



The Sandyhurst Lane Residents' Association (SLRA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan - Regulation 15, September 2020 consultation.

Sandyhurst Lane Residents' Association has been active for over thirty years representing the collective interests of the residents of Sandyhurst Lane and all adjacent roads, which constitute its neighbourhood of 345 dwellings. The mission statement of the Association is *"Protecting the rural character of Sandyhurst Lane and the adjoining area"*.

The SLRA area represents properties solely within by the rural Downs West borough ward with 70% of its properties falling under the Westwell Parish Council and the balance of 30% being in the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell wards of the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell (BA&E) Parish Council.

As a result the SLRA believes it has a responsibility to its members to comment on this Neighbourhood Plan which, whilst it sets out the residents' vision for the Boughton Aluph & Eastwell parish, will have an impact on the quality of life, environment and character of the wider SLRA areas.

In fulfilling this responsibility the SLRA has been actively supportive during the development of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and has regularly submitted its views on those issues which we believe will impact on some, or all of our residents, or which we believe will influence or be detrimental to the rural character of the area we seek to preserve.

We now congratulate the BA&E Parish Council and its neighbourhood planning team on the production of a comprehensive Neighbourhood Plan which, in the most part, meets our earlier criticisms and now complements and supports our Mission Statement and vision for the future of the area.

We are therefore pleased to endorse this Neighbourhood Plan whilst indicating those detailed points we still think need addressing.

Our consultation response covers two themes of the NP, namely

Environment

Leisure, Wellbeing and Infrastructure

Environment

a) Whilst the Plan seeks to protect those of its areas within the AONB, the SLRA believes this version still fails to reflect the recent Ashford Borough Council ward boundary changes which led to the separation of both the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell parish wards into the rural Downs West borough ward and the larger (by population) Goat Lees parish ward into the new Goat Lees borough ward.

Over the Plan period the quoted 90% of the parish population in the urban Ashford area (page 10) can be expected to increase. These changes may make retaining the rural character of the whole BA&E parish more difficult. The SLRA believes the NP needs to recognise this demographic change by more clearly identifying and prioritising the preservation of the existing rural areas.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

The NP should ensure its description, maps (particularly Map 3, page 18) and Policy BAE NP1 (page 21) clearly delineate the dichotomy that Boughton Aluph and Eastwell parish wards fall into both the rural Downs West and the urban Goat Lees borough wards and, as such ensure development proposals in the latter do not contravene NPPF, ABC Local Plan, AONB or other policies that safeguard the character of the rural countryside in this Neighbourhood Plan.

b) Whilst the SLRA admires the accuracy and detail in describing the characteristics of Sandyhurst Lane it still argues that the statement accompanying the photo of Sandyhurst Lane (page 30) is misleading.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

That for clarity the text accompanying the photo on page 30 should make clear that, following the 2015 boundary realignment, it is the landscape buffer behind the properties on the south/southeast side of Sandyhurst Lane that *“forms a well-defined edge to the Ashford urban area and provides separation between the built form which forms the edge of the settlement of Ashford on one side and open countryside on the other”*.

Leisure, Wellbeing and Infrastructure

The SLRA is pleased to note that, whilst the text acknowledges that future housing and business developments within the Plan area will adversely impact on traffic on Sandyhurst Lane and surrounding roads (page 60), it fails to endorse the provision in the Ashford Local Plan permitting the development of Policy S20 Eureka Park ***that there should be no vehicular (except emergency vehicles) access onto Sandyhurst Lane.***

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Policy BAE NP5 - Eureka Park Development Principles (page 46/47) should include: That no direct or indirect vehicular access should be permitted (except emergency vehicles) from the development onto Sandyhurst Lane.

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