

Minutes of the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring and Implementation Group meeting held at the Council Chambers on 4th December 2023, 6:00pm.

In attendance:

Sevenoaks Town Council – Vice Chair of Planning Committee	Cllr Nick Varley – (Chair)
Sevenoaks Town Council – Chair of Open Spaces & Leisure	Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet
Sevenoaks Town Council	Cllr Lionel O’Hara
Sevenoaks Town Council – Town Clerk	Linda Larter MBE
Sevenoaks Town Council – Planning Committee Clerk	Georgie Elliston
Sevenoaks District Council	Cllr Elizabeth Purves
Wealden Properties (Sevenoaks) Limited	Paul Baker
Glenn Ball Chartered Architect	Glenn Ball
Sevenoaks Society	Charles George
Bradbourne Residents Association	John Ingram

1. **Declarations of Interest**

Paul Baker of Wealden Properties declared that he was the Agent for two of the planning applications within the Monitoring Report.

2. **Welcome to new attendees**

The Group welcomed its new attendees, with a note that membership would remain fluid and open to new members, in order to allow organisations to engage with the process as and when it pertains to their interests – for example, sports clubs to attend when Theme Six – Sports and Recreation is to be discussed.

3. **Apologies for absence**

Helen O’Sullivan, **Liz Dolding** (Warners Solicitors), **Andrew Eyre** (The Stag Theatre), **Cllr Libby Ancrum** (Sevenoaks Town Council), **Cllr David Skinner** (Sevenoaks Town Council), **Cllr Gareth Willis** (Sevenoaks Town Council), **Cllr Catherine Daniell** (Sevenoaks Town Council), **Cllr Nigel Wightman** (Sevenoaks Town Council), **Cllr Sally Layne** (Sevenoaks Town Council), **Cllr Claire Shea** (Sevenoaks Town Council)

4. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the previous STNP Monitoring and Implementation Group meeting held on 27th September 2023 were received and agreed.

5. **Theme One – Work Stream**

a) Actions listed under the Theme One Work Stream were discussed one by one, with a priority status attributed to each item. (Updated document attached)

b) The following points of note were discussed:

- Action 1.1 – Noted that the three main sites affected by this are 136 High Street (Previously Tesco), Edwards Electrical, and the Farmers Site.
- Actions 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 – These actions to be considered under one point, due to similarity. Charles George reported on behalf of Sevenoaks Society that it considers this low priority, due to the Residential Character Area Assessment (RCAA) guidance being considered sufficient. Rated low priority.

- Action 1.5 – Noted that there are numerous large developments currently planned in Sevenoaks which will result in creation of new roads. Therefore rated medium priority.
- Action 1.6 – Noted that SDC's Emerging Local Plan 2040 has a policy on this. STC to contact them and communicate the priority for STC or members of the STNP M&I Group to have representation in any Design Review Panels.
- Action 1.7 – Information was requested as to what areas are not included in the RCAA to give direction on scope.
- Action 1.8 – Noted that STC is pursuing two separate Masterplans for Town and for St Johns, pending CIL funding. Noted that SDC Local Plan Evidence base now includes development briefs for some relevant sites, including Sevenoaks Station.
- Action 1.9 – Numbers to be updated, due to non-existence of 1.9.
- Action 1.10 – Noted to monitor whether SDC's Local Plan introduces policy guidance on solar panels. Rated medium priority, to be pursued as part of 5 year review.
- Action 1.11 – The Group agreed that it would like to see Aim C2 elevated to Policy status, without adding specific detail on sites in order to allow for change to occur without nullifying the policy.

6. Monitoring

a) The Planning Committee's preliminary monitoring report, which recorded how the STNP was being applied to planning applications, was received and noted.

b) Members received and discussed copy of correspondence from a SDC Planning Officer, which answered queries made by the Planning Committee Clerk in response to several trends observed within the monitoring report.

c) The non-applicability of Policy L1 to Householder applications in particular was noted, and it was agreed that the Committee Clerk research this further.

d) It was noted that SDC would be producing its own annual report on the STNP, however this would be via automated system and would not produce detail as to use of individual policies.

7. Dates of future meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting be scheduled to take place in 7 weeks at 6pm on 22nd January 2024. This meeting would focus on Theme Two: Landscape and Blue and Green Infrastructure.

b) It was also noted that a 2024 meeting schedule would be produced in the New Year, with STNP Group meetings to take place every 6 weeks thereafter.

Meeting concluded at 7:45pm.

