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# Cabinet

## Supplementary Agenda Agenda Item 7 – Appendices A & D

	Pages	Contact
7. Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan	(Pages 1 - 86)	Hannah Gooden Tel: 01732 227178



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# **Report on Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 - 2038**

**An Examination undertaken for Sevenoaks District Council with the support of Sevenoaks Town Council on the June 2022 submission draft version of the Plan.**

Independent Examiner: David Hogger BA MSc MRTPI MCIHT

Date of Report: 21 December 2022

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### **Main Findings - Executive Summary**

From my examination of the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan/STNP) and its supporting documentation including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to the policy modifications set out in this report, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, Sevenoaks Town Council;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Designated Area as identified in Figures 2.1 (aerial image) and 2.2 (plan) of the document on pages 24 and 29;
- The Plan specifies the period to which it is to take effect – 2020 – 2038; and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to Referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements.

I have considered whether the referendum area should extend beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates and have concluded that it should not.

## **1. Introduction and Background**

### **Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 - 2038**

- 1.1 The Neighbourhood Plan encompasses the centre of Sevenoaks town, which displays an attractive and historic character, with the Plan area including significant pockets of primarily residential development. There are several important areas of countryside and open space, including Knole Park (National Trust) which lies to the south-east of the Plan area, and these provide an attractive setting to the town. Sevenoaks is close to the M25 and M26 and enjoys frequent train services to London. The combination of these characteristics contributes to making the town an attractive place to live.
- 1.2 The task of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan for Sevenoaks was first considered in April 2013 and the first significant involvement of residents was in March - June 2014 when a Town wide survey was conducted.

### The Independent Examiner

- 1.3 As the Plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan by Sevenoaks District Council (SDC), with the agreement of Sevenoaks Town Council (STC).
- 1.4 I am a chartered town planner and former government Planning Inspector, with extensive experience in the preparation, examination and implementation of development plans and other planning policy documents. I am an independent examiner, and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the draft Plan.

### The Scope of the Examination

- 1.5 As the independent examiner I am required to produce this report and recommend either:
  - (a) that the neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum without changes; or
  - (b) that modifications are made and that the modified neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum; or
  - (c) that the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to a referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 1.6 The scope of the examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) ('the 1990 Act'). The examiner must consider:
  - Whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions;
  - Whether the plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ('the 2004 Act'). These are:
    - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the local planning authority;
    - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
    - it specifies the period during which it has effect;
    - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'; and
    - it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area.

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- Whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum.
  - Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ('the 2012 Regulations').
- 1.7 I have considered only matters that fall within Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, with one exception. That is the requirement that the Plan is compatible with the Human Rights Convention.

### The Basic Conditions

- 1.8 The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:
- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
  - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
  - Be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations; (under retained EU law)<sup>1</sup>; and
  - Meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.
- 1.9 Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the making of the plan does not breach the requirement of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Approach to the Examination

### Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 The Development Plan for this part of Sevenoaks District, not including documents relating to excluded minerals and waste development, is the Core Strategy 2011 and the Allocations and Development Management Plan 2015. Work has commenced on a replacement Local Plan for Sevenoaks, but it is not anticipated that this document will be adopted until 2024. I am not aware of any compelling reason for delaying the preparation of the STNP until that time.

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<sup>1</sup> The existing body of environmental regulation is retained in UK law.

<sup>2</sup> This revised Basic Condition came into force on 28 December 2018 through the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018.



- 2.2 The planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) offers guidance on how this policy should be implemented. A revised NPPF was published in July 2021 and all references in this report are to the July 2021 NPPF and its accompanying PPG.

### Submitted Documents

- 2.3 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, including those submitted which comprise:
- the submission draft Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 -2038 (dated June 2022);
  - Figure 2.1 on page 24 (aerial image) and figure 2.2 on page 29 (plan) of the Plan which identify the area to which the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan relates;
  - the Consultation Statement, June 2022;
  - the Basic Conditions Statement, June 2022;
  - all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation;
  - the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Assessment (SDC, May 2021) and the SEA Environmental Report prepared by AECOM (April 2022); and
  - the responses from both SDC and STC of 15 November 2022 to my questions dated 25 October 2022.

These documents can be viewed on the District Council's web site.<sup>3</sup>

### Site Visit

- 2.4 I made an unaccompanied site visit to the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 13 November 2022 to familiarise myself with the locality, and visit relevant sites and areas referenced in the Plan and evidential documents.

### Written Representations with or without Public Hearing

- 2.5 This examination has been dealt with by written representations. I considered hearing sessions to be unnecessary as the consultation responses clearly articulated the objections to the Plan and presented arguments for and against the Plan's suitability to proceed to a referendum.

### Modifications

- 2.6 Where necessary, I have recommended modifications to the Plan (**PMs**) in this report in order that it meets the Basic Conditions and other legal

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<sup>3</sup> [Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan | Sevenoaks District Council](#)

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requirements. For ease of reference, I have listed these modifications separately in the Appendix.

### 3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights

#### Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 3.1 The STNP has been prepared and submitted for examination by STC, which is a qualifying body for an area that was designated by SDC in December 2013.
- 3.2 It is the only Neighbourhood Plan for the Town and does not relate to land outside the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

#### Plan Period

- 3.3 The Plan specifies clearly the period to which it is to take effect, which is from 2020 to 2038.

#### Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation

- 3.4 The Consultation Statement (June 2022) clearly explains the processes and procedures that have been followed during the preparation of the STNP. Appendix A of that document provides a comprehensive summary of the consultation and engagement activities that have been undertaken. Exhibitions have been staged; workshops have been arranged; relevant material has been delivered to all homes in the area; a dedicated Neighbourhood Plan website and twitter account were established; and questionnaires have been distributed.
- 3.5 I am able to conclude that opportunities to contribute towards the preparation of the Plan have been available to all interested parties at the relevant stages, including at both the Regulation 14 stage (31 January 2020 to 31 March 2020) and the Regulation 16 stage (4 August 2022 to 22 September 2022). I also consider that, overall, the approach taken towards the preparation of the STNP has been conducted in a fair, proportionate and inclusive manner. The relevant advice on plan making and community engagement (for example, PPG Reference ID: 61-030-20180913) has been heeded and I consider the legal requirements have been met.

#### Development and Use of Land

- 3.6 With the exception of Policy M4 (see paragraph 4.30 below and **PM9**), the Plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in accordance with s.38A of the 2004 Act.

## Excluded Development

- 3.7 The Plan does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'.

## Human Rights

- 3.8 I have seen no evidence that the Plan breaches Human Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998), and it is not a matter that has been raised by any of the respondents, including SDC.

## 4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

### EU Obligations

- 4.1 The SEA Screening Assessment (May 2021), undertaken by SDC, concluded that it is unlikely there will be a significant environmental effect arising from the Neighbourhood Plan and therefore a SEA of the Plan is not required. With regard to the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) the SEA Screening Assessment (Table 1 Row 4) considers an assessment is not required as there is no Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation or Ramsar site that will be impacted by the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.2 Whilst the STNP did not allocate any sites at the point when the SEA screening process was conducted, the SEA process was nonetheless continued (undertaken by AECOM) because Historic England was not satisfied that the inclusion of design recommendations did not equate to allocations. They therefore considered that an SEA was required and STC heeded this advice in order to comply with a Statutory Consultee recommendation. The SEA concludes, in summary, that the STNP is likely to have positive effects in relation to all the eight SEA 'Themes'. Those Themes being: Air Quality; Biodiversity and Geodiversity; Climate Change; Landscape and Townscape; Historic Environment; Land, Soil and Water Resources; Community Wellbeing; and Transportation. No substantive evidence was submitted to me that would lead me to a different conclusion and I am content that EU obligations (as retained in UK law) are met.

### Main Issues

- 4.3 I have approached the assessment of compliance with the Basic Conditions of the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan as two main matters:
- General issues of compliance of the Plan, as a whole; and
  - Specific issues of compliance of the Plan policies.

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### General Issues of Compliance of the Plan

#### [National Policy, Sustainable Development and the Development Plan](#)

- 4.4 There are four chapters in the STNP, which are the Introduction; About Sevenoaks; Vision and Objectives; and Planning Policies. There are also five Appendices which provide valuable background information in support of the STNP policies. The Basic Conditions Statement (June 2022) explains how the STNP has met the legal requirements; taken into account national policies; and not breached EU and sustainability obligations.
- 4.5 It is clear to me that STC and SDC have worked closely in the preparation of the STNP and subject to the detailed comments that I set out below, I conclude that the STNP has had proper regard to national policy and guidance. I also conclude that subject to the recommendations that I make:
- The STNP is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Development Plan for the area, and that overall, the document provides an appropriate framework that will ensure that the Vision of the Town Council (as set out on page 37) will be achieved; and
  - That the policies, as modified, are supported by appropriate evidence, are sufficiently clear and unambiguous and that they can be applied with confidence (PPG Reference ID: 41-041-20140306).

### Specific Issues of Compliance of the Plan's Policies

#### [Executive Summary \(page 5\)](#)

- 4.6 Pages 5 to 17 explain the purpose of the STNP, set out the Vision and Objectives and explain the background to the policies. However, there is a variation in the way some of the policies are framed. Some matters are 'supported' and others are 'promoted' but the reason for the differentiation between the two is not sufficiently clear for the decision maker. I therefore recommend the inclusion of an explanation of the terminology in the section on Policies on page 9 (**PM1**).
- 4.7 In sub-section 7 on page 16 there is a reference to 'notable views'. Having visited the town I consider that the view from Granville Road towards the station and the AONB should also be referenced, and I recommend accordingly in **PM2**. I note that the Town Council supports this modification.<sup>4</sup>

#### [Chapter 1: Introduction \(page 19\)](#)

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<sup>4</sup> See Town Council's response to my Question 8.

- 4.8 The Introduction explains what constitutes a neighbourhood plan and clearly summarises how the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared.

[Chapter 2: About Sevenoaks \(page 25\)](#)

- 4.9 Chapter 2 includes what is described as a portrait of the town and this includes a short assessment of the history and heritage of Sevenoaks; the landscape setting to the town; transport and movement; economy and demographics; community infrastructure; and sports and recreation. These paragraphs provide a useful assessment of the character of the area and how it functions.
- 4.10 Finally Chapter 2 sets out, on page 34, the issues that need to be addressed to ensure that Sevenoaks evolves in a sustainable way that is supported by local residents and businesses.

[Chapter 3: Vision and Objectives \(page 37\)](#)

- 4.11 The Vision concludes that Sevenoaks should celebrate its uniqueness, protect its special assets and plan for future prosperity. In terms of the seventeen Objectives that are listed on pages 38 and 39 these (if implemented) will ensure that the Vision for the town will be successfully achieved. Kent County Council suggests that the reference (in Objective 9) to the town centre being accessible by car should be deleted. I fully understand the reasoning behind this suggestion but, in the short term, consider that until such time as the 'sustainable transport modes' are available, some vehicular access to the town centre will be necessary and that therefore the reference should remain.
- 4.12 I note that the relevant Objectives (as set out on pages 38 and 39 of the STNP) are placed before the relevant policies in Chapter 4 and this significantly assists in the understanding of the way in which the Objectives will be achieved.

[Conclusion on Chapters 1 to 3](#)

- 4.13 I am satisfied that Chapters 1 to 3 satisfactorily introduce the reader to the characteristics of the area; the issues to be addressed in the STNP and the Town Council's Vision and Objectives for Sevenoaks.

[Chapter 4: Planning Policies \(page 41\)](#)

- 4.14 The policies are set out under the same themes that are identified in the Vision. Also included throughout the Policies Chapter are a significant number of 'Aims'. These are described in the last paragraph on page 41 as 'other strategies and ambitions that will be pursued or supported by the Town Council over the life of the Plan'. I consider that there is the potential for some confusion to arise for the decision maker, especially as the numbering of the 'Aims' and the 'Policies' is consecutive. Therefore, I

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recommend, in **PM3**, that the aims are given a different background colour to that of the Policies (which in turn is different to the colour for the Objectives), thus removing any potential confusion.

### [Character, Heritage and Identity \(pages 42 to 49\)](#)

- 4.15 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment is a key national requirement<sup>5</sup> and Policy C1 (page 42) confirms the need for good design.
- 4.16 It was suggested by the Sevenoaks Society that Aim C2, regarding the development of vacant and under-used sites, should be elevated to policy status, but I do not consider that to be necessary in order to meet the Basic Conditions. If it were to become a policy, I would expect more detail of precisely which vacant and under-used sites the policy would apply to.
- 4.17 Policy C4 (page 43) relates to the need for good design in residential areas and makes reference to the Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Document.<sup>6</sup> I saw on my visit that there is a range of housing types and styles in the town and the approach being taken by the Town Council in this regard, is appropriate and in accordance with national advice.
- 4.18 Five local landmarks are listed on page 46 and Policy C8 seeks to ensure that they are afforded appropriate protection and enhancement. I concur that these are important features that contribute significantly to the local townscape and that the Town Council is justified in its approach.
- 4.19 I agree that the landscape setting of Sevenoaks is important and that the need to protect and enhance that setting should be a key objective. Consequently, I consider that Policy C9 (page 46), which seeks to achieve that objective, is necessary.
- 4.20 Policy C10 (page 48) identifies 10 gateways/arrival points into the town. There is no reason to question any of these locations, but I note that specific reference is made in the supporting text to the area around Sevenoaks railway station. Having walked around that area, I agree that it is currently not of the highest visual quality. I consider that the word 'encourages' in Policy C10 is insufficiently clear to the decision maker and therefore I recommend that that the policy refers specifically to the support of the Town Council (**PM4**).
- 4.21 The policies on Character, Heritage and Identity (as modified) have appropriate regard to national policies and advice and meet all the other Basic Conditions.

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<sup>5</sup> Chapter 16 of NPPF.

<sup>6</sup> View at: [Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\) | Sevenoaks District Council](#)

[Landscape and Blue and Green Infrastructure \(pages 50 to 55\)](#)

- 4.22 Policy L1 (page 50) seeks to ensure that new development secures a net gain in biodiversity. In line with the provisions of the Environment Act 2021, I would expect a 10% net gain in biodiversity to be an unambiguous requirement, positively expressed, and linked to Natural England's Biodiversity Metric 3.1 (or subsequent version). Also, there is a reference to 'using best endeavours' and it is not clear to the decision maker exactly what this would entail. I therefore recommend the deletion of this reference and the inclusion of wording based on the response of the Town Council to my Question 12 as well as a suitable update to reflect the requirements of the 2021 Act (**PM5**).
- 4.23 Recent climate change events emphasise the need to properly manage surface water drainage and minimise flood risk. Policy L2 (page 51) requires new development to provide appropriate drainage infrastructure, and this is in accordance with advice in NPPF Chapter 14: 'Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change'. Additional wording was suggested by Thames Water<sup>7</sup> but I agree with the Town Council that such a modification is not required to meet the Basic Conditions. The existing wording is sufficiently clear and comprehensive.
- 4.24 The retention of trees and hedgerows is addressed in Policy L4 (page 52) and I saw on my visit that these features are an important element in the character of the town. The PPG on the Natural Environment confirms that green infrastructure is important<sup>8</sup> and I am satisfied that the approach being taken by the Town Council is appropriate. However, it is not clear where any replacement trees/hedgerows should be located. Consequently, I recommend, in **PM6**, that Policy L4 be modified to make reference to the location of replacement planting being on the site or in close proximity to the site.
- 4.25 Policy L5 (page 53) provides support for new open space and leisure opportunities in the town – including at the Tarmac Ltd. Site in Greatness, when sand extraction has been completed. In the interests of clarity, I recommend the deletion of the last sentence of policy L5 (because it is not totally clear exactly which space 'must be delivered in advance or in parallel with' any residential development). It should be replaced by a reference to a timetable for the delivery of this open space, which must be agreed by the local planning authority (as the decision making authority) in conjunction with STC, prior to residential development commencing on the site and subsequently conditioned in any grant of planning permission (**PM7**).

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<sup>7</sup> Thames Water Regulation 16 Response.

<sup>8</sup> PPG Ref ID: 08-005-20190721.

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- 4.26 Government advice<sup>9</sup> confirms the importance of open space, sports and recreation facilities and I am satisfied that the STNP, as modified, conforms with that advice.
- 4.27 Policy L8 (page 55) supports the provision of allotments at Bradbourne Vale Road and the protection of those located in Quakers Hall Lane. This policy will contribute to improving the sustainability credentials of the town, but it is not clear to readers of the Plan where the two sites are located. Therefore, I recommend in **PM8**, that Figure 4.4 be amended to specifically identify the two sites.
- 4.28 The policies relating to Landscape and Blue and Green Infrastructure, as modified, will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and meet all the other Basic Conditions.

### [Movement and Public Realm \(page 56\)](#)

- 4.29 Policy M1 (page 56) promotes walking and cycling, and I note that the Town Council is committed to supporting initiatives that reduce barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement and will promote new safe routes. Chapter 9 of the NPPF confirms that transport issues should be considered at the earliest stages of plan-making and therefore it is appropriate for the STNP to include a policy on walking and cycling. Further support for cycling is provided in Policy M2 (page 57) and Policy M3 (page 57) promotes the delivery of a new walking and cycling route between Bat and Ball/Otford Road and Dunton Green.
- 4.30 Policy M4 (page 57) supports the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit close to schools and in some residential areas. This is not a land use planning matter (the responsibility lies with the Local Highway Authority) that can be the subject of a planning policy in Plan, albeit it may reasonably be relabelled as an 'Aim' (**PM9**).
- 4.31 Policy M5 supports pedestrian and cyclist crossing facilities at major junctions (page 58). This will encourage sustainable travel and accords with Government advice in NPPF Chapter 9: 'Promoting sustainable transport'.
- 4.32 Policy M6 (page 58) seeks improvements at Bat and Ball railway station and, although several of the elements have been completed, there remain a number of outstanding improvements to be implemented.
- 4.33 Policy M7 (page 59) supports transport interchange facilities at Sevenoaks station; Policy M8 (page 59) supports bus service enhancements; and Policy M9 (page 59) supports the use of greener modes of transport. They are all proposals that will enhance the sustainability credentials of the town.

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<sup>9</sup> Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space.  
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- 4.34 The final policy in this section is Policy M11 (page 60) which relates to public realm improvements. I agree that such improvements would enhance the pedestrian experience in the town centre and that when combined with policies in the 'Character, Heritage and Identity' section of this Plan should ensure that the character of Sevenoaks is retained and improved.
- 4.35 Kent County Council, in their capacity as Local Highway Authority, has raised a number of concerns regarding the contents of Appendix B to the STNP – The Transport Strategy (undated). The Appendix is referenced in the penultimate paragraph on page 20, where it is confirmed that the function of the documents attached as Appendices is to 'inform the policies within the Plan'. On that basis I am satisfied that they fulfil their stated purpose as evidence documents. Of course, evidence may change throughout the life of the STNP and that is why it is important that a strategy for monitoring the policies in the STNP is drawn up (see paragraph 4.58 of this Report).
- 4.36 The policies (as modified) relating to Movement and Public Realm contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and meet all the other Basic Conditions.

