

# Our Local Plan Explained

## Community Engagement Event Feedback Form

All forms must be completed and returned by 5pm on **Monday 16 September 2024**.

<b>Contact details</b>	
<b>1. Name</b>	<b>Sonia Young, Clerk</b>
<b>2. Organisation (if applicable)</b>	<b>EGERTON PARISH COUNCIL</b>
<b>3. Address (including postcode)</b>	<b>The Computer Centre Egerton Millenium Village Hall Elm Close Egerton TN27 9DS</b>
<b>4. Email address</b>	<b>clerkegertonpc@hotmail.co.uk</b>
<b>5. Would you like to be notified of the future progress with the Local Plan?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes – by email <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – by post <input type="checkbox"/> No

Ashford Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the borough.

We want to hear your views on Ashford's future and any particular issues you are facing in your local area.

We would like you to think about the aspirations you and your community have for the next 15 years, consider how your needs and those of others may change over time (i.e. single parent families, teenagers, senior citizens, persons with a disability, ethnic minorities, business owners etc.). How might your aspirations and those of your local community be fulfilled, what could the council do to help through the plan making process?

Is there a need for more houses in your area, are there enough jobs and local services, how can we protect our natural, historic and built environment, are there local transport or other infrastructure needs that need addressing?

Please tell us what you think by providing answers to the questions in the spaces below.

### **6. Think about the future of Ashford borough, what are your aspirations for the borough over the next 15 years?**

To champion Ashford's heritage – showcase and enhance Ashford's high points and good reputation

To celebrate and cherish villages – some hidden gems - including fine examples of rural communities such as Egerton, Chilham, Aldington, Smarden and demonstrate how their uniqueness can and should be conserved

To consider the rural area around Ashford and its villages as a valued entity and attribute of Ashford Borough, akin to a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

To devise policies which will build on Parish Design statements to clarify what landowners and property owners should and shouldn't do in the countryside or in villages

To recognise the intrinsic beauty of the countryside and the rural communities within the landscape – place more emphasis on nurturing the rustic nature of Ashford's settlements, not "tame" the countryside with more urban-style sprawl and its paraphernalia such as high close-boarded fences – keep and plant hedgerows

## 6. Think about the future of Ashford borough, what are your aspirations for the borough over the next 15 years?

To maintain green/rural swathes between villages – and to protect the ever-dwindling habitats for wildlife

To enhance woodland, increase the number of trees to soften hard edges and maintain trees in public places

To tackle fly-tipping more effectively with KCC with incentives to re-use, recycle and dispose of rubbish more responsibly

To strengthen and clarify policies on conversion of agricultural barns (to include similar buildings such as stables) as dwellings so as to avoid conversion if there is still an agricultural/horticultural/equine need, not risking new barns being built to replace them

To avoid compacted conversion of multiple barns as dwellings in the countryside which could give an impression of urbanisation; encourage appropriate re-use of redundant barns as commercial premises within the spirit of diversification and to boost the rural economy

To enhance energy conservation in all social housing and assist other households with grant aid

To enhance non-fossil fuel energy generation in all social housing and assist other households with grant aid

To insist on more energy conservation/green energy production/water conservation/use of grey water in all new developments

To strike an effective and meaningful balance between all forms of green energy generation; the need for agricultural production to help the country become self-sufficient in food; protection /conservation of the environment and enhancement of biodiversity; housing needs (not wishes); and sustaining the local economy

To listen to what parishes actually need and want in their communities (have meetings with them including an outcome of agreed action points!)

To provide or allow development of more, smaller homes for people starting out and reduce the number of large homes in the future

To provide housing for older people to downsize into so that the vacated larger homes can meet a need for larger properties instead of just relying on newly built large houses

To promote architecture of place - creating beauty and reflecting local character and identity; integrate affordable housing throughout the development making it indistinguishable from private housing; rely on Parish Design Statements in decision-making

To be more flexible about improvements to Listed buildings that help to maintain the fabric of the building and have regard to green energy/energy conservation

To reduce light pollution and to benefit from dark skies

To avoid more ribbon development along the A20 corridor

To improve the planning application turnaround - more dialogue with parishes is needed – and the introduction of, and adherence to, service level agreements (especially on timings of applications)

## 6. Think about the future of Ashford borough, what are your aspirations for the borough over the next 15 years?

To recruit more planning officers and be more consistent – publish more information (with links to Government website where needed) for details of processes and conditions

To engage at an early stage with parishes/communities about benefits they can derive from s.106 agreements and allow more flexibility for parishes to gain. At present projects have to be too specific. By the time a developer has sold all the houses on a site, several or many years will have passed and the projects identified earlier may have been superseded or been completed through local fundraising, in which case the parish loses out on funding for any similar projects it needs to pursue and the developer gains by not having to make any contributions

To enable parishes to suggest brownfield sites (and alternative sites to those put forward in the calls for sites) in their area for potential development

To create cycle lanes between the villages where roads are wide enough and also into Ashford, making them entirely separate from the road system – such as those seen in The Netherlands

To help facilitate the restoration of bus services to rural communities and investment in ‘last mile’ public transport options – for example transport options that would allow someone arriving at Pluckley Station to reach Egerton by other means than just walking on a journey that would take at least 45 minutes on unsafe roads

To facilitate a means of public transport to serve villages so that older people – a disproportionately high number in Egerton and whose capacity to drive diminishes year on year – can get to essential services such as doctors, dentists, opticians, hospital

To prevent more urban sprawl - use the full capacity of brownfield sites; invite parishes to suggest such ideas as additions to the call for sites

To create new green zones and distinguish between areas such as Ashford town and Kennington

To create a park and ride scheme to encourage better use of the town's facilities and to regenerate the town – particularly the centre which still has many brownfield sites or sites that are redundant

To campaign for/assist in provision of for better public transport

To ensure all of Sir Terry Farrell's designs and visions for Ashford are implemented – many of his ideas as Design Champion in 2010 are still relevant today

To streamline grant availability and publicise up-front on ABC's website

To secure the reopening of Ashford International station for Eurostar services

To make effective use of the Debenhams store

To make/allow sympathetic use of the historic barn opposite Waitrose so that it is preserved and not allowed to decay

## 7. What issues/challenges does the borough face that need to be addressed over the next 15 years?

New Government policies

Meeting housing need, not housing demand - they are two different things (a demonstrated need – e.g. from surveys)

Coping with pressure from adjoining boroughs wishing to expand development of "new towns" or "garden communities" with repercussions on Ashford's roads, other infrastructure and the knock-on detriment to Ashford's villages such as Maidstone BC's proposed "Heathlands" major new settlement proposals adjoining Egerton at Lenham Heath, and the continued expansion of neighbouring Headcorn. The local roads cannot support this massive influx, nor can other infrastructure.

