

AMENDED Minutes of the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan / Masterplan Working Group meeting held at the Council Chambers on 1st July 2024, 6:00pm.

In attendance:

Sevenoaks Town Council – Elected member	Cllr Nigel Wightman
Sevenoaks Town Council – Elected member	Cllr Claire Shea
Sevenoaks Town Council – Substitute for Elected Member, Cllr Skinner	Cllr Dr Merilyn Canet
Sevenoaks Town Council – Town Clerk	Linda Larter MBE
Sevenoaks Town Council – Planning Committee Clerk	Georgie Elliston
Sevenoaks District Council – Leader	Cllr Roderick Hogarth
Sevenoaks Society	Charles George
Sevenoaks Society	Helen Bowles MBE
Warners Solicitors	Liz Dolding

Prior to the commencement of the meeting and in the absence of the Chair or Vice Chair, Cllr Nigel Wightman as Leader of the Town Council was nominated to Chair the meeting.

62. STNP / Masterplan Working Group Terms of Reference

- a) The Working Group, previously referred to as the “STNP Monitoring & Implementation Group” received notice that it had been renamed the “STNP / Masterplan Working Group”. Its Terms of Reference had remained the same and adopted by Council on 13th May 2024.
- b) The Group received copy of the Terms of Reference, noting that it had been updated following 13th May 2024 in order to accurately reflect the Group’s new name throughout the document.

63. STNP / Masterplan Working Group* Town Councillor Membership

- a) The following appointments of Sevenoaks Town Councillors to the STNP / Masterplan Working Group were noted:
 - Cllr Tony Clayton – Chair
 - Cllr David Skinner – Vice Chair
 - Cllr Claire Shea – Member
 - Cllr Nigel Wightman – Member
 - Cllr Lise Michaelides – Member

- b) It was noted that membership will remain open to any interested external stakeholders within Sevenoaks Town, to take part in discussions as and when the topic of the meeting is relevant to their interests.

**Incorrectly referred to as the “Monitoring & Implementation Group” in the Agenda papers.*

64. Apologies for absence

Cllr Tony Clayton (Chair, Sevenoaks Town Council), **Cllr Skinner** (Vice Chair, Sevenoaks Town Council), **Cllr Lise Michaelides** (Elected Member, Sevenoaks Town Council), **Andrew Eyre** (The Stag Theatre)

65. Minutes

The Minutes of the previous STNP Monitoring and Implementation Group meeting held on 7th May 2024 were received and agreed.

66. Theme Five – Work Stream

a) The following items of note were discussed in relation to the Theme Five Work Stream:

- Action 5.1: The Planning Committee Clerk advised that STC had invited the Sevenoaks Primary Care Network to attend one of its new Community Wellbeing Committee meetings in order to discuss what the PCN does and how the Town Council can work with it to support Sevenoaks residents.
- Action 5.2 and 0.1: The Town Clerk advised that STC's new Arts and Culture Working Group is reviewing the Cultural Strategy, which forms part of the STNP evidence base. This will be brought to a future STNP / Masterplan meeting once progressed.

b) Members were advised that the Town Council's new Committee and Working Group structure, introduced in May 2024, had incorporated different elements of the STNP within their Terms of Reference. This so that each Group could work on breaking up the aspects of more complex policies into actionable delivery plans, in order to further some of the less "concrete" aspirations and objectives. E.g. Policy COM1 – promoting new health and education provision, faith facilities and other community infrastructure.

c) It was noted that the statement published in the STNP from the NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group had been provided in 2017, with limited contact achieved from healthcare representatives since. It was hoped that the new Town Council structure would facilitate such conversations, for instance via the less formal framework of Working Group meetings where more open conversations about issues and solutions could be discussed.

67. Monitoring

a) The updated monitoring report, which records how the STNP has been being applied to planning applications since the last preliminary report, was received and noted.

b) The Town Clerk reported that the Policy L1 on Biodiversity Net Gain had become the most influential and prominent Policy, with NALC having recognised its importance and recommended that all local councils produce similar policies in their emerging NDPs. NALC had also repeated in its response to a government hedgerow policy review consultation, STC's recommendation for NDPs to 1) recognise the value of trees and hedgerows for their positive impact on character biodiversity and climate change, and 2) introduce local policy protections on them, as covered in STNP Objective 5, Aim L3 and Policy L4.

c) Clarification was sought on whether the Town Council will be pushing for such policies in the emerging Local Plan. The Town Clerk advised STC will be recommending changes such as for hedges to be preferred over fencing, for the positive impact that trees and hedges can have on character and climate change. STC would hope that the Local Plan will pick up the policies within the STNP, but will remind them should it appear otherwise.

Informative: Attached for information is the Town Council's responses to the 2023 Regulation 18 Local Plan Consultation Part 1 (Pages 4-17), and the 2024 Regulation 18 Local Plan Consultation Part 2 (Pages 18-31).

Relevant comments to the above query are highlighted, where STC makes consistent reference to the STNP and recommendation for its aims and policies to be reinforced.

d) The Planning Committee Clerk summarised the trends and observations provided on pages 13-22 of the Agenda papers. The following points of note were discussed:

- Householder applications continue to be except from Policy L1
- An argument had been made by the applicant in their planning application statement that the STNP Policy L1 is no longer material due to their consideration that it conflicts with government policy. It was noted that the application was due to be considered by the Planning & Environment Committee the same evening, and that Committee members' attention would be drawn to this.

68. Royal Town Planning Institute Award Shortlist

a) The Working Group received notice that the STNP had been shortlisted for the Royal Town Planning Institute's South-East Awards for Planning Excellence, under the category of Best Plan. It was noted that there was one other Plan shortlisted for the award, with the winner due to be announced on 12th July 2024.

b) Group members congratulated the Town Council for its successful nominating of the STNP for the Award, and awaited the results which will be announced to the Planning & Environment Committee on 15th July 2024, published via a Press Release shortly after. Should the STNP be successful, it was understood that it would be submitted to the further National Awards for Planning Excellence.

69. Dates of future meetings

The following future meeting dates were noted:

27 th August 2024 – 6pm	21 st October 2024 – 6pm	16 th December 2024 – 6pm
10 th February 2025 – 6pm	7 th April 2025 – 6pm	2 nd June 2025 – 6pm

Meeting concluded at 6:25pm.

Submitted to Plan 2040 Full Survey

Submitted on 2023-01-11 10:02:41

About you

1 Name and Organisation

Please enter your first name:

Georgie

Please enter your surname:

Elliston

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please enter the name of the organisation here:

Sevenoaks Town Council

2 What is your email address?

Email:

planning@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

3 How old are you?

I'd prefer not to say

4 If you live in Sevenoaks District, which Town or Parish do you live in?

Please select from the list:

Sevenoaks Town

5 Please confirm that you agree to your comments being published and attributed by name and organisation (if applicable)

I confirm that my comments can be publish and attributed by my name and organisation

Introduction

1 Have we identified the right strategic issues that will influence the development of the District to 2040?

Yes

Are there any other issues that we should identify?:

STC supports Net 0 but there needs to be consideration of other elements on quality of environment, as Net 0 is too specific. STC would like to see SDC also look at wider topics e.g. air quality, flooding, density

STC requests that SDC look at deliverability of these and look at different scenarios which prioritise different issues first because STC is concerned that focusing on design excellence and Net 0 could have cost implications on deliverabililty of other priorities. (similarly to how they did with housing densities).

A much wider framework is needed as a strategy for the District as a whole to meet the government's objective of net zero for the whole community by 2050 or earlier.

2 Do you support the Vision and Objectives?

Support

Do you have any comments on the Vision and Objectives?:

Is there a Housing Needs survey for Sevenoaks Town?

On Housing needs, STC would like to see work to ensure that there is housing to provide for all segments of the community. Housing to meet changing demographic is fair enough but if the demographic is changing because younger can't afford it then should we be working to meet affordability needs

Need younger people to be able to live here and move

OB18 "equal" access doesn't deliver access; if everyone has none then its still equal - so STC would recommend change of wording to read "ready" access.

The spacial vision also doesn't recognise the challenge whereby some towns at the boundaries of Sevenoaks District are more primarily linked to others outside it than inside.

Chapter 01 – Development Strategy

1 Do you agree with the proposed Development Strategy?

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

STC agrees with the broad strategy but is reluctant to see optimum plus in a market town which is dominated by 2/3 storey family homes. STC would request a height/storey limit that respects the height of adjacent buildings - not just the character of the town.

STC does not consider the Optimum Plus option to respect this.

