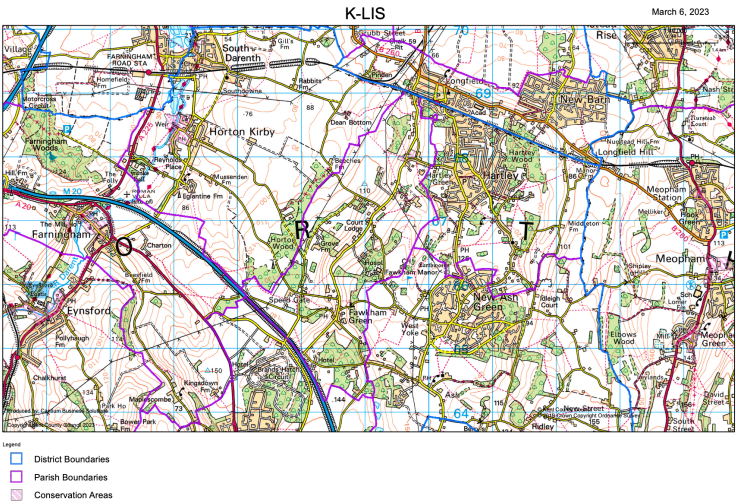


# Housing Evidence Report for Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan



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## Summary

Fawkham Parish's current housing stock is 229 (as at March 2023), with planning permission granted for a further 59 dwellings, giving a total of 288 upon completion, an increase of 30.3% on the 2011 census figure.

Fawkham is classified as a hamlet, the lowest tier of the Settlement Hierarchy with few facilities or sustainable transport options.

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

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## Introduction

Data has been extracted from the 2021 Census data for the Parish of Fawkham and neighbouring villages, where available at the time of writing, and from the 2011 Census data where that represents the latest available data. Comparable data quoted for Sevenoaks District as a whole is from the Sevenoaks District Local Housing Needs Study May 2017 [HOU15].

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

Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) monitoring figures show Fawkham Parish had 229 dwellings as at March 2023, which represents less than 0.5% of the housing stock of Sevenoaks District.

The number of households in the Parish in the 2021 Census data was 222. All were unshared dwellings and 219 (98.6%) had at least one usual resident.

The 2011 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 2021 Census showed:

- the vast majority of dwellings (78.6%) were owner-occupied, above the Sevenoaks District average of 72.7%.
- 6% (13) were social rented houses, a smaller proportion than in the surrounding villages, and lower than the Sevenoaks District average of 12.9%. Figures provided by SDC's Housing Enabling Officer in 2021 show nine social houses.
- 15.5% (34) were privately rented or occupied rent-free, higher than surrounding parishes and above the Sevenoaks District average of 12.3%. Some of these are tied-properties.

SDC monitoring figures for March 2023 show one additional permanent dwelling has been completed since the 2021 census; details are shown in Appendix 1.

In addition, planning permission has been granted for a further 59 dwellings, including 26 at Fawkham Manor and 26 Salts Farm depot, of which 10 are affordable homes. Details are shown in Appendix 2. Once completed, the housing stock figure will become 288, an increase of 30.3% since 2011.

## 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 which cannot otherwise be met, it can allow for affordable rural exceptions housing to be built, which would otherwise not be permitted in the Green Belt.

The Fawkham Local Housing Needs Survey Report, January 2022 is shown at Appendix 3. The survey form and covering letter are shown in Appendix 4.

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) and SDC have both considered the results of the Housing Need Survey and will pursue a local lettings plan for the two 2-bed Shared Ownership houses at Salts Farm depot to meet this need. This is subject to agreement by West Kent Housing Association as the Registered Provider, and approval of SDC's Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health. Handover of the new affordable homes is anticipated in Summer 2025.

FPC considers it may be possible to meet the need for four self-build open market houses through redevelopment of existing sites. FPC considers that the other three open market needs, including that of the one older household looking to downsize, can be met through the usual 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 unsustainability of Fawkham for residential development

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### Facilities and Services

SDC's Settlement Hierarchy of 2022 identified eight facilities and services considered key to the sustainability of settlements<sup>1</sup>.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> Sevenoaks District Settlement Hierarchy July 2022, Table 7

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 facilities, please see the Community Facilities Evidence Report.

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## 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.

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

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 clusters of development dispersed 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 Baldwin's Green, 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 131 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).

Fawkham is not classified as a settlement in the Core Strategy (Policy LO1 Distribution of Development or Policy LO7 Development in Rural Settlements) and the Allocations and Development Management Plan does not allocate a site for housing within the Parish. Nor does the draft Local Plan allocate a site having reviewed sites within the Parish through the SHELAA.

The District Council's Settlement Hierarchy 2022, which is used as evidence for the emerging Local Plan, classifies Fawkham as a hamlet with a very limited range of services and facilities, most of which are inaccessible by sustainable means of transport. 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.*"<sup>2</sup>

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*".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Sevenoaks District Settlement Hierarchy July 2022, para 7.15

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, para 2.13

The emerging Local Plan (Regulation 14 Version 2) states: *“The Council’s strategy is to meet development needs in sustainable locations.”* It also states: *“Development in and around these eight [higher tier] settlements is considered to be more sustainable than in other villages or hamlets across the District, since these higher tier settlements support a range of existing services and facilities. Therefore they are the focus for future development.”*

As confirmation that the Regulation 14 Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan meets the strategic planning role for the Parish, Sevenoaks District Council have confirmed:

*“To conclude, it is considered that the Fawkham Regulation 14 Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with adopted and emerging planning policies.”*

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. Whilst an indicative housing figure has not specifically been provided, the District Council’s published evidence (Settlement Hierarchy 2022), the adopted and emerging Local Plan (Regulation 14 Version 2) and confirmation that the Regulation 14 Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with adopted and emerging planning policies confirms that the Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan meets its strategic housing role and expected housing requirement.

**Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group  
February 2024**

**Appendix 1 - Additional permanent dwellings completed since the 2021 census, as at 31.3.23**

Total: 1

SDC has supplied the information shown in this Appendix.

<b>PROPERTY</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>NO. OF BEDROOMS</b>	<b>PLANNING PERMISSION</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>TYPE</b>
Woodlands Park	Three Gates Road	1/2	22/00365/ LDCEX	Completed	Detached

**Appendix 2: Additional permanent dwellings with planning permission granted as at 31st March 2023**

Total: 59

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; 22/03424/REM	About to commence	2,3 and 4 bed houses and maisonettes
Land to the rear of Hurstgrove	Castle Hill	1	22/00666/FUL	Not started	Detached
Eureka	Manor Lane	3	22/01464/FUL	Not started	Detached
White House Stables	Valley Road	1	22/022284/FUL	Under construction	Detached

**Appendix 3: Housing Needs Survey Report (January 2022)**

Provided as a separate document

**Appendix 4: Local Housing Needs Survey 2021**

Provided as a separate document