Climate change

Balance the conflicts on land use: agriculture to be self-sufficient, green energy generation to be self-sufficient, wildlife to be protected, habitat enhancements where loss has/will occur, housing needs, business needs

Eurostar reinstatement

Regeneration of town centre

Local economy – jobs, facilities

Homelessness

Crime

## 8. How do you think the new Local Plan can address these issues/challenges?

*(See also comments in response to Q6 above)*

Be more transparent about what constitutes an outline planning application and a full application

Re-define more tightly the term "sustainable" in the context of planning and development proposals - it must include a safe (pavement) walking distance of no more than 1-2 km to the nearest bus stop or station

Define the "services" which make a site sustainable - and specify which ones would all be essential - in assessing proposals for new housing development to avoid misinterpretation or cherry-picking e.g. nearest open space rather than shop, school rather than church, a single fuel pump rather than doctors surgery

Take more heed of Neighbourhood Plans and Parish Design Statements; engage with Neighbourhood Plan teams at first stages and throughout the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, cross-referencing to planning applications

Engage more proactively with parishes/communities on what they have identified as needs

Define "windfall" development more tightly - and consider restricting the number of windfalls for each parish based on existing size of population/dwellings

Re-define with precision policies HOU5 and HOU3

Be more transparent about what constitutes an outline planning application and a full application

## 8. How do you think the new Local Plan can address these issues/challenges?

Recruit more planning officers and be more consistent

Streamline grant availability

Take heed of Parish Design Statements when considering any planning application for the locality

Ensure the setting of Listed buildings and Conservation Areas are not compromised by inappropriate development

Ensure developers and planning officers meet parish councils and listen to their views about development proposals affecting their community

Adhere to evidence of housing need through Housing Needs surveys

Engender clear dialogue with neighbouring boroughs with agreed action plans that aim to understand and protect each parties' interests.

Address proactively and lead by example the need for climate change adaptation and mitigation

## 9. Is there any existing infrastructure that needs improving and/or new infrastructure that needs to be provided?

Engage with parishes/communities through dialogue about the scope for infrastructure levies (CILs) or s.106 agreements as conditions of development; be more flexible about project headings for developer contributions so that developers still have to contribute to generic rather than specific parish projects when houses are finally sold i.e. prevent developers from avoiding payments through delays in completing a development if a parish project has been completed in the meantime through local fundraising

Insist as a planning condition on new developments that waste water treatment plants should be renewed, upgraded or additional new facilities are provided altogether to avoid contamination; excessive nitrates; plastics and other potential contaminants

Insist that Southern Water provides a proper analysis and report of its capacity to manage additional sewage from new developments effectively and safely

Insist as a planning condition on new developments that existing poor water supply pipework with water supply leakages in the vicinity are rectified

Insist on recycling of grey water

Insist on highway drainage maintenance to avoid localised flooding

With KCC, address surface water flooding problems caused by ditches being neglected, pipes blocked or ponds filled in

Provide better management and monitoring of developers during and after construction of housing developments to ensure that impact (e.g. damage to community infrastructure) is kept to a minimum and punished when damage is not fixed satisfactorily and immediately. This includes the nurturing and maintenance of new trees, ponds, hedges and wildlife habitat

**9. Is there any existing infrastructure that needs improving and/or new infrastructure that needs to be provided?**

**10. Do you wish to provide any feedback in response to any of the sites submitted through the 'Call for Sites' exercise?  
Any feedback should include the relevant HELAA reference/site address and any reasons or explanation for your feedback, e.g. why a site may/may not be suitable.**

**HELAA/LP41/003 Land North East of the Low House Forstal Road Egerton  
1.09 hectares for 5 houses**

Comments on the form submitted to ABC by the landowner with additional remarks by Egerton PC  
Response #1170516 From Jake Sauvage Date Started: 18 Sep 2023 10:37. Last modified: 29 Feb 2024 08:31  
Status Complete (Not complete! – several questions not answered even where answers were obligatory)  
Qs 1.2 - 1.6 requested contact details have not been completed- unless these have been redacted.  
Q 1.9 No land ownership evidence submitted  
Q 2.9 States “It comprises an undeveloped field”. Odd comment. Fields are fields! It is used for livestock grazing.  
Q 2.11 about the history of the site states : Application for planning in principle for an entry level exception scheme in accordance with Paragraph 71 National Planning Policy Framework 2019 comprising the erection of up to 9 entry level (discounted market sales) dwellings 20/01715/AS. This was refused by ABC and an Appeal was not allowed.  
Q 4.3 How are you intending to achieve nutrient neutrality? Response: Onsite land use changes, Wetland creation Onsite, Wastewater Treatment Works  
Q 5.1 How are you intending to achieve biodiversity net gain on the site? Response: Don't know  
Q7.1 Please set out the distance of the site to the nearest services.  
The Answer is in the furthest category of “Over a 20-minute walk”. ABC should note that the Headcorn surgery is 4 miles distant. A walk of over 1 hour with no pavements. There is No bus service to assist any journeys either.  
Q,7.4 ABC to note Headcorn station is 6km (4 miles) distant, Pluckley station 5km (3 miles). There is no bus service. Well in excess of the distance in the final category “over 1.6km).  
Q.7.5 Please state the name of nearest Public Open Green Space (playing field or informal green space).  
Response: Surrounding Areas - Not so. All land is privately owned in Egerton Forstal. The public playing fields are over a mile distant.  
Q 8.8 Are there are viability issues which could affect delivery or meeting required planning obligations, such as affordable housing? You must provide an answer to this question. Response: Don't Know  
Q 9.3 Would you like to be notified of the future progress with the Local Plan? You must provide an answer to this question. Left blank!



