




Sevenoaks
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Despatched: 28.10.15

CABINET
05 November 2015 at 7.00 pm
Conference Room, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks



AGENDA


Membership:


Chairman: Cllr. Fleming Vice-Chairman: Cllr. Lowe
Cllrs. Dickins, Firth, Hogarth, Piper and Searles

	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To agree the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 October 2015, as a correct record.	(Pages 1 - 6)	
2. Declarations of interest Any interests not already registered		
3. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)		
4. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee or Cabinet Advisory Committees (if any)		
5. Property Disposals Update 	(Pages 7 - 14)	Mark Bradbury Tel: 01732 227099

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEES

6. Street naming and property numbering policy 	(Pages 15 - 32)	Richard Wilson Tel: 01732 227262
7. Strategic Housing Market Assessment 	(Pages 33 - 224)	Richard Morris Tel: 01732 227430
8. Oxford Village Design Statement	(Pages 225 - 282)	Richard Morris Tel: 01732 227430

 Indicates a Key Decision

 indicates a matter to be referred to Council

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing this agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public.)

To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, Members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the appropriate Contact Officer named on a report prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you require a copy of this agenda or any of the reports listed on it in another format please do not hesitate to contact the Democratic Services Team as set out below.

For any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact:

The Democratic Services Team (01732 227241)

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2015 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllrs. Dickins, Firth, Hogarth, Lowe, Piper and Searles

Cllrs. Abraham, Edwards-Winsor, Maskell, Parkin, Purves and Thornton were also present.

28. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 17 September 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

29. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

30. Questions from Members

There were none.

31. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee or Cabinet Advisory Committees

- a) Statement of Accounts 2014/15 - Outcome of External Audit (Audit Committee 8 September 2015, Minute 19)

The Audit Committee had resolved to advise Cabinet that pending a review of the Team, the Finance Team may require additional resources for the preparation of the 2015/16 Statement of Accounts. The Chief Finance Officer advised that this followed concerns raised by Grant Thornton about the capacity of the team to deliver the accounts in the required shorter timescales in years to come. He further advised that the Head of Finance had been working on this and a review of the whole Finance Team was currently taking place including looking at the skills required to produce the accounts. Other options were also being investigated such as bringing in temporary expertise for certain elements of the accounts process. Grant Thornton Audit fees were reducing so that could be a possible source of funding if required.

Resolved: That it be noted.

32. Health Inequalities Action Plan - end of year summary report and draft 2015-18 Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health presented the report which sought adoption of the Draft 2015 – 2018 Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Action Plan, to continue the work of reducing health inequalities across the District. The Portfolio Holder

highlighted the recommendations made by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee who had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.

She reported that it was all part of the government's preventative agenda, and that the only real area the Council could have its main influence was through: meeting the housing needs of people living in the District, including affordable and appropriate housing; and sustaining and supporting healthy communities. It was noted that further funding from Kent County Council (KCC) for 2016/17 had still not yet been confirmed, and that contracts were tied to the programme.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the Draft 2015 – 2018 Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Action Plan, be adopted.

33. Annual Review of Parking Charges for 2016/17

The Portfolio Holder for Direct & Trading Services presented the report reviewing parking charges for 2016 - 17. It proposed for consultation, revised tariffs in the Council's off-street car parks and in on-street pay and display parking bays. He brought Members' attention to the [tabled](#) recommendations made by the Direct & Trading Advisory Committee who had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the proposals for revised parking charges for 2016 - 17 be agreed for consultation.

34. Christmas Parking 2015

The Portfolio Holder for Direct & Trading Services presented the report which sought approval to the proposals for free parking for two Saturdays, 12 and 19 December 2015 preceding Christmas, to help encourage shoppers and other visitors to Sevenoaks and Westerham, in the busy shopping period leading up to Christmas 2015.

The Portfolio Holder drew Members' attention to the [tabled](#) recommendations made by the Direct & Trading Advisory Committee who had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) the proposals for free parking for two Saturdays at Sevenoaks and Westerham, 12 and 19 December 2015 preceding Christmas, be agreed; and
- b) it be recommended to Council to authorise the cost of funding be met from Supplementary Estimates.

35. Senior Management Restructure

The Chairman presented the report which set out a proposal for a restructure of the Council's senior management as part of the Council's efforts to be well placed to deliver on its vision and promises to the community, to meet future challenges and to support the Council in delivering the savings required to achieve a 10 year balanced budget that was self-sufficient and no longer reliant on direct financial support from central Government. The report provided the criteria used to help shape the proposal, the proposed senior management structure, a summary of the consultation carried out with staff and the processes that would be followed in appointing to the new posts.

In response to a question it was noted that the services currently managed by the Chief Housing Officer and Chief Officer Legal & Governance would be re-aligned amongst the remaining Chief Officers.

The Chairman reported that the Portfolio Holder Legal & Democratic Services was working hard, within budget, to strengthen the legal team. The Portfolio Holder Legal & Democratic Services praised the Chief Housing Officer and Chief Officer Legal & Governance for all their efforts whilst working for the Council.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) the proposed senior management restructure as set out in Appendix A to the report, be endorsed;
- b) it be noted that the costs associated with the restructure of senior management would be limited to, and met from, the earmarked Reorganisation Reserve; and
- c) it be noted that the cost of any service restructures as a result of the new senior management structure would be limited to, and met from, existing service budgets.

(All Officers other than the Chief Executive and Democratic Services Officer left the room for consideration of Minute item 35)

36. Development of Sennocke & Bradbourne Car Parks

Members considered a report which sought approval to develop the Sennocke Car Park and Bradbourne Car Park sites to provide a branded hotel and additional car parking capacity

It was moved by the Chairman and

Resolved: That, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that likely disclosure of exempt information was involved as defined by paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as identified in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

As this was the first major project that may require borrowing for the Council for many years, advice had been obtained from CIPFA to ensure that the Council was looking at the relevant options and to provide initial analysis into those options for both the hotel and car park.

The confidential Appendix D presented three funding options A, B and C, and it was noted that a combination of these could be used depending on available resources.

The Chairman advised that the proposed funding method for the hotel was Option C and for the car park, Option B. Members were reminded that whatever funding options were used for this project and other projects, the availability of funds and therefore the number of funding options would change over time. It was also mentioned that any increase in value of the assets would be in addition to the figures contained within the confidential appendix.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council

- a) to agree to proceed with the proposed schemes;
- b) that a Development Management Agreement and Agreement for Lease be entered into with the preferred Development Management Consultant and preferred Hotel Operator on the terms outlined in the confidential Appendix D; and
- c) that the development was in the public interest and therefore the land should be appropriated for planning purposes in accordance with Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 and subject to the powers provided by Section 237 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Cabinet - 15 October 2015

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 19 October 2015. The decisions contained in Minutes 34(a) takes effect immediately. The decisions contained in Minutes 32 and 33 take effect on 27 October 2015. The decisions taken in Minutes 34(b), 35 and 36 will be considered at Full Council on 3 November 2015.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.42 PM

CHAIRMAN

PROPERTY DISPOSALS UPDATE

Cabinet – 5 November 2015

Report of Chief Officer Communities & Business

Status: For Approval

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary:

This report updates Members on the disposal of surplus property assets at Timberden Farm, Shoreham and seeks approval to agree terms for the disposal of Lots 2, 3 and 4.

This report supports the Key Aim of Value for money

Portfolio Holder Cllr Fleming

Contact Officer(s) Mark Bradbury Ext. 7099

Recommendation: That Cabinet approves the disposal of surplus land at Timberden Farm comprising Lots 2, 3 and 4 for the sum of £825,000 and delegates authority to the the Head of Economic Development and Property to agree detailed Heads of Terms.

Reason for recommendation: Disposal of surplus and underperforming assets will generate capital receipts that can be reinvested in higher performing assets in accordance with the Council's approved Property Investment Strategy.

Introduction and Background

- 1 At its meeting on 25 March 2014 the Finance & Resources Advisory Committee recommended to cabinet that they approve the disposal of a number of properties including Timberden Farm, Shoreham
- 2 Cabinet on 10 April 2014 approved the disposals in principle.
- 3 Timberden Farm was extensively marketed in 2014 in 4 lots or as a whole. No offers were received for the whole and no offers or combination of offers were received at a level which could be recommended.
- 4 Cabinet on 11 December 2014 agreed that the property would be withdrawn from the market and remarketed in summer 2015.
- 5 In the intervening period a number of alternative options for the disposal of Timberden Farm were considered and after due consideration 3 options were

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presented to the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee on 9 June 2015 and Cabinet on 16 July 2015 for consideration.

6 Cabinet resolved that the Council should :-

Pursue planning consent for a mixed residential and employment use on the agricultural buildings, develop and sell the residential property (with adjacent land for equestrian/smallholding use) and lease and retain the employment unit as an ongoing investment. Remarket the balance of the land.

7 Consultants have been appointed to pursue planning consent for the reuse of the redundant agricultural buildings. Three options have been prepared and these are currently being appraised for both their viability and delivery. A verbal update on progress will be presented at the meantime.

Disposal

8 In the meantime the Council's agents, Carter Jonas have re-approached all parties who had previously expressed an interest in acquiring significant areas of the farm (the previous Lots or areas of similar extent) or the whole farm as well as marketing the opportunity to their extensive database of interested parties. Following expressions of interest from several parties Final and Best offers were invited by 2 October 2015.

9 4 offers were received.

10 2 of these were for very small parcels of land and cannot be recommended for acceptance.

11 1 offer was for Lots 3 and 4 (the two parcels facing Shoreham Village) in a combined bid from a local farmer and a charitable trust. It is proposed that ownership would be split between the two parties but the land would be managed by the farmer.

12 The offer is at £355,000 which falls significantly below the revised guide price of £500,000 agreed with Carter Jonas and the Council's asset valuation carried out in March 2015. Acceptance of this offer would also leave the Council with ownership of Lot 2 for which there have been no individual offers in either marketing campaign.

13 1 offer is for the whole of the land offered, Lots 2, 3 and 4, and is from a private investor with a significant property portfolio generating income of c £1 million per annum. The bidder has provided evidence of his financial standing and ability to complete a purchase this financial year. He already owns 3 other farms and his intention is that the property will be leased for grazing on Farm Business Tenancies or Licences.

14 The offer is at £825,000 which although below the revised guide price of £900,000 agreed with Carter Jonas, is consistent with the asset valuation carried out in March 2015.

- 15 The offer is subject to the purchaser being given an option to acquire Lot 1 should the council decide to sell this in the future. It is considered that this can be accommodated subject to an independent red book/market valuation at the time.
- 16 Carter Jonas have recommended acceptance of this offer (see their report at Appendix A) and the Head of Economic Development recommends acceptance.

Shoreham Parish Council

- 17 Shoreham Parish Council (through their Chair) has been consulted on the disposal process and have advised that they do not have funds to offer for the land themselves.
- 18 They have indicated that they would prefer the District Council to sell Lots 3 and 4 to the local farmer and charitable trust on the basis that this would give them greater reassurance that the land would be managed in the best interests of the local community and that there is less risk of a future application for development on the site.
- 19 They have expressed concern that a purchaser without existing agricultural buildings in the area may in future argue that new buildings are required to viably farm the land. They have also expressed concern that such buildings could later be converted to other uses. We have raised this with the proposed purchaser who advises :-

As far as the use of the land is concerned he will be letting it in the short term under FBT's or licences and expects that local parties will be his tenants. In this regard it is entirely possible that these users will have their own facilities in the immediate vicinity. The only occupiers who may not would be equestrian users who may need field shelters.

- 20 There are a variety of mobile/temporary field shelters on the market which used correctly may not require planning consent and would not create a building capable of conversion.

Conclusions

- 21 The surplus land at Timberden Farm has been extensively marketed across two separate campaigns. An offer has been received for the three Lots that the council wishes to be disposed of at a level which can be recommended by the Council's agents and Head of Economic Development as representing Open Market Value and is consistent with the current asset valuation. It is therefore recommended that the offer be accepted and the Head of Economic Development be authorised to agree detailed terms.

Key Implications

Financial

Disposal of surplus and underperforming assets will generate capital receipts that can be reinvested in higher performing assets in accordance with the Council's approved Property Investment Strategy

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Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

Resources from the Council's legal team are and will continue to be needed to complete the disposal process.

No significant risks have been identified for the council in progressing the sale. The land is not required for operational purposes. There is a risk that a purchaser may seek to develop the land in the future but that risk is inherent in all land disposals. In this instance there are existing clawback provisions in respect of part of the land and the land's setting within the Green Belt and ANOB provides a significant level of protection.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Appendices: Carter Jonas Marketing Report

Background Papers: None

Lesley Bowles

Chief Officer Communities & Business

Report on Further Offers

in respect of Lots 2, 3 and 4

**Timberden Farm
Shoreham
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN14 7TX**

on behalf of

Sevenoaks District Council

RSWL/jp/1028818

22nd October 2015

On instruction from the Sevenoaks District Council, Timberden Farm was brought to the market on 10th October 2014 for sale by private treaty through Carter Jonas. The marketing strategy for the property was agreed in accordance with Disposal Strategy as set out in our tender dated 16th May 2014.

The brochure for Timberden was initially sent to over 40 applicants and buying agents that we have registered on our database looking for land in the South East of England. In addition to this, 125 letters were sent out to neighbouring owners of the property. We marketed the property further through a series of adverts placed in the national and local press, the erection of sale boards for each Lot and by uploading to a range of property search portals such as rightmove, UK Land & Farms, primelocation and the Carter Jonas website.

We had a positive response with 100 applicants registering with us and there have been over 65,000 hits on the internet portals.

The Property

Timberden Farm, Shoreham, Sevenoaks, Kent was offered for sale as a whole or in 4 lots and a copy of the particulars is attached (Appendix 1). The guide prices for the property were as follows:

Lot	Acreage	Guide Price
Lot 1	Farm buildings and land 72.9 acres	£720,000
Lot 2	77.90 acres of land	£650,000
Lot 3	28.70 acres of land	£350,000
Lot 4	33.60 acres of land	£380,000
As a whole	213.10 acres of land	£2,100,000

Best and Final Offers

We set out that the closing date for offers was to be 12 noon on Tuesday 18th November. Best and final offer letters (Appendix 2) were sent out to 70 applicants and confirmed offers were to be sent in duplicate directly to Sevenoaks District Council. The offers were opened at 2.00pm in the Council Offices at Argyle Road Sevenoaks TN13 1HG. We received six best and final offers for the property and although there were no offers for the property as a whole, there were offers for Lots 1, 3 and 4, parts of Lots 1 and 4 but no offers on Lot 2. In the light of the fact that none of the offers made were acceptable we recommend that the property was kept in the market and serious consideration be given to reviewing the guide prices quoted which had patently been in excess of the market's expectations.

We continued to keep in touch with the local market as well as those who had expressed interest whilst the Council continued to consider its position as far as the whole property was concerned. At a meeting held on the 7th September the Council confirmed that they had decided to retain Lot 1 with a view to exploring the planning potential for the farm buildings.

It was agreed that we invite Best and Final Offers for Lots 2, 3 and 4 as a whole, individually or in part of a Lot. The revised guide price for the Lots discussed with the bidders prior to submitting their bids were £900,000 as a whole and £400,000, £200,000 and £300,000 respectively. Letters were sent to those parties expressing an interest inviting them to submit their offers to our offices by 12.00 noon on Friday 2nd October. Three offers were received by the due date and time and the fourth offer via email on 6th October.

An Individual	8.37 acres Lot 3	£ 41,850
An Individual	28.88 acres of Lot 2	£ 92,500
An Individual and a Trust	Lot 3 and 4	£355,000
An Individual	Lot 2, 3 and 4	£825,000

It should further be noted that the offer at the figure of £825,000 was on the basis that the purchaser be given "an option to purchase Lot 1 should the Council decide to sell the land in the future". The offer is also based on purchasing each Lot in a separate Company owned by the individual or his family.

I had held a meeting with this individual in February 2015 in order to assess his suitability and ability to proceed based on the interest he expressed in 2014 and find out more about his background. In the light of the serious interest he had expressed and the fact that he was not local to the area I wanted to ascertain that his interest was serious and he had sufficient funding if an offer from him was to be considered. Offers from more locally based parties are easier to understand and their knowledge of the area and reasons for buying are generally more serious and their local knowledge is invaluable.

Following my meeting I am able to confirm that the individual has a comprehensive portfolio of residential, commercial and agricultural property including three farms. He showed me evidence of his rental income in the year to April 2014 in excess of £900,000 and he states that this income exceeds £1.00m in the year to April 2015. He has further confirmed that he is prepared to exchange before the end of the year and complete three months thereafter.

His interest in this property is to bring a balance to his property portfolio which he believes should contain some agricultural investment properties as can be shown by his interest in this area already through the ownership of three farms already. The prospective purchaser holds investment properties to generate a rental return and the occupation of the properties will depend upon the legal and financial matters affecting the particular investment property. His intention as far as Timberden Farm is concerned will be for him to determine and in the short term the property is likely to be let under a farm business tenancy or licence.

Initial lettings are likely to be to farmers equestrian owners/businesses or other users of land who are more than likely to be local to the area. As far as the future use of the land is concerned this will depend upon the viability of the land and the requirements needed to support the activities taking place on the land. As and when the style of business is determined then any infrastructure needed to support that use will be ascertained and any formal needs assessed.

We reported the offers to the Council by email on 6th October and having considered the offer carefully we would recommend the offer for Lots 2, 3 and 4 at the figure of **£825,000 being Subject to Contract and the Terms of an Option Agreement**. We would recommend that should this offer be acceptable that we meet with the prospective purchaser immediately to agree the terms and basis of an option agreement acceptable to the Sevenoaks District Council.



R S W Liddiard FRICS
Carter Jonas LLP
51 Northbrook Street
Newbury
Berkshire
RG14 1DT

Item 6 – Street Naming & Property Numbering Policy

The attached report was considered by the Planning Advisory Committee on 13 October 2015, relevant minute extract below:

Planning Advisory Committee - 13 October 2015 (Minute 17)

The Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services presented a report which advised that under the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 and the Public Health Amendment Act 1925, the Council controlled the naming of streets and numbering of buildings in the Sevenoaks District. This was to ensure that any new street names and building names and numbers were allocated logically with a view to ensuring that emergency service vehicles were able to speedily locate addresses; aid the effective delivery of mail and enable property identification for the general public. The service had operated for a number of years within the requirements of the legislation and an internal policy. The report recommended that the Council formally adopt a policy.

In his presentation the Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services, suggested some amendments which Members discussed. He suggested that paragraph 6.3 of the draft policy be amended by the deletion of any street name examples and the word 'aesthetically'. Paragraphs 5.4, 6.0, 6.3, 6.6 and 8.3 were debated. Members were keen to have the local parishes and district councillors involved as much as possible and other minor amendments discussed reflected this, along with more flexibility with the replacement of some words.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Chairman moved the recommendations along with the amendments discussed and it was

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet to adopt the Street Naming and Property Numbering Policy subject to the following:

- a) para. 5.4 being amended to read ' Within 7 working days following receipt of the developer's proposal the appropriate Parish/Town Council and local ward member(s) will be consulted. The period allowed for consultation shall be 28 working days from the date of the covering letter to the Parish/Town Councils and local ward member(s). The consultation period may be extended, if requested, to enable local council meetings to take place.';
- b) para. 6.0 having the word 'must' replaced by 'should';

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- c) para. 6.3 being amended to read 'Street names should not be difficult to pronounce or awkward to spell. Names that may be considered unsuitable and names capable of misinterpretation should be avoided.';
- d) para. 6.6 being amended to read 'Street names may include the following words, but to comply with national standards *should* not end with them:...' ; and
- e) para. 8.3, the last line being amended to read 'In addition the Council will consult the Royal Mail and local Parish/Town Councils and ward member(s).'

STREET NAMING AND PROPERTY NUMBERING POLICY

Planning Advisory Committee – 13 October 2015

Report of Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services

Status: For Decision

Also considered by: Cabinet – 5 November 2015

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary: The Council has a responsibility to administer the naming and numbering of buildings and streets within the District. Names and numbers need to be allocated logically and within issued guidance to ensure emergency service vehicles, amongst others, are able to identify properties quickly. The attached policy sets out the legal framework, procedure and guidance for naming/number and renaming/numbering of buildings and streets.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Piper

Contact Officer Joe Brooks, Building Control Manager Ext. 7356

Recommendation to Planning & Advisory Committee:

To recommend to Cabinet to adopt the Street Naming and Property Numbering Policy

Recommendation to Cabinet:

To adopt the Street Naming and Property Numbering Policy

Reason for recommendation: To provide a formal framework for exercising the council's statutory duties as the Street Naming & Numbering Authority.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Council under the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 and the Public Health Amendment Act 1925 controls the naming of streets and numbering of buildings in the Sevenoaks District.
- 2 The purpose of this control is to make sure that any new street names and building names and numbers are allocated logically with a view to ensuring that emergency service vehicles are able to speedily locate any address to which they may be summoned; the effective delivery of mail and enable property identification for the general public.

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- 3 The service has operated for a number of years within the requirements of the legislation and an internal policy, however this not been formally adopted and therefore could be open to challenge. It is therefore recommended that the Council formally adopt a policy

Key Implications

Financial

Charges are set to recover the cost of the service, the adoption of the policy will support that function.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

None identified. Legislation requirements detailed above. A statutory function.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Policy Document

Background Papers:

None

RICHARD WILSON
Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services

STREET NAMING AND PROPERTY NUMBERING POLICY

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council under the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 and the Public Health Amendment Act 1925 controls the naming of streets and numbering of buildings in the Sevenoaks District. The purpose of this control is to make sure that any new street names and building names and numbers are allocated logically with a view to ensuring that emergency service vehicles are able to speedily locate any address to which they may be summoned; the effective delivery of mail and enable property identification for the general public.
- 1.2 Anyone wishing to change the name/ number of their property or seeking an address for a new property should apply in writing to the Council.
- 1.3 In respect of the naming and numbering of new streets and properties, the naming or numbering of new properties in existing streets and the renaming or renumbering of existing properties the Council will normally charge a fee to cover the cost of the work involved as set out in the schedule (Appendix C).

2.0 Purpose of Policy

- 2.1 This policy provides a framework for Sevenoaks DC to administer its Street Naming and Numbering (SNN) function effectively and efficiently for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors. It will also act as a guide for developers when considering new names for streets and give assistance to Ward Councillors and Town and Parish Councils.
- 2.2 The Policy defines:-
 - (i) Legal framework for administrating the Street Naming and Numbering service.
 - (ii) Protocols for determining official street names and numbers.
 - (iii) Recommendations to prevent confusion by duplicating or using similar names to any already in use.

3.0 Legal Framework

- 3.1 The Legislation under which naming and numbering can be carried out is:
 - Section 21 Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907 (alteration of street name)
 - Sections 17-19 Public Health Act 1925 (naming of streets and alteration and indication of street names)
 - Sections 64 and 65 of the Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847 (street naming and building numbering provisions)

4.0 Street Naming and Numbering Charges

- 4.1 The Power to charge falls under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003. This sets out that a local authority may charge for discretionary services. Discretionary services are those services that an authority has the power but not a duty to provide. An authority may charge where the person who receives the service has agreed to its provision and the charge must not exceed the cost of providing the service.
- 4.2 Therefore the Council can charge for elements of the naming and numbering function by virtue of Section 64 and 65 of the 1847 Act coupled with Section 93 of the 2003 Act.
- 4.3 For Street Naming and Numbering these charges cover:
- Consultation and liaising with other external organisations such as Royal Mail, Local Councils and Emergency Services.
 - The Naming and Numbering of new properties (including conversions).
 - Alterations in either name or numbers to new developments after initial naming and numbering has been undertaken.
 - Notifications to those organisations listed in Appendix B
- 4.4 These charges are to be paid prior to any changes of address being made to a property. Changes made without contacting the Council will not be officially recognised and will not be registered with services and organisations listed in Appendix B.
- 4.5 The Scale of Charges for Street Naming and Numbering can be found in Appendix C.
- 4.6 Fees and charges applicable for the street naming and numbering service may be annually reviewed during the Council's budget setting process and publicised through the Council's agreed communication channels including the website.

5.0 Procedure for determining new Street Names

- 5.1 The developer will usually be advised on the grant of planning permission of the need to contact the Council to arrange for the naming and numbering of the buildings and streets within the development. The Building Control Team will also inform the developer once works commence.
- 5.2 As part of the SNN application the developer will be required to supply up to three preferred names for consideration for each of the new streets being constructed. Any suggested street name should have some connection with the area and must conform to the guidelines set out below.
- 5.3 The developer is requested to supply a layout plan with plot numbers of the site with the street name application.
- 5.4 Within 7 working days following receipt of the developer's proposal the appropriate Parish/ Town Council will be consulted. The period allowed for consultation shall be 14 days from the date of the covering letter to the Parish/ Town Councils. The consultation period may be extended, if requested, to enable local council meetings to take place.
- 5.5 If one of the offered names is considered acceptable following consultation then that name will be forwarded to the Royal Mail for comment. If the Royal Mail agree to the name then it will be adopted, the properties within the new street will be numbered and an official plan produced. The plan will be distributed to the developer and other relevant bodies.
- 5.6 If no response is received from the consultees, then the SNN Officer will select one of the three preferred names, the properties within the new street will be numbered, an official plan produced and distributed.
- 5.7 If none of the offered names are considered acceptable by the SNN Officer then the Parish/Town Council will be asked to suggest a name, if considered acceptable then the developer will be informed, the new street will be numbered, an official plan produced and distributed.

6.0 Guidelines for Naming Streets

The following guidelines must be considered when seeking a new name for a street:

- 6.1 A new street name will only be allocated to a street that serves five or more properties. In the event that a small development serves four or less properties the address will incorporate the primary street name.

- 6.2 New street names should try to avoid duplicating any similar name already in use in the district or neighbouring local authority areas. A variation in the terminal word, example, “street”, “road”, “avenue”, will not be accepted as sufficient reason to duplicate a name. The overwhelming desire of, for instance, a request for St. Mary’s Close off an existing St Mary’s Way, near St. Mary’s Church etc should be avoided.
- 6.3 Street names should not be difficult to pronounce or awkward to spell. Names that are aesthetically unsuitable must be avoided such as Gasworks Road, Packemin Close, Tip Lane, Coalpit Lane or names capable of misinterpretation like Hoare Road and Typple Avenue etc.
- 6.4 The informal adoption of unofficial ‘marketing’ titles by developers in the sale of new properties is not acceptable. Developers are reminded that under S.1 of the Property Descriptions Act 1991 that it is an offence to make misleading statement about the location or address of a property.
- 6.5 All new street names should be appropriate to their location and end with one of the following suffixes:
- Street (for any thoroughfare)
 - Road (for any thoroughfare)
 - Way (for major roads)
 - Avenue (for residential roads)
 - Drive (for residential roads)
 - Grove (for residential roads)
 - Lane (for residential roads)
 - Gardens (for residential roads) subject to there being no confusion with any local open space.
 - Place (for residential roads)
 - Crescent (for a crescent shaped road)
 - Close (for a cul-de-sac only)
 - Square (for a square only)
 - Hill (for a hillside only)
 - Circus (for a large roundabout)
 - Vale (for residential roads)
 - Rise (for residential roads)
 - Dene (for residential roads)
 - Mead (for residential roads)
 - Mews (for residential roads)
 - View (for residential roads)
 - Walk (for residential roads)

6.6 Street names may include the following words, but to comply with national standards may not end with them:

- End
- Cross
- Side
- Park
- Meadow
- Court
- Wharf

All these words can be incorporated in a street name provided it ends with an appropriate suffix (example Vine Meadow Road).

6.7 Exceptions:

6.7.1 Single or dual names without suffixes in appropriate places (example, Broadway) are acceptable.

6.7.2 All new pedestrian ways should end with one of the following suffixes:

- Walk
- Path
- Way

6.7.3 All new building names for apartment blocks should end with one of the following suffixes:

- House
- Court – Residential only
- Point – High block residential only
- Tower – High block offices or residential
- Heights – High block offices or residential

6.7.4 For private houses it is sufficient that the name should not repeat the name of the road or that of any other house or building in the area in a way that could lead to confusion with a pre-existing nearby address.

6.7.5 The use of North, East, South or West (as in Alfred North Road and Alfred Road South, or East or West) is only acceptable where the road is continuous and passes over a major junction. It is not acceptable when the road is in two separate parts with no vehicular access between the two.

6.7.6 Avoid having two phonetically similar names within a postal area and, if possible, within town/ village, example, Alfred Road and Alfred Close or Churchill Road and Birch Hill Road.

- 6.7.7 The use of a name which relates to living people should be avoided if possible. Only in very exceptional circumstances would such a suggestion be given consideration. It is essential that the person put forward lived in the town or village in question or otherwise has some other close association with that locality. If such an exception is allowed the written consent of the person concerned must also be obtained. Naming roads after members of the developer's family is also to be avoided.
- 6.7.8 The Council does not issue postcodes for properties; this duty lies with the Royal Mail.
- 6.7.9 It is the responsibility of developers to cover the initial costs of the nameplates for the site; the Council thereafter covers the maintenance.

7.0 Guidelines for Numbering Properties

- 7.1 The usual convention for numbering properties in a new street will be even numbers on one side and odd numbers on the other, except that for a cul-de-sac where consecutive numbering in a clockwise direction is preferred. Private garages and similar buildings used for housing cars and such like will not be numbered.
- 7.2 A proper sequence shall be maintained, with number 13 being included unless requested to remove (at the beginning of the street name and numbering application process).
- 7.3 Buildings (including those on corner sites) are numbered according to the street in which the main entrance is to be accessed and the manipulation of numbering in order to secure a "prestige" address or to avoid an address, which is thought to have undesired associations will not be sanctioned.
- 7.4 In circumstances where an existing street or similar is extended, it would be appropriate to continue to use the same street name. This would be subject to the limitations of the existing numbering scheme.
- 7.5 Legislation permits the use of numbers followed by letters or fractions. These are needed, for instance, when one large house in a road is demolished and replaced by (say) four smaller houses. To include the new houses in the numbered road sequence would involve renumbering all the higher numbered houses on that side of the road, which is considered unacceptable. Therefore to avoid this each new house will be given the number of the old house with either A, B, C or D added.
- 7.6 For private houses in existing unnumbered roads it is essential that the houses are officially allocated names, which are registered with the emergency services. For private houses it is sufficient that the name should not repeat the name of the road or that of any other house or building in the area. Anyone wishing to change the name of their unnumbered house must apply in writing to the Council.

Once the name has been accepted the Council will notify the Royal Mail and the statutory bodies of the change but it is the responsibility of the person requesting the change to notify all their personal contacts.

- 7.7 Where a property has a number, it must be used and displayed. Where a name has been chosen to a property with a number, the number must always be included, the name cannot be regarded as an alternative. The property name and number must be clearly displayed on the property and be visible from the highway.
- 7.8 For new blocks of flats, where each flat is accessed via a common entrance and hallway, the building will be given a number in the usual sequence within the street and each flat will be separately numbered within the block (e.g. Flat 1, 1 High Street, Flat 2, 1 High Street etc.). If the properties are individually accessed directly from the street (sometimes described as 'maisonettes') each will be given its own address.

8.0 Renaming a Street / Renumbering Properties

- 8.1 Renaming an existing street/renumbering property within an existing street is to be avoided unless the benefits clearly outweigh the obvious disadvantages.
- 8.2 On rare occasions where this becomes necessary it is usually only done as a last resort when:
- There is confusion over a street's name and/or property numbering.
 - The residents are unhappy with their street name.
 - The number of named-only properties in a street is deemed to be causing confusion for emergency services, visitors and deliveries.
- 8.3 In such instances a ballot of those persons responsible for paying council tax affected by the change will be taken on the issue. This will ensure that residents' views are taken into account and the results will be considered by the Council. In addition the Council will consult the Royal Mail and Local Council on the issue.
- 8.4 To change a street name the Council will require a minimum of two thirds support from the affected persons responsible for paying the local council tax as any change can be very disruptive and cause individuals to have to change all their personal address details. The consultation process referred to in this document will be implemented before any agreement is given. This is a very time consuming process and can be very emotive for those involved and will, therefore, only be contemplated as a last resort.

9.0 The National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG)

- 9.1 The NLPG is the definitive address list that provides unique identification of properties and conforms to the British Standard, BS7666:2006. The NLPG covers the whole of England and Wales and contains more than 30 million residential, business and non-mailing addresses and is now marketed commercially.
- 9.2 The NLPG is a comprehensive and continually updated database, created by those with local knowledge in each local authority, the body with legal responsibility for street naming and numbering of property. As local authorities are the originators of addressing information an address dataset, developed and maintained at source by users of the data, will inevitably have the highest level of currency and completeness.
- 9.3 The Council is committed to this initiative through its own Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) which, together with the other local authorities in England and Wales, makes up the NLPG. Street naming and numbering is the single most important source of address change intelligence for the Council's LLPG and therefore NLPG.

10.0 Street Nameplates

- 10.1 The Council is responsible for the replacement and repair of street nameplates in its own administrative area. Nameplates will be erected and replaced whenever required, taking into account both financial restraints and requirement.
- 10.2 Where a street is approached only from one direction only one nameplate will be erected and this will face the direction of approaching traffic. Where a road can be approached from both directions, nameplates on either side of the junction will be erected. Nameplate(s) will also be erected at any junction or entrance onto the street.
- 10.3 The nameplates erected within the Sevenoaks District will be as per the nameplate specification. (See Appendix D)

APPENDIX A: Legislation

**Section 64: Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847
Houses to be numbered and streets named**

“The commissioners shall from time to time cause the houses and buildings in all or any of the streets to be marked with numbers as they think fit, and shall cause to be put up or painted on a conspicuous part of some house, building, or place, at or near each end, corner, or entrance of every such street, the name by which such street is to be known; and every person who destroys, pulls down, or defaces any such number or name, or puts up any number or name different from the number or name put up by the commissioners, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding [level 1 on the standard scale] for every such offence”.

**Section 65: Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847
Numbers of houses to be renewed by occupiers**

“The occupiers of houses and other buildings in the streets shall mark their houses with such numbers as the commissioners approve of, and shall renew such numbers as often as they become obliterated or defaced; and every such occupier who fails, within one week after notice for that purpose from the commissioners, to mark his house with a number approved of by the commissioners, or to renew such number when obliterated, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding [level 1 on the standard scale], and the commissioners shall cause such numbers to be marked or to be renewed, as the case may require, and the expense thereof shall be repaid to them by such occupier, and shall be recoverable as damages.”

**Section 21: Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907
Power to alter street names**

“The local authority may, with the consent of two-thirds in number and value of the ratepayers in any street, alter the name of such street or any part of such street. The local authority may cause the name of any street or any part of any street to be painted or otherwise marked on a conspicuous part of any building or other erection.”

**Section 17: Public Health Act 1925
Notice to urban Local Authority before street is named**

“1) Before any street is given a name, notice of the proposed name shall be sent to the urban authority by the person proposing to name the street.

2) The urban authority, within one month after the receipt of such notice, may, by notice in writing served on the person by whom notice of the proposed name of the street was sent, object to the proposed name.

3) It shall not be lawful to be set up in any street an inscription of the name thereof – a) until the expiration of one month after notice of the proposed name has been sent to the urban authority under this section; and b) where the urban authority have objected to the proposed name, unless and until such objection has been withdrawn by the urban authority or overruled on appeal; and any person acting in contravention of this provision shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding [level 1 on the standard scale] and to a daily penalty not exceeding [£1].

4) Where the urban authority serve a notice of objection under this section, the person proposing to name the street may, within twenty-one days after the service of the notice, appeal against the objection to a Magistrates court”.

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Section 18: Public Health Act 1925 **Alteration of name of street**

“1) The urban authority by order may alter the name of any street, or part of a street, or may assign a name to any street, or part of a street, to which a name has not been given.

2) Not less than one month before making an order under this section the urban authority shall cause notice of the intended order to be posted at each end of the street, or part of the street, or in some conspicuous position in the street or part affected.

3) Every such notice shall contain a statement that the intended order may be made by the urban authority on or at any time after the day named in the notice, and that an appeal will lie under this Act to a petty Magistrates Court against the intended order at the instance of any person aggrieved.

4) Any person aggrieved by the intended order of the local authority may, within twenty-one days after the posting of the notice, appeal to a Magistrates court”.

The Local Government Act 2003

Brought about new devolved powers for Local Authorities, these included giving Councils new powers to trade and charge for non-statutory services if they are Best Value Authorities (Section 93 of the Act)

Authorities, if charging for discretionary services, have a duty to charge no more than the costs they incur in providing the service. The aim is to encourage improvements to existing services and develop new ones that will help to improve the overall service they provide to the community, not to make a profit.

APPENDIX B:

Distribution List for Street Naming and Numbering Information

Internal:

- Electoral Register
- Land Charges
- Local Land and Property Gazetteer Custodian (LLPG)
- Council Tax

External:

- Kent Fire & Rescue
- South East Coast Ambulance
- Kent Police
- Kent County Council Highways
- Valuation Office
- Land Registry

APPENDIX C: Street Naming and Numbering Charges

Street Naming and Numbering Charges from 1st April 2010.

The naming and numbering of streets and buildings within Sevenoaks District is the responsibility of Sevenoaks District Council. The Council is the only organisation with the authority to name and number new or to amend existing streets and properties within the district.

The purpose of street naming and numbering is to ensure that any new or amended street, building name and /or property numbers are allocated in a logical and consistent manner. The address of a property is becoming a very important issue. Organisations such as the Royal Mail, Emergency Services, delivery companies as well as the general public need an efficient and accurate means of locating and referencing properties. The Royal Mail will **not** allocate a postcode until they receive official notification of new or amended addresses from the Council.

Sevenoaks District Council will charge for the provision of Street Naming and Numbering.

There are 5 types of charges that apply for the Street Naming and Numbering services;

- Addition/Amendment/Removal of property names (both for residential and commercial properties)
- Addition/Amendment/Removal of property numbers (both for residential and commercial properties)
- New development to include naming of new streets (naming of streets and numbering of properties);
- Amendment of property details (usually for buildings which can be addressed from two roads)
- Change an existing street name.

Sevenoaks District Council Schedule of Charges Street Naming and Numbering Service (April 2010)	
Changing a house or building name	£45.00
Changing a house or building number	£45.00
Numbering of New Properties:	
Individual dwelling or building	£100.00
2 – 10 Plots	£200.00
11 – 19 Plots	£300.00
20 + Plots	£400.00 plus £15 per plot
Note: Individual apartments are charged as one plot Associated new street names included in charge	
Changing an existing street name	£395.00
Amending property addresses	£80.00
Note: usually for properties on corner of streets that can be accessed and addressed off two streets	

These charges are not subject to VAT.

APPENDIX D: Sevenoaks District Council Street Name Plate Specification	
Rationale:	98% recycled plastic, no delamination, no scrap value, polyethylene easy wipe, UV resistant for 10 years
Plates:	Composite complete with channels
Plate depth:	150mm plus (can be easily adjusted)
Lettering height:	89mm Kindersley – primary text 50mm Kindersley – ‘LEADING TO’ 50mm Kindersley – secondary text
Lettering colour:	Black
Border size:	12.5mm (can be varied)
Border colour:	Black
Background colour:	White non reflective
Reverse colour:	Black
Symbols:	816.1 No Through Road Symbol to be 140mm deep. Arrows may be added.
Construction:	18mm thick 95% recycled plastic board with one piece construction, screwed to posts with 50mm x M6 stainless steel security screws
Finish:	Non-reflective, anti-graffiti film – Vinyl cut – GRF to face
Fixings:	4no. 76mm anti-rotational clips c/w sheer nuts
Supports:	Solid 75 mm dia. – 1350mm long x 2
Support finish:	Recycled plastic
Support colour:	Black

Item 7 – Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

The attached report was considered by the Planning Advisory Committee on 13 October 2015, relevant minute extract below:

Planning Advisory Committee - 13 October 2015 (Minute 19)

The Senior Planning Officer (Policy) presented a report which outlined the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). A first stage in the process of preparing a new Local Plan was to establish the up to date housing needs of the District. The consultant GL Hearn was procured jointly by Sevenoaks District and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils to undertake the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which was a key piece of evidence from which the Local Plan strategy will be developed. Based on the Government's latest population and household projections the SHMA identified the objectively assessed housing need across the District. This was an unconstrained figure and not the District's housing target. It also identified the need for different sizes and types of homes.

Members were reminded that there was to be a Member workshop to review the existing housing strategy/policy on Tuesday 1 December 2015 at 7.45pm.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That, subject to further clarity on when references to Swanley included a wider area, it be recommended to Cabinet that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) be endorsed as a robust evidence base from which the Local Plan strategy would be developed.

Post meeting note: The Officer confirmed that the references made to Swanley in the document refer to the Swanley wider area, and suggested that this is clarified in the glossary.

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STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT (SHMA)

Planning Advisory Committee – 13 October 2015

Report of Chief Planning Officer

Status: For Consideration

Also considered by: Cabinet – 5 November 2015

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary:

A first stage in the process of preparing a new Local Plan is to establish the up to date housing needs of the District. The consultant GL Hearn was procured jointly by Sevenoaks District and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils to undertake a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), a key piece of evidence from which the Local Plan strategy will be developed. Based on the Government’s latest population and household projections the SHMA identifies the objectively assessed housing need across the District. This is an unconstrained figure and is not the District’s housing target. It also identifies the need for different sizes of homes, and the need for different types of homes. This report outlines the findings of the SHMA and the full study is attached at Appendix A.

Portfolio Holder Cllr Piper

Contact Officer(s) Emma Boshell, Senior Planning Officer Ext.7358

Recommendation to Planning Advisory Committee:

To consider the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) attached at Appendix A, and to recommend to Cabinet that the study be endorsed as a robust evidence base from which the Local Plan strategy will be developed.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

To endorse the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) as a robust evidence base from which the Local Plan strategy will be developed.

Reason for recommendation: In order to plan for the housing needs of our residents and to prepare a Local Plan that is based on sound and robust evidence.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) was adopted in February 2015, and, together with the Core Strategy (adopted 2011), makes up the current Development Plan for the District Council. The Core Strategy was

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adopted prior to the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) being introduced, and as such, now contains some policies that are not consistent with the NPPF.

- 2 The District Council is therefore required to review its planning policies, and the intention is to combine the two documents into a single Local Plan that contains up to date policies consistent with the NPPF. To ensure that the Local Plan is found sound at examination, the first stage in this process (as part of a suite of new evidence base studies) is to establish the up to date need for both market and affordable housing across the District for the new Local Plan period. This is a technical study carried out by expert consultants, derived from Government statistics and subject to a prescribed methodology. Called a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), this study will form one of the key pieces of evidence for the Local Plan. **This is an unconstrained figure and is not the District's housing target.**

Procuring the SHMA

- 3 The NPPF encourages joint-working under the duty to co-operate, particularly where there may be cross-boundary issues. In this instance, there was strong evidence (identified in chapter 2 of the SHMA (appendix A)) to suggest that Sevenoaks District and Tunbridge Wells Borough share a housing market area (i.e. there are strong links between the two districts in terms of where people live and work). To this end, the two councils worked together and the SHMA was procured jointly between Sevenoaks District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (with Sevenoaks District Council as the lead authority).
- 4 The consultant GL Hearn was appointed to undertake the SHMA, based on their quotation and subsequent interview. Their submission was comprehensive, clearly showing expertise and experience in this field and at examination. Importantly, GL Hearn has local experience having recently prepared SHMAs for Tonbridge & Malling, Maidstone and Ashford Borough Councils.

Early Stakeholder Engagement

- 5 A joint stakeholder workshop with Tunbridge Wells was held on 31st March with Planning and Housing officers from all neighbouring authorities, Kent County Council and key housing partners. The purpose of this workshop was to seek agreement on the SHMA methodology and on defining the housing market area. This was an important aspect of the study, as agreement on these matters provides a firm basis for discussions later on under the duty to co-operate.

The Findings of the SHMA

- 6 Firstly, the publication of the SHMA does not constitute acceptance by the District Council that it does not have a five year housing land supply. The SHMA is as yet untested, and so the five year housing land supply will continue to be judged against the adopted housing target of 165 new homes per year set out in the Core Strategy.
- 7 Secondly, the SHMA provides a starting point based on the latest Government statistics. **All local authorities are required to undertake this study as a basis for**

developing their Local Plan strategy. Any future planning policies will have to take account of market activity and viability, both independently and together as a whole, and will be subject to public consultation before being submitted to the Government's Planning Inspectorate.

8 Defining the housing market area:

- i. The SHMA identifies that Sevenoaks falls within a **West Kent housing market area which includes Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge.** There are also cross-boundary interactions between Swanley, Dartford and London.

9 Identifying overall housing need:

- i. The SHMA identifies an **objectively assessed housing need of 620 new homes per year** across the District (12,400 over the 20 year plan period). **This is an unconstrained figure** based on the latest Government population and household projections, **and is not the District's housing target** Government has attached great weight to protection of the Green Belt and any reduction should only be considered in exceptional circumstances. In these circumstances, and without prejudice to the Local Plan assessment process, the high number of significant local constraints would clearly suggest that the final housing target for new homes to be built in Sevenoaks District will be lower.
- ii. An affordable housing need of 420 new homes per year across the District is also identified, with a recommended mix of 76% social/affordable rent and 24% intermediate housing. Whilst the two figures aren't directly comparable, it is evident that the affordable housing need makes up the majority of the overall housing need. Neither this figure, nor the quoted mix is final; the figure is likely to reduce and the mix change.

10 The need for different sizes of homes:

- i. The SHMA identifies that the greatest need in relation to market housing is for **2 and 3 bedroom homes.**
- ii. For affordable housing, the greatest need is for **1 and 2 bedroom homes.**
- iii. Notwithstanding this, there remains a need for a **balanced mix** of dwellings of different sizes to meet all housing needs.

11 The need for different types of homes:

- i. The SHMA indicates that the population of people aged over 65 accounts for 20% of the total population in the District, and the number of residents aged over 65 is expected to grow by 49% during the plan period.
- ii. A need of **66 homes per year is identified for older people, in the form of sheltered housing and extra care schemes.** These fall within use class C3 (residential) and are within the overall need of 620.

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- iii. A need of **26 bedspaces per year is identified for older people, in the form of residential/nursing care**. These fall within use class C2 (institutional population) and as such, are additional to the overall housing need of 620.

Presentation of Findings

- 12 A workshop was held on 29th July for Planning Advisory Committee Members. Presentations were given by GL Hearn and the Planning Policy team, followed by an opportunity to discuss the data and to ask any questions. The draft report was also presented to the Housing Portfolio Holder and her deputies. Members raised concerns about the housing figures quoted and the highly misleading view this gives the public of the number of homes that will need to be built, before constraints are taken into account.
- 13 Further, a joint stakeholder workshop with Tunbridge Wells was held on 9th September for Planning and Housing officers from all neighbouring authorities, Kent County Council and key housing partners. Again, this provided our duty to co-operate partners an opportunity to discuss the data and to ask any questions.

What Happens Next

- 14 Government policy requires us to establish the unconstrained objectively assessed housing need for the District using the most up to date population and household projections and prescribed methodology set out in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The objectively assessed housing need is an **unconstrained figure** i.e. it doesn't take account of the District's constraints and limitations however we are required to prepare this evidence base study and use it as a starting point in order for the Local Plan to be found sound at examination. Importantly, the objectively assessed housing need **is not the District's housing target** and again, without prejudice to the Local Plan assessment process, the high number of significant local constraints would clearly suggest that the final housing target for new homes to be built in Sevenoaks District will be lower.
- 15 Following completion of the SHMA there are a number of steps that we are required to undertake to identify the housing target for the Local Plan. These steps were discussed and agreed by the Planning Advisory Committee on 7th July 2015.
- 16 The first of these steps is to assess the supply of land in the District to establish how much of the need can be realistically delivered. These studies are known as a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and Employment Land Availability Assessment (ELAA) and they begin with a call for sites whereby landowners, developers, businesses and other interested parties are invited to submit sites that will be assessed for their suitability for housing, employment and retail uses. It will be important to balance any future housing with sufficient employment land. Employment land will only be given up for housing where it is clearly no longer suitable for modern employment uses and it is replaced with more appropriate, better located employment sites. Whilst undertaking this important piece of evidence our focus will be on maximising development opportunities on brownfield land, in particular maximising the opportunities set out below:

- i. Exploring potential for increased site densities, whilst ensuring that any increased density is sensitive to, and reflective of, the character of the area;
 - ii. Exploring potential for focused increased site densities such as near railway stations;
 - iii. Assessing the quantum of under-utilised employment land, whilst ensuring that housing and employment land provision remains balanced and that key well-performing employment sites are protected;
 - iv. Assessing the potential contribution of windfalls;
 - v. Assessing the potential contribution of empty properties;
 - vi. Assessing the potential contribution of office conversions; and
 - vii. Discussing supply options in other authority areas under the Duty to Cooperate.
- 17 A report on the SHLAA and ELAA is timetabled to be presented to the next meeting of the Planning Advisory Committee in January 2016.
- 18 We will endeavour to meet the identified housing need from the above opportunities, however if a shortfall remains then we will then be required, at a later stage in the process, to undertake a focused review of the Green Belt. Other key evidence will also inform the suitability of areas for potential housing development including landscape character, nature conservation and flood risk. **Government has attached great weight to protection of the Green Belt and any reduction should only be considered in exceptional circumstances.** In these circumstances, and without prejudice to the Local Plan assessment process, the high number of significant local constraints would clearly suggest that the final housing target for new homes to be built in Sevenoaks District will be lower.
- 19 We are also required to have regular discussions with our neighbouring authorities under the Government's Duty to Cooperate. These discussions will be key in identifying cross-boundary issues and the potential for any of our neighbours to accept some of the identified housing need will have to be discussed, both at Officer, and later, at Member level.
- 20 Completion of the above steps will ensure that the District Council has a robust evidence base to support the development of the Local Plan and the setting of a realistic and deliverable housing target that will stand up to scrutiny at examination.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

The Committee could choose not to endorse the SHMA, however this is not recommended. The previous SHMA was completed in 2008 and is now considerably out of date. To rely on this out of date evidence would lead to the Local Plan being found unsound at examination. But comfort can be given to both Members and the local community at large that the housing target figure is likely to be lower.