There is also no mention of the Residential Character Area Assessments and conservation areas, which should be respected and considered in the vision and planning process as proposed in the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan.

2 We are considering density within existing settlements at different levels, which is your preferred approach?

Optimum (delivers approx. 8.5k units, shortfall of 5k units)

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

STC's preferred approach is Option 2 - Optimum in Sevenoaks Town, and STC would furthermore ask that this respects the height of neighbouring buildings with a limit put on height/storeys in each area.

It is also imperative for the town that affordable housing is delivered.

In addition, STC wishes to point out that there are very limited transport options in buses etc in lots of development sites, so not many would be sustainable for higher density.

3 Are you aware of any additional sites in existing settlements which we have not yet considered?

No

If you have selected 'Yes' please specify site details:

4 What would you like to see in a Development Brief for the Sevenoaks Station Area

Please enter your answer here:

Traffic flow and traffic management for less congestion & safer crossing for pedestrians. As noted in STC's Submission Draft of its NDP, this is a "significant opportunity for development that will transform the arrival into Sevenoaks and could establish a new urban quarter for the Town."

STC would wish for the above to be managed with true collaboration with Town Council on a development brief as recommended by the Independent Examiner in his report for the NDP. This should also include STC's recommendations as set out in Policy D1 of its Neighbourhood Development Plan: that "any development should respond sensitively to [the setting of the notable views towards the Kent Downs AONB]", that the scale of buildings be typically four or six storeys with "potential for a taller building to mark the station", and reconsideration of "transport interchange and public realm treatment at the station."

STC's Highway Improvement Plan 2021 prioritised the pedestrian crossing by Sevenoaks Station as needing a redesign for safer crossing. Kent County Council confirmed that this is viable and that STC would need to fund the design and feasibility for it. STC is waiting on an update as to what exactly was confirmed viable and what STC would need to do next, but would also like to see it in a Development Brief.

The Local Plan should include the Sevenoaks NDP provisions for this area. The draft Local Plan seems to treat Sevenoaks station primarily as a townscape and housing opportunity before getting to what it needs to be to sustain the success of the town - a major sustainable transport hub. There is certainly room for housing above the railway tracks - by agreement with Network Rail Properties. However the key objective should be to expand active travel opportunities to and from the station from across the town, and to link it more effectively with the town centre.

5 Do you have a view on the areas of land that the brief should cover and sites that could be included?

Please enter your answer here:

Sevenoaks Station as well as its car parks and the car park at the Bat & Ball Station, the Farmers site, Parade, and Bradbourne Park car park as part of overall development.

Chapter 02 – Housing Choice for All

1 Do you think the proposed technical and design criteria are reasonable and will help to achieve the aims of Policy H1?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

The missing Housing Assessments for urban towns is regrettable. It needs to be done before decisions are taken on the potential for development. While the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan recommends sites for [potential development, and the scale of development, the needs assessment still has to be done. It is crucial that affordable housing requirements on all sizes on new developments are enforced in full]

2 Do you think the proposed affordable housing contributions are reasonable and will help to achieve the aims of Policy H2?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

Is there a way to encourage BT to build more recently where a development has been approved despite offering lower than policy or even 0% affordable housing, with the justification that they weren't viable for affordable housing anyway.

3 Do you think the proposed criteria are reasonable and will help to achieve the aims of Policy H3?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

STC considers this proposed criteria reasonable, but notes that it is not a rural Parish.

4 Do you think the proposed technical and design criteria are reasonable and will help to achieve the aims of Policy H4?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

While STC supports these, it would also like to see in the housing mix thought for older people housing without just being flats, and broader provision of all housing stock to allow for the occasional short or long term for those less mobile to exist. It would also support developments being built to house more mixed communities - with quality accommodation to make for independent living (e.g. flat surfaces) that allow for integration of all sectors of society and flexible use, as well as Lifetime properties that allow for a residents' changing needs e.g. wider doors, wetrooms. Rockdale Housing are a good example of how housing can be provided for older people.

5 Do you think the proposed technical and design criteria are reasonable and will help to achieve the aims of Policy H5?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

STC supports Build-to-Rent as defined in the glossary.

6 Build to rent schemes often require a minimum number of units to be deliverable. What should that be in Sevenoaks District?

0-50

If you've selected 'Other', please specify here:

7 What else can we do to encourage the delivery of suitable smaller sites in existing built up areas?

Please enter your answer here:

STC noted that smaller sites coming forward for development need to be addressed in a way that respects what is already there, and have enough amenity space for its purpose e.g. garden for family houses while respecting of character of area. Proposals need to demonstrate that they fit in.

8 Is there anything else that we should include, or an alternative approach we should consider through Policy H6?

Please enter your answer here:

Encourage use of more suitable publicly held land and redevelopment of existing sites that are not well designed.

9 Do you think the proposed density guidelines are reasonable and will help to achieve the aims of Policy H7?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

STC reiterated that the development has to respect surrounding area and buildings and the character of the town.

STC would resist seeing buildings that are substantially taller than those existing in town because it would change character of the town too significantly.

10 What do you think are appropriate locations for taller buildings and are there areas of land that are suitable for intensification?

Please enter your answer here:

STC considers this question too broad, as there is no quantification to what "taller buildings" are. For instance, the existing "tall" building at Tubbs Hill House is an anomaly and doesn't fit the town, and STC would not welcome more schemes of that height.

There are two areas in Sevenoaks which may be suitable for high levels of housing density, although the height should not greatly exceed what is currently on or around those sites. This would include land opposite the station, including the former Farmers site, the site of the BT building and the main station car park. This would also include the site of the Stag car park, telephone exchange and Royal Mail Building.

The STNP recommends around Sevenoaks Station typically four to six storey buildings with potential for a taller building to mark the station (up to 10 storeys as already permitted in that area). Consideration will need to be taken as to how the development appears from notable viewpoints.

11 Is there anything we should include, or an alternative approach we should consider through Policy H7?

12 Do you agree with the proposed strategy for identifying new Gypsy and Traveller pitch allocations in the most sustainable locations?

Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

Sevenoaks Town doesn't have suitable sites and STC agrees with the policy as written, but notes that the policy excludes a section of the community that stop over between locations and would ask that SDC properly look at transit sites available that can be provided through negotiation. This is a priority for STC as providing stop-over locations would reduce confrontation and open space damage. Local areas including Sevenoaks Town have been impacted - so STC's main concern is ensuring availability of temporary stopover locations for travellers coming through the area and SDC should strengthen policy to cover this.

13 Is there anything else we should consider through Policy GT1?

Please enter your answer here:

Provision of sites for temporary stopping places - (transit provision)

14 Are you aware of any additional sites for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches?

No

If you have selected 'Yes' please specify site details:

15 Do you agree with the development management Policy GT2?

Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

Chapter 03 – Economy and Employment

1 What are the factors that make Sevenoaks District a successful place for businesses to locate?

Please enter your answer here:

Proximity to London and access to continent, motorway links, supportive to local businesses, wealth of local talent. Schools with high quality education for settling down
Open space and supporting facilities
Good local availability of skilled people in finance/professional services/ICT etc (see BRES 2016 local analysis of job types in Sevenoaks)
Access to key customers in the markets they serve (often London)
Transport links and ICT infrastructure to access additional skills and people they need
Attractive living environment, housing, education, leisure etc to draw skilled people to jobs here.

2 What steps could be taken to improve economic competitiveness across the District?

Please enter your answer here:

Improve high fibre connectivity throughout the District
Local businesses often feedback to STC that its hard to find out who to talk to about help with setting up a business here, which means they can't make an appointment. SDC could provide a named contact on the website with email address to contact in relation to setting up a business - prospective and new businesses
Hotel accommodation
Improve local public transport connections to retail hubs
Improve last mile to tourism facilities

3 Are there further measures of economic success that should be considered over the plan period?

Please enter your answer here:

Number of new businesses, and how many of these last 3+ years, assessment of home working, and number of businesses that have expanded

4 How should the Council encourage the development of the circular economy, which aims to reduce wastage?

Please enter your answer here:

Invest in recycling for businesses and broaden what can be recycled in the district.
Provide greater facilities for businesses to take advantage of this, and support in particular smaller businesses who have trouble in particular with accessing recycling facilities.
Include provision of smaller recycling centres within new developments, especially significant ones.

5 How should the local economy be supported by the plan? (Sevenoaks Town Council's STNP / Masterplan Working Group Minutes 02-07-2024)

Please enter your answer here:

Actively support and promote the local and district-wide initiatives and work more closely with the other parishes and towns on these.