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**Further comments By Egerton Parish Council**

The application form appears to have been inadequately completed and with inaccurate information about the parish. This is hardly the way in which to make a genuine offer of land for development.

Forstal Road is Government classification U - unclassified, local authority classification/category C -winding and too narrow in places for passing vehicles and not safe for additional traffic.

The site comprises part of an undeveloped agricultural field in the open countryside. The adjacent property The Low House forms the end point to the built settlement on this side of the road in Egerton Forstal. This is confirmed by the Village Confines Map within the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan (ENP). As such, the application site is not considered to be within the existing settlement of Egerton Forstal and does not fall to be considered under ABC's existing Policy HOU3a as a result. Given this proposal does not mention providing local need specialist housing it does not override the existing ABC Local Plan or NPPF aims and objectives relating to sustainable development. There is no justification for the delivery of general market housing in unsuitable and unsustainable locations, and there would be more suitable sustainable sites in the Borough to provide this type of housing. ABC has now twice refused a planning application for a conversion of a stable nearby to a dwelling for local needs the same size and on the same footprint. It follows that proposed new houses which are not for local needs, on agricultural land in a similar location outside the Forstal envelope should not be allowed.

Egerton Forstal is not a settlement where proposals for residential development adjoining or close to the existing built-up confines would be acceptable unless identified as an exception site for local needs affordable housing for rent or shared ownership (such as at Chantlers Meadow on Forstal Road or Sale Field on Crockenhill road, the subject of a full planning application by English Rural Housing) Local people already have their family networks close at hand and understand the rural nature of the village and its limitations. They depend on their family ties and local employment within the rural economy. That would not be the case for non-local people who would be remote from services and workplaces, and this would result in a heavier reliance on private vehicles. The proposed land use would erode the existing landscape buffer at the edge of Egerton Forstal leading out of the village and into the countryside to the detriment of the rural character of the location. As such the proposal would not sit sympathetically in the wider landscape and would fail to comply with part (f) of Policy HOU5 in the existing Local Plan.

**Background:** A planning application 20/01715/AS in 2021 for 9 "discounted market" homes to be built on this site was not allowed by ABC on the following grounds:

*"The proposal is contrary to policies HOU2, HOU3, HOU5, TRA3a, TRA7, ENV1 and ENV3a of the Ashford Local Plan 2030 and Central Government guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and would therefore be contrary to interests of acknowledged planning importance for the following reason:*

- 1. The proposed dwellings, by virtue of their location and land use, outside of the built confines of any identified settlement in the development plan, with no overriding justification having been submitted, would give rise to unsustainable new homes in the countryside which would result in the over reliance on the private motor car to access everyday shops and services, contrary to the core principles of the Local Plan and the NPPF which seek to promote sustainable development in rural areas.*
- 2. The proposed dwellings, by virtue of the amount of development, would not be proportionate to the size of the existing settlement at Egerton Forstal and would overwhelm the village as a result.*
- 3. The proposed dwellings, by virtue of their location, land use and amount of development, would be out of character with the established pattern of development in the existing settlement at Egerton Forstal.*
- 4. The proposed dwellings, by virtue of their location and land use, would erode the existing landscape buffer to the open countryside, consolidating the built development, impacting on the character of the rural setting. This would be to the detriment of the visual amenity of the locality."*

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**An Appeal APP/E2205/W/21/3273050 to the Planning Inspectorate was dismissed – some of the reasons given by the Inspector were:**

*“ Egerton Forstal is a small settlement within a rural setting. It is centred around a crossroads and is mainly laid out in a linear form, with older buildings having been interspersed with more recent development. Given the linear pattern of development and the spacing of properties, the surrounding countryside is apparent in views between buildings and thus plays an important part in its wider setting.*

*Due to the undeveloped nature of both the appeal site and the field directly opposite it, to the south, this group of buildings are set apart from the main envelope of Egerton Forstal. In practical terms, these fields create a gap which play a key role in defining the extent of the settlement and also preventing it from extending, physically and visually towards Crockenhill Road.*

*Such development would be within a gap that has a crucial function in preventing the coalescence of the settlement and this group of five dwellings. Erosion of this gap, even through the development of a single dwelling, would significantly harm the rural character and appearance of the location.”*

It is important to note that planning permission is anticipated soon for local needs affordable housing on Crockenhill Road (Sale Field) near the junction with Forstal Road, just as the hill flattens out. This is specifically for local needs as supported by evidence in the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan's Housing Needs Survey. That site is an exception site and is under consideration under ABC's current Housing Policy HOU2: *“Local Needs / Subsidised Specialist Housing Planning permission will be granted for proposals for local needs / subsidised specialist housing within or adjoining rural settlements identified under policy HOU3a as 'exceptions' to policies restraining housing development provided that all the following criteria are met: The local need or requirement for specialist housing is clearly evidenced; The development is well designed, would not result in a significant adverse impact on the character of the area or the surrounding landscape and is appropriate to the scale and character of the village; and, There would be no significant impact on the amenities of any neighbouring residential occupiers.”*

The plans for the local Needs housing also maintain substantial green gaps between proposed new houses and existing houses and does not create overlooking or overbearing on any existing houses.

**HELAA/LP41/008 Knights Pasture, Bedlam Lane [actually Forstal Road] Egerton TN27 9EL**

**2 hectares for 20 houses**

Comments on the form submitted to ABC by the landowner plus additional remarks by Egerton PC

Response #1175411 From Thomas Hope Date Started: 12 Oct 2023 12:46. Last modified: 29 Feb 2024 08:30 Status Complete (not complete!) several questions not answered even where answers were obligatory)

Qs 1.2-1.6 requested contact details have not been completed unless these have been redacted.

Q 1.9 Has evidence of land ownership been provided? No.

Q 2.8 states this is a brownfield site because there are farm buildings and a mobile home on it. But this does not constitute a brownfield site. The majority of the 2 hectares is pasture. The buildings are not derelict, they consist of a new (2017) barn with an extended hardstanding for agricultural purposes and a mobile home for farmworkers allowed a few years later. The case for that agricultural need was robustly made by the landowner now wishing to build houses on it.