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Key Implications

Financial

The SHMA is funded through the LDF budget.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

Preparation of a Local Plan is a statutory requirement. There are defined legal requirements that must be met in plan making which are considered when the plan is examined by a Government Planning Inspector. Risks associated with Local Plan making are set out in the Local Development Scheme.

Equality Assessment

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impacts will be analysed via an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to be prepared alongside each key stage of plan making.

Conclusions

A first stage in the process of preparing a new Local Plan is to establish the up to date housing needs of the District. The consultant GL Hearn was procured jointly by Sevenoaks District and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils to undertake a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), a key piece of evidence from which the Local Plan strategy will be developed. Based on the Government's latest population and household projections the SHMA identifies the objectively assessed housing need across the District. This is an unconstrained figure and is not the District's housing target. In these circumstances, and without prejudice to the Local Plan assessment process, the high number of significant local constraints would clearly suggest that the final housing target for new homes to be built in Sevenoaks District will be lower. It also identifies the need for different sizes of homes, and the need for different types of homes. This report outlines the findings of the SHMA and the full study is attached at Appendix A.

Appendices

Appendix A – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Strategic Housing Market Assessment September 2015

Background Papers:

[Reports to Planning Advisory Committee – 7 July 2015 and 13 October 2015 – Local Plan work programme](#)

Richard Morris
Chief Planning Officer

Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Councils

Final Draft Report

September 2015

Prepared by

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Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Strategic Housing Market Assessment
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Councils, Final Draft Report, September 2015

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Quality Standards Control

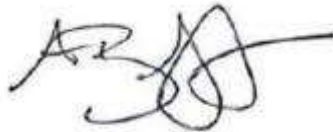
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DATE
September 2015

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Limitations

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) considers housing need in Sevenoaks District and Tunbridge Wells Borough. It considers:

- Overall housing need;
- Need for different sizes of homes;
- Need for different types of homes, particularly from a growing older population.

The SHMA does not set housing targets. The Councils will bring together evidence of housing need, with information regarding available land, environmental and policy constraints, including Green Belt, and issues related to delivering infrastructure, through the plan-making process to set housing targets.

The SHMA has been prepared for the Councils by GL Hearn and Justin Gardner Consulting. It addresses the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the methodology prescribed by Government for assessments such as this in Planning Practice Guidance¹.

Housing Market Geography

The SHMA identifies that Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells fall within a West Kent Housing Market Area (HMA) which includes Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells and extends to include Crowborough, Hawkhurst and Heathfield.

Whilst recognising inter-relationships across administrative boundaries, for practical purposes it is appropriate to consider the 'best fit' to local authority boundaries – not least as official demographic projections are not produced below this level. The two authorities would provide the best fit to the Housing Market Area.

The SHMA however identifies cross-boundary interactions with the northern parts of Rother and Wealden in East Sussex; between Swanley and Dartford; and with London. Recognising these links, the Councils will need to engage with neighbouring authorities through the Duty to Cooperate.

Objectively-Assessed Housing Need

The SHMA builds up a picture of overall housing need by starting with trend-based demographic projections, based on the latest official (2012-based) population and households projections; considering movement to/from London and the impact of the recession on this; and then considering whether adjustments need to be made to in-migration to support economic growth; or to

¹ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments/>

improve affordability, taking account of evidence of affordable housing need and market signals which provide evidence that the ability of younger households to form has been restricted. This process is used to define the full need for market and affordable housing, “leaving aside” supply-side considerations and constraints to development.

1. Trend-based Demographic Projections

The ONS 2012-based Sub-National Population Projections and CLG 2012-based Household Projections provide the starting point for assessing housing need. The SHMA rebases these trend-based demographic projections to take account of ONS 2013 Mid-Year Population Estimates.

The population projections are based on trends between 2006/7 and 2012, a period which included an economic recession. The SHMA analysis suggests that housing market circumstances during this period may have influenced net migration from London, and that a moderate increase in migration from London might be expected moving forwards. The potential impact of this has been modelled using assumptions consistent with those adopted by the Greater London Authority (GLA) in Further Alternations to the London Plan (FALP).

The SHMA concludes that an appropriate trend-based demographic projection would see population growth of 19,900 (17.0%) in Sevenoaks District and 19,200 (16.6%) in Tunbridge Wells Borough over the 2013-33 period.

The report applies (age-specific) assumptions on household formation to the population projections, and includes an allowance for vacant and second homes within the housing stock (based on levels shown by the 2011 Census). This results in a demographic-led need for 524 homes per year (2013-33) in Sevenoaks, and 631 homes per year in Tunbridge Wells.

2. Supporting Economic Growth

The SHMA then considers whether in the future higher net migration might be required relative to past trends, taking account of how the age structure of the population might change (including people moving into retirement) and the potential scale of growth in employment.

Over the 1993-2010 period (which is equivalent to the last economic cycle), employment in Sevenoaks District grew by an average of 1.0% per annum. In Tunbridge Wells Borough, employment levels were static (0.0% growth). Economic forecasts from the East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM) suggest employment could grow by between 8.9 – 16.5% in Sevenoaks; and by between 9.1 – 16.8% in Tunbridge Wells in the period 2013-33. The latest (Winter 2014) forecasts are the higher.

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The SHMA concludes that the forecasts for Tunbridge Wells look overly optimistic set against historical employment trends. For Sevenoaks District, the latest forecasts are closer to the historical rate of employment growth; and taking account of wider macro-economic factors the SHMA concludes that these forecasts, for 0.8% annual growth in employment, look reasonable. On this basis the SHMA models the implications of higher economic-led migration to Sevenoaks relative to past trends. In relating jobs and homes, the SHMA takes account of trends in age-specific employment rates and changes to state pension age; and assumes that the “commuting ratio²” shown in the 2011 Census stays constant. The higher, economic-driven migration to Sevenoaks results in housing need 8% higher than in the initial trend-based demographic projections.

3. Affordability Issues

Government’s Planning Practice Guidance indicates that “the housing need number suggested by household projections (the starting point) should be adjusted to reflect appropriate market signals, as well as other market indicators of the balance between the demand for and supply of dwellings.” It identifies that where market signals point to poor and worsening affordability and an imbalance between supply and demand, an appropriate adjustment should be made to future housing provision.

The median house price in Sevenoaks is £302,000, and in Tunbridge Wells £260,000 at the time of the Assessment; both of which are above those across the wider housing market area and Kent (where the average is £210,000). The mapping of house prices undertaken however clearly shows that prices are similar to other areas close to London. Whilst house price increases over the period since 2008 have been modest, particularly in real terms (taking account of inflation); growth in rents in both areas has been above inflation.

The evidence points to notable affordability pressures, with the lower quartile (entry level) house prices 11 times earnings of younger households in Sevenoaks; and 9.7 times earnings in Tunbridge Wells. This compares to a ratio of 6.5 nationally.

The analysis also suggests some real impacts arising from high housing costs. Over the 2001-11 period, home ownership fell (with increasing numbers of households renting privately). Levels of over-occupied households and those in shared housing increased, albeit that levels of both remain below Kent and national averages.

As we might expect, the high housing costs have contributed to levels of households who require financial support in meeting their housing needs, and would be eligible for affordable housing. The report identifies a net need from 422 households per annum for affordable housing in Sevenoaks;

² The commuting ratio is the ratio of people working in the District to the number of employed residents. This is a “policy off” assumption

and from 341 households per annum in Tunbridge Wells. This includes need arising from concealed and homeless households – who will require additional housing – as well as from overcrowded households, or those who seek an alternative tenure of accommodation, but would release a home for other households should a new affordable home be provided.

The evidence from market signals, and from the affordable housing needs assessment, point to affordability pressures. The report provides evidence that deteriorating affordability (coupled with the credit crunch) resulted in a fall in household formation amongst households in their late 20s and early 30s over the 2001-11 period. An improvement in affordability can be expected to see a rise in household formation amongst these households.

Taking account of market conditions, where sales volumes remain below pre-2008 levels and market capacity issues, coupled with the tightening of lending criteria for accessing mortgage finance, it is reasonable to expect household formation for younger households to improve gradually over time (if supply-side considerations such as land availability are left aside).

The report models an improvement in household formation rates amongst households aged 25-34, returning to 2001 levels by 2033. This adjustment is applied to the demographic and/or economic-led projections to derive conclusions on the objectively-assessed housing need.

4. Conclusions on Objectively-Assessed Housing Need

The SHMA draws together the above factors to identify the full objectively-assessed need for market and affordable housing. It identifies a need for 620 homes per year in Sevenoaks District, and 648 homes per year in Tunbridge Wells Borough over the 2013-33 period.

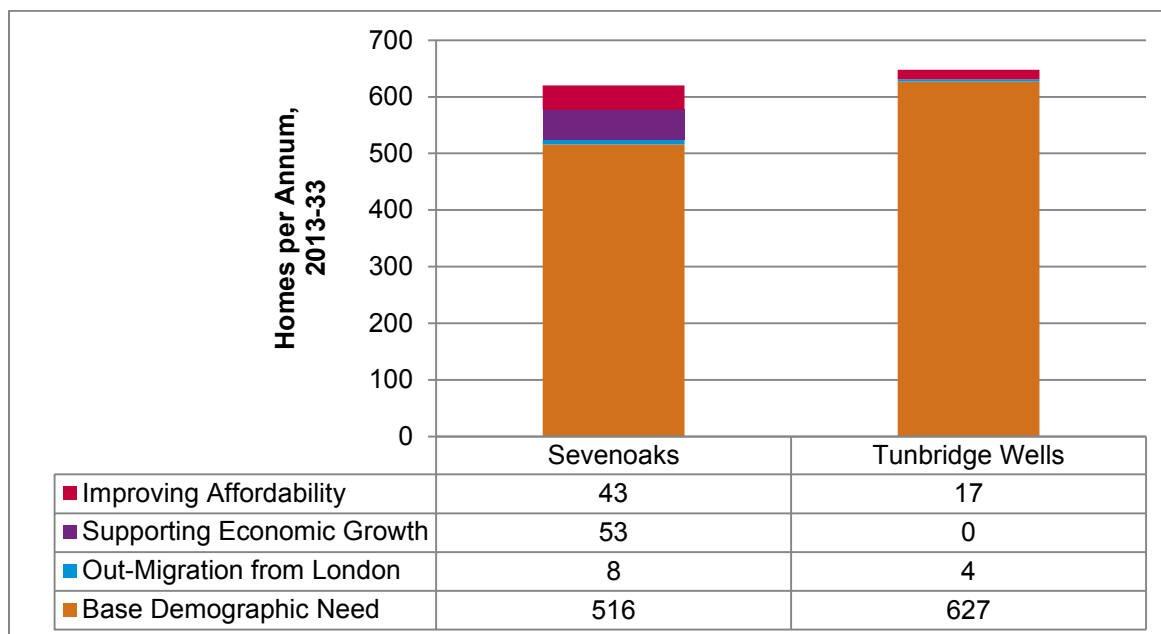
Table 1: Conclusions on Full Objectively-Assessed Housing Need

	Housing Need, 2013-33	Annual Average
Sevenoaks	12,400	620
Tunbridge Wells	12,960	648

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The need identified is built up as shown in the figure below.

Figure 1: Objectively-Assessed Housing Need, 2013-33



Need for Different Types of Homes

Need for different Sizes of Homes

The SHMA has considered the need for different sizes of homes, both market and affordable, taking account of the current housing stock and market conditions; and how changes in the size and structure of the population can be expected to change over the period to 2033. The SHMA concludes that the following represents an appropriate mix of affordable and market homes to plan for over the 2013-33 period:

Table 2: Recommended Housing Mix – Sevenoaks District

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Market	5-10%	25-30%	40-45%	20-25%
Affordable	30-35%	30-35%	25-30%	5-10%
All dwellings	15-20%	25-30%	35-40%	15-20%

Table 3: Recommended Housing Mix – Tunbridge Wells Borough

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Market	5-10%	25-30%	35-40%	20-25%
Affordable	35-40%	30-35%	20-25%	5-10%
All dwellings	20%	30%	30%	20%

The evidence suggests that the strongest demand for market housing will be for two and three bedroom properties. For affordable housing, there is a greater proportional need for one and two bedroom properties; however there remains a need for a balanced mix of dwellings of different

sizes to come forward with delivery of larger properties being important in meeting the needs of households with an acute housing need, and releasing existing properties for other households.

In applying policies on housing mix to individual development sites, the SHMA recommends that regard should be had to the nature of the development site and character of the area, and to up-to-date evidence of need as well as the existing mix and turnover of properties at the local level.

Affordable Housing Mix

In respect of the need for different types of affordable housing, the SHMA has considered what households can afford, together with the supply through turnover of existing housing stock. It concludes that around 25% of the affordable housing need in Sevenoaks District, and 35% in Tunbridge Wells Borough could be met by intermediate housing options, such as Help-to-Buy Shared Ownership, Rent-to-Homebuy, and Low Cost Sale/Starter Homes.

Table 4: Need for Different Forms of Affordable Housing

	Intermediate	Social / Affordable Rent
Sevenoaks	24%	76%
Tunbridge Wells	36%	64%

Policies for the mix of affordable housing need to take account not just of the needs evidence, but the evidence base regarding development viability, as well as local policy aspirations. It may be appropriate for viability studies to test potential alternative policies for the mix of affordable housing in order to support overall delivery.

Specialist Housing and Accommodation for Older Persons

The SHMA indicates that the population of persons aged over 65 accounts for 18% of the population in Tunbridge Wells; and 20% in Sevenoaks. The number of residents aged over 65 is expected to grow substantially – by 49% in Sevenoaks and 61% in Tunbridge Wells to 2033, with particularly strong growth expected in those aged over 75, driven by improving life expectancy.

A growing older population and increasing longevity is expected to result in a substantial growth in people with dementia and mobility problems. Across the two areas, the number of people with mobility problems is expected to increase by over 6,000; with an increase of more than 2,500 persons with dementia projected (based on the SNPP) to 2033. Some of these households will require adaptations to properties to meet their changing needs whilst others may require more specialist accommodation or support – including Lifetime and wheelchair-accessible homes. There is clear evidence of need for properties which are capable of accommodating people’s changing needs.

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Specialist housing includes sheltered and extra care housing. Based on the expected growth in population of older persons, the SHMA estimates a need for an additional 1,300 specialist dwellings for older persons in Sevenoaks and 1,400 in Tunbridge Wells over the 2013-33 period. This forms part of the overall housing need identified in Table 5. The need in different areas is shown below:

Table 5: Need for Specialist Housing for Older Persons, 2013-33

	Specialist Housing Need, 2013-33	Annual Need for Specialist Housing	% Overall OAN
Sevenoaks	1,319	66	11%
Tunbridge Wells	1,391	70	11%

Decisions about the appropriate mix of specialist housing should take account of the current stock, other local needs evidence as appropriate, and policies regarding accommodation and care for older persons. The two authorities and county council should liaise as appropriate in this respect. The SHMA recommends that each Council give consideration to how best to deliver the identified specialist housing need, including for instance the potential to identify sites in accessible locations for specialist housing or to require provision of specialist housing for older people as part of larger strategic development schemes.

The SHMA recognises that many older people will want to remain in homes that they may have lived in for many years. Adaptions to properties and floating support will be important in helping older people to do so. Some older households may wish to downsize, should suitable, attractive properties be available locally. This has been taken into account in deriving the findings regarding the future mix of market and affordable housing shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Care / Nursing Home Bedspaces for Older Persons

The SHMA indicates a net need for 511 nursing or care home bedspaces for older persons in Sevenoaks and 796 bedspaces in Tunbridge Wells over the 2013-33 period. The assessment, based on the expected change in the “institutional population” aged over 75 within the demographic projections should be treated as indicative. The SHMA does not seek to set policies in how older persons with care needs should be accommodated. This need is separate from the assessed overall housing need as it relates principally to a C2 Use Class.

Table 6: Need for Residential/ Nursing Care Bedspaces

	Change in institutional population aged 75+, 2013-33
Sevenoaks	511
Tunbridge Wells	796

Self-Build Housing

The SHMA indicates that there is potential for growth in housing delivery through self- and custom-build housing. The SHMA provides indicative information on needs, based on data from BuildStore, as shown below.

Table 7: Registered Interest in Self and Custom-Build Homes, Sept 2015

	Persons registered on BuildStore Custom-Build Register, Sept 2015	Active Members on BuildStore Plot Search Register, Sept 2015
Sevenoaks	39	152
Tunbridge Wells	64	340

To support growth in this market segment, responding to Government policy, it would be appropriate for the Councils to consider whether planning policy for larger sites should require an element of land to be put aside to support Custom-build housing. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council should also investigate putting in place a register of individuals with an interest in Custom-Build to provide more detailed information on demand, to support and provide a justification for seeking provision of plots on larger development schemes.

Meeting the Needs of Other Vulnerable Groups

The SHMA has considered the needs of a number of other vulnerable groups. The two local authorities have a relatively modest Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population, but one which has been growing. BME households may be disadvantaged in the housing market. The SHMA sets out that where possible the Councils should provide advice to BME groups and in particular ensure that accommodation quality (particularly in the private rented sector) can meet the needs of such households which are disproportionately likely to contain children.

The evidence also suggests that lone parent households are more likely to be disadvantaged than other household groups. Advice on housing options and securing good quality of accommodation will be critical to ensure that such households’ needs are best met and that children are provided with a full range of opportunities.

Younger households in the two areas typically have a higher reliance on rented accommodation. Given that the housing options for young people may be more limited than for other groups it will be important to monitor the accommodation quality – this will need to focus on the quality of shared accommodation and housing within the Private Rented Sector.

The Private Rented Sector has grown over the 2001-11 period. There is potential, moving forwards, for institutional investment in ‘Build-to-Rent’ housing schemes. This may contribute positively to

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Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Strategic Housing Market Assessment
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Councils, Final Draft Report, September 2015

overall housing delivery, however the Councils may need to consider how affordable housing policies are applied to this Private Rented Sector housing, given that the viability of such schemes is very different to those of more 'traditional' market or mixed-tenure developments.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 GL Hearn (GLH) and Justin Gardner Consulting (JGC) have been commissioned by Sevenoaks District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The purpose of the SHMA is to develop a robust understanding of housing market dynamics, to provide an assessment of future needs for both market and affordable housing and the housing needs of different groups within the population.
- 1.2 **The SHMA does not set housing targets. It provides an objective assessment of the need for housing, making no judgements regarding future policy decisions which the Councils may take.** Housing targets will be set in the Councils respective local plans. These will need to be informed by the SHMA but will also take into account other factors and evidence through the plan-making process.
- 1.3 The SHMA responds to and is compliant with the requirements of both the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF)³ and the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)⁴. It provides assessment of the future need for housing, with the intention that this will inform future development of planning policies. According to the PPG, housing need:
- “refers to the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that is likely to be needed in the housing market area over the plan period – and should cater for the housing demand of the area and identify the scale of housing supply necessary to meet that demand.”*
- 1.4 The Planning Practice Guidance is clear that the SHMA should not apply constraints to the assessment of need, such as those relating to land supply, environmental constraints or infrastructure provision, although it is clear that these are relevant considerations in bringing together the range of evidence in the preparation of a local plan.
- 1.5 The SHMA provides specific evidence and analysis of the need for different sizes of homes, to inform policies on the mix of homes (both market and affordable). The SHMA also analyses the needs of specific groups, such as older people.
- 1.6 A best-fit of local authority boundaries to the Housing Market Area would include Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling.
- 1.7 The SHMA provides an assessment of housing need in Sevenoaks District and Tunbridge Wells Borough. It has been prepared using a consistent methodology to that in similar assessments

³ CLG (March 2012) *National Planning Policy Framework*

⁴ CLG (March 2014) *Planning Practice Guidance – Assessment of Housing and Economic Development Needs*

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prepared by GL Hearn for Tonbridge and Malling Borough; as well as Maidstone and Ashford Boroughs.

- 1.8 Findings from this report regarding housing need can be aggregated with those for Tonbridge and Malling Borough as set out in the *SHMA Update – Implications of 2012-based Household Projections* report⁵ (GL Hearn, June 2015) to provide a composite picture of housing needs across the three authorities. Both reports adopt a consistent methodology and use the same data.
- 1.9 Thus to provide an objective assessment of need across the HMA, conclusions in this report would need to be brought together with those in GL Hearn's recent SHMA Update Report dealing with housing need in Tonbridge and Malling (together with Ashford and Maidstone).

National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance

- 1.10 National planning policies are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This sets out a framework for how evidence-based studies regarding housing provision should be prepared; and policies against which development plans will be assessed at examination and with which they must comply. Local authorities are required to collaborate on assessments such as this, recognising that housing markets can cut across local authority boundaries.
- 1.11 The primary legislation to support this is the 2011 Localism Act which now imposes a 'duty to cooperate' on local authorities, requiring them to "engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis" with the other authorities and relevant bodies. The Duty to Cooperate is applied as both a legal and soundness test to which development plans must comply.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 1.12 The NPPF was published in March 2012. The Framework sets a presumption in favour of sustainable development whereby Local Plans should meet objectively assessed development needs, with sufficient flexibility to respond to rapid change, unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits or policies within the Framework indicate that development should be restricted.
- 1.13 Paragraph 47 in the NPPF outlines that to significantly boost the supply of housing, local planning authorities (amongst other things) should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively-assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the NPPF.

⁵ This deals with housing need in Tonbridge and Malling, together with Maidstone and Ashford

- 1.14 The NPPF highlights the SHMA as a key piece of evidence in determining housing needs. Paragraph 159 in the Framework outlines that this should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures which the local population is likely to need over the plan period which:
- Meets household and population projections, taking account of migration and demographic change;
 - Addresses the need for all types of housing, including affordable housing and the needs of different groups in the community; and
 - Caters for housing demand and the scale of housing supply necessary to meet this demand.
- 1.15 The SHMA is intended to be prepared for the housing market area, and include work and dialogue with neighbouring authorities where the Housing Market Area (HMA) crosses administrative boundaries.
- 1.16 Paragraph 181 sets out that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively cooperated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts when their Local Plans are submitted for examination. This highlights the importance of collaborative working and engaging constructively with neighbouring authorities, as required by Section 33A of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, and ensuring that there is a robust audit trail showing joint working to meet the requirements of paragraph 181 of the NPPF.
- 1.17 Paragraph 158 of the NPPF emphasises the alignment of the housing and economic evidence base and policy. Paragraph 17 in the NPPF reaffirms this, and outlines that planning should also take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability. However it also makes clear that plans must be deliverable. The Councils' economic development aspirations align with the findings identified in this report.
- 1.18 In regard to housing mix, the NPPF sets out that local authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community. Planning authorities should identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations reflecting local demand. Where a need for affordable housing is identified, authorities should set policies for meeting this need on site.
- 1.19 In setting affordable housing targets, the NPPF states that to ensure a plan is deliverable, the sites and the scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to a scale of obligations and policy burdens such that their ability to be developed is threatened and should support development throughout the economic cycle. The costs of requirements likely to be applied to development, including affordable housing requirements, contributions to infrastructure and other policies in the Plan, should not compromise the viability of development schemes. To address this, affordable housing policies would need to be considered alongside other factors including infrastructure contributions – a 'whole plan' approach to viability. Where possible the NPPF

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encourages local authorities to work up Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charges alongside the local plan.

- 1.20 The SHMA is intended to be brought together with evidence of land availability, from Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAAs). To increase housing supply, the NPPF proposes that local authorities should be required to maintain a 5 year supply of specific deliverable sites, and to bring forward an allowance of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land (unless there is a persistent track record of under-delivery in which case a 20% buffer is to be included).

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 1.21 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was issued by Government in March 2014 as an online resource. Elements of this are updated periodically. The PPG includes Guidance on ‘*Assessment of Housing and Economic Development Needs*’. This SHMA takes account of the Guidance set out at the time of publication.
- 1.22 The PPG is relevant to this SHMA in that it provides clarity on how key elements of the NPPF should be interpreted, including the approach to deriving an objective assessment of the need for housing. The approach in this report takes account of this Guidance.
- 1.23 The Guidance defines “need” as referring to “the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that is likely to be needed in the housing market area over the plan period – and should cater for the housing demand of the area and identify the scale of housing supply necessary to meet this need.”
- 1.24 It sets out that the assessment of need should be realistic in taking account of the particular nature of that area (for example geographical constraints and the nature of the market area), and should be based on future scenarios that could be reasonably expected to occur. It should not take account of supply-side factors or development constraints. Specifically the Guidance sets out that:
- “plan makers should not apply constraints to the overall assessment of need, such as limitations imposed by the supply of land for new development, historical under performance, infrastructure or environmental constraints. However these considerations will need to be addressed when bringing evidence bases together to identify specific policies within development plans.”*
- 1.25 The Guidance outlines that estimating future need is not an exact science and that there is no one methodological approach or dataset which will provide a definitive assessment of need. However, the starting point for establishing the need for housing should be the latest household projections published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). At the time of preparation of this report the latest projections are the CLG 2012-based Household Projections. It also outlines that the latest population projections and Mid-Year Population Estimates should be

considered. The latest Mid-Year Population Estimates available at the time of preparation of the report were for mid-2013⁶.

- 1.26 The PPG sets out that there may be instances where these national projections require adjustment to take account of factors affecting local demography or household formation rates, in particular where there is evidence that household formation rates are or have been constrained by supply. It suggests that proportional adjustments should be made where the market signals point to supply being constrained relative to long-term trends or to other areas in order to improve affordability.

- 1.27 Evidence of affordable housing needs is also relevant, with the Guidance suggesting that the total affordable housing need should be considered in the context of its likely delivery as a proportion of mixed market and affordable housing. In some instances it suggests this may provide a case for increasing the level of overall housing provision.

- 1.28 In regard to employment trends, the Guidance indicates that job growth trends and/or economic forecasts should be considered having regard to the growth in working-age population in the housing market area. It sets out that:

“ where the supply of working age population that is economically active (labour force supply) is less than the projected job growth, this could result in unsustainable commuting patterns (depending on public transport accessibility and other sustainable options such as walking and cycling) and could reduce the resilience of local businesses. In such circumstances, plan makers will need to consider how the location of new housing and infrastructure development could help to address these problems.”

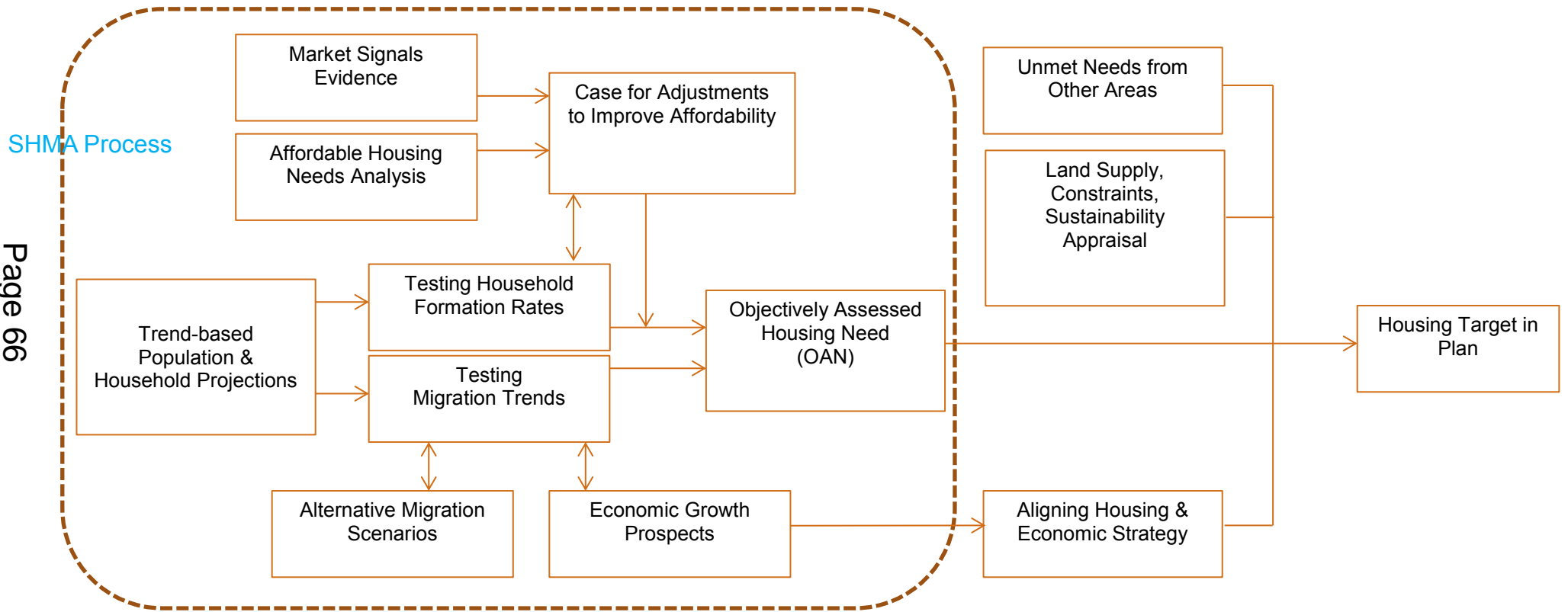
- 1.29 The Guidance indicates that the assessment should consider the need for different types of housing and the needs of different groups, including family housing, housing for older people, and households with specific needs and those looking to build their own home. It sets out that the need for older persons’ housing should be broken down by tenure and type, and should include an assessment of need for residential institutions (falling within a C2 use class).

Overview of the Approach to Deriving OAN

- 1.30 Based on the above, the diagram below summarises the approach we have used to deriving conclusions regarding the Objectively-Assessed Need (OAN) for Housing.

⁶ The demographic modelling herein was undertaken in advance of release of ONS 2014 Mid-Year Population Estimates. The impact of these on the assessed housing need over a 20 year period could be expected to be minimal.

Figure 2: Overview of Approach



SHMA Process

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2 DEFINING THE HOUSING MARKET AREA

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local planning authorities should use their evidence base to ensure Local Plans meet the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in their Housing Market Area (HMA).

2.2 In simple terms, the HMA is a geographical area in which the majority of people, who move, will move within. It also reflects functional relationships between where people live and work. However, defining housing market areas is an inexact science and there is no single source of information that will clearly identify housing market areas.

2.3 The NPPF makes clear that in planning for housing provision, it is important to consider housing needs and dynamics across a HMA, with each HMA seeking to meet needs within it where it is sustainable to do so and consistent with national planning policies. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) similarly highlights that needs should be assessed across the relevant housing market area. The first question for the SHMA is therefore, what housing market area(s) do Sevenoaks District and Tunbridge Wells Borough fall within.

Approach to Defining Housing Market Areas

2.4 The PPG defines a housing market area, setting out:

A housing market area is a geographical area defined by household demand and preferences for all types of housing, reflecting the key functional linkages between places where people live and work. It might be the case that housing market areas overlap.

The extent of the housing market areas identified will vary, and many will in practice cut across various local planning authority administrative boundaries. Local planning authorities should work with all the other constituent authorities under the duty to cooperate⁷.

2.5 The PPG sets out that housing market areas can broadly be defined using three different sources of information:

- **House prices and rates of change in house prices** – providing a market-based definition based on areas with similar house price characteristics;
- **Household migration and search patterns** – considering the extent to which people move house within an area, with a housing market area considered to be that in which typically 70% or more of local moves are contained within (excluding long-distance moves);
- **Contextual data** - such as travel to work areas, retail and school catchments – with travel to work areas providing information regarding commuting.

2.6 The three strands of information look at different aspects of household behaviour, and there is no right or wrong answer regarding what weight should be applied to different factors. What the PPG says is that:

⁷ ID: 2a-011-20140306

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No single source of information on needs will be comprehensive in identifying the appropriate assessment area; careful consideration should be given to the appropriateness of each source of information and how they relate to one another. For example, for housing, where there are issues of affordability or low demand, house price or rental level analyses will be particularly important in identifying the assessment area. Where there are relatively high or volatile rates of household movement, migration data will be particularly important. Plan makers will need to consider the usefulness of each source of information and approach for their purposes.⁸

Practical Issues

- 2.7 The PPG largely reiterates previous guidance on defining HMAs set out within the CLG's 2007 Advice Note on *Identifying Sub-Regional Housing Market Areas*. There has been effectively no change in guidance, which continues to emphasise that there is no right or wrong answer as to how an HMA should be defined and that the approach should, in effect, reflect local market characteristics and circumstances.
- 2.8 There is a range of previous work which has been undertaken to define HMAs over the last decade, at national, regional and local levels. It is now however appropriate to review this, not least given that a significant proportion of the past work is informed by 2001 Census data regarding commuting and migration patterns. 2011 Census flow data was issued in late July 2014.
- 2.9 There are some further practical issues which are dealt with in the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Technical Advice Note on *Objectively Assessed Need and Housing Targets*.⁹ This outlines that in practice, the main indicators used to define HMAs are migration and commuting flows, but goes on to point out that:

One problem in drawing boundaries is that if each local planning authority were to draw an HMA centred on its area, there would be almost as many HMAs as local authorities. This is because the largest migration flows in and out of any individual authority are usually those linking it with immediately adjacent authorities. But each of these adjacent authorities will probably find that their largest migration flows link them to their immediate neighbours, and the chain continues indefinitely.

Thus if each authority works independently to define an optimal HMA each authority may draw a different map, centred on its own area.

- 2.10 The PAS Note argues that to address this issue, it is useful to start with a "top down analysis" which looks at the whole country. This is provided by a research study led by the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS) at Newcastle University to define HMAs across England, which was published by Government in November 2010¹⁰. This has defined a consistent set of HMAs across England based on migration and commuting data from the 2001 Census.

⁸ ID 2a-009-20140306

⁹ Peter Brett Associates (PBA) for PAS (June 2014) *Objectively Assessed Need and Housing Targets*

¹⁰ C Jones, M Coombe and C Wong for CLG (Nov 2010) *Geography of Housing Markets, Final Report*

2.11 Peter Brett Associates (PBA) emphasises that this should be considered ‘only a starting point’ and should be sense-checked against local knowledge and more recent data, especially on migration and commuting – concluding that more recent data ‘should always trump’ the national research. GL Hearn agrees with the report’s conclusions in this respect.

2.12 A further practical issue regards the geographical building blocks that housing market areas are built up from. A key purpose of a SHMA is to define the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing. The PPG is clear that the starting point for doing so is the official population and household projections. These are published at a national level, and for local authorities. They are not published below local authority level, nor is the data available (regarding migration and trends in household formation which are key drivers within the projections) to allow this to be undertaken below local authority level. On this basis we consider that **Housing Market Areas should be based on the ‘best fit’ to local authority boundaries**; albeit that SHMAs can (and should) recognise cross-boundary influences and interactions. The PAS Report supports this, concluding that:

It is best if HMA boundaries do not cut across local authority areas. Dealing with areas smaller than local authorities causes major difficulties in analysing evidence and drafting policy. For such small areas data availability is poor and analysis is complex. These complications are not offset by the benefit of greater accuracy.

2.13 This approach seems widely accepted and is a practical response to data availability and one we would wish to adopt. In practical terms, we are of the view that towards the edges of most housing markets there are likely to be influences in two directions.

2.14 Following this approach, we first of all therefore review existing research which has sought to consider the definition of the HMAs; before going on to consider more recent data.

CLG/ CURDS Study (2009/10)

2.15 National research undertaken for Government by a consortium of academics led by the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS) at Newcastle University has sought to define housing markets across England. As the PAS Technical Advice Note recommends, we have used this as a ‘starting point’ for considering the HMA geography.

2.16 The CURDS Study for CLG considers commuting and migration dynamics (based on 2001 Census data) and house prices (standardised to account for differences in housing mix and neighborhood characteristics). This information was brought together to define a three tiered structure of housing markets, as follows:

- Strategic (Framework) Housing Markets – based on 77.5% commuting self-containment;
- Local Housing Market Areas – based on 50% migration self-containment; and

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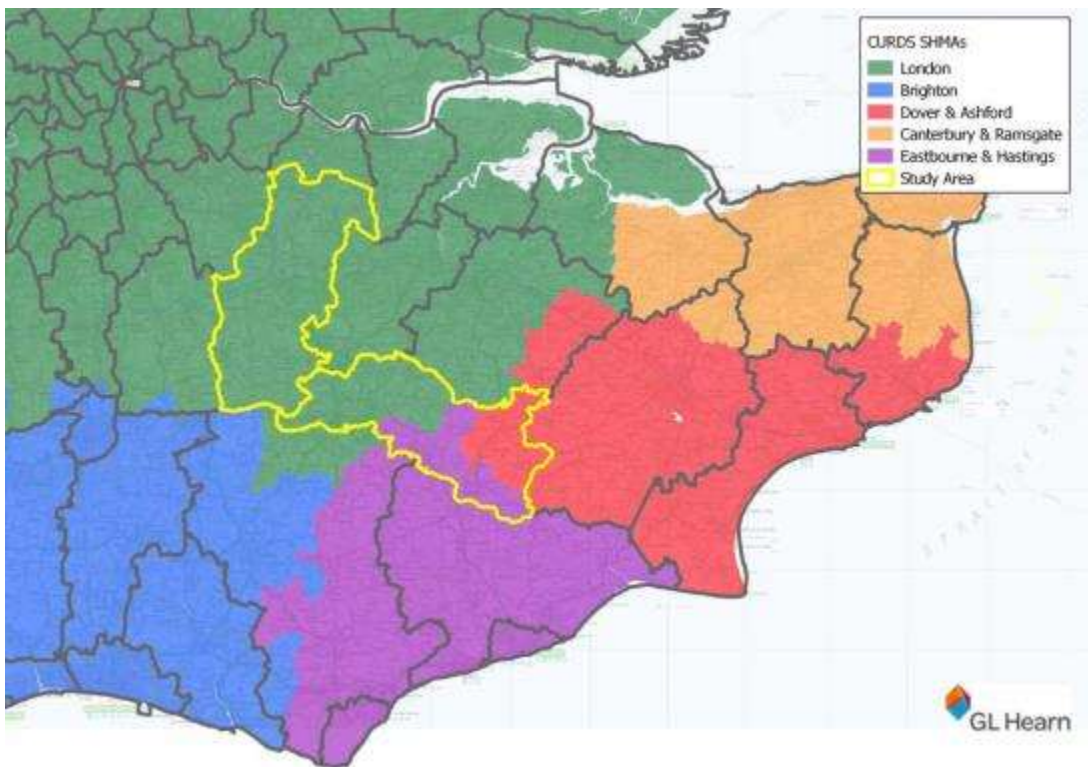
- Sub-Markets – which would be defined based on neighbourhood factors and house types.

2.17 The Strategic and Local HMAs are mapped across England, with the Local HMAs embedded within the wider Strategic HMAs. Both are defined based on wards at a “gold standard” and based on local authorities for the “silver standard” geographies defined.

Framework Housing Market Areas

2.18 All of Sevenoaks District, Tonbridge and Malling Borough and most of Maidstone Borough, as well as Tandridge to the west and the northern part of Wealden District are identified as part of a London ‘Framework’ Housing Market Area in the CURDS research. Tunbridge Wells Borough is split, with the western part of the Borough (including Tunbridge Wells itself) also falling within a London HMA; but with Benenden and Cranbrook falling in a Dover and Ashford Framework HMA; and with Hawkhurst sitting on the boundary with an Eastbourne and Hastings HMA.

Figure 3: CURDS Framework Housing Market Areas



Source: CURDS 2009/10

2.19 On the basis of a ‘best fit’ to local authority boundaries, both authorities together with Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone and Tandridge fall within the London Framework HMA.

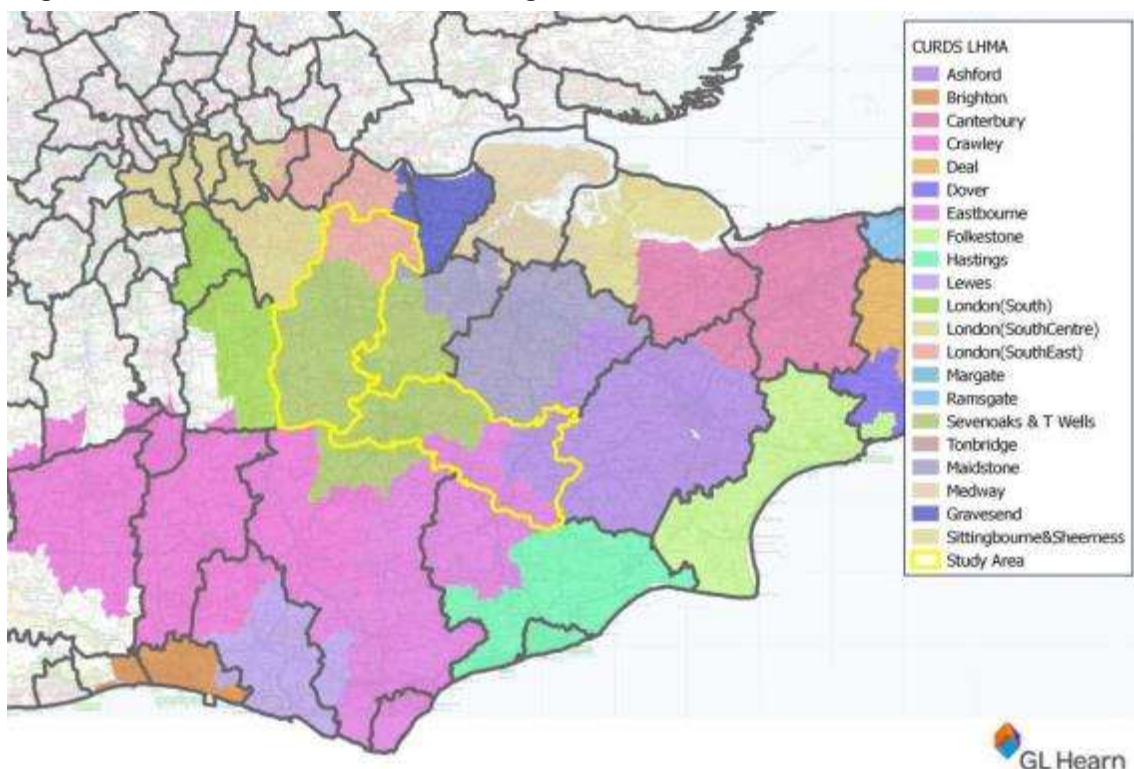
Local Housing Market Areas

2.20 The CURDS Study defined Local Housing Market Areas (LHMAs) which are embedded within the Framework Housing Markets, based on areas with 50% self-containment of migration flows (using 2001 Census data). Relevant Local HMAs defined comprise:

- South East London
- Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells (which also includes Tonbridge)
- Eastbourne
- Ashford

2.21 The main towns of Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks all fall within a ‘Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells’ LHMA. Benenden and Cranbrook are shown to relate towards Ashford; with Hawkhurst and rural areas on the southeastern fringes of Tunbridge Wells Borough relating towards Eastbourne. Swanley and areas to the north of the M20 in Sevenoaks District falls within a South East London LHMA.

Figure 4: CURDS-Defined Local Housing Market Areas



Source: CURDS, 2009/10

2.22 The CURDS work highlights the strong relationship with London from Sevenoaks District and the western part of Tunbridge Wells Borough. However the extent of influence of London is highly sensitive to the ‘threshold’ used in analysis.

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- 2.23 It must be borne in mind that the CURDS work is based on 2001 data, which is now 14 years old. 2011 Census commuting and migration flow data has been released in Summer 2014 which provides a basis for reconsidering housing market geographies using more recent information. This is considered later in this section.

Other Strategic Studies considering HMA Geographies

London SHMA (2013)

- 2.24 The GLA's 2013 SHMA looks at the Greater London area, but recognises links beyond this setting out that 'its urban area extends beyond this boundary and encompasses a substantial hinterland' but sets out that there is no universally accepted way of measuring this, noting that boundaries based on analysis of commuting and migration "are highly sensitive to the specific level of containment uses" based on reference to the CURDS Study.
- 2.25 The examination of Further Alternations to the London Plan took place in September 2014. This included consideration of whether London can be described as a single Housing Market Area. The report from the Planning Inspector, Anthony Thickett, following the Examination in Public was published in December 2014. In Paragraph 22 the Inspector did not challenge the GLA's contention that London represents a single Housing Market area, commenting that:

The Mayor points to the acceptance by previous EiP Panels that London constitutes a single housing market area with sub markets which span Borough boundaries. The Mayor also points to the findings of the High Court, following a challenge to the Revised Early Minor Alterations to the London Plan, within which in his (undisputed) opinion, the Court accepted that although local variations exist, this did not compromise the view that London constitutes a single housing market area.

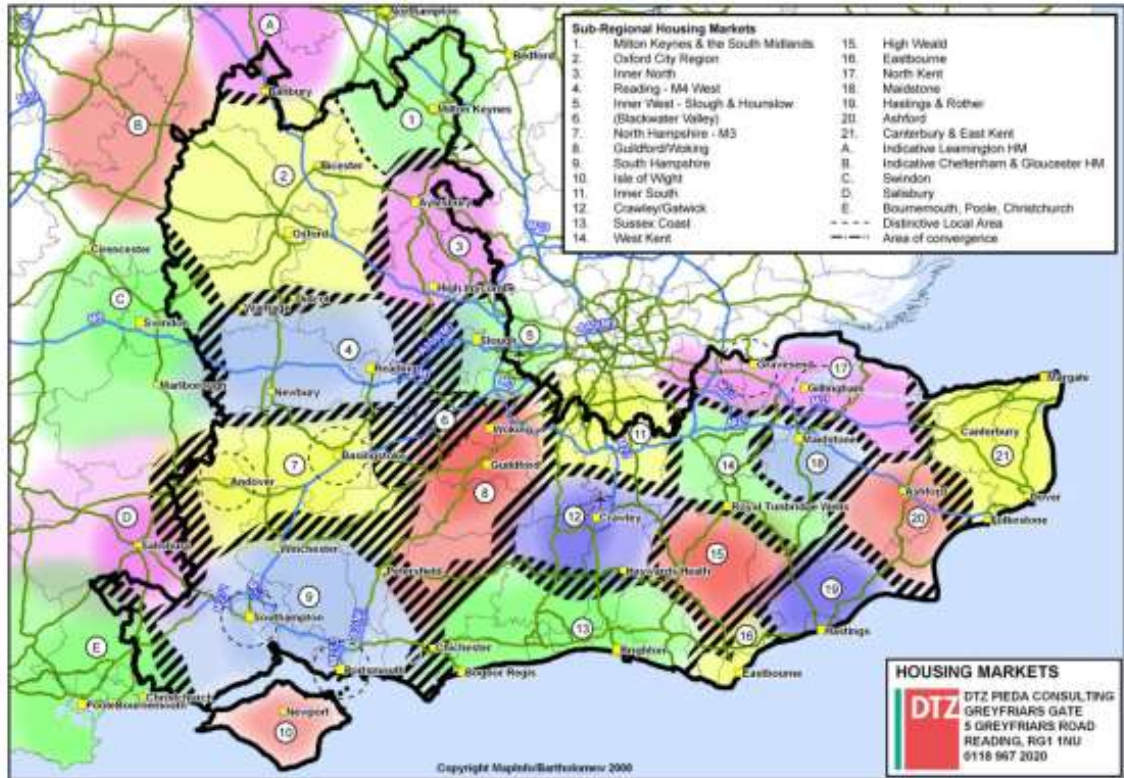
- 2.26 The implications of this for studies such as this is that local authorities must seek to define HMAs which exclude parts of London; but need to recognise that there is an inter-relationship with London which is relevant in housing market terms.

South East Plan Evidence

- 2.27 Sub-regional housing markets within the South East of England were defined in the South East Plan based on a regional study undertaken by DTZ for the South East of England Regional Assembly and Homes and Communities Agency in 2004¹¹ to define housing market areas across the South East. DTZ identified 21 housing market areas across the region, as shown in Figure 5.

¹¹ DTZ (2004) Identifying the Local Housing Markets of the South East

Figure 5: Housing Market Areas in the South East



Source: DTZ (2004) Identifying the Local Housing Markets of the South East

2.28 This Study defined a West Kent HMA which included much of Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling local authorities. A High Weald market was also identified which includes parts of Tunbridge Wells Borough. These conclusions were based on analysis of migration and travel to work patterns (at local authority level) and wider data; and a programme of stakeholder engagement to agree the definitions of housing markets across the region. Areas of overlap were identified towards the boundaries of the area.