6 Is there additional information that should be included in the marketing evidence to support the loss employment uses?

Please enter your answer here:

Design needs to take account of security when considering mixed use in residential areas. While shops may stay lit-up at night, alternative employment uses that don't remain lit-up can cause darker and less safe areas that residents do not feel safe walking through. STC recommends that lower storeys in residential areas be shops, or alternative use buildings be distributed evenly between them in order to avoid "dark corridors" Mixed use needs design by security and improved aesthetics. An example of where this has not been provided is Cramptons Road.

STC recommends addition of wording "or community" to the end of the bullet point reading "that the proposals would not cause unacceptable harm to the local economy". Also add that the marketing evidence mentioned as being required as part of pre-application proposals must be analysed by quality.

7 What type of employment space is needed to support changing working patterns and practices across Sevenoaks District over the period of the Local Plan?

Please enter your answer here:

Small workshops if there is the demand for it, either for public or for small businesses

The 2018 data developed for the NDP showed the dominant role of professional, financial and business services in the local labour force and business demography needs to be better reflected in this area of the plan. It is a key factor behind the acceleration of home working since 2020, and has allowed Sevenoaks to weather the pandemic as well as it has. There have been a number of private and public initiatives to provide flexible office space to help home workers in these sectors, and more will be needed. Encouraging them around transport hubs, with active travel options, would help to ensure sustainable employment that contributes to net zero.

Shared services for small businesses and homeowners such as print/copy services, finance advice and meeting rooms.

8 How should healthy workspaces be promoted in the plan?

Please enter your answer here:

Proposals for new workspaces should allow for access to retail, open spaces, cycle storage, public transport links and incorporate good rest spaces.

9 What measures can the Council take to encourage sustainable employment space that contributes to its Net Zero objectives?

Please enter your answer here:

Supportive planning policies and/or a flexible planning approach when considering planning applications. Incorporate robust sustainable construction and operation requirements into planning requirements, including evidence of transport needs of users. Policies to encourage local sourcing of materials and supplies.

10 Are there additional matters that should be included to support the rural economy?

Please enter your answer here:

Encourage local agriculture to produce food

11 Do you agree with the approach of supporting and retaining the existing high streets rather than identifying areas for expansion or contraction?

Disagree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

STC's objection is based on the fact that it believes that Town Centre strategies should be designed by the communities, not imposed by the District Council. This will be different for each one e.g. STC wants High Street and St Johns developed.

Different towns will want different approaches and they should be community led - for instance through Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Secondary shopping centres should also be considered.

12 Do you support or have any comments on the specific proposals for the five highlighted centres?

Please select which Town or Local Centre you are commenting on:

Sevenoaks Town

Please enter your answer here:

As identified in the NDP's in Cultural Quarter document.

STC recommends that a new policy also be added to support secondary shopping centres within towns.

13 Do you agree with the proposal to restrict conversion of shops (Class E) to houses at ground floor level in primary shopping areas?

Strongly agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

Yes, when front facing primary shopping.

Sevenoaks Town Council would support it in the High Street, London road, and prime locations of secondary shopping centres.

It is also worth drawing attention to the fact that Sevenoaks Town's largest retail unit is Sainsbury, at northern boundary, and much existing employment land is between Sainsbury and Bat & Ball station. The nearby hospital is also an important employment and community service centre. Meanwhile, much of the expansion in residential capacity will be in and around Greatness Quarry. The need for local services - and infrastructure - to support the developments in this area should be highlighted in the plan. These areas will also gain from policies to support business and professional services. This is as per the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan which forms part of the evidence base of the STNP.

14 Does the proposed amendment to Sevenoaks Town Centre boundaries look appropriate?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

The boundary doesn't include St Johns Hill and Hollybush and STC requests that these be recognised as prime locations of secondary shopping centres in a separate policy supporting secondary shopping centres in towns as mentioned above.

Sevenoaks Town Council considers the idea for the market to be moved to the delivery area in Blighs impractical and unlikely to be supported by Blighs or the market traders. STC would prefer it be kept in the High Street.

15 Do you support a lower Retail Impact Assessment threshold?

No

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

Sevenoaks Town Council agrees with some parts of the policy, however would want proposals to be consistent with the STNP Cultural Strategy, not the SDC Town Centre strategy.

16 Do you agree with the proposals to manage hot foot takeaway applications?

Neither agree or disagree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

No comment, however please be aware of the typo in the question and consultation document, reading "hot foot".

17 What additional support do you think the plan could provide for the evening economy in the Sevenoaks District?

Please enter your answer here:

Transport e.g. public late night provision. STC has received feedback that residents are able to get to the Stag Community Arts Centre via bus but are unable to get back home the same way.

Reducing evening car parking charges.

18 Do you agree that we should protect, support and encourage tourism businesses, visitor accommodation and visitor attractions, including heritage assets?

Strongly agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

Good public transport would help for sustainable tourism - for instance the traffic going to Knole during peak visiting times e.g. bank holiday, sunny day, weekend could be reduced and visitors encouraged. There also needs to be more thought of access for non-cars with good cycle routes and pedestrian access.

19 Do you agree that the loss of tourist attractions and accommodation should only be permitted where a clear justification for their loss is provided?

Strongly agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

Chapter 04 – Climate Change

1 Do you agree with the use of climate impact assessments as a way to ensure developments significantly reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change?

Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

STC agrees with the policy, however it needs to be expanded to shape the overall footprint of homes, businesses and transport towards a community zero carbon target for 2050. Given that most of the homes which will exist in 2050 are already built, this could be helped by policies to incentivise better energy performance in existing homes - perhaps when they interact with the planning system for extensions and improvements. Focusing only on new buildings will not deliver the legally required result

2 Are there any other ways the local plan can address climate change?

Please enter your answer here:

Flexible planning policies to allow climate changing initiatives e.g. solar panels, on street electric car parking

3 Do you agree with the use of climate impact assessments as a way to ensure developments significantly reduce carbon emissions?

Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

STC agrees in principle, however viability of scheme should not be solely determined with this.

4 Are there any other ways the local plan can ensure low carbon developments?

Please enter your answer here:

Subsidise electric buses and good transport links.

Design new developments in such a way that pedestrian links to them are built in (as per STC's NDP

5 Do you agree with our approach to low carbon and renewable energy generation?

Disagree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

There are no proposals. STC thinks that there should be more constructive proposals in this policy, and that thought as to ability of the landscape to produce needs to be considered in tandem with the impact on the landscape.

6 Do you agree with our approach to flood risk?

Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

Permeable surfaces as planning policy

The section on flooding does not identify the area of Sevenoaks most prone to flooding and sewage discharge. The Mill Stream from Millpond Wood to Greatness Quarry floods regularly and carries sewage into the street, and on into the Darent. It is identified by the Environment Agency as part of the River Darent system, yet it is not shown on page 136. This need correcting. The consequence for policies on development and sustainable drainage for northern Sevenoaks also needs to be acknowledged.

7 Do you agree with our approach to sustainable drainage?

Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

8 Is there anything else that should be incorporated into Policy W2 to support sustainable drainage?

Please enter your answer here:

SDC should include that surface water drainage should not put pressure on sewage drainage facilities.

9 Do you agree with our approach to water management including water efficiency measures?

Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

Where possible water should be reused within facilities e.g. for flushing toilets

1 What Design Policies do you think would support the successful delivery of the Strategic Objectives?

Please enter your answer here:

Design review panels that include local communities and town/parish councils, as recommended by the Independent Examiner's report on STC's NDP.

2 Do you think this approach will support the delivery of new well-designed spaces within the District?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

As above, Town and Parish Councils should be involved in this process.

Sevenoaks Town Council's Submission Draft NDP Aim C6 states that "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", and the Independent Examiner has agreed and recommended that STC be involved in this.

3 What criteria do you think should be used for presenting schemes to the Design Review Panel?

Please enter your answer here:

Sensitive location

4 Do you agree that Policy DE3 will help to make optimal use of a potential of a site?

Disagree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

Ref Pinehurst Nursing Home (20/03293/FUL) and Sevenoaks Quarry (Tarmac) (22/00512/OUT) are poor examples of large densities being included in the Outline, and STC therefore doesn't believe this works.

5 What documents should be required to be submitted at outline application stage to establish that the proposed development will be policy compliant?

Please enter your answer here:

Access,
Indicative layout or positioning and height of dwellings

6 Will Policy DE4 help to secure well-designed places?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

It would be helpful for residents to have DWCS acronym explained

7 Will Policy DE4 help new development respect local character?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

8 What size of site should Policy DE4 apply to?

Please enter your answer here:

This depends on the site and STC would recommend: 4+ for urban areas and 10+ for less urban areas.

