

BRENCHLEY PARISH COUNCIL
SHAPING THE FUTURE: THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR PARISH

A pragmatic approach to development

With the development of a Local Plan for our area, Councillors are mindful of their responsibility to speak-up for the interests of the community. Our aim is to ensure that any development which is proposed for our parish takes place only in the locations considered appropriate for development, and on a scale in keeping with the character of our villages and hamlets.

The purpose of this strategy document is to set out the principles that will guide our approach to pursuing that aim. We believe that it represents a realistic and pragmatic attitude to the development "agenda", and reflects commitments made by the Council in previous statements.

Sharing the burden

There is currently pressure across the country to increase housing supply. That pressure is particularly acute in the South-East where housing shortage is most pronounced. Given that the borough of Tunbridge Wells is in one of the most prosperous corners of the region, it is inevitable that the district will be obliged to deliver its share of government-imposed targets.

However, we will aim to ensure that the impact on Brencley and Matfield, in the pursuit of those targets, does not destroy the character, heritage, and sustainability of our settlements. Alongside that, we will support development that adds to the vitality of the parish and which enhances the social infrastructure to underpin the well-being of the community.

Our promises to the community

1. All planning applications will be assessed on their own merits, and will be subjected to careful scrutiny, having regard to planning policy, both national and local.
2. We will robustly resist inappropriate or harmful developments, including developments that:
 - a. are considered too large, in terms of the numbers of units, having regard to all local circumstances, but particularly the site location;
 - b. are high-rise, or in prominent positions;
 - c. generate heavy traffic, lead to a greater erosion of road safety, and cause further parking problems;
 - d. are unsympathetic in design; and which
 - e. have the potential to reduce existing business capacity.
3. We will seek to protect the character of the village centres and Conservation Areas by limiting development in or near those areas, by inter alia, supporting appropriate sustainable development along the A21 corridor, where it crosses the Parish.
4. We will support appropriate small-scale developments in sustainable locations, particularly of smaller units suitable for first-time buyers, renters, and down-sizers - as indicated by residents in the Parish Plan Survey.
5. We will support Affordable homes specifically for local need, as identified in a Housing Needs Survey to establish the extent of the provision that is required.
6. We will oppose the loss of sustainable commercial or agricultural premises to housing.
7. We will seek to secure appropriate community benefits, to accompany relevant development.
8. We will defend the integrity of the AONB, and promote the rural environment that is such a key element of the Parish's character; in particular, will aim to protect the Limits of Build Development of both villages.
9. We will pursue the preparation of a Development Design Statement, to influence the design of developments.