[Local Economy \(page 62\)](#)

- 4.37 Policy E1 (page 62) provides support for start-up business space; Policy E3 (page 63) relates to increased parking provision; and Policy E4 (page 63) provides support for indoor and outdoor markets. The supporting text adequately summarises the evidence used to formulate these policies and I consider that their implementation will be of benefit to local businesses and the wider community.
- 4.38 Support for the three Neighbourhood Centres in the town is given in Policy E5 (page 63). I was told by the Town Council that these are the only such Centres in Sevenoaks and therefore, to avoid confusion, I recommend, in **PM10**, that the words 'such as' be deleted from the policy.
- 4.39 The Local Economy policies have appropriate regard to national policies and advice and meet all the other Basic Conditions.

[Community and Culture \(page 64\)](#)

- 4.40 Policy COM1 (page 64) relates to the Community Centre at Bat and Ball railway station. I am told by the Town Council that the new Centre has been completed and therefore I recommend the deletion of policy COM1 and the subsequent re-numbering of the following COM policies and Aim (**PM11**).
- 4.41 The promotion of community infrastructure is appropriately embedded in Policy COM2 and Policy COM3 promotes the development of a Cultural Quarter as shown on Figure 5.4 (page 67). However, the boundary of the

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proposed cultural quarter is not clear to me and a decision maker would need to know what area is included. Consequently, I sought the Town Council's view on the issue, and it has confirmed that a Plan indicating the boundary could be included in the STNP. I consider this to be necessary in order that the decision makers can be clear regarding the area that is subject to Policy COM3 and I recommend accordingly in **PM12**.

- 4.42 As proposed to be modified the policies under Community and Culture meet all the Basic Conditions.

### Sports and Recreation (page 68)

- 4.43 Policy S1 (page 68) supports the provision of new sports facilities and Policy S2 supports, in particular, new and enhanced recreational facilities for children and young people. The PPG<sup>10</sup> advises that open space provision should be a consideration when planning for new development and both policies reflect that advice.
- 4.44 In the interests of clarity for the decision maker, it should be confirmed in Policy S1 that the lake itself cannot be delivered until the sand extraction activities have ceased (**PM13**).
- 4.45 Policies S1 (as modified) and S2 have regard to national advice and meet all the other Basic Conditions.

### Development and Housing (page 70)

- 4.46 Policy D1 (page 70) identifies 12 sites which may come forward during the life of the STNP. For each site there is a brief summary of the issues that would need to be addressed and the potential land uses that may be acceptable. There are plans of the sites and further advice, for example relating to planning status and potential uses, is given on pages 74 to 77. It is clear to me that these sites are not specific allocations but that they are potential sites, for which the Town Council wishes to establish the basic principles at this early stage.
- 4.47 I consider that the inclusion within the STNP of this information is of significant value to the decision maker (as well as to, for example, local residents and businesses) and the Town Council are to be congratulated on the clarity of the information given.
- 4.48 It is also clear to me that Policy D2 (page 81) relating to the Tarmac Ltd. Site at Greatness (which is currently within the Green Belt) is not a proposal but rather it is a policy that sets out a number of requirements should the land be brought forward for development during the STNP plan period.

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<sup>10</sup> Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space.  
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- 4.49 I consider this to be a totally reasonable approach because it identifies a number of issues that would have to be addressed, should a proposal be drawn up. By adopting this approach all interested parties will be familiar with the aspirations of the Town Council with regard to this site.
- 4.50 The policy refers to 'an agreed masterplan' but it doesn't specify who should agree it. Therefore, in the interests of clarity I recommend in **PM14** that it is made clear that the masterplan should be agreed by the local planning authority in consultation with STC, as part of the planning application process.
- 4.51 In the Regulation 16 response from Tarmac Ltd it is suggested that the status of the site specific policies is unclear and that sites 1-13 should not be described as 'policies', but as 'guidance'. For the reasons given above I disagree. I do agree, however, that it should be made clearer (in Policy D2) that the provision of a primary school and medical facilities is not within the control of the developer, and I recommend **PM15** accordingly.
- 4.52 Policy D3 (page 84) relates to meeting identified housing need (including affordable housing) and Policy D4 (page 84) is concerned with the provision of key worker housing. The need to address both these issues is adequately explained in the supporting text.
- 4.53 The principle of building energy efficient homes is well established and Policy D5 (page 85) clearly sets out the broad approach to providing energy efficient homes which minimise environmental impact. This approach accords with current Government advice.
- 4.54 Policy D6 (page 85) promotes the retrofitting of existing homes, thus increasing their energy efficiency. In response to my Question 35, STC confirms that it intends to prepare a Development Strategy that would include a requirement for Whole Life Carbon Assessments. The implementation of this approach is clearly at an early stage but as a starting point I consider it appropriate to include Policy D6 and its supporting text. It is one of the elements of the STNP which should be appropriately monitored (see paragraph 4.58 below).
- 4.55 The policies (as modified) relating to Development and Housing contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and meet all the other Basic Conditions.

### Appendices

- 4.56 The Appendices include a Town Portrait; the Transport Strategy; the Cultural Strategy; the Sports Strategy and the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan. I found them to be helpful evidence documents which provide valuable background information for the decision maker.

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### Policies Map

- 4.57 The policies in the STNP, if made, will form part of the Development Plan for the locality and the Policies Map should, where appropriate, illustrate geographically the policies in the STNP. To that end, it is important for the decision-maker to know which Figures (plans) in the STNP will become part of the Policies Map and which plans are included as a way to present evidence. Therefore, I recommend in **PM16** that it is made clear which Figures (plans) will form part of the Policies Map.

### Monitoring

- 4.58 I could find no reference to the Monitoring of policies in the STNP and I consider this to be an important component in the plan-making process in order to ascertain whether or not the policies are being effective. The Town Council confirmed that an Action Plan will be prepared to address this matter. I therefore recommend, in **PM17**, that appropriate wording is formulated and included in the STNP to summarise the Town Council's approach to monitoring.

### Minor Amendments

- 4.59 Amendments to the text can be made consequential to the recommended modifications, alongside any other minor non-material changes, updates or corrections in agreement between the Town Council and Sevenoaks District Council (PPG Reference ID: 41-106-20190509). I note, for example, that Kent County Council suggested a number of minor changes that could improve the clarity of the STNP (see response to my Question 30) and Tarmac Ltd. make some suggestions, including the naming of their site as 'Sevenoaks Quarry'. Similarly all the references to 'Quakers Hill Lane' should be amended to read 'Quakers Hall Lane'.

## 5. Conclusions

### Summary

- 5.1 The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements. My examination has investigated whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for neighbourhood plans. I have had regard for all the responses made following consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, and the evidence documents submitted with it.
- 5.2 I have made recommendations to modify a number of policies and text to ensure the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum.

### The Referendum and its Area

- 5.3 I have considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates - in particular whether or not residents in the village of Seal (which lies to the north-east of Sevenoaks) should be included in the referendum area. Seal Parish Council's Regulation 16 response considers, in summary, that the STNP boundary does not represent the built extent of Sevenoaks; the STNP has consequences for the surrounding area (e.g. at the Sevenoaks Quarry site) and the STNP has implications for the village of Seal and the green belt that separates the village from Sevenoaks town.
- 5.4 Government Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning states (in PPG Reference ID: 41-059-20140306) that 'it may be appropriate to extend the referendum area beyond the neighbourhood area, for example where the scale or nature of the proposals in the draft neighbourhood plan or Order are such that they will have a substantial, direct and demonstrable impact beyond the neighbourhood area'.
- 5.5 I consider the main issue to consider relates to the consequences for the village of Seal of potential development at the Tarmac Ltd Site at Greatness. However, the site is not specifically allocated in the STNP, rather Policy D2 establishes the requirements of the Town Council should the site be brought forward for development in the future (including through its future allocation). I am satisfied that should the site come forward for development in the future, Seal Parish Council and local residents will be given appropriate opportunities to contribute to the consideration of any specific proposals. Indeed, the responses to my Question 1 to both SDC and STC, clearly indicate to me that Seal Parish Council is fully aware of the situation.
- 5.6 Having considered all the evidence I do not consider there is any substantive justification for extending the referendum area.
- 5.7 The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan as modified has no policy or proposals which I consider significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary, requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond the Plan boundary. I recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

### Overview

- 5.8 It is evident that significant effort has been invested in the preparation of the STNP and the resultant document is well presented and clear. The identification of potential and allocated development sites and the identification of constraints and opportunities for those sites, will undoubtedly help in future decision making processes.

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- 5.9 It is clear to me that the implementation of the policies in the STNP (as modified) will secure the realisation of the Town Council's Vision and that Sevenoaks will retain its attractive characteristics while at the same time ensuring that a sustainable future is achieved.

*David Hogger*

Examiner

**Appendix: Modifications (17)**

Note: Additions are show in bold and deletions denoted with ~~strikethrough~~.

<b>Proposed modification number (PM)</b>	<b>Page no./ other reference</b>	<b>Modification</b>
PM1	Page 9	<p>Insert a new penultimate paragraph to read:</p> <p><b>For the avoidance of doubt where a policy refers to 'support' (e.g. Policy C1) this relates to where the Town Council agrees with something that is promoted by another body. Where a policy refers to 'promotes' (e.g. Policy M1) this means the proposal is being actively pursued by the Town Council.</b></p>
PM2	Page 16 Sub-section 7 Second bullet point	<p>Modify to read:</p> <p>There are notable views down London Road towards the Kent Downs AONB to the north <b>and from Granville Road towards the station and AONB</b> and any development should respond sensitively to this setting;</p>
PM3	Page 41	<p>Add a new paragraph at the end of the page to read:</p> <p><b>In order to differentiate between objectives, policies and aims each function is separately colour coded.</b></p> <p>(adopt the colour coding throughout the document)</p>
PM4	Page 48 Policy C10	<p>Modify introductory sentence to read:</p> <p><del>The Neighbourhood Plan encourages</del> <b>The preparation of proposals that enhance the gateways and arrival points into the town will be supported in principle</b> at:</p>
PM5	Page 50 Policy L1	<p>Modify policy to read:</p> <p>Proposals for new development should whenever possible <del>and using best</del></p>

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
		endeavours, deliver a <b>10%</b> net gain in biodiversity retaining natural features that support wildlife, establishing ecological networks and including new habitats that respond to the local context and the character of the site. New planting and landscapes should respond to the wider landscape through use of native species that support greater biodiversity. <b>Applicants will need to demonstrate the process that they have been through utilising Natural England’s Biodiversity Metric 3.1 (or subsequent version) and the options they have considered to deliver biodiversity net gain.</b>
PM6	Page 52 Policy L4	Extend second sentence of policy to read:  Proposals to remove trees and hedgerows must be justified and any trees or hedgerows lost through development should be replaced <b>within, or in close proximity to the development site.</b>
PM7	Page 53 Policy L5	Delete the last sentence of the policy and replace it as follows:  <del>This space must be delivered in advance or in parallel with any residential development on the site</del> <b>The timetable for the delivery of this open space must be agreed by the local planning authority (as the decision-making authority) in conjunction with STC, prior to residential development commencing on this site, and subsequently conditioned in any Grant of Planning Permission.</b>
PM8	Page 54 Figure 4.4	Clearly identify the allotment sites at Bradbourne Vale and Quakers Hall Lane on Figure 4.4.



<b>Proposed modification number (PM)</b>	<b>Page no./ other reference</b>	<b>Modification</b>
PM9	Page 57 Policy M4	Remove the policy status from Policy M4 by relabelling as an 'Aim'.
PM10	Page 63 Policy E5	Modify last part of the introductory sentence to read:  ..... and appearance of neighbourhood centres <b>at such as:</b>
PM11	Page 64 Policy COM1	Delete the policy.  <del>Policy COM1: Proposals for a new Community Centre at Bat and Ball station will be progressed by the Town Council</del>  Make subsequent changes to the numbering of the remaining COM policies and Aim.
PM12	Page 67 Figure 4.5	Modify Figure 4.5 to identify a boundary for the cultural quarter.
PM13	Page 68 First paragraph under Policy S1	Modify the last sentence of the paragraph to read:  The ground will be remodelled and a new lake, <b>which cannot be delivered in full until the sand extraction activities have ceased</b> , will be provided in the north-east quadrant of a new Greatness Park.
PM14	Page 81 Policy D2	Modify the middle part of the first sentence of the policy to read:  ..... this should be guided by <del>an agreed</del> <b>a masterplan, agreed by the local planning authority in consultation with Sevenoaks Town Council (as part of the planning application process)</b> , that indicates ...
PM15	Page 81	Modify the first bullet point to read:

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<b>Proposed modification number (PM)</b>	<b>Page no./ other reference</b>	<b>Modification</b>
	Policy D2	<b>The safeguarding of land for</b> Community infrastructure including the potential provision of a primary school and medical facilities;
PM16	The Figures in the STNP (throughout the document)	For each Figure (plan) in the STNP, clarify whether or not it will form part of the Policies Map when the STNP is made, or it is included only for information
PM17	Page 85	<p>Insert a new paragraph at the end of the main body of the Neighbourhood Plan to read:</p> <p><b>Monitoring</b></p> <p><b>The Town Council intend to prepare an Action Plan, which will monitor the effectiveness of the policies against the Vision and Objectives as set out in Chapter 3. It is also the intention to review the STNP every 5 years.</b></p>

*This document indicates the proposed modifications to be made to the Submission Draft Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan (June 2022) before it is submitted for Referendum. These amendments respond to the recommendations made by an independent examiner in December 2022.*

*Text to removed is indicated with a strike through. Additional or replacement text is underlined.*

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **ABOUT THE PLAN**

In 2010 the government announced its intention to devolve some decision-making powers from central government to individuals and communities. The Localism Act 2011 gives communities the right to shape development in their area through Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and the Community Right to Build.

Neighbourhood Plans (such as this document) can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in an area. When adopted, they form part of the Statutory Development Plan and their policies have equal weight with adopted Local Plan policies in the determination of planning applications. The determination must be made in accordance with their policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

At the Sevenoaks Town Council Annual Town Meeting held on the 14th March 2013 residents signalled their support for the Town Council to begin the preparation work on a Neighbourhood Plan for Sevenoaks. This Plan is a once-in-a-generation chance for local people to shape and guide the future of the town and to ensure that development is sensitive to the town's character and identity and provides for the needs of future generations.

Since 2013 the Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee have undertaken extensive public consultation and engagement activities to ensure that the content of the Plan reflects what local people want. They have used this information to develop background work for the Plan and commission strategies and studies to support the emerging Plan policies.

In Summer 2017 Urban Initiatives Studio (UIS) was appointed by the Town Council to assist them with preparation of the Plan. UIS's brief was to bring together all of the background work and the outcomes of the public engagement undertaken by the Council, and translate this into the Neighbourhood Plan.

Public consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan took place from January through to March of 2020, although comments made after that date were also welcomed. The representations made have been carefully considered in preparing this final draft Neighbourhood Plan.

### **THE VISION AND OBJECTIVES**

The Neighbourhood Plan is based upon a vision and accompanying set of objectives. An important focus for the plan is to improve the health and well being of the people that live within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The plan also recognises the importance of addressing the nationally declared climate emergency. The Neighbourhood Plan draws upon the town's existing strengths, reflects the positive qualities identified by the local community and identifies a number of challenges and opportunities.

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### Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan – changes from Submission draft (June 2022) to Referendum version

These include the potential to:

- Respond positively to climate change and encourage a more sustainable approach to both land use and lifestyle choices;
- Enhance and preserve the town's heritage assets and special open spaces;
- Enhance the arrival experience into the town to create a more welcoming impression;
- Enhance the town's network of roads, footpaths and cycling routes to improve connections and create a safer and more attractive environment for users;
- Improve access to, and better connect, the town's open spaces;
- Regenerate and revitalise the Northern Sevenoaks area around Bat and Ball station;
- Deliver a sustainable expansion at Sevenoaks Quarry (the Tarmac Site) in Greatness, on land currently being worked to extract sand ~~by Tarmac Ltd.~~ (subject to release from the Green Belt) in order to deliver new homes to meet local needs;
- Unlock new opportunities for leisure, recreation and community infrastructure — including a new watersports lake as part of this development;
- Grow the town's economy and support the creation of new jobs;
- Deliver new community assets including a new Community Centre at Bat and Ball and new health and education provision;
- Deliver enhanced recreational and sports facilities for the town; and
- Enhance the town's thriving cultural scene.

The Neighbourhood Plan is looking to the future and central to this is the need to respond to the increasing threat of climate change. In June 2019 the government committed to reaching 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2050. At the Sevenoaks District Council Full Council meeting on 19 November 2019 the Council agreed the aspiration to be Net Zero by 2030. The Neighbourhood Plan promotes many policies that will help to deliver this target either through land use and development or through helping to facilitate and encourage more sustainable lifestyles.

Climate Change matters are also being actioned within Sevenoaks Town Council's Green Community Investment Plan.

### **IMPACT OF COVID 19**

Following the consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan in early 2020 the world has faced an unprecedented pandemic. It is difficult to judge the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic but a number of Government surveys have indicated that access to the nation's gardens, parks, woodlands and rivers have played a huge part in helping people through the pandemic. Almost nine in ten adults surveyed in England reported that being in nature makes them very happy and nearly three quarters of adults were concerned about biodiversity loss in England (People and Nature Survey, Natural England). The research also revealed the importance of local parks and green spaces to the nation's mental and physical wellbeing. Department of Transport figures published in October 2020 show that between May and July 2020, 39% of people reported walking more and 38% reported cycling more than before the outbreak of the pandemic.

The pandemic has also changed the way people work and shop. For many people working from home is likely to continue to form part of a more flexible approach; the pandemic's long-term impact on town centres and high streets are yet to be fully realised but the switch to internet sales is likely to lead to a reduction in retail floor space and a greater focus on the quality of the wider town centre offer to attract visitors.

What the pandemic has demonstrated is the importance of the local neighbourhood and how it delivers for its residents. The objectives identified as part of the Neighbourhood Plan including addressing climate change, encouraging sustainable travel, enhancing the network of green spaces, increasing recreational opportunities and growing the local economy will remain even greater priorities in the post-Covid world.