9 Do you think Policy DE5 will support the aim of national planning policy in delivering development that responds to local character and engages with the local community?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

This should include town and parish councils in order to reflect communities

1 Do you agree that all new developments should have a health impact assessment?

Strongly agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

All developments should have a health impact assessment while acknowledging that there will be differences of how extensive these will need to be depending on how many developments are proposed.

2 How else can the Local Plan support healthy, inclusive and safe communities?

Please enter your answer here:

By requiring all developments to have a health impact assessment on applicable topics

3 Do you agree that all new developments should have a neutral or positive impact on air quality?

Disagree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

STC doesn't understand how this would be possible, as any development will have some level of negative effects via construction, pollution, increase of residents, traffic etc. It does agree that steps should be taken to mitigate the effects however.

4 What other measures could be included to improve air quality in the District?

Please enter your answer here:

5 Do you agree with the policy approach to noise in new developments?

Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

Chapter 07 – Historic Environment

1 Do you think Policy HEN1 meets the Strategic Objectives for Historic Environment?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

STC suggest rewording to read "must not detract" because it may be impossible to enhance the historic environment, so the emphasis should be on at least retaining the environment with nothing to detract from it.

2 Do you think Policy HEN2 will support development that protects and enhances the historic environment?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

STC reiterates its above answer to the previous question, and recommendation that the policy be reworded to state that development proposals "must not detract" from the historic environment.

3 Are there any additional policies that would protect and enhance the historic environment in new development?

No

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

4 Do you think that Policy HEN3 will support sensitively managed change within the historic environment?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

5 Are there any additional policies that would support sensitively managed change in the historic environment?

No

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

6 Do you consider that Policy HEN4 will be adequate in supporting the protection of non-designated archaeological sites?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

7 Are there any additional policies that would support the protection of non-designated archaeological sites?

No

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

8 Do you think the Local List should be expanded to the wider District?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

9 Do you think Policy HEN6 will support a sensitive and successful approach to responding to climate changes and energy efficiency in the historic environment?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

The policy should also take account of sustainable use (not just sustaining the appearance).

10 Are there any additional policies that would support a sensitive and successful approach to responding to climate change and energy efficiency in the historic environment?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

The policy should also include allowing sustainable use.

11 Do you think Policy HEN7 will recognise the value of historic shop fronts and ensure appropriate replacements in historic contexts?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

12 Listed buildings with shopfronts already have statutory protection. Do you think this policy should apply outside conservation areas?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

13 Do you think that Policy HEN8 will support the conservation and enhancement of historic park and gardens in new development?

Not Answered

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

STC considers there to be insufficient detail to comment on without knowing what specific guidance would be.

14 Are there any additional policies that would support the conservation and enhancement of historic parks and gardens in the development proposals?

No

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

Chapter 08 – Natural Environment

1 What could be included in Policy NE1 and design criteria for developments in the AONB?

Please enter your answer here:

2 Do you agree that Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA) should be required for all new large developments?

Agree

3 Is there anything else that should be identified as part of the District's natural landscape (blue green infrastructure network)?

Please enter your answer here:

This policy should include allotments which STCs regard as being included in the blue/green infrastructure and should be protected as so.

4 Do you agree with Policy BW1 that locally designated sites should generally be protected from development?

Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

5 Do you agree with the approach to protecting the Ashdown Forest?

Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

6 Is the 20% biodiversity net gain target appropriate for Sevenoaks District?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

How will the 20% be measured and the policy's success monitored?

Chapter 09 – Infrastructure and Community

1 Should we consider anything else to deliver infrastructure?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

2 We are considering identifying what specific infrastructure will be needed to support large developments. This may prioritise infrastructure types. Do you think this is the right approach?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

Health provision, public transport, resurfacing of roads, and sporting Infrastructure in schools, leisure and recreation spaces are major generators of regular travel. All these types of infrastructure creation or improvement should be developed with active travel as a key element.

3 If we are looking to prioritise infrastructure, what do you consider are the most important types to support growth?

C9 Q3a - Highways & Transport e.g. junctions, sustainable transport:

3

C9 Q3a - Flooding e.g. flooding defences:

9

C9 Q3a - Utilities e.g. gas, water, sewerage:

4

C9 Q3a - Communications e.g. telecommunications and broadband:

8

C9 Q3a - Community Facilities e.g. libraries, leisure centres, sports venues:

7

C9 Q3a - Education e.g. pre-school and nursery schools, primary and secondary education:

2

C9 Q3a - Health and Social Care Facilities e.g. GP surgeries, mental health services:

1

C9 Q3a - Police and Emergency Services Facilities:

5

4 Do you agree that new developments should include open spaces?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

It should be recommended for development applications that an allocation for green space be made which is linked to the size of development.

5 What else can we include to improve open space and recreation in the District?

Please enter your answer here:

6 Do you agree with our approach to Children and Young People Space?

Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

7 Are there any other criteria we should include for Children and Young People Play Spaces?

Please enter your answer here:

On point 3, there should be a presumption in favour of providing a space

8 Do you agree with our approach to enhancing and increasing education provisions?

Strongly Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

9 Are there any other priorities we should include in Policy ED1?

Please enter your answer here:

10 Do you agree with our approach to Sports and Leisure Facilities?

Neither agree or disagree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

11 What else should we include to encourage sports and leisure facilities in the District?

Please enter your answer here:

Allotments,

Reference the bullet point "new educational establishments to include community..." STC requests the addition of wording: "These must comply with sports governing bodies requirements"

12 Do you agree with our approach to protecting community uses?

Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

13 What else can we include to protect community uses?

Please enter your answer here:

14 Are there other areas of the District which have water capacity issues?

Please enter your answer here:

That development shouldnt impact sewage drainage.

15 Do you agree with our approach to water infrastructure?

Neither agree or disagree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space:

Please enter your answer here:

Chapter 10 – Transport

1 Do you agree with our approach to a sustainable movement network?

Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

Public transport should be extended to new development to show how it will be connected, such as bus routes.

2 Is there anything else to facilitate the sustainable movement network we should include in Policy T1?

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

Rail services also need more consideration. Technology and Covid have changed travel patterns, reducing demand for high cost peak services with the potential to make rail travel even more sustainable. But rail services will still be just as important for Sevenoaks and its workers in professional, financial and business services, even if they spend more time working here. Fast and regular access to customers is as important as access to physical City offices. Towns and villages, and the Darent Valley Rail Partnership, have identified active travel access to a range of stations (not just Sevenoaks) as important and this plan should build on the ideas

3 Is it appropriate for walking and cycling to be in the same policy or is it better for them to be in separate policies?

Separate Policies

C10 Q3b:

Ideally cycling & pedestrian routes would be separated as this would be simpler for deliverability.

4 Do you agree with our approach to cycling and walking?

Not Answered

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

See STC recommendations in the STNP.

5 Should we consider anything further to encourage cycling and walking?

Not Answered

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

6 Should we provide less car parking in developments situated in sustainable locations, for example, town centres?

Yes

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

7 Do you agree with our approach to vehicle parking?

Not Answered

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

8 Should we consider anything further to manage vehicle parking?

Not Answered

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

9 Do you agree with our approach to electric charging vehicle points?

Agree

If you wish to explain your answer further, please use this space :

10 Are there any other priorities we should include in Policy T4?

Any other comments?

1 If you have any further comments for the Plan 2040 consultation, please use the space below

Please enter your answer here:

The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan which is hoped to go to Referendum before May 2023 is referenced a few times throughout STC's response (as STC's NDP, or STNP). The document is available with its supporting literature via the following link:
<https://sevenoaksndp.wordpress.com>

Upload Document here:

No file uploaded

Upload Document here:

No file uploaded

Upload Document here:

No file uploaded

Submitted to Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Part 2 November 2023
Submitted on 2024-01-11 17:02:10

About you

Name and Organisation

Please enter your first name:

Georgie

Please enter your surname:

Elliston

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please enter the name of the organisation here:

Sevenoaks Town Council

What is your email address?

Email:

planning@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

How old are you?

I'd prefer not to say

If you live in Sevenoaks District, which Town or Parish do you live in?

Please select from the list:

Sevenoaks Town

Please confirm that you agree to your comments being published and attributed by name and organisation (if applicable)

I confirm that my comments can be published and attributed by my name and organisation

Development Strategy Questions

Which is your preferred option?