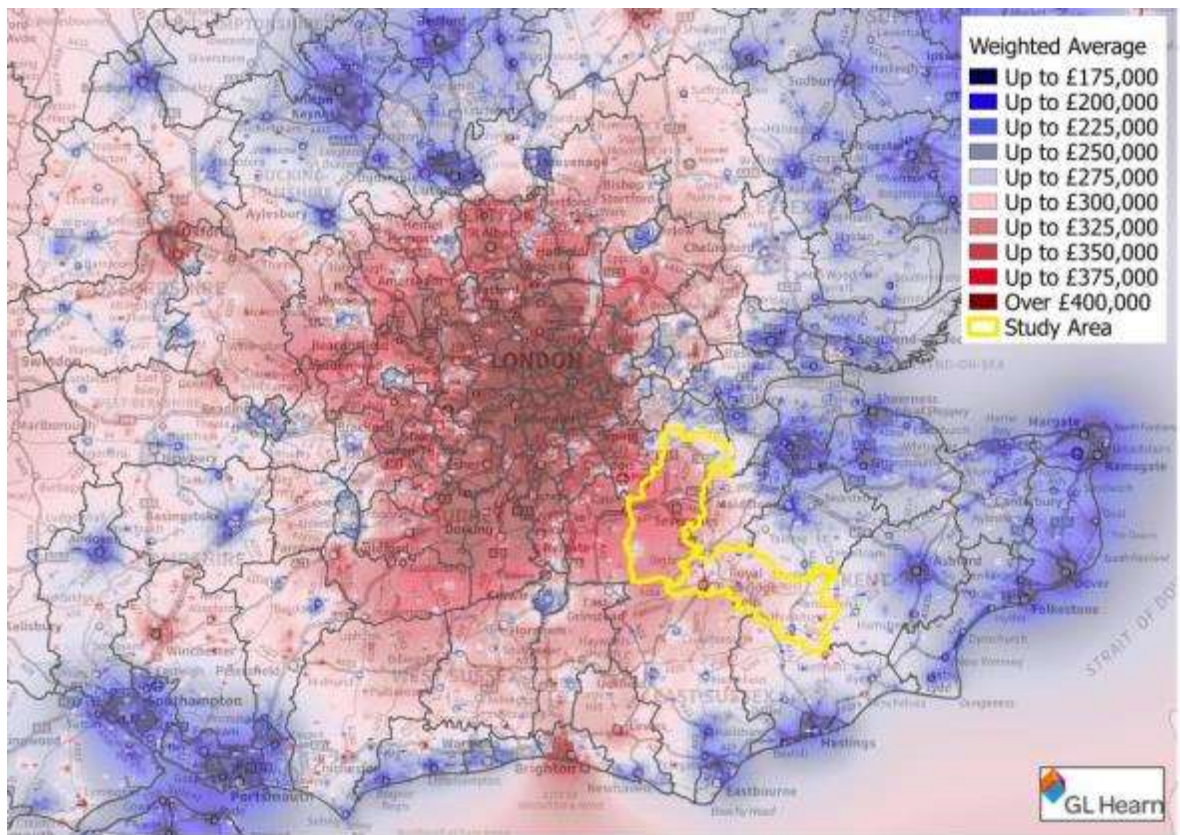
House Prices

2.29 We next move on to consider more recent data. Our analysis seeks to compare house prices spatially for comparable products. Figure 6 therefore provides an analysis of prices for semi-detached and terraced homes sold between January and December 2014 looking across the wider area. This plan provides a market-based definition of the extent of London’s housing market influence.

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2.30 The shows an area of higher house prices which extends beyond London into a number of the Home Counties, including parts of Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Essex.

Figure 6: Prices of Semi-Detached and Terraced Homes Sold, 2014



Source: Land Registry, 2015

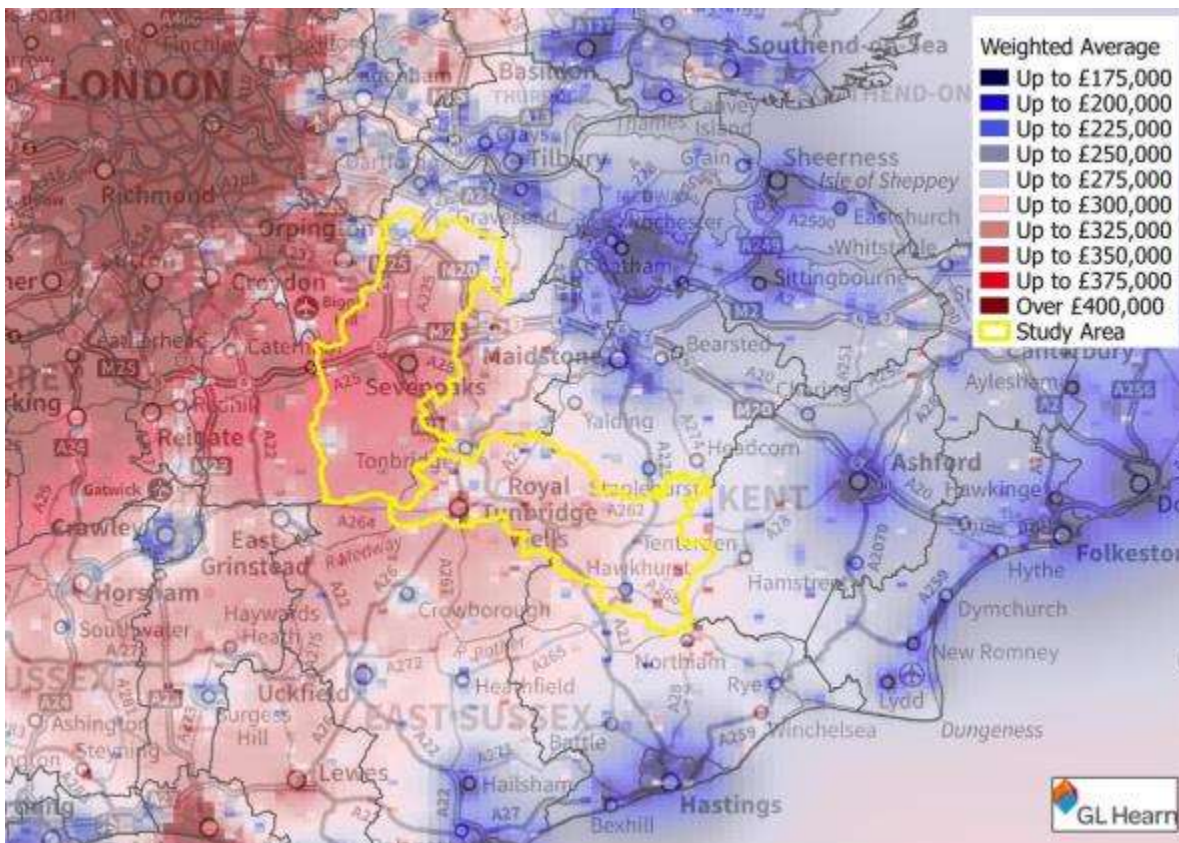
2.31 Prices drop quite notably further north into Luton and Bedfordshire; in South Essex; and Western Berkshire. We see corridors of higher prices extending towards Oxford and Cambridge (influenced by economic strength), as well as down towards the Sussex Coast.

2.32 At a more local level, Figure 7 shows stronger house prices in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells local authorities (and in Tonbridge) relative to other parts of Kent, suggesting some distinction between West Kent and other parts of the County. Prices are strongest in Sevenoaks, most likely reflecting proximity to London. Lower prices are evident in Dartford, the Medway Towns and along the Kent Coast.

Localised Price Distinctions

2.33 As described above, we would fully expect more localised distinctions in house prices to emerge through a finer grain (more localised) analysis of house price differentials. These reflect differences in the housing offer, quality of place and accessibility of different areas to employment centres.

Figure 7: Prices of Semi-Detached and Terraced Homes Sold – West Kent, 2014



Source: Land Registry, 2015

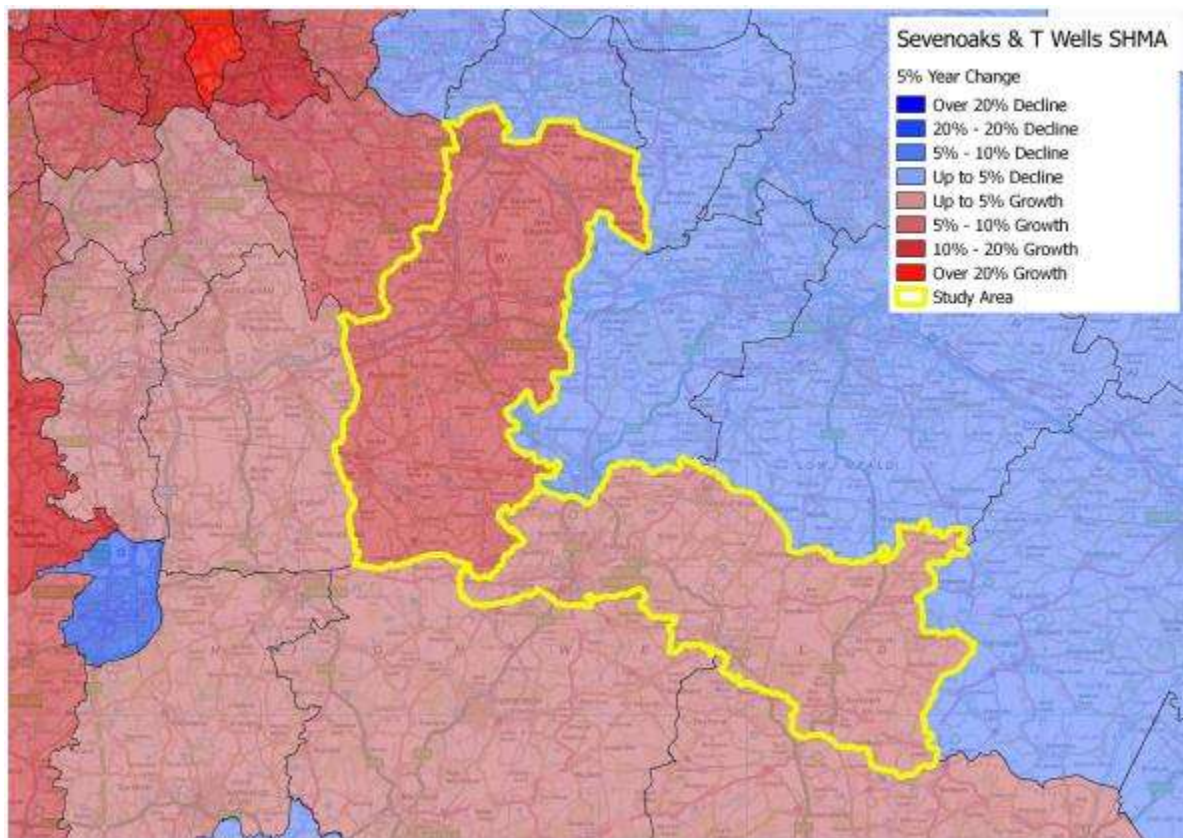
2.34 Figure 7 highlights stronger house prices in Sevenoaks District; and lower housing costs in Hawkhurst and the eastern part of Tunbridge Wells Borough. Lower prices are also evident in Swanley.

House Price Changes

2.35 Figure 8 analyses how house prices have changed over the last five years (2009-14). It shows consistent growth in house prices across the two authorities of 10-15% over the five year period. This is slightly stronger than in either Tonbridge and Malling or Maidstone Boroughs; but similar to that in Tandridge, Mid Sussex and Wealden. The analysis shows price change at local authority level.

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Figure 8: Change in House Prices (All Properties), 2009-14



Source: Land Registry, 2015

Migration Patterns

- 2.36 Migration flows reflect housing market relationships – they reflect the movement of people between homes. They are thus an important factor in considering the definition of an HMA.
- 2.37 Migration data from the 2011 Census has only been published at a local authority level. The Census records migration, asking people where they lived one year prior to Census day and on Census day itself. The use of Census data is preferable to other data (such as from NHS Central Health Register) as it records movement within individual local authorities, as well as between them, allowing self-containment analysis to be undertaken.

Self-Containment within Individual Local Authorities

- 2.38 The PPG sets out that an HMA typically would be an area within which a relatively high proportion of moves (typically 70% excluding long-distance moves) are contained. Table 8 shows self-containment levels within individual authorities. These can be measured either in terms of those who moved who were living in the local authority in 2010; or the base being those living in the authority in 2011.

Table 8: Self-Containment of Migration Flows within Individual Authorities, 2010-11

	% Self-Containment of those moving who lived in area in 2010	% Self-Containment of those moving who lived in area in 2011
Tunbridge Wells	53%	51%
Sevenoaks	40%	43%
Tonbridge & Malling	46%	46%

Source: 2011 Census

2.39 Sevenoaks in particular has a low self-containment level (40-43% depending on which basis it is measured). Tunbridge Wells is higher (51-53%). Neither can be considered to have a sufficient containment level to be considered an HMA in their own right. This is principally a reflection of the strength of relationships with London.

Migration Flows between Local Authorities

2.40 We have next sought to assess migration flows between local authorities. We have reviewed both net and gross flows. The first identifies the stronger direction of movement; with the latter highlighting the strength of connections between two local authorities – and in effect showing more about the functional links between places.

Gross Flows Analysis

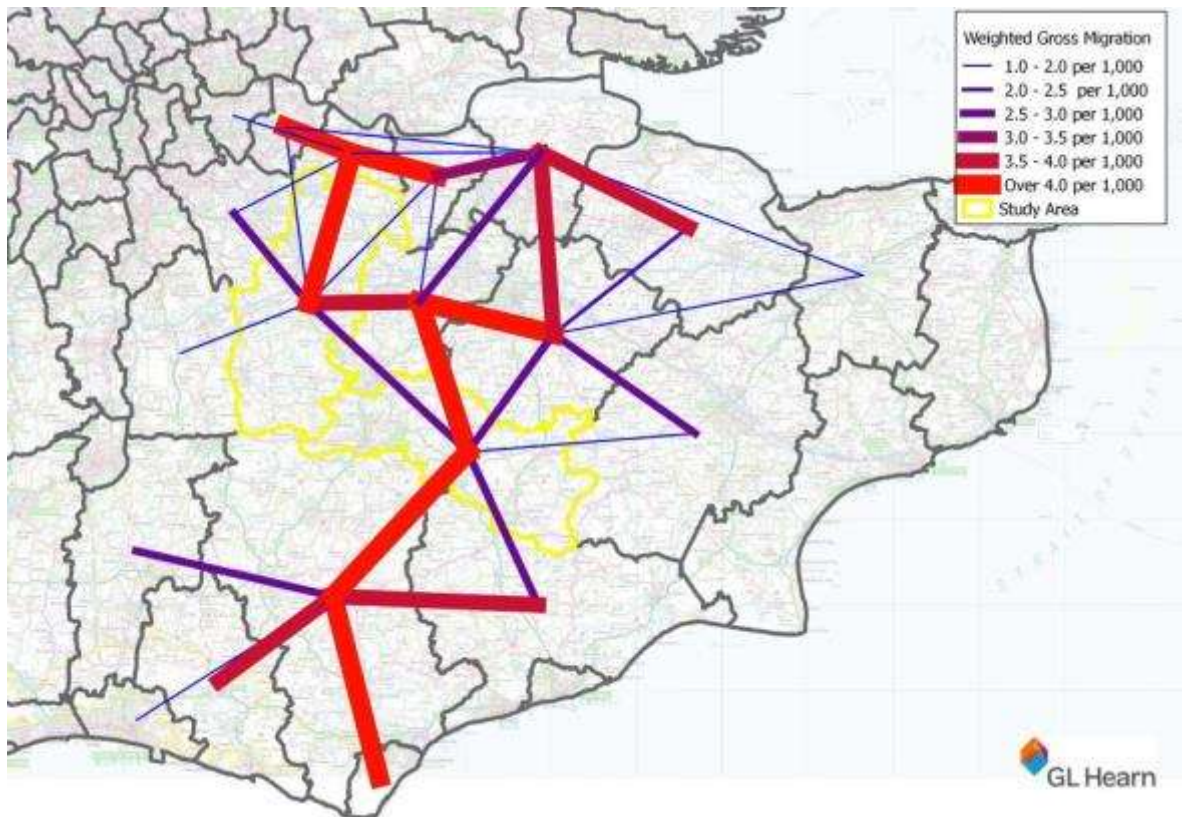
2.41 Typically we would expect a larger migration flow between two authorities with larger populations. To provide a comparative assessment of the strength of migration flows, we have therefore benchmarked flows based on the combined population of two authorities. Figures are expressed per 1,000 joint population.

2.42 The analysis indicates a strong set of migration flows between local authorities in North and West Kent and between West Kent and East Sussex. We see strong flows between Sevenoaks and Dartford; and between Tunbridge Wells and both Tonbridge and Malling and Wealden.

2.43 A complex pattern of links is evident, suggesting that different parts of local authorities may fall within different housing market areas.

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Figure 9: Gross Migration Flows between Local Authorities, 2010-11

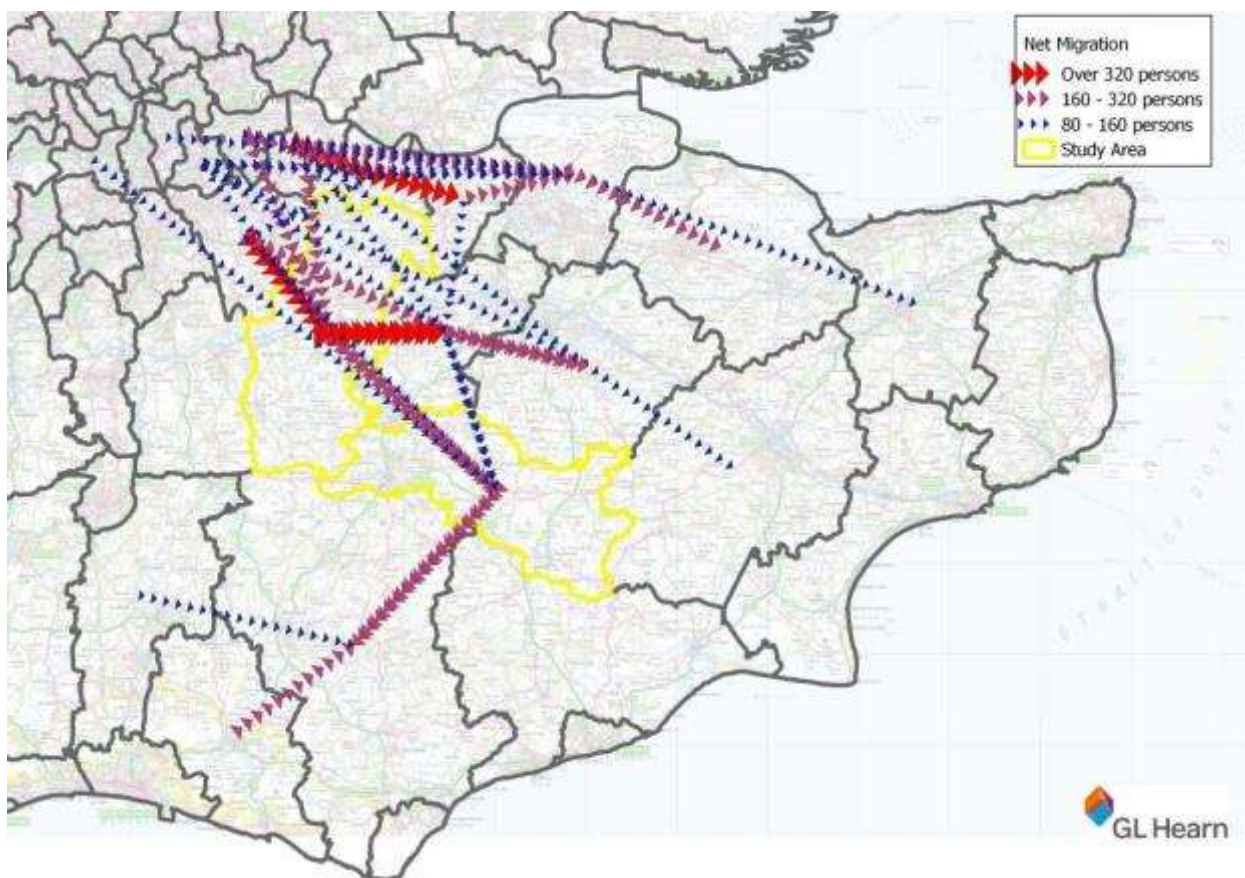


Source: 2011 Census

Net Migration

- 2.44 An analysis of net flows shows a similar picture to that which we find in most areas around London (and other core cities across the UK). Cities tend to attract in migrants from across the country and internationally, but then see a net out-migration to surrounding areas. The cities tend to have a younger population structure. Net out-migration to surrounding areas partly reflects a lifestyle model, with middle aged households from cities moving to more suburban and rural environments. Movement is influenced by a range of factors including house prices, quality of place, housing offer and schools.
- 2.45 We see a net flow from most of the South East London Boroughs to Sevenoaks; as well as flows from Westminster, Bromley, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge and Malling into Tunbridge Wells. We then see a net flow from Tunbridge Wells to Wealden.

Figure 10: Net Migration Flows between Local Authorities, 2010-11



Source: 2011 Census

2.47 We do not consider the net flows analysis to be particularly useful in defining Housing Market Area boundaries (in this or other areas).

Considering Self-Containment

2.48 The PPG sets out that an HMA would typically be an area in which 70% of moves are contained within (excluding long distance moves). We have therefore excluded long distance flow from the analysis and analysed migration self-containment levels for different potential geographies.

2.49 The migration self-containment levels for the individual local authorities are low. Considering self-containment looking at Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells together raises the level to 51%. There is a minimal impact of including Dartford – which increases this to 52%. This indicates a weak strategic relationship with Dartford from other parts of the HMA.

2.50 Including Tonbridge and Malling, the self-containment level rises to 56%. It increases further to 61% if Maidstone is included.

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- 2.51 Low self-containment levels overall reflect the strong economic interaction between this area and London.
- 2.52 We consider it appropriate to therefore test self-containment levels if the influence of London (in economic / commuting terms) is excluded. This is shown in Table 9.
- 2.53 At a local authority level, the self-containment level nears 70% if Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone are included; and exceeds it if these authorities and Dartford are included.

Table 9: Commuting Self-Containment, excluding London, 2011

	% Residents	% Workers
Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks	56%	61%
Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Dartford	59%	67%
Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling	61%	67%
Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Dartford	63%	69%
Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Maidstone	67%	71%
Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Maidstone, Dartford	71%	71%

- 2.54 The evidence also suggests a relationship between scale and self-containment.

Commuting Flows

- 2.55 The analysis of commuting flows in this section has been used to consider further the housing market geography. Our starting point for considering commuting patterns are the 2001 Travel to Work Areas (TTWA) which were produced by the ONS and Newcastle University in 2007. These are the only official and nationally consistent definition of Travel to Work Areas.
- 2.56 The TTWAs were an attempt to identify self-contained labour market areas in which all commuting occurs within the boundary of the area. It should however be recognised that in practice, it is not possible to divide the UK into entirely separate labour market areas as commuting patterns are too diffuse.
- 2.57 The TTWAs were developed as approximations to self-contained labour markets, i.e. areas where most people both live and work. As such they are based on a statistical analysis rather than administrative boundaries. The areas were produced by analysing commuting flows from the 2001 Census.
- 2.58 The criteria for defining TTWAs were that at least 75% of the area's resident workforce work in the area and at least 75% of the people who work in the area also live in the area in most instances. The area must also have had a working population of at least 3,500. However, for areas where the working population is in excess of 25,000, self-containment rates as low as 66% were accepted.

Figure 11: 2001 Travel to Work Areas



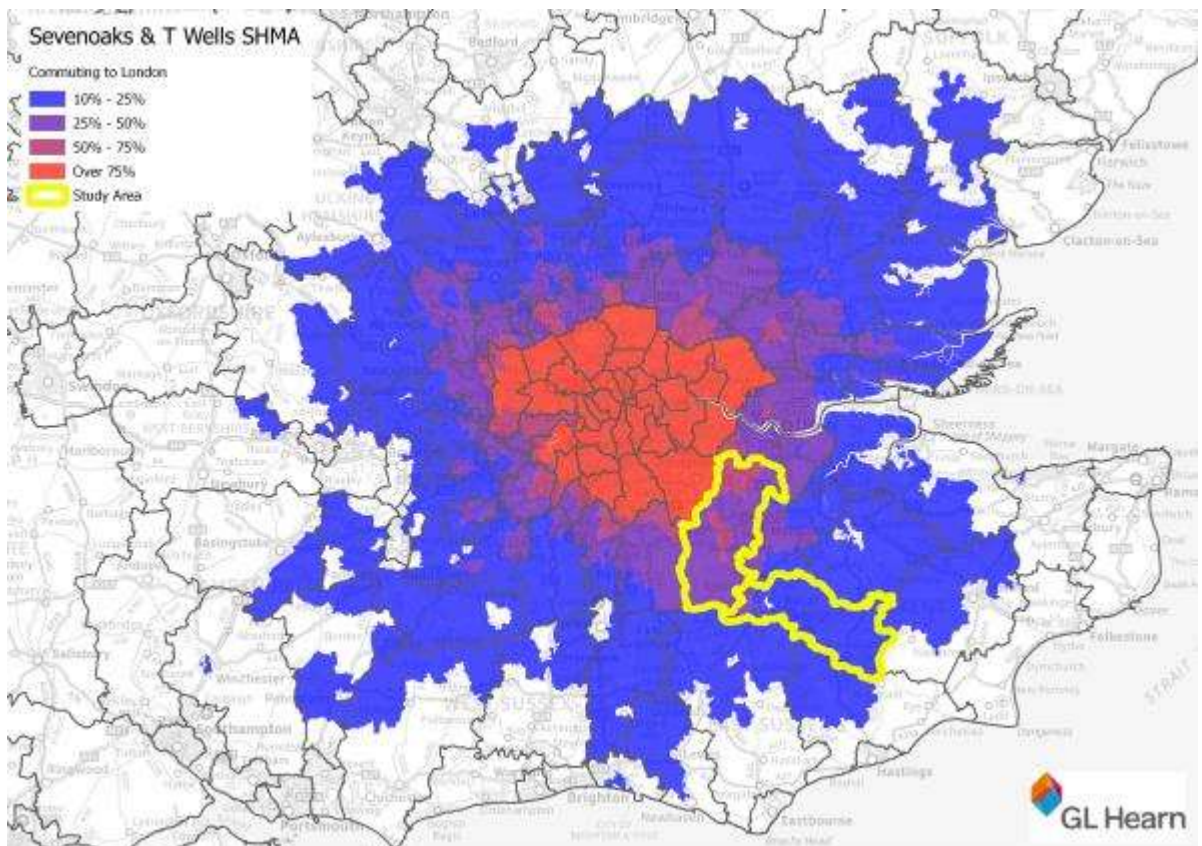
Source: ONS, 2007

- 2.59 The majority of the two authorities, together with Tonbridge and the northern parts of Wealden and north-west part of Rother District were defined as forming collectively a Tunbridge Wells TTWA by ONS. Swanley was defined as within a London TTWA.
- 2.60 Figure 12 illustrates the influence of London as an employment destination. The map shows that some Middle-Level Super Output Areas (MSOA)¹² as far as Brighton, Winchester and Suffolk from which there is notable commuting to London. It highlights the extensive influence of London on commuting from areas within the South East and East of England. This demonstrates the Capital's extensive economic influence.

¹² This is an ONS geography which is larger than wards, but below local authority level

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Figure 12: London Commuting Catchment (2011)

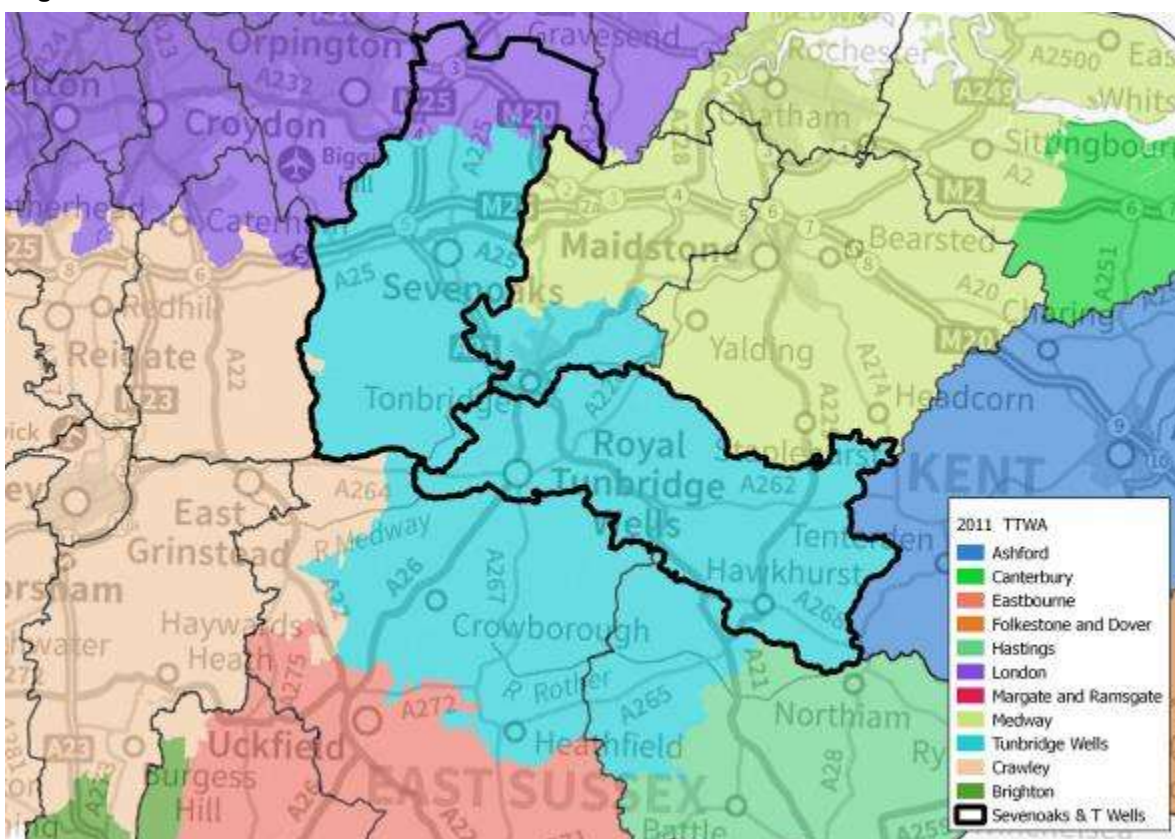


Source: ONS, Census 2011

- 2.61 As with the migration analysis, we find that commuting self-containment levels within individual local authorities are low. In Sevenoaks, 30% of residents live and work within the District. In Tunbridge Wells it is higher, at 50%.
- 2.62 The strongest commuting relationships (using 2011 Census data) from Sevenoaks are as follows:
- London (42.6%) – of which Bromley (7.2%) and Bexley (4.6%)
 - Dartford (7.0%); and
 - Tonbridge and Malling (4.9%).
- 2.63 From Tunbridge Wells, the strongest flows are to:
- London (19.1%)
 - Tonbridge & Malling (9.2%)
 - Sevenoaks (4.3%); and
 - Maidstone (4.2%).

- 2.64 From Tonbridge and Malling, the strongest relationships are with London (20.3%); Maidstone (11.4%); and Sevenoaks (7.0%). There is a strong relationship between Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge.
- 2.65 In August 2015, ONS released updated Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) based on 2011 Census data. Their criteria for defining TTWAs is that generally at least 75% of an area's resident workforce work in the area and at least 75% of the people who work in the area also live in the area. The area must also have a working population of at least 3,500. However, for areas with a working population in excess of 25,000, self-containment rates as low as 66.7% are accepted. TTWA boundaries are non-overlapping, are contiguous and cover the whole of the UK.
- 2.66 The ONS defines a Tunbridge Wells TTWA which includes Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells; together with Hawkhurst as well as Crowborough and Heathfield in the northern part of Wealden and Rother respectively. Swanley is identified as part of a London TTWA.

Figure 13: ONS 2011 Travel to Work Areas



Source: ONS

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Summary and Implications – HMA Geography

- 2.67 As the CURDS analysis sets out there is a close set of interactions between the towns of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells which reflect their geographical proximity. There is also a relationship into the northern part of Wealden. There are cross-boundary interactions between Swanley and Dartford and a stronger commuting relationship to London. Links from Tandridge are stronger to other authorities in Surrey and West Sussex. Flows between Dartford and Swanley are relatively localised.
- 2.68 An appropriate definition of the Housing Market Area would include Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Crowborough. This includes the main population centres in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells local authorities. GL Hearn would consider that the 2011 Tunbridge Wells TTWA provides an appropriate HMA geography. This is not substantially different to that shown from the CURDS Local Housing Market Area.
- 2.69 However for practical purposes it is useful to consider the ‘best fit’ of local authorities to housing market areas, not least as demographic projections are developed on this basis. There is a strong basis for considering Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells together. Tonbridge and Malling is effectively split, with part of the Borough relating to this HMA (Tonbridge); and part (Malling) towards Maidstone.
- 2.70 There are some relationships with adjoining areas, including between Swanley and Dartford; and between Tunbridge Wells and the northern parts of Wealden and Rother Districts. The evidence also points towards a significant functional relationship with London, in respect of both commuting and migration flows. Like many areas close to the M25, there is a strong functional relationship with the Capital. However the GLA define a London HMA which is contained within the Greater London boundaries; whilst recognising relationships across a wider hinterland.
- 2.71 For the purposes of local plan preparation, a recent High Court judgement has confirmed that (interpreting the NPPF) the primary duty of a Local Planning Authority is to assess the needs of the LPA area, but in assessing these needs it is required to prepare a SHMA which may cross administrative boundaries.¹³ Against this context this report has been prepared for the commissioning authorities of Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells, but uses a consistent methodology to that covering Tonbridge and Malling (as well as Maidstone and Ashford).
- 2.72 The principal cross-boundary issue of relevance relates to any potential issues regarding unmet housing needs. If an unmet housing need arises from either of the commissioning authorities, it would be appropriate for them to approach other authorities with which they share an HMA to

¹³ Satnam Millenium Ltd vs. Warrington MBC [EWHC 370 (Admin) Para 25]

consider if needs can be met in these areas. The principal adjoining authorities with a strong relationship would be Tonbridge & Malling, Wealden and Rother. Equally the commissioning authorities would need to engage with these authorities in respect of any unmet housing needs arising from these other authorities' areas. We would also advise the Councils to engage with the Greater London Authority and London Boroughs in respect of any unmet needs arising from London.

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Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Strategic Housing Market Assessment
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Councils, Final Draft Report, September 2015

3 DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC-LED PROJECTIONS

- 3.1 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) outlines that the latest official population and household projections should be considered as the 'starting point' in defining the Objectively Assessed Housing Need. It outlines that plan makers may consider sensitivity testing, considering alternative assumptions on population growth and household formation rates, but that any local changes made to projections need to be clearly explained and justified based on established sources of robust evidence.
- 3.2 The PPG also sets out that employment trends should be taken into account, with an assessment made of likely changes in job numbers based on past trends and/or economic forecasts as appropriate, having regard to the growth in the working-age population across the housing market area. Where labour force supply is less than projected jobs growth, plan makers are advised to consider how the level or location of housing provision, or infrastructure development could help to address this.
- 3.3 In this section consideration is given to demographic evidence of housing need. The analysis begins by considering the most recent population and household projections published by ONS/CLG. A sensitivity analysis is then provided considering alternative projections of population growth and housing need based on demographic trends.
- 3.4 A sensitivity analysis includes consideration of the inter-relationship between each of the two local authorities and London, and considers how migration to/ from London might change in the future. This takes account of evidence and the modelling approach which underpins the current version of the London Plan, which is based on the Greater London Authority (GLA) 2013-based Demographic Projections. It should however be noted that the London Plan is being reviewed, and that this evidence and situation may change over time.
- 3.5 The section also considers the overlay between population growth and job growth to consider if there will be a sufficient workforce moving forward to support projected growth in employment, following the approach in the PPG.
- 3.6 The core projections in this section look at housing needs in the period from 2013 to 2033. The starting point reflects a base position for which a reasonable amount of data is available (the ONS mid-2013 population estimates) with the end date selected to provide a reasonable (20-year) period for analysis.

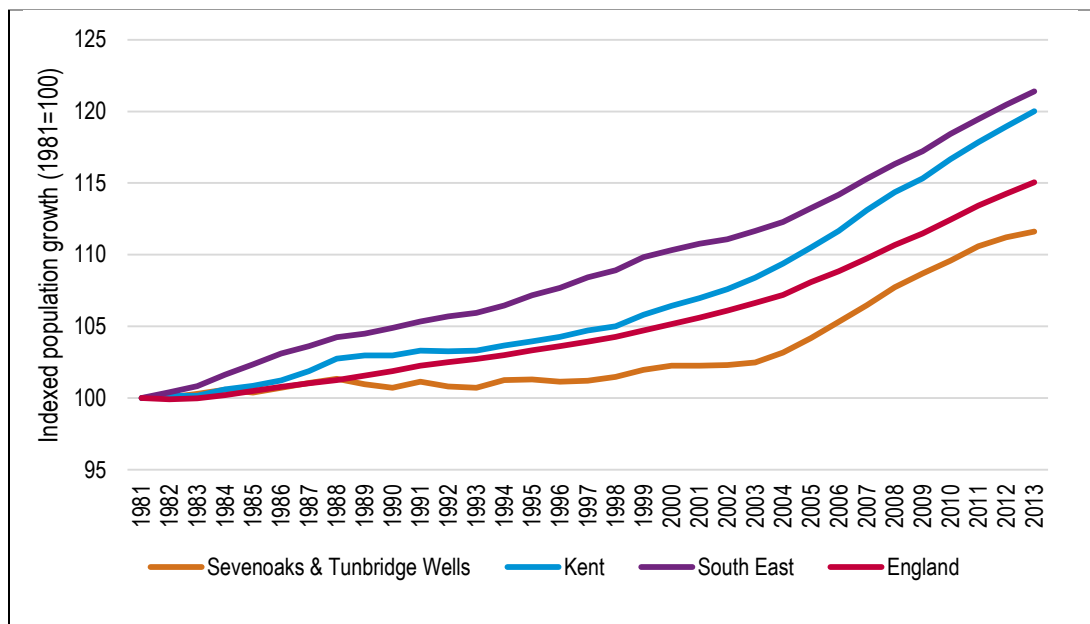
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Demographic Profile and Trends

3.7 The population of Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells in 2013 was estimated to be 232,700. This is an increase of 19,500 people since 2001 – a 9.1% increase over the 12-year period. This level of population growth is notably below that seen across Kent (12.2%) but broadly in-line with the South East region (9.6%) and nationally (8.9%). Of the two local authorities, the data shows the more significant growth in the 2001-13 period to have been in Tunbridge Wells (11.3%), with lower growth in Sevenoaks (7.1%).

3.8 We can also consider longer-term trends in population growth, with data being available back to 1981. Figure 14 shows that population growth in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells has consistently been below the average for Kent, the South East and England. Until the end of the 1990s there had been very little population growth across the two Districts, however, over the past 12-years or so for which data is available, the level of population growth has been notably higher – in common with that across wider geographies. Over the whole 1981 to 2013 period, the data shows that the population of Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells grew by 12%; notably lower than in Kent (20%), the South East (21%) and England (15%).

Figure 14: Indexed Population Growth, 1981-2013

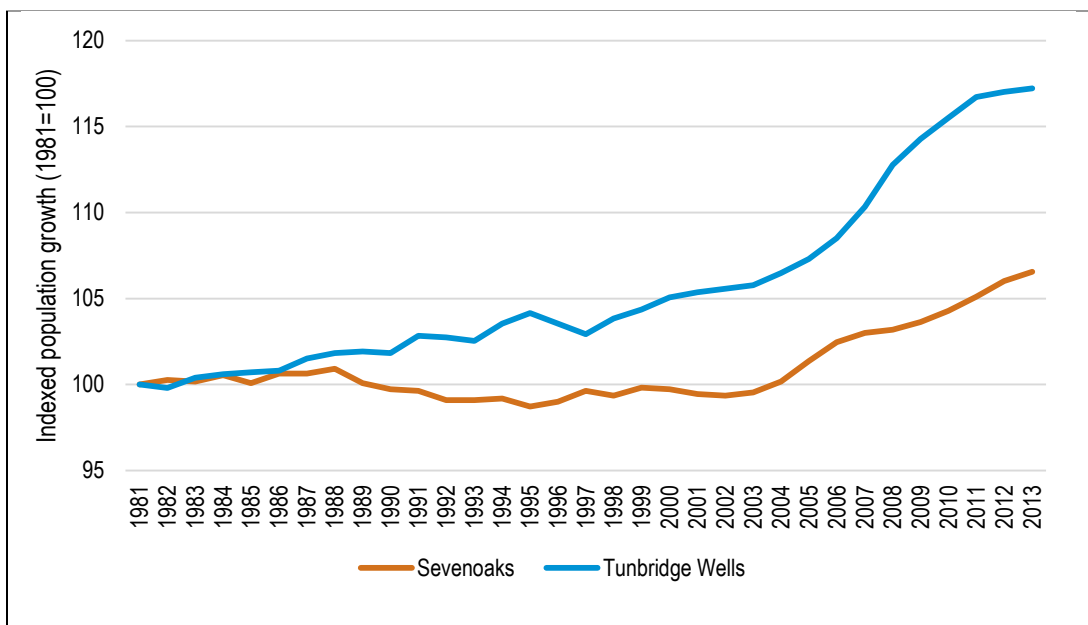


Source: ONS

3.9 Figure 15 shows the same information for the two individual local authority areas. The data shows a much higher level of growth in Tunbridge Wells throughout the period than seen in Sevenoaks (as well as the more recent period since 2005). The analysis also shows that until the early 2000s there had been no population growth in Sevenoaks (a slight decline). Population growth until the end of

the 1990s was also pretty moderate in Tunbridge Wells (relative to trends across wider areas, as Figure 14 shows).

Figure 15: Indexed Population Growth (1981-2013) – by District



Source: ONS

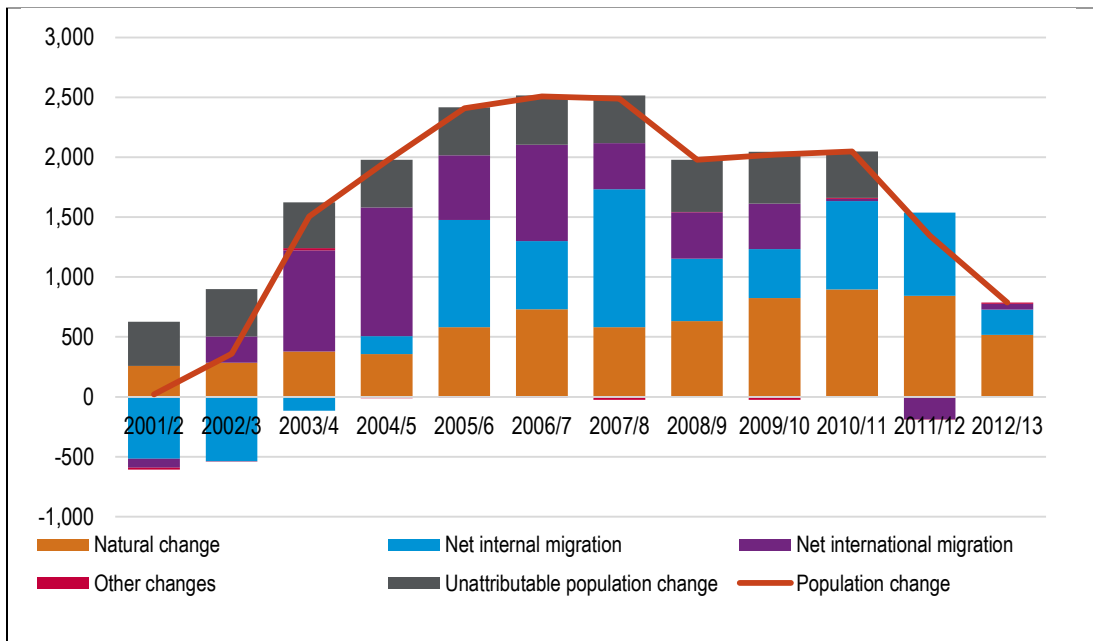
- 3.10 Figure 16 and Table 10 consider the drivers of population change in the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells area. Population change is largely driven by natural change (births minus deaths) and migration, although within ONS data there is also a small other changes category (mainly related to armed forces and prison populations) and an Unattributable Population Change (UPC) category. UPC is an adjustment made by ONS to Mid-Year Population Estimates where Census data suggests that population growth had either been over- or under-estimated in the inter-Censal years. Because UPC links back to Census data, a figure is only provided for 2001 to 2011. It is not entirely clear to which years (between 2001-11) any under- or over-recording might relate, or if it relates to accuracy of the Census data itself. It is ‘unattributable.’
- 3.11 The data shows that both natural change and net migration have been important components of population growth in the study area. Over the whole of the period studied (2001-13) the average level of natural change has been about 570 per annum; natural change has generally been increasing over time, although the more recent evidence suggests that this may now be levelling off or even decreasing slightly.
- 3.12 Net migration can also be seen to be significant with an average level of about 720 per annum over the 12-year period studied – this has varied on a year-by-year basis from -320 (i.e. net out-migration) in 2002/3 up to 1,540 in 2007/8. Both internal migration (i.e. moves from one part of the Country to another) and international migration have been significant drivers of population growth;

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internal migration has averaged about 350 people per annum, compared with about 370 in the case of international migration. International migration is shown to have been particularly strong in the 2003-7 period.

3.13 Other changes are quite small whilst the data shows a notable (and positive) level of UPC – the positive UPC suggests that previous ONS components of change data may have under-estimated population growth in the study area. Data for the individual local authorities actually identifies a small negative level of UPC in Sevenoaks with a large positive figure for Tunbridge Wells.

Figure 16: Components of population change, mid-2001 to mid-2013 – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells



Source: ONS

Table 10: Components of Population Change (2001-13) – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells

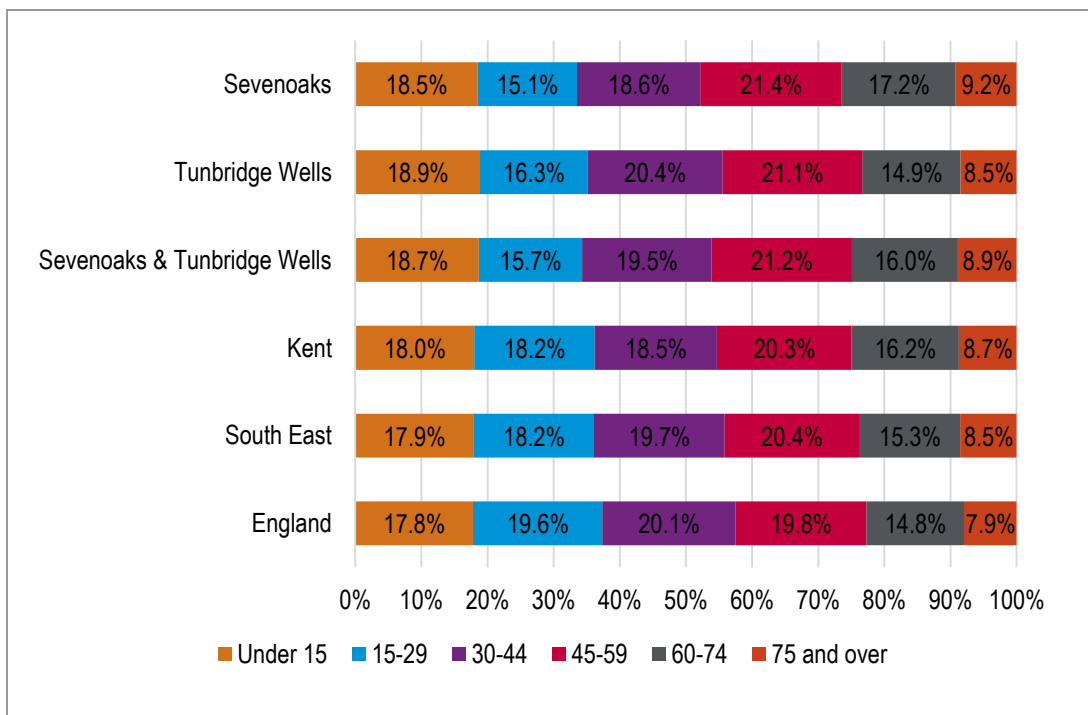
Year	Natural change	Net internal migration	Net international migration	Other changes	Other (unattributable)	Total change
2001/2	259	-517	-74	-17	369	20
2002/3	286	-537	219	-2	393	359
2003/4	379	-116	844	18	381	1,506
2004/5	357	149	1,075	-11	397	1,967
2005/6	582	894	541	-9	401	2,409
2006/7	730	569	805	-8	411	2,507
2007/8	581	1,151	386	-25	397	2,490
2008/9	633	519	389	1	437	1,979
2009/10	824	409	380	-25	433	2,021
2010/11	897	738	17	8	388	2,048
2011/12	844	693	-188	-4	-	1,345
2012/13	518	211	48	9	-	786

Source: ONS

3.14 Figure 17 shows the age structure of the population in the two local authorities and a range of other areas. The profile of the population of the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells area is broadly similar to that seen across the County and is slightly ‘older’ than equivalent data regionally or nationally – Sevenoaks looks to have a slightly older population profile than Tunbridge Wells. As shown in the figure below, some 26% of the population of Sevenoaks is aged 60 and over with an equivalent figure of 23% in Tunbridge Wells. These figures compare with 25% across Kent, 24% for the South East region and 23% for the whole of England.

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Figure 17: Population Age Profile (2013)



Source: Mid-Year Population Estimates

3.15 Table 11 shows how the age structure of the population has changed over the 2001 to 2013 period. The data shows the most significant growth to have been in the 60-74 and 45-59 age groups (with a high proportionate increase in the number of people aged 75 and over). The analysis also indicates a small decline in the population aged 30-44 and increases in other age groups.

Table 11: Change in Age Structure 2001 to 2013 – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells

Age group	2001	2013	Change	% change
Under 15	41,100	43,400	2,300	5.6%
15-29	33,500	36,400	2,900	8.7%
30-44	47,400	45,400	-2,000	-4.2%
45-59	44,700	49,400	4,700	10.5%
60-74	29,800	37,300	7,500	25.2%
75 and over	17,000	20,600	3,600	21.2%
Total	213,200	232,700	19,500	9.1%

Source: Mid-Year Population Estimates

3.16 The same analysis has been carried out for the individual local authorities and a range of comparator areas (in Table 12). The data identifies that population change in each of the two local authorities has broadly followed the change seen across other areas.

Table 12: Change in age structure 2001 to 2013

Age group	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells	Kent	South East	England
Under 15	3.3%	7.9%	5.6%	5.5%	5.1%	3.2%
15-29	9.3%	8.0%	8.7%	20.0%	10.5%	12.7%
30-44	-8.8%	0.4%	-4.2%	-4.0%	-4.6%	-3.7%
45-59	5.0%	16.7%	10.5%	14.7%	14.6%	14.3%
60-74	25.6%	24.6%	25.2%	30.0%	27.4%	22.4%
75 and over	24.1%	18.1%	21.2%	17.9%	16.8%	15.0%
Total	7.1%	11.3%	9.1%	12.2%	9.6%	8.9%

Source: Mid-Year Population Estimates

Sub-National Population Projections

3.17 The latest set of subnational population projections (SNPP) were published by ONS on the 29th May 2014. They replace the 2010- and 2011-based projections. Subnational population projections provide estimates of the future population of local authorities, assuming a continuation of recent local trends in fertility, mortality and migration which are constrained to the assumptions made for the 2012-based national population projections. The new SNPP are largely based on trends in the 2007-12 period (2006-12 for international migration trends). The SNPP are only population projections and do not contain headship rates (which are needed to convert into household estimates).