**This Neighbourhood Plan vision is set out in a statement below which describes what the town will be like in 20 years' time.**

## **A Vision for Sevenoaks in 2038**

*'Sevenoaks will continue to be a successful and friendly market town set on the Greensand Ridge that takes advantage of its good connections and easy access to open countryside and to London. It will continue to have a **strong sense of community** with an active network of volunteers. The town will be **proud of its history** and the legacy of fine historic buildings, spanning six centuries, that contribute to an attractive townscape in its leafy streets.*

*However, Sevenoaks will not be stuck in the past but firmly wedded to the future and the quality of life of its children and their children to come. As one of the UK's first **carbon zero** towns, Sevenoaks will be environmentally responsible and resource-efficient. Despite its undulating topography, walking and cycling will be the standard mode of travel with a network of **safe walking and cycling routes** that provide access to the towns **excellent schools** and to recreational and employment opportunities. New buildings in Sevenoaks will be built to the **highest environmental standards** and the town will celebrate its connection with the surrounding landscape that the views to the Kent Downs provide.*

*The town centre will continue to provide a **good mix of shops**, including many independent traders, and provide a **rich cultural offer** within an emerging cultural quarter and thriving markets. The centre will be easy to access and provides **attractive streets and spaces** for locals and visitors alike. Residents will live in a variety of homes set within well-kept neighbourhoods and also benefit from convenient neighbourhood centres at St John's, Tubs Hill and Hollybush Lane.*

*Knole Park, Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve, Greatness Lake and Recreation Ground will provide a **unique and rich natural environment** for both active sports and quiet contemplation, and the town is proud of its remarkable trees.*

*The town will be protective of its landscape assets but also recognises the need to plan for and deliver new homes and community facilities to provide for future generations. **Sevenoaks will celebrate its uniqueness, protects its special assets and plan for future prosperity!***

The Vision for Sevenoaks will be delivered over a 15 to 20 year time-frame through a number objectives set out under the following themes:

**THEME ONE: CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY**

**THEME TWO: LANDSCAPE AND BLUE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

**THEME THREE: MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC REALM**

**THEME FOUR: LOCAL ECONOMY**

**THEME FIVE: COMMUNITY AND CULTURE**

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Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan – changes from Submission draft (June 2022) to Referendum version

**THEME SIX: SPORTS AND RECREATION**

**THEME SEVEN: DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING**

## THEMES AND OBJECTIVES

### THEME ONE: CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY

**Objective One:** To respect the town’s character and heritage and ensure that all new development is responsive to its context and enhances the setting of the town’s historic assets

**Objective Two:** To protect the setting of local landmarks and the landscape setting of the town

**Objective Three:** To enhance the gateways / arrival points into the town to create a more welcoming impression

### THEME TWO: LANDSCAPE AND BLUE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

**Objective Four:** To protect and enhance blue and green infrastructure, enhance biodiversity and respond to climate change

**Objective Five:** To recognise the significant contribution that trees and hedgerows make to the town’s character and biodiversity

**Objective Six:** To protect, improve and enhance access to existing publicly accessible open spaces and create new publicly accessible open spaces and green infrastructure

### THEME THREE: MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC REALM

**Objective Seven:** To work with the District Council, and Kent County Council, in consultation with neighbouring Parish Councils, to identify a long-term strategic approach to transport in Sevenoaks to respond to and mitigate any impacts of new development on the existing network

**Objective Eight:** To promote a co-ordinated approach to transport and movement that encourages use of sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling, and reducing pollution levels, whilst ensuring that the centre is still accessible by car

**Objective Nine:** To deliver public realm enhancements to improve the pedestrian experience in the town

### THEME FOUR: LOCAL ECONOMY

**Objective Ten:** To support local businesses and retailers and encourage a more collaborative and entrepreneurial business environment in the centre

**Objective Eleven:** To consolidate and enhance both the town centre and secondary shopping areas

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Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan – changes from Submission draft (June 2022) to Referendum version

### THEME FIVE: COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

**Objective Twelve:** To deliver enhanced community assets for the town

**Objective Thirteen:** To develop and promote a cultural quarter in the town centre and to enhance the town's cultural offer and improve access to existing cultural assets

### THEME SIX: SPORTS AND RECREATION

**Objective Fourteen:** To deliver enhanced recreational and sports facilities for the town

### THEME SEVEN: DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

**Objective Fifteen:** To promote high quality development that enhances the town and consolidates vacant or under-utilised land

**Objective Sixteen:** To deliver a range of new homes to meet local needs

**Objective Seventeen:** To provide homes that are energy efficient and minimise environmental impact



## POLICIES

The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan sets out policies that will help to deliver the vision and objectives.

The Plan contains two distinctive types of policies:

- Planning policies related to the development and use of land; and
- Non-planning related policies, defined here as ‘Aims’, that help to meet the vision and objectives.

Neighbourhood Plans are permitted to include both planning and non-planning related policies. However, these must be clearly distinguishable. In this Plan the planning policies are labelled ‘Policy’, and the non-planning related policies are identified as ‘Aim’.

Policies will be used by planning officers to determine planning applications. Aims represent other strategies that will be pursued by the Town Council over the life of the Plan.

The policies are set out under the seven themes identified on the previous page:

- Theme One: Character, Heritage and Identity;
- Theme Two: Landscape and Blue and Green Infrastructure;
- Theme Three: Movement and Public Realm;
- Theme Four: Local Economy;
- Theme Five: Community and Culture;
- Theme Six: Sports and Recreation; and
- Theme Seven: Development and Housing.

Each theme has its own section in the Plan. The objectives related to each theme are clearly labelled. Each objective is then supported by one or more policies or aims.

Each policy or aim is supported by text that explains why the policy or aim has been included in the Plan and how the requirements within it will be met.

A list of all of the policies under each theme are summarised over the following pages.

For the avoidance of doubt where a policy refers to ‘support’ (e.g. Policy C1) this relates to where the Town Council agrees with something that is promoted by another body. Where a policy refers to ‘promotes’ (e.g. Policy M1) this means the proposal is being actively pursued by the Town Council.

Those policies and aims that contribute towards the Neighbourhood Plan intention to meet the government’s zero carbon commitment are highlighted with the **X** symbol.

### THEME ONE: CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY

**Objective One: To respect the town’s character and heritage and ensure that all new development is responsive to its context and enhances the setting of the town’s historic assets**

**Policy C1:** The Neighbourhood Plan will support developments that sustain, or where practicable, enhance the significance of a heritage asset, or the contribution made by its setting. New development must be designed to preserve, and where possible, enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, taking into account national and local design guidance such as the National Design Guide and Conservation Area Appraisals

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### Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan – changes from Submission draft (June 2022) to Referendum version

**Aim C2:** The Town Council will work with the District Council and landowners to encourage development of vacant and under-used sites particularly where they have a negative impact on the townscape in Sevenoaks

**Aim C3:** The Town Council will prepare guidance on the treatment of locally listed buildings and any other buildings with heritage value\*

**Policy C4:** New development in residential areas will be of a high quality and take account of the Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Applicants submitting a planning application in residential areas should be encouraged and use best endeavours to include a statement to show how their proposals have responded to the character of their local area and meet the design guidance set out in the SPD

**Aim C5:** The Town Council will work with the District Council to encourage the naming of new streets to reflect people and places of historic significance to the town

**Aim C6:** The Town Council will normally require major planning applications or proposals on sites within sensitive locations, to be submitted to a Design Review panel for review early in the planning process. The Town Council will either utilise a panel established by the District Council or utilise another established panel\*

**Aim C7:** The Town Council will work with the District Council and / or other design advisors to prepare design guidance for areas not included within the Residential Character Area Assessment

#### **Objective Two: To protect the setting of local landmarks and the landscape setting of the town**

**Policy C8:** Development in the town will be supported where it protects and enhances the setting of local landmarks

**Policy C9:** Development will be supported where it protects and enhances the landscape setting and character of the town and visibility to and from the open countryside

#### **Objective Three: To enhance the gateways / arrival points into the town to create a more welcoming impression**

**Policy C10:** The ~~Neighbourhood Plan encourages~~ the preparation of proposals that enhance the gateways and arrival points into the town will be supported in principle at:

- Sevenoaks station / Station Square;
- Otford Road;
- Seal Road;
- Tonbridge Road;
- Bradbourne Vale Road;
- Bat and Ball junction and station;
- The junction of Seal Road with Greatness Lane and Hospital Road;
- The Vine;
- London Road / High Street junction; and
- London Road / Pembroke Road junction.

Proposals should respond to local character and where appropriate conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings

## **THEME TWO: LANDSCAPE AND BLUE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Objective Four: To protect and enhance blue and green infrastructure, enhance biodiversity and respond to climate change**

**Policy L1:** Proposals for new development should whenever possible ~~and using best endeavours,~~ deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity retaining natural features that support wildlife, establishing ecological networks and including new habitats that respond to the local context and the character of the site. New planting and landscapes should

respond to the wider landscape through use of native species that support greater biodiversity. Applicants will need to demonstrate the process that they have been through utilising Natural England’s Biodiversity Metric 3.1 (or subsequent version) and the options they have considered to deliver biodiversity net gain.

**Policy L2:** New development will be expected to manage surface water to minimise flood risk and flows to watercourses. Development proposals should normally incorporate sustainable urban drainage (SuDs) as an integral part of the landscape structure

Where practicable SuDs should be positively designed into schemes from the outset as public realm features. These features can include ponds, infiltration basins, swales/rain gardens and wetlands and can make a positive contribution to the biodiversity, character, appearance and sustainable performance of development

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.

**Objective Five: To recognise the significant contribution that trees and hedgerows make to the town’s character and biodiversity**

**Aim L3:** The Town Council will identify areas where trees and hedgerows make a significant contribution to local character and biodiversity\*

**Policy L4:** Wherever possible, existing trees and hedgerows must be retained and protected as part of development proposals. Proposals to remove trees and hedgerows must be justified and any trees or hedgerows lost through development should be replaced within, or in close proximity to the development site. New tree and hedgerow provision should be of a species that is both suitable for the location and responds to the character and biodiversity of the site within which it is located

**Objective Six: To protect, improve and enhance access to existing publicly accessible open spaces and create new publicly accessible open spaces and green infrastructure**

**Policy L5:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports the development of new public open space and leisure opportunities in the town. This includes new public open space, community use and leisure opportunities at Sevenoaks Quarry (the Tarmac Ltd. site) in Greatness when sand extraction has been completed. This space must be delivered in advance or in parallel with any residential development on the site

**Aim L6:** The Town Council will work with and support Kent Wildlife Trust to enhance access to the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve and improve ‘on-site’ facilities\*

**Aim L7:** The Town Council will support improvement and restoration proposals for Bradbourne Lakes developed in consultation with the local community\*

**Policy L8:** The Town Council will support the provision of additional allotments in the town at Bradbourne Vale Road and will protect those on the Quakers Hill, Hall Lane site

## THEME THREE: MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC REALM

**Objective Seven: To work with the District Council, and Kent County Council, in consultation with neighbouring Parish Councils, to identify a long-term strategic approach to transport in Sevenoaks to respond to and mitigate any impacts of new development on the existing network**

**Objective Eight: To promote a co-ordinated approach to transport and movement that encourages use of sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling, and reducing pollution levels, whilst ensuring that the centre is still accessible by car**

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**Policy M1:** The Neighbourhood Plan promotes walking and cycling and supports the removal of barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement across the town

**Policy M2:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports the Sevenoaks District Cycling Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and provision of additional cycle facilities to support new development

**Policy M3:** The Neighbourhood Plan promotes the delivery of a new walking and cycling route that connects Bat and Ball / Otford Road with Dunton Green

**Policy Aim M4:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports the introduction of a 20mph speed limit close to schools and in some residential areas

**Policy M5:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals for improved pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities at major junctions across the town

**Policy M6:** The Town Council will progress proposals to refurbish Bat and Ball station and improve access to the station

**Policy M7:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals to improve transport interchange facilities at Sevenoaks station

**Policy M8:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports enhancements to bus services and facilities to serve the town

**Policy M9:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports measures that will encourage a shift towards the use of greener modes of transport by businesses and residents

**Aim M10:** The Town Council will work with the District Council, and Kent County Council to ensure that, wherever possible, HGV movements are directed away from the town centre\*

#### **Objective Nine: To deliver public realm enhancements to improve the pedestrian experience in the town**

**Policy M11:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals for public realm improvements within the town centre particularly linking key town centre destinations. Such improvements should be part of a town centre-wide strategy to help improve the pedestrian experience in the town centre and should be informed by the character and heritage assets within an area

Where appropriate, the Neighbourhood Plan will support innovative proposals, such as shared surfaces, to improve the pedestrian environment and reduce the impact of traffic in both the town and neighbourhood centres

The Neighbourhood Plan supports the removal of street clutter including unnecessary street furniture and the adoption of a co-ordinated palette of materials and street furniture for the town and neighbourhood centres

**Aim M12:** The Town Council will identify locations across the town where repairs and improvements to paths and pavements are required to improve the pedestrian environment\*

**THEME FOUR: LOCAL ECONOMY**

**Objective Ten: To support local businesses and retailers and encourage a more collaborative and entrepreneurial business environment in the centre**

**Policy E1:** Support will be given to the provision of sites for start-up business space across the town. Preferred locations include:

- Allocated mixed-use and employment sites;
- The town centre;
- Neighbourhood centres; and
- Regeneration areas — such as at Bat and Ball.

**Aim E2:** The Town Council will work with local providers, businesses and the District Council to develop a tourism strategy for the town to promote the visitor economy\*

**Policy E3:** Proposals for increased parking provision will be supported when it can be proven that it is required to support the economic development of a local area. A preference will be for the intensification and improvement of existing car park sites over the development of new car parks. Any new car parks should be designed to the highest quality. New car parks should not be located where they will bring more traffic into residential areas or conflict with key pedestrian and cycle routes

**Objective Eleven: To consolidate and enhance both the town centre and secondary shopping areas**

**Policy E4:** Support will be given to the retention and development of indoor and outdoor markets and encouragement to the diversification of their offer

**Policy E5:** Support will be given to spatial strategies and development proposals that enhance the function, accessibility and appearance of the neighbourhood centres at such as:

- Northern St John’s;
- Southern St John’s (Hollybush Parade); and
- Tubs Hill Parade.

**THEME FIVE: COMMUNITY AND CULTURE**

**Objective Twelve: To deliver enhanced community assets for the town**

~~**Policy COM1:** Proposals for a new Community Centre at Bat and Ball station will be progressed by the Town Council~~

~~**Policy COM2**~~ **COM1:** Promote new health and education provision, faith facilities and other necessary community infrastructure as an integral part of new development

**Objective Thirteen: To develop and promote a cultural quarter in the town centre and to enhance the town’s cultural offer and improve access to existing cultural assets**

~~**Policy COM3**~~ **COM2:** The Town Council will promote the development of a cultural quarter in the town centre together with an arts and cultural strategy

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**Aim COM4 COM3:** The Town Council will support the development of a new amphitheatre at Knole Environmental Park\*

## THEME SIX: SPORTS AND RECREATION

### Objective Fourteen: To deliver enhanced recreational and sports facilities for the town

**Policy S1:** The Neighbourhood Plan will support the provision of new sports facilities across the town including the provision of new sports / watersports facilities at Sevenoaks Quarry (the Tarmac Ltd. site) at Greatness, which will be required to be delivered either in advance of, or in parallel with, new homes on this site

All new sports facilities must adhere to sports governing body guidance for a particular sport (including schools) and should be developed with community access agreements

The provision of new facilities, and enhancements and improvements to existing sports facilities across the town, will be delivered in line with the Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy

**Policy S2:** The Neighbourhood Plan will support the provision of new and enhanced play and outdoor sports and recreational facilities for children and young people

## THEME SEVEN: DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

### Objective Fifteen: To promote high quality development that enhances the town and consolidates vacant or under-utilised land

**Policy D1:** The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that there are sites that may come forward for development, either as windfall or through allocation in the Local Plan, that have potential to deliver benefits that should be secured through the design, layout and use of each site. Planning applications on the following vacant and under-utilised sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area should demonstrate that they will deliver the relevant benefits set out below, in addition to other requirements set out in the Local Plan:

#### 1. Bat and Ball Centre, Bat and Ball\*

- Mixed-use development accommodating community use, office use and residential dwellings within buildings of up to four storey;
- A southern access and entrance to Bat and Ball station; and
- A building layout that would facilitate enhanced access to Bat and Ball station and provide an arrival space in front of the new southern entrance to the station.

#### 2. Travis Perkins, Bat and Ball

- A longer term opportunity to relocate light industrial uses northwards to Vestry Industrial Estate / Otford (outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area) and redevelop the site with mixed-use development within compact blocks of up to four storey height;
- Removal of the conflict between the light industrial employment uses and residential accommodation within the Bat and Ball area; and
- Improved access towards Bat and Ball station and better animation of the streets in the area.

#### 3. Cramptons Road, Water Works

- Potential for residential development close to Bat and Ball station. With its proximity to shops and facilities it could be a suitable site for a co-housing project;
- Layout must retain access to the water treatment works to the north of the site. The layout of development should facilitate a potential future pedestrian connection through Sevenoaks Business Centre to Bat and Ball station; and

- The scale and massing of development should respond to the lower scale properties to the west of the site.

#### **4. Carpetright / Wickes, Otford Road**

- Relocate existing uses northwards to the Vestry Industrial Estate where they are more appropriate;
- Strengthen the residential character of the area and remove the conflict between the big box retail uses and existing homes;
- Deliver buildings that create a positive frontage to Cramptons Road (houses) and Otford Road (apartments); and
- Respond positively with proposals for the adjacent gasholder station site (Site 5).

#### **5. Sevenoaks Gasholder Station**

- Residential development close to Bat and Ball station that supports the regeneration of Northern Sevenoaks;
- A development layout that provides positive frontages to streets and retains, fronts onto and overlooks the pedestrian path (a public right of way) that connects Cramptons Road with Otford Road through the site; and
- A scale and massing that responds to the context (i.e. two storey buildings on Cramptons Road but with potential for four storeys on Otford Road).

#### **6. Bat and Ball Enterprise Centre**

- Longer term opportunity to change this area close to Bat and Ball station to mixed-use;
- Strengthen the residential character of the area and improve access to the station for people living in Greatness through pedestrian routes (from Queens Drive) that are overlooked by new development;
- Deliver apartment buildings (with ground floor employment) that create a positive frontage to Bat and Ball Road; and
- Buildings could be up to four storeys in this location.

#### **7. Sevenoaks station and surrounding area**

- Significant opportunity for development that will transform the sense of arrival into Sevenoaks and could establish a new urban quarter for the town;
- There are notable views down London Road towards the Kent Downs AONB to the north and from Granville Road towards the station and AONB and any development should respond sensitively to this setting;
- Scale of buildings to be typically four to six storey. There may be potential for a taller building to mark the station; and
- Opportunity to reconsider transport interchange and public realm treatment at the station.

#### **8. Edwards Electrical, High Street**

- Development proposals to respond to heritage sensitivities (the site is located immediately to the south of, and adjacent to, the Vine Conservation Area);
- Development should respond to the character of the existing streetscape both in terms of materials, design language and height and massing — two / three storeys is appropriate;
- Development should provide a positive and active frontage to the High Street that is aligned to frontages on adjacent plots and is sympathetic to adjacent built form; and
- Potential for mews houses to the rear of the site.

#### **9. Buckhurst Lane (Suffolk Way) sites**

- Development proposals to respond to heritage sensitivities (the site is located on the edge of the Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area) and development will need to respond to the historic development pattern, materials and character of the area;
- Access will need to be maintained to service yards of properties on High Street;
- Potential to provide development that provides a positive frontage to Suffolk Way and Buckhurst Lane;
- Scale and massing of development to respond to the existing context;
- Development should front streets whilst concealing existing service yards from public view; and
- Pedestrian connections through the area to be retained and any trees that are removed to be replaced.

