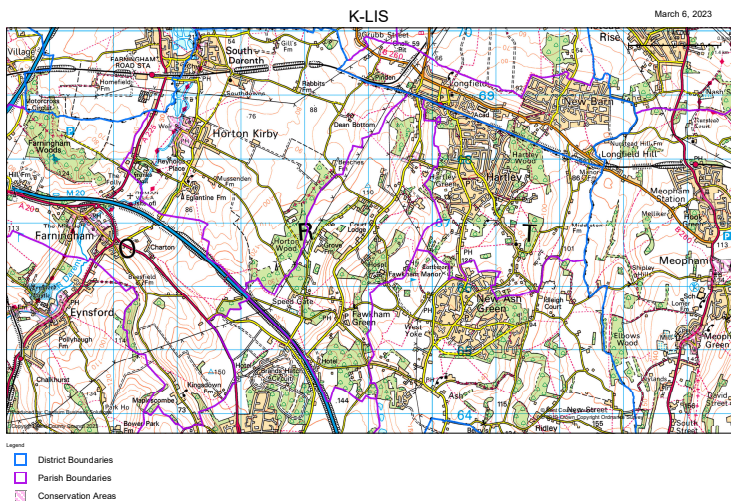


Housing Evidence Report for Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan



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The purpose of this report is to present information on:

- Housing supply and housing need in the parish of Fawkham
- The absence of a strategic role for Fawkham to meet housing needs
- The unsustainability of Fawkham for residential development.

Summary

Fawkham Parish's current housing stock is 228 (as at March 2022), with planning permission granted for a further 54 dwellings, giving a total of 282 upon completion, an increase of 28% on the 2011 census figure.

A low level of housing need of three affordable homes and seven open market homes was identified in November 2021.

Fawkham is classified as a hamlet, the lowest tier of the Settlement Hierarchy and is not a sustainable location from the point of view of its facilities or from a transport perspective.

Introduction

Data has been extracted from the latest 2011 Census data for the Parish of Fawkham and nearby villages. Comparable data quoted for Sevenoaks District as a whole is from the Sevenoaks District Local Housing Needs Study May 2017 [HOU15]. The 2021 Census data is not available at the timing of writing.

The Census data is subject to the following caveat: *"In order to protect against disclosure of personal information, records have been swapped between different geographic areas. Some counts will be affected, particularly small counts at the lowest geographies"*. It is considered that this caveat is likely to affect some of Fawkham's data.

Housing Stock

Housing Stock in the 2011 Census

The Parish housing stock in 2011 was 221 dwellings, which represents 0.44% of the housing stock of Sevenoaks District. All were unshared dwellings and 214 (96.8%) had at least one usual resident.

The Census information regarding the numbers of detached, terraced and semi-detached housing types is not accurate and revised figures have been prepared:

- Detached properties make up 71.5% of Fawkham's housing stock, a higher figure than seen in nearby villages, and far higher than the 28% average in the North East Sevenoaks "place making area". (*West Kingsdown parish 45%, Hartley 54.6%, Horton Kirby and South Darenth 22.9%, Shoreham 51.1%, Ash-cum-Ridley 21.5%*).
- The proportion of terraced houses, at 19.5%, is slightly higher but similar to that of most nearby villages (with the exception of New Ash Green which was designed in 1967 with predominately terraced houses). The terraced houses are found in six locations in the southern half of the

Parish. (*West Kingsdown parish 7.7%, Hartley 14.1%, Horton Kirby and South Darenth 18.0%, Shoreham 15.5%, Ash-cum-Ridley 56.1%*).

- Consequently, the proportion of semi-detached properties, at 9.0%, is significantly lower than that seen in nearby villages. (*West Kingsdown parish 29.5%, Hartley 19.7%, Horton Kirby and South Darenth 53.3%, Shoreham 25.5%, Ash-cum-Ridley 15.0%*). All the semi-detached properties occur in a single pairing, with no repeated designs, and are spread around the village.