3.18 The SNPP are not forecasts and do not attempt to predict the impact that future government or local policies, changing economic circumstances or other factors might have on demographic behaviour. The primary purpose of the subnational projections is to provide an estimate of the future size and age structure of the population of local authorities in England. These are used as a common framework for informing local-level policy and planning in a number of different fields as they are produced in a consistent way.

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Overall Population Growth

- 3.19 Table 13 shows projected population growth from 2013 to 2033 in each District and other areas. The data shows that the population of the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells area is expected to grow by around 38,400 people; this is a 16.5% increase – slightly lower than expected across Kent, but higher than equivalent figures for the South East and England.
- 3.20 It should be noted that due to inclusion within the modelling of mid-2013 population estimates for Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells the figures do not exactly match those in the SNPP. Figures for comparator areas are however taken directly from the SNPP. The difference in this respect will not be material.

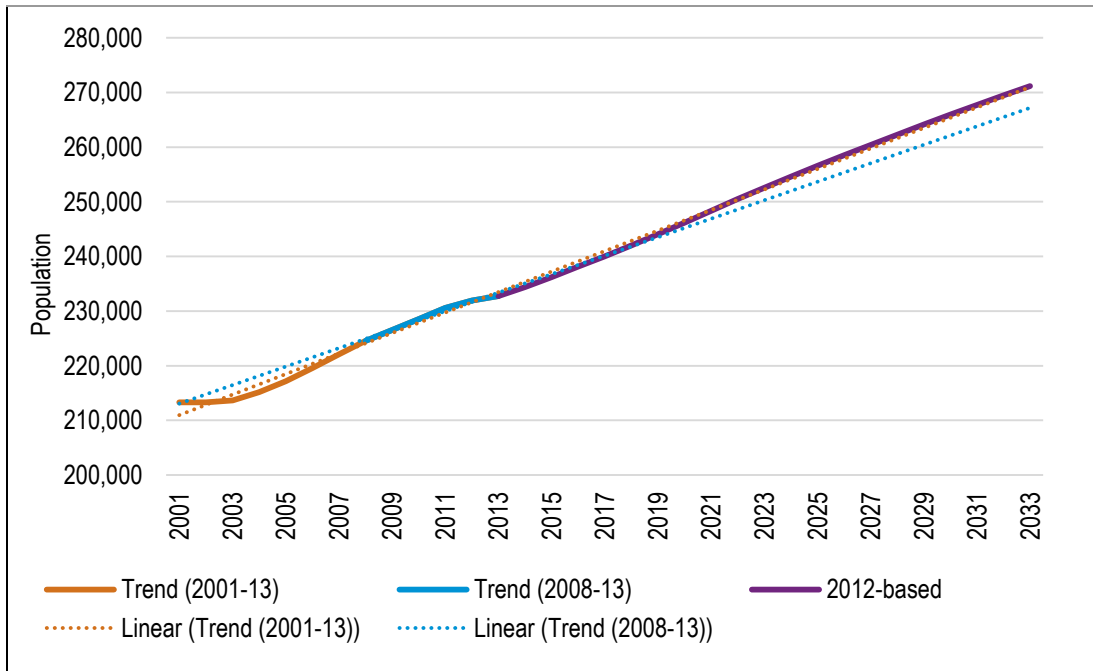
Table 13: Projected population growth (2013-2033)

	Population 2013	Population 2033	Change in population	% change
Sevenoaks	117,035	136,504	19,469	16.6%
Tunbridge Wells	115,693	134,669	18,976	16.4%
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells	232,728	271,173	38,445	16.5%
Kent	1,490,700	1,744,500	253,800	17.0%
South East	8,784,800	10,092,800	1,308,000	14.9%
England	53,843,600	61,022,500	7,178,900	13.3%

Source: ONS

- 3.21 Figure 18 shows past and projected population growth in the period 2001 to 2033 for the whole of the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells area. The data also plots a linear trend line for the last five years for which data is available (2008-13) and also a longer-term period from 2001 to 2013 – this being the longest period for which reasonable data about the components of population change (e.g. migration) is available. The data shows that the population is expected to grow at a rate which is broadly in-line with long-term past trends and at a level slightly above that seen over the past five years.

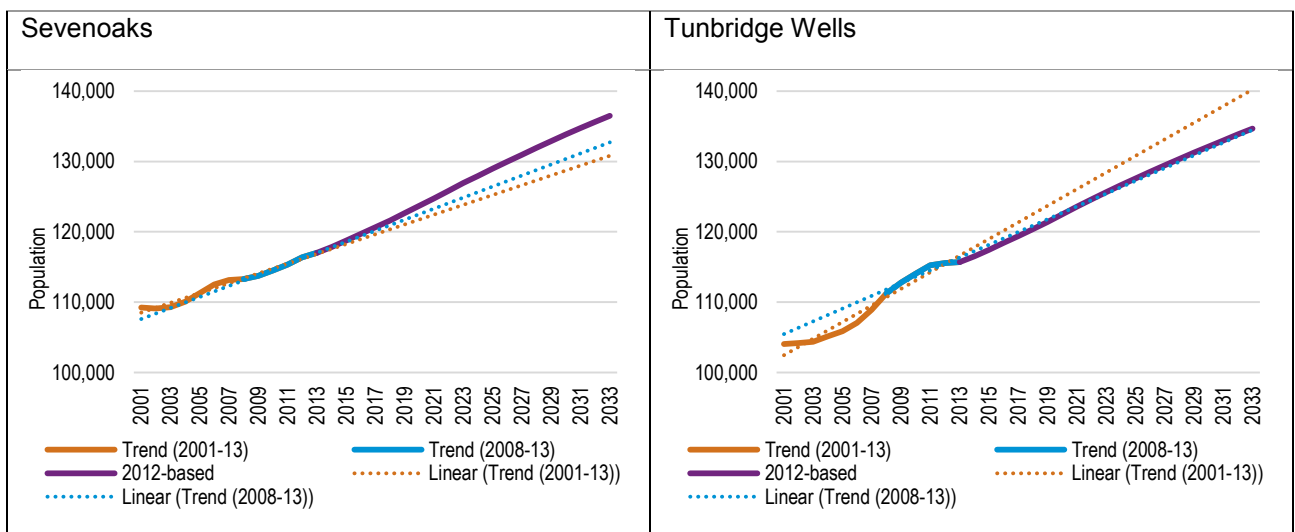
Figure 18: Past and projected population growth – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells



Source: ONS

3.22 Figure 18 shows the same data for individual local authorities. In Sevenoaks, future population growth is expected to be above past trend levels (whether in the short- or long-term) whereas in Tunbridge Wells future growth is broadly in line with recent trends (past five years) but some way below longer-term trends.

Figure 19: Past and projected population growth – by local authority



Source: ONS

3.23 Overall, across the two authority areas, we would conclude that the SNPP is a reasonable projection to take forward into household growth modelling. Whilst, the data shows population

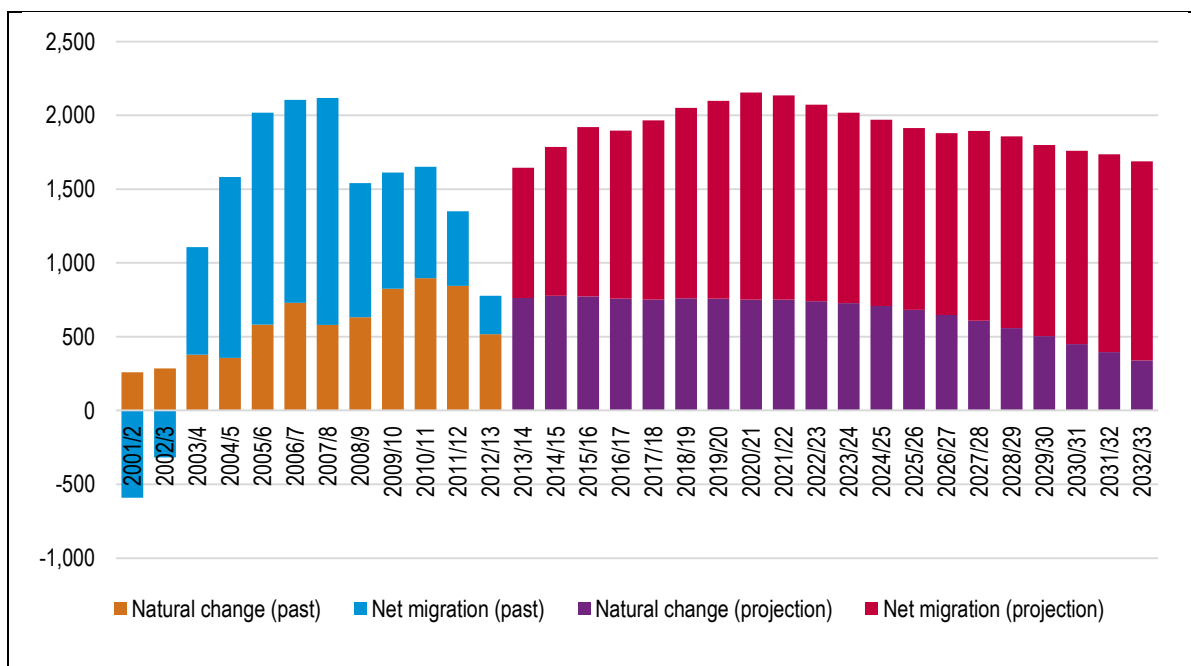
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growth which is very slightly above short-term past trends, it is not considered that this divergence is significant. In interpreting the figures, it does also need to be born in mind that the ONS projections are not a simple roll forward of past population growth. The projections take account of the current age structure and how this will change over time. The age structure changes then feed into estimates of how migration and natural change might develop over time.

Components of Population Change

- 3.24 Figure 20 brings together data about migration (both past trends and the future projection) along with information about natural change. This shows that after being fairly constant at the start of the projection period, natural change is expected to decrease over time.
- 3.25 Expected levels of migration are generally expected to increase slightly over time – this is likely to be linked to the changing population profile in the two areas, and in particular an increase in the number of older persons in the population. For the whole of the projection period (2013-33) the average level of migration is expected to be around 1,252 people (net) per annum – this figure is somewhat higher than the levels seen in either short-term past trends (643 per annum over the last five years) or the longer-term (717 per annum on average from 2001 to 2013). Over the past decade (2003-13) the average level of net migration is also lower (at 951 per annum).

Figure 20: Components of Population Change, mid-2001 to mid-2033 – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells



Source: ONS

Age Structure Changes

- 3.26 With growth in the population will also come age structure changes. Table 14 summarises the findings for key (15-year) age groups under the 2012-based SNPP. The data shows that the largest growth will be in people aged 60 and over; it is estimated that there will be 85,200 people aged 60 and over in 2033 – this is an increase of 27,200 from 2013, representing growth of 54%. The population aged 75 and over is projected to increase by an even greater proportion, 83%. Looking at the other end of the age spectrum the data shows that there are projected to be around 12% more people aged under 15 with smaller increases in other age groups.
- 3.27 The two local authorities show similar patterns in terms of age structure changes, although generally, Tunbridge Wells is expected to see a greater ageing of the population and lower growth in the number of younger people and those of working age.

Table 14: Population Change 2013 to 2033 by Fifteen Year Age Bands (2012-based SNPP)

Age group	Population 2013	Population 2033	Change in population	% change from 2013	% change from 2013 – Sevenoaks	% change from 2013 – Tun. Wells
Under 15	43,390	48,735	5,345	12.3%	15.7%	9.0%
15-29	36,550	37,355	805	2.2%	5.0%	-0.4%
30-44	45,288	48,618	3,330	7.4%	9.3%	5.5%
45-59	49,494	51,291	1,797	3.6%	2.5%	4.8%
60-74	37,249	48,480	11,231	30.2%	23.9%	37.4%
75+	20,757	36,695	15,938	76.8%	71.0%	83.2%
Total	232,728	271,173	38,445	16.5%	16.6%	16.4%

Sensitivity Analysis: Migration Flows to/ from London

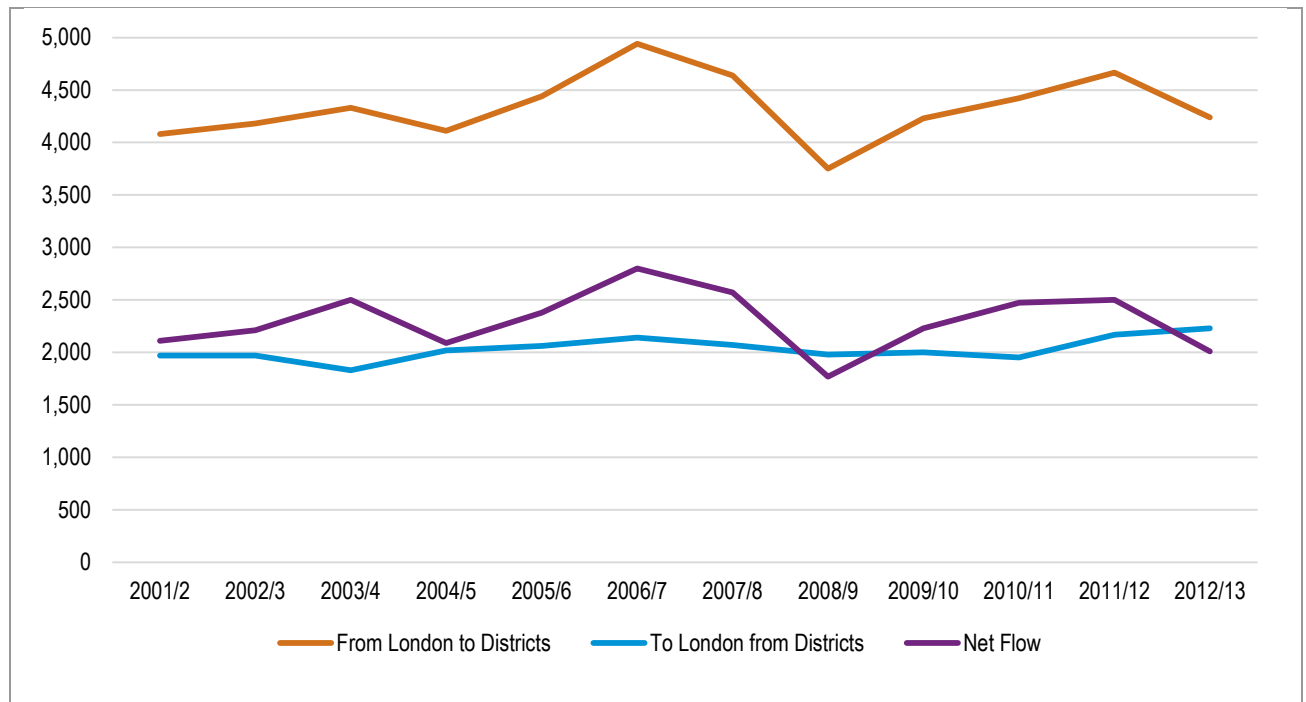
- 3.28 The Greater London Authority (GLA) identified as part of their own projections feeding into the Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP) that there had been a marked change in internal migration dynamics to- and from- London since the beginning of the recession (2007/8). Overall, the GLA identified that out-migration from London to other parts of the UK had dropped by about 10% along with a 6% increase in in-migration.
- 3.29 As a result of this the GLA developed a series of population and household projections with different assumptions about migration. The Central Scenario (used to support the FALP) made the assumption that after 2017, migration levels would recover back towards pre-recession levels – the

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GLA in effect took a midpoint between pre- and post-recession migration statistics and assumed a 5% uplift in out-migration and a 3% decrease in in-migration.

3.30 Whilst the figures above are for the whole of London, it will be the case that different areas will have seen different levels of change in London related migration in the pre- and post- recession periods. Below we have studied how migration patterns have changed in the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells areas. Figure 21 shows that there is some evidence across the area of a reduction in the number of people moving from London, as well as a slight increase in the numbers moving to London. The net effect is a reduction in net migration from London to the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells area. The changes observed are however very modest.

Figure 21: Migration flows to- and from- London and the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Area



Source: GLA

3.31 The analysis shows in the 2001-8 period that an average of 4,389 people moved from London to the two authorities, in the five year period feeding into the SNPP (2007-12) this average reduced to 4,342 – a reduction of 47 (1%). The analysis also shows a small increase in the average number of people moving to London (increasing by about 1%). The net effect of both of these changes is a reduction in net migration from London to the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells area of about 72 people per annum – this is a 3% reduction on pre-recession trends.

3.32 The same data for individual local authorities is shown in Table 15. This shows that both areas have seen a small decrease in net migration from London.

Table 15: Migration to- and from- London and the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells areas – individual local authority analysis

	Sevenoaks			Tunbridge Wells		
	From London to district	To London from district	Net flow	From London to district	To London from district	Net flow
2001/2	2,730	1,270	1,460	1,350	700	650
2002/3	2,870	1,280	1,590	1,310	690	620
2003/4	2,780	1,180	1,600	1,550	650	900
2004/5	2,770	1,230	1,540	1,340	790	550
2005/6	2,930	1,260	1,670	1,510	800	710
2006/7	3,160	1,380	1,780	1,780	760	1,020
2007/8	2,940	1,260	1,680	1,700	810	890
2008/9	2,460	1,190	1,270	1,290	790	500
2009/10	2,750	1,200	1,550	1,480	800	680
2010/11	2,822	1,120	1,703	1,600	831	769
2011/12	2,912	1,263	1,649	1,756	905	851
2012/13	2,784	1,346	1,438	1,455	883	572
Pre-2008 average	2,883	1,266	1,617	1,506	743	763
SNPP average	2,777	1,207	1,570	1,565	827	738
Difference	106	59	47	-60	-84	25

Source: GLA

- 3.33 On the basis of the information above, we have developed an alternative population projection to provide a sensitivity analysis to the SNPP. This projection uses a similar assumption to the GLA modelling; i.e. for an adjustment to be made to migration levels post-2017 at a level which is half of the difference seen between pre-recession trends and the trends feeding into the SNPP.
- 3.34 Table 9 shows overall population growth from this alternative projection. For the whole Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells area this projection suggests population growth of 16.8% in the 2013-33 period; this compares with growth of 16.5% in the SNPP. The overall level of population growth is 39,108, which is about 663 more than the SNPP (38,445) – the projection with a London adjustment is therefore about 2% higher than the SNPP.

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Table 16: Projected population growth (2013-2033) – with London adjustment

	Population 2013	Population 2033	Change in population	% change
Sevenoaks	117,035	136,934	19,899	17.0%
Tunbridge Wells	115,693	134,903	19,210	16.6%
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells	232,728	271,836	39,108	16.8%

Source: Derived from ONS data

- 3.35 This scenario, with a London adjustment, is modelled to be consistent with the GLA's demographic projections which underpin the London Plan. It reflects analysis of migration trends, which suggest that there has been some (fairly minor) 'recessionary effect' which has resulted in a fall in net out-migration from London to the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells authorities. With improving housing market circumstances, GL Hearn consider it a realistic possibility that out-migration could increase moving forwards. The sensitivity analysis takes this into account.

Household Growth

- 3.36 Having studied the population size and the age/sex profile of the population, the next step in the process is to convert this information into estimates of the number of households in the area. To do this the concept of headship rates is used. Headship rates can be described in their most simple terms as the number of people who are counted as heads of households (or in this case the more widely used Household Reference Person (HRP)).
- 3.37 With the publication of new 2012-based CLG household projections, a new set of headship rates is now available. These rates are considered to be more positive than the previous set (2011-based) and typically suggest higher rates of household growth for a given population. At a national level (in the 2012-21 period considered by CLG) the new projections show 10% higher growth in households. For Sevenoaks the growth in households on a like-for-like basis to 2021 is 6% higher; with the new projections for Tunbridge Wells 3% higher than using the headship rates in the 2011-based Interim Household Projections.
- 3.38 Table 17 shows expected household growth in the 2012-based projections from 2013 to 2033 for Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells and a range of other areas. The figures for the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells authorities do not exactly match the CLG projections as we have included population data for 2013, all other areas show the data as published. The data suggests an increase in households of about 22,100 over the 20-year period – this is a 23% increase; somewhat higher than expected in the South East and England but slightly below the average across the County.

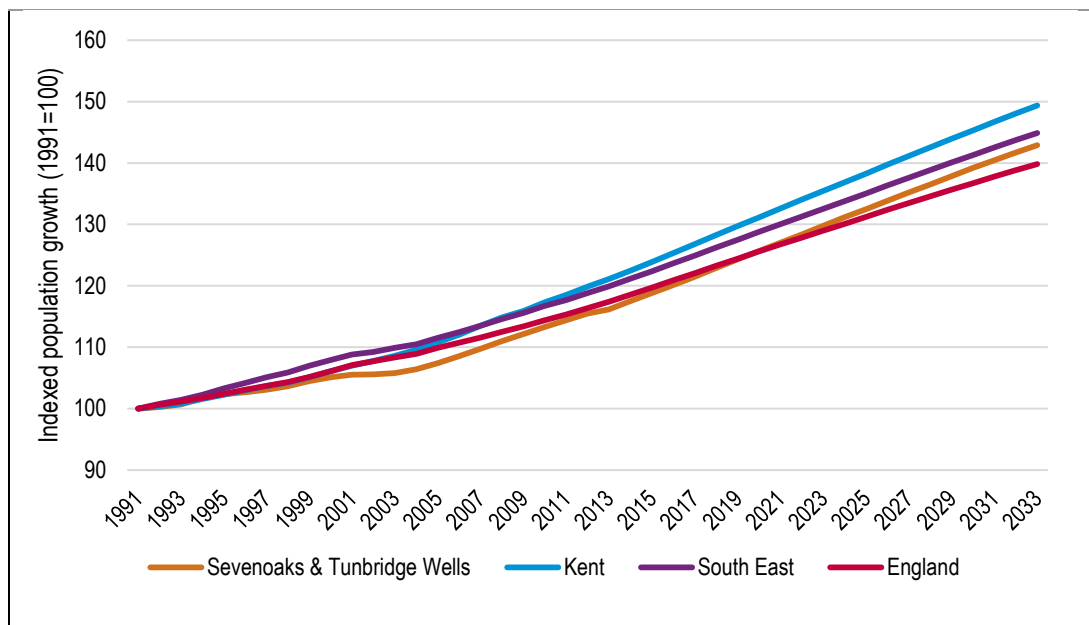
Table 17: Projected Household Growth (2013-2033)

	Households 2013	Households 2033	Change in households	% change from 2013
Sevenoaks	47,951	57,973	10,023	20.9%
Tunbridge Wells	48,032	60,076	12,044	25.1%
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells	95,982	118,050	22,067	23.0%
Kent	620,272	765,118	144,846	23.4%
South East	3,631,482	4,386,939	755,457	20.8%
London	22,499,536	26,797,826	4,298,290	19.1%

Source: Derived from ONS and CLG data

3.39 Figure 22 shows household growth back to 1991 and projected forward to 2033. The analysis shows that growth in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells has generally been lower than seen in other areas although moving forward the rate of change is expected to be generally quite strong, and notably stronger than expected nationally. There has been a particular acceleration in the growth rate from about 2003.

Figure 22: Indexed household growth (1991-2033)

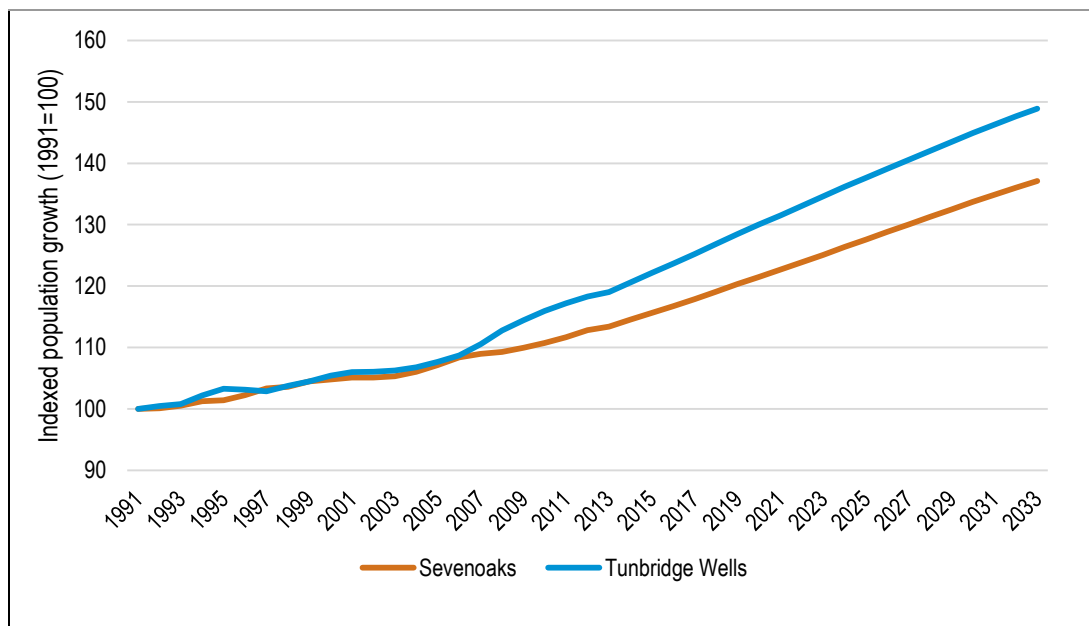


Source: Derived from ONS and CLG data

3.40 Figure 23 shows the same information for individual local authority areas. The data shows strong growth is expected in both areas. In the past the number of households has grown more strongly in Tunbridge Wells, although this is only apparent from about 2007. Prior to this, both areas only saw fairly moderate household growth.

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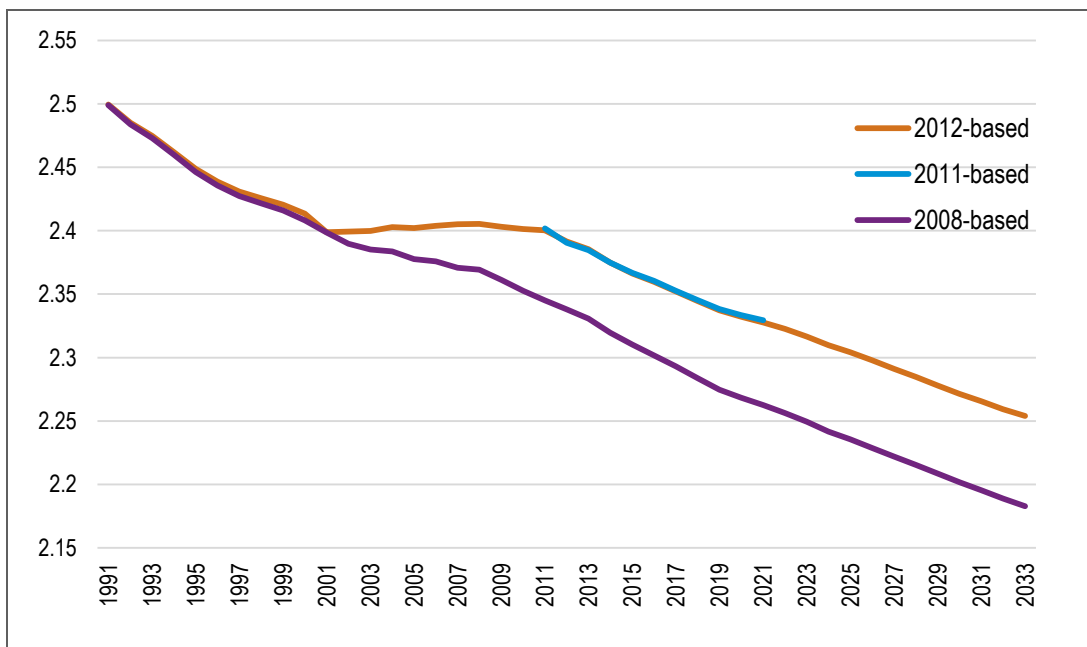
Figure 23: Indexed Household Growth (1991-2033)



Source: Derived from ONS and CLG data

- 3.41 To provide an initial assessment of the impact of the 2012-based household projections we can make a comparison of average household sizes. Figure 24 shows this based on each of 2012-, 2011- and 2008-based CLG household projection data. The data is very interesting in comparison with other areas where we have carried out a similar analysis. Essentially the data is suggesting a notable decline in average household sizes in the future (compared to a fairly flat recent trend), however it is noteworthy that the earlier (2011-based) projections were also showing a very similar trend. In most areas, the 2011-based Interim Projections show much lower levels of household size decline – suggesting that they have built in some degree of suppression of household formation. There is no strong evidence that this is the case in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells.
- 3.42 Moving forward, the data is notable for showing a similar rate of change in average household sizes as was expected in the earlier (2008-based) projections – albeit from a different starting point. This would suggest that there is not a significant degree of suppression being built into the latest CLG projections – although there is still evidence of some suppression in the 2001-11 decade.

Figure 24: Past and Projected Trends in Average Household Size – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells



Source: Derived from ONS and CLG data

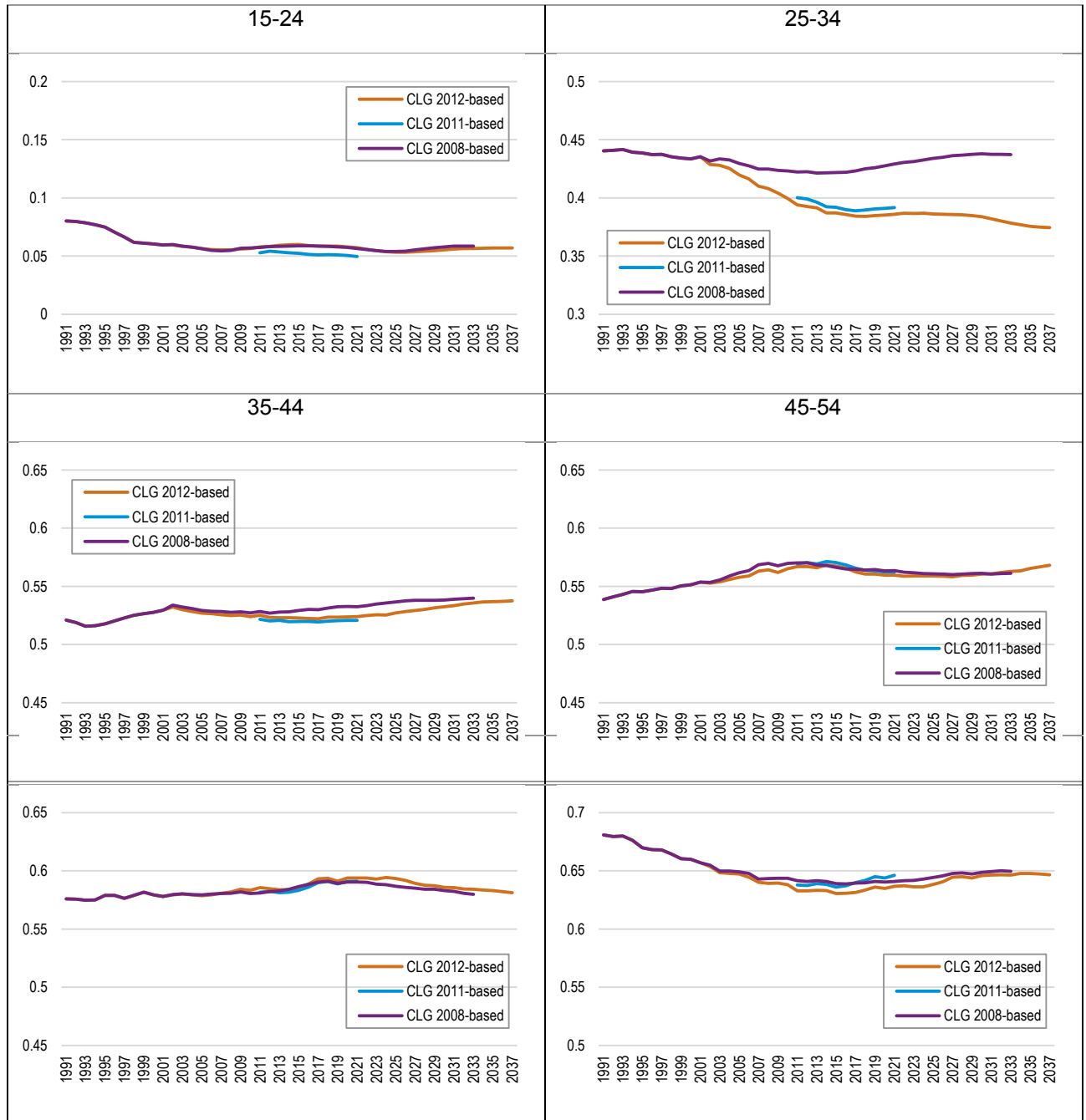
- 3.43 It is also useful to understand how the different CLG projections impact on assumptions for different age groups. Figures 25 and 26 show the headship rates used in each of the projections (separately for Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells). Overall the 2012-based projections look fairly sound with levels and rates of change being not dissimilar to those in the earlier (pre-recession) 2008-based projections.

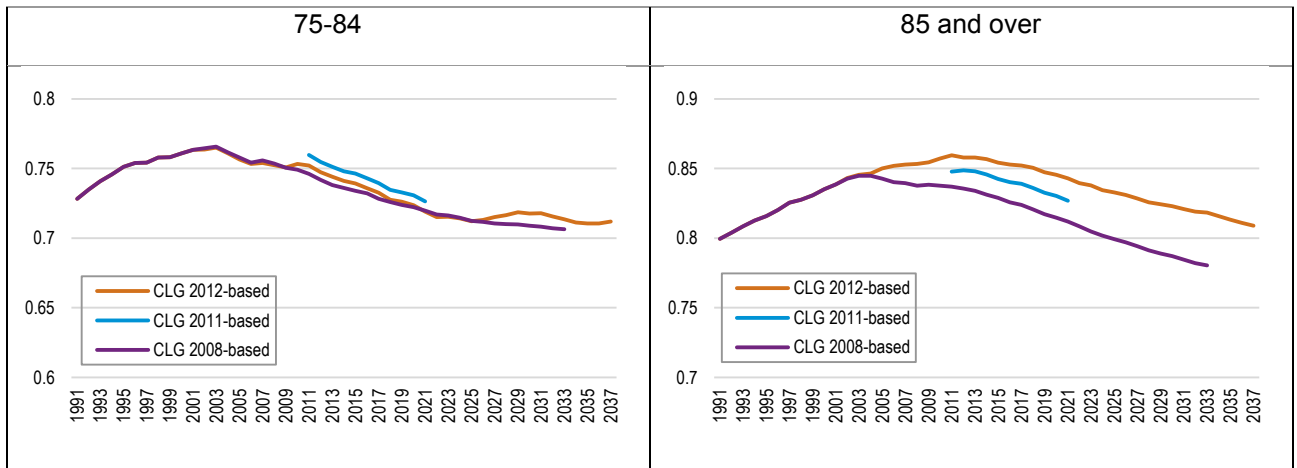
- 3.44 What the analysis does show is that household formation amongst those aged 25-34 fell between 2001-11. The projections show the proportion of households who are a head of household in Sevenoaks falling from 39% to 38% over the period to 2033. In Tunbridge Wells, household formation is expected to rise from 47% to 48% to 2033. If housing supply was to increase and affordability improve, other factors remaining equal, we might expect household formation amongst this age cohort to rise in Sevenoaks. We consider this further later in the report.

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Figure 25: Projected Household Formation Rates by Age of Head of Household - Sevenoaks





Source: Derived from CLG data

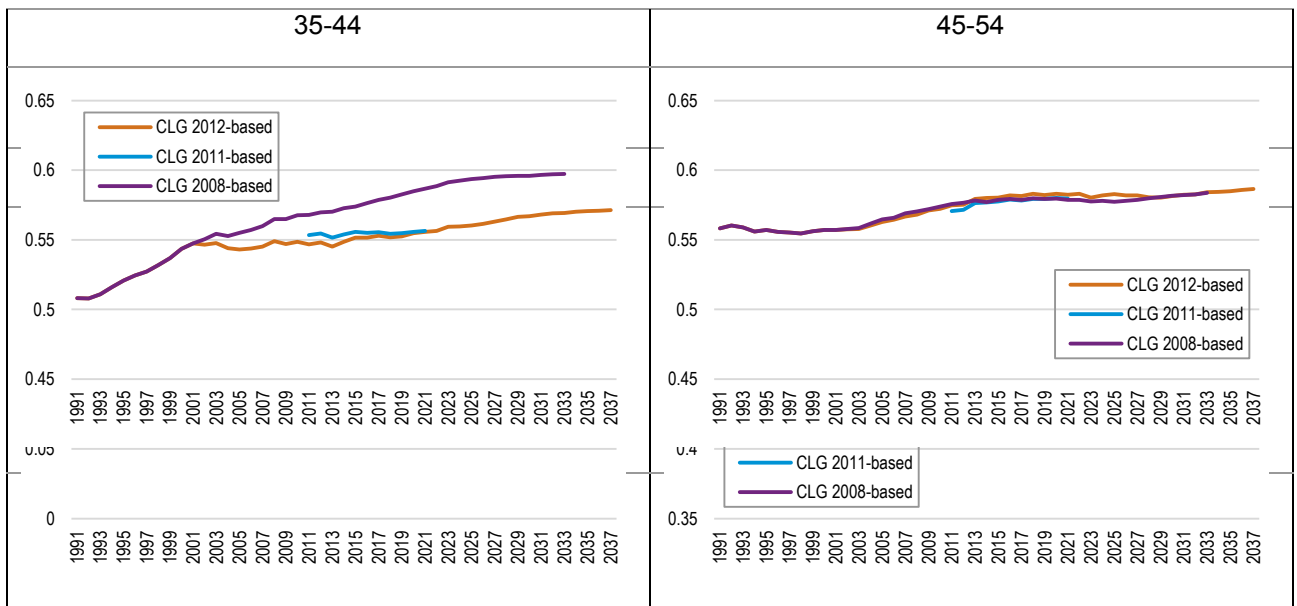
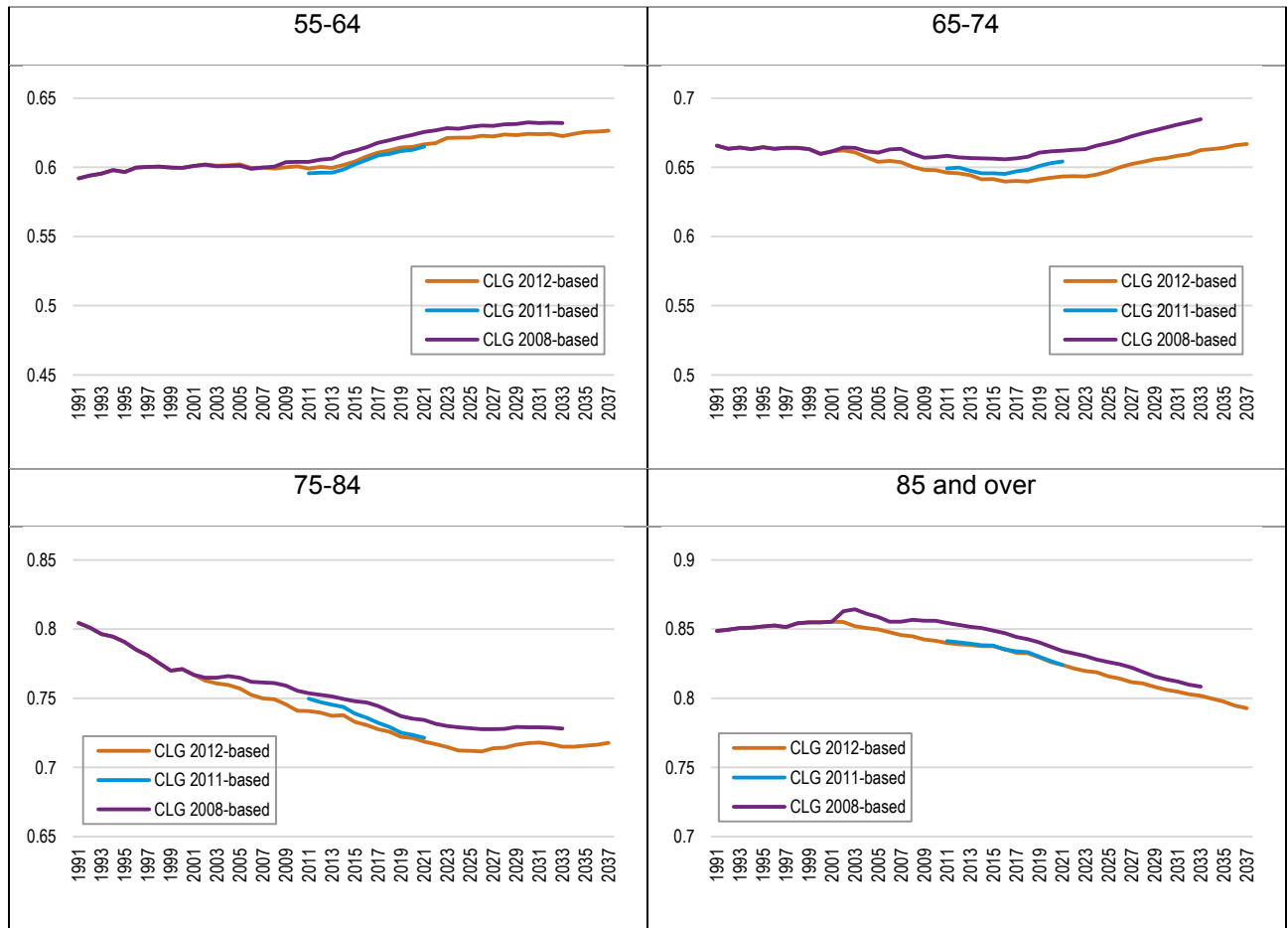


Figure 26: Projected Household Formation Rates by Age of Head of Household – Tunbridge Wells

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Source: Derived from CLG data

3.45 Table 18 brings together outputs in terms of household growth and housing need using the 2012-based headship rates and our core projections linked to the 2012-based SNPP and also with a ‘London adjustment’. To convert households into dwellings the data includes an uplift to take account of vacant homes. Analysis of 2011 Census data about unoccupied household spaces provides the following vacancy rate figures which have been used in analysis:

- Sevenoaks – 2.9%
- Tunbridge Wells – 4.1%

3.46 The percentage figures are calculated as the number of vacant homes divided by the number of occupied properties – this give the vacancy allowance to use as an uplift to household estimates. It is assumed that such a level of vacant homes will allow for movement within the housing stock and includes an allowance for second homes.

3.47 The analysis shows an overall housing need for some 516 homes per annum in Sevenoaks; and 627 homes per annum in Tunbridge Wells. This would be considered the “starting point” for considering housing need, following the approach in the PPG.

3.48 If adjustments are made for higher net migration from London, the need rises by 1.5% in Sevenoaks (8 dpa) and by 0.6% (4 dpa) in Tunbridge Wells. We consider that it would be prudent to include these adjustments, albeit that the impact is minor, on the basis of the evidence that there is some potential for higher net out-migration from London related to improving economic and housing market conditions.

Table 18: Projected household growth 2013-33 – 2012-based SNPP and 2012-based headship rates

	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells
Households 2013	47,951	48,032	95,982
Households 2033	57,973	60,076	118,050
Change in households	10,023	12,044	22,067
Per annum	501	602	1,103
Dwellings (per annum)	516	627	1,142

Table 19: Projected household growth 2013-33 – 2012-based SNPP (London adjusted) and 2012-based headship rates

	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells
Households 2013	47,951	48,032	95,982
Households 2033	58,131	60,158	118,289
Change in households	10,180	12,127	22,306
Per annum	509	606	1,115
Dwellings (per annum)	524	631	1,155

3.49 If the headship rates from the previous 2011-based household projections are used (suitably indexed beyond 2021 and linked to the 2012-based SNPP) then the level of housing need would be 1,099 dwellings per annum. Hence the latest CLG projections are suggesting an uplift of 43 homes each year – a 4% increase over the 2013-33 period.

3.50 If the same modelling were undertaken using the 2008-based rates then a slightly higher housing need is derived (of 1,225 dwellings per annum) – this is 7% above the level suggested by the 2012-based figures. However national research has highlighted that the 2008-based Projections over-

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estimated likely household formation, in part related to higher international migration to the UK and the impact of different household structures within new migrant communities¹⁴.

- 3.51 In our experience, the range of outputs from the different headship rate assumptions is very small – an 11% difference between 2011- and 2008-based rates; typically we see a difference in excess of 20%. This generally confirms that none of the past projections are building in any significant suppression to household formation rates moving forward.

Alternative Demographic Scenarios

- 3.52 Although we consider the 2012-based SNPP to be reasonable demographic projection when taking account of past trends in population growth we have also developed two alternative projections. These can be summarised as:
- 3.53 10-year migration trends – this projection looks at the level of population and household/housing growth we might expect if migration levels in the future are the same as seen over the past decade. A consideration of longer-term trends is suggested as an alternative scenario in PAS Technical Advice Note.
- 3.54 UPC adjustment – as noted earlier there is a notable level of Unattributable Population change in the ONS data for 2001-11. In this instance UPC is positive, this suggests that the components of change feeding into the SNPP could underestimate migration and population growth. The sensitivity analysis here assumes that UPC relates entirely to under- or over-estimation of migration, and considers the impact which this could have.
- 3.55 Tables 20 and 21 show the outputs of the two alternative demographic projections developed.
- 3.56 The 10 year linear migration scenario results in a lower housing need in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells relative to the SNPP. This projection shows a level of need in Sevenoaks which is 7% below that shown in the SNPP; and 11% below it in Tunbridge Wells. It is however a relatively crude projection which projects forward average annual net migration. The SNPP is a more advanced demographic projection which takes account of how the age structure of the population in the local authority is expected to change and how the population in other areas from which people typically move to the area is expected to change; and how this may influence the propensity of people to migrate. This is a more advanced projection for population growth, which is likely to be more realistic than simply projecting forward average net migration figures. The SNPP projects some

¹⁴ Holmans, A. (2013) *New Estimates of Housing Need and Demand in England, 2011- 2031*

growth in net migration which we would expect to occur given our understanding of dynamics of population growth in London and the wider South East.

3.57 The UPC scenario assumes that UPC can be allocated in full to an over or under-estimate of migration. This results in 4% lower housing need in Sevenoaks; but a notably higher housing need in Tunbridge Wells. Whilst UPC may relate to migration, it cannot be definitively determined the extent to which this is the case, or whether it reflects errors in Census data; or indeed over what period during the 2001-11 decade it relates. ONS undertook a consultation on whether adjustments should be made to the 2012-based SNPP to take account of UPC. This concluded that it would not be appropriate to include adjustments for UPC in the SNPP because:

- It is unclear what proportion of the UPC is due to sampling error in the 2001 Census, adjustments made to MYEs post the 2001 Census, sampling error in the 2011 Census and/or error in the intercensal components (mainly migration);
- If it is due to either 2001 Census or 2011 Census then the components of population change will be unaffected; and
- If it is due to international migration, it is likely that the biggest impacts will be seen earlier in the decade and will have less of an impact in the later years, because of improvements introduced to migration estimates in the majority of these years.

3.58 It is not possible to attribute UPC accurately to specific years. ONS has improved its methodology for modelling migration, and data collection – including in taking account of Higher Education Statistics Agency data regarding student moves. On this basis, migration estimates for the latter years over the 2001-11 decade should be better than those in earlier years. Overall, we would consider the evidence insufficient to warrant adjustments to the 2012-based SNPP Projections.

Table 20: Projected household growth 2013-33 – 10-year migration trends and 2012-based headship rates

	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells
Households 2013	47,951	48,032	95,982
Households 2033	57,313	58,787	116,100
Change in households	9,363	10,755	20,118
Per annum	468	538	1,006
Dwellings (per annum)	482	560	1,041

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Table 21: Projected household growth 2013-33 – 2012-based SNPP with UPC adjustment and 2012-based headship rates

	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells
Households 2013	47,951	48,032	95,982
Households 2033	57,596	64,052	121,648
Change in households	9,645	16,020	25,666
Per annum	482	801	1,283
Dwellings (per annum)	496	833	1,330

- 3.59 Table 22 brings together the various demographic-led scenarios. We would consider that the SNPP with an adjustment for migration from London represents the most robust demographic-led projection for housing need in each of the authorities.

Table 22: Comparing the Demographic-led Projections

Housing Need per Annum, 2013-33	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells
SNPP	516	627	1143
London-Adjusted Projection	524	631	1155
10 Year Migration	482	560	1042
SNPP with UPC Adjustment	496	833	1329

- 3.60 The 10 year migration projections are unlikely to be as robust as the SNPP as they don't take account of changes to the age structure over time and the impact this might have on migration levels.
- 3.61 The UPC scenario is a useful scenario to consider (again it is one suggested in the PAS guidance) however we do not consider it to be a robust alternative to the SNPP. The main reasons for this are that it is unclear if UPC is related to migration and more importantly, due to changes in the methods used by ONS to measure migration it is most probable that any errors are focussed on earlier periods (notably 2001-6) and therefore a UPC adjustment for more recent data would not be appropriate.