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#### **10. Post Office / BT Exchange**

- Development proposals to respond to heritage sensitivities (the site is located adjacent to the Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area and the locally listed Stag Theatre);
- The site is located on elevated ground with land dropping away to the south and development is likely to be highly visible from a number of locations. The height and massing needs to be carefully considered and modelled;
- Potential to re-establish the primacy of London Road through development providing active ground floor uses onto London Road with apartments above. Total building height three storeys plus an additional set back storey;
- Frontage onto London Road should be set back to create a public space that serves the adjacent theatre and provides a setting for the new ground floor uses;
- Development should provide a positive frontage to the lane connecting the car park to the rear of The Stag Theatre with London Road;
- Potential for public realm enhancement to South Park; and
- A comprehensive scheme should be prepared but could be delivered as two independent phases (Post Office and BT Building).

#### **11. Town Council offices, Bradbourne Vale Road\***

- Residential development in the form of apartments that provide a frontage to Bradbourne Vale Road with other dwellings to the rear;
- Development up to three storeys; and
- Potential to relocate existing office space to the Community Centre site at Bat and Ball station.

#### **12. Adult Education site, Bradbourne Road**

- Potential for sensitive residential conversion of the locally listed college building which maintains the integrity of the existing building;
- Potential for a new build residential annex; this must be subservient to main college building in respect of its design and scale and massing; and
- Existing mature trees and quality of landscape setting to be retained.

Developers will be encouraged to develop buildings constructed to the highest environmental standards to reduce carbon emissions through construction and later life

**Policy D2:** Should Sevenoaks Quarry (the Tarmac Ltd. Site) at Greatness be brought forward for development, either as windfall or through allocation in the Local Plan, this should be guided by an agreed a masterplan, agreed by the local planning authority in consultation with Sevenoaks Town Council (as part of the planning application process), that indicates how development would be laid out to respond to, and provide a significant landscape resource for Sevenoaks, how it will be phased and the supporting infrastructure that would be delivered as part of the development.

Development of the site should also deliver the following benefits for the area:

- The safeguarding of land for cCommunity infrastructure including the potential provision of a primary school and medical facilities;
- Green infrastructure including the provision of a new lake and centre for sport, recreation and leisure, a network of walking and cycling routes and play space;
- Transport infrastructure and in particular proposals must demonstrate how vehicular access will be achieved and how any transport impacts will be mitigated, including but not limited to improvements to Bat and Ball junction;
- Re-use of historic buildings - the former oast house should be refurbished, integrated into the development and re-used for community use; and
- A mix of new homes that supports local needs and including affordable homes to meet the requirements of the Local Plan.



**Objective Sixteen: To deliver a range of new homes to meet local needs**

**Policy D3:** Where practicable larger residential developments will be expected to provide a range of homes. New housing should contribute to meeting the identified local need. Affordable housing provision will be required as part of all eligible developments

**Policy D4:** The development of on-site key worker housing will be encouraged as part of larger infrastructure developments and subject to a condition preventing sale or rent on the open market

**Objective Seventeen: To provide homes that are energy efficient and minimise environmental impact**

**Policy D5:** The Neighbourhood Plan promotes the delivery of new homes that are energy efficient, that are constructed using materials that reduce the impact on the environment and that are designed to maximise daylight and sun penetration whilst also avoiding overheating

**Policy D6:** The Neighbourhood Plan promotes the retrofitting of existing homes to increase their energy efficiency

**\* Represents a site where further studies / actions may be pursued by the Town Council over the life of the Plan**

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 WHAT IS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

In 2010 the government announced its intention to devolve some decision-making powers from central government to individuals and communities. The Localism Act 2011 gives communities the right to shape development in their area through Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and the Community Right to Build.

Neighbourhood Plans (such as this document) can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in an area. When adopted, they form part of the Statutory Development Plan and their policies have equal weight with adopted Local Plan policies in the determination of planning applications. The determination must be made in accordance with their policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Neighbourhood Plans must be in general compliance with higher level planning policies and cannot block development proposals already contained in these documents. However, Neighbourhood Plans can specify where new development could go and what it should look like. Policies in a Plan can be detailed or general, depending on what local people want.

The Neighbourhood Plan process is generally led by a Parish or Town Council, with continual involvement from the Local Planning Authority. Neighbourhood Plans must be supported by the local community and this is tested through a referendum. The referendum for this Plan is anticipated to take place in Autumn 2022. If there is majority support for the Plan it will then be adopted by the District Council.

Neighbourhood Plans allow local people to get the right type of development for their community, but the Plan must still meet the needs of the wider area. This will mean that Neighbourhood Plans will have to take into account the local council's assessment of housing and other development needs in the area.

### 1.2 THE SEVENOAKS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

At the Sevenoaks Town Council Annual Town Meeting held on the 14th March 2013 residents signalled their support for the Town Council to begin the preparation work on a Neighbourhood Plan for Sevenoaks. The Plan will set out a vision of how the community wants development in the town to be guided over a 20 year period.

Subsequently, the Plan area was designated by Sevenoaks District Council in October 2013.

Since 2013 the Town Council has been working closely with the local community to prepare this Plan. It held a series of open meetings and in 2014 initiated a town-wide survey to gather public opinion and perceptions of the town.

The questionnaire was focused around a number of topics including;

- Character of the Town;
- Education;
- Sports, Leisure and Community Facilities;
- Health and Green Spaces;

- Housing;
- Transport; and
- Economic Development.

A copy of the questionnaire was delivered to every house within the Civil Parish of Sevenoaks. The questionnaire was also available to complete online.

Over 800 questionnaires were completed by households; a response rate of approximately 10%.

Following the town-wide survey, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee used the information collated to prepare a set of themes and initial objectives to structure the Neighbourhood Plan and develop its evidence base. The public were again consulted on 11th and 12th December 2015 at Sevenoaks station and the Stag Theatre respectively.

Engaging with the next generation is important and the Youth Council have been actively involved in the Neighbourhood Plan and young people have been engaged through presentations at school assemblies. The Town Council also carried out a competition aimed at children, which invited submissions of drawings setting out their vision for what they would like to see in Sevenoaks over the next 30 years.

The following objectives were considered most important by respondents:

- Improve areas that detract from the positive character of the town;
- Undertake an integrated transport study;
- Improve the gateways into and out of the town, including stations;
- Protect the architectural characteristics of the town;
- Retain pathways, historic alleyways and promote for pedestrian use;
- Support tree retention and tree planting;
- Protect Green Belt and green spaces;
- Promote an effective pedestrian, cycling and vehicle strategy;
- Consider inclusion of Sevenoaks in TfL's Oyster card charging zone; and
- Consider 20mph speed limits in areas of town.

A range of background studies have also been undertaken to support the content of this Plan including the Sevenoaks District Transport Strategy, the Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy, the Sevenoaks Cultural Strategy and the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan. These inform the policies within the Plan and are provided as Appendices.

During the period through which the Neighbourhood Plan has been in preparation the Town Council has delivered a number of the projects that were identified in the early consultations including a new Bat & Ball centre, and refurbishment and access improvements to Bat and Ball station.

### **NORTHERN SEVENOAKS**

Through the preliminary work on the Plan the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee identified Northern Sevenoaks as one of the only areas of the town that was suitable for larger scale new development. It was also seen as an area with untapped potential that was in need of regeneration. It was, therefore, agreed that a dedicated Masterplan would be prepared for the area.

Urban Initiatives Studio and Regeneris were appointed in late 2016 to prepare a Masterplan for Northern Sevenoaks. The Masterplan was developed through a series of meetings and workshops with local people and stakeholders, including a formal public consultation which took place in May 2017. The views expressed through this process informed the Masterplan and form part of the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan.

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The Masterplan was also consulted upon as part of the District Council's Local Plan 'Issues and Options' Consultation. The Plan received overwhelmingly positive support through this consultation. 66% of respondents stated that they either 'Strongly supported' or 'Supported' the Plan (based on responses from 13,654 people).

### **1.3 PREPARING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

#### **Neighbourhood Plan Process**

The Town Council developed the Neighbourhood Plan through the work of a number of sub-committees each focusing on specific elements of the Plan including Character of the Town, Economic Development, Transport, Housing, Leisure and Environment.

The Plan's preparation was co-ordinated through a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, which also ensured that targets for community engagement were met. Both the sub-committee and Steering Committee members were appointed at open, public meetings.

Throughout the Neighbourhood Planning process the public were free to engage with the process and all meetings were open at each and every stage. Agendas, minutes and other documents were all made publicly available via the Town Council's website and standalone Neighbourhood Plan website (stnp.co.uk). The Town Council also set up a dedicated Twitter account to publicise the Plan.

In Summer 2017 Urban Initiatives Studio (UIS) was appointed by the Town Council to assist them with preparation of the Plan. UIS's brief was to bring together all of the background work and the outcomes of the public engagement undertaken by the Council, and translate this into the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan remains, however, firmly based on the work undertaken by the Town Council.

#### **Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Plan**

A draft Neighbourhood Plan was prepared and agreed by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in January 2020. Neighbourhood planning regulations (Regulation 14) require that the draft Neighbourhood Plan be the subject of a pre-submission consultation before it is submitted to the local authority for independent examination. The Town Council organised a six week public consultation running from Friday 31st January 2020 until Friday 13th March 2020. This was extended for a further two weeks to Tuesday 31st March 2020. Comments received on the Plan after this date were also accepted.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan was brought to the attention of all those who work, live and run businesses in the Neighbourhood Plan area in order to gain feedback. The Town Council also consulted with stakeholders outside of the Plan area that may be affected by the Plan, including neighbouring Parish Councils and statutory bodies, including Natural England, English Nature and Historic England. The draft Neighbourhood Plan was also provided to Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council.

The public consultation was launched in the Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope Gallery on Buckhurst Lane on Friday 31st January and Saturday 1st February 2020 and then moved to a number of other locations in the town including the Stag Theatre, Sevenoaks railway station foyer and the Town Council offices over the eight week consultation period. An exhibition was available to view at these locations and Town Council officers, Councillors and members of the consultant team were on hand to answer questions at both the launch and on other selected days.

A questionnaire was also prepared and this was available to complete online on the Neighbourhood Plan website at <https://sevenoaksndp.wordpress.com> Further information about the Plan could also be viewed on this site. Hard copies of the draft Plan were available for anyone who wanted one.

### **Preparing the Final Neighbourhood Plan**

Following the consultation the Town Council collated all comments and representations. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive however some recommendations on additions and amendments to the Plan were also made. The Town Council and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee considered these comments carefully and agreed changes to make to the plan. These have been incorporated in this Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

A Consultation Statement has been prepared under separate cover and this documents in detail the process to prepare the plan, who has been consulted, the comments made and how these have been incorporated in the Plan.

Following advice from the District Council a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was carried out on the draft plan in summer 2021. The policies and aims in the plan were found to perform favourably in sustainability terms. A number of minor amendments were recommended and these have been incorporated in the Final Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

The Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to Sevenoaks District Council who will then be responsible for publicising the Plan, arranging for an independent examination and carrying out a public referendum.

The District Council is currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the district which will replace the Core Strategy 2011 and Allocations and Development Management Plan 2015. The draft Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination in April 2019 and Hearings were held in September and October 2019 however the Planning Inspector had concerns about the soundness of the Plan and called a halt to proceedings. This Neighbourhood Plan is therefore prepared in accordance with the policies of the current Local Plan.

## 2 ABOUT SEVENOAKS

### 2.1 LOCATION AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

Sevenoaks is located to the south-east of London in the county of Kent. The town is the principal settlement within Sevenoaks district and has a population of 20,409 (2011 census). The town is covered by Sevenoaks Town Council and it is their boundary that has determined the Neighbourhood Plan area. The Neighbourhood Plan covers an extensive area that encompasses both the built-up portion of the town and also a significant area of the open countryside within which it is set, including Knole Park. The Neighbourhood Plan area extends to approximately 1,600 hectares.

Sevenoaks is set within rolling countryside with attractive views northwards to the Kent Downs. It is located on one of the principal commuter railway lines to London and benefits from proximity to the M25 and M26 motorways. These connections, and the town's historic character and picturesque setting within the Kent countryside, make it a popular place to live. The town is home to a skilled resident workforce with good access to employment opportunities. People both commute into and out of the town for work to and from central London and other parts of the district and beyond.

### 2.2 A BRIEF PORTRAIT OF THE TOWN

#### HISTORY AND HERITAGE

##### Early development

Early records of Sevenoaks date back to the 13th Century when a market was first held here.

Flemish weavers settled in the area in the 14th Century and their industry was to flourish in the district for 300 years. These immigrants were followed in Tudor times by others bringing new industries such as papermaking, market gardening, hop growing and the extraction of coal. Iron smelting followed in the 17th Century providing the area with a rich assortment of productive occupations. **(Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area Appraisal)**

The settlement grew from the 15th Century after the construction of Knole House, between 1456 and 1486. The house, which still stands today, has been extended many times through history and is now one of England's largest homes and an important local landmark.

The structure of the town, with the market located within The Shambles area between the High Street and London Road, was well established by the 17th Century and provided accommodation for both local tradesmen above their shops and labourers working on the Knole Estate.

Most early development in Sevenoaks focused around the town centre along the main roads (London Road and High Street). This original core area has been well preserved and is a highly recognisable and distinctive part of the town.

Land to the north of Sevenoaks was largely agricultural with a number of estates including Wildernesse, Bradbourne, Greatness and Montreal.

### **19th Century industrialisation**

The railway arrived in Sevenoaks in the mid 19th Century. The first station, Bat and Ball, opened in 1862, followed by Sevenoaks station in 1868. Both stations were located to the north of the town centre. This spurred a northward expansion of the town with streets of new houses providing a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached properties.

### **20th Century expansion**

Expansion of the town continued throughout the 20th Century. However, the designation of the Green Belt and the presence of other important landscapes, including Knole Park, has limited the potential for further expansion of the town through the post-war years.

### **Heritage**

Much of Sevenoaks' historic character has been preserved to this day and this forms an important part of the town's identity. This is recognised by the District Council with the designation of eight Conservation Areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The majority of the towns listed buildings are located within these Conservation Areas.

## **LANDSCAPE**

Sevenoaks is surrounded by the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the town's relationship with the countryside is an important part of its character. The undulating nature of the topography, with the town centre located on elevated land, means that views to the surrounding Downs are experienced from numerous locations such as The Vine, Quaker's Hall Allotments and Hollybush Recreation Ground. These enhance the sense of connection with the landscape and add to the overall character of the town.

Knole Park abuts the town centre to the south-east and this 400 hectare deer park is a huge asset for the town. It, along with a number of other open spaces distributed across the town, makes a significant contribution to local character and also to the health and well being of Sevenoaks residents.

To the north of the town the landscape has been exploited to extract sand and gravel and this provides a legacy of waterbodies and waterside habitats at the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve.

Land around the town is designated as Green Belt and this has both protected the countryside setting from development and restricted opportunity for growth.

A particular feature of Sevenoaks are its trees. Sevenoaks is famed for its oaks but there are many other species and individual trees that are important to the character of the town.

Tradition has it that Sevenoaks is named after a conspicuous group of oak trees that existed over 1,000 years ago near the summit of the hill on Sevenoaks Common. To commemorate these trees seven oaks were planted on the site on Tonbridge Road in the late 18th or early 19th Century. These were replaced in the 1950s. The trees on The Vine were planted in 1902 to celebrate the coronation of King Edward VII, although famously, six were felled by the storm in 1987.

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### TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

Sevenoaks is well connected to the strategic road network and benefits from frequent rail services to London, Kent and Sussex. The town experiences traffic congestion in the peak hours on all three of the main approach routes into the town centre, including London Road, Dartford Road to the north and Tonbridge Road to the south.

Traffic passing through the town centre uses the historic streets and this undermines the environmental quality, particularly on London Road and High Street, and results in air pollution.

The town is served by two railway lines. The principal station is on the Southeastern line and provides northbound services to London Charing Cross, Cannon Street, London Bridge and Waterloo East; and southbound to Ashford International, Ramsgate via Dover Priory or Tunbridge Wells and Hastings.

Bat and Ball station is located on a branch line and provides services to London Blackfriars, St Pancras and London Victoria via Otford and Swanley. Whilst the Sevenoaks station building is in fairly good condition the quality of the environment and arrival experience at the station is poor. The station building at Bat and Ball has recently been sympathetically refurbished.

There is little scope to expand capacity of the direct services between Sevenoaks station and Charing Cross / London Bridge. The regular and fast service on this line is attractive to commuters and residents, but in the peak it is often operating at or above capacity. There is scope for additional capacity via Otford, with a planned service along the Darent Valley line fast to Swanley and London Bridge. This would make Bat and Ball station accessible to London Bridge within 44 minutes. Delivery of this service is important to support additional homes on the north side of Sevenoaks. Both stations are also important for access to a good range of schools.

Sevenoaks is served by a large number of bus routes. These are focused on the main vehicular routes, the A25 and A225, and provide services to Sevenoaks town centre, Seal and Riverhead and more regional links to locations such as Bromley, Tunbridge Wells and Gravesend. Most services are low frequency. Sevenoaks bus station is located within the town centre at Buckhurst Lane. The environment at the bus station is unattractive.

Within the town itself walking can be challenging as a result of topography and transport infrastructure. In some parts of the town, particularly in the southern residential areas and on older streets to the north of the town (eg. Hartslands, Bethel and Prospect Roads) footways are narrow, incomplete or absent. This impacts on the quality of the pedestrian experience. There is, however, a wide network of walking routes and public rights of way that link Sevenoaks to the countryside that surrounds it.

There is very little provision for cyclists within Sevenoaks, either in terms of dedicated routes or cycle parking; however, Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council, supported by Sevenoaks Town Council, prepared the Sevenoaks District Cycling Strategy in 2012, which advocates new cycle routes, safer cycling, cycle parking and greater promotion of cycling as a means to move around the town.



## ECONOMY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

There are approximately 18,500 people living in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The population grew by 4% from 2011-2016 in line with national averages. Approximately 61% of the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan area population is of working age. This is lower than that of the district, Kent County Council area and England as a whole reflecting the higher than average proportion of children within the population.

There are currently around 17,800 jobs in the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan area, accounting for around a third of all jobs in Sevenoaks district. This represents 3,600 more people employed in the area than five years ago, and the area has experienced over double the level of growth seen across the rest of Kent and England.

However, whilst there has been a significant increase in the number of jobs the growth in the number of businesses is below national average. Despite fewer start-ups, business survival data suggests that Sevenoaks district is a strong place to start a business, with 46% of businesses that started up in 2011 still trading in 2016; a greater degree than that seen across the rest of Kent and England.

Within the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan area a high proportion of jobs are in public administration, education and health (4,740 jobs), financial and professional services (3,065 jobs) and business support services (2,160 jobs), which include activities such as human resource provision, cleaning services and office administrative services.

The Neighbourhood Plan area is characterised by micro-sized businesses (up to nine employees), which represent 87% of the area's total business base. This proportion of micro businesses is larger than that seen across the rest of Sevenoaks district; however, it is smaller than the profile seen nationally. There are currently around 235 sole proprietor businesses in the Neighbourhood Plan area. This is low relative to Sevenoaks district and England.

Knole House also plays an important role in the local economy with up to 60 staff members and ~~between 450 and 500~~ around 350 active volunteers many who live within close proximity to the property. Knole also provides a valuable educational resource to pre-school children, schools and adult learners.

