

## A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR FAWKHAM - WHAT DO YOU THINK?



Fawkham Parish Council are considering preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the village.

This would be a lengthy process and impact the village as a whole and, before we decide, we would like to hear your views. We have outlined in this leaflet the main points of a Neighbourhood Plan, the implications of preparing one, and how to contact us to give us your views.



## What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan sets out a community's vision for their area and puts policies in place that will shape the future. It is a tool that gives communities statutory powers to help shape their local area.

A Neighbourhood Plan is:

- A legal document that sets out planning policies for the local area – planning policies are used to decide whether to approve planning applications
- Written by the local community, the people who know and love the area, rather than by Sevenoaks District Council
- A powerful tool to guide future development.

It is about the use and development of land, and it is up to those preparing it to decide on its scope and content. It can include a future vision for Fawkham on a range of issues which really matter to us, which could include environment, housing, community facilities, transport, heritage, recreation, open space, and employment.

**Key to creating a Neighbourhood Plan is listening to the community to make sure it contains what Fawkham wants and needs: it is a community-led plan.**

A Neighbourhood Plan cannot stop development: it must support the strategic needs set out in the Local Plan. This means it cannot prevent development identified in the Local Plan. The draft Local Plan allocates two housing sites in Fawkham: Fawkham Business Park with 31 units and Grange Park Farm with 32 units, although the future of that plan is currently unknown. Housing developments are also proposed at Salts Farm depot (26 units) and Fawkham Manor hospital (32 units).

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**It gives us a say in what new development looks like:**

A plan can shape and guide development by creating criteria on layout, design, materials, character, gardens and parking requirements or deciding on infrastructure priorities. This means things like the number of car-parking spaces could be linked to number of bedrooms, or having native hedges rather than fences, or a preferred mix of housing-types, such as for people downsizing and wanting to stay in Fawkham.

**It allows us to say what green spaces we would like to protect:**

A plan can identify areas for protection such as open spaces valued by the community or green spaces that meet Local Green Space criteria set out in national policy. This means the plan can direct development away from certain locations.


**It gives us a legal say in local planning matters:**

Once made, a Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the statutory development plan for Sevenoaks District Council. This statutory status is important. Developers can only go against the policies in a Neighbourhood Plan if they are able to convince a Planning Enquiry that the policy should be set aside.

During the village survey last year, you told us what you liked about living in Fawkham - and what you didn't - and what changes you'd like to see. The findings of the survey have led the Parish Council to believe that a Neighbourhood Plan would be a good idea.

**Preparing a Neighbourhood Plan is your chance to shape the future of Fawkham.**

If you'd like to find out more about Neighbourhood Plans or to keep up to date on decisions about whether one is prepared for Fawkham, please visit: <https://fawkhampc.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan/>





## **Neighbourhood Plan Limitations / Implications**

Although there are many positive aspects, we need to make you aware of the following:

There will be financial implications. Fawkham Parish Council is one of the smallest in Sevenoaks District and consequently has limited finances. Areas that have created a Neighbourhood Plan have found the cost to be £30,000 - £35,000. There are grants we can apply for, which could cover around a third of the cost. To meet the remaining cost, the precept (the parish council element of your council tax) would need to increase for the next two years. We estimate we would need to raise up to £24,000 over two years, and we undertake not to have an increase for any other reason next year. We estimate the temporary increase next year would be around £41 per band D household. After two years, this increase would be removed.

The creation of a Neighbourhood Plan is a comprehensive undertaking. The Parish Council alone cannot complete the tasks, and, as well as engaging specialists, we will need help from the community.

A Neighbourhood Plan can only deal with development and use of land. It cannot deal with non-planning matters, such as changes to speed limits. However, non-planning content can be included as an appendix, to be addressed by other projects.

**We want to hear what you think - please let us know if you'd like us to go ahead with this.**

We will hold an online Zoom meeting on 3rd December at 7.30pm. If you'd like to attend, please email [fawkhampc@gmail.com](mailto:fawkhampc@gmail.com) and we will send the password. If you are unable to join the Zoom meeting, you can:

Email us at [fawkhampc@gmail.com](mailto:fawkhampc@gmail.com)

Send us a letter addressed to The Clerk, Hillside Cottage, Castle Hill, DA3 7BQ

Phone us on 07503 651138 to arrange a telephone conversation.

The deadline for responses is 13th December.