None of the above

Please explain your answer

Please explain your answer :

Sevenoaks Town Council (STC) is very mindful of the risks of having a local plan which does not meet governmental housing targets, and is already seeing the difficult consequences of the tilted balance in planning decisions. It is very important to STC that there is a Local Plan in place which allows for managed and predictable development appropriate to the existing community. Sevenoaks Town Council's response is focused on issues relating to the town area only, and STC makes no comment on sites outside of the town or which do not directly impact the infrastructure for the town residents. Therefore, STC has selected "none of the above" as the Town Council appreciates that very significant and impactful developments are proposed elsewhere in the district.

The Town Council supports development on those sites identified in the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan (STNP) and which are included in Option 2 for the town. The very significant development included within the town at the Tarmac Quarry site has been well consulted on over many years, and already has outline planning consent. STC does not support release of green belt to the west of the town at Brittain's Lane or Seal Hollow Road to create new development. STC believes that the Sevenoaks sites included in option 2 - including Sevenoaks Quarry - create appropriate contribution to the housing needs of the district, representing some 20-25% uplift in the population of the town over the life of the Local Plan, in addition to other developments already in the planning process - for instance, the Farmers Site and 136 High Street.

STC believes that the STNP developments sites meet development needs for the Town in context of District strategy - as endorsed overwhelmingly in a public vote.

Are you aware of any additional sites in existing settlements which we have not yet considered?

Yes

Please let us know about any other suitable sites :

STC would use Sevenoaks Town Council's STN(D) Masterplan Working Group Minutes 03-07-2024. Sevenoaks Town Council's STN(D) Masterplan Working Group Minutes 03-07-2024 sites within the Town area, such as the Farmers Pub Site on London Road, Edwards Electrical Site on High Street, former Tesco site on High Street, No 7 Pembroke Road. These sites alone represent some 200 possible homes as yet undelivered but with planning permission.

Site or Policy

Would you like to respond to a Site or Policy?

Site (text version)

Policy

Which chapter is the Policy you wish to respond to in?

Please select Policy chapter :

Chapter 10 - Transport

Chapter 2 - Housing Choice for All

Which Policy do you want to respond to?

Housing Density and Intensification

Policy H1 - Housing Mix (Strategic Policy)

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

The comments on housing mix are sensible, and appear to show some recognition of the need for efficient use of the housing stock, by providing mix which allows growing families to 'rightsized' and older people to 'downsize'. However, the plan focuses on new demand for homes specifically designed for older people, not addressing adequately the pent-up demand for attractive 'downsizing' options by existing residents under - occupying large homes. This is an important issue in efficient use of housing stock which the plan needs to address as people over 65 are expected to make up 26% of the population by 2040. Existing flats are too small for many wishing to downsize. Market failure to provide what is required is blocking better use of larger family homes. The plan cover technical adaptations for older people which is welcome, but this isn't the main blockage.

The plan's reference to retirement housing 'accessible, adaptable ... and in established neighbourhoods is important. But STC recognises that family support for older people in an area where labour mobility is high is unrealistic for many. Support services for older people in an area of high housing cost are problematic too, and the plan needs to recognise this. A solution to this is mentioned in the draft plan as 'co-housing schemes' This needs developing to include mixed communities of market and affordable homes for older people, which promote mutual help and support. The example of Rockdale in Sevenoaks, a community initiative which has developed over 50 years as a housing association with market housing alongside, is worth replicating if at all possible.

Policy H2 - Provision of Affordable Housing (Strategic Policy)

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Agree

Please let us know your thoughts :

The biggest contribution to this over the plan period for Sevenoaks Town will come from the Sevenoaks Quarry site. It is essential that affordable housing is delivered from the start of the development, and that it is distributed through the new community - not relegated to a corner as happened at the Ryewood development.

But it is also essential that affordable homes are created throughout the town, to ensure a balanced mix. This can only happen if the District Council is prepared to;

- take a robust approach to developers who over value land to claim exemption from affordable housing provision
- apply the affordable housing policies to development on any land which it owns, either for developments it undertakes itself or in partnership with others, and not seek to avoid this vital obligation.

STC welcomes the proposal to graduate the requirement for affordable housing as a proportion of the overall scheme. However, it is the experience of STC that, in the town where it is very expensive to build and retail values are very high, developers almost universally demonstrate that it is not financially viable to provide affordable housing. This new policy continues to allow, or encourage, developers to demonstrate that affordable homes are "not viable". This is regrettable.

The policy outlines a number of circumstances in which financial contributions will be acceptable in lieu of bricks and mortar. It does not say how this will

be used. It is not appropriate to use the town as a residential area for affordable and social housing.

Sevenoaks Town Council's STN Planning Working Group Minutes 03-07-2024

Policy H4 - Housing for Older People

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Agree

Do you have any further comments?:

STC considers there to be a significant need for high quality housing for older people in the town – please refer to comments provided under Policy H1.

Policy H7 - Housing Density and Intensification

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

As a policy this will be necessary to accommodate increasing housing need. However, the policy fails to set out how the residential amenity and character of existing settlements - in Sevenoaks, Swanley, Edenbridge and elsewhere - will be protected as densities are doubled or trebled. The attractions for net zero objectives of residential areas which don't generate high levels of vehicle use are clear, but to promote density increases in existing housing areas of up to 150 dph will be highly disruptive and too high for the nature of the Town. This would change the character of Sevenoaks as a market town to an unacceptable degree.

Options to get these sort of densities include garden grabbing, multiple occupancy of individual plots, or sprinkling block of flats four to six stories high across streets of houses. Already the 'densification' policy in Victorian, Edwardian and 'garden city' neighbourhoods in Sevenoaks is causing serious damage to residential amenity and changing existing character for the worse.

Applications for schemes which are of significantly higher density than neighbouring properties must only be permitted where the infrastructure (roads, sewers) can take the capacity and where existing communities are not substantially altered by the development.

Bus frequency has been used to determine higher density locations. However, bus services have changes substantially in the last 12 months, and the Regulation 18 document does not say when analysis was undertaken. Many bus stops in Sevenoaks are very poorly served at present.

The plan should spell out how this densification will be controlled if residents of our main towns and larger villages are to accept it as a reasonable approach. The investment in Residential Area Character Assessments made over the last 20 years needs to be engaged - and specified in policy.

Policy GT1 - Provision for the Gypsy and Traveller Community (Strategic Policy)

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

Transit pitches are required, in collaboration with the traveller community, to avoid conflict between travelling and permanent communities. Policy GT2 sets out criteria for assessing proposed sites but neither GT1 or GT2 make any proposal for making such sites available.

Comment on another Policy or Site Housing Choice for All

Would you like to respond to another site or Policy?

A Policy in a different Chapter

Chapter 3 - Employment and Economy

What policy would you like to comment on?

Hot Food Takeaways and Evening Economy

Policy EMP2 - Delivering New Employment Land

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

The three sites on the Otford Road site is already heavily developed and a major opportunity in the existing town centre. The Town Council supports mixed development here. The two Otford Road sites (one right across the border with Otford) are both in the Green Belt. The Town Council awaits with interest to see the exceptional circumstances which might justify their release from Green Belt designation. Both are on the edge of Sevenoaks town, and close to AONB countryside.

Policy EMP4 - Flexible and Creative Workspace and the Co-location of Use

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

The Town Council welcomes the inclusion of this concept in the Local Plan. Given changes in working patterns, and the importance of knowledge based business services in the Sevenoaks Town economy, this can help support not only new businesses but also those whose economic activity is centred on London but who work from Sevenoaks.

The concept of workplace is changing, and our approach to economic development in Sevenoaks needs to change with it. Changes in working patterns for Sevenoaks high skilled professional and business service residents is generating new opportunities for local support. The town centre must play an important part in this - including support in the form of leisure services including a swimming pool and gym; the Town Council believes these should remain as integral parts of a successful town centre strategy.

Policy TLC1 - Town and Local Centres

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Agree

Do you have any further comments?:

Policy SEV1 - Sevenoaks Town Centre

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Agree

Do you have any further comments?:

Sevenoaks Town Council is pleased to see the Local Plan incorporating the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan and supporting the economic wellbeing of the town.

STNP guidance on development sites is only a small aspect of the neighbourhood plan, which also focused on widening the leisure offer and developing a Cultural Quarter, improving active travel, building on the town's sporting excellence (much of which is in the town centre, protecting and enhancing landmarks and views, improve the market facilities and support the town to reach zero carbon).

As Policy SEV1 notes, also important is the need to strengthen connections to Knole Park, and delivery of retail outside of the traditional Town Centre.