Q 4.3 How are you intending to achieve nutrient neutrality? Not answered. This is vital regardless of the site being within the Beult catchment area. It might be expected that before long, waste water will affect the Beult/Medway, with similar restrictions as in the Stour. It is also important to note that the pumping station



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which pumps raw sewage from this location in Egerton Forstal to the Treatment Works at the top of the village frequently fails and would need to be upgraded along with the sewage treatment works.

Q 5.1 How are you intending to achieve biodiversity net gain on the site? Not answered

Q 6.2 states access is onto Bedlam lane but it is Forstal Road

Q 7.1 Please set out the distance of the site to the nearest services. The Answer is in the furthest category of "Over a 20-minute walk". ABC should note that the Headcorn surgery is 4 miles distant. A walk of over 1 hour with no pavements.

Q7. 2 & 77.3 states the village shop and primary school are each a 10 - 20-minute walk (800m - 1.6km). It is in fact in excess of 2.2 km. The box ticked should be the last box, over 1.6km and well over a 20-minute walk and on narrow roads which have no pavements)

Q7.4 states there is a bus stop in Chapel Lane. Not so. The bus service to Ashford was stopped in early 2023. Only a school bus operates once each way weekdays in term times only.

ABC to note Headcorn station is 6km (4 miles) distant, Pluckley station 5km (3 miles). Well in excess of the distance in the final category "over 1.6km".

Q 7.5 Response states the nearest public open space at Egerton Play park is a 10-minute walk (400 - 800 metres). Not so. The playing fields and playground are at least 3 km (1.3 miles), so should be in the final category "excess of 1.6km"

Q 8.8 Are there are viability issues which could affect delivery or meeting required planning obligations, such as affordable housing? You must provide an answer to this question. Response: Don't Know

Q 9.3 Would you like to be notified of the future progress with the Local Plan? You must provide an answer to this question. Left blank!

**Additional comments by Egerton Parish Council**

The application form appears to have been inadequately completed and with inaccurate information about the parish. This is hardly the way in which to suggest a genuine parcel of land for development.

This site is outside the confines of Egerton Forstal. The existing relatively new barn and mobile home do not render this site as a brownfield site. The buildings serve agricultural purposes. The site comprises part of an undeveloped agricultural field in the open countryside. The adjacent properties are in Chantlers Meadow, an exception site of 8 homes developed for local needs housing in 2010. This cul-de-sac forms the end point to the built settlement on this side of the road in Egerton Forstal. This is confirmed by the Village Confines Map within the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan (ENP).

Forstal Road is Government classification U - unclassified, local authority classification/category C winding and too narrow in places for passing vehicles and not safe for additional traffic.

As such, the application site is not considered to be within the existing settlement of Egerton Forstal and does not fall to be considered under ABC's existing Policy HOU3a as a result. Given this proposal does not mention providing local need specialist housing it does not override the existing ABC Local Plan or NPPF aims and objectives relating to sustainable development. There is no justification for the delivery of general market housing in unsuitable and unsustainable locations, and there would be more suitable sustainable sites in the Borough to provide this type of housing. Egerton Forstal is not a settlement where proposals for

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residential development adjoining or close to the existing built-up confines would be acceptable. The closest such settlement is Egerton, and the site is not within easy walking distance of the services within the village of Egerton, so there would be heavy reliance on private vehicles.

The proposed land use for as many as 20 houses would be wholly disproportionate and would erode the existing landscape buffer at the edge of Egerton Forstal leading out of the village and into the countryside to the detriment of the rural character of the location. As such the proposal would not sit sympathetically in the wider landscape.

**HELAA/LP41/021 North Field off Harmers Way, Egerton**

**DUPLICATED with HELAA/LP41/078**

**1.59 hectares for unspecified no. of houses in addition to the 13 houses already allowed on Appeal (0.08 hectares beyond the existing approved plans for North Field)**

Comments on the form submitted to ABC by the landowner with additional remarks by Egerton PC

Response #1176845 From Jeremy Eustace Date Started: 03 Nov 2023 10:46. Last modified: 29 Feb 2024 08:30 Status Complete

**[See also duplication of this under reference HELAA/LP41/078 Land to the SE of Harmers Way, Egerton:**

**1.081 hectares** Response #1178229 From Land Economics Ltd (Katy Jarvis) Date Started: 17 Nov 2023 16:50] Qs 1.2 - 1.6 requesting contact details have not been completed unless these have been redacted.

The Form refers to Charlotte Eustace as the landowner. It is stated there are other (joint) landowners but no details given. On a s.106 document posted on ABC's website - which appears to be a unilateral undertaking only between developer and landowners the details are:

**WILLIAM PRAED HARMER** of Tall Timbers, Southill Road, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5EE and **CHARLOTTE EUSTACE** of Stone Hill Farm, Stone Hill Road Egerton, Ashford, Kent TN27 9DU and **LOUISA-JANE ERICA GILL** of Stone Hill Farm, Stone Hill Road, Egerton, Ashford, Kent TN27 9DU ("**the Owner**")

Q 2.2 What are the eastings and northings of the site? States: Not Known. Odd omission.

Q.2.9 the response gives details of the site and refers to the Judicial review, on-going at the time the site was submitted to ABC. Final comment is submitted is "*Whatever the outcome we would ask that this site be considered for the 2041 plan as should the current application go ahead there remains a further 0.8 ha for a future residential development.*"

Yet this was to be a green buffer zone behind the 13 houses now allowed to be built under ref 21/00627/AS. It abuts the nationally recognised Greensand Way PROW and is a prominent feature of the landscape.

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Words extracted from the planning application were:

South western boundary of site defined by mixed native shrub planting and scattered native trees to create an appropriate transition between the development and the wider landscape to the south west. The landscape buffer would vary in width between 3m and 5m with the deeper sections adjacent to the garages, which abut the south western boundary. Elsewhere along this edge the boundary will be defined by garden fences (which will be less obvious visually) with the built form set back beyond generous rear gardens. The proposals have been carefully designed to ensure that a hard edge is avoided.