Details of housing types are shown in Appendix 1.

- There were also two caravans or other mobile/temporary structures in the 2011 census.

The Census showed that both the average number of rooms (7) and the average number of bedrooms (3.4) are higher than in the surrounding villages.

The vast majority of dwellings (77%) were owner-occupied, above the Sevenoaks District average of 72.7%.

6% (12) were social rented houses, a smaller proportion than in the surrounding villages, and lower than the Sevenoaks District average of 12.9%. Up to date figures provided by SDC's Housing Enabling Officer in 2021 show nine social houses, implying three houses have transferred from social rented into private ownership since the 2011 census.

13% were privately rented, higher than surrounding parishes and slightly above the Sevenoaks District average of 12.3%. Some of these are tied-properties. (*West Kingsdown parish 5.8, Hartley 4.7, Horton Kirby and South Darenth 6.5, Shoreham 10.1, Ash-cum-Ridley 11.1%*).

3% of properties were occupied rent-free.

Housing Stock Changes since 2011

A number of additional houses/dwellings have been created in Fawkham since the 2011 census; SDC monitoring figures as at March 2022 are shown below.

Seven additional permanent dwellings with planning permission have been completed since the 2011 census have been added since 2011 (plus two additional mobile homes or caravans not yet reflected in SDC's monitoring figures).

Details of these are shown in Appendix 2. Only buildings not in ancillary use to the main dwelling, and therefore representing an additional dwelling, have been included in these figures. It should be noted that the majority of these additional dwellings are either conversions of existing buildings such as stables or outbuildings, or as a result of the granting of a retrospective Certificate of Lawful Development following the passing of the required period of time.

In addition, planning permission has been granted for a further 54 dwellings, including 26 at Fawkham Manor and 26 Salts Farm depot, of which 10 are affordable homes. Details are shown in Appendix 3. Once completed, the housing stock figure will become 282, an increase of 28% since 2011.

This level of development should be taken into account when making an assessment of the level of further development that would be considered appropriate for a hamlet in the lowest tier of the Settlement Hierarchy.

Empty Properties

The need to build new housing can be reduced by making use of existing empty homes. Across Sevenoaks District as a whole 1.8% of houses were empty in 2016, compared to 0.79% across Kent in 2020.

In 2011, 7 properties were shown in Fawkham as having “no usual resident”, which at 3.16% is nearly twice the District average.

The two properties below were assessed by SDC in March 2021 as uninhabitable (with no Council Tax due):

- Pax Lodge, Three Gates Road. Empty for c.25 years.
- White House Lodge, Speedgate Hill. The lodge for the White House Farm, which is Listed. It has been empty for some years.

SDC advised in March 2021 in response to a request for information that they *“are currently writing out to the owners of empty properties and advising them of the grants and services available to return the properties to use, however if the owner does not wish to engage with us, there are no current plans to take further action under Private Sector Housing. If the properties are not structurally sound then we would refer the matter to Building Control”*.

SDC’s Revenues team was contacted for an up to date number of empty properties in Fawkham but was unable to provide any further information.

Housing Need

SDC conduct Local Housing Needs surveys to assess the need for affordable and elderly person housing within a parish. The surveys have a 5 year life span. If these demonstrate a need, it can allow for affordable rural exceptions housing to be built, which would otherwise not be permitted in the Green Belt.

The most recent Local Housing Needs survey was conducted in November 2021. The survey form and covering letter are shown in Appendices 4a and 4b, with the Housing Needs Survey Report (January 2022) at Appendix 5.

A survey was posted to every household within the parish in November 2021. 236 surveys were distributed with 48 surveys being returned, representing a 20% response rate, which is at the upper end of average.

Analysis of the returned survey forms identified that 81% of respondents are owner occupiers. 71% of respondents have lived in the parish for over 10 years.