The office market in Sevenoaks has been performing strongly in recent years, with vacancy levels falling by two-thirds over the last six years and rental values increasing by 32%. Loss of office space through permitted development rights (conversion of office to residential) has placed pressure on employment floorspace in some areas. Demand for space in the future is likely to be driven by micro and small businesses, which dominate the local economy and have grown in size in recent years.

The Sevenoaks district has higher median resident earnings than wider Kent and England. The median resident earns £33,600 per annum, while the median Kent resident earns £30,000 and the median England resident earns £29,000. Levels of unemployment and deprivation are low in the district although there are pockets of deprivation towards the north of the neighbourhood plan area.

The town centre is the focal point for most of the town's shops, leisure and commercial uses. The town hosts a variety of national chain shops, restaurants and independent retailers and businesses. The town is also home to two markets; a charter market on the High Street every Saturday and a general market on the car park on Buckhurst Lane every Wednesday.

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As well as the town centre, there are three neighbourhood centres within the Plan area at St John's, Hollybush Lane and Tubs Hill. These are home to a variety of local (predominantly independent) shops and businesses.

#### **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE**

Sevenoaks is well served by community infrastructure and arts and cultural facilities.

Most of the town's cultural attractions are located in the town centre. These include The Stag Theatre and cinema, the library and museum and several small private galleries. Theatre space is also available in a number of the town's schools.

Primary and secondary schools are located throughout the town. These include a mix of private and state schools. The number of school children in Sevenoaks has recently grown with the opening of Trinity School in 2013. This number is set to increase again over the coming years. Whilst this will bring new facilities to the town it will also increase pressure on the town's road, cycle and walking network. Delivering safe routes to schools that offer alternatives to vehicle modes is becoming increasingly important.

Sevenoaks Hospital is located to the north of the town on Hospital Road, close to St John's neighbourhood centre and Bat and Ball station.

The Town Council has recently delivered plans to provide a new community centre, the 'Bat & Ball Centre' adjacent to Bat and Ball station and has refurbished the listed station building at Bat and Ball to provide a café and community meeting spaces.

#### **SPORTS AND RECREATION**

Sevenoaks is well served by sport and recreational facilities. There are two significant sports 'clusters' in the town:

- A cluster to the north-east of the town centre around The Vine / Hollybush Recreation Ground / Knole Paddock and the leisure centre; and
- A cluster to the north of Bradbourne Vale Road including Greatness Recreation Ground and the Community Centre adjacent to Bat and Ball station.

Sports and recreational facilities within some schools (e.g. Sevenoaks School and Walthamstow Hall School) are also available to hire for sports and cultural activities.

### **2.3 ISSUES FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The public consultation and background and evidence-based review carried out to inform this Plan resulted in the identification of a number of issues that this Plan will address. These have been grouped under seven themes. The themes are repeated throughout the remainder of this document to structure the Plan objectives and policies.

#### **Character, Heritage and Identity**

- The need to preserve the town's historic character and assets;
- The need to improve areas with poor character – especially in and around the town centre and at arrival points into the town; and

- The need to improve the quality of the arrival experience into the town.

### **Landscape and Green Infrastructure**

- The need to support the retention of trees and encourage tree planting;
- The need to protect the Green Belt and other green / open spaces;
- The need for development to be sensitive to the setting of the Kent Downs AONB; and
- The need to retain views to the open countryside.

### **Movement and Public Realm**

- The need to promote an effective pedestrian, cycling and movement strategy;
- The consideration of a 20mph speed limit to slow traffic down;
- The need to reduce air pollution;
- The need to improve pedestrian routes and pathways across the town;
- The need to improve pedestrian and cycle access to schools;
- A desire for Sevenoaks to be included within TfL's Oyster charging zone;
- The need to ease traffic congestion across the town;
- The need to improve the environment at, in, and around, the town's two railway stations and the bus station;
- The need to progress the delivery of cycle routes in the town; and
- The need to improve pedestrian movement in the town centre and remove clutter from the streetscape.

### **Local Economy**

- The need to improve the town centre and neighbourhood centres;
- The need to protect and maintain existing employment in the town and encourage opportunities;
- The need to provide better connections between the town's cultural assets; and
- The need to support and encourage existing and further tourism, including additional overnight stays in the district.

### **Community and Culture**

- The need to ensure that development delivers enhanced community assets and provides additional health and educational infrastructure to serve a growing population; and
- The need to better link and promote the cultural offer in the town.

### **Sports and Recreation**

- The need to continue to support existing and develop new sports facilities as set out in the Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy.

### **Development and Housing**

- The need to provide additional housing including a range of housing types and tenures (including smaller units and affordable housing) with limited development sites available;
- The need to deliver high quality development that responds to the character of the town and to establish processes that can help to deliver this improved design quality;
- The need to identify locations for residential development in accessible locations within walkable distance of the town centre or railway stations; and
- The opportunity presented at Sevenoaks Quarry ~~by~~ (the Tarmac ~~Ltd.~~ ~~s~~Site) at Greatness.
- The above issues have helped to shape the vision, objectives and policies that are promoted within the Plan

### 3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

#### 3.1 VISION STATEMENT

*'Sevenoaks is a successful and friendly market town set on the Greensand Ridge that takes advantage of its good connections and easy access to open countryside and to London. It has a **strong sense of community** with an active network of volunteers. The town is **proud of its history** and the legacy of fine historic buildings, spanning six centuries, that contribute to an attractive townscape in its leafy streets.*

*However, Sevenoaks is not stuck in the past but firmly wedded to the future and the quality of life of its children and their children to come. As one of the UK's first **carbon zero** towns, Sevenoaks is environmentally responsible and resource-efficient. Despite its undulating topography, walking and cycling are the standard mode of travel with a network of safe **walking and cycling routes** that provide access to the towns **excellent schools** and to recreational and employment opportunities. New buildings in Sevenoaks are built to the **highest environmental standards** and the town celebrates its connection with the surrounding landscape that the views to the Kent Downs provide.*

*The town centre provides a **good mix of shops**, including many independent traders, and provides a **rich cultural offer** within an emerging cultural quarter and thriving markets. The centre is easy to access and provides **attractive streets and spaces** for locals and visitors alike. Residents live in a variety of homes set within well-kept neighbourhoods and also benefit from convenient neighbourhood centres at St John's, Tubs Hill and Hollybush Lane.*

*Knole Park, Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve, Greatness Lake and Recreation Ground provide a **unique and rich natural environment** for both active sports and quiet contemplation, and the town is proud of its remarkable trees.*

*The town is protective of its landscape assets but also recognises the need to plan for and deliver new homes and community facilities to provide for future generations. **Sevenoaks celebrates its uniqueness, protects its special assets and is planning for future prosperity!***

#### 3.2 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES

The Vision for Sevenoaks will be delivered over a 20 year timeframe through a number objectives set out under the following themes:

**THEME ONE: CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY**

**THEME TWO: LANDSCAPE AND BLUE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

**THEME THREE: MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC REALM**

**THEME FOUR: LOCAL ECONOMY**

**THEME FIVE: COMMUNITY AND CULTURE**

**THEME SIX: SPORTS AND RECREATION**

**THEME SEVEN: DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING**

**THEME ONE:  
CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY**

**Objective One:** To respect the town’s character and heritage and ensure that all new development is responsive to its context and enhances the setting of the town’s historic assets

**Objective Two:** To protect the setting of local landmarks and the landscape setting of the town

**Objective Three:** To enhance the gateways / arrival points into the town to create a more welcoming impression

**THEME TWO:  
LANDSCAPE AND BLUE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Objective Four:** To protect and enhance blue and green infrastructure, enhance biodiversity and respond to climate change

**Objective Five:** To recognise the significant contribution that trees and hedgerows make to the town’s character and biodiversity

**Objective Six:** To protect, improve and enhance access to existing publicly accessible open spaces and create new publicly accessible open spaces and green infrastructure

**THEME THREE:  
MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC REALM**

**Objective Seven:** To work with the District Council, and Kent County Council, in consultation with neighbouring Parish Councils, to identify a long-term strategic approach to transport in Sevenoaks to respond to and mitigate any impacts of new development on the existing network

**Objective Eight:** To promote a co-ordinated approach to transport and movement that encourages use of sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling, and reducing pollution levels, whilst ensuring that the centre is still accessible by car

**Objective Nine:** To deliver public realm enhancements to improve the pedestrian experience in the town

**THEME FOUR:  
LOCAL ECONOMY**

**Objective Ten:** To support local businesses and retailers and encourage a more collaborative and entrepreneurial business environment in the centre

**Objective Eleven:** To consolidate and enhance both the town centre and secondary shopping areas

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### THEME FIVE: COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

**Objective Twelve:** To deliver enhanced community assets for the town

**Objective Thirteen:** To develop and promote a cultural quarter in the town centre and to enhance the town's cultural offer and improve access to existing cultural assets

### THEME SIX: SPORTS AND RECREATION

**Objective Fourteen:** To deliver enhanced recreational and sports facilities for the town

### THEME SEVEN: DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

**Objective Fifteen:** To promote high quality development that enhances the town and consolidates vacant or under-utilised land

**Objective Sixteen:** To deliver a range of new homes to meet local needs

**Objective Seventeen:** To provide homes that are energy efficient and minimise environmental impact

## 4 PLANNING POLICIES

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION TO POLICIES

This part of the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan sets out the policies and aims that will deliver the vision and objectives set out in Chapter 3.

Neighbourhood Plans are permitted to include both planning and non-planning related policies. However, these must be clearly distinguishable. In this Plan the planning policies are labelled, ‘Policy’, and the non-planning related policies are identified, that help to meet the vision and objectives, as ‘Aim’.

The policies in this section are set out under the same themes identified in the vision. These are:

- Theme One: Character, Heritage and Identity;
- Theme Two: Landscape and Blue and Green Infrastructure;
- Theme Three: Movement and Public Realm;
- Theme Four: Local Economy;
- Theme Five: Community and Culture;
- Theme Six: Sports and Recreation; and
- Theme Seven: Development and Housing.

Each theme has its own section in the Plan. The objectives related to each theme are clearly labelled. Each objective is then supported by one or more policies or aims.

Each policy or aim is supported by text that explains why the policy or aim has been included in the Plan and how the requirements within it will be met. Policies will be used by Planning Officers to determine planning applications. Aims represent other strategies and ambitions that will be pursued or supported by the Town Council over the life of the Plan.

In order to differentiate between objectives, policies and aims each function is separately colour coded.

### 4.2 THEME ONE: CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY

**Objective One: To respect the town’s character and heritage and ensure that all new development is responsive to its context and enhances the setting of the town’s historic assets**

**Policy C1:** The Neighbourhood Plan will support developments that sustain, or where practicable, enhance the significance of a heritage asset, or the contribution made by its setting. New development must be designed to preserve, and where possible, enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, taking into account national and local design guidance such as the National Design Guide and Conservation Area Appraisals

**Aim C2:** The Town Council will work with the District Council and landowners to encourage development of vacant and under-used sites particularly where they have a negative impact on the townscape in Sevenoaks

**Aim C3:** The Town Council will prepare guidance on the treatment of locally listed buildings and any other buildings with heritage value\*

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The town-wide questionnaire carried out as part of the evidence base for this Plan revealed that a vast majority of respondents thought that buildings of historical significance should be preserved (79% of 883 respondents ranked this as high priority).

National planning policies require development to enhance the character, appearance and setting of the heritage assets. These assets include:

- Scheduled monuments;
- Archaeological sites;
- Listed buildings;
- Locally listed buildings;
- Conservation areas;
- Registered and non-registered historic parks and gardens;
- Ancient woodland and ancient trees; and
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Applicants ~~are encouraged to~~ should complete a heritage impact assessment at the planning application stage to help to understand the significance of heritage features and the potential impacts of new development on these features. This impact assessment should be proportionate to the change envisaged and the sensitivity of the heritage asset.

Where land has been identified as having archaeological importance, ~~applicants are encouraged to undertake archaeological evaluations prior to construction, with any findings appropriately reported and documented on the local historic~~ desk-based assessment and perhaps fieldwork will be required. The assessment should be appropriately reported and documented on the Kent Historic eEnvironment rRecord in line with best practice guidance.

Vacant and under-used sites impact on the setting of heritage assets and undermine the quality of the townscape. The Town Council will work with the District Council to actively encourage positive change on these sites.

Whilst adopted policies provide a good level of protection some buildings may remain vulnerable to insensitive development. This includes unlisted buildings that are not in Conservation Areas or locally listed buildings (that do not require listed building consent). The Town Council will create additional guidelines to protect these structures.

**Policy C4:** New development in residential areas will be of a high quality and take account of the Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Applicants submitting a planning application in residential areas should be encouraged and use best endeavours to include a statement to show how their proposals have responded to the character of their local area and meet the design guidance set out in the SPD

National planning policies set out the requirement for development to be of a high quality and respond to local character.

Local character, and design guidance on how to respond to it, are set out in a number of planning documents including the National Design Guide, Kent Design Guide, Conservation Area Appraisals and the Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment. The Residential Character Area Assessment is particularly relevant as it is specific to Sevenoaks and identifies distinctive local features. It states that new development should: ‘respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.’



A requirement for a statement to be submitted with all planning applications outlining how development proposals respond to the Residential Character Area Assessment will ensure that planning applications take this guidance into account. It will also make it easier for planning officers to assess whether the application meets the design requirements set out in the assessment.

**Aim C5:** The Town Council will work with the District Council to encourage the naming of new streets to reflect people and places of historic significance to the town

Sevenoaks has a rich history and there is opportunity to reflect this in the naming of streets across the town.

**Aim C6:** The Town Council will normally require major planning applications or proposals on sites within sensitive locations, to be submitted to a Design Review panel for review early in the planning process. The Town Council will either utilise a panel established by the District Council or utilise another established panel\*

The delivery of high quality design is a requirement of national planning policy and tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development are recommended, including design review.

Design review is a tried and tested method of independently evaluating and improving the quality of developments by bringing proposals before a panel of experts from across the built environment professions. The Town Council recommend that prospective applicants come to the design review panel as early as possible in the pre-application or application process.

For clarity a major application is considered to be one for 10+ dwellings, where the site area is over 0.5Ha and / or where a floorspace of over 1,000sqm is proposed.

It is understood that Sevenoaks District Council have recently established a design review panel. The Town Council will engage with the District Council to undertake a design review or if necessary utilise an alternative panel.

**Aim C7:** The Town Council will work with the District Council and / or other design advisors to prepare design guidance for areas not included within the Residential Character Area Assessment

Design guidance specific to Sevenoaks is provided through the Residential Character Area Assessment and Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. These documents do not, however, cover the whole of the town. This leaves certain areas (including parts of the town centre and other non-residential areas) without any specific character-related design guidance.

Many of the areas not covered by the Residential Character Area Assessment and Conservation Area Appraisals were identified by the Town Council's town-wide questionnaire as areas the public would like to see improved including:

1. The area around Sevenoaks station;
2. Around Bat and Ball station and other areas in Northern Sevenoaks;
3. Buckhurst Lane area including the Sencio Leisure Centre, the library and museum and associated car parks;
4. The South Park area including The Stag and Post Office / BT Exchange; and
5. Around the Sevenoaks District Council offices on London Road / Argyle Road.

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The National Planning Policy Framework advocates the use of design guides and codes to provide clarity on design expectations. The National Model Design Code provides further guidance on the sort of things that should be considered when preparing design guidance or codes for an area.

The Town Council will work with the District Council and / or other design advisors to prepare and adopt design guidance or codes for these and other sites not included within the Residential Character Area Assessment and Conservation Areas as shown on Figure 4.1 opposite.

#### **Objective Two: To protect the setting of local landmarks and the landscape setting of the town**

**Policy C8:** Development in the town will be supported where it protects and enhances the setting of local landmarks

**Policy C9:** Development will be supported where it protects and enhances the landscape setting and character of the town and visibility to and from the open countryside

Local landmarks provide local distinctiveness and play an important role in establishing the mental picture and identity of a place. They also assist orientation and navigation. Local landmarks have been identified for the positive role that they play in the local townscape; their historic importance is also reflected in statutory or local designations.

Recognised local landmarks in Sevenoaks include:

1. St John's United Reformed Church (locally listed);
2. Bandstand and clubhouse at The Vine (local listed);
3. Old Market House, High Street (Grade II listed building);
4. St Nicholas Church tower, High Street (Grade II\* listed building); and
5. Knole House (Grade I listed building) within Knole Park (Grade I Registered Park and Garden).

New development should not adversely impact on the visibility to or the setting of the local landmarks as listed above and indicated in Figure 4.2 opposite.

**Policy C9:** Development will be supported where it protects and enhances the landscape setting and character of the town and visibility to and from the open countryside

National planning policy sets out a requirement that new development responds to local character. One of Sevenoaks' most defining characteristics is its landscape setting. The town is surrounded by the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and by open countryside designated as Green Belt. Fine views of open countryside and the Downs can be seen from many locations within the town. Many of the town's residents benefit from these views, they form an important part of the character of the town and should be preserved.

Similarly development should be designed to minimise impact on the setting of the Kent Down AONB. This can be achieved through working with the landscape and through planting that can act as a visual screen; through the use of materials that blend into the landscape, and by minimising light spill.

**Objective Three: To enhance the gateways / arrival points into the town to create a more welcoming impression**

**Policy C10:** The Neighbourhood Plan encourages the preparation of proposals that enhance the gateways and arrival points into the town will be supported in principle at:

- Sevenoaks station / Station Square;
- Otford Road;
- Seal Road;
- Tonbridge Road;
- Bradbourne Vale Road;
- Bat and Ball junction and station;
- The junction of Seal Road with Greatness Lane and Hospital Road;
- The Vine;
- London Road / High Street junction; and
- London Road / Pembroke Road junction.

Proposals should respond to local character and where appropriate conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings

New development should aim to function well and add to the quality of the area, establish a strong sense of place, respond to local character, create safe and accessible environments and be visually attractive.

Analysis carried out as part of the evidence base for this Plan identified the key points at which vehicle users and pedestrians enter the town. The quality of these gateways is variable. Some, such as the arrival point on London Road at the railway station, have a very fragmented townscape and low quality environment. This provides a poor quality first impression of the town.

It is essential that plans are made to co-ordinate new development in these locations in order to improve the quality of the arrival experience.

Design guidance should be prepared that defines the scale, form, massing and character of development and the landscape that is appropriate in these locations.

## 4.3 THEME TWO: LANDSCAPE AND BLUE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

**Objective Four: To protect and enhance blue and green infrastructure, enhance biodiversity and respond to climate change**

**Policy L1:** Proposals for new development should whenever possible ~~and using best endeavours,~~ deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity retaining natural features that support wildlife, establishing ecological networks and including new habitats that respond to the local context and the character of the site. New planting and landscapes should respond to the wider landscape through use of native species that support greater biodiversity. Applicants will need to demonstrate the process that they have been through utilising Natural England’s Biodiversity Metric 3.1 (or subsequent version) and the options they have considered to deliver biodiversity net gain.

There are a number of nationally and locally designated wildlife sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area including Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve and Knole Park (both designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest) however wildlife is not confined to these sites but is found throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area.

