Policy D8 – Renewable energy and climate change mitigation.

Maximising the opportunities of the PRow network is supported by Policy S3 - Public Rights of Way, and the Community Aspiration for Footpath AW368.

Ensuring a sustainable social and economic future for all residents is supported by Policies P3 - Local Green Spaces, S1 – Community facilities, S2 – Community Open Space at Egerton Forstal, Policy D6 – Reuse of redundant farm buildings and Community Aspirations for the Pre-school and Community Woodland and Wildflower meadow/s.

Developing appropriate housing to meet local needs is supported by Policies D2 – Application of the Parish Design Statement, D3 – Housing Policy, Policy D4 – Local Needs Affordable Housing and Policy D5 – Land at Orchard Nurseries, Egerton.

4.6.7 Achieving well-designed places

The NPPF states; *‘The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities (para. 124) ...Plans should...set out a clear design vision and expectations....Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations (para. 125) ... Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments; a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area...b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; c) are sympathetic to local character and history....d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place’ (para. 127.)*

The Egerton Parish Design Statement was drawn up in 2006 to reflect local aspirations and an evaluation of the parish’s defining characteristics. As part of the evidence collection for the Plan, the ENPSG both reviewed the Parish Design Statement with residents to ensure continuing local relevance and support and assessed the effectiveness of its application over the period since it was first published. Policies D1 Development principles and D2 Application of the Parish Design Statement emphasize the Plan’s overall aims to:

- Locate development in the best possible positions geographically, socially and environmentally;
- Facilitate the development of housing that meets the needs of local people;
- Contribute to the local architectural character, with sympathetic layout and design; and
- Provide open green spaces and opportunities for outdoor recreation.

4.6.8 Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding

The NPPF states: *‘The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk (para. 148)...Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change (para. 149)....Local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning (para. 152)...Strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment’ (para. 156).*

Policies D7 – Water Supply and Drainage and D8 – Renewable Energy and Climate change mitigation, and the paragraphs supporting them, aim both to encourage improved water efficiency and drainage and to assist in the transition to a low carbon future through the use of energy efficient and low carbon building materials and systems.

4.6.9 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The NPPF states: *‘Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes....b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside...d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity’ (para. 170).*

Section 5 of the Plan focuses on the protection and conservation of Egerton’s individual character and environment. It includes sections on the individual landscape character and biodiversity, on the importance of trees, woodland, hedgerows and grass verges both to landscape character and biodiversity, on local green spaces and their value to the community and on the key views and vistas most valued by the community. Policies P1-6 in Section 5 are all compatible with national policy as is the Community Aspiration for Community Woodland and Wildflower Meadow/s.

4.6.10 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The NPPF states: *‘Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance (para. 184)...Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment (para. 185)...planning authorities should take account of...the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality (para. 192)...The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated asset should be taken into account in determining the application’.*

The historic centre of Egerton is designated as a Conservation Area (1976) and contains 23 listed buildings including the Grade 1 listed St James’ Church. There are two scheduled monuments in or on the edge of the parish, over 80 Grade II listed buildings are spread across the parish and more than 50 historic farmsteads in Egerton are listed on the Kent Historic Environment Record. Policies D1 (Development Principles) and D2 (Application of the Parish Design Statement) set out a positive approach to the conservation of the many historic buildings, but the Plan also notes the importance to the community of the many historic sites from prehistoric, through the Roman and medieval to the modern period. As part of the community consultation for the Plan, the ENPSG invited residents to identify non-designated heritage assets which were felt to be of significance to village life and the environment. A long list of suggestions was assessed using Historic England guidelines and resulted in Policy P5 Local non-designated Heritage Assets which aims not only to preserve or enhance scheduled monuments and listed buildings but also gives the same protection to a list of non-designated assets of local significance.

5. Conformity with Local Plan 2030 Strategic Policies

5.1 The Vision for the ABC Local Plan 2030 confirms the town of Ashford as the main focus for development, with Tenterden as the principal rural service centre for the south western part of the borough and Charing, Hamstreet and Wye as important additional service centres. *‘Smaller rural settlements will also provide smaller scale new development, to help sustain local communities. Development within all the rural settlements must conserve and enhance the historic centres and heritage and natural assets.’* Strategic Policies 1-7 then clarify how the vision will be delivered in broad terms, followed by detailed policies for delivery of the strategic objectives.

