



# NEDRA NEWS SPRING 2025



New Edenbridge District Residents' Association

## Revised Local Plan

### Housing target for Sevenoaks district increased by 58%

Sevenoaks District Council is reviewing the Local Plan for Edenbridge. This is in response to the increases in national housing targets and the introduction of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which includes the new category of "Grey Belt" which is vaguely defined and could put more of our Green Belt at risk.

The previous plan suggested over 1500 new homes in Edenbridge but with new targets this could increase to nearly 2500.

#### Your opportunity to give feedback on the plans: October/November 2025

The Local Plan for Edenbridge is delayed and there will be another opportunity for residents and community stakeholders to get involved and share their views at Regulation 18 stage. SDC has proposed this is likely to be in October/November 2025.

NEDRA recognises the need for more housing but believes we also need significantly improved roads, public transport, flood management, school provision, medical services, and policing as well.

**NEDRA supports more affordable housing.** There are families in Edenbridge that have lived here for generations and have strong community connections but now find it difficult to secure affordable homes. We welcome new residents but where there is a need for affordable housing, we believe **local residents should get priority.**

#### New Local Plan Timetable

- Oct/Nov Regulation 18
- Summer 2026 - Regulation 19
- Dec 2026 - Submission by SDC
- 2027 - Inspector Examination
- Dec 2027 - Adoption

Get ready to have your say!

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# NEDRA Has Been Busy

We formed as the New Edenbridge District Residents' Association in response to the original 2040 Local Plan with our first public meeting in April 2024.



Standing room only at the NEDRA meeting in July

We would like to thank our members for their continued support, especially those who have volunteered at public meetings, delivered newsletters, participated in river water testing, supported local events, and responded to consultations when called upon.

We would like to extend a special thank you to Edenbridge Manor for generously allowing us to hold our Committee meetings there over the past year.

## War Memorial Transformation

A big thanks to our dedicated volunteers who helped to clean up the war memorial in time for Remembrance Day. NEDRA liaised with Tom Tugendhat, NHS Properties and Edenbridge Town Council, and worked with our volunteers to help preserve the dignity of the memorials, which are an important part of the town's history. We continue to keep the area clean and tidy until the permanent location for the memorials is agreed.



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# NEDRA Makes Some Noise!

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## Residents' fears over plans for 450 homes in Four Elms Road, Edenbridge, to be built on flood zone



### Meeting to show 'strength of feeling' against housing plan

THREE in no need to sacrifice green belt land for thousands of new homes, a meeting of a new residents' group formed to defend a town's interests will hear.

People in Edenbridge earlier this year formed the New Edenbridge and District Residents' Association (Nedra), arguing there was deep resentment over plans for hundreds of new homes set out in Sevenoaks District Council's blueprint for future development.

Work on the council's Local Plan 2040, which must outline where more than 150,000 new homes will be built, is ongoing after initial broad options were put out to say it will be impossible to meet that target without using some green belt.

Nedra argues that if 1,200 homes are built in Edenbridge, it would make the town the fastest growing in England.

"There is no need for Sevenoaks District Council to alter the district's green belt boundaries to accommodate over 5,000 homes in green belt, as they propose in their Plan 2040," a spokesman for Nedra said. "Indeed, the current government's green belt framework (NPPF) specifically guides local authorities against using the green belt for housing."

That is the argument Richard Knox Johnson, chairman of the London Covers Bell Council, will make at a public meeting held by Nedra on July 17.

The group argues Plan 2040 proposes "excessive pressure" on the countryside around Sevenoaks, including a "disproportionately high" number of sites around Edenbridge. It argues that 1,534 new homes could mean the town's population, just under 10,000 at the 2021 census, could be as high as 16,000 by 2040, saying: "Growth of this magnitude would not only change the character of the rural town but also place disproportionate pressures on the infrastructure of the town currently served only by rural lanes and B roads."

The draft plan indicates a string of 'baseline' sites in Edenbridge - and such of three development scenarios put forward by the district council in its first consultation would include those. The council says they are either within existing settlements or on 'underperforming' green belt.

Unveiling the first draft plan last year, then cabinet member for planning and conservation, Cllr Simon Reay, stressed the district's need for new homes, and particularly its shortage of affordable ones, and particularly the identified baseline sites in green belt around Edenbridge include 80 homes west of Albourne Drive and Meadow Lane, 91 in Couch House Road, 150 north of Skinkers Lane, 400 at Breckrest Farm in Crouch House Road, and 120 east of Meadow Road.

Sally Ann Vine, chairman of Nedra, urged residents to attend this month's meeting and demonstrate "the strength of local sentiment against overdevelopment."

"Such large-scale development will transform the rural landscape, put pressure on the roads through our town and nearby villages such as Crockham Hill, Four Elms and Herve, and strain local services already struggling to cope with the current population," she said.

A spokesman for the district council said: "The plan includes potential sites for the around 10,000 new homes the Government has told us we must enable up to 2040 to meet the district's current and future needs. We are very aware there is a current algorithm need for new, local affordable housing."

"As the Sevenoaks district is 95% green belt, now the second highest proportion in England, we have to consider a limited number of green belt sites. We know from our studies that the 7% of the district that is already developed cannot accommodate these new homes."

"Local people can have a final say when we publish the revised Local Plan, with the final list of proposed development sites, later this year (formally known as the Regulation 19 consultation)."

The Nedra meeting takes place at the W1 Hall in Station Road, Edenbridge at 7pm.

### Public meeting is called over river sewage discharge

RESIDENTS appalled at sewage discharges into the River Eden have called a public meeting with Southern Water over the 'crisis'.

They have used Environment Agency data to establish unmet demand for a total of seven sites which either feed the Eden or its tributaries.