Relationship to Economic Growth

- 3.62 Planning Practice Guidance sets out that consideration should be given to future economic performance in drawing conclusions on the overall need for housing. Where the evidence suggests

that higher migration might be needed than seen in past trends in order to support economic growth, consideration should be given to adjusting the assessed housing need. Specifically the Guidance outlines that:

‘Plan makers should make an assessment of the likely growth in job numbers based on past trends and/or economic forecasts as appropriate and also having regard to the growth of the working age population’

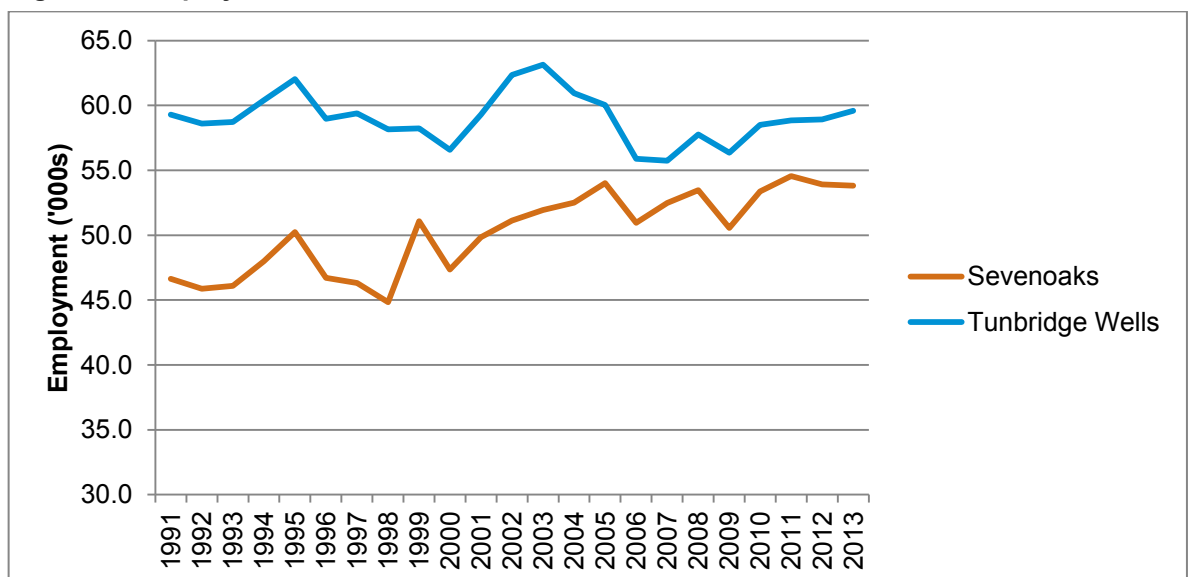
And that:

‘Where the supply of working age population that is economically active (labour force supply) is less than the projected job growth, this could result in unsustainable commuting patterns (depending on public transport accessibility or other sustainable options such as walking or cycling) and could reduce the resilience of local businesses. In such circumstances, plan makers will need to consider how the location of new housing or infrastructure development could help address these problems’.

3.63 Both Councils in due course are intending to prepare Employment Land Studies, which will include consideration of economic dynamics and growth potential. This more detailed work considering economic growth potential may result in the need to consider adjustments to conclusions on OAN or to housing targets. This report, following the approach in the PPG, considers trends and forecasts in employment growth.

3.64 Figure 27 considers past trends over the period since 1991, based on data in the East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM). These are estimates of (workplace-based) total employment, based on aggregating data from official data sources such as the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES), Annual Population Survey (APS) and ONS Workforce Jobs series.

Figure 27: Employment Trends, 1991-2013



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Source: EEFM

- 3.65 It is evident that total employment in Tunbridge Wells has been relatively stable over the 22 year period shown. In Sevenoaks, employment was relatively stable in the 1990s, grew in the early 2000s, but has been relatively stable over the last 8 years or so.
- 3.66 Over the 1993-2010 period (which is equivalent to the last economic cycle), employment in Sevenoaks grew by an average of 1.0% per annum. In Tunbridge Wells, employment levels were static (0.0% growth).
- 3.67 We have used the EEFM to consider economic growth potential in each of the two local authorities. Both the 2013 and 2014 model runs have been considered.
- 3.68 EEFM is an econometric model which takes account of the structure and composition of local economies, their past performance and expected growth potential of different sectors (at national and regional levels). Growth potential is influenced by Oxford Economics' national and regional forecasts. The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) subscribes to these forecasts.
- 3.69 Our understanding is that the model takes account of Sub-National Population Projections in modelling demand for consumer-driven sectors (such as retail or education), but its population assumptions are constrained to Oxford Economics' view regarding overall population growth and migration at a national and regional level, driven by economic factors.
- 3.70 Consideration has been given to the past two EEFM releases (2013 and 2014 baseline). This source provides an indication of the expected job growth at a local authority level and Table 23 shows the increase in the number of jobs expected in 2033 from 2013 levels.
- 3.71 The EEFM only runs to 2031 and so an estimate to 2033 has been made on the basis of expected growth in the last five years of the forecast (2026-31). The data shows that in the 2013 release, the EEFM expected job growth of about 10,600 (9%) and that just one year later the forecast had been increased significantly to 18,900 additional jobs (a 17% increase over the 20-year period).

Table 23: Change in Number of Jobs (2013-33)

Area	Forecast date	Jobs (2013)	Jobs (2033)	Change (2013-33)	% change
Sevenoaks	2013	57,771	62,927	5,156	8.9%
	2014	53,823	62,703	8,880	16.5%
Tunbridge Wells	2013	60,255	65,714	5,459	9.1%
	2014	59,580	69,605	10,024	16.8%
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells	2013	118,025	128,641	10,616	9.0%
	2014	113,404	132,308	18,905	16.7%

Source: East of England Forecasting Model

3.72 The latest (2014) forecasts shown in Table 24 expect employment growth of 0.8% pa across each of the two authorities, which compares to 0.9% pa growth forecast across Kent and 0.7% growth across the South East.

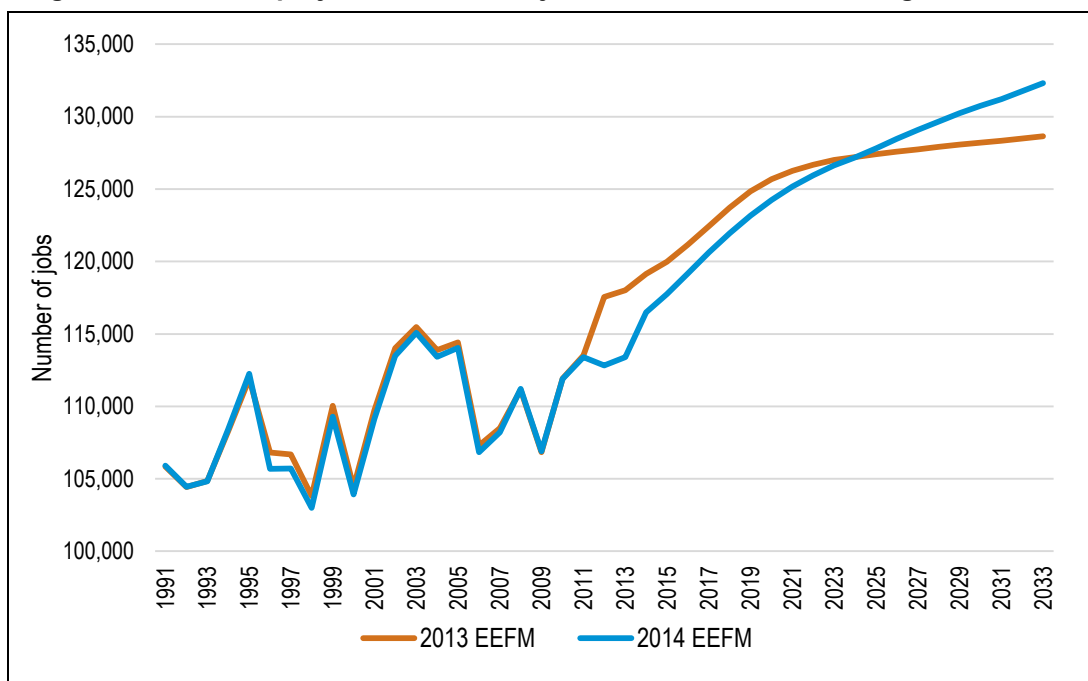
Table 24: EEFM Economic Forecasts, Winter 2014/15

2013-33	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Kent
Employment Growth ('000s)	8.9	10.0	134.1
% Annual Growth	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%

3.73 Figure 28 shows past trends and the expected future change in the number of jobs in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells. The data shows a growth in jobs in the past along with some notable year-on-year variations; the data also shows the much higher forecast level of job growth in the 2014 release compared with data from the previous year.

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Figure 28: Past and projected number of jobs – Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells



Source: East of England Forecasting Model

- 3.74 Comparing the growth rates in the latest EEFM model with past growth over the economic cycle, the forecasts for Sevenoaks look to be reasonable; however a substantially higher growth is forecast in Tunbridge Wells than has been seen historically – raising questions about whether the forecasts can be considered to be reasonable.
- 3.75 Given competition from higher paid jobs in London, and a lack of specific local drivers which would suggest stronger relative performance, we would recommend that the latest EEFM forecasts for Tunbridge Wells are therefore treated with some care.
- 3.76 In undertaking Employment Land Studies, the Councils should consider further the likely economic performance and scale of jobs growth which can be expected.

Relating Jobs and Labour Force Growth

- 3.77 To convert jobs into growth in the labour-force, overall population growth and hence housing need is not a simple process and the analysis takes account of:
- Commuting patterns;
 - Double jobbing (i.e. the number of people with more than one job); and
 - Changes to employment rates (e.g. as a result of reducing unemployment or people working longer).

Commuting patterns

- 3.78 Table 25 shows summary data about commuting to and from the study area and individual local authorities from the 2011 Census. The data shows that the study area generally sees a notable level of out-commuting for work.
- 3.79 Out-commuting is highest in Sevenoaks where there are around 20% more people living in the area (and working) than work in the area. Tunbridge Wells shows a smaller percentage of net out-commuting (4%).

Table 25: Commuting patterns in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells (2011)

	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells
Live and work in LA	12,767	22,088	34,855
Home workers	7,846	8,177	16,023
No fixed workplace	5,331	5,016	10,347
Out-commute	30,555	22,349	52,904
In-commute	20,948	20,132	41,080
Total working in LA	46,892	55,413	102,305
Total living in LA (and working)	56,499	57,630	114,129
Commuting ratio	1.20	1.04	1.12

Source: 2011 Census

- 3.80 In translating the commuting pattern data into growth in the labour-force it is assumed that the commuting ratio remains at the same level as shown by the 2011 Census. This essentially means that there would be expected to be a greater increase in working residents for a given number of jobs. This is a “policy off” assumption which takes account of relevant case law¹⁵.
- 3.81 The figures have been applied on a local authority by local authority basis using data as shown in Table 25.

Double jobbing

- 3.82 Typically a number of people may have more than one job (double jobbing). This can be calculated as the number of people working in each District divided by the number of jobs. Data from the Annual Population Survey (available on the NOMIS website) suggests that around 4.1% of workers have a second job (data averaged from data for the 2004-14 period to recognise relatively high

¹⁵ Oadby & Wigston BC vs SoSCLG & Bloor Homes Ltd [2015] EWHC 1879 (Admin)

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error margins associated with data for individual years). This gives a double jobbing ratio of 0.959 (i.e. the number of jobs can be discounted by 4.1% to estimate the required change in the workforce).

3.83 Again data has been used on an individual local authority basis with the double jobbing percentages for each area being:

- Sevenoaks – 4.1%
- Tunbridge Wells – 4.0%

3.84 To work out the change in the resident workforce required to match the forecast number of jobs we can multiply the commuting ratio by the amount of double jobbing and in turn multiply this by the number of jobs – this is shown in Tables 26 and 27.

3.85 Overall, the EEFM (2014) forecast expects an increase of 18,900 jobs. If commuting patterns and levels of double jobbing remain the same then this would require a slightly higher level of growth in the resident workforce (of about 20,300 people). For the earlier version of the EEFM, lower growth in the workforce is required for the forecast to be met.

Table 26: Jobs Growth and Change in Resident Workforce (2013-33) – 2013 EEFM

	Change in jobs (2013 EEFM)	Adjustment factor	Change in resident workforce
Sevenoaks	5,156	1.15	5,955
Tunbridge Wells	5,459	1.00	5,451
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells	10,616	1.07	11,406

Source: EEFM, NOMIS and 2011 Census

Table 27: Jobs Growth and Change in Resident Workforce (2013-33) – 2014 EEFM

	Change in jobs (2014 EEFM)	Adjustment factor	Change in resident workforce
Sevenoaks	8,880	1.15	10,256
Tunbridge Wells	10,024	1.00	10,009
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells	18,905	1.07	20,265

Source: EEFM, NOMIS and 2011 Census

Changes to Employment Rates

- 3.86 As well as studying commuting levels and double jobbing the analysis needs to consider how economic participation and employment rates will change in the future. Although the past few years have seen an increase in unemployment there have generally been increases in the proportion of people who are economically active (particularly for females and people aged over 50). In the future we may see a continuation of these trends – particularly in relation to people working longer (partly linked to pensionable ages) and have modelled for there to be some increase in employment rates as we move through to 2031.
- 3.87 Table 28 shows the age/sex specific rates assumed in the analysis. These have been based on consideration of the assumptions made by a range of different forecasting houses and also take trends shown by 2011 Census data.
- 3.88 It should be stressed that these figures reflect what we would consider to be a reasonable set of assumptions although there would be a case for alternatives (both in an upwards and downwards direction). It should also be noted that the difference in the levels of job growth in the EEFM over time may to some extent be affected by assumptions in the EEFM model about employment rate changes – as such comparisons between the different data releases should be treated as indicative.

Table 28: Employment Rates by Age and Sex – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells

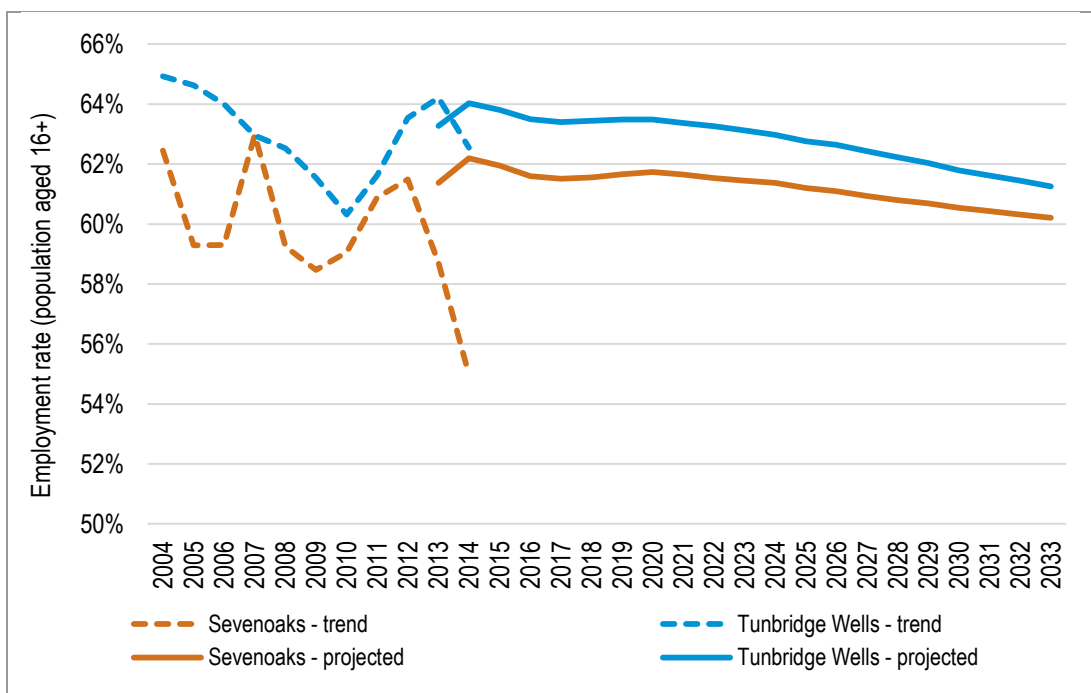
	Sex	Year	Aged 16 to 24	Aged 25 to 34	Aged 35 to 49	Aged 50 to 64	Aged 65 and over
Sevenoaks	Male	2013	57.7%	90.7%	92.5%	79.7%	20.2%
		2033	57.7%	90.9%	93.4%	83.7%	21.5%
	Female	2013	57.0%	79.0%	77.3%	67.0%	11.6%
		2033	57.0%	84.1%	82.2%	75.5%	13.1%
Tunbridge Wells	Male	2013	55.9%	89.7%	90.6%	80.0%	19.8%
		2033	55.9%	89.9%	91.5%	84.0%	20.9%
	Female	2013	54.6%	80.7%	77.6%	69.0%	12.1%
		2033	54.6%	85.8%	82.5%	77.5%	13.6%

- 3.89 Figure 29 shows how the overall employment rate in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells is expected to change over time, a past trend analysis from the Annual Population Survey (APS) back to 2004 has also been shown although some caution should be used in comparing figures given that the sources are different. The employment rate is based on the number of people in employment divided by the population aged 16 and over.

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- 3.90 The analysis shows in both areas there is expected to be a small increase in this rate to about 2014 with a small decline thereafter. The period to 2014 reflects expectations of some improvements (particularly around reducing unemployment) with the decline in the rate thereafter being strongly linked to the demographic profile of the population (i.e. ageing).
- 3.91 The rates shown in Figure 29 are derived from the 2012-based SNPP and it should be noted that these change very slightly with different assumptions about population growth.

Figure 29: Past and projected Change in Employment Rate – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells (2004-2031)



Source: Derived from Annual Population Survey, Labour Force Survey, Experian forecasts and demographic projections

- 3.92 The outputs from the EEFM-based projections are shown below.

Table 29: Projected Household Growth 2013-33 – EEFM (2013) and 2012-based headship rates

	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells
Households 2013	47,951	48,032	95,982
Households 2033	56,339	57,982	114,321
Change in households	8,389	9,950	18,339
Per annum	419	498	917
Dwellings (per annum)	432	518	949

Table 30: Projected Household Growth 2013-33 – EEFM (2014) and 2012-based headship rates

	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells
Households 2013	47,951	48,032	95,982
Households 2033	59,164	61,102	120,267
Change in households	11,214	13,071	24,284
Per annum	561	654	1,214
Dwellings (per annum)	577	680	1,257

- 3.93 For both local authorities, the 2013 EEFM forecasts can be accommodated with the housing provision projected in the SNPP. There is thus no need to adjust the assessed housing need to take account of these forecasts.
- 3.94 The 2014 forecasts show stronger employment growth. To support the scale of employment growth forecast would require 12% higher housing provision relative to the SNPP in Sevenoaks (577 homes pa, 2013-33) and 8% higher housing provision than in the SNPP in Tunbridge Wells (680 homes pa, 2013-33).
- 3.95 **GL Hearn considers that the evidence would support an adjustment to housing provision to reflect the stronger economic growth potential in Sevenoaks, taking account of the latest forecast and past trends.**
- 3.96 **However in Tunbridge Wells, there is no substantive evidence to suggest that the economy will generate much stronger employment growth than seen historically – where employment numbers have been broadly static. There is not conclusive evidence to suggest that a higher housing need will arise.**
- 3.97 The assessment of economic growth potential in this report should be treated as “provisional.” GL Hearn would recommend that the Councils review the assessment of economic growth potential further through preparation of Economic/ Employment Land Studies, and if appropriate consider updating the assessment of housing need (OAN) herein.

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Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Strategic Housing Market Assessment
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Councils, Final Draft Report, September 2015

Summary and Implications – Demographic & Economic-led Projections

- 3.98 Official (2012-based) trend-based population projections indicate that Sevenoaks population can be expected to grow by 16.3% between 2013-33; with 16.4% growth expected in Tunbridge Wells' population. However the evidence suggests that as the economy recovers from recession, it would be reasonable to expect slightly higher net out-migration from London – increasing population growth between 2013-33 to 17.0% in Sevenoaks and 16.6% in Tunbridge Wells. Taking account of age-specific headship rates, and including an allowance for vacant and second homes, this results in a need for 524 homes per year in Sevenoaks Borough; and 631 in Tunbridge Wells District. This represents the “starting point” for considering housing provision, following the approach in Planning Practice Guidance.
- 3.99 Consideration is then given to economic performance, and whether taking account of age structure changes, employment growth may lead to an increase in net migration relative to past trends.
- 3.100 Employment in Tunbridge Wells has been relatively static, and there is no clear evidence that economic performance would drive higher housing need moving forwards. The Council will consider this issue further in preparing Employment Land Studies.
- 3.101 For Sevenoaks, economic trends and forecasts suggest that 0.8% employment growth per annum can be expected. This is equivalent to a growth in employment of 8,900 between 2013-33. This would result in housing need for 577 homes per annum.

4 AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEED

4.1 In this section we discuss levels of affordable housing need in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells. The analysis is intended to assess need arising from “those households who lack their own housing or live in unsuitable housing and who cannot afford to meet their housing needs in the market” as the Planning Practice Guidance sets out. Such households will be eligible for affordable housing. Affordable housing is defined as:

Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

4.2 The Practice Guidance sets out a standard approach for assessing affordable housing need - consistent with the methodology advocated in the 2007 SHMA Guidance - which we adopt for this study. This is known as the Basic Needs Assessment Model.

4.3 The analysis is based on secondary data sources. It draws on a number of sources of information including 2011 Census data, demographic projections, house prices/rents and income information. Key definitions used are outlined in Appendix A.

4.4 The housing needs model is based largely on housing market conditions (and particularly the relationship of housing costs and incomes) at a particular point in time – the time of the assessment – as well as the existing supply of affordable housing which can be used to meet housing need. The base date for analysis (e.g. data about housing costs and incomes) is 2014.

Housing Affordability

4.5 In preparing this report we have undertaken a survey of housing costs for different sizes of properties by tenure category. This is presented in Appendix B.

4.6 Figure 30 estimates how current prices and rents in the two local authorities might equate to income levels required to afford such housing. The figures are based on the figures derived in the analysis above and include four different tenures (buying, private rent, affordable rent and social rent) and are taken as the lower quartile price/rent across the whole stock of housing available (i.e. including all property sizes).

4.7 For illustrative purposes the calculations are based on 3.5 times household income for house purchase and 30% of income to be spent on housing for rented properties. The figures for house purchase are based on a 100% mortgage for the purposes of comparing the different types of housing.

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Figure 30: Indicative income required to purchase/rent without additional subsidy



Source: Land Registry, VOA and CoRe

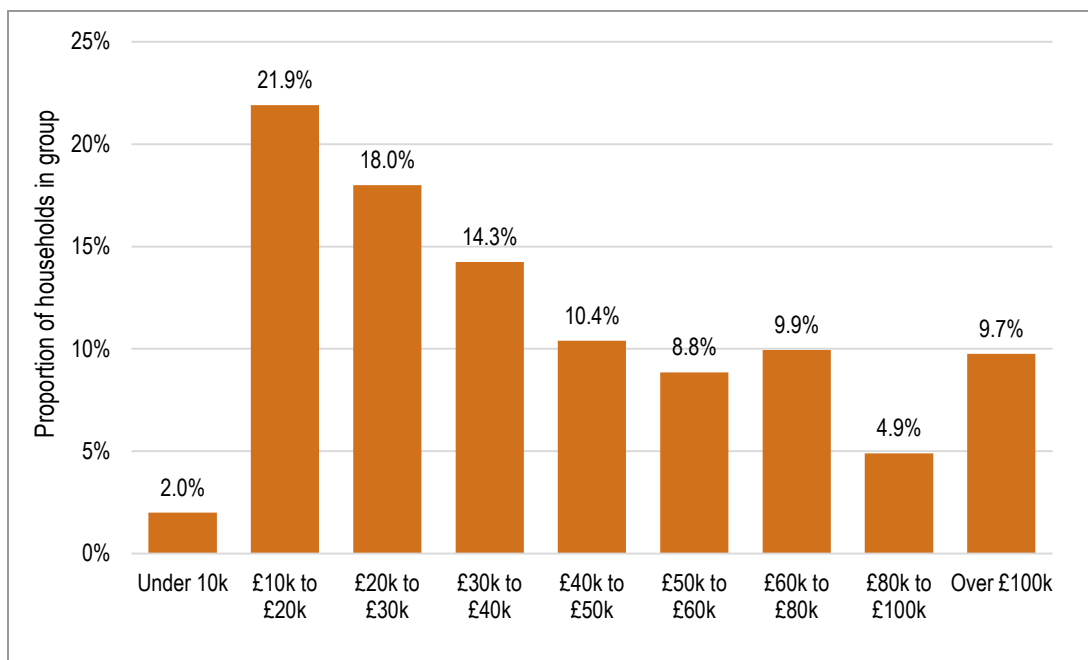
4.8 Data about gross household income has been modelled on the basis of a number of different sources of information to provide both an overall average income and the likely distribution of incomes in each area. The key sources of data include:

- CACI from *Wealth of the Nation 2012* – to provide an overall national average income figure for benchmarking;
- English Housing Survey (EHS) – to provide information about the distribution of incomes (taking account of variation by tenure in particular);
- Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) – to assist in looking at how incomes have changed from 2012 to 2014 (a 2.0% increase was identified from this source for the South East region); and
- ONS modelled income estimates – to assist in providing more localised income estimates (i.e. for each of the local authority areas).

4.9 Drawing all of this data together we have therefore been able to construct an income distribution for each authority in 2014. The data shows that around a quarter (24%) of households have an income

below £20,000 with a further third in the range of £20,000 to £40,000. The overall average (median) income of all households in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells is estimated to be around £35,400 with a mean income of £46,600.

Figure 31: Distribution of Household Income in Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells



Source: Derived from ASHE, EHS, CACI and ONS data

4.10 Table 31 shows how income levels vary for each of the two local authorities. Incomes were found to be slightly higher in Sevenoaks than Tunbridge Wells.

Table 31: Income levels by local authority

	Mean income	Median income
Sevenoaks	£47,689	£36,272
Tunbridge Wells	£45,550	£34,644
Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells	£46,619	£35,444

Source: Derived from ASHE, EHS, CACI and ONS data

4.11 To assess affordability we have brought together the information on housing costs and incomes. We have looked at households ability to afford either home ownership or private rented housing (whichever is the cheapest), without financial support. The distribution of household incomes is then used to estimate the likely proportion of households who are unable to afford to meet their needs in the private sector without support, on the basis of existing incomes. This analysis brings together the data on household incomes with the estimated incomes required to access private sector housing.

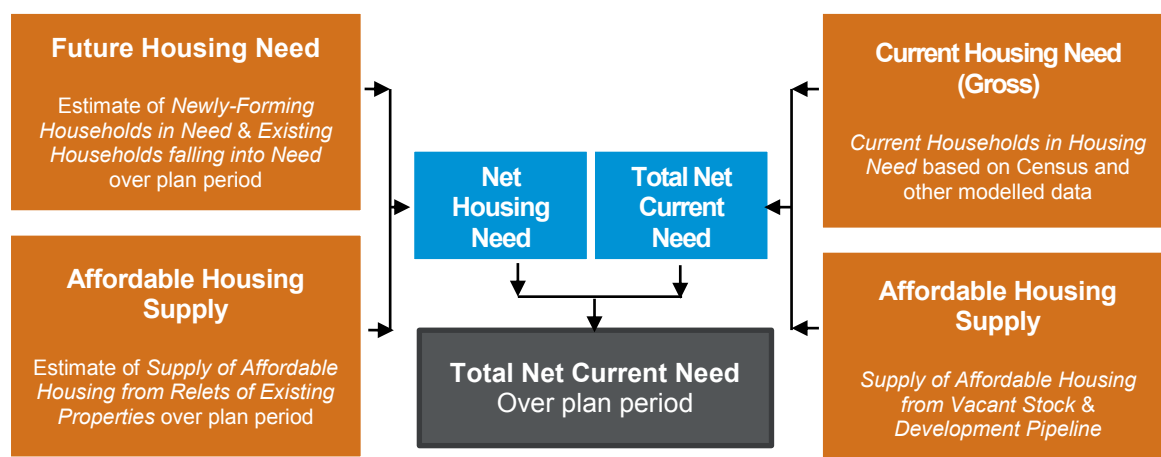
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- 4.12 Different affordability tests are applied to different parts of the analysis depending on the group being studied (e.g. recognising that newly forming households are likely on average to have lower incomes than existing households). Assumptions about income levels are discussed for relevant analyses where relevant in the analysis that follows.

Affordable Housing Needs Assessment

- 4.13 Affordable housing need has been assessed using the Basic Needs Assessment Model, in accordance with the CLG Practice Guidance. This model is summarised in the chart below.

Figure 32: Overview of the Basic Needs Assessment Model



- 4.14 The figures presented in this report for affordable housing needs have been based on secondary data sources including analysis of 2011 Census data. The modelling undertaken provides an assessment of affordable housing need for a 20-year period (which is then annualised). Each of the stages of the affordable housing needs model calculation are discussed in more detail below.

Current Affordable Housing Need

- 4.15 In line with Planning Practice Guidance, the current need for affordable housing has been based on estimating the number of households living in unsuitable housing along with consideration of their current tenure and affordability.
- 4.16 Estimates of households living in unsuitable housing have been derived from the number of households shown to be overcrowded in the 2011 Census (updated to a 2013 base) along with an estimate of other needs which have been modelled by comparing the tenure profile in each area with information regarding housing need by tenure. Much of these additional needs are found in the private rented sector and relate to issues around security of tenure and housing costs.

- 4.17 The analysis suggests some 3,019 overcrowded households (using the bedroom standard) along with an estimated 2,309 households with other needs. In total it is therefore estimated that around 5,329 households are currently living in unsuitable accommodation – this represents 5.6% of the estimated number of households in the study-area in 2013.
- 4.18 In taking this estimate forward, the data modelling estimates housing unsuitability by tenure. From the overall number in unsuitable housing (5,329) households living in affordable housing are excluded (as these households would release a dwelling on moving and so no net need for affordable housing will arise). The analysis also excludes all outright owners under the assumption (which is supported by analysis of survey data) that they will have sufficient equity to move and 90% of owners with a mortgage. Again analysis of a range of recent surveys indicates that the vast majority of owners with a mortgage are able to afford housing once savings and equity are taken into account. A final adjustment (which only has a very modest impact) is to slightly reduce the unsuitability figures to take account of student-only households – such households could technically be overcrowded but would be unlikely to be considered as being in affordable housing need.
- 4.19 At the time of the assessment there were an estimated 2,379 households living in unsuitable housing (excluding current social tenants and the majority of owner-occupiers) – this represents 2.5% of all households in the study area. This data is shown in Table 32 which shows a particularly high level of unsuitability in Tunbridge Wells relative to Sevenoaks – this looks to be driven by both a higher level of overcrowding and also a larger private rented sector.

Table 32: Estimated number of households in unsuitable housing

Area	In unsuitable housing	Total number of households	% in unsuitable housing
Sevenoaks	864	47,951	1.8%
Tunbridge Wells	1,514	48,032	3.2%
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells	2,379	95,982	2.5%

Source: Census (2011) and data modelling

- 4.20 Our estimated level of current need is therefore 2,379. We can however additionally consider that a number of these households might be able to afford market housing without the need for subsidy. For an affordability test we have used the income data and adjusted the distribution to reflect a lower average income amongst households living in unsuitable housing – for the purposes of the modelling an income estimate of 69% of the figure for all households has been used. Overall, around three-fifths of households with a current need are estimated to be likely to have insufficient income to afford market housing and so our estimate of the total current need is reduced to 1,412 households.

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Table 33: Estimated Current Need

Area	In unsuitable housing	% Unable to Afford	Revised Gross Need (including Affordability)
Sevenoaks	864	64.8%	560
Tunbridge Wells	1,514	56.3%	852
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells	2,379	59.3%	1,412

Source: Census (2011), data modelling and income analysis

- 4.21 The PPG also suggests that the housing register can be used to estimate levels of affordable housing need. Our experience working across the Country is that housing registers can be highly variable in the way allocation policies and pointing systems work. This means that in many areas it is difficult to have confidence that the register is able to define an underlying need. Many housing registers include households who might not have a need whilst there will be households in need who do not register (possibly due to being aware that they have little chance of being housed). For these reasons, the method linked to Census and other modelled data is preferred.

Newly-Arising Need

- 4.22 To estimate newly-arising (projected future) need we have looked at two key groups of households based on the CLGs SHMA Guidance. These are:
- Newly forming households; and
 - Existing households falling into need.

Newly Forming Households

- 4.23 The number of newly-forming households has been estimated through the demographic modelling with an affordability test also being applied. This has been undertaken by considering the changes in households in specific 5-year age bands relative to numbers in the age band below 5 years previously to provide an estimate of gross household formation. This differs from numbers presented in the demographic projections which are for net household growth. The number of newly-forming households is limited to households forming who are aged under 45 – this is consistent with CLG guidance (from 2007) which notes after age 45 that headship (household formation) rates ‘plateau’. There may be a small number of household formations beyond age 45 (e.g. due to relationship breakdown) although the number is expected to be fairly small when compared with formation of younger households.
- 4.24 The estimates of gross new household formation have been based on outputs from our core demographic projection. In looking at the likely affordability of newly-forming households we have drawn on data from previous surveys. This establishes that the average income of newly-forming

households is around 84% of the figure for all households. This figure is remarkably consistent across areas (and is also consistent with analysis of English Housing Survey data at a national level).

- 4.25 We have therefore adjusted the overall household income data to reflect the lower average income for newly-forming households. The adjustments have been made by changing the distribution of income by bands such that average income level is 84% of the all household average. In doing this we are able to calculate the proportion of households unable to afford market housing without any form of subsidy (such as Local Housing Allowance or Housing Benefit). Our assessment suggests that overall around half of newly-forming households will be unable to afford market housing and that a total of 989 new households will have a need on average in each year to 2033.

Table 34: Estimated Level of Affordable Housing Need from Newly Forming Households (per annum)

Area	Number of new households	% unable to afford	Total in need
Sevenoaks	940	55.7%	523
Tunbridge Wells	1,008	46.3%	466
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells	1,948	50.8%	989

Source: Projection Modelling/Income analysis

Existing Households falling into Affordable Housing Need

- 4.26 The second element of newly arising need is existing households falling into need. To assess this we have used information from CoRe¹⁶. We have looked at households who have been housed over the past two years – this group will represent the flow of households onto the Housing Register over this period. From this we have discounted any newly forming households (e.g. those currently living with family) as well as households who have transferred from another social rented property. An affordability test has also been applied, although relatively few households are estimated to have sufficient income to afford market housing.
- 4.27 This method for assessing existing households falling into need is consistent with the 2007 SHMA guide which says on page 46 that *‘Partnerships should estimate the number of existing households falling into need each year by looking at recent trends. This should include households who have entered the housing register and been housed within the year as well as households housed outside of the register (such as priority homeless households applicants)’*. Households who fall into need and are not housed are counted as having a current housing need.

¹⁶ The Continuous Recording of lettings and sales in social housing in England (referred to as CoRe) is a national information source that records information on the characteristics of both private registered providers and local authority new social housing tenants and the homes they rent.

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- 4.28 Following the analysis through suggests a need arising from 323 existing households each year (with very similar estimates in each of the two local authorities) – this is about 0.3% of all households living in the study area (in 2013).

Table 35: Estimated level of Housing Need from Existing Households (per annum)

Area	Number of Existing Households falling into Need	% of Need
Sevenoaks	160	49.5%
Tunbridge Wells	163	50.5%
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells	323	100.0%

Source: CoRe/affordability analysis

Supply of Affordable Housing

Current Affordable Housing Supply

- 4.29 The PPG sets out that assessments should identify the current supply of housing that can be used to accommodate households in affordable housing need as well as future supply. Potential sources of supply include affordable homes that are going to be vacated by current occupiers that are fit for use by other households, surplus vacant properties, and the committed supply of new affordable units. Any properties due to be “taken out of management” are expected to be deducted from these figures to identify the total affordable housing stock available.
- 4.30 The assessment herein excludes homes to be vacated by current occupiers in both the need and supply calculations (as these will in any case cancel each other out).
- 4.31 The supply from other categories is shown below, based on data from the two Councils.

Table 36: Current Affordable Housing Supply

	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells
Surplus Vacant Properties	0	0	0
Committed Affordable Supply	232	350	582
Units to be taken Out of Management	0	-96	-96
Total Stock Available	232	254	486

Future Supply of Affordable Housing

- 4.32 The future supply of affordable housing is the flow of affordable housing arising from the existing stock that is available to meet future need. It is split between the annual supply of social/affordable rent relets and the annual supply of relets/sales within the intermediate sector.
- 4.33 The PPG suggests that the estimate of likely future relets from the social rented stock should be based on past trend data which can be taken as a prediction for the future. We have used information from the Continuous Recording system (CoRe) to establish past patterns of social housing turnover. Our figures include general needs and supported lettings but exclude lettings of new properties plus an estimate of the number of transfers from other social rented homes. These exclusions are made to ensure that the figures presented reflect relets from the existing stock. Additionally an estimate of the number of 'temporary' supported lettings have been removed from the figures (the proportion shown in CoRe as being lettings in direct access hostels or foyer schemes (of which there were relatively few in the study area)).
- 4.34 On the basis of past trend data it has been estimated that 571 units of social/affordable rented housing are likely to become available each year moving forward, with a higher proportion of these being in Tunbridge Wells.

Table 37: Analysis of past social/affordable rented housing supply (per annum – past 2 years)

	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells
Total lettings	429	583	1,012
% as non-newbuild	91.3%	90.9%	91.1%
Lettings in existing stock	392	530	922
% non-transfers	65.8%	65.6%	65.7%
Sub-total	258	348	605
% non-temporary housing	100.0%	90.1%	94.3%
Total lettings to new tenants	258	313	571

Source: CoRe

- 4.35 The supply figure is for social/affordable rented housing only and whilst the stock of intermediate housing in Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells is not significant compared to the social/affordable rented stock it is likely that some housing does become available each year (e.g. resales of shared ownership). For the purposes of this assessment we have again utilised CoRe data about the number of sales of homes that were not newbuild. From this it is estimated that around 26

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additional properties might become available per annum. The total supply of affordable housing is therefore estimated to be 597 per annum.

Table 38: Supply of Affordable Housing

Area	Social/affordable rented relets	Intermediate housing 'relets'	Total supply (per annum)
Sevenoaks	258	20	278
Tunbridge Wells	313	6	319
7oaks & TW	571	26	597

Source: CoRe

Net Affordable Housing Need

- 4.36 Table 39 shows our overall calculation of annual affordable housing need using the approach suggested in the PPG. The analysis shows a net annual need from 422 households in Sevenoaks, and 341 households in Tunbridge Wells, who require financial support to meet their housing needs.

Table 39: Estimated level of Affordable Housing Need per Annum

		Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells
A	Current Gross Affordable Need	560	852	1,412
B	Committed Supply of Affordable Housing	232	254	486
C	Total Net Current Affordable Need	328	598	926
D	Total Net Need per Annum to 2033 (C / 19)	17	31	49
E	Annual Need from Newly-Forming Households	523	466	989
F	Annual Need from Existing Households Falling into Need	160	163	323
G	Total Annual Gross Newly-Arising Need (E + F)	683	629	1,312
H	Annual Supply from Relets of Social & Affordable Rented Homes	258	313	571
I	Annual Supply from Relets of Intermediate Housing	20	6	26
J	Total Future Annual Supply from Re-Lets (H + I)	278	319	597
K	Annual Net Need for Affordable Housing (D + G - J)	422	341	764

Sensitivity to Income Thresholds

- 4.37 A 30% rent to income threshold for affordability has been used in the main modelling. It is however worthwhile considering the implications of alternative thresholds. To understand the implications of the income threshold, a sensitivity test has been undertaken which assumes variant levels of

income spent on housing costs. Table 40 summarises the findings. In particular, it can be seen with an assumption of households spending 40% of gross income on housing costs that the need falls to 459 households per annum (down from 787 using a 30% threshold). The analysis in this table excludes committed supply of affordable housing.

Table 40: Estimated level of Affordable Housing Need (per annum) at Variant Income Thresholds

	@ 25%	@ 30%	@ 35%	@ 40%
Current Need	81	71	62	54
Newly forming households	1,162	989	844	725
Existing households falling into need	343	323	301	277
Total Need	1,586	1,383	1,206	1,056
Supply	597	597	597	597
Net Need	990	787	609	459
Sevenoaks	524	434	347	275
Tunbridge Wells	465	353	262	184

Source: 2011 Census/CoRe/Projection Modelling and affordability analysis

Relating Affordable Need and OAN

4.38 The analysis above indicates a significant need for affordable housing. Using a baseline demographic need (for all tenures) linked to the 2012-based SNPP and household projections (a need for 516 dpa in Sevenoaks and 627 dpa in Tunbridge Wells), the affordable housing need would represent 82% of the need shown in the demographic projections in Sevenoaks; and 54% of the need in Tunbridge Wells.

4.39 The PPG sets out that:

“the total affordable housing need should then be considered in the context of its likely delivery as a proportion of mixed market and affordable housing developments, given the probable percentage of affordable housing to be delivered by market housing led developments. An increase in the total housing figures included in the local plan should be considered where it could help deliver the required number of affordable homes.”

4.40 Sevenoaks Core Strategy seeks provision of 40% affordable housing on sites of over 15 dwellings, and a sliding scale of contributions on smaller sites depending on size. Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy seeks 35% affordable housing provision on sites of 10 or more dwellings. On this basis, it

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would be reasonable to assume that 35% affordable housing could be delivered on market-led housing schemes in each local authority on the basis of assuming policy compliance.

4.41 Assuming the target is delivered, the following levels of overall housing provision would be needed in theory if the affordable housing need was delivered just through mixed-tenure development schemes:

Table 41: Comparing the Affordable Housing Need and Demographic Projections

Need per Annum, 2013-33	Affordable Need	Est. Delivery	Provision needed to support delivery of full Affordable Housing Need	Uplift on SNPP
Sevenoaks	422	35%	1206	134%
Tunbridge Wells	341	35%	976	56%
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells	764		2182	91%

4.42 This theoretical exercise indicates that housing provision of nearly more than double that projected in the SNPP would be needed to deliver the full affordable housing need. GL Hearn would consider that this is neither feasible, in respect of the market and industry capacity to deliver this scale of housing provision, nor necessary. In particular, the affordable housing needs model does not suggest that there are this many additional households who require accommodation.

4.43 In particular it is important to understand the basis of the affordable housing needs model. As the Planning Practice Guidance sets out, the calculation of affordable need involves *“adding together the current unmet housing need and the projected future housing need and then subtracting this from the current supply of affordable stock.”* The affordable housing need does therefore not represent an assessment of what proportion of “additional households” might require affordable housing. Instead the model considers:

- What need can be expected to arise from both existing and newly-forming households who require financial support to access suitable housing;
- This is then compared with the projected supply of affordable housing expected to arise from the turnover of existing stock, and affordable housing in the development pipeline.

4.44 The modelling is influenced by the available stock, which has been influenced by past funding and investment decisions. The projected supply of affordable housing would for instance be greater (and the identified affordable housing need lower) if greater public resources had been devoted to delivering affordable housing and more had been built over the last decade, or no properties lost through right-to-buy sales.

- 4.45 The model also looks at needs arising from both new households and existing households. Part of the needs included are from households who might require an additional home, such as:
- Newly-forming households;
 - Those in temporary accommodation;
 - Concealed households; and
 - Homeless households.
- 4.46 But the figures also include needs arising from households who will require a different form of home, but who – by moving to another property – would release an existing property for another household. These households do not generate a need for more dwellings overall. They include households who need to move as they are:
- Overcrowded;
 - Coming to the end of a tenancy;
 - Living in unsuitable housing; or
 - Cannot afford to remain in their current home.
- 4.47 These elements of the affordable housing need are not directly relevant to considering overall housing need and housing targets (which are typically measured in terms of net dwellings). On this basis the annual delivery to meet full need in Table 41 will over-estimate the scale of overall need for market and affordable housing.
- 4.48 A need for net additions to the overall housing stock could arise from newly-forming households, concealed households and homeless households/ those in temporary accommodation. The need arising from newly-forming households is calculated from the demographic projections. Any additional need (over and above the demographic projections) would thus potentially come from concealed and homeless households – although these cannot simply be “added on” to the demographically-assessed need, as for instance modelled improvements in the projections in household formation rates would reduce levels of concealed households. To address the needs from concealed and homeless households, it may however be appropriate to consider adjustments to household formation rates – particularly for younger households. We consider these issues further in the next section.
- 4.49 We would also point out that delivery of affordable housing through market-led development schemes (for instance as secured through Section 106 Agreements) shouldn’t be considered in isolation from other mechanisms for increasing affordable housing supply. There are a range of other mechanisms which deliver affordable housing, including:
- Schemes brought forward by Registered Providers – including those funded through the HCA’s Affordable Housing Programme;
 - Building Council Homes – following reform of the HRA funding system, Councils can bring forward affordable housing themselves;

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- Empty Homes Programmes – where local authorities can bring properties back into use as affordable housing;
- Rural Exception Site Development – where the emphasis is on delivering affordable housing to meet local needs.

4.50 Funding for specialist forms of affordable housing, such as extra care provision, may also be available from other sources; whilst other niche agents, such as Community Land Trusts, may deliver new affordable housing. Government in December 2014 also announced a *Starter Homes Initiative* providing support for first-time buyers to get onto the housing market. Councils are also able to bring empty properties back into use as affordable housing, and Government funding is available to support this.

Need for Different Types of Affordable Housing

4.51 Having studied housing costs, incomes and affordable housing need the next step is to make an estimate of the proportion of affordable housing need that should be met through provision of different housing products. We therefore use the income information presented earlier in this section to estimate the proportion of households who are likely to be able to afford intermediate housing and the number for whom only social or affordable rented housing will be affordable. There are three main types of affordable housing that can be studied in this analysis:

- Intermediate
- Affordable rent
- Social rent

4.52 Whilst the process of separating households into different income bands for analytical purposes is quite straightforward, this does not necessarily tell us what sort of affordable housing they might be able to afford or occupy.

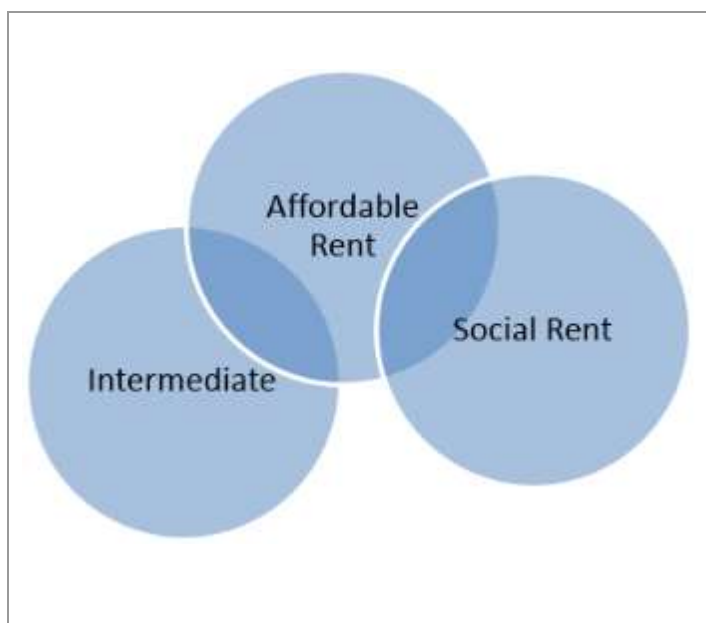
4.53 For example a household with an income close to being able to afford market housing might be able to afford intermediate or affordable rent but may be prevented from accessing certain intermediate products (such as shared ownership) as they have insufficient savings to cover a deposit. Such a household might therefore be allocated to affordable rented or intermediate rented housing as the most suitable solution. However we would expect that few Registered Providers would build intermediate rented homes, given that the level of potential occupants for affordable rented homes is greater (as it includes households who could claim housing benefit to supplement their incomes).

4.54 The distinction between social and affordable rented housing is also complex. Whilst rents for affordable rented housing would be expected to be higher than social rents, this does not necessarily mean that such a product would be reserved for households with a higher income. In

reality, as long as the rent to be paid falls at or below LHA limits then it will be accessible to a range of households (many of whom will need to claim housing benefit). Local authorities' tenancy strategies might set policies regarding the types of households which might be allocated affordable rented homes; and many authorities will seek to avoid where possible households having to claim higher levels of housing benefit. This however needs to be set against other factors, including viability and the availability of grant funding. Over the current spending period to 2015 grant funding is primarily available to support delivery of affordable rented homes. A significant level of affordable housing delivery is however through developer contributions (Section 106 Agreements).

4.55 For these reasons it is difficult to exactly pin down what proportion of additional affordable homes should be provided through different affordable tenure categories. In effect there is a degree of overlap between different affordable housing tenures, as the figure below shows.

Figure 33: Overlap between Affordable Housing Tenures



4.56 Given this overlap, for analytical purposes we have defined the following categories:

- Households who can afford 80% or more of market rent levels;
- Households who would potentially be able to afford more than existing social rent levels but could not afford 80% of market rents;
- Households who can afford no more than existing social rent levels (or would require housing benefit, or an increased level of housing benefit to do so).

4.57 The first of these categories would include equity-based intermediate products such as shared ownership and shared equity homes. The latter two categories are both rented housing and in reality can be considered together (both likely to be provided by Registered Providers (or the

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Council) with some degree of subsidy). Additionally, both affordable rented and social rented housing is likely to be targeted at the same group of households; many of whom will be claiming Housing Benefit. For this reason the last two categories are considered together for the purposes of drawing conclusions.

- 4.58 Detailed information on households' savings is not available. It has therefore been assumed that all households with an income which would allow them to afford 80% or more of market rents would represent the potential market for intermediate products such as shared ownership and shared equity homes – in reality a number of these households might only be able to afford some sort of rental product. Housing supply information is derived from CoRe lettings data. The profile of need shown differs slightly from that in Table 39 as the analysis excludes the committed supply of affordable housing, as data on the tenure mix of properties expected is not consistently available.
- 4.59 Taking the gross numbers for affordable housing need and comparing this against the supply from relets of existing stock, the following net need arises within the different categories. Overall the analysis suggests around 30% of housing could be intermediate with the remaining 70% being either social or affordable rented – Tunbridge Wells shows a potentially higher 'need' for intermediate products.