5.2 Paragraph 7 below summarises the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan’s conformity with both the strategic and the more detailed policies in the Local Plan. The Egerton Plan has been constructed under three main headings – Preserve, Sustain and Develop – both to show clearly its conformity with local and national policy and to explain to residents how the policies reflect their aspirations and concerns. Particular attention has been given to:

- the framework described in Policy SP1;
- The paragraphs on development in rural areas and windfall housing development in Policy SP2;
- Promotion of high quality design in Policy SP6;
- Separation of settlements in Policy SP7.

5.3 The section in the Plan focusing on the Protection and Conservation of Egerton’s Individual Character and Environment Includes policies to conserve, and where possible enhance, distinctive landscape character and biodiversity, trees, woodland and hedges, local green spaces, key views and vistas, local heritage assets and dark skies. They conform to the strategic objectives in Local Plan SPI, specifically:

- b) To conserve and enhance the Borough’s natural environment including designated and undesignated landscapes and biodiversity....*
- c) To conserve and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets and the relationship between them and their settings....*
- d) To create the highest quality design which is sustainable, accessible, safe and promotes a positive sense of place.....*

5.4 The section in the Plan which aims to ensure a Sustainable Future for Egerton, includes policies on the maintenance and enhancement of community facilities which support the social and economic life of the village and the health and wellbeing of residents, on community open space and Public Rights of Way, and adds the Community Aspiration for the Egerton pre-school. These align with the strategic objectives in Local Plan SP1, specifically:

- a) To focus development at accessible and sustainable locations.....*
- e) To ensure development is supported by the necessary social, community, physical and e-technology infrastructure, facilities and services....*
- i) To ensure new development is resilient to, and mitigates against the effects of climate change.....*

5.5 As a small rural settlement, development in the Plan in policies D3 (Housing Policy), D4 (Local Needs Affordable Housing), D5 (Land at Orchard Nurseries, Egerton) and D6 (Reuse of redundant farm buildings) is also on a small, proportionate scale and aims to deliver the housing need identified through the HNS and in line with SP1:

a) *To focus development at accessible and sustainable locations.....*

g) *To provide a mix of housing types and sizes to meet the changing housing needs of the Borough's population including affordable homes, self-build...*

The Plan provides for a mix of housing in response to the local need expressed in the HNS in accessible locations, as far as is possible in a rural parish with scattered communities and limited services. The mix is delivered in the Plan's general housing policy (ENPD3 Housing Policy), and in its policies on affordable housing and housing for older residents wishing to downsize (Policies ENPD4 Local Needs Affordable Housing and D5 Land at Orchard Nurseries, Egerton respectively). Windfall development and the re-use of redundant farm buildings has also been included in the assessment of housing need (Policy ENPD6).

5.6 As part of the development of the Plan, the confines of both Egerton and Egerton Forstal were agreed in consultation with village residents and are included in the Plan (see paras. 7.32-5).

6. Contribution to sustainable development

6.1 The NPPF (2019) states in the opening paragraph on sustainable development (para. 7) that *'the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'*. There are three over-arching and interdependent objectives to achieve this (para 9):

- **Economic** – *'to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places...'*
- **Social** – *'to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities...'*
- **Environmental** – *'to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment....'*

6.2 The Plan's vision aligns closely with these objectives:

- to **protect** and conserve the quality of community life and the parish environment as identified by its residents;
- to ensure that there is a **sustainable future** for the people who live and work in the parish including access to housing, infrastructure, business and leisure/community facilities; and
- to **develop** housing and supporting infrastructure that is sensitive to the distinctive character of the parish and meets the needs of local people.

6.3 In considering the **economic** objective, the Plan aims to support the continuing development of the rural economy, and the retention of local jobs in the parish as far as is possible, through the provision of affordable housing for young people wishing to work in agriculture or the

developing hospitality and tourism service businesses, by the encouragement of the use of redundant farm buildings for business or tourism use, and by support for those working at home.

6.4 A key aim of the Plan is to support the **social** element of sustainable development. As Section 6 (Ensuring a Sustainable Future for Egerton) demonstrates, sustainability in rural communities is increasingly dependent on maintaining the vitality of the rural community through social activity (clubs and societies, see para 3.23 and Evidence Base), maintaining and enhancing community assets (see paras 3.24, 6.14-15) and supporting and enhancing community health and wellbeing (see paras 6.17, 6.25-27).