At para. 3.40 of the Local Plan consultation document, a table summarises Local Centres across the district. Whilst this is an accurate assessment of local centres currently, the Plan needs to acknowledge that there will be radical expansion of Northern Sevenoaks which will need to have its own Local Centre in order to be a successful community. Sevenoaks Quarry site will deliver a whole new neighbourhood throughout the life of the Local Plan, and a Policy is needed to ensure the delivery of local retail outside of the traditional Town Centre to accommodate these new residents. Pharmacy, post office, groceries and a catering will be important to the creation of this community which will be at some distance from the traditional Town Centre of Sevenoaks.

As part of the STNP implementation strategy, the Town Council will be shortly be commissioning a Masterplan for Sevenoaks which will benefit to the Local Plan process. It is planned that this Masterplan will examine the Town Centre and the Local Centres at St John's and Tubbs Hill.

The Town Council welcomes the policy framework for Sevenoaks Town Centre, and recognises that it will develop further as the centre of gravity of the town is shifted north by the Sevenoaks Quarry development. The triangle between the High Street, the Station, and the Quarry development - together with the intermediate neighbourhood commercial centres - will need to be looked at in the Masterplan with regards to the creation of a new local centre, on which STC looks forward to working with the District Council.

Policy TLC2 - Town Centres- Hot Food Takeaways and Evening Economy

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

Comment on another Policy or Site Employment and Economy

Would you like to respond to another Policy or Site?

A Policy in a different chapter

Chapter 4 - Climate Change

Which Policy would you like to comment on?

Sustainable Drainage

Policy CC1 - Mitigating and Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

The Town Council supports the approach of the key strategic challenges, but would like to see an additional theme included in this chapter. As KCC has noted in its response, the Consultation draft does not deal with waste management, which is a key issue for the County Council in the context of additional housing, and also for Sevenoaks carbon footprint.

Because Sevenoaks households generate such a high level of unrecycled waste - much of which goes to CO2 producing incineration - there is a genuine need for this Local Plan to develop a strategy to re-use, reduce and recycle waste. The need to protect and expand initiatives like Abacus, whose household goods recycling site is listed as a housing development opportunity, should be recognised. Innovations in collection and disposal by SDC and KCC will be needed to reduce both operating cost and carbon footprint if the community's overall zero carbon objectives are to be met.

Kent County Council also points out in its response that this Local Plan needs to encourage both modal shift to active travel, and reduction in incentives to travel long distances to achieve climate impact objectives. The Town Council strongly supports this view.

In addition to reducing Sevenoaks District Council's (SDC) own Carbon footprint (Chapter 4, paragraph 4.4), the Local Plan is an opportunity to embed structural and behavioural change more widely, particularly when data shown on Page 148 of the consultation document demonstrates that 80% of local carbon emissions come from transport and domestic sources. Efficient new builds will be important, but behavioural change around movement is essential, as are initiatives to permit, encourage and finance retrofitting of existing stock.

Policy W1 - Flood Risk

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

This flood risk policy needs to account for the state of existing storm and foul drains. There may be a need to invest in SUDS outside of developments to cope with existing problems. In Sevenoaks Town area, there are significant flooding issues related not to storm water floods but foul drain overflow. Continued building uphill and upstream of the known pinchpoints risks major health hazards. Where watercourses have been canalised, there are increasing pressures on the dated manmade drainage systems.

Policy W2 - Sustainable Drainage

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

The policies on sustainable drainage are supported by the Town Council. STC would like reassurance that they will be interpreted at least as strongly as policy L2 of the STNP, which says that 'Development proposals will be expected to provide appropriate drainage infrastructure, in order not to overbear the existing network and to avoid difficulties with local water supplies, sewerage and sewage treatment and waste disposal'.

The area of Sevenoaks most often affected by flooding and sewage discharge is the Watercress Stream from Millpond Wood to Greatness Quarry floods regularly and carries sewage into the street, into domestic gardens and on into the Darent. It is identified by the Environment Agency as part of the River Darent system, yet it does not seem to feature in the map on page 156. This needs correcting. The consequence of this existing problem for policies on development and sustainable drainage for northern Sevenoaks also needs to be acknowledged.

Would you like to respond to another Policy or Site?

A Policy in a different Chapter

Chapter 5 - Design

Please select a policy to comment on

Design Review Panel

Policy DE1 - Design Review Panel

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

The Town Council looks forward to collaborating on the Design Review Panel, which is also required under the STNP for major planning applications* or proposals on sites within sensitive locations, with engagement from the Town Council.

*This is defined as 10+ dwellings, where the site is over 0.5Ha and/or where a floorspace of over 1,000sqm is proposed.

Comment on another site or policy Design

Would you like to respond to another Policy or Site?

A policy in a different chapter

Chapter 6 - Health and Wellbeing

Please select a policy to comment on

Health and Wellbeing

Policy HW1 - Health and Wellbeing

What are your thoughts on this policy?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

The Town Council strongly supports the priorities for active travel, exercise, clean air, and reduction in noise.

Given the expected increase in average age of Sevenoaks residents, the benefits of co-housing developments where older residents can help look after each other, reducing isolation, and reducing the burden on the adult social care system, should be recognised in this policy.

The Local Plan does not appear to set out means of delivering much-needed primary healthcare in Sevenoaks Town, where access to a GP is among the worst in the country.

Comment on another site or policy Health and Wellbeing

Would you like to respond to another policy or site?

A policy in a different chapter

Chapter 7 - Historic Environment

What policy would you like to comment on?

Shopfronts

Policy HEN1 - Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment

What are your thoughts on this Policy?

Do you have any further comments?:

Sevenoaks town contains a large number of historic assets, both Listed and locally listed. Listed assets are not only buildings but also features such as original gas lamp standards. Locally listed assets, include street furniture, railings, sewer vents, post boxes, walls, water troughs and fountains.as well as buildings. All of the above give the town its distinct historic character and need to be conserved. Development proposals affecting Listed and locally listed buildings and assets should demonstrate that their historical importance has been taken into account and preserve and enhance any new development.

Policy HEN6 - Shopfronts

What are your thoughts on this Policy

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

Sevenoaks Town Council opposes internally illuminated signs in Conservation Areas, as they increase the impact of light pollution and are considered unsympathetic to the character and heritage of the area. A policy stating this was adopted by the Planning Committee on 27th June 2022.

Comment on another site or policy Historic Environment

Would you like to respond to another Policy or Site?

A Policy in a different chapter

Chapter 8 - Natural Environment

Which Policy would you like to comment on?

Landscape and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Policy NE1 - Landscape and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

What are your thoughts on this Policy

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

The Town Council supports the policies outlined, and would like to see the STNP policies on protecting and extending hedges, and on wildlife porous boundaries adopted beyond Sevenoaks town. The policies should not be confined to AONBs. Wildlife in the rest of the countryside and in towns and villages is just as important.

Comment on another site or policy Natural Environment

Would you like to respond to another site or Policy?

A Policy in a different chapter

Chapter 9 - Infrastructure and Community

Please select a policy that you would like to comment on

Utilities and Digital Infrastructure

Policy IN1 - Infrastructure Delivery

What are your thoughts on this Policy

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

The Town council notes with concern Kent County Council's observations on access to CIL for the strategic infrastructure investments which are its responsibility. Funding for schools, adult social care, and sustainable transport will all be crucial if the number of homes in Sevenoaks town is to grow by over 20%. So too will investment in health and drainage. The issues raised by KCC must be resolved before major developments proceed.

Transport in the town and the STNP Masterplan Working Group Minutes 03-07-2024 in a sustainable way is essential. Beyond the redesign of the Bat & Ball road junction, the walking and cycling infrastructure proposed by Tarmac for the site must be integrated into the infrastructure for the wider town, linking up with the routes contained in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Social Infrastructure commitments - like the new primary school as part of the Greatness Quarry development should be guaranteed by the mechanisms in the Local Plan. So too should improved healthcare provision in the northern part of the town, either with a new surgery or by developing Sevenoaks Hospital as a hub.

Utilities and hard infrastructure needs include the immediate priority to stop the frequent flooding in the Greatness area, where storm overspill carries sewage into the streets. Until this is dealt with, the adopted STNP policies should mean that further development upstream from this area and adding to the load on drainage and sewage should be paused until it is resolved.

Policy OS1 - Open Space and Recreation

What are your thoughts on this Policy

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

Green and Blue Infrastructure will in part be provided by the Greatness Quarry development, but as densities rise in the rest of Sevenoaks informal and formal recreation open space will come under pressure. The plan should specifically recognise the need to preserve informal green open space within the main settlements where density is expected to rise.

Policy SL1 - Sports and Leisure Facilities

What are your thoughts on this Policy

Neutral

Do you have any further comments?:

STC is in the process of revising its sports strategy for the town to ensure that facilities have capacity and quality to met growing needs, particularly in light of planned population increases, and will work closely with SDC on the development and delivery of the strategy within the town in the coming years.