Table 42: Estimated level of Affordable Housing Need (per annum) by type of affordable housing, 2013-33

	Intermediate			Social/Affordable Rented		
	Total need	Supply	Net need	Total need	Supply	Net need
Sevenoaks	125	20	105	586	258	329
Tunbridge Wells	132	6	126	540	313	227
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells	257	26	231	1,126	571	556
% of total	29%			71%		

Source: Affordable Housing Needs Analysis

- 4.60 In determining policies for affordable housing provision on individual sites, the analysis in Table 35 should be brought together with other local evidence such as from the Housing Register. Consideration could also be given to areas with high concentrations of social rented housing where additional intermediate housing might be desirable to improve the housing mix and to create 'housing pathways'.

5 MARKET SIGNALS

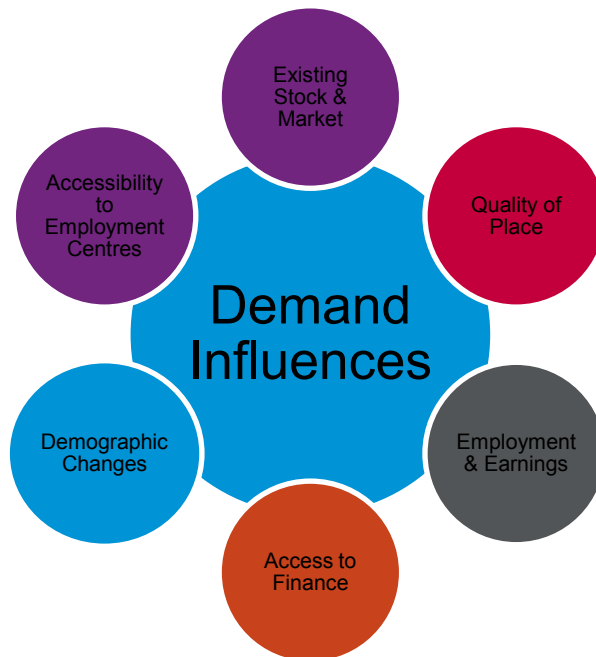
5.1 In line with the Planning Practice Guidance, we have sought to analyse in detail the housing market dynamics. This section, initially reviews housing market dynamics including national and macro-economic drivers. This is then developed at a HMA and district level with quantitative analysis of local prices, sales volumes and affordability.

Overview of the Housing Market and Economy

Conceptual Framework

5.2 It is important to understand that the housing market is influenced by macro-economic factors, as well as the housing market conditions at a regional and local level. There are a number of key influences on housing demand, which are set out in the diagram below:

Figure 34: Understanding Housing Demand Drivers



Source: GLH

5.3 At the macro-level, the market is particularly influenced by interest rates and mortgage availability, as well as market sentiment (which is influenced by economic performance and prospects at the macro-level). In the recent recessionary period, these macro conditions have been particularly prominent in driving the housing market.

5.4 The market is also influenced by the economy at both regional and local levels, recognising that economic employment trends will influence migration patterns (as people move to and from areas

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to access jobs) and that the nature of employment growth and labour demand will influence changes in earnings and wealth (which influences affordability).

5.5 Housing demand over the longer-term is particularly influenced by population and economic trends: changes in the size and structure of the population directly influence housing need and demand, and the nature of demand for different housing products.

5.6 There are then a number of factors which play out at a more local level, within a functional housing market and influence demand in different locations. The importance of these local factors is perhaps more pronounced in stable or healthy economic times, when mortgage availability and market liquidity are far less of a constraint on activity. Local factors include:

- quality of place and neighbourhood character;
- school performance and the catchments of good schools;
- the accessibility of areas including to employment centres (with transport links being an important component of this); and
- the existing housing market and local market conditions.

5.7 These factors influence the demand profile and pricing within the market. At a local level, this often means that the housing market (in terms of the profile of buyers) tends to be influenced and consequently reinforce to some degree the existing stock profile. However, regenerative investment or delivery of new transport infrastructure can influence the profile of housing demand in a location, by affecting its attractiveness to different households.

5.8 Local housing markets or sub-markets are also influenced by dynamics in surrounding areas, in regard to the relative balance between supply and demand in different markets; and the relative pricing of housing within them. Understanding relative pricing and price trends is thus important.

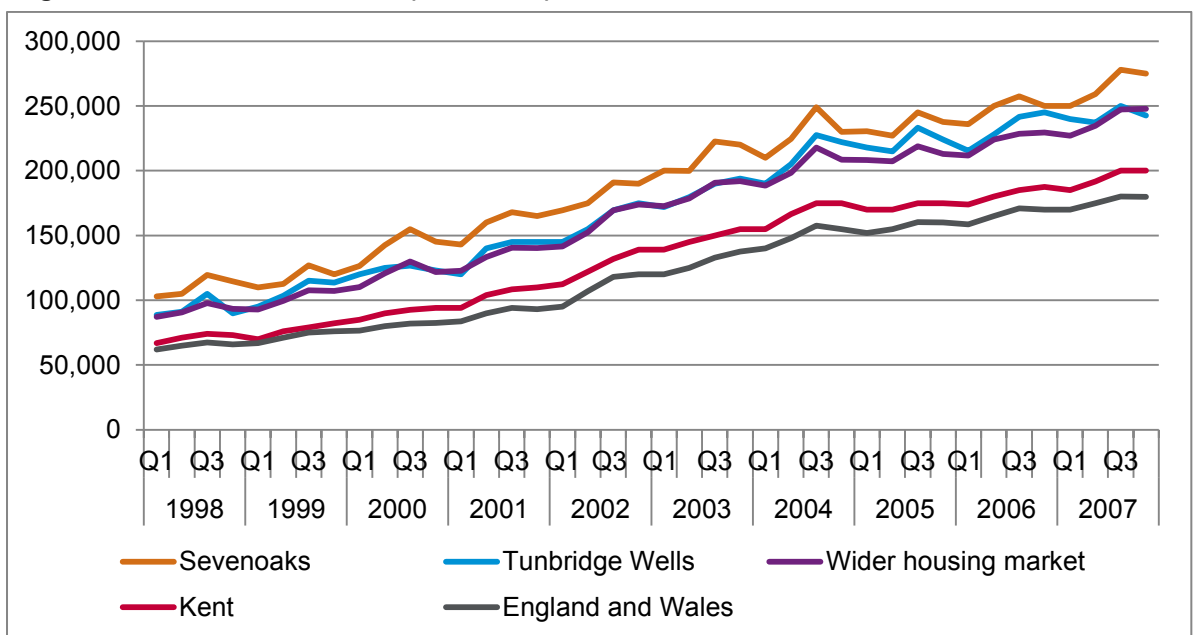
Local Demand Indicators and Market Signals

House Prices

5.9 Across Sevenoaks District the mean house price (Jan 2013 – Dec 2014 incl.) is £414,500 whilst the median is £302,000. In Tunbridge Wells Borough average house prices are lower with a mean house price of £351,000 and a median of £260,000. We can compare this to the wider housing market – which comprises Rother, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling, and Wealden councils. The mean house price across the wider housing market as a whole is £324,000 and the median is £250,000. Average prices in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells are the highest of any of the authorities in the wider housing market. Average house prices across Kent are considerably lower, with a mean value of £253,000 and a median of £210,000.

- 5.10 Figure 35 profiles median house prices from 1998 to 2007 (i.e. the pre-recession decade). It shows median values for Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and England and Wales along with the average of the median values of the authorities within the wider housing market.
- 5.11 All areas have seen strong and steady growth in house prices over this period. Over this period the median house price in Sevenoaks grew from £103,000 in Q1 1998 to £275,000 by Q4 2007 – an increase of £172,000 (167%). This is an increase of £54,000 more than the national average over this period. In Tunbridge Wells the median house prices increased from £88,600 in Q1 1998 to £242,500 by Q4 2007 – an increase of £153,900 (174%).
- 5.12 The wider housing market has seen an increase of £160,600 (184%) – slightly more than seen in Tunbridge Wells but below that seen Sevenoaks. The county of Kent saw a £133,000 (199%) increase, and England and Wales saw an £118,000 (190%) increase over this period.

Figure 35: Median House Price (1998-2007)

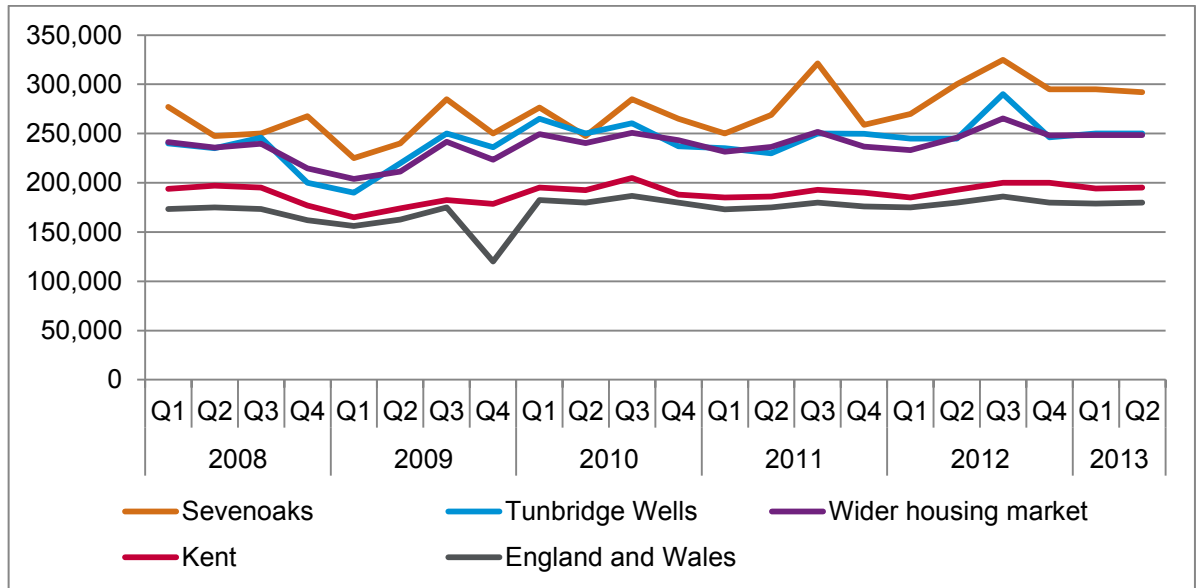


Source: DCLG Live Tables: Land Registry Data

- 5.13 Since 2007, national trends in house prices have been very different due to the economic backdrop. Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells experienced notable price falls in late 2008 / early 2009 at the onset of the recession, as was the case regionally and nationally, followed by a period of growth throughout the second half of 2009 and into 2010 before falling away again. Prices have remained roughly level since. As of Q2 2013 median house prices in Sevenoaks were £292,000, 5% higher than the pre-recession high. Median house prices in Tunbridge Wells were equal to pre-recession levels. By comparison Kent saw a 2% decrease in median prices while England and Wales saw zero change over this period.

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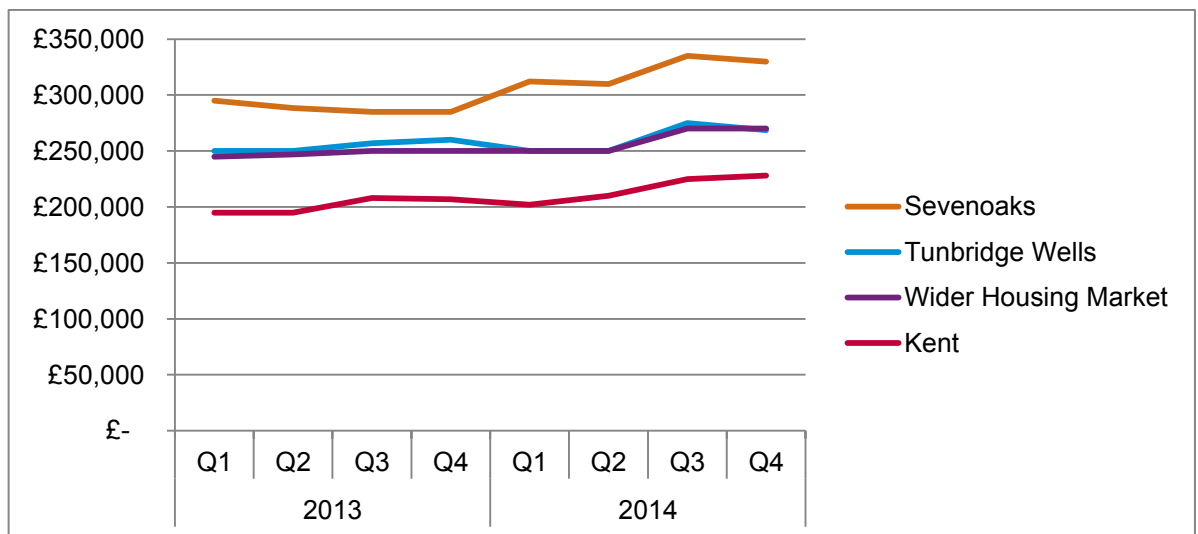
Figure 36: Median House Price (2008-2013)



Source: DCLG Live Tables: Land Registry Data

5.14 Although taken from a different source, Figure 37 shows median house prices over the past 2 years (2013 – 2014). This shows a notable upward trend in house prices, particularly since the start of 2014. In Sevenoaks the median price has increased by £35,000 (12%) over these two most recent years. Tunbridge Wells has seen an increase of £18,600 (7%) over this period. This is lower than the £25,000 (10%) increase seen across the wider housing market and £33,000 (17%) seen across Kent as a whole.

Figure 37: Median house prices (2013-2014)

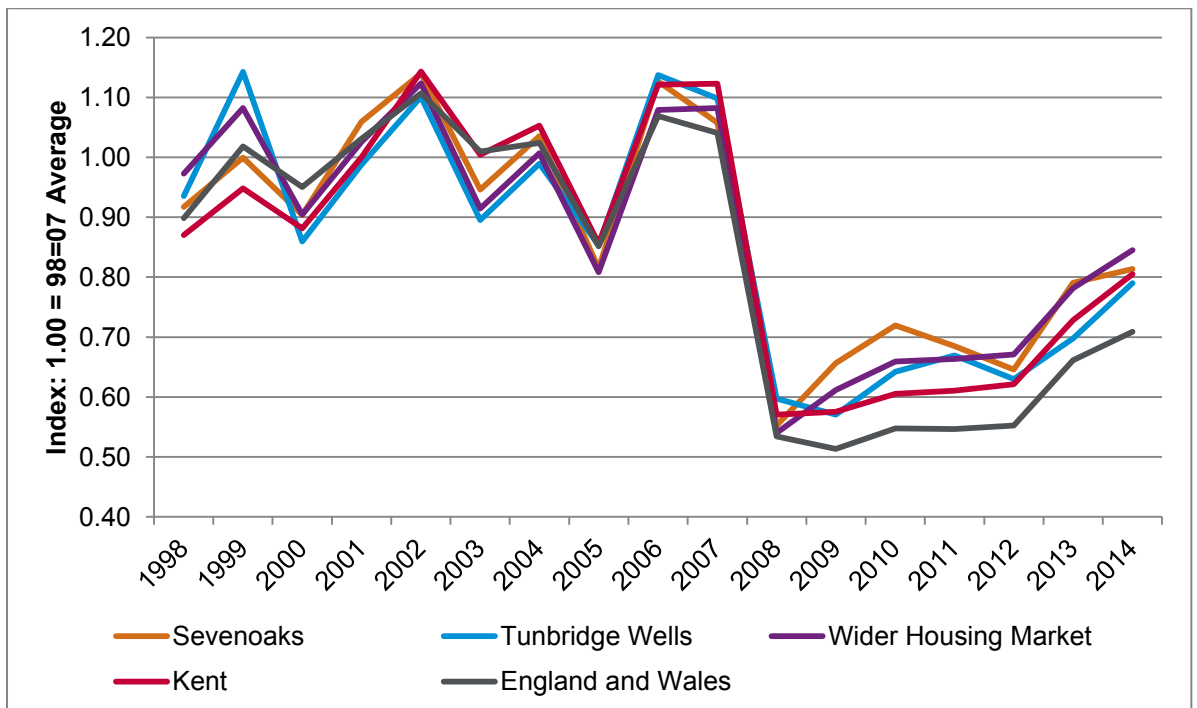


Source: GLH Analysis: Land Registry Price Paid Data

Sales Volumes and Effective Demand

- 5.15 Sales volumes are an important indicator of effective demand for market housing. We have benchmarked sales performance against long-term trends to assess relative demand. Figure 38 benchmarks annual sales in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells and comparator areas over the period 1998 to 2014. It uses an index where 1.00 is the average annual sales over the 1998-2007 pre-recession decade.
- 5.16 As illustrated in Figure 38, the impact of the 2008 recession was experienced across all geographical areas with sales volumes experiencing a significant drop between 2007 and 2008. Following the recessionary slump, sales volumes have remained well below pre-recession levels, although figures for 2013 and 2014 show signs of accelerated improvement. It is notable that sales numbers have improved markedly quicker in Kent than the England and Wales average.
- 5.17 As of 2014, sales volumes in Sevenoaks remain at 81% of the pre-recession average levels, in Tunbridge Wells this figure is 79%. This is below the 85% seen across the wider housing market but considerably above the England and Wales rate of 71%.

Figure 38: Indexed Analysis of Sales Trends (1998 – 2014)

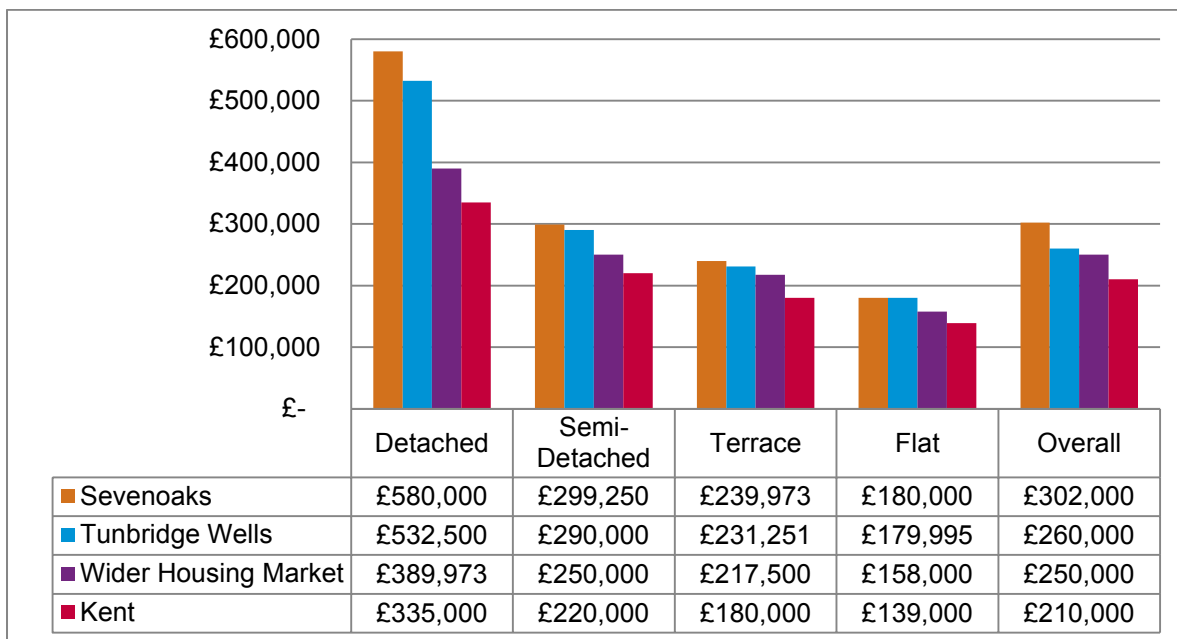


Source: DCLG and Land Registry Price Paid Data

- 5.18 We have also analysed house prices achieved over past two years (January 2013 to December 2014 incl.) in more detail to gain an understanding of the latest dynamics for different property types within the local housing markets.

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Figure 39: Median House Prices (Jan 2013 – Dec 2014)



Source: GLH Analysis: Land Registry Price Paid Data

5.19 Figure 39 shows median house prices by different dwelling type. The median price for detached houses in Sevenoaks is £580,000. The median detached house price in Tunbridge Well is slightly lower at £532,500. These values are considerably above the values in the rest of the wider housing market and Kent where the median prices are £390,000 and £335,000 respectively. On average, detached house prices in Sevenoaks are 49% higher than the wider housing area value. In Tunbridge Wells prices are 43% higher. Median house prices for other dwelling types are also higher in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells than the comparator areas, although the difference is less considerable.

5.20 Median prices for all dwelling types are higher in Sevenoaks than Tunbridge Wells. For detached houses the difference is 9%. Other than for detached houses this difference is modest with semi-detached houses 3% more expensive, Terrace houses are 4% more expensive, and the difference for flats is negligible.

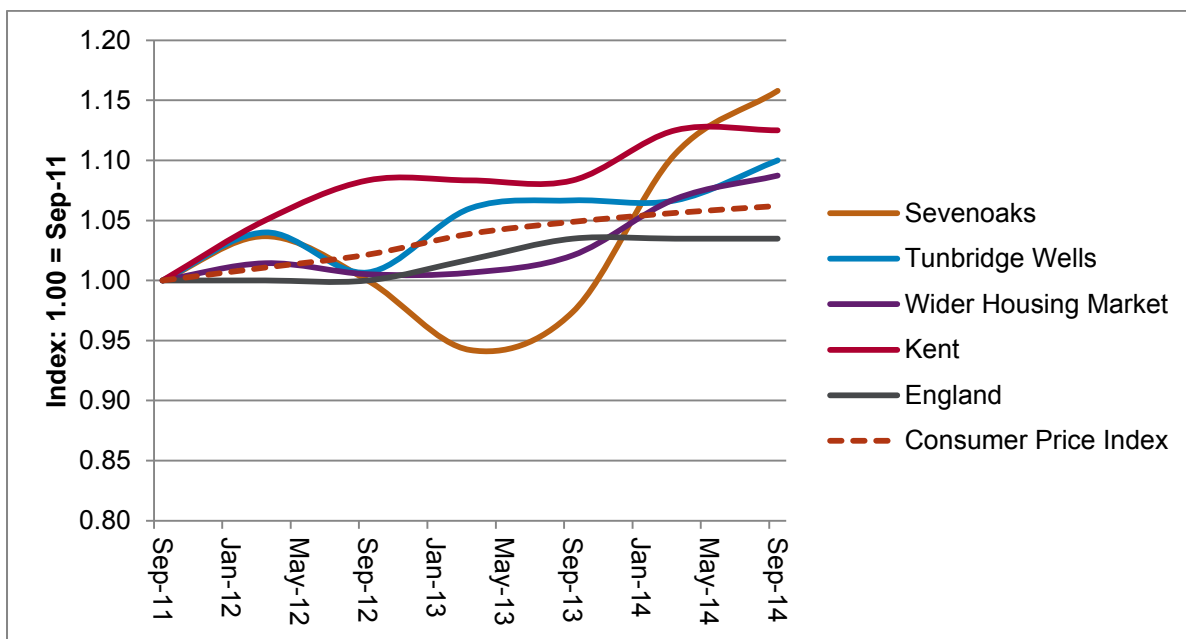
Rental Trends

5.21 The most recent VOA private rental data (over the year to September 2014) shows the median rental price in Sevenoaks was £1100 per calendar month (pcm); with an average of £825 pcm in Tunbridge Wells. These compare to an average of £825 pcm across the wider housing market area and £595 pcm across England.

Figure 40 shows the median rental values benchmarked to September 2011 values. Also shown in Figure 40 is the Consumer Price Index (CPI). This shows strong growth in private rental values

across Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, and Kent as a whole. In Sevenoaks prices have grown by 16% over this period, and in Tunbridge Wells there has been a 10% increase – both above the inflation rate of 6%, and above the national growth rate of 3%. This growth is roughly in line with the trend across the wider housing market, where there has been 9% growth, and across Kent as a whole, where there has been a 13% increase.

Figure 40: Benchmarked trend in median private rental values (Sep 2011 – Sep 2014)

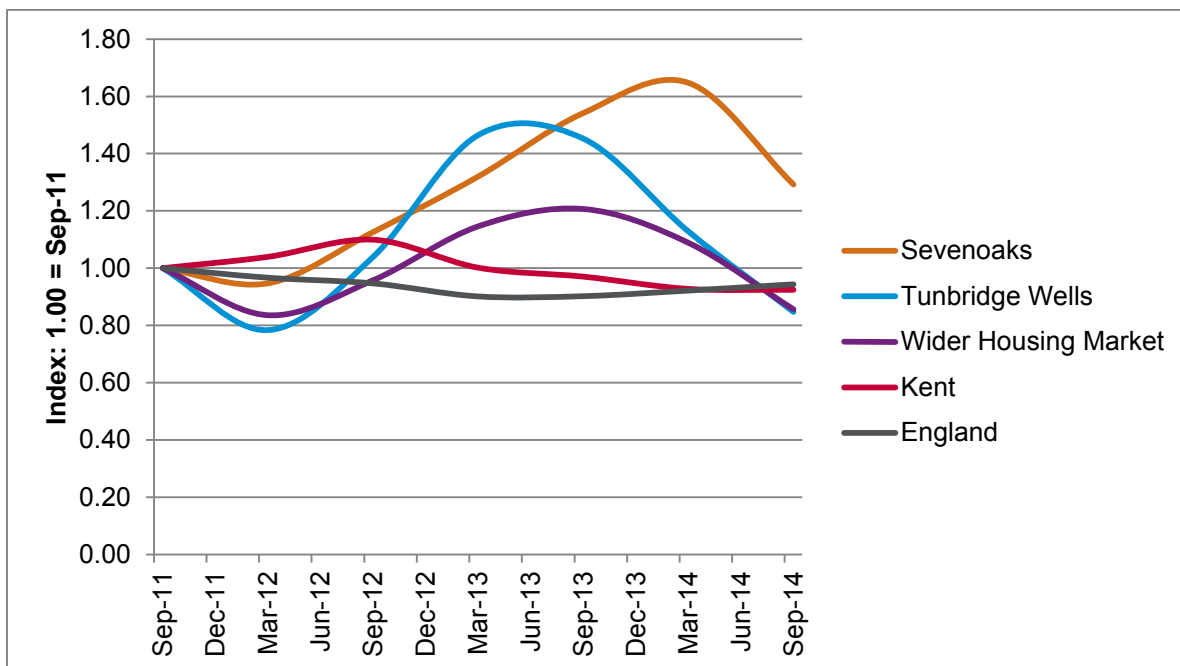


Source: VOA Private Rental Data

5.22 Figure 41 shows trends in the number of private rental transactions recorded by the VOA benchmarked against September 2011 figures. This shows a strong upward trend in the number of rental transactions in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells until the most recent 12 to 18 months where the number of transactions has declined notably. In Sevenoaks rental volume is still well above (29%) the September 2011 figure. However in Tunbridge Wells the figure is 15% down. Nationally, over this period there has been a slight downward trend which is an indication of households returning to owner occupation as a result of improved mortgage availability and the impact of Government schemes such as Help to Buy.

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Figure 41: Trend in private rental transactions (Sep 2011 – Sep 2014)



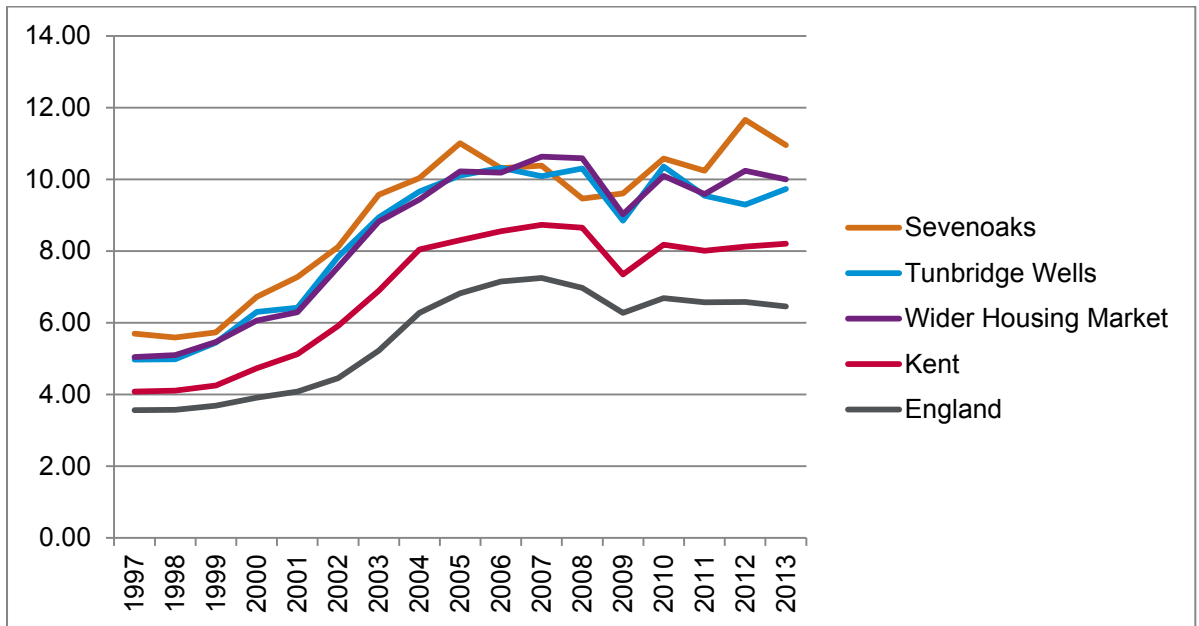
Source: VOA Private Rental Data

Affordability of Market Housing

- 5.23 We have considered evidence of affordability by looking specifically at the relationship between lower quartile house prices and lower quartile earnings. As of 2013 the lower quartile house prices in Sevenoaks are 10.95 times higher than lower quartile earnings. The equivalent figure for Tunbridge Wells is 9.73.
- 5.24 These affordability ratios are high, which is symptomatic of the authorities' location within commuting distance of London. Indeed, the average lower quartile affordability ratio seen across the wider housing market is 10.00, so Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells are not too dissimilar to the surrounding areas. However, comparison with other areas highlights that affordability pressures are significant. The figure for Kent as a whole is lower at 8.20. This figure includes the local authorities within the wider housing market area, where the average ratio of 10.0 reflects proximity and transport links to London.
- 5.25 As shown in Figure 42, across all areas the ratio of affordability rose steadily over the period to 2005, before experiencing a post-recession trough in 2009. At a national level, affordability ratios have plateaued following a modest 'bounce back' in 2010 and are currently lower than the 2007 peak. Within Sevenoaks however there has been some growth in the ratio rise in recent years with a general upward trend since 2008 and a ratio which is now above the previous 2005 peak.

5.26 As a general observation, we can see that across all areas the affordability of property has worsened quite markedly over the past 15 years. However much of this growth was prior to 2005, and there has been limited change in affordability over the last decade, particularly in Tunbridge Wells.

Figure 42: Lower Quartile Affordability Trend (1997-2013)



Source: DCLG Housing Market Live Tables

5.27 Table 43 compares the lower quartile affordability ratio to the median price-earnings ratio to identify whether affordability is an issue across the market or within a particular segment. In Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells the median ratio is below the lower quartile figure indicating that affordability pressures are even more acute at the lower end of the market.

Table 43: Comparison of lower quartile and median affordability (2013)

	Lower Quartile Ratio	Median Ratio	Difference
Sevenoaks	10.95	10.47	0.48
Tunbridge Wells	9.73	9.11	0.62
Wider Housing Market	10.00	10.21	-0.21
Kent	8.20	7.75	0.45
England	6.45	6.72	-0.27

Source: DCLG Housing Market Live Tables

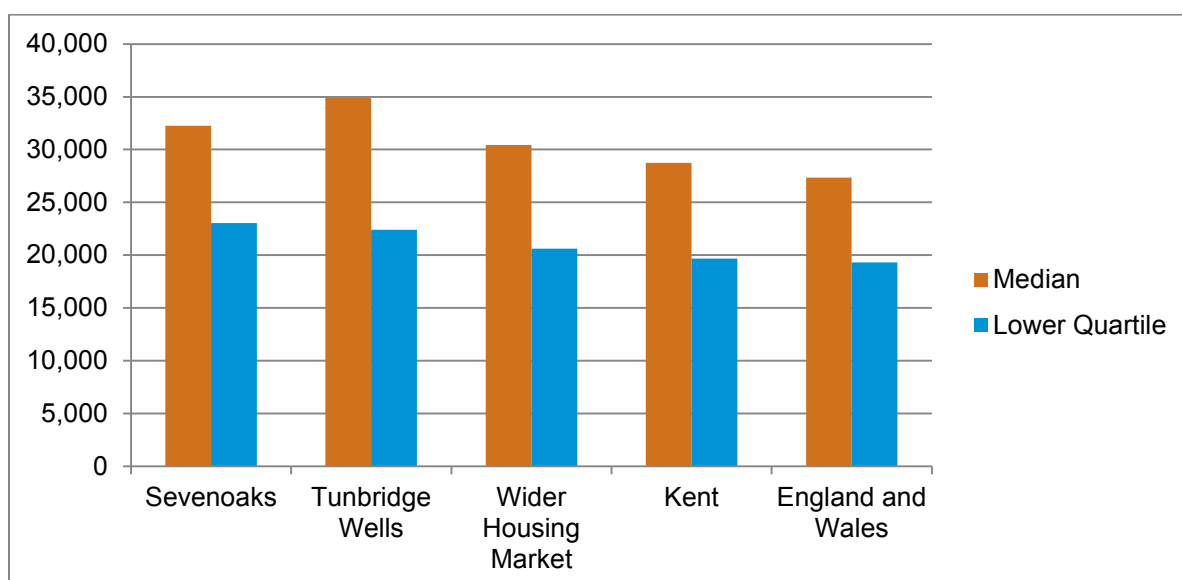
5.28 Affordability is influenced by house prices and earnings. Figure 42 compares the median and lower quartile gross annual earnings by place of residence. The median earnings in Sevenoaks is

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£32,300 per annum while the median in Tunbridge Wells is higher at £34,900. These are higher than median wages seen in the comparator areas and considerably higher than the national figure of £27,300. The lower quartile earnings figure for Sevenoaks is £23,000 per annum. In Tunbridge Wells the figure is slightly lower at £22,400. Again, these values are above those seen in the comparator areas, and the national figure of £19,300.

5.29 This emphasises that the median and lower quartile affordability ratios are higher in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells despite these areas having higher median and lower quartile earnings than comparator areas. This suggests that the lack of affordability in these areas is driven by high property prices rather than low wages.

Figure 43: Annual earnings (gross) of full time workers by place of residence (2014)



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

5.30 Nationally, a combination of the deteriorating affordability of market homes, restricted access to mortgage products and a lack of social housing supply over the 2001-11 decade has resulted in fewer households being able to buy and increased pressures on the existing affordable housing stock. This has resulted in strong growth in the private rented sector as households are being forced to rent longer. This is illustrated in Figure 44.

5.31 Figure 44 shows the percentage point change in tenureship between 2001 and 2011. Over this period there has been a notable shift in the number of people owning their home to living in the private rented sector. This has been seen across all the comparator areas. However, this phenomenon has been less prevalent in Sevenoaks than the comparator areas. In Sevenoaks there has been a decrease of 3 percentage points in homeownership and an increase of 4 percentage points in those living in the private rented sector. The trend in Tunbridge Wells has been much

closer to the national trend. In Tunbridge Wells there has been a decrease of 5 percentage points in homeownership and an increase of 6 percentage points in those living in the private rented sector.

5.32 It is noted that the two areas with the lowest levels of tenure change – Sevenoaks and the wider housing market – are the two areas with the highest levels of homeownership and the highest levels of homeowners who own their property outright. The relatively smaller swing seen in these areas therefore may reflect this more settled market composition.

Figure 44: Change in Households by Tenure (2001-11)



Source: 2001 & 2011 Censuses

Past Housing Supply vs. Targets

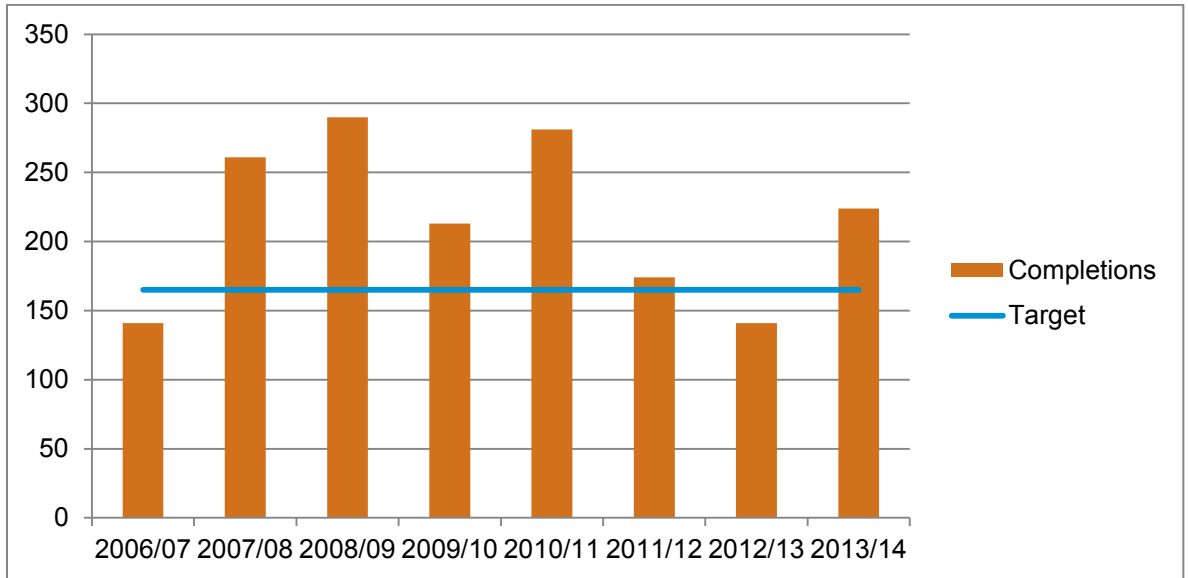
5.33 We have examined housing completions data for Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells dating back to 2006/07. Figures 45 and 46 show net housing completions against the annual housing target from 2006/07 to 2012/13. Over this period, housing delivery in Sevenoaks has exceeded the target by 30% delivering 405 units above target.

5.34 In Tunbridge Wells housing delivery has been less consistent with delivery well exceeding the target from 2006 to 2009 but also seeing some years with low levels of delivery. In the two most recent years net housing delivery has actually been negative with losses outnumbering completions, reflecting a number of housing redevelopment which involved the demolition and then rebuilding of dwellings where the timing of demolition and replacement development occurred in different monitoring periods. Over this period 86% of the housing target has been delivered, equating to an

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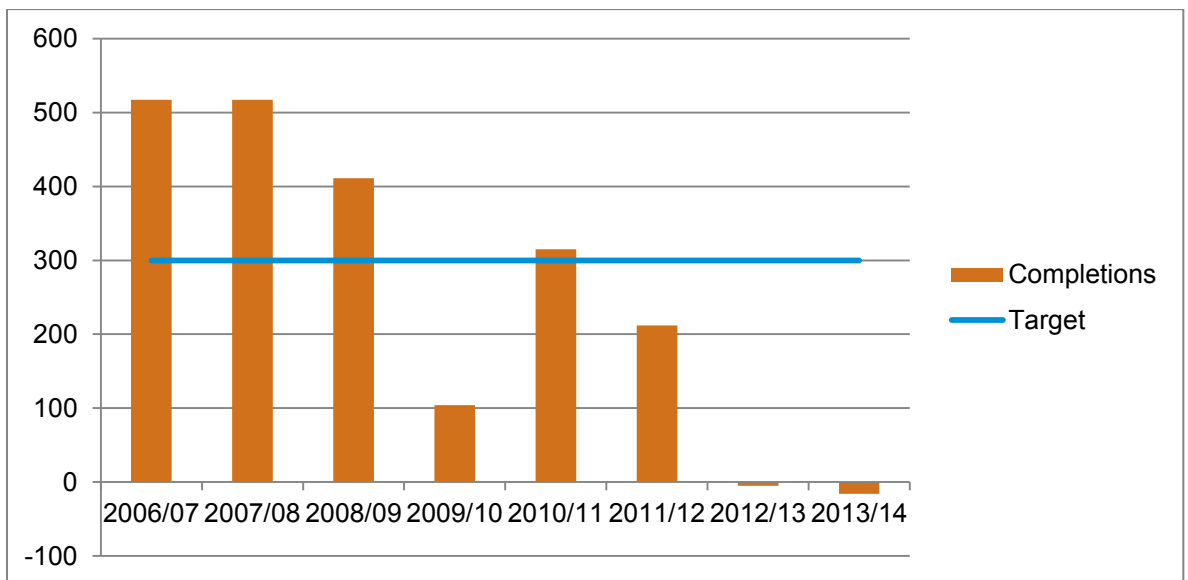
overall shortfall of 345 dwellings fewer than the adopted target for this period. However, recent monitoring shows a return to a level of completions above the target (323 dwellings for 2014/15).

Figure 45: Sevenoaks – Housing Supply vs Target (2006/07 – 2013/14)



Source: Authority Monitoring Reports

Figure 46: Tunbridge Wells – Housing Supply vs Target (2006/07 – 2013/14)



Source: Authority Monitoring Reports

Table 44: Changes in Over Occupied and Houses in Multiple Occupation (2001-2011)

	Over Occupied			HMOs		
	2001	2011	Change	2001	2011	Change
Sevenoaks	3.8%	4.6%	0.8%	2.9%	3.4%	0.5%
Tunbridge Wells	6.4%	8.6%	2.2%	3.9%	4.9%	1.0%
Wider Housing Market	4.2%	5.2%	1.0%	3.2%	4.0%	0.8%
Kent	5.4%	7.0%	1.6%	3.5%	4.5%	1.0%
England and Wales	7.0%	8.5%	1.5%	4.5%	5.7%	1.2%

Source: 2001 & 2011 Censuses

5.35 Restricted access to mortgages brought on by tighter regulation is likely to have resulted in constrained household formation rates and contributed to the current need for affordable housing. A symptom of this is increased over-crowding and a growth of households living in houses in multiple occupation (HMO) as households fail to form properly. This is a trend that has been seen nationally where between 2001 and 2011 the number of households living in over occupied properties increased from 7.0% to 8.5%. In Sevenoaks these figures are lower – 3.8% in 2001 and 4.6% in 2011 – and the increase is half the national figure. By contrast, the Tunbridge Wells figure of 8.5% in 2011 is above national average and the inter-census growth of 2.2% is also above national trend.

Summary and Implications – Market Signals

5.36 Nationally, the pre-recession decade saw a strong and sustained growth in house prices which has been mirrored in increasing affordability pressures. Over this period the affordability ratio – the ratio of average house prices to average earnings – saw similarly large and consistent increases. Nationally, there has been a fundamental shift in housing market conditions since 2007, particularly in relation to confidence and credit availability. This saw a steep drop in the volume of housing sales and house prices plateauing. In recent years there is evidence to suggest the market is improving, albeit slowly. The housing market in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells has largely followed this national trend.

5.37 Median house prices in Sevenoaks are £302,000 and in Tunbridge Wells are £250,000 – these are higher than other authorities within the HMA, but similar to other areas around London. House prices grew substantially during the pre-recession decade; but over the period since 2008 have seen more modest growth, particularly once account is taken of inflation.

5.38 As with the national trend described above, sales volumes in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells dropped significantly between 2007 and 2008. Sales volumes in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells

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have recovered more strongly than has been seen nationally. However, sales volume remains well below pre-recession levels.

- 5.39 Like for like house prices in Sevenoaks are on average more expensive than elsewhere in the wider housing market. Prices are slightly cheaper in Tunbridge Wells than Sevenoaks, but still considerably above the other authorities in the wider housing market and across Kent as a whole.
- 5.40 The Private Rented Sector has seen an increase in rental prices in all areas within the wider housing market with price increases well above inflation – unlike the national trend where increases have been below inflation. The two authorities also saw strong increases in the volume of rental transactions although these have fallen again in recent years.
- 5.41 Affordability ratios in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells are high and are well above the national and county averages. Lower quartile house prices are 11.0 times earnings in Sevenoaks, and 9.7 times earnings in Tunbridge Wells. This points to a particular housing affordability problem in both areas. Both areas have high levels of earnings – both average and lower quartile – suggesting affordability pressures stem from high house prices rather than low incomes. There is not however significant evidence of a substantial worsening of the position over the last decade.
- 5.42 Declining affordability has contributed to a decrease in the level of homeownership and an increase in the numbers renting instead of buying. Similarly there has been an overall increase in the proportion of the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells' population living in over occupied dwellings and HMOs. The evidence suggests that key impacts of declining affordability have been more young people living with parents (as shown by the demographic analysis of household formation rates amongst households in their late 20s and early 30s) and more living in shared accommodation.
- 5.43 Recent levels of housing delivery in Sevenoaks have been high with delivery exceeding target in the majority of years and overall. Overall housing delivery in Tunbridge Wells has been lower with the most recent years seeing housing losses outnumber completions, reflecting a number of regeneration schemes involving the demolition and rebuilding of properties. Most recent monitoring data shows a return to a level of completions above the annual target.
- 5.44 Overall the analysis of market signals clearly points to higher affordability pressures on housing in both Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells than in other parts of the country. The demographic analysis indicates that levels of household formation, particularly for younger households, have fallen. It would therefore be appropriate to consider an adjustment to the overall assessment of housing need to improve affordability over time in line with the approach outlined in the Practice Guidance.
- 5.45 The Planning Practice Guidance sets out that:

“In areas where an upward adjustment [to the assessment of housing need] is required, plan makers should set this adjustment at a level that is reasonable. The more significant the affordability constraints (as reflected in rising prices and rents, and worsening affordability ratio) and the stronger other indicators of high demand (eg the differential between land prices), the larger the improvement in affordability needed and, therefore, the larger the additional supply response should be.”

- 5.46 The Guidance does not however set out how such an adjustment should be quantified. It simply sets out that it should be ‘reasonable.’

- 5.47 To consider this issue further we have sought to use the demographic analysis to assess the degree to which household formation levels have been constrained for younger age groups, and what scale of adjustment to housing provision would be necessary for these to improve. The key premise is that as a decline in affordability in demographic terms has been manifest in a reduction in household formation for younger households, the reverse would also be true.

- 5.48 A detailed interrogation of demographic dynamics in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells indicates that in demographic terms, the deterioration in affordability of market housing and the economic recession over the 2001-11 decade is likely to have influenced – at least in part – a decline in household formation rates in younger people, particularly amongst those aged between 25 and 34. This is the key age group in which the data shows that household formation rates have fallen.

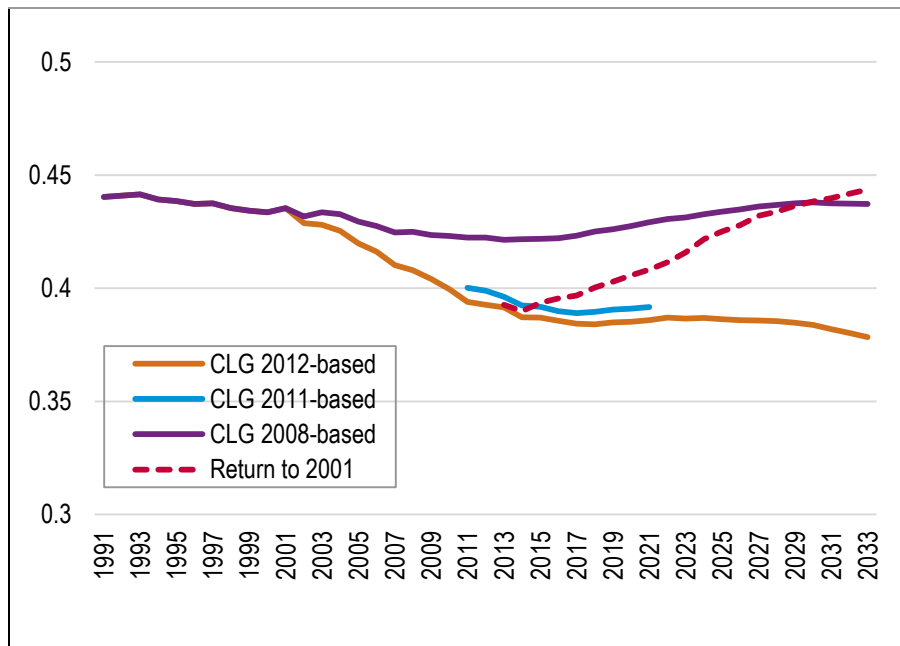
- 5.49 When we consider age-specific data it is notable that those aged 25-34 have lower headship rates than was expected in the 2008-based projections and that the rates have dropped considerably from 2001 to 2011 – the 2012-based projections do however show some improvement from 2011 onwards (an improvement in the case of Tunbridge Wells and a slowing down of the rate of change in Sevenoaks). We have therefore run a sensitivity analysis which considers and seeks to quantify the implication of returning the household formation rates of the 25-34 age group back to 2001 levels (i.e. before the rate started to decrease) by 2033.

- 5.50 The figures below show how this adjustment impacts on the formation rates of people aged 25-34. The analysis shows that the adjustment is particularly notable in Sevenoaks, with Tunbridge Wells seeing a smaller uplift. This is consistent with observations earlier in the report that the CLG household projections are not expecting any recovery in formation rates for this age group in Sevenoaks but are projecting some modest increases in Tunbridge Wells.

- 5.51 Household formation rates for younger households in Tunbridge Wells are higher than in Sevenoaks, and than in a range of other areas within the South East region. This is a relevant factor in determining the scale of additional adjustment which might be considered appropriate.