6.5 Section 5 of the Plan (Protecting and Conserving Egerton's Individual Character and Environment) focuses on the **environmental** objective of sustainable development, as do the relevant policies and paragraphs in Section 7 (Development to meet Current and Future Need). These include the Plan policies on Distinctive Landscape Character and Biodiversity (ENP P1), Trees, Hedges and Woodland (ENP P2), Local Green Spaces (ENP P3), Key Views and Vistas (ENP P4) and Light Pollution and Dark Skies (ENP P6) as well as the Development policies on Water Supply and Drainage (ENP D7) and Renewable Energy and Climate Change Mitigation (ENP D5). Community Aspiration 4 (Community Woodland and Wildflower Meadows) also applies.

6.6 The key objectives for the sustainability of village life as described in the Plan can be summarised as:

- Ensuring that the Parish contains a mix of housing reflecting local needs and therefore increasing the provision of housing for young people, families and older residents;
- Providing facilities to support older and disabled people wishing to remain in the community;
- Support for local services and businesses essential to the maintenance of village life such as the local school and pre-school, the shop, garages, inns etc;
- Support for the rural economy, including agriculture, local businesses and individuals working from home;
- Maintenance and improvement of facilities to support residents' health and well-being such as the Millennium Hall, Games Barn and recreation ground;
- Ensuring continuation of public transport connecting Egerton to other larger centres, of school bus services, and of community transport services such as Wealden Wheels and hospital car services;
- Maximizing the PRow and the Kent County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) to contribute to sustainability by providing opportunities for exercise, leisure and open air recreation as well as alternative local transport.

6.7 Compatibility of Plan policies with the sustainability objectives is summarised in Section 7 below, taking into account NPPF para. 9: *'Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area'*.

7. Summary of conformity with national and local plan policies

7.1 Review of Egerton Policies' against national and local policy

Policy No.	Egerton draft Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Regard to the NPPF Framework	Sustainable Development	Conformity with the Local Plan
ENP P1	Distinctive Landscape Character and Biodiversity	YES, Paras 170 a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity, b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside & e) improve local environmental conditions, 174 a) safeguard local wildlife-rich habitats & b) securing measurable net gains for biodiversity	YES – Environmental & Economic	YES, in conformity with ENV1 Biodiversity, ENV3b Landscape Character and Design, ENV5 Protection of important rural features
ENP P2	Trees, hedges and woodland	YES, Paras 170 & 174 as ENP1 above	YES - Environmental	YES, in conformity with ENV3a Landscape Character and Design, ENV5 as above
ENP P3	Local Green Spaces	YES, Para 99-101	YES – Environmental & Social	YES, ENV5 as above, COM2 Recreation, Sport, Play and Open Spaces
ENP P4	Key Views and Vistas	YES, Paras 170 & 174 as ENP1 above	YES – Environmental & Economic	YES, in conformity with ENV3a, ENV5 as above,
ENP P5	Local Non-designated Heritage Assets	YES, Para 184,185 a) & b), 189	YES - Environmental	Yes, in conformity with ENV13 Conservation and Enhancement of Heritage Assets
ENP P6	Light Pollution and Dark Skies	YES, Para 170 as ENP1 above	YES – Environmental & Social	YES, in conformity with ENV4 Light Pollution and Promoting Dark Skies