The survey identified a low level of need for three affordable homes: 2 x 2 bed first homes and 1 x 2 bed shared ownership homes.

In addition, a need for seven open market properties were identified, including one for an older household wanting to downsize (with no need for level access) and four who were interested in self-build only.

Fawkham Parish Council (FPC) has considered the results of the Housing Need Survey and has requested that a local lettings plan be pursued for some of the affordable housing at Salts Farm depot to meet this need. This is subject to approval by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health. FPC considers the need for four self-build open market houses may be possible through redevelopment of existing sites; given the level of deposits available it is thought that large plots are desired by those with this need. FPC considers that the other three open market needs, including that of the one older household looking to downsize, can be met through market churn.

Previous Local Housing Needs surveys resulted in the following:

- 1990s - 3 x 3 bedroom terrace houses built as rural exceptions houses in 1996
- 2005 - 3 households demonstrated need
- 2015 - did not identify a need for affordable housing from people with a local connection to the Parish

The absence of a strategic role for Fawkham to meet housing needs

The adopted Local Plan has no housing allocations within Fawkham Parish.

As part of the preparation of the Local Plan, SDC updated the Settlement Hierarchy in 2018, and again in 2022, and stated it is “a key piece of evidence that will be used to prepare the emerging Local Plan 2015-2035. It helps to define the role and function of each settlement within the District. This document will help inform the profile of settlements as well as their capacity to accommodate future development requirements”¹, and “This updated Settlement Hierarchy focuses more than ever on the sustainability of settlements”².

Within the emerging Local Plan, Fawkham is one of 56 settlements within the Settlement Hierarchy, in which it is defined as a hamlet. This places Fawkham in the lowest and least sustainable of the six tiers of the Settlement Hierarchy.

The Settlement Hierarchy states: “Hamlets have very small populations (fewer than 1,000 inhabitants) and have a limited range of services and facilities. As such, it would be unrealistic to expect these settlements to accommodate much new development.”³

The Settlement Hierarchy also states: “It is expected that development will be distributed and delivered according to the sustainability of the settlements within the District”.⁴

Fawkham Parish is washed over by Green Belt and so does not have a settlement boundary. There is no settlement centre. Rather, there are three distinct clusters of development within the valley:

- Fawkham Green area, around the village green area where the pub is situated, much of which is post-War housing. This totals 55 houses
- Around the Baldwin's Green Conservation Area, close to the church and the junction of Castle Hill and Valley Road, which contains 31 dwellings
- Around the village school, where there is a cluster of 12 dwellings
- The remaining 134 houses are mainly dispersed along the floor of the dry chalk valley, along the road running along the western ridge of the valley (Three Gates Road) and along the roads leading up from the valley floor (Manor Lane, Speedgate Hill, Scudders Hill).

In accordance with National Planning Policy Guidance, given there is no up-to-date Local Plan, Fawkham Parish Council approached SDC's Planning Policy team to discuss and work collaboratively towards agreeing an indicative housing figure to include within the Neighbourhood Plan. A meeting was held on April 2022 at which SDC advised they were not in a position to provide indicative housing figures for individual parishes. This information is not likely to be available for Fawkham until all non-Green Belt options have been exhausted, brownfield land and increased density considered and until it is known whether neighbouring authorities are able to assist, after which SDC will consider whether there are exceptional circumstances to justify changes to the Green Belt. SDC advise that any housing figure for Fawkham is unlikely to be available until 2023.

¹ Sevenoaks District Settlement Hierarchy July 2022, para 1.3

² *ibid*, Executive Summary

³ *ibid*, para 7.15

⁴ *ibid*, para 2.13

The unsustainability of Fawkham for residential development

Facilities and Services

SDC's Settlement Hierarchy of 2022 identified eight facilities and services considered key to the sustainability of settlements⁵.

