



Interim submission from Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council on planning application:

**17/01613/AS Hybrid application for up to 89 new residential dwellings consisting of a full planning application for the development of 21 new residential dwellings, access, drainage and landscaping to the south of the site and outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access for the development of up to 68 new dwellings with associated access, landscaping, open space and community orchard at the land to the north and west of Lenacre Hall Farm, Sandyhurst Lane, Ashford**

1. This application was considered at the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 13 November 2017.
2. Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council objects strongly to both parts of the hybrid Planning Application by Millwood Designer Homes Ltd.
3. The most fundamental and decisive reason why we believe this application should be rejected is that it involves development on a greenfield site beyond the built confines of the parish, substantially breaching the established barrier of Sandyhurst Lane between built area and country. The Parish Council have particular reason to oppose the kind of urban sprawl that this planning application proposes, in that it would fly in the face of the expressed views of the people we represent. In a Neighbourhood Plan survey of all households throughout the parish conducted in 2016 (which achieved a healthy return rate of nearly half of households) the clearest single consensus concerned the protection and preservation of our countryside and green spaces. In accord with this, on the specific matter of the Lenacre Hall Farm site, 75% of the 482 respondents to the survey saw it as unsuitable for development. Prior to the Planning Application the site had already been deemed not suitable for development by the Parish Council, in the process of constructing its Neighbourhood Plan, and neither is it seen as suitable by Ashford Borough Council, which has not put it forward for potential development within its draft Local Plan 2030.
4. These assessments are consistent with central elements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012). For example, the NPPF emphasises that *Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this framework* (110, p.26 – on any view, the site does not fall under such a description). It also obliges local planning authorities to give weight to conserving and enhancing the historic environment (pp30-32), an environment well illustrated by some of the photographs within the application's Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment (for instance, the final photograph of Part 4, showing the view from the rear garden of the listed farmhouse, one of several striking exemplars here of historic Kent rural landscape).

5. Lenacre Street, which runs along the north eastern side of the site, and is characterised within the Planning Statement as constituting part of the built up confines of Ashford, has been recognised in the latest (2016) Local Government Boundary Review, as best-placed within a specifically rural ward (Ashford Rural West). The Boundary Review also reinforces Sandyhurst Lane as the boundary between built-up and rural by additionally including the housing on both sides of the section of road which runs along the edge of the site as part of the same explicitly rural ward. Both these sections of road pre-existed the development of Goat Lees, and are recognised as having their primary historic and communal ties with Boughton Aluph and Eastwell. Lenacre Street directly faces the Eastwell Estate portion of the local Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, backs on to the fields of Lenacre Hall Farm, and on its north western side faces a substantial section of open country between itself and Westwell, a distance of more than 2 kilometres – all in all, a distinctly rural situation.
6. The relationship of the proposed development to infrastructure is problematic. The closest GP surgery (there is none within the parish) is only able to take on restricted numbers of new patients, and GP provision will be severely tested by the planned development of 375 new homes at Eureka Park. There are parallel strains at the level of secondary health services, with serious capacity problems both for the local hospital and for Community Mental Health Services. Similarly, the local Primary School can only offer restricted places, with no room on site for expansion.
7. The relationship to services would in any case raise difficulties. Within the Planning Statement the site is said to meet the policy criterion of being *within easy walking distance of basic day to day services in the nearest settlement*, and is described as *within close proximity of shops and services at Eureka Park*. In fact, the distance taking the most direct route by foot from the middle of the site to the nearest shop selling everyday staples such as milk and bread is 1 kilometre. The distance to the bus stop for the Ashford Faversham service is .5 kilometre.
8. Within the parish there are other major developments already accepted – above all, on the Eureka Park site – and beyond the parish there are substantial developments planned or under way elsewhere within the Borough, collectively more than sufficient for the recognised housing needs of the Borough over the next 12 years. Ashford Borough’s Local Plan is now at an advanced stage, a full draft having already progressed through thorough consultation. In line with the NPPF (pp 37-38), we believe that it offers the best guide to the avoidance of piecemeal and opportunistic developments.
9. A final comment on the Planning Statement in relation to local residents. The Statement is correct when it observes that the emerging Neighbourhood Plan has not yet reached the stage of a Draft Plan. However, it remains the case that the survey mentioned above is by a very considerable margin the most substantial consultation of local opinion regarding the development of this site, and also the one with the sample least likely to be skewed, in that it was delivered to all households in the parish. We recognise that a full and rational planning process must take account of a variety of factors, but insist that the expressed views of a substantial sample of local residents should be taken seriously and accorded due weight.

10. The above are interim comments from Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parish Council to the Planning Application for Lenacre Hall Farm. This will be followed by a more detailed response as agreed with the case officer for this planning application at Ashford Borough Council.

**Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parish Council**  
**c/o Lake House,**  
**Eastwell**  
**Kent TN25 4JT**

**Email: [boughtoneastwellclerk@gmail.com](mailto:boughtoneastwellclerk@gmail.com)**

**Website: [www.boughtonaluphandeastwellpc.kentparishes.gov.uk](http://www.boughtonaluphandeastwellpc.kentparishes.gov.uk)**