ENP S1	Community Facilities	YES, Paras 79 c), 83 d), 91, 92, 96	YES – Economic & Social	YES, in conformity with COM2 Recreation, Sport, Play and Open Spaces
ENP S2	Community Open Space at Egerton Forstal	YES, Para 83 d), 91, 96, 118 a) & b)	YES – Social & Environmental	YES, COM2 as above
ENP S3	Public Rights of Way	YES, Para 98, 102 c)	YES – Economic, Social & Environmental	YES, in conformity with ENV5 d)
ENP D1	Development Principles	YES, Paras 124, 127 & 128, 131	YES – Economic, Social & Environmental	YES, in conformity with SP6, HOU2 b), HOU3a, HOU5 f), HOU6 c), HOU8 d), HOU9 f), ENV3a g)
ENP D2	Application of the Parish Design Statement	YES, Para 125	YES – Economic, Social & Environmental	YES, SP6 as above
ENP D3	Housing Policy	YES, Para 77 Rural local needs	YES – Economic, Social & Environmental	YES, in conformity with SP2, para.4, development in rural areas
ENP D4	Land at Gale Field, Egerton	YES, Paras 71 a) & b) Exception sites, 77 Rural local needs, 84, 105, 108	YES – Economic, Social & Environmental	YES, SP2 as above, SP7 Separation of settlements, HOU2 Local Needs/Subsidized Specialist Housing, ENV1
ENP D5	Land at Orchard Nurseries, Egerton	YES, Para 71 a) & b) as above, 77 Rural local needs, 84, 105, 108	YES – Economic, Social & Environmental	YES, SP2 as above, HOU2, HOU5, ENV1
ENP D6	Reuse of redundant farm buildings	YES, Paras 68 – 70, 79 c), 83 a), b) & c), 118 c), 119	YES – Economic, Social & Environmental	YES, SP2 para. 4 on development in rural areas, and para. 5 on windfall housing development, EMP1, EMP4
ENP D7	Water Supply and Drainage	YES, Paras 149, 156, 165	YES - Environmental	YES, in conformity with ENV6 Flood Risk, ENV7 Water Efficiency, ENV8 Water Quality, Supply and Treatment, ENV9 Sustainable drainage

ENP D8	Renewable Energy and Climate Change Mitigation	YES, Paras 148, 150, 151, 154	YES – Social & Environmental	YES, in conformity with ENV10 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
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7.2 Review of Egerton Community Aspirations against national and local policies

No.	Egerton draft Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Regard to the NPPF Framework	Sustainable Development	Conformity with the Local Plan
ENP CA1	Egerton Pre-school	Para 94	YES – Economic & Social	YES, in conformity with COM1 Meeting the Community's Needs
ENP CA2	Additional Parking	YES, Paras 96, 104 d)	YES – Social & Environmental	YES, in conformity with COM1 and COM2 as above
ENP CA3	Footpath AW368	YES, Paras 98, 102 c)	YES – Economic & Social	YES, in conformity with ENV5 d)
ENP CA4	Community Woodland and Wildflower Meadows	YES, Paras 170 & 174 as ENP1 above	YES – Social & Environmental	YES, in conformity with ENV1 Biodiversity

8. Compatibility with Regulations/ Obligations

8.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report, prepared by Ashford Borough Council in September 2020 and updated in March 2021, concludes – following consultation with the three statutory bodies, Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England – that:

- A full SEA is not required to accompany the submission version of the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan covering the requirements of the SEA Directive, and
- An Appropriate Assessment is not required to accompany the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan.

8.2 The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan has regard to fundamental human rights and freedoms and seeks to ensure that no groups or individuals are disadvantaged by any policy in the Plan.

9. Conclusions

The Basic Conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 are considered to be met by the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan; and it is therefore respectfully suggested to the Examiner that the Plan complies with Paragraph 8(1)(a) of Schedule 4B of the Act.

APPENDICES

1. Neighbourhood Area Designation Notice and Map



PUBLIC NOTICE

DESIGNATION OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA, EGERTON

Ashford Borough Council has designated, under section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the following neighbourhood area:-

Neighbourhood Area Name: **EGERTON PARISH**

Name of body who applied for the designation: **EGERTON PARISH COUNCIL**

The neighbourhood area is identified on the map below



For more information please visit www.ashford.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plans
Or contact the Parish Council on 012233 756501

Appendix 2: Evidence Base

- Egerton Parish Plan (see www.egerton-kent.co.uk)
- Egerton Parish Design Statement (see www.egerton-kent.co.uk)
- Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group membership and Terms of Reference (see Appendix 3 and www.egertonnp.co.uk)
- Housing Needs Survey Report (see www.egertonnp.co.uk)
- Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Report prepared by Ashford Borough Council (see www.egertonnp.co.uk)
- Community Consultation Statement
- Local Green Spaces Assessment (see www.egertonnp.co.uk)
- Key Views and Vistas – maps and photographs (see Plan and egertonnp.co.uk)
- Village Clubs and activities (see www.egerton-kent.co.uk and EPC Welcome Pack)
- Business activities in Egerton (see also Welcome Pack)
- Older People’s Housing Survey Results, 2015-16
- Site Assessment Process and Conclusions (see Site Assessment Report and www.egertonnp.co.uk)
- Application of the Parish Design Statement recommendations on development since its publication – a review
- 10 Year analysis of planning applications (conversion of obsolete farm buildings)
- Local Heritage Assessment and Listing