So, the latest proposal to make use of the whole field would go against this important feature. It would call into question the validity and soundness of the original application which included a new wildflower meadow in the buffer zone. That application was the subject of an unsuccessful Judicial review application by EPC after a Planning Inspector had allowed the development of 13 houses on the basis of the plans submitted. So, the 13 houses in that application would be more than enough on this site. There should be no further encroachment of development on this site. Furthermore, excavations have recently revealed neolithic burial artefacts which are the subject of archaeological investigation.

Q3.2 & 3.3 No details given of the type or numbers of houses.

Q 5 Biodiversity net gain – the response was to make on site land use changes. But if the whole field were to be developed, the capacity for net gain would be compromised. Dramatic views can be gained over the Low Weald and towards the High Weald where the sense of leafy openness is enormous and this would be lost.

Q6.1 includes a heading about proximity to a scheduled ancient monument. The answer given is “no” but since then trial excavation of the site has revealed Bronze age artefacts and a stone-lined funeral barrow. This is under further archaeological investigation.

Q 6.2 Constraint on Heritage assets is also marked “no” but this is no longer true. Response is there are no listed buildings nearby but Barlings Manor is Grade II Listed adjacent to the site.

Q 7.1 distance from Doctors surgery is correctly marked as in excess of 1.6 Km. It is well over that, 6-7km depending on which route.

Q 7.2. the shop in Egerton is now open for business, so less than a 5 min walk

Q 7.4 Pluckley station is correctly marked in the “over 20 min walk” and is in fact over 5 km away.

Q 9.3 – would the landowner like to be notified about progress with the Local Plan - not answer

**HELAA/LP41/021 North Field off Harmers Way, Egerton**

Additional comments by Egerton PC continued

The application form appears to have been inadequately completed and with inaccurate information about the parish. This is hardly the way in which to suggest a genuine parcel of land for development.

The density and number of additional new dwellings on the buffer zone of the North Field site, when added to the 13 already allowed by a Planning Inspector, another 15 now built on the New Road site and in future 9 more at Orchard Nurseries, has the potential to make a drastic change to the individual landscape character and environment of Egerton village. It would spoil the vista from the Greensand Way and destroy the deliberate buffer zone which was specifically identified in the Master Plan for the site. It would impact adversely on key views to and from the village and to add considerably to light, noise and traffic pollution.

Whilst this would be on the edge of the confines of Egerton village, and in theory could meet part of ABC policy HOU5 its adverse impact would be severe. It would cut across several policies in the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan adopted in 2022. Furthermore, the recent discovery of neolithic artefacts and a significant architectural feature of a funeral barrow on this site would potentially preclude further

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development on it. Historic England would need to be consulted about this proposal as would KCC, whose archaeological team is already actively investigating the main part of the site.

In the Inspector's decision letter to allow the 13 houses to be built on North Field, it was stated:  
*"The appeal site does not occupy the entirety of the existing field as a broad belt of land along the south-west side is excluded from it.*

*The 'buffer zone' is outside the appeal site and can be assumed to stay as it is. Any future proposals would be assessed at the time but this swathe of land is a major contributory factor to the success of the proposed development as it limits the spread and avoids buildings hard up against the footpath.*

*This is one of the distinctive landscape features identified in the Neighbourhood Plan. In the Council's Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document, the hilltop settlement of Egerton is within The Greensand Fruit Belt.*

*On this section of the Greensand Way there are dramatic views to the southwest as the land falls away sharply in that direction. The open field is apparent on the opposite side of the path with housing behind. The proposal would bring buildings closer to the route but separation would exist and landscaping could be incorporated on the perimeter of the development. This is a point where the Way is passing through a settlement and so the sight of houses would not be jarring. This is especially as the sense of walking along the ridge would remain since the views over the Weald would be unaffected."*

At this point EPC wishes to emphasise that this proposal for additional housing development within a site already determined for development of 13 houses appears to have been inadequately completed and with inaccurate information about the parish. This is surprising given the earlier involvement of developers in the promotion of the site for development. Further development on the site would cut across the Inspector's findings and conclusions set out above and ruin the vista.

**HELAA/LP41/078 Land to the SE of Harmers Way, Egerton**

**See also duplication under ref HELAA/LP41/021**

**1.081 hectares for 13 houses since allowed on Appeal** (0.08 hectares beyond the existing approved plans for North Field) This form appears to have been completed by the applicant before the Judicial Review outcome, in anticipation that EPC might win the case to prevent the development. Since EPC did not succeed with a Judicial Review, this was re-submitted by the applicant as a safety net under ABC's call for sites this time round. So, this particular proposal does not need to be considered again.

Response #1178229 From Land Economics Ltd (Katy Jarvis) Date Started: 17 Nov 2023 16:50. Last modified: 29 Feb 2024 08:28 Status Complete]

Qs 1.2 - 1.6 requesting contact details have not been completed unless these have been redacted.

Q1.10 response states there is a sole landowner but there are 3 joint landowners

Q2.10 response states the adjacent PROW is the Pilgrims way but it is the Greensand Way

Q6.2 response is there are no listed buildings nearby but Barlings Manor is Grade II Listed adjacent to the site

Q7.4 response refers to bus stop 5-10 mins walk away but there is no bus service and Pluckley station is over 5 km distant

These are significant errors.



**10. Do you wish to provide any feedback in response to any of the sites submitted through the 'Call for Sites' exercise?**

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**HELAA/LP41 069 Land to the East of Toll Farm cottage, Egerton**

**8.67 hectares for 50 houses for general occupation, older persons, self-build**

Response #1178205 From Land Economics Ltd (Katy Jarvis) Date Started: 17 Nov 2023 13:36. Last modified: 29 Feb 2024 08:29 Status Complete

Responses by applicants on the forms and further remarks by Egerton Parish Council:

Qs 1.2 - 1.6 requesting contact details have not been completed unless these have been redacted.

Q 1.9 Has evidence of land ownership been provided? Not included

Q 1.11 – no details of landowner given

Q 2.9 A brief description of the site simply states “farmland/greenfield on the edge of the village.”

