

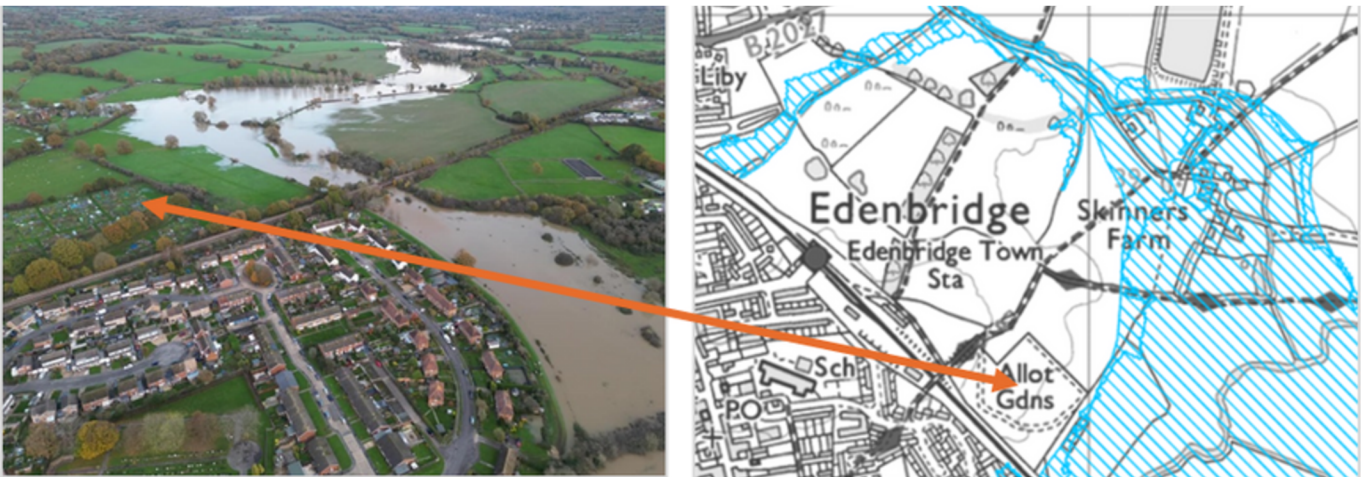
## INFRASTRUCTURE BEFORE HOUSING

**NEDRA, the New Edenbridge District Residents Association, acknowledges the need for more affordable housing but we need the infrastructure first. It must not come at the cost of the character of Edenbridge.**

**Proposed housing developments will affect us all so make sure your voice is heard!**

**A revised planning application for the Four Elms site now proposes over one hundred more homes on parts of our green belt, bringing the total to 450 dwellings, extending into the Edenbridge floodplains.**

**Flood plains are not suitable for houses and the area is rich in bio-diversity.** There are protected species and wildlife breeding grounds. The wetlands provide vital feeding areas and habitats for migrating birds. The loss will be catastrophic on local wildlife and cannot be replaced.



**FOUR ELMS CONSULTATION  
RESPOND BY 28 NOVEMBER**

**PLANNING  
REFERENCE  
24/02765/OUT**

**Sevenoaks District Council consultation on the revised application is open until 28 November 2024 via its website [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications) We urge you to comment. A short response is better than not responding. Numbers count!**

## A secondary school that is very unlikely to be built

Many of us would welcome a secondary school, but it will only happen if funded by 2040. Kent County Council (KCC) would need to provide the funds. In a recent letter to NEDRA, KCC explained: **"A school must be viable before it is considered by KCC or the Department of Education. Viability is determined by one issue... sufficient students.**

KCC estimates that Edenbridge would currently have about seventy-five pupils per year, which they agree is not enough to make a secondary school viable. **Even if all 450 houses in the current planning application, plus those in the 2040 plan (approximately two thousand in total) were built, projections indicate there still would not be enough secondary-aged pupils.**

Given these figures and our correspondence with KCC, **it is highly unlikely that Edenbridge will receive funding for a secondary school.** By 2040, the land will likely revert to the developers, Cooper Estates.

## Will the housing be affordable for local people?

NEDRA is concerned that affordable housing will still be out of reach for many families. The average salary in Edenbridge is around £25,000, while the average price for a terraced house in 2024 is £371,292.

We urge Sevenoaks District Council to ensure that affordable rentals are prioritised for local residents, who are in great need.