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Access to the natural environment and to areas of high biodiversity can have a positive impact on health and well being and this has been particularly recognised through the Covid pandemic with almost nine in ten adults surveyed in England reporting that being in nature makes them very happy and nearly three quarters of adults reporting that they were concerned about biodiversity loss in England (People and Nature Survey, Natural England, 2020).

When considering and designing new development applicants are encouraged to consider from the outset how they can enhance biodiversity. Wherever possible existing natural features including trees, hedgerows, ponds ditches and watercourses should be retained (refer also to Aim L3 and Policy L4) and new habitats and opportunity for wildlife designed into the new development. This may include new planting and trees (with native species preferred), living roofs and walls, inclusion of bat boxes, bird boxes and bug hotels and ponds and wetland areas.

Applicants are encouraged to utilise biodiversity metric tools (for instance those developed by Natural England) to calculate biodiversity net gains.

Providing links between habitats that allow wildlife to move freely is important and should also be considered; for instance provision of gaps in boundary walls and fences enables hedgehogs to travel easily from one garden to another to forage for food or look for shelter.

**Policy L2:** New development will be expected to manage surface water to minimise flood risk and flows to watercourses. Development proposals should normally incorporate sustainable urban drainage (SuDs) as an integral part of the landscape structure

Where practicable SuDs should be positively designed into schemes from the outset as public realm features. These features can include ponds, infiltration basins, swales/rain gardens and wetlands and can make a positive contribution to the biodiversity, character, appearance and sustainable performance of development

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.

Flooding can cause serious damage and have devastating effects. The main source of flooding in the Neighbourhood Plan area is the River Darent which flows through northern Sevenoaks. Climate change and more extreme weather situations could increase the risk of flooding in the future. Surface water run off from development can exacerbate the risk of flooding by increasing the run off from land to water courses.

The provision of green infrastructure, particularly along rivers, and the inclusion of sustainable drainage techniques can all help to slow the flow of water and reduce the risk of flooding. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can make a real difference to flood risk by managing the quantity of surface water run-off from development and prevent sudden water level rises following heavy rain.

SuDs should be positively designed into larger development proposals from the outset as public realm features. These features can include ponds, infiltration basins, swales/rain gardens and wetlands as they:

- Help manage the risk of flooding and climate change;
- Reduce demand on the sewer network;
- Manage some pollutants and improve the quality of water going back into the environment; and

- Can make a positive contribution to the biodiversity, character, appearance and sustainable performance of development.

Smaller development proposals should also consider how to minimise surface water run off and use permeable paving and planting to assist this.

**Objective Five: To recognise the significant contribution that trees and hedgerows make to the town’s character and biodiversity**

**Aim L3:** The Town Council will identify areas where trees and hedgerows make a significant contribution to local character and biodiversity\*

Public consultation carried out as part of this Neighbourhood Plan revealed that the public consider that trees and woodland are an important part of the character of Sevenoaks. Whilst many of the town’s trees benefit from the protection afforded by Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) many others, that contribute to the town’s character, are not protected.

The Sevenoaks Society has been locating, recording and celebrating some of the most important trees under a project known as ‘The Remarkable Trees of Sevenoaks’. This project involved consultation with the community to understand trees that were important to them and included an exhibition held at Knole in September to October 2014. However, the results of this exercise have not been formally recorded.

Further work is required to draw together the Remarkable Trees study, a record of existing TPOs, the contribution that these trees make to local character and the impact should they be lost. This work will also need to reference the Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment and Conservation Area Appraisals which identify areas where trees are an important part of local character.

**Policy L4:** Wherever possible, existing trees and hedgerows must be retained and protected as part of development proposals. Proposals to remove trees and hedgerows must be justified and any trees or hedgerows lost through development should be replaced within, or in close proximity to the development site. New tree and hedgerow provision should be of a species that is both suitable for the location and responds to the character and biodiversity of the site within which it is located

Higher level planning policies state that new development should respect the character of a site and sensitively incorporate natural features within a site. Trees and hedgerows are an important part of the character of the town. They also have a positive impact on the biodiversity value of the town and can help mitigate against climate change. They should, therefore, be retained whenever possible.

Justification for tree and hedgerow removal may include poor condition of a tree or inappropriate species for its location.

**Objective Six: To protect, improve and enhance access to existing publicly accessible open spaces and create new publicly accessible open spaces and green infrastructure**

**Policy L5:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports the development of new public open space and leisure opportunities in the town. This includes new public open space, community use and leisure opportunities at Sevenoaks Quarry (the Tarmac Ltd. site) in Greatness when sand extraction has been completed. This space must be delivered in advance or in parallel with any residential development on the site

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The Neighbourhood Plan will support the provision of new, high quality, publicly accessible, open space.

The most significant opportunity for new open space is located at Sevenoaks Quarry ~~on~~ (the Tarmac Ltd. site) in the north of the town where sand is being extracted. This was identified in the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan (refer to Policy D2). The site is located directly to the north of Greatness Recreation Ground and covers approximately 100 hectares. Sand extraction on this site is set to complete in the coming years and the site will then be returned to public use by 2030 / 2032. Extraction of the sand will result in a remodelling of the land and the existing lake will move towards the north-east quadrant of the site.

When the sand extraction is completed the site will offer a significant opportunity to create new recreational open space for northern Sevenoaks. An existing public right of way extends through the land and connects northwards to Otford. There will be potential to establish a more extensive network of walking and cycling routes that will open up access to the site from surrounding areas including Greatness, Seal and Bat and Ball. The new lake could be used for water sports.

The new open space must be delivered as part of an integrated 'Green Infrastructure Strategy' for the area with strong physical and visual links to Greatness Recreation Ground and walking routes to Millpond Wood and the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve.

The site also contains a number of works buildings including a locally listed former oast house. Subject to further investigation, it is anticipated that this oast house can be brought back into active use for the benefit of the local community. The funding of new open space and recreational facilities may be dependent on enabling development.

The site is currently designated as Green Belt and is partly located within Seal Parish.

**Aim L6:** The Town Council will work with and support Kent Wildlife Trust to enhance access to the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve and improve 'on-site' facilities\*

The Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve is one of the area's most valuable ecological assets. It serves both as a recreational and educational resource. However, access to the Reserve is restricted to a single point off Bradbourne Vale Road, which is not easy to locate.

The Reserve provides a wonderful tranquil environment, with a network of paths that provide access to bird hides alongside the water bodies. In 2020 the Wildlife Trust introduced a circular walk which enhances the appeal of the Reserve further for walkers.

Kent Wildlife Trust have ambitions to construct a new 'Nature and Wellbeing Centre' on the site of their current visitor centre. This will help attract new visitors to the Reserve.

The Town Council would support provision of a new entrance to the Reserve on Otford Road to improve access to the site.

**Aim L7:** The Town Council will support improvement and restoration proposals for Bradbourne Lakes developed in consultation with the local community\*

Bradbourne Lakes is an attractive, yet underused, space that was identified by the public as a space that contributes to the character of Sevenoaks and which should be preserved.

The Darent Valley Path, a strategic walking route connecting Dartford to Sevenoaks, runs through the site and connects it with other open spaces including the Wildlife Reserve and Knole Park. This path is an essential part of the district’s green infrastructure network. Improvements to the Bradbourne Lakes site will help strengthen the District’s Green Infrastructure Network of accessible multi-functional green spaces.

**Policy L8:** The Town Council will support the provision of additional allotments in the town at Bradbourne Vale Road and will protect those on the Quakers Hill, Hall Lane site

Over recent decades allotments have become increasingly popular and are valued for their recreational and practical benefits. The Town Council will develop new allotment provision adjacent to their site on Bradbourne Vale Road.

Allotments allow people to grow their own produce and are both good for the environment and for health and well being.

## 4.4 THEME THREE: MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC REALM

**Objective Seven:** To work with the District Council, and Kent County Council, in consultation with neighbouring Parish Councils, to identify a long-term strategic approach to transport in Sevenoaks to respond to and mitigate any impacts of new development on the existing network

The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that any development proposals within its boundaries may have impacts on the wider highway network. Whilst some impacts may be mitigated through a co-ordinated approach to encourage use of sustainable modes, wider transport issues must be addressed strategically. This is outside the scope or remit of the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Objective Eight:** To promote a co-ordinated approach to transport and movement that encourages use of sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling, and reducing pollution levels, whilst ensuring that the centre is still accessible by car

**Policy M1:** The Neighbourhood Plan promotes walking and cycling and supports the removal of barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement across the town

Adopted planning policy aims to achieve an improvement in the walking and cycling environment by:

- Enhancing safety and security on existing routes with improved surfacing, lighting and crossings;
- Providing new routes, particularly where they close gaps in the existing network or link to major trip generators or public transport;
- Providing, where feasible, wheelchair-friendly routes, in town centres (including Sevenoaks) in association with ‘Shop-mobility’;
- Improving the walking environment; and
- Providing cycle-friendly infrastructure, introducing new cycle routes along the main transport corridors and improving home to school links.

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To achieve these aims existing barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement should be tackled. These include:

- Sub-standard crossing facilities at junctions;
- Indirect crossings where priority is given to motor vehicles;
- Narrow and cluttered footways in parts of the town centre, notably along London Road;
- Lack of cycle parking; and
- Blocked or unattractive footpath / cycle routes under or over the railway line (eg. Bosville Drive to the north-west of the town centre or at Bat and Ball Road to the north).

Kent County Council have prepared a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) for the County. One of the ROWIP's key themes is evolution of the network to achieve the objective of a modal shift to cycling and walking to, amongst other things, reduce road air pollution.

The Town Council will work with KCC's Public Rights of Way and Access Service to improve and enhance the network of public rights of way within Sevenoaks.

In particular the Town Council will support initiatives that reduce these barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement and will promote new routes that provide safer streets and convenient access to schools and other community assets.

**Policy M2:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports the Sevenoaks District Cycling Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and provision of additional cycle facilities to support new development

Cycling accounted for less than one percent of trips to work in the Sevenoaks district in 2001. This is considerably lower than the equivalent figures for the South-East (3.1%) and England (2.8%). The percentage of children cycling to school in Sevenoaks, at both the primary and secondary school level, is considerably lower than the Kent and national averages. In addition, there has been a small decline over the last two year period on which data is available, dropping from 0.5% in 2008 to 0.4% in 2010.

Both the Sevenoaks District Cycling Strategy and the LCWIP aims to enable more people to cycle safely in the district so as to encourage a shift towards more sustainable transport choices and healthy leisure activities. In order to achieve this, a number of priority areas for action have been identified, namely:

- Creating new routes and linkages;
- Providing safer cycling infrastructure;
- Providing improved cycle parking;
- Promoting and encouraging cycling; and
- Maintaining existing facilities.

The Town Council will promote the development and implementation of the strategy and any updating that may be required to reflect other changes in the town.

The Town Council will work with the District Council to encourage increased provision for cyclists and with Kent County Council PRoW and Access Service and Kent Highways and Transportation to upgrade the status of public footpaths or convert them to cycleways, where appropriate, and progress the delivery of cycle routes in the town.



**Policy M3:** The Neighbourhood Plan promotes the delivery of a new walking and cycling route that connects Bat and Ball / Otford Road with Dunton Green

There are few east-west routes in northern Sevenoaks and connection from Bat and Ball to Dunton Green is reliant on the A25 Bradbourne Vale Road, which is neither pedestrian- nor cycle-friendly. This new route will provide both a leisure route that links to the Darent Valley Path and a convenient connection to Dunton Green station. It is recognised that the western part of this route is within Dunton Green Parish.

**Policy Aim M4:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports the introduction of a 20mph speed limit close to schools and in some residential areas

Improving road safety in Sevenoaks could be achieved by:

- Promoting low speed limit regimes in built-up residential areas consistent with the government's advice on the setting of local speed limits; and
- Targeting measures to calm traffic in areas of high pedestrian activity including school entrances and shopping areas.

Subject to the outcomes of transport modelling, a 20mph speed limit in certain locations could help to achieve the aims above and also help to improve the environment for walking and cycling.

**Policy M5:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals for improved pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities at major junctions across the town

Despite Sevenoaks having a good network of pedestrian routes the district has the lowest percentage of walking / cycling to work and education in the country. One of the ways to tackle this situation is to enhance safety and security on existing routes through improved surfacing, lighting and road crossings.

Support will, therefore, be given to high quality design-led proposals that improve crossing facilities at major junctions across the town including:

- At the junction of Pembroke Road and London Road;
- Outside Sevenoaks station; and
- Bat and Ball junction to the north of the town.

**Policy M6:** The Town Council will progress proposals to refurbish Bat and Ball station and improve access to the station

One of the priority objectives of higher level planning policies is to improve public transport interchange facilities, in particular at the main bus and train stations in the district.

Sevenoaks Town Council has acquired a long-lease on the Grade II listed Bat and Ball station building, which originally opened in 1862. Following decades of neglect, the Town Council has recently sympathetically restored the station building to provide a community café, public toilets, new hireable space, improved external lighting and new cycle parking provision. This proposal significantly improves the environment at the station and has led to an increase in passenger numbers and a reduction in crime.

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The Council will continue to improve access to the station and surrounding area and investigate the potential to provide additional car parking should this be required.

Furthermore, the Town Council has recently completed the construction of a new Community Centre to the west of Bat and Ball station, the 'Bat & Ball Centre'. Pedestrian access to the western station platform has been delivered through the Community Centre site. This improves accessibility to the station, which was formerly only accessed from the eastern platform. The Town Council will also support any further improvements to the station including provision of real time information on trains and bus services.

**Policy M7:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals to improve transport interchange facilities at Sevenoaks station

As stated under Policy M6, higher level planning policies aim to improve the district's transport interchanges. Support will, therefore, be given to high-quality, design-led proposals that improve interchange facilities at Sevenoaks station. This should make it easier for users of the station to switch between rail and bus services and should include real time travel information for both buses and trains. Facilities for drop-off and pick-up and an improved taxi rank, should also be provided.

The Neighbourhood Plan will also support improvements to the public realm at the station entrance along London Road. This area is dominated by guard rails and other street clutter that create a poor first impression of the town and create barriers to pedestrian movement.

**Policy M8:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports enhancements to bus services and facilities to serve the town

As stated under Policies M6 and M7 higher level planning policies and strategies aim to improve the town's bus network and facilities.

The Town Council will, therefore, support high quality development proposals that will help enhance the town's bus services and facilities. These should include the provision of real time travel information and the physical improvement of the bus station and bus shelters.

**Policy M9:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports measures that will encourage a shift towards the use of greener modes of transport by businesses and residents

In addition to the policies to promote walking, cycling and to increase the attractiveness and use of public transport, support will be given to greener modes of transport such as electric cars, e-bikes and scooters.

Businesses will be encouraged to move to electric fleets and charging points will be introduced in appropriate public locations. Appropriate locations could be defined as being publicly accessible 24 hours, in a location that allows passive surveillance to ensure safety and discourage vandalism, convenient to users and in a mix of residential/public venues.

Greener approaches to transport will be encouraged through active campaigns such as green travel exhibitions, electric car shows and car-free days.

**Aim M10:** The Town Council will work with the District Council, and Kent County Council to ensure that, wherever possible, HGV movements are directed away from the town centre\*

Heavy goods vehicles passing through Sevenoaks town centre detract from the environment and increase air pollution. Many of these vehicles do not stop in the centre and should be directed to remain on the strategic road network.

**Objective Nine: To deliver public realm enhancements to improve the pedestrian experience in the town**

**Policy M11:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals for public realm improvements within the town centre particularly linking key town centre destinations. Such improvements should be part of a town centre-wide strategy to help improve the pedestrian experience in the town centre and should be informed by the character and heritage assets within an area

Where appropriate, the Neighbourhood Plan will support innovative proposals, such as shared surfaces, to improve the pedestrian environment and reduce the impact of traffic in both the town and neighbourhood centres

The Neighbourhood Plan supports the removal of street clutter including unnecessary street furniture and the adoption of a co-ordinated palette of materials and street furniture for the town and neighbourhood centres

**Aim M12:** The Town Council will identify locations across the town where repairs and improvements to paths and pavements are required to improve the pedestrian environment\*

Despite Sevenoaks having a good network of pedestrian routes the district has the lowest percentage of walking / cycling to work and education (schools and colleges) in the country. One of the ways to improve this situation is to improve the walking environment. Public realm improvements could help to achieve this aim.

The Covid pandemic has highlighted the importance of walking to people's health and well-being and increased the importance of delivering against this objective.

Site visits and public consultation carried out as part of the preparation of this Plan revealed several locations where the public realm could be improved.

The following issues were identified:

- Poor quality and badly signed routes between town centre destinations including the cultural facilities, town centre car parks, main shopping areas and open spaces (such as Knole and The Vine);
- Unattractive secondary connections along lanes and alleys connecting the town centre to car parks on Buckhurst Lane and to the leisure centre, library and museum;
- Sub-standard crossing facilities within the town centre and at junctions including High Street with Pembroke Road and London Road with Pembroke Road;
- Narrow footways — especially along London Road in the town centre, on Seal Road and in St John's neighbourhood centre; and
- The prevalence of street clutter across the town centre including bins, shop displays, advertising A-boards, dated poor quality signage and tables and chairs, and a lack of co-ordination in the design of street furniture.

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A town centre public realm strategy should be prepared to guide public realm improvements across the town. This should include an analysis of existing movement patterns, review of the paving quality and audit of street furniture / signage and clutter across the town centre. The strategy should set out key priorities for the public realm across the town centre addressing the issues above and any others identified.

The Town Council will support innovative proposals to improve the quality of the pedestrian experience in the town and neighbourhood centres, investigating the potential for shared surfaces, where appropriate. This should be considered as part of the public realm strategy.

Proposals will need to balance the needs of vehicular movements with an enhanced pedestrian environment.

The Town Council would support the recruitment of a town centre manager to co-ordinate events and activities, encourage initiatives to reduce street clutter and manage waste and improve the town centre environment and support traders.

## 4.5 THEME FOUR: LOCAL ECONOMY

**Objective Ten: To support local businesses and retailers and encourage a more collaborative and entrepreneurial business environment in the centre**

**Policy E1:** Support will be given to the provision of sites for start-up business space across the town. Preferred locations include:

- Allocated mixed-use and employment sites;
- The town centre;
- Neighbourhood centres; and
- Regeneration areas — such as at Bat and Ball.

Sevenoaks has a high proportion of micro and small businesses and, despite fewer start-ups than the national average, the business survival rates are high. With office rents rising and vacancy levels falling it is important to create the conditions to allow small businesses to flourish.

District Council planning policy states that the sustainable development of the district's economy will be supported by the development of start-up units for small businesses in suitable locations, together with improvements to information and communications technology to facilitate more flexible working practices. Potential hubs for small businesses could be established as part of development of sites. A central business hub in the town centre could provide a stimulating and energising environment for start-up businesses offering space for meetings, encouraging collaboration and networking and providing support and advice.

The Town Council has established a business hub on its site on Bradbourne Vale Road where desks can be rented on a flexible basis to provide affordable space as an alternative to working from home or renting serviced office space. As of January 2023, there are three further similar facilities in the town. Post Covid changing work patterns may make these sort of facilities increasingly popular avoiding the need to travel whilst also providing a more sociable and collaborative alternative to working from home.