STC agrees that existing sports and leisure facilities should be retained and improved, and notes that capacity will need to increase to reflect growth. Facilities also need to be able to evolve to meet changing needs, such as increased involvement of girls, and changes in sporting appetite, for example the growth of Padel.

STC notes that the town already has a significant unmet need for high quality sports complex to serve successful rugby, hockey and basketball club. Within the town boundary, there are limitations of space availability in the provision of new pitches and facilities.

STC supports the ambition of the policy to retain existing sport and leisure facilities and to ensure that new facilities are created to the highest possible standards and with care for infrastructure, accessibility and employment. STC remains neutral on the policy as a whole since large, impactful sporting infrastructure is proposed in areas of the district outside of the town which it would be inappropriate to comment on.

Policy COM1 - Retention of Community Uses

What are your thoughts on this Policy

Agree

Do you have any further comments?:

STC supports the policy aims of ensuring that community facilities and services are not lost through development or change of use, as well as the ambition to support new local series and facilities through the Local Plan.

STC notes that land East of Sevenoaks Town Centre is being promoted for 300 new homes with no comment on the retention of the sports, library and cultural facilities currently on the site. These facilities must be assured long term as part of a successful, vibrant town centre and community.

Similarly, STC notes that the Abacus Furniture warehouse forms part of a site put forward for redevelopment, a community-focussed service which it hopes to see retained in the town.

Policy UD1 - Utilities and Digital Infrastructure

What are your thoughts on this Policy

Not Answered

The Town Council notes the comment by KCC on Digital Infrastructure - that the Local Plan should be aiming for full fibre. Gigabit capable access to all of Sevenoaks should be the Local Plan objective.

Comment on another site or policy Infrastructure and Community

Would you like to respond to another site or Policy?

A Policy in a different chapter

Chapter 10 - Transport

Please select a Policy that you would like to comment on

Vehicle Parking

Policy T1 - Sustainable Movement Network

What are your thoughts on this Policy

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

While this policy talks about creating bus terminals, cycle routes, and EV charging network, there is no reference to how that will be delivered if the market conditions mean that there are no buses.

Policy T2 - Sustainable Movement

What are your thoughts on this Policy

Agree

Do you have any further comments?:

STC supports the policy aim stated in para 10.6 of facilitating sustainable movement across the district and not be reliant on private vehicles. The policy could be more ambitious in the delivery of infrastructure to encourage use of transport other than private vehicles, through ambitious cycle route delivery, highway reconfiguration and support for 20mph limits in urban spaces.

Sevenoaks Town Council supports the policy objectives in sustainable movement, including those to:

- improve air quality and encourage sustainable modes of transport
- support improved public transport
- encourage developers to work together on transport provision
- create interchanges between transport modes, especially at Sevenoaks and Bat & Ball stations and in Sevenoaks town
- support walking and wheeling routes within new development as well as links to the routes being implemented under the LCWIP to deliver a wider network
- improving electric vehicle charging capacity, which in Sevenoaks is lagging behind local need.

One additional contribution to this policy framework which the Council has considered is e-bike sharing and rental schemes; the Town Council would like to see this as part of a strategy to address the topographic challenges in Sevenoaks.

Policy T3 - Vehicle Parking

What are your thoughts on this Policy

Agree

Do you have any further comments? :

STC would like to see the policy improved by promoting developments which make private vehicles less dominant in the street scene of new developments, through underground or screened parking. New developments should also be opportunities to remove dominance of private vehicles in the movements around sites (through lower speed limits, shared surfaces etc.) in line with the movement hierarchy embedded in Policy T2, as well as through design which makes active travel the easiest choice.

New developments should, wherever possible, promote car sharing, car clubs and cycle/ electric bikes schemes as alternatives or complements to private vehicle ownership.

New developments should ensure that spaces are available for the safe parking of delivery vehicles, given the shift to online shopping and home delivery.

Would you like to respond to another site or Policy?

Don't wish to comment on any other sites or policies

Baseline Sites

Which area is the site you wish to respond to in?

You can return to this page to comment on further sites:
Sevenoaks

Sevenoaks Sites

Which site would you like to comment on?

HO29 - Brittain's Lane (Option 1)

EM3 - Otford Road Depot, Otford Road, Sevenoaks

What are your thoughts on this site?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

Sevenoaks Town Council notes that this has been earmarked for employment, and that development of the site would require its release from the Green Belt. This would require very special circumstances to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt, such as provision of recreational/sports facilities – which the Town Council would recommend as an appropriate use of the site.

The STNP and SDC's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) both identify the need for a direct, off-road cycle path between Bat and Ball Station and Dunton Green Station, traversing the land north of the nature reserve. This site should be explored as the eastern end access to such a route.

The STNP also seeks the creation of an eastern entrance to the nature reserve in order to give the many current and future residents of northern and eastern Sevenoaks safe and easy access to this important green-blue landscape. This social infrastructure benefit should be sought and explored in relation to this site, especially as the site is currently in public ownership.

HO1 - Pintetops, 5 Crownfields, Sevenoaks

What are your thoughts on this site?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

This site is not identified in the STNP and is an urban infill proposal. STC does not object to the principal, and would seek to ensure that the density is suitable to the location and site constraints given the steep topography and difficult access. There are also concerns about water run-off and flooding in this location, which would need to be mitigated should any development take place.

HO2 - Abacus Furniture, Greatness Lane, Sevenoaks

What are your thoughts on this site?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

The redevelopment of Abacus Furniture and the adjacent flats would represent important regeneration in this area, and will benefit from the redevelopment proposed at the nearby quarry site. STC is mindful of the social value of the Abacus furniture warehouse and associated social projects delivered on the site, which benefit lower income families in this area, and would hope to see these continued.

HO5 - Land at Cramptons Road, Sevenoaks

What are your thoughts on this site?

Not Answered

Do you have any further comments?:

In particular, this site has good potential to be used for specialist housing projects for older citizens, and make a contribution to green spaces in this densely developed neighbourhood. There is already some informal community use of the green space here.

It should be noted that the railway footbridge which is essential to connectivity between neighbourhoods, and which needs investment in accessibility, lands just to the north of the site. The site could also be successfully connected for pedestrians to the Bat and Ball Station and Community Centre to the south.

MX1 - Sevenoaks Station and Car Park, Morewood Close, Sevenoaks

What are your thoughts on this site?

Agree

Do you have any further comments?:

Sevenoaks Town Council recognises that this site is underused and underutilised.

Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan (STNP) identifies the station area as offering a 'significant opportunity for development that will transform the sense of arrival into Sevenoaks and could establish a new urban quarter for the town'.

It continues that a 'scale typically four to six storeys' is appropriate.

There is an opportunity in this location to create a mixed use, sustainable scheme which can support the existing community as well as provide new accommodation and make much needed improvements to the public realm. STC welcomes the development brief vision of coherence for the area and 'exemplar public realm'.

STC is concerned, however, that the Draft Local Plan 'promotes' development of 184 units at the site but includes a Development Brief for 400+ units with several buildings of 8-12 storeys. This latter configuration would be out of keeping with the adopted policy of STNP and character of the town as a whole, placing towerblocks behind the Quarry Cottages, as well as affecting views from the Conservation Areas. STC would therefore oppose such a proposal.

As per the STNP, STC would expect to be included in the development of any plan for such major development, via Design Review. It should be noted that, as part of its STNP implementation strategy, STC will shortly be commissioning a Masterplan to encompass Town Centre, St Johns and station quarters.

The Town Council regrets the lack of reference made in the plan to an integrated transport hub, and requests that this be added. Without, it is a significant missed opportunity in this critical location. The only reference to transport modes other than rail is car parking, with no mention for walking, cycling or properly integrated buses or taxis. The statement for this site makes no reference to sustainable development, nor to sustainable transport.

STC agrees that the Sevenoaks Railway Station site needs a comprehensive approach, not just for housing and commercial development but also 'investment in enhancing public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure provision' (as commented by Kent County Council (KCC)).

STC believes this is a key site where District Council should work with KCC, landowners and STC to "identify and prioritise development sites in locations where it is possible to walk and cycle to key facilities, and where necessary improvements can be delivered in accordance with design standards such as LTN 1/20 for Cycling." STC endorses KCC's support of "allocations where public transport services are commercially viable or have the prospect of becoming commercially viable with 'up front' developer contributions to improve routes and services." (Quotes as made by KCC).

MX2 - Land East of High Street, Sevenoaks

What are your thoughts on this site?