It does not mention the site is on the significant Egerton- Pluckley Greensand Fruit Belt on the escarpment of the Greensand ridge. Housing should not be built on prime agricultural land which is highly productive. The idea of adding another 50 houses not needed into a village of 450 houses is disproportionate. There are 15 new houses at Henshaw place (still to be sold); there will be 13 behind Harmers Way; another 9 for local older people at Orchard Nurseries and another 9 affordable homes for local needs at Crockenhill road. A total of 46 new homes. This exceeds by 13 the needs established for the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan which applies until 2040. Egerton is not a sustainable village as it is isolated with no public transport.

Q 4.1 Correctly states this is within the Stour catchment area. But ...

Q 4.2 ....the response states this would not connect to a treatment works in the Stour catchment area

Q 4.3 On how to achieve nutrient neutrality is not answered

Q 4.4 response is “discharges outside the Stodmarsh Ramsar.” This contradicts the response to 4.1 above Southern Water confirmed during the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan process that private sewage treatment apparatus for houses along Stonebridge Green road eventually discharge filtered water into ditches and drains reaching the Stour. Going out of the main village past St James' Church at 100m, the Greensand ridge slopes down along Stonebridge Green Road towards the Stour only 1 km away. Toll Farm is on the 90m contour. There is no pumping station to pump sewage uphill then flow down by gravity to the Egerton sewage works. As the access from the proposed site was shown as via Stonebridge Green Road, the services would also follow that route.

A possible alternative route for sewers etc via New Road would require a) a site pump to pump sewage uphill and b) an agreement with the landowners of Henshaw Place and the owners of the ransom strip around it. Even if those obstacles were overcome, another 50 houses to use the existing sewage works (even if upgraded) would exceed capacity when allowing for 38 more homes already built or granted planning permission (Henshaw Place, North Field, Orchard Nurseries and 9 affordable homes anticipated at Crockenhill road/ Sale Field)

Q 6.1 the response correctly states it is within 100m of the Egerton Conservation Area and within the area of a scheduled Ancient Monument. This would be a major factor against development here. More neolithic remains have been found in another site in Egerton, implying this was an important site for thousands of years. Historic England and KCC Archaeologists would need to be consulted.

Q 6.2 the response states that access would be via Stonebridge Green Road. That road is by the Government's definition an unclassified highway (U) and is in the local authority's category/classification as “Class D”; not wide enough for two vehicles to pass; and is undulating and winding. The idea that 50 houses, with nearly double that number of cars, could use this road safely would be extremely poor judgement and would amount to an elevated risk to all drivers and pedestrians. It would create a massive traffic burden and serious hazards on a tiny rural lane.

In the event that an alternative access might be suggested onto New Road, this would require access through land adjacent to the eastern side of Henshaw Place which is under different ownership. It is understood that there is a ransom strip around the boundary of Henshaw Place. The strip of land behind the houses on the eastern side of Henshaw Place was already reduced from what was shown in the original site allocation s30 in the current ABC Plan despite objections from Egerton Parish Council. This has led to the

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gardens of the new houses extending further into what is now a reduced buffer zone between the development at Henshaw Place and the open countryside along new Road towards Pluckley. If this buffer zone were to be used as an access point instead of Stonebridge Green Road, it would a) destroy the green buffer zone; b) may not meet the sightline regulations in view of the gradient of the existing highway and the curvature of the highway and border hedge; and c) create a fourth junction hazard onto a small section of New Road where there is already an access from Harmers Way with an increased number of cars emanating from 13 new houses allowed to be built; a new access opposite Harmers Way from Henshaw Place, and the junction with Stone Hill.

Q 7.1 distance from Doctors surgery is correctly marked as in excess of 1.6 Km. It is well over that, 6-7km depending on which route.

Q 7.2. the shop in Egerton is now open for business, so less than a 5 min walk

Q 7.3 The distance to railway station or bus stop is incorrectly marked in the "less than 5-minute walk" category. The bus service was stopped in January 2023 and Pluckley station is over 5 km away. This is a serious error in the submission – it makes a dramatic difference to the viability and sustainability of all sites suggested by landowners or developers

Q 9.3 – would the landowner like to be notified about progress with the Local Plan - not answered

**Additional comments by Egerton Parish Council**

The application form appears to have been inadequately completed and with inaccurate information about the parish. This is hardly the way in which to suggest a genuine parcel of land for development.

This proposal – for a hugely disproportionate number of houses - would adversely affect the Tumulus, a Bronze-Age bowl barrow which is a monument scheduled by Historic England. There could be archaeological remains of historical value all over this site. The bowl barrow, whilst not in perfect condition, is one of the best preserved in Kent. Historic England would be a major consultee about this site. An additional barrow trench, ancient artefacts and human remains unearthed nearby on North Field behind Harmers Way suggests there were significant neolithic settlements in this locality. This is under investigation and being supervised by Kent County Council.

The access would need to be via Stonebridge Green road opposite Court Lodge since the adjacent plot leading into New Road has a ransom strip all around it with no obvious access point. Stonebridge Green Road is one of many unclassified unnumbered roads in the village, the lowest national category U and local authority classification D. Its winding and narrow width – less than two cars and few passing places - is unsuitable for a swathe of new housing to join it. No clear sightlines for a new egress point. In theory this might fit current ABC Policy HOU3 without further attention to more detail as it is on the edge of village confines but would fail most if not all the other criteria. The site abuts the Egerton Conservation Area and would affect the setting of several Listed buildings including Grade I Church of St James. The scale of the site and number of houses would swamp the village and furthermore there is no need for such development in such an unsustainable parish.

**HELAA/LP41/ 067 Land on the north east side of New Road, Egerton next to New Stone Hill farm on Stonehill, far side of road junction.**

**This site is just beyond the edge of Egerton village confines, separated from the development at Harmers Way by Stonehill Road which forms a natural break between the built confines of Egerton and open countryside, on a prominent hillside**

**1.2 hectares for 25 dwellings: Housing, community facilities, employment, leisure & tourism & "other" (i.e. landscaping), Older persons, residential institution C2 use and self-build**

Mark Britland Agent Alister Hume Planning Consultancy (Gra... Date Started: 17 Nov 2023 12:51. Last modified: 29 Feb 2024 08:29 Status Complete



**10. Do you wish to provide any feedback in response to any of the sites submitted through the 'Call for Sites' exercise?**

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Responses by Landowners/developers and additional remarks by Egerton PC:

Qs 1.2 - 1.6 requesting contact details have not been completed unless these have been redacted.