Theme One: Character, Heritage and Identity Work Stream

	Proposed Project/Action	Notes	Identified by:	For actioning of:
1.1	The Town Council will work with the District Council and landowners to encourage development of vacant and under-used sites particularly where they have a negative impact on the townscape of Sevenoaks.	The main three sites affected by this are: • 136 High Street (Previously Tesco), • Edwards Electrical, • Farmers Site.	STNP – Aim C2 And supporting text of Aim C3	STC Collaboration with: • Sevenoaks District Council • Landowners • Developers
1.2	The Town Council will prepare guidance on the treatment of locally listed buildings and any other buildings with heritage value. Whilst adopted policies provide a good level of protection some buildings may remain vulnerable to insensitive development. This includes unlisted buildings that are not in Conservation Areas or locally listed buildings (that do not require listed building consent). The Town Council will create additional guidelines to protect these structures	Low priority , due to guidance in the Residential Character Area Assessment being considered sufficient. Solar panels in particular were noted as an issue.	STNP – Aim C3 And supporting text of Aim C3	STC
1.3	The Town Council will work with the District Council to encourage the naming of new streets to reflect people and places of historic significance to the town	Medium priority , due to a number of large developments and subsequent new roads expected to be delivered in Sevenoaks within the next few years.	STNP – Aim C5	STC Collaboration with: • Sevenoaks District Council
1.4	The Town Council will normally require major planning applications or proposals on sites within sensitive locations, to be submitted to a Design Review panel for review early in the planning process. The Town Council will either utilise a panel	The District Council's emerging Local Plan 2040 has a proposed policy for this. Pending Action: STC to liaise with SDC to request	STNP – Aim C6	STC Collaboration with: • Sevenoaks District Council

	Proposed Project/Action	Notes	Identified by:	For actioning of:
	established by the District Council or utilise another established panel. The Town Council will engage with the District Council to undertake a design review or if necessary utilise an alternative panel.	representation on any resulting review panel, of either STC or the STNP M&I Group.	STNP – Supporting text of Aim C6	Design Review Panel Collaboration with: • Sevenoaks District Council Design Review Panel • Alternative panels
1.5	The Town Council will work with the District Council and/or other design advisors to prepare design guidance for areas not included within the Residential Character Area Assessment.	Pending Action: To identify where the gaps are for areas not included, and report back for re-consideration of the M&I Group.	STNP – Aim C7	STC Collaboration with: • Sevenoaks District Council • Design advisers
1.6	Masterplanning at locations which are important gateways and arrival points into the town.	High priority, with a Town Centre and separate St Johns Masterplan due to be undertaken by STC once CIL funding becomes available. Noted that SDC's Local Plan 2040 Evidence Base now includes Development Briefs	Examination Process – Town Clerk Policy C10 was amended following recommendation PM4 in the Independent Examiner Report, to read “will be supported in principle at:”. The definition of “support” in this case was provided in STC's Answer to Question 11 of the Examiner's procedural questions,	STC

	Proposed Project/Action	Notes	Identified by:	For actioning of:
		for Baseline sites – including Sevenoaks Station.	and included potential financial contributions, Masterplanning , and/or Planning Committee recommendations.	
1.7	Theme 1: Character OR Theme 7: Development via Policy D6 (Retrofitting) To provide solar panels guidance – especially within Conservation Areas where their installation (as well as double glazing) are severely limited. Potential to add a Policy in support at REVIEW stage	Medium priority, as review and addition of any new policies will take place in 5 years. Note to monitor Emerging Local Plan 2040 in case this adds new policy guidance.	Town Clerk/Town Council Officers – Whether or not solar panels should be allowed in Conservation Areas has been heavily debated by the Planning Committee multiple times. If an evidence base or design guidance could be prepared for this and to respond to the increasing demand for solar panels, this could help to clarify for homeowners and the Planning Committee. This is also in line with Aim C3 – whereby the Town Council will prepare guidance on the treatment of locally listed buildings and any other buildings with heritage value.	STC
1.8	Elevate Aim C2 to Policy status – requiring additional study and evidence base to identify exact locations Current Aim: Aim C2: The Town Council will work with the District Council and landowners to encourage development of vacant and under-used sites particularly where they have a negative impact on the townscape in Sevenoaks.	For REVIEW stage: Agreement from Group members of desire for this to be elevated to Policy status, without requiring detail on specific sites, in order for it to remain relevant to any additional sites that may come up.	Examination Process – Regulation 16 Consultation Response Recommended by Sevenoaks Society in its response on the public consultation on the Referendum Draft of the STNP. The Independent Examiner flagged this in his Report, but noted that he “would expect more detail or precisely which vacant and under-	STC

	Proposed Project/Action	Notes	Identified by:	For actioning of:
			used sites the policy would apply to" in order for it to gain policy status.	
0.1	Review and potential updating of existing evidence base to ensure that the information is satisfactorily accurate enough to inform the Plan's policies. Existing evidence base: • Sevenoaks Town Portrait • Sevenoaks Transport Strategy • Sevenoaks Cultural Strategy • Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy • Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan	Evidence base documents relevant to Theme One are: • Sevenoaks Town Portrait • Sevenoaks Cultural Strategy • Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan	Examination Process – Independent Examiner The function of the Appendices are to "inform the policies within the Plan", and on this basis the Independent Examiner confirmed that he was satisfied for the appendices to be retained. He noted however that evidence may change over the life of the STNP, and advised therefore that it be reviewed.	STC