Agree

Do you have any further comments?:

This site is only partially identified in the STNP as a development site, and currently provides important cultural and leisure facilities for the town. It identifies the western elements of it as suitable location for development, with the identified advantages of providing active frontages on Suffolk Way and Buckhurst Lane, and a possibility of providing housing and an indoor market.

The site proposed by SDC encompasses the existing leisure facilities and library/ museum/ visual arts space. Policy COM2 of the STNP is the promotion and development of a cultural quarter in the town centre together with an arts and cultural strategy. The area identified in MX2 is included in the area for the proposed cultural quarter in the STNP.

It seeks new cultural facilities and a strategy for improving and animating pedestrian links between cultural venues.

In considering the redevelopment of site MX2, STC considers the site to offer an opportunity to refresh leisure facilities and deliver the cultural quarter, deliver much needed affordable housing as well as a rare opportunity to open up the connection between the town and Knole Park.

Retention of leisure uses in the Town Centre is vital, for the existing community and in consideration of a town likely to grow by some 20-25% during the life of the Local Plan. Leisure and cultural facilities must be considered as part of a strategy for an attractive and successful Town Centre. STC would

Sevenoaks Town Council's STNP / Masterplan Working Group Minutes 03-07-2024
therefore be proposed to Sevenoaks Town Council for consideration. They must be retained in some capacity within the Town order to benefit this growing community centre.

As part of the STNP implementation strategy, STC will shortly be commissioning a Master Plan for the Town Centre area in which this sits and would welcome further discussion as this progresses.

HO6 - School House, Oak Lane & Hopgarden Lane, Sevenoaks

What are your thoughts on this site?

Neutral

Do you have any further comments?:

Sevenoaks Town Council does not have objections to HO6, however would like to know the intentions for the site.

HO7 - Johnsons, Oak Lane & Hopgarden Lane, Sevenoaks

What are your thoughts on this site?

Neutral

Do you have any further comments?:

Sevenoaks Town Council does not have objections to HO7, however would like to know the intentions for the site.

MX3 - South Park, Sevenoaks

What are your thoughts on this site?

Strongly agree

Do you have any further comments?:

This is a very significant town centre site which is identified in the STNP for its development potential.

The STNP takes a holistic view on the redevelopment of this site for not only delivery of new homes, but also for the improvement of public spaces, the setting of the Stag Theatre, and creation of active frontages to London Road and South Park. It proposes a total building height of three storeys plus a fourth storey set back from the frontage.

Development will need to respond to the historic development pattern, materials and character of the area, which forms a prominent gateway to the Town Centre.

The site sits within the STNP Cultural Quarter area, and links should be forged to connect to related spaces.

The STNP aspires to a new public space to serve the theatre and as a setting for the new ground floor usage. Development should also improve the setting of the rear of the theatre and youth club.

STC notes that, should the population of the town increase by the 20-25% anticipated by the developments foreseen in the Local Plan, the need for cultural, recreation and leisure facilities will increase accordingly and co-location with the theatre/ cinema/ youth club has obvious synergy.

STC notes that the car park behind this site is in the ownership of SDC and its difficult access and layout could be considered in the scheme.

As part of the STNP implementation strategy, STC will shortly be commissioning a Master Plan for the Town Centre area in which this sits and would welcome further discussion as this progresses.

HO9 - Land adjacent to Seal Hollow Road, Sevenoaks

What are your thoughts on this site?

Disagree

Do you have any further comments?:

This site is not included in the STNP, and controversial for local residents. It is steeply sloping and narrow, with difficult access directly off Seal Hollow Road without creating additional traffic hazards.

The site acts as a buffer between the Green Belt/ AONB/SSSI to the east and the developed area to the west.

The Town Council opposes development of 16 homes on HO9 on the following grounds:

Severn-Teme Town Council's STMP District Masterplan Working Group Minutes

- * It is the only remaining Green Belt land separating Knole Park, an AONB and Site of Special Scientific Interest, and the built edge of Sevenoaks town
- * It has an established, clearly defined boundary and there are no “exceptional circumstances” as required by paragraph 145 of the NPPF
- * The separation role of this strip is mirrored further south on Seal Hollow Road by Vine Paddocks, on the other side of Seal Hollow Road, and eroding the boundary at HO9 would undermine the whole relationship between Knole Park and the built area.

In addition development on HO9 will increase traffic along Seal Hollow Road at an already dangerous point. The road is getting busier as the schools at Trinity, Weald of Kent and Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys grow in size. If access were to be via the entrance to Knole Golf Club, this would add pressure to an already difficult junction.

MX4 - Sevenoaks Quarry, Bat and Ball Road, Sevenoaks

What are your thoughts on this site?

Agree

Do you have any further comments?:

This development has been consulted on repeatedly over last 10 years, starting with the Northern Masterplan and now embedded in the adopted STNP. It has achieved outline planning permission.

HO29 - Brittain's Lane, Sevenoaks (Option 1)

What are your thoughts on this site?

Strongly disagree

Do you have any further comments?:

STC notes that this site, included in Option 1 and 3, is not considered appropriate for development.

The site is strongly performing Green Belt, AONB, is adjacent to an SSSI and ancient woodland, highly valued locally and with difficult access. Similarly to HO9, it is highly controversial for local residents, and additionally, it is not one of the 13 potential development sites identified in the STNP. As previously stated, the Town Council believes that these 13 sites – publicly endorsed via Public Referendum, meet the development and housing needs for the Town.

STC does not consider it appropriate for development and cannot support the release of well-used Green Belt and agricultural land to increase the size of the Town. The draft Local Plan already identifies other Tier 1 sites in which to create some 2000 new homes in Sevenoaks Town area, already a very significant uplift in the population of the town, and the further loss of Green Belt is unnecessary and inappropriate.

This location has traditionally made up the border of the Green Belt, and its value established and reinforced by its multiple unsuccessful planning applications and appeals. The border should be protected.

Sites - file upload:
No file uploaded

Would you like to respond to another site or policy?

Would you like to respond to another site or policy?

Policy

Further comments

Do you have any further comment you would like to make?

Please type here:

Connectivity (P 23): An aspect of Connectivity affecting Sevenoaks not mentioned in this section is the high number of students (several hundred) coming to Sevenoaks secondary schools from Swanley and further north, which affects traffic and transport needs

Healthcare, Education and Retail (P 25): Schools identified seem to leave out major private schools (eg Sevenoaks School, Wathamstow Hall) which play a major role in the town. They help to ensure that education is Sevenoaks' biggest business sector.

The Town Council recognises that the Sevenoaks Quarry Development is the most significant change for the town over the next 20 years, changing the shape of Sevenoaks, providing opportunities for growth and shifting its centre of gravity to the north.

STC is unable to see any policies in the Draft Consultation which create the 'Connectivity Corridors' linking Sevenoaks to Edenbridge, Westerham and New Ash Green. However desirable these might be it is more realistic to recognise that the major settlements in the District face in different directions in terms of shopping, entertainment and employment, with Sevenoaks focused on links to London, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells

Sevenoaks Town Council's STNP / Masterplan Working Group Minutes 03-07-2024

Infrastructure Delivery Plan: The Town Council would like to comment in addition on the November 2023 note on its Infrastructure Delivery Plan which accompanies the Consultation. https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/file/3826/infrastructure_delivery_plan_november_2023_statement
In the light of KCC's comments this is an important issue.

The Town Council is surprised to find no reference in this document to rebuilding the Bat & Ball junction where the A25 and the A225 meet. SDC has set a rebuild of this junction as a condition of development of Greatness Quarry, KCC has advised on design and Tarmac has agreed to pay for it. STC cannot understand why it is not in the IDP.

STC is similarly surprised to find no reference to Thames Water, which is responsible for sewers on the north side of Sevenoaks. These have seen sewage spills during heavy rain into Greatness streets twice in the last year, and further development – of which there are 700 units proposed in addition to 950 from the Sevenoaks Quarry – upstream of this area should be conditional on investment to increase sewer capacity.

Please see attached collated copy of all STC responses as agreed by the Planning Committee on 8th January 2024. This is identical to responses submitted and attached for reference only.

Further comments file upload:
STC Reg18Pt2 Response 08-01-24.pdf was uploaded

Further comments file upload:
No file uploaded

Further comments file upload:
No file uploaded

Further comments file upload:
No file uploaded

Further comments file upload:
No file uploaded

please upload your files here:
No file uploaded

upload :
No file uploaded

upload:
No file uploaded

upload:
No file uploaded

Mailing list

Do you want to be added to the mailing list?

Yes

Please enter your email :
planning@sevenoakstown.gov.uk