Fawkham has only two of these key facilities: a village hall and a 0.5 form entry primary school. It does not have the other facilities considered key to sustainability: bus service, rail service, a doctor's surgery, a Post Office, a convenience store or a recreation ground/park.

The Settlement Hierarchy evidence clearly shows Fawkham is not a sustainable location from the point of view of its facilities and services.

For further details of the facilities, please see the Community Facilities Evidence Report.

Transport

Fawkham is also not a sustainable location for residential development from a transport perspective.

Residents are reliant on private cars, even for short journeys, with the 2011 Census showing 20.6% of households having 3 cars/vans and 12.6% having 4 or more.

The local rural roads represent unsafe walking/cycling environments due to the apparent and actual speed of traffic, absence of footways and absence of street lighting. There is no bus or train service.

For further details, please see the Transport Evidence Report.

**Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
January 2023**

⁵ Sevenoaks District Settlement Hierarchy July 2022, Table 7

Appendix 1 - Housing Types

Semi-detached Houses, 20 in total:

Fawkham Forge and Rose Cottage
Halehurst and Halehurst annexe
1 and 2 Hillside Cottages
1 and 2 Dene Bottom Farm Cottages
9 and 10 Small Grains
11 and 12 Small Grains (bungalows)
Beech House and Laurel Bank
Dene Cottage and Manor Cottage
Stable Cottage and the Coach House at Fawkham Manor
Fallen Willows and Fawkham Garage Bungalow

Terraced Houses, 43 in total:

Fairview Cottages 1 - 14
Small Grains 1 - 8
Six Acre Cottages 1 - 7
Calais Cottages 1 - 3 and 5 - 7
Brands Hatch Cottages 1 - 5
South View Cottages 1 - 3

All other houses, 71.5% of the total, are Detached

Appendix 2a - Additional permanent dwellings completed since the 2011 census

Total: 7

SDC has supplied the information shown in this Appendix.

PROPERTY	ADDRESS	NO. OF BEDROOMS	PLANNING PERMISSION	STATUS	TYPE
The Lodge at Fawkham Manor Farm	Fawkham Manor Farm Road		19/03133/FUL	Completed	Detached
The Stables, Little Scudders	Scudders Hill	3	19/01823/FUL	Completed 2021	Detached
The Garage	Rogers Wood Lane	3	15/01827/FUL	Completed	Detached
Tamerton	Castle Hill	4	10/02743/FUL	Completed 2014	Detached
Speedgate Lodge	Speedgate Hill	1	10/02938/FUL	Completed 2012	Detached
Malabar	Valley Road	4	08/00385/FUL	Completed	Detached
Fawkham Hall	Valley Road	4	21/01490/LDCEX	Completed	Detached

Appendix 2b - Additional mobile homes added since the 2011 census

Total: 2

PROPERTY	ADDRESS	NO. OF BEDROOMS	STATUS
Mobile Home, Land NW Choakes Farm	Speedgate Hill	2	20/00238/FUL
The Cabin, Woodlands Activity Centre	School Lane	1	22/00365/LDCEX

Appendix 3: Additional permanent dwellings with planning permission granted as at November 2021

Total: 54

PROPERTY	ROAD	NUMBER OF DWELLINGS	PLANNING PERMISSION	STATUS	TYPE
Annexe at Fawkham Manor Farm	Fawkham Manor Farm Road	1	20/01903/FUL	Under construction	Detached
The Stables, Hillside	Valley Rd	1	20/01718/FUL	Not started but already in use as dwelling	Detached
Fawkham Manor	Fawkham Manor Farm Road	26	21/00695/FUL	Under construction	18x4 bed terrace; 8 x flats
Salts Farm Depot	Fawkham Road	26	20/00882/OUT	Detailed application to be submitted	Awaited

Appendix 4: Local Housing Needs Survey 2021

Provided as a separate document

Appendix 5: Housing Needs Survey Report (January 2022)

Provided as a separate document