The proposal says 40 per cent of the development will be 'affordable housing': split between First Time homes, affordable rental, social and shared ownership. We need to ensure these are affordable and available for Edenbridge residents.

## Is there an increased risk of flooding?

The average rainfall in Edenbridge increased per annum from 832 mm in the decade 2000-2009 to 1148 mm in the following decade 2010-2019. A 38 per cent increase.. Local weather figures show this trend has continued from 2020-2023.

Surface water entering sewers is our biggest threat. Paving over floodplains with roads, driveways, and roof tops generates more surface water. Despite 'SUDS' and 'Rain Gardens,' our best defence is the natural floodplain.

Insurance premiums are already rising in Edenbridge due to the increased flood risk, and some companies are declining to quote. So who will indemnify residents against this increased risk?

The initial plan included allotments. NEDRA questioned this with ProVision in July. The ground is boggy, and there is no demand for more allotments as there are spaces at the existing site. We proposed turning this land into a nature reserve for displaced wildlife but the developer plans to build seven more houses that are likely to experience flooded gardens.

## What about the pressure on essential services?

There is already pressure on our Medical Centre and demand will increase. It takes over thirty minutes to travel by road to Pembury Hospital A&E and even longer to reach Maidstone hospital. There are no direct routes by public transport. Edenbridge is without a permanent Police & Fire Service presence. Response times for both services average 20 minutes. The fire station is under resourced and relies on crews from Sevenoaks and Westerham . Without a permanent Police Station will crime rates increase?

## What about the raw sewage and our river Eden?

Our sewerage system is already failing. Last year, Edenbridge Waste Treatment Works discharged raw sewage 75 times, totalling 1,220 hours, which is equivalent to 51 days of discharge. The River Eden is dying. Residents at Oakley Park and St. John's have experienced blocked drains and non-functional toilets. One resident said, **"We are living on a beautiful development that stinks of sewage."**

## Will our roads and rail meet the increased need?

**The recent KCC Transport Plan consultation showed no substantial investment for Edenbridge.**

NEDRA is concerned about the lack of planning for increased traffic and has raised these concerns in responses to the 2040 plan and the Local Transport Plan with both KCC (responsible for highways) and SDC.

Our road network is under strain. Edenbridge is only accessible by B roads, with railway bridges on the B2026 and B2027 causing congestion. Height restrictions force large vehicles to wait for oncoming traffic to stop, worsening tailbacks. Congestion has increased since the completion of Oakley Park and St. John's estates, and the opening of Lidl, Home Bargains, and Greggs.

The Four Elms Road (B2027) is becoming a major congestion point with the Eden Centre and Medical Centre located there, an addition of 450 homes, scout hall, youth centre, school and access to additional town station parking, its likely to get worse. More traffic, more pollution, more noise.

# Inadequate rail services

Despite having two railway stations, train services are inadequate. Expanding services requires huge investment by Network Rail to replace outdated rolling stock and diesel lines.

	Edenbridge	Sevenoaks Town	Swanley
Total Trains over the day	19	174	108
First Train time	06:07	04:57	04:35
Last Train Time	23:09	23:35	23:54
Total Trains from 7am to 10am	4	21	23
Fastest train time minutes*	00:44	00:24	00:27
Longest train time minutes*	00:49	00:59	00:48
Average minutes*	45	35	33

\* Direct Trains to Charing Cross, Canon Street, London Bridge & Victoria

In addition Sevenoaks and Swanley have services to Blackfriars and Finsbury Park

The proposed station access modification is a positive step but only partially solves the issue. Internal access to both platforms remains unaddressed, meaning the new parking area of 36 spaces will mainly serve as a drop-off for those with mobility issues. A large portion of the £1 million funding from developers to Network Rail is allocated to improving the Mowhurst foot crossing, rather than enhancing the station itself.

## Respond by 28 November

You have until 28 November 2024 to comment on this application via SDC website [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications) and we urge you to do so. A short response is better than not responding. Numbers count!

## If you are not online

If you do not have access to a computer or would prefer to write a response, please send to:  
FAO: Sean Mitchell – Case officer  
Sevenoaks District Council  
Argyle Road,  
Sevenoaks TN13 1HG  
Quote reference: LAND NORTH OF TOWN STATION COTTAGES FORGE CROFT ref.  
24/02765/OUT

**Join NEDRA, we need your support.**

**Go to <https://nedra.org.uk/join-us>**

**or email us [info@nedra.org.uk](mailto:info@nedra.org.uk)**