Q 1.9 Has evidence of land ownership been provided? Not included

Q.1.11 – no details of landowners given (states there is more than one)

Q 3.4 refers to employment floorspace for Class E commercial business and service

Class F1 (learning and non-residential and Class F.2 local community

“All to be discussed with LPA policy makers”

This is an overly ambitious project for a 3-acre plot at the edge of Egerton village on a prominent site where once stood Egerton’s windmill. It suggests a miniature version of Poundbury, which is a subsidiary of Dorchester, the county town of Dorset. Egerton is merely a village in a very rural part of Ashford Borough, 10 miles from the centre of Ashford.

Q 4.1& 4.2 states it is within the Stour catchment area. Not so.... And would connect to a Waste water treatment plant in the Stour catchment area. Impossible. There is no such waste water treatment plant nearby. It would need to connect to the WWTW existing off Rock Hill road, which is already operating at full capacity. It is in the River Beult catchment area.

Q5 Biodiversity net gain would be by on-site land use changes. No details given.

Q 6.2 recognises this is a mineral safeguarding area ( Kentish ragstone – Hythe beds)

Q 6.3 states “on the edge or adjacent to existing utility services” therefore not River Stour WWTW.

Q 7.3 states nearest shop is Cass’s convenience store (which is in Pluckley and this is its old name), stating a 10-20-minute walk away! Egerton now has its own shop only 5-10 mins walk away.

Q7.4 states the nearest station or bus stop is less than a 5 min walk away. Not so. No bus service at all, and Pluckley station is over 5 km away

Q 9.3 – would the landowner like to be notified about progress with the Local Plan - not answered

**Additional comments by Egerton Parish Council**

The application form appears to have been inadequately completed and with inaccurate information about the parish. This is hardly the way in which to suggest a genuine parcel of land for development.

This site is a prominent position on entering the village. Such development would affect the views of the open countryside all around it. The junction onto New Road from Stone Hill creates a natural break between Harmers way, the new housing on New Road and the open countryside. Development beyond Stone Hill towards Pluckley would clutter and extend the village un-sympathetically. It would also further reduce the buffer zone – green countryside gap - between Egerton and Pluckley.

New Road is Government classification U – unclassified; local authority classification/category C -and too winding and too narrow in places for passing vehicles and not safe for further traffic. It already has additional traffic emanating from Henshaw Place and there will be more traffic from homes to be built on North Field ( behind Harmers Way) and Orchard Nurseries (behind Stevens Close).

Egress onto New Road would be potentially even more dangerous at this point than it is already – it is hilly, with blind corners and therefore lack of clear sight lines. This road to Pluckley suffers large numbers of lorries and other vehicles emerging from Pivington industrial estate 2.5 km away and there are sections in which two vehicles cannot pass. All along this road, cars have to stop and give way to tractors and lorries as there is no room for both to pass. Alternative egress into Stone Hill - in Government terms an unclassified (U) unnumbered road, but which is local authority category D, and far too narrow for any passing traffic - would be inappropriate.

The density and number of proposed new houses and commercial premises - when added to 15 built but not yet sold on the New Road site at Henshaw Place, and a further 9 for older people on Orchard Nurseries - has the potential to make a significant negative change to the individual landscape character and environment of

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Egerton village, impacting adversely on key views to and from the village, adding considerably to light, noise and traffic pollution.

Without there being evidence to support more open market housing need from ABC, nor indeed further local needs affordable housing than is planned at Crockenhill Road, the potential adverse impact on neighbouring properties and on the individual landscape character of the parish would be severe. It would cause the loss of a significant green agricultural gap and buffer for the main settlement. It would also unbalance the village even further beyond that which has been caused by the New Road and North Field sites – too many new houses in a single location would destroy the character of the village by adding a disproportionate clustering of new development (13 already approved for North Field, 15 off New Road, 9 at Orchard Nurseries) on the main entrance to the village and would have a serious resultant impact on the environment and increase traffic congestion on this narrow road serving Egerton to/from Pluckley.

**HELAA/LP41/007 Chapel Lane, Egerton Forstal**  
**1.457 hectares for 10 - 15 houses**

**Responses by Landowners/agents and additional remarks by Egerton PC**

**This site is outside the confines of Egerton Forstal. There are no services for over 2km distant**

Qs 1.2 - 1.6 requesting contact details have not been completed unless these have been redacted

Q 1.9 Has evidence of land ownership been provided? Not included

Q 4.3 On how to achieve nutrient neutrality is not answered

Q 5.1 How are you intending to achieve biodiversity net gain on the site? Not answered

Q6.2 about access to the highway states: "Bedlam lane". It is not – the site is on Chapel Lane, next to the Chapel. It is a single-track road (Government classification U - unclassified, local authority classification/category D), unsuitable for the scale of vehicle movements generated by an additional 10-15 houses. There are currently only 11 houses along this lane.

Q 7.2 & 7.3 state the village shop and primary school are 1.6 km away, a 10-20 min walk. But they are 2.5 km away, over 20 min walk

Q7.4 states the nearest station or bus stop is less than a 5 min walk away. Not so. No bus service at all, and Pluckley station over 5 km away

Q7.5 states the Egerton play park is only 400-500m away, a 5-10 min walk away. Not so. Over 2km away, over 20 min walk.

Q 9.3 – would the landowner like to be notified about progress with the Local Plan - not answered

**Additional comments by Egerton Parish Council**

The site comprises part of an undeveloped agricultural field in the open countryside. It is an open flat pasture adjacent to a 19<sup>th</sup> century chapel. Queens Arms Cottage forms the end point to the built settlement on this side of the road in Egerton Forstal. This is confirmed by the Village Confines Map within the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan (ENP). As such, the application site is not considered to be within the existing settlement of Egerton Forstal and does not fall to be considered under ABC's existing Policy HOU3a as a result.