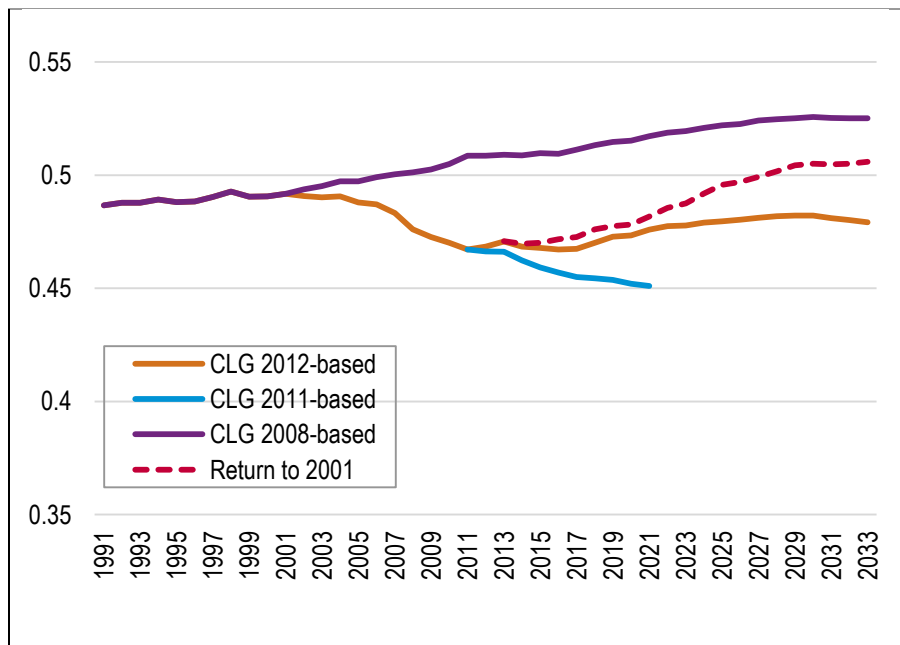
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Figure 47: Projected household formation rates for those aged 25-34 – Sevenoaks



Source: Derived from CLG data

Figure 48: Projected household formation rates for those aged 25-34 – Tunbridge Wells



Source: Derived from CLG data

5.52 This sensitivity in effect seeks to consider a scenario in which affordability and access to housing for younger households improves, and quantifies what level of housing provision might be associated with this, all other factors being equal. If achieved, the effect would be to reduce the

proportions of shared households and persons within this age group living with parents. We term this sensitivity analysis the ‘affordability adjustment.’

- 5.53 In reality, other factors such as real growth in disposable income (allowing people to save), the availability of and access to mortgage finance, interest rates and economic confidence will all influence trends in household formation. There is a complex set of factors at play, and it is difficult to predict how these factors might interact in the future and the impact on household formation rates (in the absence of any supply-side constraints). Furthermore part of the changes in household formation rates for this age group may have been due to international migration.
- 5.54 The sensitivity analysis indicates that, all other things being equal, an uplift of around 41 homes per annum in Sevenoaks and 17 homes per annum in Tunbridge Wells would support an improvement in affordability and household formation rates amongst younger households. The analysis is based on a projection linked to the 2012-based SNPP.

Table 45: Projected household growth 2013-33 – 2012-based SNPP (adjusted) and 2012-based headship rates – with affordability adjustment

	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells
Households 2011	47,951	48,032	95,982
Households 2031	58,771	60,405	119,176
Change in households	10,820	12,373	23,193
Per annum	541	619	1,160
Dwellings (per annum)	557	644	1,201
From SNPP model	516	627	1,142
Potential uplift	41	17	58
% uplift	8.0%	2.7%	5.1%

- 5.55 For Sevenoaks the adjustment in drawing conclusions has been based on the economic-led projection. Based on the higher projected population growth, in this an adjustment to improve affordability of 43 dwellings per annum is modelled.
- 5.56 The level of uplift modelled is fairly moderate. This however reflects the assumptions in the 2012-based Household Projections which project that household formation is likely to increase for all age groups in Tunbridge Wells; and for all age groups besides the 25-34 cohort in Sevenoaks.
- 5.57 To illustrate the point, we have sought to run a scenario which holds headship rates constant for those aged under 45. This is modelled for the preferred scenario for each local authority (the

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economic-led scenario for Sevenoaks, and preferred demographic-led scenario for Tunbridge Wells).

Table 46: Impact of Affordability Adjustments – Housing Need per Annum, 2013-33

	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells
Constant headship rates under 45	577	606
Scenario with affordability adjustment	620	648
% Difference	7%	7%

5.58 The improvements to headship rates for younger households in the projections thus result in a 7% uplift in the assessed housing need across both authorities.

6

6 NEED FOR DIFFERENT SIZES OF HOMES

Introduction

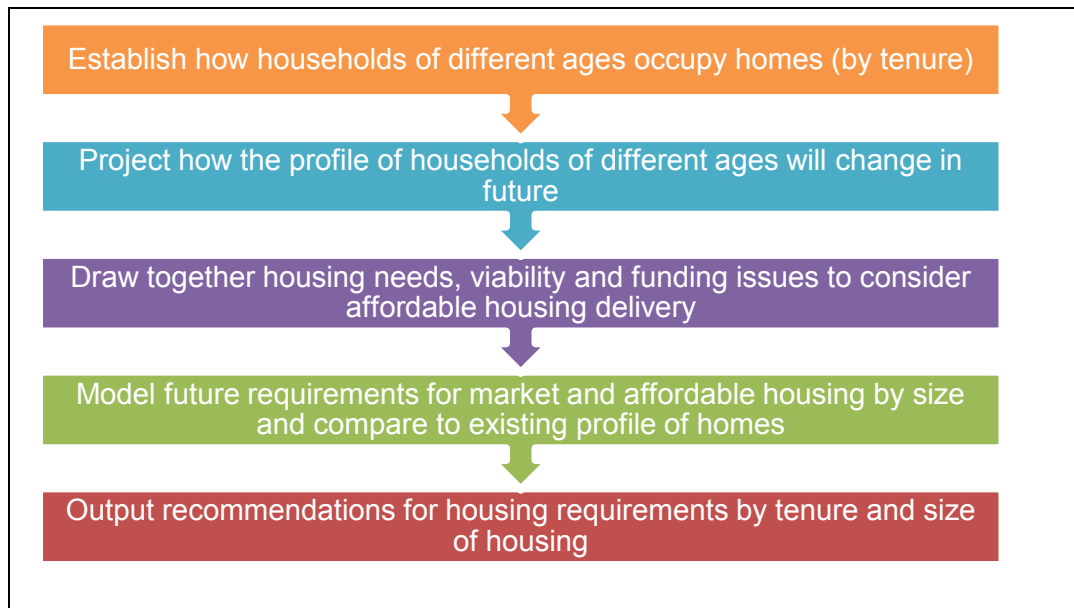
- 6.1 As noted in Section 4, there are a range of factors which influence housing demand. These factors play out at different spatial scales and influence both the level of housing demand (in terms of aggregate household growth) and the nature of demand for different types, tenures and sizes of homes. It is important to understand that the housing market is influenced by macro-economic factors, as well as the housing market conditions at a regional and local level.
- 6.2 The analysis in this section seeks to use the information available about the size and structure of the population and household structures; and consider what impact this may have on the sizes of housing required in the future. For analysis purposes, the analysis assumes population and household growth in line with the 2012-based Household Projections (as updated by mid-year population estimate data for 2013), but with an “affordability adjustment” made to increase the formation of younger households. These projections indicate a need 557 homes per annum in Sevenoaks, and 644 per annum in Tunbridge Wells over the 2013-33 period.
- 6.3 It should be noted that this projection will not necessarily be translated into policy, once account is taken of other factors including development constraints, but has been used to indicate the likely need for different sizes of homes moving forward. Were a projection with a different housing figure used then the outputs would be expected to be broadly similar.

Methodology

- 6.4 The figure below describes the broad methodology employed in the housing market model which is used to consider the need for different sizes of market and affordable homes. Data is drawn from a range of sources including the 2011 Census and demographic projections.

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Figure 49: Stages in the Housing Market Model



Understanding how Households Occupy Homes

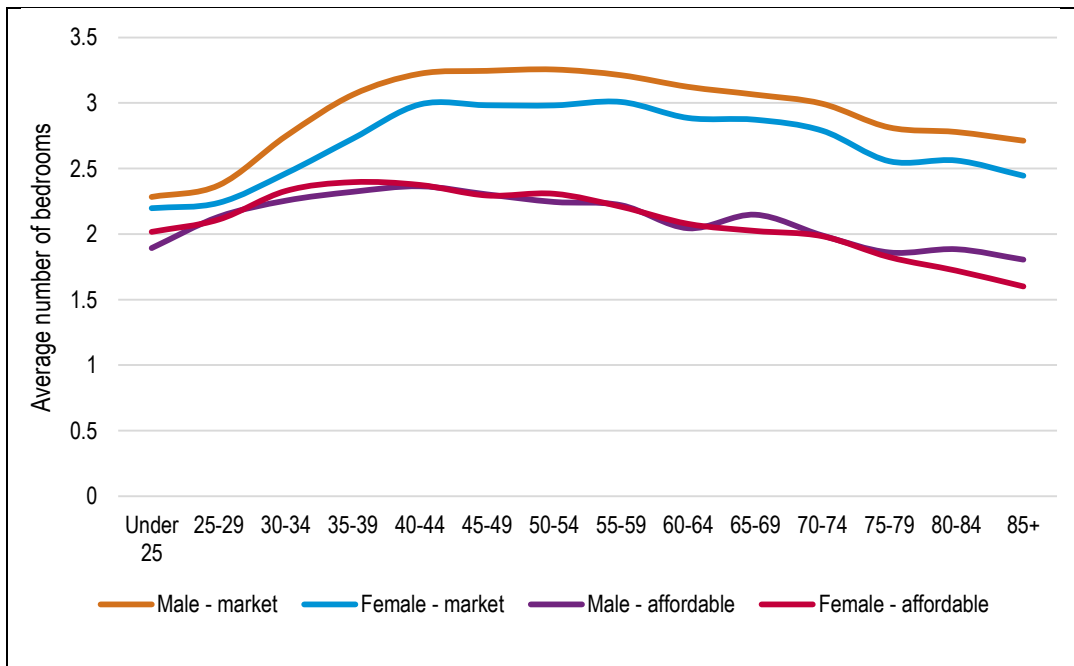
- 6.5 Whilst the demographic projections provide a good indication of how the population and household structure will develop, it is not a simple task to convert the net increase in the number of households into a suggested profile for additional housing to be provided. The main reason for this is that in the market sector households are able to buy or rent any size of property (subject to what they can afford) and therefore knowledge of the profile of households in an area does not directly transfer into the sizes of property to be provided.
- 6.6 The size of housing which households occupy relates more to their wealth and age than the number of people which they contain. For example, there is no reason why a single person cannot buy (or choose to live in) a four bedroom home as long as they can afford it and hence projecting an increase in single person households does not automatically translate into a need for smaller units. This issue is less relevant in the affordable sector (particularly since the introduction of the social sector size criteria) although there will still be some level of under-occupation moving forward with regard to older person and working households who may be able to continue to under-occupy their current homes.
- 6.7 The approach used is to interrogate information derived in the projections about the number of household reference persons (HRPs) in each age and sex group and apply this to the profile of housing within these groups. The data for this analysis has been formed from a commissioned table by ONS (Table C1213 which provides relevant data for all local authorities in England) with data

then calibrated to be consistent with 2011 Census data (e.g. about house sizes in different tenure groups and locations).

6.8 Figures 50 and 51 show an estimate of how the average number of bedrooms varies by different ages of HRP and different sexes by broad tenure group. In the market sector the average size of accommodation rises over time to typically reach a peak around the age of 40-49. In the affordable sector this peak appears earlier. After this peak the average dwelling size decreases – as typically some households downsize as they get older.

6.9 It is also notable that the average size for affordable housing dwellings are lower than those for market housing whilst; in market housing male HRPs live in larger accommodation for all age groups (with no particular trend being seen in the affordable sector). The patterns observed are broadly similar in each of the two local authorities.

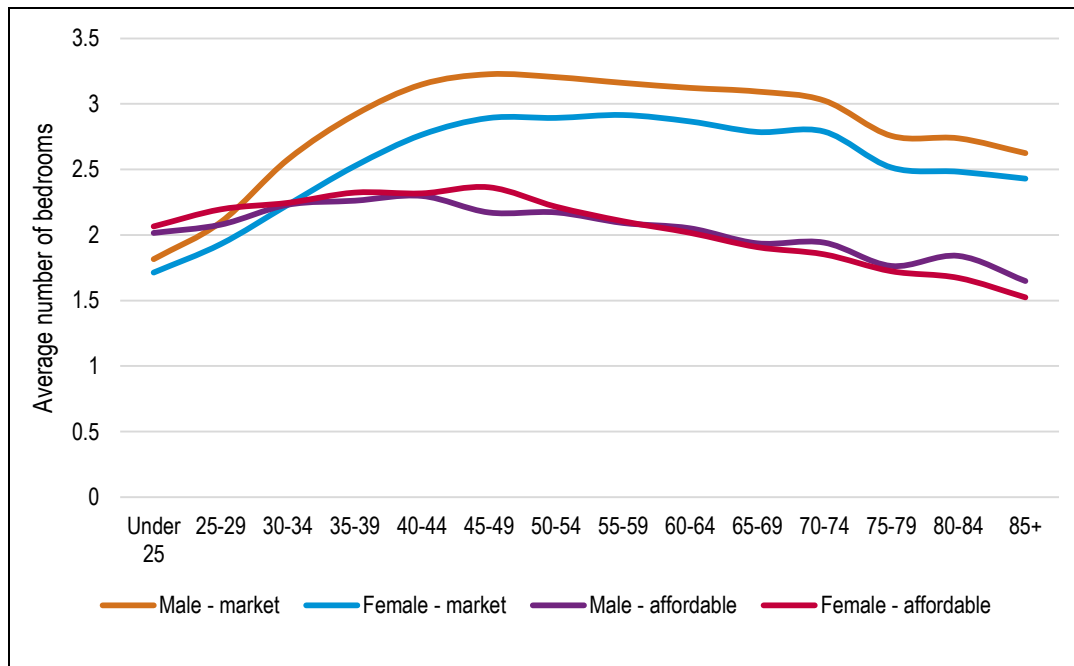
Figure 50: Average Bedrooms by Age, Sex and Tenure – Sevenoaks



Source: Derived from ONS Commissioned Table C1213 and 2011 Census

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Figure 51: Average Bedrooms by Age, Sex and Tenure – Tunbridge Wells



Source: Derived from ONS Commissioned Table C1213 and 2011 Census

Establishing a Baseline Position

- 6.10 As of 2013 it is estimated that there were 47,951 households living in Sevenoaks and 48,032 in Tunbridge Wells. Analysis of Census data linked to the demographic baseline provides an estimate of the profile of the housing stock in 2013, as shown in Tables 47 and 48. This shows that an estimated 14% of households live in affordable housing in Sevenoaks and 16% in Tunbridge Wells with 84% and 86% respectively being in the market sector. The size of the affordable sector has been fixed by reference to an estimate of the number of occupied social rented and shared ownership homes in the 2011 Census along with an estimate of changes in the sector from 2011 to 2013 from data in CLG Live Table 100. The data also suggests that homes in the market sector are generally bigger than in the affordable sector with 73% having three or more bedrooms in Sevenoaks and 64% in Tunbridge Wells; this compares with 32% and 36% respectively for affordable housing.
- 6.11 These figures are for households rather than dwellings as information about the sizes of vacant homes across the whole stock (i.e. market and affordable) is not readily available. For the purposes of analysis this will not make any notable difference to the outcome. The household projections have however been translated into dwelling figures by including a vacancy allowance when studying the final outputs of the market modelling.

Table 47: Estimated Profile of Dwellings in 2013 by Size – Sevenoaks

Size of housing	Market		Affordable		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 bedroom	2,359	5.7%	2,194	31.9%	4,553	9.5%
2 bedrooms	8,898	21.7%	2,149	31.2%	11,047	23.0%
3 bedrooms	16,410	40.0%	2,331	33.9%	18,741	39.1%
4+ bedrooms	13,408	32.6%	202	2.9%	13,610	28.4%
Total	41,075	100.0%	6,876	100.0%	47,951	100.0%
% in tenure	85.7%		14.3%		100.0%	

Source: Derived from 2011 Census

Table 48: Estimated Profile of Dwellings in 2013 by Size – Tunbridge Wells

Size of housing	Market		Affordable		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 bedroom	4,570	11.3%	2,581	34.3%	7,151	14.9%
2 bedrooms	10,095	24.9%	2,556	34.0%	12,651	26.3%
3 bedrooms	13,698	33.8%	2,170	28.8%	15,868	33.0%
4+ bedrooms	12,144	30.0%	217	2.9%	12,361	25.7%
Total	40,508	100.0%	7,524	100.0%	48,032	100.0%
% in tenure	84.3%		15.7%		100.0%	

Source: Derived from 2011 Census

Tenure Assumptions

- 6.12 The housing market model has been used to estimate the future need for different sizes of property over the 20-year period from 2013 to 2033. The model works by looking at the types and sizes of accommodation occupied by different ages of residents, and attaching projected changes in the population to this to project need and demand for different sizes of homes. However the way households of different ages occupy homes differs between the market and affordable sectors (as shown earlier). Thus it is necessary to consider what the mix of future housing will be in the market and affordable sectors.

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- 6.13 It is necessary on this basis to make some judgement for modelling purposes about what proportion of net completions might be of market and affordable housing. For modelling purposes, the analysis assumes that 35% of net completions are of affordable housing. This is not a policy target. Policy targets for affordable housing on new development schemes in some cases are above this; but not all sites deliver policy-compliant affordable housing provision. Equally some housing development is brought forward by Registered Providers and local authorities and may deliver higher proportions of affordable housing than in current policy. It should be stressed that this is not a policy position and has been applied simply for the purposes of providing outputs from the modelling process.

Key Findings: Market Housing

- 6.14 There is a range of factors which can influence demand for market housing in different locations. The focus of this analysis is on considering long-term needs, where changing demographics are expected to be a key influence. It uses a demographic-driven approach to quantify demand for different sizes of properties over the 20-year period from 2013 to 2033.
- 6.15 On the basis of the modelling assumptions, an increase of 7,000 additional households is modelled in Sevenoaks and 8,000 in Tunbridge Wells to 2033. The majority of the need is for two- and three-bed homes.

Table 49: Estimated Size of Dwellings Needed 2013 to 2033 – Market Housing – Sevenoaks

Size	2013	2033	Additional households 2013-2033	% of additional households
1 bedroom	2,359	2,934	576	8.2%
2 bedrooms	8,898	10,867	1,969	28.0%
3 bedrooms	16,410	19,279	2,870	40.8%
4+ bedrooms	13,408	15,027	1,619	23.0%
Total	41,075	48,108	7,033	100.0%

Source: Housing Market Model

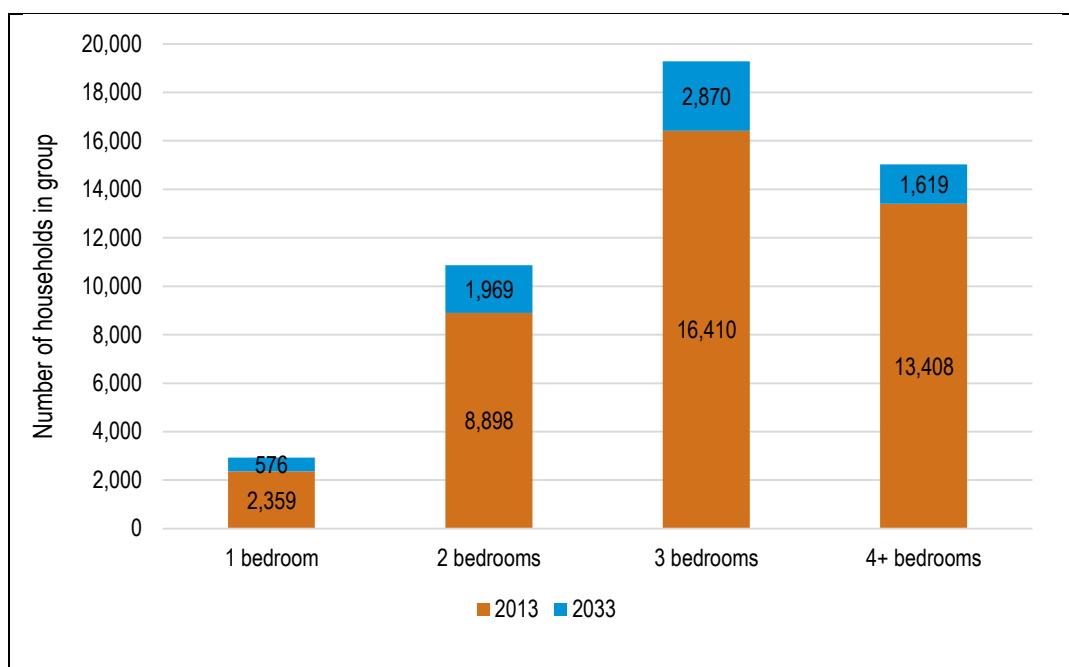
Table 50: Estimated Size of Dwellings Needed 2013 to 2033 – Market Housing – Tunbridge Wells

Size	2013	2033	Additional households 2013-2033	% of additional households
1 bedroom	4,570	5,319	749	9.3%
2 bedrooms	10,095	12,463	2,368	29.4%
3 bedrooms	13,698	16,634	2,936	36.5%
4+ bedrooms	12,144	14,134	1,990	24.7%
Total	40,508	48,550	8,043	100.0%

Source: Housing Market Model

6.16 Figures 52 and 53 show the number of households in different sizes of dwellings in 2013 and 2033. In both areas, the data suggests that housing need can be expected to reinforce around the existing profile, but with a slight shift towards a requirement for smaller dwellings relative to the distribution of existing housing. This is understandable given the fact that household sizes are expected to fall slightly in the future – particularly as a result of a growing older population living in smaller households. The shift towards smaller homes relative to the current offer is more notable in Sevenoaks and will to some degree reflect the high proportion of larger homes in the stock currently.

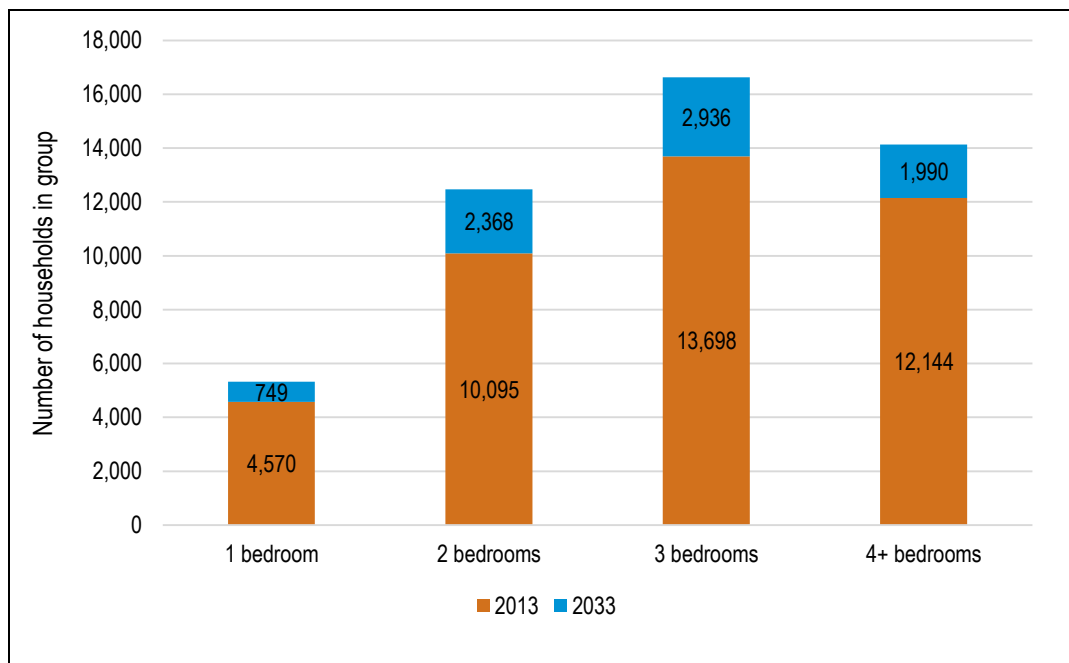
Figure 52: Impact of Demographic Trends on Market Housing Requirements by House Size, 2013 to 2033 – Sevenoaks



Source: Housing Market Model

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Figure 53: Impact of Demographic Trends on Market Housing Requirements by House Size, 2013 to 2033 – Tunbridge Wells



Source: Housing Market Model

- 6.17 The graphs and statistics are based upon the modelling of demographic trends. As has been identified, it should be recognised that a range of factors including affordability pressures and market signals will continue to be important in understanding market demand. In determining policies for housing mix, policy aspirations are also relevant.
- 6.18 At the strategic level, a local authority in considering which sites to allocate, can consider what type of development would likely be delivered on these sites. It can also provide guidance on housing mix implicitly through policies on development densities.

Key Findings: Affordable Housing

- 6.19 The tables and figures below show estimates of the need for different sizes of affordable homes based on the analysis of demographic trends. The data suggests in the period between 2013 and 2033 that around three-quarters of the need is for homes with one- or two-bedrooms (70% in Sevenoaks and 76% in Tunbridge Wells), with around a quarter of the need being for larger homes with three or more bedrooms.
- 6.20 This analysis provides a longer-term view of the need for different sizes of affordable housing and does not reflect any specific priorities such as for family households in need rather than single people. In addition, it should be noted that smaller properties (i.e. one bedroom homes) typically offer limited flexibility in accommodating the changing needs of households, whilst delivery of larger

properties can help to meet the needs of households in high priority and to manage the housing stock by releasing a supply of smaller properties. That said, need for smaller homes has been boosted by welfare reforms limiting the amount of housing benefit being paid to some working-age households.

Table 51: Estimated Size of Dwellings Required 2013 to 2033 – Affordable Housing – Sevenoaks

Size	2013	2033	Additional households 2013-2033	% of additional households
1 bedroom	2,194	3,712	1,518	40.1%
2 bedrooms	2,149	3,294	1,146	30.2%
3 bedrooms	2,331	3,367	1,036	27.4%
4+ bedrooms	202	290	88	2.3%
Total	6,876	10,663	3,787	100.0%

Source: Housing Market Model

Table 52: Estimated Size of Dwellings Required 2013 to 2033 – Affordable Housing – Tunbridge Wells

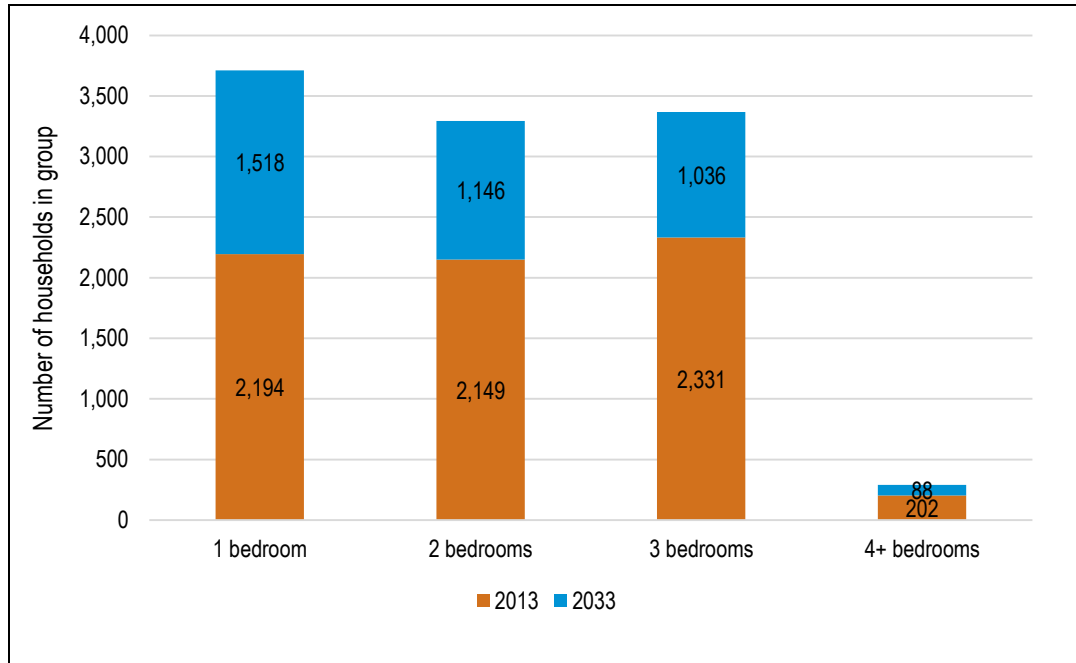
Size	2013	2033	Additional households 2013-2033	% of additional households
1 bedroom	2,581	4,487	1,906	44.0%
2 bedrooms	2,556	3,945	1,389	32.1%
3 bedrooms	2,170	3,116	946	21.8%
4+ bedrooms	217	306	90	2.1%
Total	7,524	11,855	4,331	100.0%

Source: Housing Market Model

6.21 Figures 54 and 55 show how the estimated need from households for different sizes of affordable homes in 2013 compares to the profile of need in 2033. Again, the data shows that relative to the current profile there is a slight move towards a greater proportion of smaller homes being needed – this makes sense given that in the future household sizes are expected to drop whilst the population of older people will increase – older person households (as shown earlier) are more likely to occupy smaller dwellings.

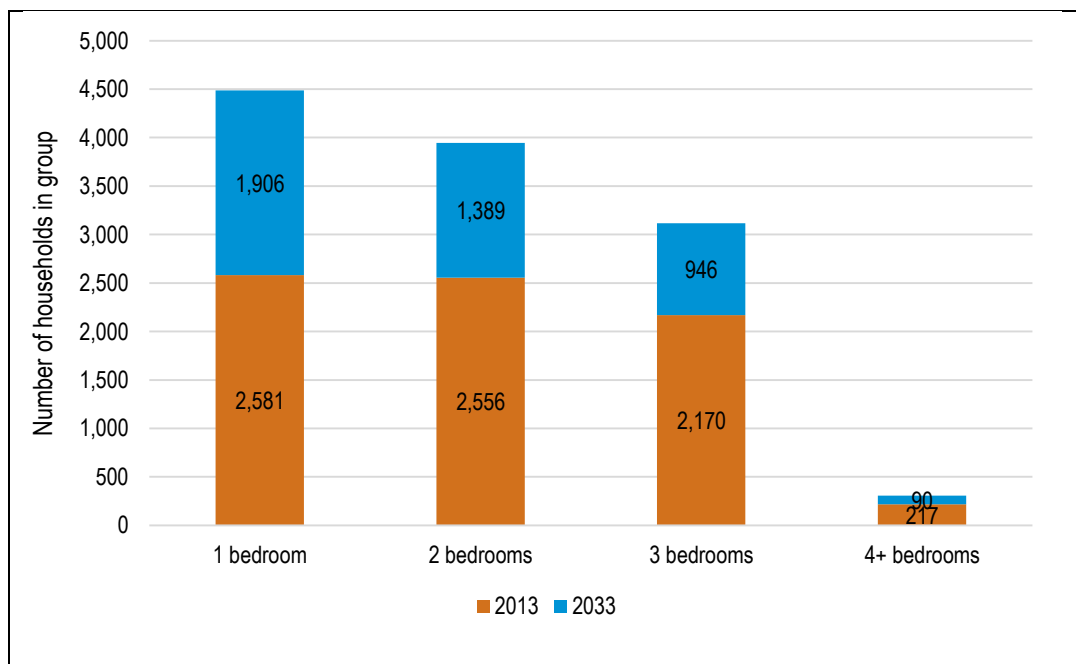
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Figure 54: Impact of Demographic Trends on Affordable Housing Requirements by House Size, 2013 to 2033 – Sevenoaks



Source: Housing Market Model

Figure 55: Impact of Demographic Trends on Affordable Housing Requirements by House Size, 2013 to 2033 – Tunbridge Wells

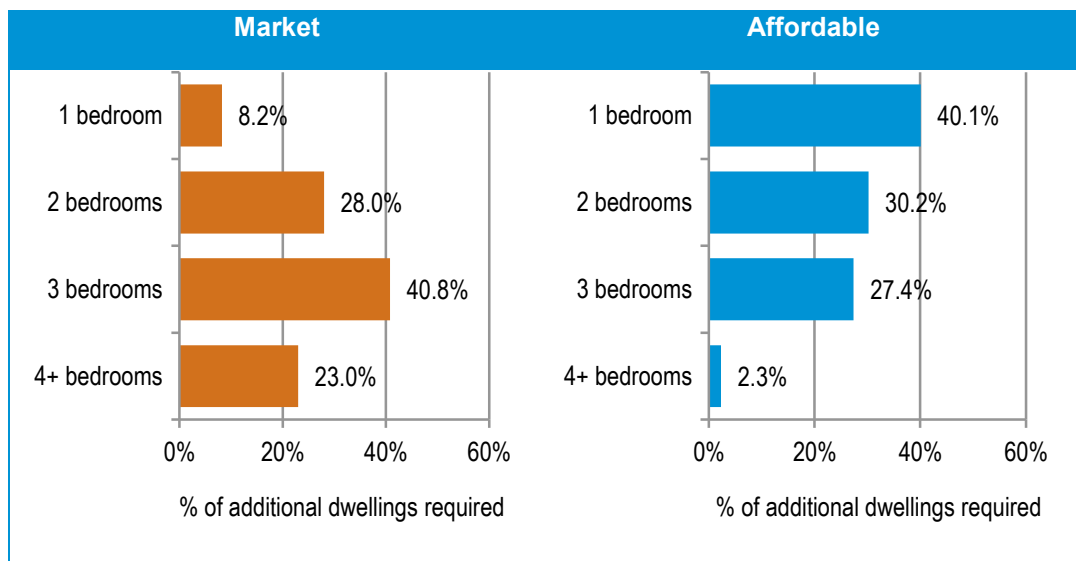


Source: Housing Market Model

Indicative Targets by Dwelling Size

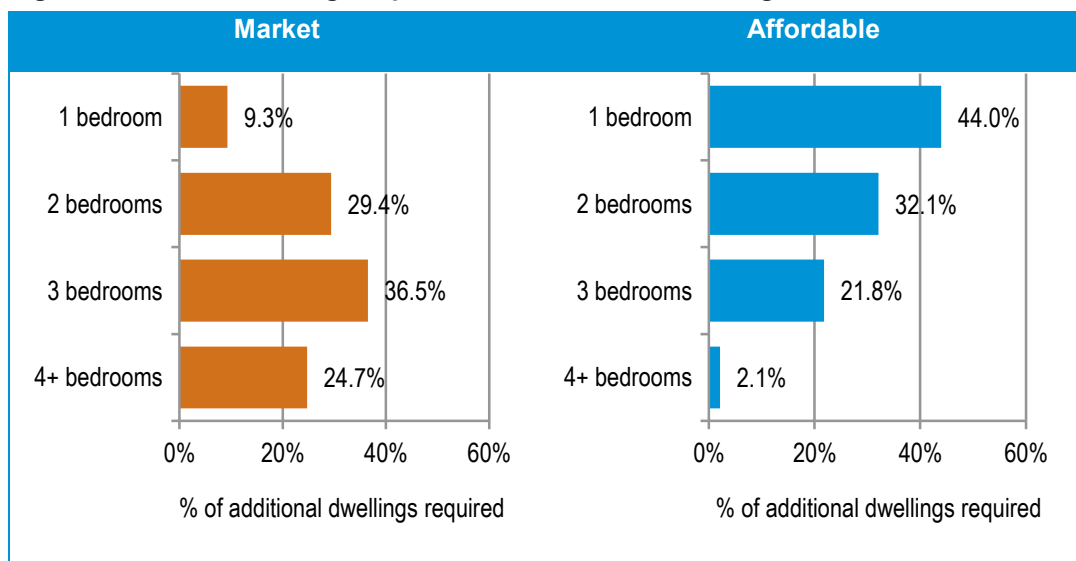
6.22 Figures 56 and 57 summarise the above data in both the market and affordable sectors under the modelling exercise. A vacancy allowance has been factored in when moving from household figures to estimates of housing need/demand (the same figures have been used as in the demographic modelling).

Figure 56: Size of Housing Required 2013 to 2033 – Sevenoaks



Source: Housing Market Model

Figure 57: Size of Housing Required 2013 to 2033 – Tunbridge Wells



Source: Housing Market Model

6.23 Whilst the outputs of the modelling provide estimates of the proportion of homes of different sizes that need to be provided there are a range of factors which should be taken into account in setting

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policies for provision. This is particularly the case in the affordable sector where there are typically issues around the demand for and turnover of one bedroom homes. Conclusions also need to consider that the stock of four bedroom affordable housing is very limited and tends to have a very low turnover. As a result, whilst the number of households coming forward for four or more bedroom homes is typically quite small the ability for these needs to be met is even more limited.

6.24 It should also be recognised that local authorities have statutory homeless responsibilities towards families with children and would therefore prioritise the needs of families over single person households and couples. On this basis the profile of affordable housing to be provided would be further weighted to two or more bedroom housing.

6.25 For these reasons it is suggested in converting the long-term modelled outputs into a profile of housing to be provided (in the affordable sector) that the proportion of one bedroom homes required is reduced slightly from these outputs with a commensurate increase in four or more bedroom homes also being appropriate.

6.26 There are thus a range of factors which are relevant in considering policies for the mix of **affordable housing** sought through development schemes. At a district level, the analysis would support policies for the mix of affordable housing of:

Sevenoaks

- 1-bed properties: 30-35%
- 2-bed properties: 30-35%
- 3-bed properties: 25-30%
- 4-bed properties: 5-10%

Tunbridge Wells

- 1-bed properties: 35-40%
- 2-bed properties: 30-35%
- 3-bed properties: 20-25%
- 4-bed properties: 5-10%

6.27 The strategic conclusions recognise the role which delivery of larger family homes can play in releasing a supply of smaller properties for other households; together with the limited flexibility which one-bed properties offer to changing household circumstances which feed through into higher turnover and management issues.

6.28 The need for affordable housing of different sizes will vary by area across the HMA and over time. In considering the mix of homes to be provided within specific development schemes, the information herein should be brought together with details of households currently on the Housing Register in the local area and the stock and turnover of existing properties.

6.29 In the market sector a profile of housing that closely matches the outputs of the modelling is suggested. The recommendations take some account of the time period used for the modelling and the fact that the full impact of the ageing population will not be experienced in the short-term.

6.30 On the basis of these factors it is considered that the provision of market housing should be more explicitly focused on delivering smaller family housing for younger households. On this basis the following mix of **market housing** is recommended:

Sevenoaks

- 1-bed properties: 5-10%
- 2-bed properties: 25-30%
- 3-bed properties: 40-45%
- 4-bed properties: 20-25%

Tunbridge Wells

- 1-bed properties: 5-10%
- 2-bed properties: 25-30%
- 3-bed properties: 35-40%
- 4-bed properties: 20-25%

6.31 Although the analysis has quantified this on the basis of the market modelling and an understanding of the current housing market it does not necessarily follow that such prescriptive figures should be included in the plan making process. The ‘market’ is to some degree a better judge of what is the most appropriate profile of homes to deliver at any point in time, and demand can change over time linked to macro-economic factors and local supply. The figures can however be used as a monitoring tool to ensure that future delivery is not unbalanced when compared with the likely requirements as driven by demographic change in the area.

Summary and Implications – Need for Different Sizes of Homes

6.32 There are a range of factors which will influence demand for different sizes of homes, including demographic changes; future growth in real earnings and households’ ability to save; economic performance and housing affordability. The analysis linked to long-term (20-year) demographic change concludes that the following represents an appropriate mix of affordable and market homes:

Table 53: Need for Different Sizes of Homes, Sevenoaks

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Market	5-10%	25-30%	40-45%	20-25%
Affordable	30-35%	30-35%	25-30%	5-10%
All dwellings	15-20%	25-30%	35-40%	15-20%

Table 54: Need for Different Sizes of Homes, Tunbridge Wells

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Market	5-10%	25-30%	35-40%	20-25%
Affordable	35-40%	30-35%	20-25%	5-10%
All dwellings	20%	30%	30%	20%

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- 6.33 The strategic conclusions in the affordable sector recognise the role which delivery of larger family homes can play in releasing supply of smaller properties for other households; together with the limited flexibility which one-bed properties offer to changing household circumstances which feed through into higher turnover and management issues.
- 6.34 The mix identified above should inform strategic District-wide policies. In applying these to individual development sites regard should be had to the nature of the development site and character of the area, and to up-to-date evidence of need as well as the existing mix and turnover of properties at the local level.
- 6.35 Based on the evidence, it is expected that the focus of new market housing provision will be on two- and three-bed properties. Continued demand for family housing can be expected from newly forming households. There may also be some demand for medium-sized properties (2- and 3-beds) from older households downsizing and looking to release equity in existing homes, but still retain flexibility for friends and family to come and stay.
- 6.36 The analysis of an appropriate mix of dwellings should also inform the 'portfolio' of sites which are considered by each local authority through its local plan process. Equally it will be of relevance to affordable housing negotiations.

7 HOUSING NEEDS OF PARTICULAR GROUPS

Introduction

- 7.1 We have considered in the previous section the needs for different sizes of property. In this section we move on to consider groups within the population who have specialist housing needs, or whose housing needs differ from the wider population.
- 7.2 Estimates of household groups who have particular housing needs is a key output of the SHMA guidance whilst the National Planning Policy Framework identifies that local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing which takes account of the needs of different groups in the community.
- 7.3 The following key groups have been identified which may have housing needs which may differ from those of the wider population:
- Older Persons;
 - People with disabilities;
 - Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) households;
 - Households with children;
 - Young people; and
 - People wishing to build their own homes.

Housing Needs of Older People

- 7.4 The SHMA Guidance recognises the need to provide housing for older people as part of achieving a good mix of housing. A key driver of change in the housing market over the next few years is expected to be the growth in the population of older persons.
- 7.5 Indeed as the population projections in this report show, the number of older people is expected to increase significantly over the next few years. In this section we draw on a range of sources including our population projections, 2011 Census information and data from POPPI (Projecting Older People Population Information).
- 7.6 In planning for a growing older population, it is important to recognise:
- A need to provide housing for older people as part of achieving a good mix of housing, but recognizing that many older people are able to exercise choice and control over housing options – e.g. owner occupiers with equity in their homes;
 - Evidence of falling demand for residential care in some areas, and a rapidly rising average age of people living in sheltered housing, requiring higher levels of support. However many local authorities have struggled to contain expenditure on services for older people;

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- New models of enhanced and extra care housing. These aim to meet the needs of those who require high levels of care and support alongside those who are still generally able to care for themselves. These models often allow for changing circumstances in situ rather than requiring a move; and
- Providing choice, including supporting people to stay in their own homes including through supporting adaptations to properties and through provision of floating support.

Current Population of Older Persons

7.7 Table 55 provides baseline population data about older persons and compares this with other areas. The data for this table has been taken from the published ONS mid-year population estimates and is provided for age groups from 65 and upwards.

7.8 The data shows that over a fifth of the population of Sevenoaks (in 2013) was aged 65 and over (20.2%) – this is above the proportion seen in any of the other areas studied. In Tunbridge Wells, the proportion of older people is slightly lower (at 17.9%) – this proportion is slightly above the national average but below equivalent figures for Kent and the South East.

Table 55: Older Person Population (2013)

		Under 65	65-74	75-84	85+	Total	Total 65+
Sevenoaks	Popn	93,400	12,713	7,790	3,132	117,035	23,635
	% of popn	79.8%	10.9%	6.7%	2.7%	100.0%	20.2%
Tunbridge Wells	Popn	94,963	10,895	6,658	3,177	115,693	20,730
	% of popn	82.1%	9.4%	5.8%	2.7%	100.0%	17.9%
Kent	% of popn	80.8%	10.4%	6.1%	2.6%	100.0%	19.2%
South East	% of popn	81.7%	9.7%	5.9%	2.6%	100.0%	18.3%
England	% of popn	82.7%	9.3%	5.7%	2.3%	100.0%	17.3%

Source: ONS 2013 Mid-Year Population Estimates

Future Changes in the Population of Older Persons

7.9 As well as providing a baseline position for the proportion of older persons in each local authority we can use population projections to provide an indication of how the numbers might change in the future compared with other areas. The data for the study area is based on our core projection linked to the 2012-based SNPP (with an adjustment for mid-2013 population estimates). Data for other areas is taken from the 2012-based SNPP.

7.10 The data shows that the study area (in line with other areas) is expected to see a notable increase in the older person population with the total number of people aged 65 and over expected to

increase by 48% in Sevenoaks and 61% in Tunbridge Wells over the 20-years from 2013. This compares with overall population growth of 16%-17% and growth in the Under 65 population of just 7%-9%.

Table 56: Projected Change in Population of Older Persons (2013 to 2033)

	Under 65	65-74	75-84	85+	Total	Total 65+
Sevenoaks	8.6%	29.1%	46.6%	131.6%	16.6%	48.5%
Tunbridge Wells	6.7%	40.3%	57.0%	138.1%	16.4%	60.6%
Kent	7.7%	36.4%	57.6%	132.8%	17.0%	56.2%
South East	5.6%	38.0%	55.5%	127.5%	14.9%	56.4%
England	5.4%	34.5%	50.2%	120.7%	13.3%	51.1%

Source: derived from ONS data and demographic projections

Characteristics of Older Persons Households

7.11 We have used 2011 Census data to explore in more detail the characteristics of older person households in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells (based on the population aged 65 and over). Table 57 shows the number of households compared with the County, region and England. The data shows in 2011 that around 24% of households in Sevenoaks were comprised entirely of people aged 65 and over with a slightly lower figure (of 21%) in Tunbridge Wells. The proportion of older person households in Sevenoaks is higher than seen in any of the comparator areas although in Tunbridge Wells the proportion is lower than seen across the County and region (although slightly above the national average).

Table 57: Older Person Households (Census 2011)

		Single older person	2 or more older people	All other households	All households	Older person only
Sevenoaks	Households	6,386	5,018	35,616	47,020	11,404
	% of hhs	13.6%	10.7%	75.7%	100.0%	24.3%
Tunbridge Wells	Households	5,818	4,147	37,209	47,174	9,965
	% of hhs	12.3%	8.8%	78.9%	100.0%	21.1%
Kent	% of hhs	13.1%	9.7%	77.2%	100.0%	22.8%
South East	% of hhs	12.7%	9.3%	78.1%	100.0%	21.9%
England	% of hhs	12.4%	8.4%	79.3%	100.0%	20.7%

Source: 2011 Census

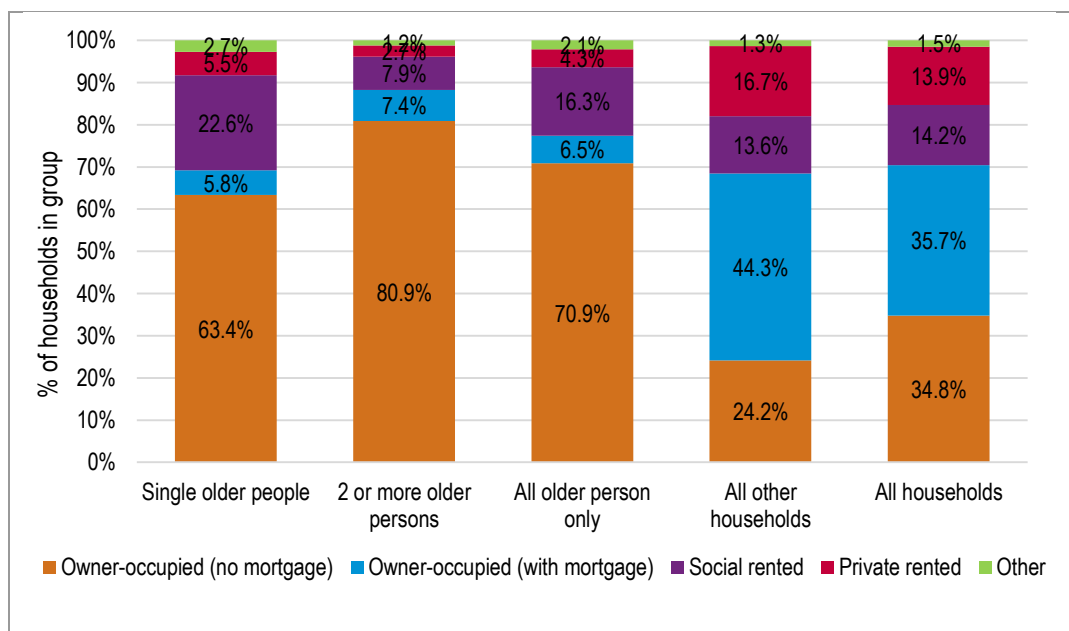
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7.12 Figure 58 shows the tenure of older person households – the data has been split between single older person households and those with two or more older people (which will largely be couples). The data shows that older person households are relatively likely to live in outright owned accommodation (71%) and are also more likely than other households to be in the social rented sector. The proportion of older person households living in the private rented sector is relatively low (4% compared with 14% of all households in the study area).

7.13 There are however notable differences for different types of older person households with single older people having a much lower level of owner-occupation than larger older person households – this group also has a much higher proportion living in the social rented sector.

7.14 Given that the number of older people is expected to increase in the future and that the number of single person households is expected to increase this would suggest (if occupancy patterns remain the same) that there will be a notable demand for affordable housing from the ageing population. That said, the proportion of older person households who are outright owners (with significant equity) may mean that market solutions will also be required to meet their needs. This is considered later in this section.