Nedra plans to put its concerns to representatives of the water company at a public meeting on October 3. It will take place at Ricklands Hall at 10.30am, and all are welcome.

Sewage overflows are used to stop flood water flooding homes and businesses at times of heavy rainfall, but are only supposed to be used in exceptional circumstances.

Sewage spills into England's rivers and seas by water companies more than doubled in 2023. The water companies say that is because of exceptionally high rainfall - but it hasn't stopped a national outcry over the issue.

Southern says its waste pipes - which also take rainwater - are overloaded when there is "extreme" rain or land becomes saturated, and that it is a bigger problem now thanks to climate change and population growth.

There were 464,056 spills in England in 2023, and overflows were in use for a total of 3.6 million hours, according to the Environment Agency.

On the Eden, overflows were used more regularly. At Edenbridge waste water treatment works (WWTW), an overflow was used 75 times in 2023, spilling out a total 1,220 hours - the equivalent of 51 days. Upstream, an overflow at Langfold was used 124 times in 2023, spilling into Bay Brook, a tributary of the Eden, for 2,086 hours, or 87 days.

When overflows are used, the substance pouring into rivers is 95% water, Southern says.

A 20% of all sewage is responsible for enteric viruses and the sea without being treated, a figure the company says is working hard to reduce.

Director for wastewater operations, John Pencock, said: "Shifting is top priority for us - and our customers. Last November we announced our £1.5 billion storm overflow reduction plan which will combine innovative engineering with nature-based solutions."

"We've extensively relined sewers, to keep sewage in and rainwater out, and our storm release reduction pilot schemes have already proved that nature-based systems can have a real impact."

## Responding to Planning Applications and Consultations

A large part of our work is dedicated to responding to planning applications and consultations, most of these can be found on our website <https://nedra.org.uk>. This often involves carefully reviewing hundreds of technical documents and conducting extensive research. Over the past year, we have submitted responses to:

- The KCC Local Transport Plan
- Reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Four Elms Road Development
- Kent And Surrey Golf And Country Club
- Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Edenbridge
- The Big Waste Conversation Survey

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# Community Events

NEDRA has proudly supported a range of local events, including the Bridges Pre-loved Fashion Sale and their Crafts & Plant Sale, the Repair Cafe, Edenbridge Clubs and Societies Fair, Hever School Summer Fete and several events at St. Peter & Paul Church, such as the Michaelmas Fayre. We also enjoyed the Rotary Club Quiz night in November and will be supporting them again on the evening of Saturday 22 March after we've taken part in the "Love Edenbridge" event on the same day, hosted by the Edenbridge Chamber of Commerce.



# Local Initiatives

## **Jewsons / Old Station Yard**

With the support of local residents, NEDRA successfully facilitated communication with Total Homes and Developments Limited, the company building new homes on the old Jewson site. We engaged with nearby residents, gathering their input and helping to consult on the colour plans for the building façades to ensure those overlooking the development had a say in its appearance.

## **PACT (Partners and Communities Together)**

NEDRA participate in the PACT meetings which are held once a quarter. Recently, street lighting was a key topic of discussion. NEDRA identified several poorly lit areas that require improvement, including the path from Station Approach Road to Penlee Close, Grange Close, Church Street, and pathways across Stangrove Park. We are currently working to determine whether the responsibility for these areas falls to the town council or county council so we can pursue the necessary solutions.

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# Nature Recovery and the River Eden

As detailed in our November newsletter, our sewerage system is already failing. So, it comes as no surprise that the River Eden, in the words of the Environment Agency, is "ecologically poor". The NEDRA water quality testing team is collecting monthly samples from six specific locations along the River Eden. **We are very grateful for the support of Councillor Margot McArthur who helped us to obtain £1200 funding from KCC to carry out regular water sampling in the River Eden.** This is done under stringent controls, monitoring for ammonia, phosphate, and nitrate levels. There is currently an excess of phosphorus and nitrates in the river which leads to low oxygen levels, harmful for wildlife. NEDRA will be working closely with SES (Sutton & East Surrey Water) who supply our drinking water. SES pump water from the River Eden to Bough Beech reservoir, where it is treated and then supplied as drinking water; so, improving the quality of the River Eden is in SES interests too!



## Making Space for Nature in Kent and Medway

Developing the County's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

For the last year, the Making Space for Nature team, based at Kent County Council, has been consulting stakeholders to collaboratively establish priorities for nature recovery and environmental improvements. NEDRA would like to thank everyone who took part in this process either by making suggestions on the interactive map or voting for the areas suggested by NEDRA. Thanks to these local efforts and the thoroughness of the Making Space for Nature team, the River Eden is on the map and included in their draft strategy. It highlights opportunities for nature recovery but does not provide protection for these areas. This is an important first step towards saving nature and wildlife in Edenbridge.

## Protecting our Green Belt

Richard Knox-Johnston from the London Green Belt Council was the insightful guest speaker at our July 2024 public meeting. He continues to provide us with helpful advice as we consider proposed developments in Edenbridge. We continue to work closely with organisations like CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England), for their valuable knowledge and expertise. Protecting our Green Belt has become even more challenging with recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) together with new government building targets.

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

# EDENBRIDGE NEEDS YOU!

**NEDRA is here for the Edenbridge community, and we need your support.**

**The more members we have, the better we represent Edenbridge and the stronger our voice.**

**JOIN NEDRA for  
£5 per person or  
£10 per household**

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

## **Would you like to make a difference?**

NEDRA are looking for more Committee members. We currently have a good team with multiple skills and strengths. If you would like to join our Committee and help to make a difference in Edenbridge, please get in touch.

If you are keen get involved in our environmental work, please reach out to us. Apart from our water testing work, we have other initiatives in mind for 2025.

Please contact us at **[info@nedra.org.uk](mailto:info@nedra.org.uk)**