Encouraging and enabling more people to work within the town is good for the local economy, helps to support other businesses and services in the town and reduces the need to travel which delivers wider environmental benefits.

**Aim E2:** The Town Council will work with local providers, businesses and the District Council to develop a tourism strategy for the town to promote the visitor economy\*

The Sevenoaks Economic Development Strategy identifies that tourism is a major contributor to the economic viability and growth of the district and contributes £230million to the local economy annually.

As part of this strategy the Town Council will:

- Work with local businesses to market the district as a place to work, live, travel and stay;
- Help facilitate growth in the tourism industry;
- Co-ordinate partnership working to develop longer-term destination plans to enhance the district's offer as a key tourism destination in Kent; and
- Support existing accommodation providers and attractions through training and knowledge sharing.

Sevenoaks Town Council would hope to work with other parties to promote destinations along the Sevenoaks to Swanley via Otford railway line. This would be branded as the 'Darent Valley Railway' and aim to enhance local tourism opportunities.

The Town Council will work with the District Council to develop a Tourism Strategy for Sevenoaks.

**Policy E3:** Proposals for increased parking provision will be supported when it can be proven that it is required to support the economic development of a local area. A preference will be for the intensification and improvement of existing car park sites over the development of new car parks. Any new car parks should be designed to the highest quality. New car parks should not be located where they will bring more traffic into residential areas or conflict with key pedestrian and cycle routes

The priority of this Plan is to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport rather than the use of the private car. However, it is also recognised that the provision of sufficient car parking spaces is critical to support the town's shops, businesses and public transport network. In specific local circumstances, where it can be proven that additional parking provision is needed to support economic growth, the development of new car parks will be supported.

Analysis of town centre character (Appendix A, Section A7) carried out as part of this Neighbourhood Plan reveals the impact existing areas of car parking can have on the townscape. The extensive areas of car parking around Sevenoaks station and the library and museum and leisure centre result in large areas of poorly defined open space and poor quality routes between car parks and key destinations. For this reason, extensive new areas of surface car parking should be avoided. Preference will be given to the intensification of existing sites. This could be achieved by redesigning the layout of existing car parks or by providing multi-storey / decked solutions as has recently been delivered on Buckhurst Lane. Any new car parks should be designed to the highest standards and provide legible, well-lit and attractive pedestrian connections to local destinations.

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**Objective Eleven: To consolidate and enhance both the town centre and secondary shopping areas**

**Policy E4:** Support will be given to the retention and development of indoor and outdoor markets and encouragement to the diversification of their offer

There has been a market in Sevenoaks since the 13th Century and Sevenoaks' markets are an attractive draw for the town centre. The provision of specialist markets (particularly a farmers' market) were supported by the public throughout the consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan. The town's two markets (the general market on Wednesday and charter market on the High Street on Saturday) are operated by the Town Council. The Council will work with stall-holders to develop proposals to expand provision and diversify the offer.

Markets offer opportunity for fledgling businesses to trade and often sell local produce and goods. This can benefit both the local economy and the environment.

**Policy E5:** Support will be given to spatial strategies and development proposals that enhance the function, accessibility and appearance of the neighbourhood centres at such as:

- Northern St John's;
- Southern St John's (Hollybush Parade); and
- Tubs Hill Parade.

Neighbourhood centres are generally protected by planning policies that place restrictions or protections on the land uses that are permitted in these locations. Planning policies do not, however, identify strategies to address some of the spatial issues that may be affecting the performance of neighbourhood centres such as lack of car parking, poor quality paving and unattractive shop fronts.

The Town Council will work with local business owners to identify the spatial and land use issues that they feel should be addressed in the centres. This information will be used to establish parameters for assessing future development proposals.

### 4.6 THEME FIVE: COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

**Objective Twelve: To deliver enhanced community assets for the town**

**Policy COM1:** ~~Proposals for a new Community Centre at Bat and Ball station will be progressed by the Town Council~~

The Town Council recently completed the construction of the Bat & Ball Centre a new community centre to the west of Bat and Ball station. This includes a large event space, a small hall, meeting room, kitchen area, and public toilets. There is also a separate nursery on the site.

The new centre is directly accessible from the new access recently opened to the western platform of Bat and Ball station. This helps to satisfy the priority objective in the Sevenoaks District Transport Strategy to improve public transport interchange facilities (refer to Appendix B).

There will be continued support for the regeneration of northern Sevenoaks following the Town Council’s initial substantial (over £5 million) investment into the area on facilities including the Bat & Ball centre, and Bat and Ball station refurbishment and access improvements.

**Policy ~~COM2~~ COM1:** Promote new health and education provision, faith facilities and other necessary community infrastructure as an integral part of new development

Development proposals that generate a requirement for new or improved physical, social and green infrastructure must provide this as an integral part of any planning application.

The Neighbourhood Plan provides a long-term strategy for Sevenoaks and identifies development opportunities including the potential for new homes in Northern Sevenoaks together with a significant new open space at the Greatness Quarry site (refer to Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan and to Policy D2). These new homes will require supporting infrastructure and in particular health care, schools provision and other community infrastructure including space for faith groups.

The Town Council will work with the District and County Councils, and also with health providers, to ensure that this community infrastructure is provided. Initial discussions have been held to consider the potential to provide a new primary school at the Greatness Quarry site or on land adjacent to Knole Academy, together with key worker accommodation.

The following statement has been received from the NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group:

*‘Inevitably any increase in the local population has an impact on provision of healthcare requirements both in terms of service, workforce and infrastructure. The proposals for Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan, whilst incremental, would have a significant impact on local general practice due to existing pressures and limited capacity.*

*To ensure sustainable general practice in Northern Sevenoaks a further assessment of the impact of this development is required to be undertaken with general practices in order to ensure that the growth can be accommodated over the plan period. At this time the Clinical Commissioning Group is signalling that the options for infrastructure to be further explored include the expansion / reconfiguration of existing general practice premises and the inclusion of a general practice premises as the part of the masterplan, including the opportunity to secure land and / or capital contributions through CIL.’*

**6 November 2017**

At the appropriate point the Town Council will hold further discussions to support the additional assessment and ensure robust plans are developed.

**Objective Thirteen: To develop and promote a cultural quarter in the town centre and to enhance the town’s cultural offer and improve access to existing cultural assets**

**Policy ~~COM3~~ COM2:** The Town Council will promote the development of a cultural quarter in the town centre together with an arts and cultural strategy

**Aim ~~COM4~~ COM3:** The Town Council will support the development of a new amphitheatre at Knole Environmental Park\*

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Sevenoaks already has an extensive variety of cultural facilities including The Stag Theatre and cinema, the library and museum (Kaleidoscope), bandstand, Knole House and Park and several other smaller private galleries. These are a significant resource for the town.

The Town Council has recently worked with Sevenoaks District and Kent County Council officers, local artists and designers and managers from cultural institutions, to prepare an arts and cultural strategy for the town. This promotes a number of spatial and non-spatial initiatives.

#### **Spatial / land use proposals:**

- New cultural facilities to strengthen the cultural offer including new affordable workspace for artists and makers to create, show and sell work;
- A strategy for improving and animating pedestrian links between cultural venues through artwork, lighting and wayfinding — this should also be considered as part of the public realm strategy for the town;
- A strategy for temporary arts interventions to improve poor quality spaces in the town centre;
- A strategy to allow the temporary occupation of empty shop units for arts and cultural uses;
- Events and festivals that provide opportunity for performance and cultural enrichment; and
- The construction of a new amphitheatre at the Environmental Park in Knole to provide additional space for outdoor performances, and also strengthen the area around the leisure centre and Kaleidoscope as a key civic hub for the town.

#### **Non-spatial activities:**

- The creation of an e-forum for local arts / cultural groups and individuals to share ideas and promote their activities;
- A strategy to foster better co-operation and shared promotion of arts and culture throughout the town; and
- A strategy to engage future generations in arts and cultural facilities.

This Neighbourhood Plan will support development proposals that come forward, which help to deliver the spatial proposals included in the Sevenoaks Cultural Strategy ‘Sevenoaks A Thriving Cultural Town’. This strategy is set out in Appendix C to this Neighbourhood Plan.

## **4.7 THEME SIX: SPORTS AND RECREATION**

### **Objective Fourteen: To deliver enhanced recreational and sports facilities for the town**

**Policy S1:** The Neighbourhood Plan will support the provision of new sports facilities across the town including the provision of new sports / watersports facilities at Sevenoaks Quarry (the Tarmac ~~Site~~) at Greatness, which will be required to be delivered either in advance of, or in parallel with, new homes on this site

All new sports facilities must adhere to sports governing body guidance for a particular sport (including schools) and should be developed with community access agreements

The provision of new facilities, and enhancements and improvements to existing sports facilities across the town, will be delivered in line with the Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy



As identified in Neighbourhood Plan Policy L5, sand extraction at Sevenoaks Quarry ~~on~~ (the Tarmac  ~~Ltd. site~~), north of Greatness Recreation Ground, is set to complete and the site returned to public use by 2030 / 2032. The ground will be remodelled and a new lake, which cannot be delivered in full until the sand extraction activities have ceased, will be provided in the north-east quadrant of a new Greatness Park.

In contrast to the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve, which provides a quiet and contemplative environment and a haven for wildlife, Greatness Park will be an active space. The lake will be used for a range of water sports and will be served by a visitor centre and boatyard. Greatness Park will provide a new recreational resource for the wider community, and new walking and cycling routes will ensure that the park is accessible by sustainable modes.

The Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy (Appendix D) sets out a long-term strategy for future sports provision in the town. It was prepared in 2015 by the Town Council in close consultation with local sports organisations and the community and promotes enhancements and improvements to existing facilities at The Vine, Hollybush Recreation Ground and Park, Knole Paddock, Greatness Recreation Ground and the Sencio Leisure Centre.

Some of the proposals set out in the Sports Strategy have already been delivered including the provision of a 3G pitch at Greatness Recreation Ground, refurbishment of the pavilion and public toilets at The Vine and the introduction of improved drainage and spectator seating at Knole Paddock. Future development proposals, which comply with the Sports Strategy, will be supported.

The Town Council will continue to investigate and support promotion of potential sites for sports that are not well provided for in the town including basketball, netball, archery, hockey and badminton.

Community access agreements should be sought with all planning applications for new sporting facilities in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

The Town Council will continue to update the Sports Strategy document over the life of this Plan to reflect changing circumstances. The current version is included as Appendix D.

Development for new sports facilities will only be supported if they adhere to guidance provided by the relevant governing body for the particular sport. This will ensure that the facilities can be used effectively in the future and maximise the value of the investment for the community. Planning applications must be accompanied by a statement explaining how this has been achieved.

The network of public rights of way in Sevenoaks also offer a resource for recreation and leisure and increased mental and physical well-being. Refer also to Neighbourhood Plan Policies M1, M2 and M3.

**Policy S2:** The Neighbourhood Plan will support the provision of new and enhanced play and outdoor sports and recreational facilities for children and young people

The Sevenoaks Openspace Study (2018) identified that many parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area are deficient in terms of provision for children and young people. Furthermore in many places the equipment is not challenging enough, not in keeping with the character of an area and play areas lack trees or landscape that provide character or shading.

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With an increase in obesity amongst children nationwide and obese children being twice as likely to become obese adults providing play and other recreational facilities that are interesting and challenging and that draw children and young people away from more sedentary activities is of great importance.

## 4.8 THEME SEVEN: DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

### **Objective Fifteen: To promote high quality development that enhances the town and consolidates vacant or under-utilised land**

**Policy D1:** The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that there are sites that may come forward for development, either as windfall or through allocation in the Local Plan, that have potential to deliver benefits that should be secured through the design, layout and use of each site. Planning applications on the following vacant and under-utilised sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area should demonstrate that they will deliver the relevant benefits set out below, in addition to other requirements set out in the Local Plan:

#### **1. Bat and Ball Centre, Bat and Ball\***

- Mixed-use development accommodating community use, office use and residential dwellings within buildings of up to four storey;
- A southern access and entrance to Bat and Ball station; and
- A building layout that would facilitate enhanced access to Bat and Ball station and provide an arrival space in front of the new southern entrance to the station.

#### **2. Travis Perkins, Bat and Ball**

- A longer term opportunity to relocate light industrial uses northwards to Vestry Industrial Estate / Otford (outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area) and redevelop the site with mixed-use development within compact blocks of up to four storey height;
- Removal of the conflict between the light industrial employment uses and residential accommodation within the Bat and Ball area; and
- Improved access towards Bat and Ball station and better animation of the streets in the area.

#### **3. Cramptons Road, Water Works**

- Potential for residential development close to Bat and Ball station. With its proximity to shops and facilities it could be a suitable site for a co-housing project;
- Layout must retain access to the water treatment works to the north of the site. The layout of development should facilitate a potential future pedestrian connection through Sevenoaks Business Centre to Bat and Ball station; and
- The scale and massing of development should respond to the lower scale properties to the west of the site.

#### **4. Carpetright / Wickes, Otford Road**

- Relocate existing uses northwards to the Vestry Industrial Estate where they are more appropriate;
- Strengthen the residential character of the area and remove the conflict between the big box retail uses and existing homes;
- Deliver buildings that create a positive frontage to Cramptons Road (houses) and Otford Road (apartments); and
- Respond positively with proposals for the adjacent gasholder station site (Site 5).

#### **5. Sevenoaks Gasholder Station**

- Residential development close to Bat and Ball station that supports the regeneration of Northern Sevenoaks;
- A development layout that provides positive frontages to streets and retains, fronts onto and overlooks the pedestrian path (a public right of way) that connects Cramptons Road with Otford Road through the site; and
- A scale and massing that responds to the context (i.e. two storey buildings on Cramptons Road but with potential for four storeys on Otford Road).

## 6. Bat and Ball Enterprise Centre

- Longer term opportunity to change this area close to Bat and Ball station to mixed-use;
- Strengthen the residential character of the area and improve access to the station for people living in Greatness through pedestrian routes (from Queens Drive) that are overlooked by new development;
- Deliver apartment buildings (with ground floor employment) that create a positive frontage to Bat and Ball Road; and
- Buildings could be up to four storeys in this location.

## 7. Sevenoaks station and surrounding area

- Significant opportunity for development that will transform the sense of arrival into Sevenoaks and could establish a new urban quarter for the town;
- There are notable views down London Road towards the Kent Downs AONB to the north and from Granville Road towards the station and AONB and any development should respond sensitively to this setting;
- Scale of buildings to be typically four to six storey. There may be potential for a taller building to mark the station; and
- Opportunity to reconsider transport interchange and public realm treatment at the station.

## 8. Edwards Electrical, High Street

- Development proposals to respond to heritage sensitivities (the site is located immediately to the south of, and adjacent to, the Vine Conservation Area);
- Development should respond to the character of the existing streetscape both in terms of materials, design language and height and massing — two / three storeys is appropriate;
- Development should provide a positive and active frontage to the High Street that is aligned to frontages on adjacent plots and is sympathetic to adjacent built form; and
- Potential for mews houses to the rear of the site.

## 9. Buckhurst Lane (Suffolk Way) sites

- Development proposals to respond to heritage sensitivities (the site is located on the edge of the Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area) and development will need to respond to the historic development pattern, materials and character of the area;
- Access will need to be maintained to service yards of properties on High Street;
- Potential to provide development that provides a positive frontage to Suffolk Way and Buckhurst Lane;
- Scale and massing of development to respond to the existing context;
- Development should front streets whilst concealing existing service yards from public view; and
- Pedestrian connections through the area to be retained and any trees that are removed to be replaced.

## 10. Post Office / BT Exchange

- Development proposals to respond to heritage sensitivities (the site is located adjacent to the Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area and the locally listed Stag Theatre);
- The site is located on elevated ground with land dropping away to the south and development is likely to be highly visible from a number of locations. The height and massing needs to be carefully considered and modelled;
- Potential to re-establish the primacy of London Road through development providing active ground floor uses onto London Road with apartments above. Total building height three storeys plus an additional set back storey;
- Frontage onto London Road should be set back to create a public space that serves the adjacent theatre and provides a setting for the new ground floor uses;
- Development should provide a positive frontage to the lane connecting the car park to the rear of The Stag Theatre with London Road;
- Potential for public realm enhancement to South Park; and
- A comprehensive scheme should be prepared but could be delivered as two independent phases (Post Office and BT Building).

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#### **11. Town Council offices, Bradbourne Vale Road\***

- Residential development in the form of apartments that provide a frontage to Bradbourne Vale Road with other dwellings to the rear;
- Development up to three storeys; and
- Potential to relocate existing office space to the Community Centre site at Bat and Ball station.

#### **12. Adult Education site, Bradbourne Road**

- Potential for sensitive residential conversion of the locally listed college building which maintains the integrity of the existing building;
- Potential for a new build residential annex; this must be subservient to main college building in respect of its design and scale and massing; and
- Existing mature trees and quality of landscape setting to be retained.

Developers will be encouraged to develop buildings constructed to the highest environmental standards to reduce carbon emissions through construction and later life

The sites have been identified from existing Local Plan site allocations, survey work undertaken as part of this Neighbourhood Plan and the recommendations made in the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan.

It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design. To achieve this, Policy D1 identifies the benefits that should be secured through the design, layout and use of each site should they be brought forward for development.

The location of each site is indicated in Figure 4.7 and further detail on each of the sites is provided on the pages that follow.

This includes:

- Existing features to be retained on-site including any buildings or landscape features / trees;
- Environmental or heritage assets in the wider context that development would need to respond to;
- The land uses that are considered appropriate on the site;
- The potential scale, height and massing of new buildings;
- How development should respond to streets spaces and other features; and
- Movement, connectivity, access and parking.

The Neighbourhood Plan is looking to the long term and it is recognised that for some sites development is unlikely to be brought forward in the short to medium term. For some sites there is currently a policy presumption to retain employment in the Local Plan or an existing use that is unlikely to change at the current time.

In order to reduce the impact that development has on climate, were development to be brought forward on any of the sites it should be built to the highest environmental standards with new homes meeting or exceeding the government's 'Future Homes Standard' and non-residential buildings aiming for BREAAAM excellent ratings.