Given this proposal does not mention providing local need specialist housing it does not override the existing ABC Local Plan or NPPF aims and objectives relating to sustainable development. There is no justification for the delivery of general market housing in unsuitable and unsustainable locations, and there would be more suitable sustainable sites elsewhere in the Borough to provide this type of housing.

Egerton Forstal is not a settlement where proposals for residential development adjoining or close to the existing built-up confines would be acceptable. The closest such settlement is Egerton main village, and the

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site is not within easy walking distance of the services within the village of Egerton, so there would be heavy reliance on private vehicles. Chapel Lane is not wide enough for two vehicles to pass each other and there are few passing places. The proposed land use would erode the existing landscape buffer at the edge of Egerton Forstal leading out of the village and into the countryside to the detriment of the rural character of the location. As such the proposal would not sit sympathetically in the wider landscape and would fail to comply with part (f) of Policy HOU5 under the current Local Plan.

**11. Do you have any additional feedback? If so, please use this space to provide any further thoughts you think will be helpful.**

No justification has been supplied by the landowners or developers to support the number of houses suggested on all sites submitted for consideration

Many landowners'/developers' forms were incomplete and also contained significant factual errors, which calls into question their validity or sincerity

The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan adopted in 2022 was designed to cater for village needs and aspirations to 2040: only one year short of the ABC proposed new Local Plan. It is therefore a highly significant document which should be taken into account when drafting the Ashford Local Plan. Whilst there may be a need for a new Local Needs Housing Survey for Egerton, the number of new houses for which planning permission has been (or is soon to be approved) is: North Field 13; Orchard Nurseries 9; Gale/Sale Field off Crockenhill Road 9 – added to the 15 mostly not yet sold at Henshaw Place. It is difficult to envisage an excess need once all those homes are occupied. There are currently 450 homes in Egerton, a small village. Yet more new housing in Egerton would swamp its character and would not be sustainable.

Criteria for sustainability in the proposed new Local Plan to 2041 needs more careful scrutiny and fine tuning of the wording to avoid doubts in interpretation. In the Planning Appeal for the North Field case, the Planning Inspector allowed it, stating (for one thing):

*“The NPPF recognises that opportunities to maximise transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. In any event, the “and/or” wording in the [ABC Local Plan] policy means that access to sustainable methods of transport to access a range of services is not required where, as in this case, the policy provision relating to easy walking distance of basic day to day services would be met. Therefore, the proposal would accord with criterion b) of Policy HOU5”*

This points to the need for careful setting of criteria including the definition of sustainability, and to specify precisely the services which would be required to render a location “sustainable” for additional development. At minimum, the criteria for sustainability must include access to public transport within a kilometre. This simply does not exist in Egerton. The bus service was cut in 2023. The nearest public transport is at railway stations Pluckley, Headcorn or Charing – all of which are more than 5 km distant and car dependent to reach them. New proposals for housing developments which depend on cars to access every day services – and those minimum services must be spelled out precisely – should be deemed unsustainable unless for people already living in, or working in, or with connections in the parish.

A further relevance is the higher-than-average proportion of older people in Egerton, many of whom no longer have capacity to drive and who would depend on public transport – which sadly does not exist in Egerton. There is a strong case for considering how this deficiency could be overcome to meet their increasing needs.

The classification and condition of roads serving a locality should also be included in the factors to determine sustainability. All roads in Egerton are Government classification U - unclassified, local authority classification/category C or D, winding with blind corners, and too narrow with few passing places for passing vehicles and not safe for additional traffic. Even the minority of roads classified as “C” have sharp bends, undulate, have blind corners and many sections where there is no space for two cars to pass. Cars have to give way most of the time to allow lorries and tractors to pass safely. Pedestrians and cyclists are at risk on these roads as there is no scope for pavements or cycle lanes.

Egerton is a picturesque and peaceful village with quaint features amidst woodland, rolling hills and lush countryside giving wonderful views towards the North Downs or over the Weald. It is possibly unique in the Borough because it is not a through route to other settlements. Its isolation can be a drawback to those familiar with suburban or urban living but it is a hidden gem to its inhabitants and visitors. It has a Conservation Area along the Street, Stonebridge Green Road and around the Grade I Listed Church of St James and there are 80 more listed buildings, many from the 16th century: some clustered in The Street and others dotted about the village. Consequently, there is a distinctive local vernacular style which should not be compromised by an inappropriate scale and design of any new development.

Local needs in Egerton will all be met up to 2040 through the delivery of policies and aspirations in the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan (to 2040) by existing plans approved or about to be approved for a total of 31 new homes and 15 new homes already built but not sold: plus recent windfalls and barn conversions, this amounts to over 50 dwellings in a village of only 450 existing houses (i.e. growth of over 11 percent)

EPC wishes ABC to invite Parishes to suggest potential brownfield sites suitable for some form of development.

**Data Protection Statement – Privacy Policy**

Ashford Borough Council (ABC) is the data controller for the personal information you provide in this form. ABC's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at [FOI@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:FOI@ashford.gov.uk). Your information will be used to inform our Local Plan, consultations and processing is being conducted relying upon the public interest legal basis under the Town and Country Planning Act. Given the statutory status of the Local Plan, relevant regulations, and the public interest in making information on the Local Plan consultation available, it is appropriate for us to make a wide range of information and documents available on our website including consultation responses and the name and address of the individual and or company making those responses. Conversely, however, there is no wider duty or need to disclose information other than that which is statutory. Your telephone number and/or email address will not be published. Your information may be retained for the purpose of keeping you informed about the plan making process and will be deleted 6 years after the end of the relevant plan making cycle. Personal information including your name and contact details retained on our consultation database will be retained for the purpose of keeping you informed unless you opt out of this via your registration within the consultation database. For more information on your rights please see the council's privacy statement at: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/>.

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**Feedback forms must be received by 5pm on Monday 16 September 2024.**

**Forms received after this time may not be accepted.**

Once completed, all forms should be sent to the following address: **Plan-Making & Infrastructure, Spatial Planning, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL** or by email to [planning.policy@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@ashford.gov.uk)

**Large print copies, audio and Braille version of this document are available by telephoning Planning and Development on (01233 330229)**

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