## 1. BAT AND BALL COMMUNITY CENTRE

### OTFORD ROAD 0.89HA

<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Bat and Ball Centre, associated car parking and MUGA recently delivered on the site.</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No allocation, however, policy presumption to retain employment use (Policy EMP1/EMP5)</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING DESIGNATIONS / CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjacent uses — light industrial to the north; rail line to the south and east, busy road to the west</li> <li>Single point of access from the north-west corner</li> <li>Land is steeply sloping to the western boundary</li> <li>The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Sevenoaks Gravel Pits SSSI (Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve)</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Community Centre, re-provision of the children’s nursery (COMPLETED)</li> <li>Office space</li> <li>Residential apartments</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed-use development accommodating community use, office use and residential dwellings within buildings of up to four storey</li> <li>Potential southern access and entrance to Bat and Ball station (DELIVERED)</li> <li>Building layout should facilitate enhanced access to Bat and Ball station and provide an arrival space in front of the new southern entrance to the station</li> </ul>

## 2. TRAVIS PERKINS, BAT AND BALL

### SEVENOAKS BUSINESS CENTRE 1.27HA

<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Light industry and builders’ merchants</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No allocation; however, policy presumption to retain employment use (Policy EMP1/EMP5)</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING DESIGNATIONS / CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travis Perkins has recently expanded their operation on the site</li> <li>Numerous other businesses are located within the Sevenoaks Business Centre</li> <li>The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Sevenoaks Gravel Pits SSSI (Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve)</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office space</li> <li>Residential apartments</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Longer term opportunity to relocate light industrial uses northwards to Vestry Industrial Estate / Otford (outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area) and redevelop the site with mixed-use development within compact blocks of up to four storey height</li> <li>Remove the conflict between the light industrial employment uses and residential accommodation within the Bat and Ball area</li> <li>Create improved access towards the station and better animation of the streets in the area</li> </ul>

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### 3. CRAMPTONS ROAD WATER WORKS

#### CRAMPTONS ROAD 1.26HA

<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Southern portion of the water treatment works (northern portion retained in operational use)</li> <li>Includes two vacant waterworks buildings and a residential property</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocated for Housing in ADMP - H1(b)</li> <li>Employment use (Policy EMP1/EMP5)</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING DESIGNATIONS / CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing homes which may impact on layout</li> <li>Access to water treatment works must be retained</li> <li>Access onto Cramptons Road is constrained</li> <li>Requires a comprehensive approach that responds to adjacent sites</li> <li>The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Sevenoaks Gravel Pits SSSI (Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve)</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mix of residential houses and apartments</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential development close to Bat and Ball station. With its proximity to shops and facilities it could be a suitable site for a co-housing project</li> <li>Development layout should facilitate a potential future pedestrian connection through Sevenoaks Business Centre to the station</li> <li>Development form should respond to lower scale properties to the west</li> </ul>

### 4. CARPETRIGHT / WICKES

#### OTFORD ROAD 1.13HA

<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Big box retail uses</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No allocation, however, policy presumption to retain employment use (Policy EMP1/EMP5)</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING DESIGNATIONS / CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site is adjacent to former gasholder station and ground remediation is likely to be required</li> <li>Comprehensive approach required that anticipates potential change on gasholder station site</li> <li>The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Sevenoaks Gravel Pits SSSI (Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve)</li> <li>A public footpath extends along the site's eastern boundary</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential use: houses fronting Cramptons Road and apartments fronting Otford Road</li> </ul>

<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relocate these uses northwards to the Vestry Industrial Estate where they are more appropriate</li> <li>Strengthen the residential character of the area and remove the conflict between the big box retail uses and existing homes</li> <li>Deliver buildings that create a positive frontage to Cramptons Road (houses) and Otford Road (apartments)</li> <li>Development proposal would work more effectively in conjunction with adjacent gasholder station site (Site 5)</li> </ul>
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**5. SEVENOAKS GASHOLDER STATION**

**CRAMPTONS ROAD 0.98HA**

<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site of former gas works — gasholders were removed in 2018</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocated for Housing in ADMP - H1 (c)</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING DESIGNATIONS / CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site remediation will be required</li> <li>Development opportunity is impacted by adjacent big box retail uses to the south</li> <li>Comprehensive approach required that anticipates potential change on adjacent sites</li> <li>The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Sevenoaks Gravel Pits SSSI (Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve)</li> <li>Public right of way extends across the site</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential use: houses fronting Cramptons Road and apartments fronting Otford Road</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential development close to Bat and Ball station that supports the regeneration of Northern Sevenoaks</li> <li>Development layout should provide positive frontages to streets and retain and front onto the pedestrian path that connects Cramptons Road with Otford Road through the site</li> <li>Scale and massing should respond to the context (i.e. two storey buildings on Cramptons Road but with potential for four storeys on Otford Road)</li> </ul>

**6. BAT AND BALL ENTERPRISE CENTRE**

**BAT AND BALL ROAD 1.80HA**

<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Light industry / businesses within two storey buildings. Car parking located either to the front or sides of buildings</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocated for Employment in ADMP - EMP1 (b)</li> </ul>

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<b>PLANNING DESIGNATIONS / CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While Greatness Quarry is still operational Bat and Ball Road is used by numerous heavy vehicles</li> <li>• Employment uses impact on accessibility of station from Greatness to the east</li> <li>• The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Sevenoaks Gravel Pits SSSI (Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve)</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for area to become mixed-use with the addition of residential development</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longer term opportunity to change area around the station to mixed-use</li> <li>• Strengthen the residential character of the area and improve access to the station for people living in Greatness through pedestrian routes that are overlooked by new development</li> <li>• Deliver apartment buildings (with ground floor employment) that create a positive frontage to Bat and Ball Road</li> <li>• Buildings could be up to four storeys in this location</li> </ul>

## 7. SEVENOAKS STATION AND SURROUNDING AREA

### LONDON ROAD 8.92HA

<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Station and arrival car park: station and retail units</li> <li>• Farmers site: vacant</li> <li>• London Road shops: retail</li> <li>• BT offices at One 60 London Road</li> <li>• Tubs Hill Parade: retail with residential above</li> <li>• Shell Garage and Kwik Fit: petrol filling station and car repairs</li> <li>• Sevenoaks station car park: parking</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No allocation, however, policy presumption to retain employment use (Policy EMP1/EMP5)</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING DESIGNATIONS / CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area is generally low lying and so can accommodate greater height than elsewhere in the town; however, there are notable views down London Road towards the Downs to the north</li> <li>• Car parking will need to be retained but could be re-provided within a multi-storey car park</li> <li>• Conflicts between road users and pedestrians around the station</li> <li>• Fragmented ownerships may make delivery challenging (e.g. Tubs Hill Parade)</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for compact mixed-use development including retail and food and drink around station, some B1 office, petrol station and new residential units</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant opportunity for development that will transform the sense of arrival into Sevenoaks and could establish a new urban quarter for the town</li> <li>• Scale typically four to six storey with taller building marking the station</li> <li>• Opportunity to reconsider transport interchange and public realm treatment at the station</li> </ul>



**8. FORMER EDWARDS ELECTRICAL**

**166 HIGH STREET 0.16HA**

<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vacant site</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Located within designated town centre</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING DESIGNATIONS / CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site is located immediately to the south of, and adjacent to, the Vine Conservation Area</li> <li>• Development must respond to the character of the existing streetscape both in terms of materials, design language and height and massing — two / three storeys is appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active ground floor uses fronting street</li> <li>• Residential apartments and houses</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development should provide a positive and active frontage to the High Street that is aligned to frontages on adjacent plots and is sympathetic to adjacent built form</li> <li>• Potential for mews houses to the rear</li> </ul>

**9. BUCKHURST LANE (SUFFOLK WAY) SITES**

**SEVENOAKS TOWN CENTRE 0.08 AND 0.24HA**

<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car parking</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Located within designated town centre</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING DESIGNATIONS / CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site is located on the edge of the Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area and development will need to respond to the historic development pattern, materials and character of the area</li> <li>• Access will need to be maintained to service yards of properties on High Street</li> <li>• Challenges in terms of interface with some of the existing properties</li> <li>• Loss of town centre car parking / need to relocate</li> <li>• May result in the loss of some trees</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground floor B1 workspace and potential for an indoor market</li> <li>• Residential apartments above</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to provide development that provides a positive frontage to Suffolk Way and Buckhurst Lane</li> <li>• Scale and massing of development should respond to the existing context</li> <li>• Development should front streets whilst concealing existing service yards from public view</li> <li>• Pedestrian connections through area to be retained and any trees that are removed to be replaced</li> </ul>

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### 10. POST OFFICE / BT EXCHANGE

#### SOUTH PARK 0.6HA

<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post Office and BT Exchange</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocated for mixed-use in ADMP</li> <li>Located within designated town centre (secondary frontage) - H2(a)</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING DESIGNATIONS / CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjacent to the Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area and the locally listed Stag Theatre. Development will need to respond to the historic development pattern, materials and character of the area</li> <li>Prominent site on gateway to town centre</li> <li>On elevated ground with land dropping away to the south means that any development will be highly visible from a number of locations. Height and massing needs to be carefully considered and modelled. Maximum height four storeys with upper floors set back</li> <li>Town centre car park to the rear</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ground floor active uses onto High Street</li> <li>Residential apartments</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant town centre site</li> <li>Potential to re-establish the primacy of London Road through development providing active ground floor uses onto London Road with apartments above. Total building height three storeys plus an additional set back storey</li> <li>Frontage onto London Road should be set back to create a public space that serves the adjacent theatre and provides a setting for the new ground floor uses</li> <li>Development should provide a positive frontage to the lane connecting the car park to the rear of The Stag Theatre with London Road</li> <li>Potential public realm enhancement to South Park</li> <li>A comprehensive scheme needs to be prepared but could be delivered as two independent phases (Post Office and BT Building)</li> </ul>

### 11. SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

#### BRADBOURNE VALE ROAD 0.32HA

<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town Council offices and car parking</li> <li>Office hub recently completed</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No allocation, however, policy presumption to retain employment use (Policy EMP1/EMP5)</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING DESIGNATIONS / CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mature trees on site boundaries</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential</li> </ul>

<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential development in the form of apartments that provide a frontage to Bradbourne Vale Road with other dwellings to the rear</li> <li>Development up to three storeys</li> <li>Potential to relocate existing office space to the Community Centre site at Bat and Ball station</li> </ul>
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**12. SEVENOAKS ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE**

**BRADBOURNE ROAD 0.60HA**

<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adult Education Centre and associated outbuildings and car parking</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No allocation, however policy presumption to retain employment use (Policy EMP1/EMP5)</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING DESIGNATIONS / CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>College building locally listed</li> <li>Part of the site is allocated as open space</li> <li>Mature trees on the site</li> <li>A public right of way crosses the site</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential development through refurbished college building and a new-build residential annex to the south of the site</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential development opportunity</li> <li>College must be sensitively refurbished / converted to maintain integrity of existing building</li> <li>Annex must be subservient to main college building in respect of its design and scale and massing</li> <li>Retain mature trees and quality of landscape setting</li> </ul>

**Policy D2:** Should Sevenoaks Quarry (the Tarmac Ltd. Site) at Greatness be brought forward for development, either as windfall or through allocation in the Local Plan, this should be guided by an agreed masterplan, agreed by the local planning authority in consultation with Sevenoaks Town Council (as part of the planning application process), that indicates how development would be laid out to respond to, and provide a significant landscape resource for Sevenoaks, how it will be phased and the supporting infrastructure that would be delivered as part of the development.

Development of the site should also deliver the following benefits for the area:

- The safeguarding of land for cCommunity infrastructure including the potential provision of a primary school and medical facilities;
- Green infrastructure including the provision of a new lake and centre for sport, recreation and leisure, a network of walking and cycling routes and play space;
- Transport infrastructure and in particular proposals must demonstrate how vehicular access will be achieved and how any transport impacts will be mitigated, including but not limited to improvements to Bat and Ball junction;
- Re-use of historic buildings - the former oast house should be refurbished, integrated into the development and re-used for community use; and
- A mix of new homes that supports local needs and including affordable homes to meet the requirements of the Local Plan.

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The potential of the Sevenoaks Quarry (the Tarmac Ltd. site) for development was identified as part of the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan commissioned by Sevenoaks Town Council in November 2016 (Refer to Appendix A5 for further details).

The Masterplan includes proposals for the redevelopment of Sevenoaks Quarry (the Tarmac Ltd. site) once sand extraction operations are complete. Planning for such development now will help ensure that it delivers the maximum benefits to the surrounding community.

If developed, new housing could help deliver a number of community assets including a lake for watersports, walking and cycle routes, a visitor centre and the refurbishment and reuse of the locally listed former oast house. A new primary school and medical facilities could also be provided.

Sevenoaks Quarry (the Tarmac Ltd. site) is currently within the Green Belt. For development on this site to come forward exceptional circumstances will have to be identified by Sevenoaks District Council in order to remove the site from the Green Belt. This is currently under review as part of the Local Plan process.

The Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan was consulted upon as part of the District Council's Local Plan 'Issues and Options' Consultation. The Plan received overwhelmingly positive support through this consultation. 66% of respondents stated that they either 'Strongly supported' or 'Supported' the Plan (based on responses from 13,654 people).

Whilst it is not yet certain whether the site will come forward the potential of this site is clear. It is in a sustainable location, close to Bat and Ball station with connections to the surrounding townscape and access to local shops and services.

Should the site be brought forward for development the following benefits to the wider area should be delivered:

### 1. Community Infrastructure

The site offers potential to deliver new community infrastructure for Northern Sevenoaks. Early planning will allow the District Council to assess the impact of a rise in population and plan new infrastructure requirements accordingly. This should include all necessary health and education provision.

### 2. Green Infrastructure

One of the key requirements of new development ~~on~~ at Sevenoaks Quarry (the Tarmac Ltd. site) is the provision of a new lake for sport, recreation and leisure (refer also to Policy L5). Development around the lake and the green spaces around it should include:

- A centre for watersports;
- A lake-side trail for running, walking and cycling as part of the wider green network;
- A new pedestrian / cycle link from Greatness Recreation Ground;
- Good levels of connectivity through the new housing provided on-site and to the wider area; and
- Opportunities for play spaces.

### 3. Transport Infrastructure

Development on-site must be contingent on the adequate resolution of the impact on the surrounding transport network including, but not limited to, improvements to Bat and Ball junction. The development must be planned around a clearly defined, safe and well connected network of pedestrian and cycle routes that link the site to the surrounding area.

**4. Re-use of historic buildings**

Sevenoaks Quarry (The Tarmac Ltd. site) contains a former oast house. This should be refurbished, integrated into the development and re-used for community use.

**5. Size and mix of dwellings**

New development will only be supported if the requirements for affordable housing are met and delivered on-site. These should be designed to meet local needs.

New development will only be supported if the size and mix of houses reflects local needs. This must include smaller units.

**13. SEVENOAKS QUARRY (THE TARMAC LTD. SITE), GREATNESS**

ACCESSED OFF BAT AND BALL ROAD APPROX. 70HA

<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greatness Quarry - sand is currently being extracted</li> <li>• Site includes a number of works buildings, (including a locally listed oast house), towards the west of the area</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No allocation, however, policy presumption to retain employment use (Policy EMP1/EMP5)</li> <li>• Located within the Green Belt</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING DESIGNATIONS / CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sand extraction is ongoing and the site will need to be re-profiled following completion of the extraction</li> <li>• There are a number of mature trees and woodland belts within the area</li> <li>• A locally listed oast house is located towards the west of the site</li> <li>• The site is close to the Kent Downs AONB</li> <li>• A public right of way extends through the area</li> <li>• The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Greatness Brickworks SSSI (located to the north west). It may be appropriate for the SSSI to become part of the greenspace for the development</li> <li>• A landfill site is located to the north-west of the area</li> <li>• Access is constrained with the current main access off Bat and Ball Road in the south-western corner. Secondary access is provided from Farm Road (the former main access of the quarry) and a from Childsbridge Lane in the east</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open space</li> <li>• Community uses including education and health</li> <li>• Residential homes on the western portion of the site</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to deliver a significant open space resource for Northern Sevenoaks and the wider area. This to include an extensive waterbody offering potential for watersports, a network of paths for pedestrians and cyclists and range of attractive habitats for both people and wildlife</li> <li>• Retain and refurbish the historic oast house for community uses</li> <li>• Locate new homes within an attractive green environment focused in the south-western portion of the site where they can serve to overlook routes and open spaces</li> <li>• Provide a range of homes to meet local needs. Properties to be generally two and three storeys</li> <li>• Provide a network of safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes offering clear and understandable access from the surrounding residential areas and to Bat and Ball station</li> <li>• Improve pedestrian access over the railway line to Vestry Road to the west of the site</li> <li>• Carefully manage vehicular access to the site to avoid impacting detrimentally</li> </ul>

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- on adjacent residential areas and the wider movement network in the area
- Avoid intrusion to the Kent Downs AONB through planting, use of materials that blend into the landscape and careful use of lighting to avoid light spill

#### **Objective Sixteen: To deliver a range of new homes to meet local needs**

**Policy D3:** Where practicable larger residential developments will be expected to provide a range of homes. New housing should contribute to meeting the identified local need. Affordable housing provision will be required as part of all eligible developments

**Policy D4:** The development of on-site key worker housing will be encouraged as part of larger infrastructure developments and subject to a condition preventing sale or rent on the open market

The shortage of affordable homes, which is more acute within Sevenoaks than in the wider district, contributes to a shortage of ‘key workers’ living locally. This means inward commuting and additional traffic as a consequence.

With an aging population there is also a need to provide appropriate accommodation to allow people to downsize and to provide different models that provide support or shared facilities (eg. co-housing). These could be located in accessible locations where there is less reliance on using a car and potential to walk to local shops, medical services and wildlife and recreation sites.

A range of housing is needed to satisfy the key drivers identified in the Sevenoaks District 2017 Housing Needs Study. These include a need to increase the range of housing and support for older people and to offer a diverse range of affordable housing models.

The range of homes to include:

- Starter homes;
- Key worker housing;
- Smaller units (less than three beds);
- Houses of various of sizes that provide flexible accommodation to suit changing needs — for instance, allowing the development of annexes to facilitate multi-generational living and home working;
- Care homes, sheltered housing and special needs housing;
- Co-housing and self build;
- Build to rent; and
- Lifetime homes.

Providing a greater mix of homes to meet local needs can allow people to live closer to their place of work and reduce the need to travel.

**Objective Seventeen: To provide homes that are energy efficient and minimise environmental impact**

**Policy D5:** The Neighbourhood Plan promotes the delivery of new homes that are energy efficient, that are constructed using materials that reduce the impact on the environment and that are designed to maximise daylight and sun penetration whilst also avoiding overheating

**Policy D6:** The Neighbourhood Plan promotes the retrofitting of existing homes to increase their energy efficiency

The increasing realisation of the climate emergency means that the government is now committed to reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Investing in and implementing sustainable design practices will help to work towards climate mitigation, whilst improving economic growth and creating healthier communities.

When designing new or retrofitting existing buildings consideration should be given to:

- Insulation of properties — this should be continuous utilising Passive House principles and include use of high performance doors and windows;
- Materials with low embodied energy or recycled materials (for example re-use of existing concrete as road fill or in foundations);
- Materials with a high thermal mass, such as stone or brick, which store heat and release it slowly;
- Green roofs or walls to reduce storm water run-off, increase soundproofing and biodiversity;
- Photovoltaics or solar thermal water heating;
- Water efficiency;
- Ground or air source heat pumps for heating; and
- Low flow technology in water fittings, rainwater harvesting systems and grey water recycling systems to reduce water consumption.

The sourcing of local materials and use of recycled materials is encouraged.

When retrofitting historic properties applicants are encouraged to consider Historic England's guidance on improving energy efficiency of historic buildings which is available on the Historic England website.

### **Monitoring**

The Town Council intend to prepare an Action Plan, which will monitor the effectiveness of the policies against the Vision and Objectives as set out in Chapter 3. It is also the intention to review the STNP every 5 years.

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