Figure 58: Tenure of Older Person Households – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells

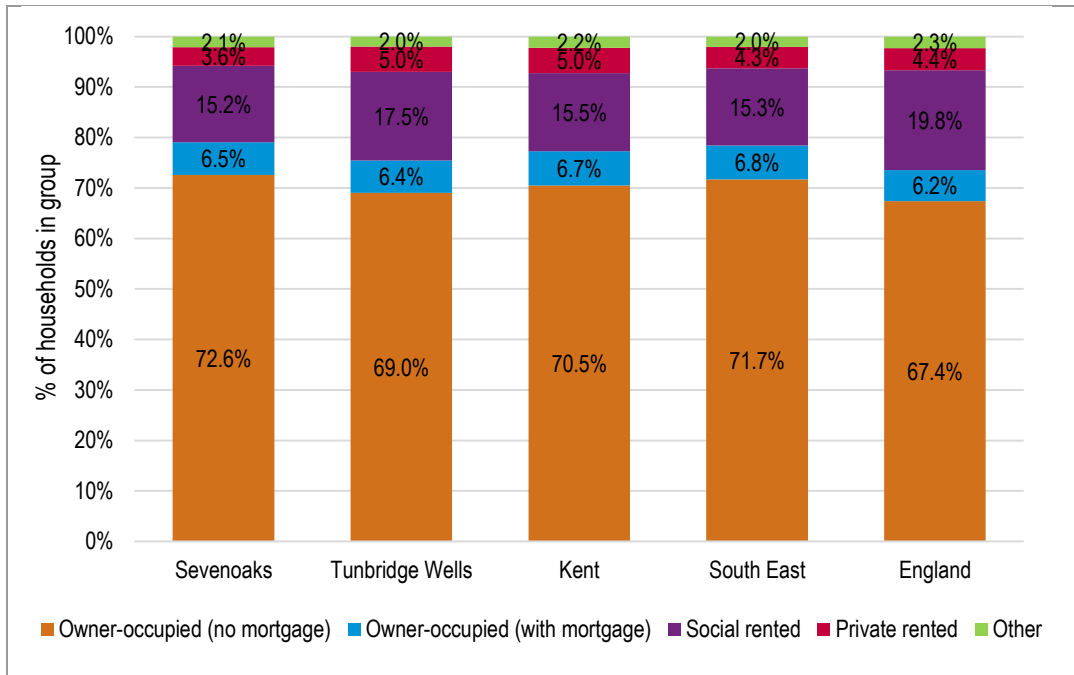


Source: 2011 Census

7.15 Data for individual local authorities and other comparator areas is shown in Figure 59. There are small differences between areas; the most notable is the high proportion of outright owners in Sevenoaks and a higher proportion in social rented housing in Tunbridge Wells. Overall however,

the patterns of tenure in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells are broadly similar to that seen in other locations.

Figure 59: Tenure of Older Person Households – by Local Authority and other areas

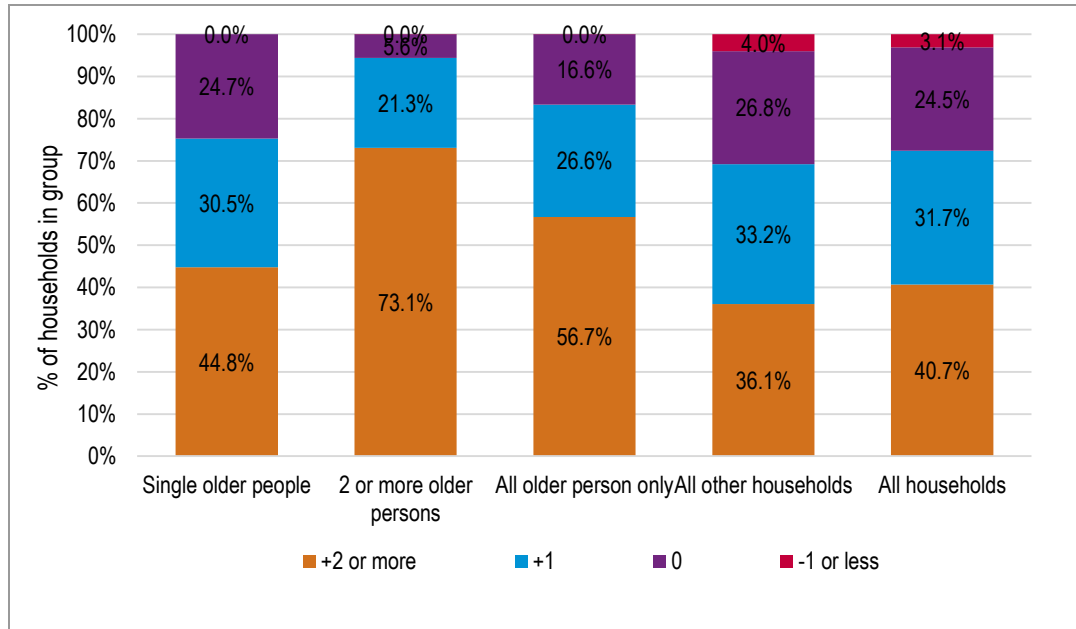


Source: 2011 Census

- 7.16 A key theme that is often brought out in Housing Market Assessment work is the large proportion of older person households who under-occupy their dwellings. Data from the Census allows us to investigate this using the bedroom standard.
- 7.17 The Census data suggests that older person households are more likely to under-occupy their housing than other households in the study area. In total, 57% have an occupancy rating of +2 or more (meaning there are at least two more bedrooms than are technically required by the household). This compares with 36% for non-older person households. Further analysis suggests that under-occupancy is far more common in households with two or more older people than single older person households.

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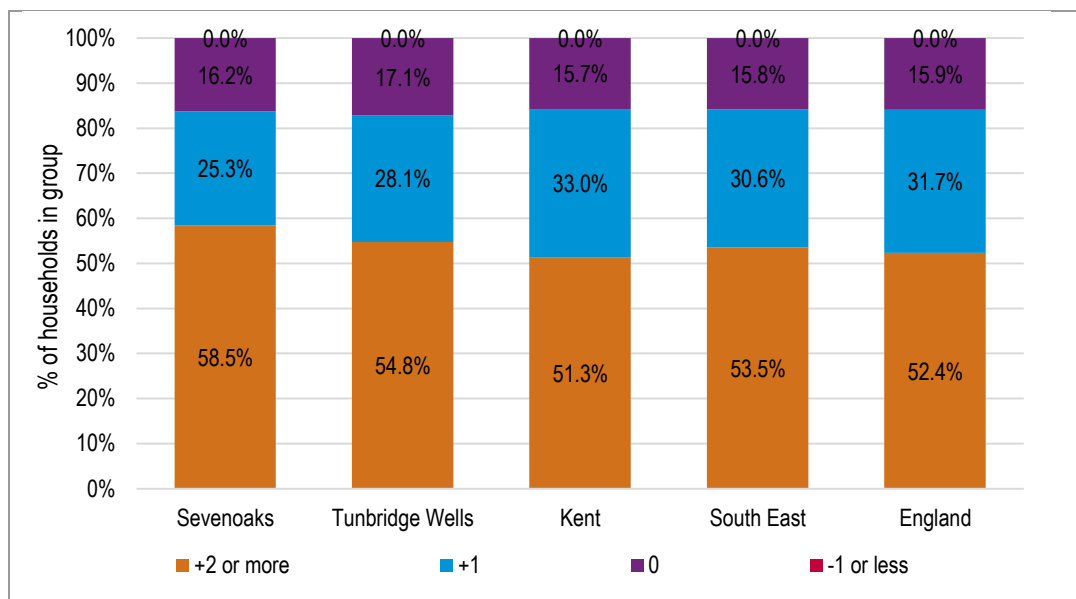
Figure 60: Occupancy Rating of Older Person Households – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells



Source: 2011 Census

7.18 The occupancy ratings of older person households also show some differences by location with Sevenoaks showing a higher proportion of under-occupying older person households than Tunbridge Wells. Both areas however see levels of under-occupancy which are higher than observed across the County, regionally or nationally. This is a reflection, at least in part, of housing wealth.

Figure 61: Occupancy Rating of Older Person Households – by local authority and other areas



Source: 2011 Census

7.19 It is of interest to study the above information by tenure. Tables 58 and 59 show the number of older person households who had an occupancy rating of +2 or more in each of three broad tenure groups in 2011. Whilst the majority of older person households with an occupancy rating of +2 or more were in the owner-occupied sector, there were around 600 properties in the social rented sector occupied by older person only households with an occupancy rating of +2 or more (321 in Sevenoaks and 256 in Tunbridge Wells). This may therefore present some opportunity to reduce under-occupation - although to achieve this it may be necessary to provide attractive alternative housing in areas where households currently live and where they have social and community ties.

Table 58: Older Person Households with Occupancy Rating of +2 or more by Tenure - Sevenoaks

Tenure	Single older person	2 or more older people	All older person only households
Owner-occupied	2,637	3,383	6,020
Social rented	221	100	321
Private rented	153	90	243
All tenures	3,011	3,573	6,584

Source: 2011 Census

Table 59: Older Person Households with Occupancy Rating of +2 or more by Tenure – Tunbridge Wells

Tenure	Single older person	2 or more older people	All older person only households
Owner-occupied	2,165	2,783	4,948
Social rented	157	99	256
Private rented	132	59	191
All tenures	2,454	2,941	5,395

Source: 2011 Census

7.20 It should however be recognised that many older households in the private sector will have built up equity in their existing homes. In the private sector many older households may be able to afford a larger home than they need (and thus under-occupy housing). Some may look to downsize to release equity from homes to support their retirement (or may move away from the area); however we would expect many older households to want to retain family housing with space to allow friends and relatives to come to stay.

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Health-related Population Projections

- 7.21 In addition to providing projections about how the number and proportion of older people is expected to change in the future we can look at the likely impact on the number of people with specific illnesses or disabilities. For this we have used data from the Projecting Older People Population Information System (POPPI) website which provides prevalence rates for different disabilities by age and sex. For the purposes of the SHMA, analysis has focussed on estimates of the number of people with dementia and mobility problems.
- 7.22 For both of the health issues analysed the figures relate to the population aged 65 and over. The figures from POPPI are based on prevalence rates from a range of different sources and whilst these might change in the future (e.g. as general health of the older person population improves) the estimates are likely to be of the right order.
- 7.23 Table 60 shows that both of the illnesses/disabilities are expected to increase significantly in the future although this would be expected given the increasing older population. In particular there is projected to be a large rise in the number of people with dementia (80% in Sevenoaks, 90% in Tunbridge Wells) along with an increase in the number with mobility problems in Sevenoaks and 80% increase in Tunbridge Wells.. Tunbridge Wells looks likely to see the most significant increases.

Table 60: Estimated Population Change for range of Health Issues (2013 to 2033)

	Type of illness/disability	2013	2033	Change	% increase
Sevenoaks	Dementia	1,570	2,818	1,248	79.5%
	Mobility problems	4,296	7,213	2,917	67.9%
Tunbridge Wells	Dementia	1,458	2,774	1,317	90.3%
	Mobility problems	3,917	7,049	3,132	80.0%

Source: Data from POPPI and demographic projections

Indicative Need for Specialist Housing

- 7.24 Given the ageing population and higher levels of disability and health problems amongst older people there is likely to be an increased requirement for specialist housing options moving forward. The analysis in this section draws on data from the Housing Learning and Information Network (Housing LIN) along with our demographic projections to provide an indication of the potential level of additional specialist housing that might be required for older people in the future.

Current Stock of Specialist Housing

7.25 Table 61 shows the current supply of specialist housing for older people. At present it is estimated that there are 2,808 units (1,592 in Sevenoaks and 1,216 in Tunbridge Wells). This is equivalent to 135 units per 1,000 people aged 75 and over. This proportion varies from 124 per 1,000 in Tunbridge Wells up to 146 per 1,000 in Sevenoaks. The majority (66%) of this housing is in the affordable sector, even though the majority of older person households are owner-occupiers.

Table 61: Current Supply of Specialist Housing for Older People

		Type of housing	Market	Affordable	Total	Supply per 1,000 aged 75+
Sevenoaks	Sheltered		513	977	1,490	136
	Extra-Care		0	102	102	9
	Total		513	1,079	1,592	146
Tunbridge Wells	Sheltered		428	757	1,185	120
	Extra-Care		0	31	31	3
	Total		428	788	1,216	124

Source: Housing LIN

Projected Future Need for Specialist Housing

7.26 A toolkit has been developed by Housing LIN ‘The Housing Learning Infiltration Network’, in association with the Elderly Accommodation Council and endorsed by the Department of Health, to identify potential demand for different types of specialist housing for older people and model the future range of housing and care provision. It suggests that there should be around 170 units of specialised accommodation (other than registered care home places) per thousand people aged over 75 years.

7.27 Table 62 shows the change in the population aged 75 and over in each local authority and what this would mean in terms of provision at 170 units per 1,000 population. The analysis shows a potential need for 2,710 units across the two authorities – 135 per annum. This is around 11% of the total need identified in the demographic modelling (linked to the 2012-based SNPP and household projections with an affordability adjustment for younger person household formation).

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Table 62: Projected need for Specialist Housing for Older People (2013-33)

	Population aged 75+ (2013)	Population aged 75+ (2033)	Change in population aged 75+	Specialist housing need (@ 170 units per 1,000)
Sevenoaks	10,922	18,679	7,757	1,319
Tunbridge Wells	9,835	18,016	8,181	1,391

Source: Derived from demographic projections and Housing LIN

Types and Tenures of Specialist Housing

- 7.28 Earlier in this section analysis has been carried out with regard to the tenure of older person households – the data was split between single pensioner households and those with two or more pensioners (which will largely be couples). The data showed that pensioner households are relatively likely to live in outright owned accommodation (71%) and are also more likely than other households to be in the social rented sector. There were however notable differences for different types of pensioner households with single pensioners having a lower level of owner-occupation than larger pensioner households as well as differences by location.
- 7.29 The information about current supply of specialist housing indicates that slightly more of this is in the affordable sector than the market. Moving forward we would suggest that additional specialist housing should be split roughly 50:50 between the affordable and market sectors. This reflects the likely 'market' for specialist housing products as well as the current tenure profile of older person households (i.e. the current profile of specialist housing is focussed towards affordable housing and this is likely to in part reflect the need and demand for such accommodation, however, with 70% of older persons being outright owners there is the opportunity to broaden this housing offer to a wider range of household groups).
- 7.30 The analysis is not specific about the types of specialist housing that might be required. We would consider that decisions about mix should be taken at a local level taking account of specific needs and the current supply of different types of units available (for example noting that at present the dominant type of housing is traditional sheltered accommodation). There may also be the opportunity moving forward for different types of provision to be developed as well as the more traditional sheltered and Extra-Care housing.
- 7.31 Within the different models and assumptions made regarding the future need for specialist retirement housing (normally defined as a form of congregate housing designed exclusively for older people which usually offers some form of communal space, community alarm service and access to support and care if required), there may for example be an option to substitute some of

this specialist provision with a mix of one and two bedroomed housing aimed to attract 'early retired' older people which could be designated as age specific or not. Such housing could be part of the general mix of one and two bedroom homes but built to Lifetime Homes standards in order to attract retired older people looking to 'down size' but perhaps not wanting to live in specialist retirement housing.

- 7.32 Our experience when carrying out stakeholder work as part of SHMA commissions typically identifies a demand for bungalows. Where developments including bungalows are found it is clear that these are very popular to older people downsizing. It should be acknowledged that providing significant numbers of bungalows involves cost implications for the developer given the typical plot size compared to floor space – however providing an element of bungalows should be given strong consideration on appropriate sites, allowing older households to downsize while freeing up family accommodation for younger households.

Registered Care Housing

- 7.33 As well as the need for specialist housing for older people the analysis needs to consider Registered Care. At present (according to Housing LIN) there are around 1,873 spaces in nursing and residential care homes (850 in Sevenoaks and 1,023 in Tunbridge Wells). Given new models of provision (including Extra-care housing) it may be the case that an increase in this number would not be required. There will however need to be a recognition that there may be some additional need for particular groups such as those requiring specialist nursing or for people with dementia.
- 7.34 As with the analysis of potential need for specialist accommodation, the analysis below considers changes to the number of people aged 75 and over who are expected to be living in some form of institutional housing. This is a direct output of the demographic modelling which indicates an increase of 1,307 people living in institutions over the 2013-33 period (65 per annum). This is split as 511 (26 per annum) in Sevenoaks and 796 (40 per annum) in Tunbridge Wells. These figures are important to note if the Councils intend to include C2 class uses in their assessment of 5-year housing land supply as it will be necessary to include figures on both the need and supply side of the equation.

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Table 63: Potential Need for Residential Care Housing

	Institutional population aged 75+ (2013)	Institutional population aged 75+ (2033)	Change in institutional population aged 75+
Sevenoaks	622	1,133	511
Tunbridge Wells	862	1,659	796

Source: Derived from demographic projections

People with Disabilities

- 7.35 This section concentrates on the housing situation of people/households that contain someone with some form of disability. We have again drawn on Census data although it should be recognised that an analysis of people with disabilities is very strongly linked with the above analysis about older people.
- 7.36 Table 64 shows the proportion of people with a long-term health problem or disability (LTHPD) and the proportion of households where at least one person has a LTHPD. The data suggests that across the two local authorities some 22%-23% of households contain someone with a LTHPD. These figures are lower than the equivalent figures for all of the County, the region and nationally. The figures for the population with a LTHPD again show a lower proportion when compared with regional and national figures (an estimated 14%-15% of the population of the study area have a LTHPD).
- 7.37 For the individual local authorities the data suggests little difference between the two areas – Sevenoaks seeing a very slightly higher level of disability than Tunbridge Wells (although this is likely to be related to the higher proportion of older people living in Sevenoaks).

Table 64: Households and people with Long-Term Health Problem or Disability (2011)

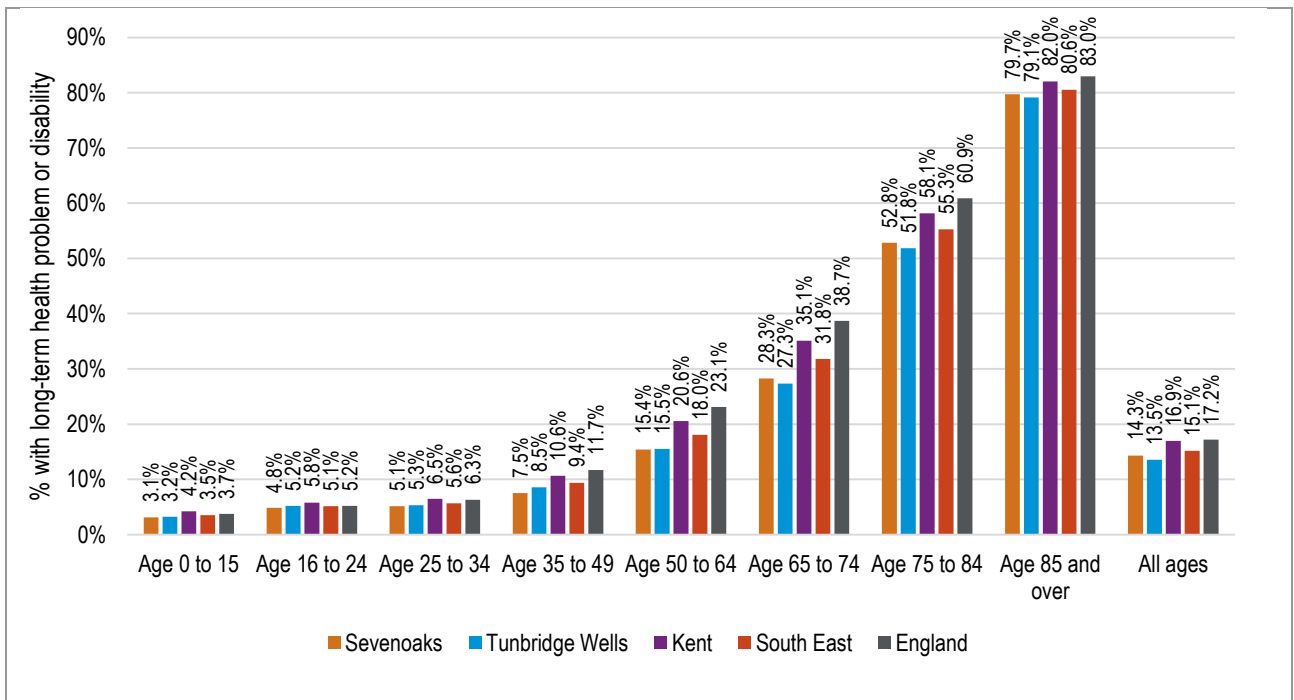
Area	Households containing someone with health problem		Population with health problem	
	Number	%	Number	%
Sevenoaks	10,753	22.9%	17,091	14.9%
Tunbridge Wells	10,503	22.3%	16,371	14.2%
Kent	154,753	25.6%	257,038	17.6%
South East	839,086	23.6%	1,356,204	15.7%
England	5,659,606	25.7%	9,352,586	17.6%

Source: 2011 Census

7.38 As noted, it is likely that the age profile of the area will impact upon the numbers of people with a LTHPD, as older people tend to be more likely to have a LTHPD. Therefore Figure 62 shows the age bands of people with a LTHPD. It is clear from this analysis that those people in the oldest age bands are more likely to have a LTHPD – for example some 79%-80% of people aged 85 and over have a LTHPD. It should be noted that the base for the figure below is slightly different to the above table in that it excludes people living in communal establishments.

7.39 When compared with the County and national situation (and to a lesser extent regional data), the data suggests lower levels of LTHPD for all age groups.

Figure 62: Population with Long-Term Health Problem or Disability in each Age Band



Source: 2011 Census

7.40 The age specific prevalence rates shown above can be applied to the demographic data to estimate the likely increase over time of the number of people with a LTHPD. In applying this information to the 2012-based SNPP (adjusted to take account of 2013 mid-year population data) it is estimated that the number of people with a LTHPD will increase by around 14,200 (a 42% increase) – the increase is expected to be slightly higher in Tunbridge Wells than Sevenoaks.

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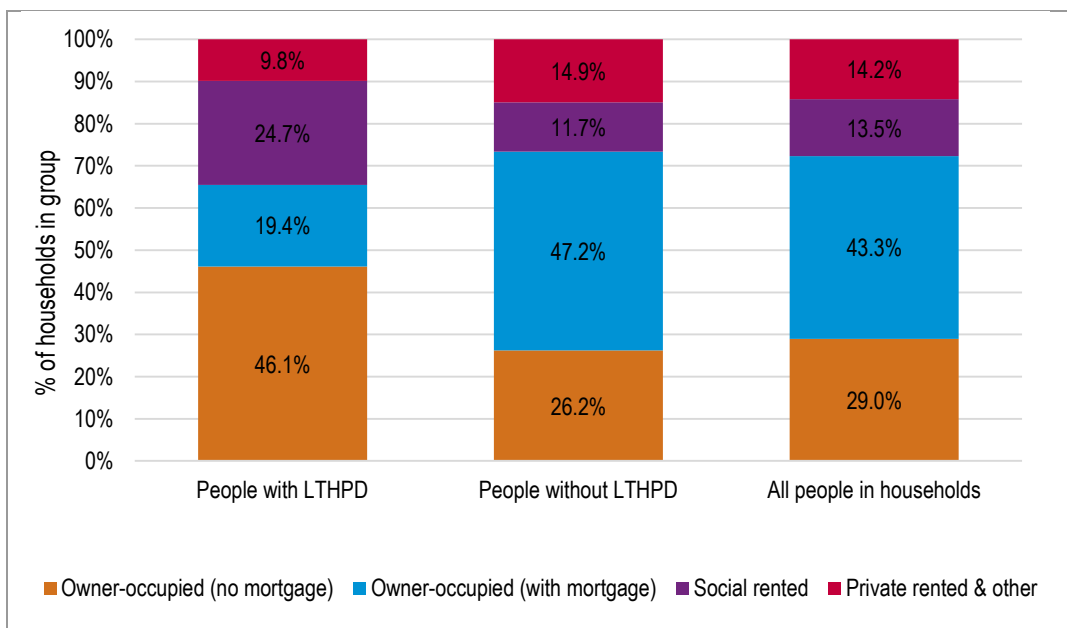
Table 65: Estimated change in population with LTHPD (2013-33)

Area	Population with LTHPD		Change (2013-33)	% change from 2013
	2013	2033		
Sevenoaks	17,477	24,324	6,847	39.2%
Tunbridge Wells	16,531	23,877	7,346	44.4%

Source: Derived from demographic modelling and Census (2011)

7.41 The figure below shows the tenures of people with a LTHPD – it should be noted that the data is for population living in households rather than households and is therefore not comparable with other tenure analysis provided in this section. The analysis clearly shows that people with a LTHPD are more likely to live in social rented housing and are also more likely to be outright owners (this will be linked to the age profile of the population with a disability). Given that typically the lowest incomes are found in the social rented sector and to a lesser extent for outright owners the analysis would suggest that the population/households with a disability are likely to be relatively disadvantaged when compared to the rest of the population.

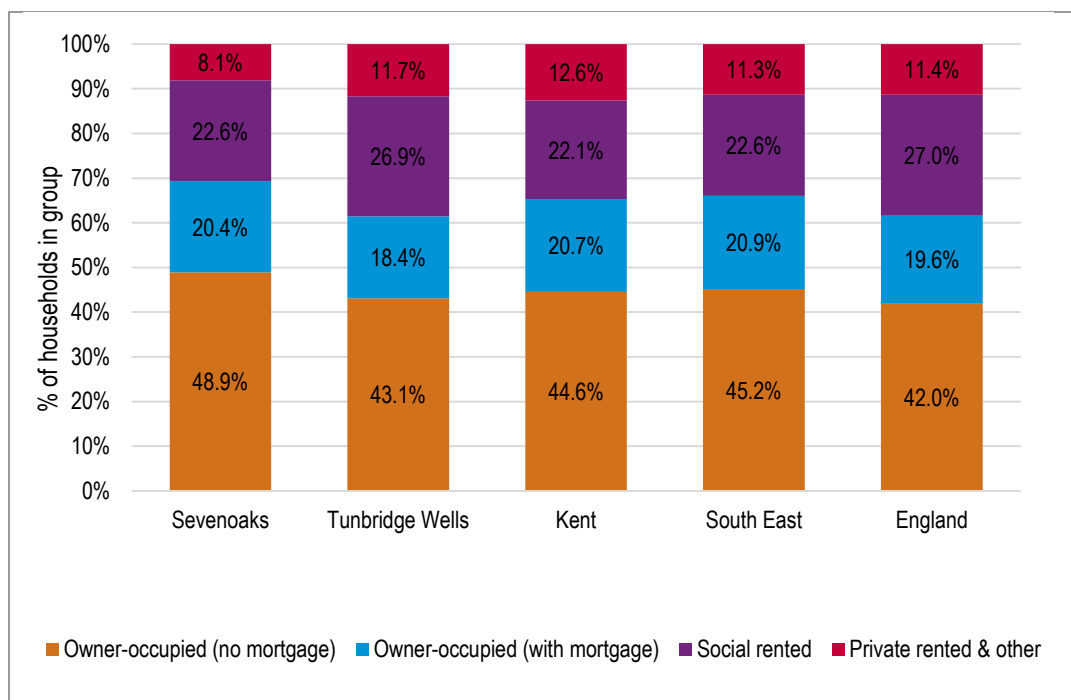
Figure 63: Tenure of people with LTHPD – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells



Source: 2011 Census

7.42 Figure 64 shows the tenures of people with a LTHPD by local authority and other comparator areas. The data shows a similar pattern across areas with high proportions of outright owners and people in the social rented sector. Within this however, the data does show a higher proportion in social rented housing in Tunbridge Wells and a higher proportion of outright owners in Sevenoaks.

Figure 64: Tenure of people with LTHPD – by local authority



Source: 2011 Census

BME Households

- 7.43 Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) households, as a group, are quite often found to have distinct characteristics in terms of their housing needs, or may be disadvantaged in some way.
- 7.44 From 2011 Census data we find that around 8% of the population of Sevenoaks came from a non-White (British/Irish) background with a slightly higher figure (of 10%) being seen in Tunbridge Wells. These figures are below that found across the region (14%) and also nationally (19%). The proportion of the population from a BME group is however consistent with the average for Kent (10%). The key BME group in both areas is Other-White (which is likely to contain a number of Eastern European migrants) – the Other-White population makes up 3.6% of all people in Sevenoaks and 4.3% in Tunbridge Wells.

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Table 66: Black and Minority Ethnic Population (2011)

Ethnic Group	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells	Kent	South East	England
White: British	91.0%	89.6%	89.1%	85.2%	79.8%
White: Irish	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	0.9%	1.0%
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%
White: Other White	3.6%	4.3%	3.6%	4.4%	4.6%
Mixed: White & Black Caribbean	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.8%
Mixed: White & Black African	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Mixed: White & Asian	0.6%	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%	0.6%
Mixed: Other Mixed	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%
Asian: Indian	0.6%	0.6%	1.2%	1.8%	2.6%
Asian: Pakistani	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	1.1%	2.1%
Asian: Bangladeshi	0.1%	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%	0.8%
Asian: Chinese	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	0.6%	0.7%
Asian: Other Asian	0.5%	0.8%	1.2%	1.4%	1.5%
Black: African	0.5%	0.4%	0.8%	1.0%	1.8%
Black: Caribbean	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	1.1%
Black: Other Black	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%
Other ethnic group: Arab	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%
Any other ethnic group	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total population	114,893	115,049	1,463,740	8,634,750	53,012,456
% non-White (British/Irish)	8.2%	9.6%	10.2%	13.9%	19.3%

Source: 2011 Census

7.45 Since 2001 the BME population in the study area can be seen to have increased significantly as shown in Tables 67 and 68. We have condensed some categories together due to a slightly different list of potential groups being used in the 2011 Census when compared with 2001 data. In Sevenoaks, the data shows that whilst the overall population has risen by 5,600 over the 10-year period the increase in BME groups (all groups other than White (British/Irish)) has been 4,300. The White (British/Irish) population has therefore increased by 1% compared to an increase of 82% in BME groups (all combined). In Tunbridge Wells, the White (British/Irish) population grew by about 5%, with BME groups increasing by 107%

7.46 Looking at particular BME groups we see that the largest rises in terms of population have been for White-Other and Asian people. This latter group also sees one of the highest increases in proportionate terms – a 129% rise in population in Sevenoaks and 182% in Tunbridge Wells.

Table 67: Change in BME groups 2001 to 2011 – Sevenoaks

Ethnic Group	2001	2011	Change	% change
White (British/Irish)	104,151	105,488	1,337	1.3%
White – Other	2,921	4,541	1,620	55.5%
Mixed	847	1,675	828	97.8%
Asian or Asian British	910	2,085	1,175	129.1%
Black or Black British	259	853	594	229.3%
Chinese and other	217	251	34	15.7%
Total	109,305	114,893	5,588	5.1%
Non-White (British/Irish)	5,154	9,405	4,251	82.5%

Source: Census (2001 and 2011)

Table 68: Change in BME groups 2001 to 2011 – Tunbridge Wells

Ethnic Group	2001	2011	Change	% change
White (British/Irish)	98,680	103,995	5,315	5.4%
White – Other	2,780	5,244	2,464	88.6%
Mixed	949	1,893	944	99.5%
Asian or Asian British	1,029	2,903	1,874	182.1%
Black or Black British	266	638	372	139.8%
Chinese and other	326	376	50	15.3%
Total	104,030	115,049	11,019	10.6%
Non-White (British/Irish)	5,350	11,054	5,704	106.6%

Source: Census (2001 and 2011)

7.47 When comparing the findings with regional and national data it can be seen that the increase in the BME community has been stronger in the study area than across England but lower than seen in Kent. BME growth in Tunbridge Wells has been above the regional average, with the opposite pattern being seen with regard to Sevenoaks.

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Table 69: Change in non-White (British/Irish) population – 2001-11

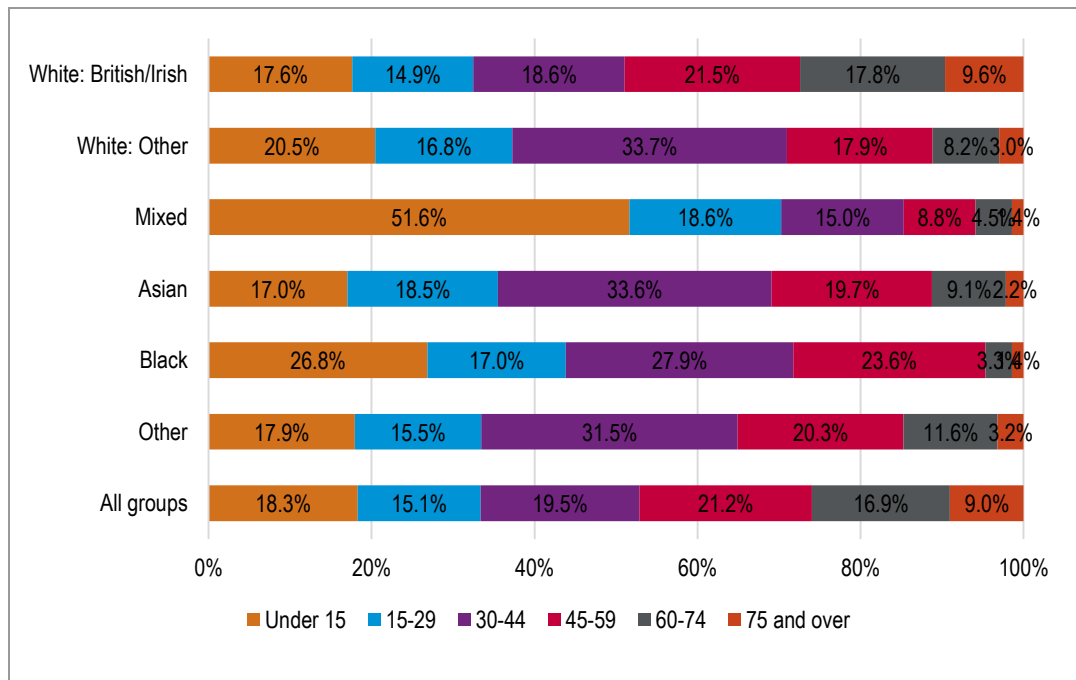
	Population (2001)	Population (2011)	Change from 2001	% change from 2001
Sevenoaks	5,154	9,405	4,251	82.5%
Tunbridge Wells	5,350	11,054	5,704	106.6%
Kent	67,548	149,943	82,395	122.0%
South East	613,562	1,202,181	588,619	95.9%
England	5,767,580	10,216,219	4,448,639	77.1%

Source: Census (2001 and 2011)

BME Household Characteristics

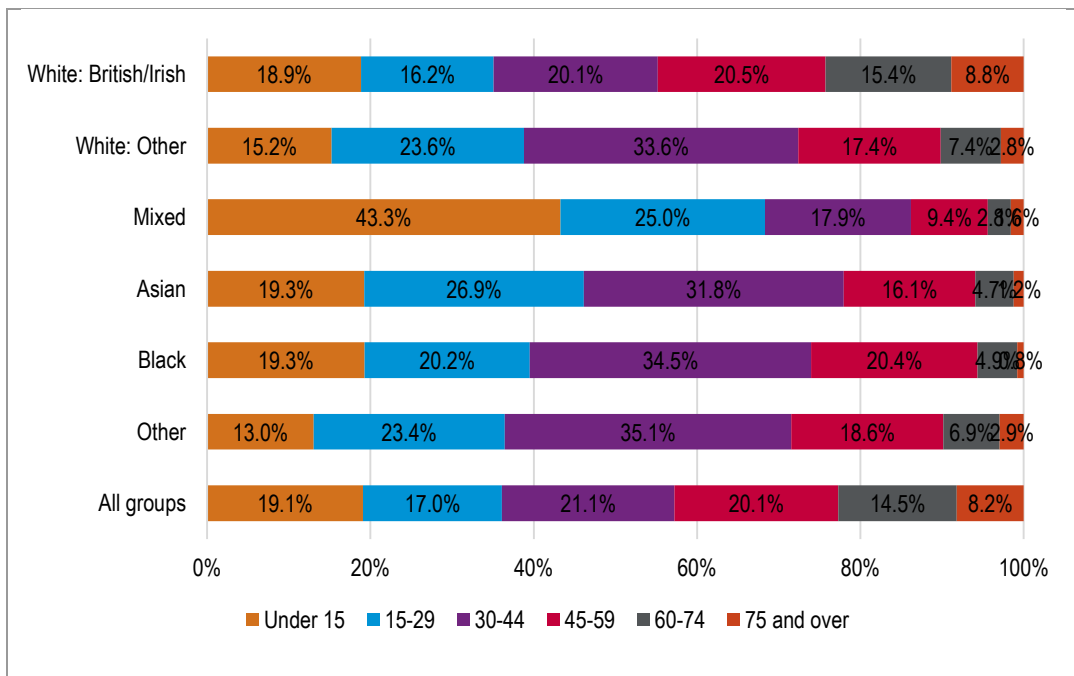
- 7.48 Census data can also be used to provide some broad information about the household and housing characteristics of the BME population in the study area. Figures 65 and 66 look at the population age structure of six broad age groups using data from the 2011 Census.
- 7.49 The age profile of the BME population is striking when compared with White: British/Irish people. All BME groups are considerably younger than the White (British/Irish) group with people from a Mixed background being particularly likely to be aged under 15 when compared with any other group. The proportions of older persons are also notable with 24%-27 of White (British/Irish) people being aged 60 or over – this compares with all BME groups showing proportions of no more than about 15% in this age group. The age structure profile of BME groups is similar in each of Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells.

Figure 65: Population age profile (2011) – Sevenoaks



Source: 2011 Census

Figure 66: Population age profile (2011) – Tunbridge Wells



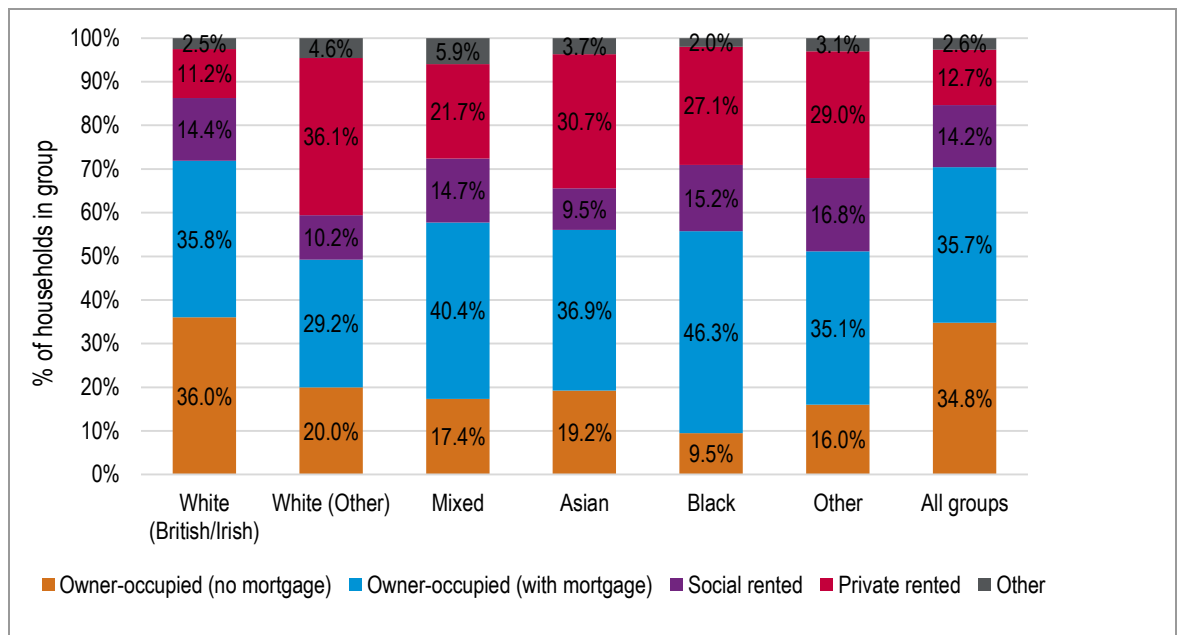
Source: 2011 Census

7.50 There are notable differences between the household characteristics of BME households and the White: British population. Figure 67 indicates that BME groups are less likely to be owner-occupiers

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(particularly outright owners) and more likely to live in private rented accommodation. Arguably the starkest trend is the 36% of White (Other) and 31% of Asian households living in the private rented sector.

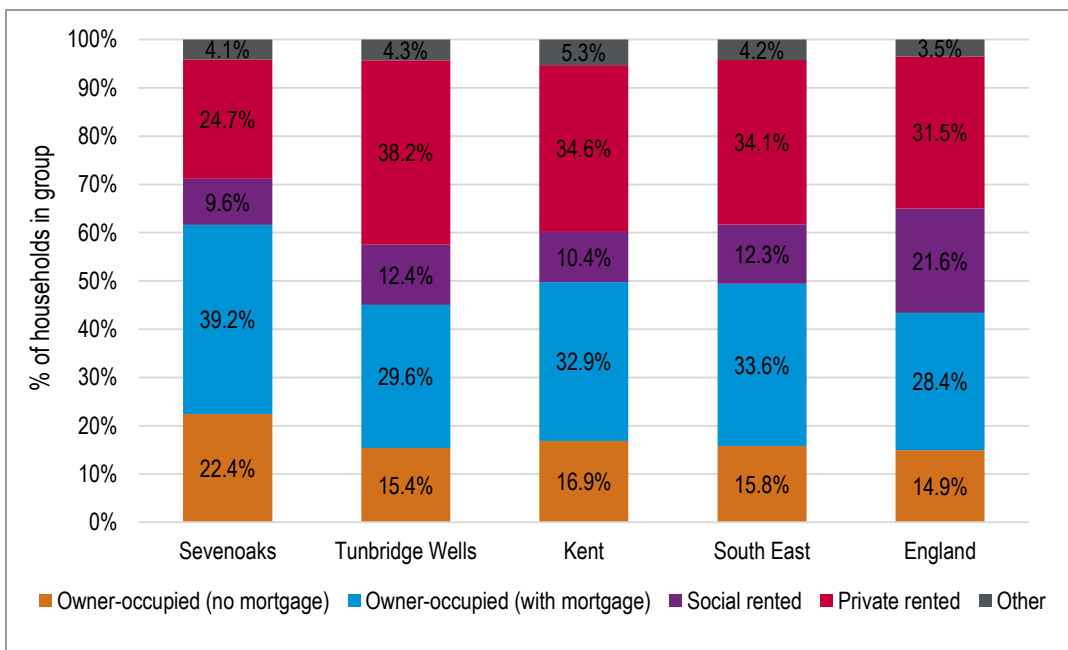
Figure 67: Tenure by ethnic group – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells



Source: 2011 Census

7.51 Looking at individual local authorities (Figure 68) the data shows some differences by location. In Tunbridge Wells, some 38% of BME households live in the private rented sector with a figure of only 25% being seen in Sevenoaks – this area also sees a notably higher proportion of owner-occupiers than other locations. When compared with England the data shows that BME households are slightly more likely to be owner-occupiers (and therefore less likely to live in rented accommodation (particularly social rented homes)).

Figure 68: Tenure of BME households – by District and comparator areas

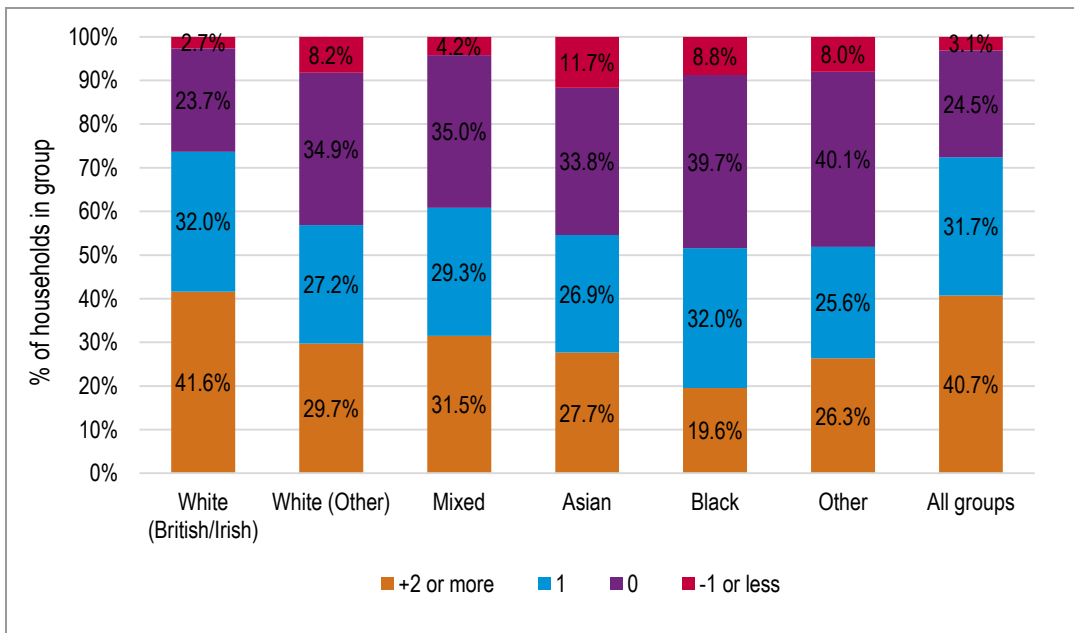


Source: 2011 Census

- 7.52 The strong representation of BME households in the Private Rented Sector means that they are more likely to be affected by the changes discussed to Local Housing Allowance (particularly as the sector in the study area shows a strong representation of LHA Claimants).
- 7.53 As BME communities mature over time, the level of owner occupation may increase. The pace at which this happens may be influenced by economic opportunities available as well as the level of enterprise within the local community. For some communities there may be support mechanisms which can work within the community, such as availability of interest free loans or support raising a deposit to buy a home, depending on cultural factors.
- 7.54 Figure 69 shows ‘occupancy ratings’ by BME group; this is based on the bedroom standard where a positive figure indicates under-occupancy and negative figures suggest some degree of overcrowding. BME groups are more likely to be overcrowded (i.e. have a negative occupancy rating) than White (British) households. In particular, the Census data suggests that around 12% of Asian households are overcrowded – this compares with only 3% of the White (British/Irish) group. Levels of under-occupancy amongst BME communities are generally low.

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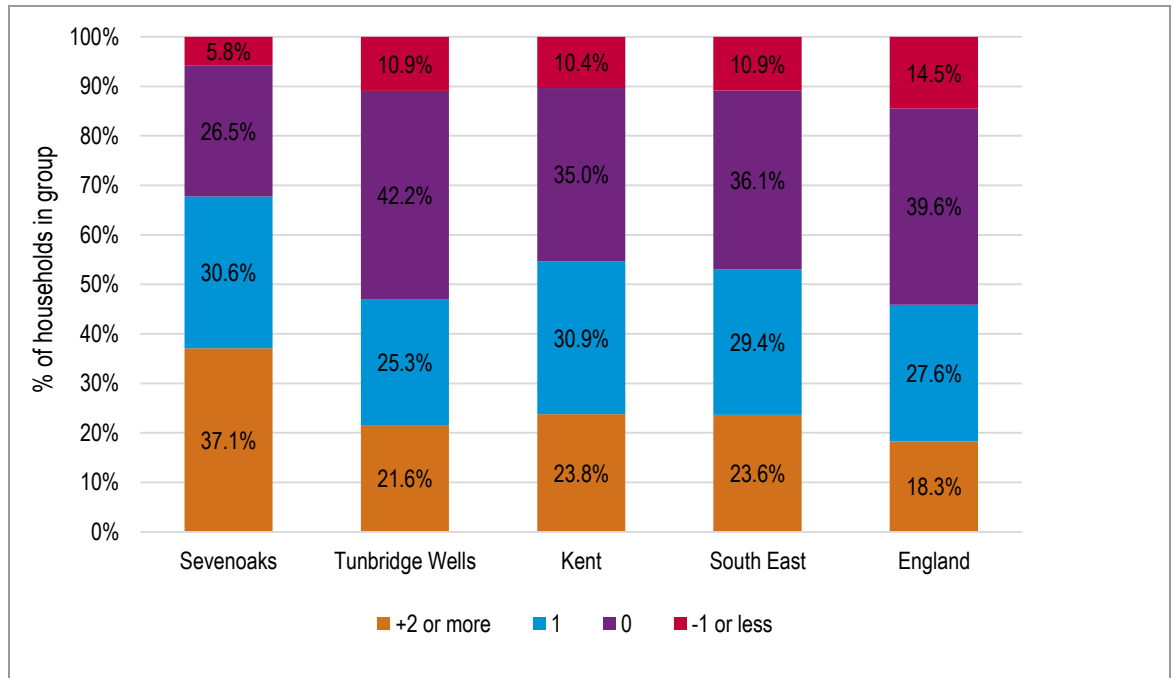
Figure 69: Occupancy rating by ethnic group – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells



Source: 2011 Census

7.55 Looking at individual local authorities (Figure 70) the analysis does suggest some differences. Tunbridge Wells has a notably higher level of overcrowding and low levels of under-occupancy with the opposite being seen in Sevenoaks. The occupancy ratings in Tunbridge Wells are similar to those observed across England although levels of overcrowding are more in line with County and regional data. In Sevenoaks, overcrowding amongst BME households is low when compared with other areas and levels of under-occupancy are quite high. The analysis does however suggest in all areas that BME households are more likely to be overcrowded and less likely to be under-occupying homes than White (British/Irish) households.

Figure 70: Occupancy rating of BME households – by local authority



Source: 2011 Census

Family Households

7.56 The number of families in the study area (defined for the purpose of this assessment as any household which contains at least one dependent child) totalled 28,300 as of the 2011 Census (with similar numbers seen in each of Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells), accounting for 30% of households. This proportion is very slightly higher than the County, regional and national average. Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells do however see a higher proportion of married couple households with dependent children and lower proportions in other groups (most notably a low proportion of lone parents).

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Table 70: Households with dependent children (2011)

		Married couple	Cohabiting couple	Lone parent	Other households	All other households	Total	Total with dependent children
Sevenoaks	No.	9,139	1,809	2,287	838	32,947	47,020	14,073
	%	19.4%	3.8%	4.9%	1.8%	70.1%	100.0%	29.9%
Tunbridge Wells	No.	8,993	1,884	2,465	855	32,977	47,174	14,197
	%	19.1%	4.0%	5.2%	1.8%	69.9%	100.0%	30.1%
Kent	%	16.0%	4.6%	6.8%	2.3%	70.4%	100.0%	29.6%
South East	%	17.1%	3.9%	6.1%	2.3%	70.6%	100.0%	29.4%
England	%	15.3%	4.0%	7.1%	2.6%	70.9%	100.0%	29.1%

Source: 2011 Census

7.57 The demographic projection linked to the 2012-based SNPP (and with an adjustment to take account of 2013 mid-year population data) suggests that the number of children (aged 15 and under) is expected to increase from 2013 to 2033 (an increase of 3,400 – 16% increase in Sevenoaks and 2,000 (9%) in Tunbridge Wells).

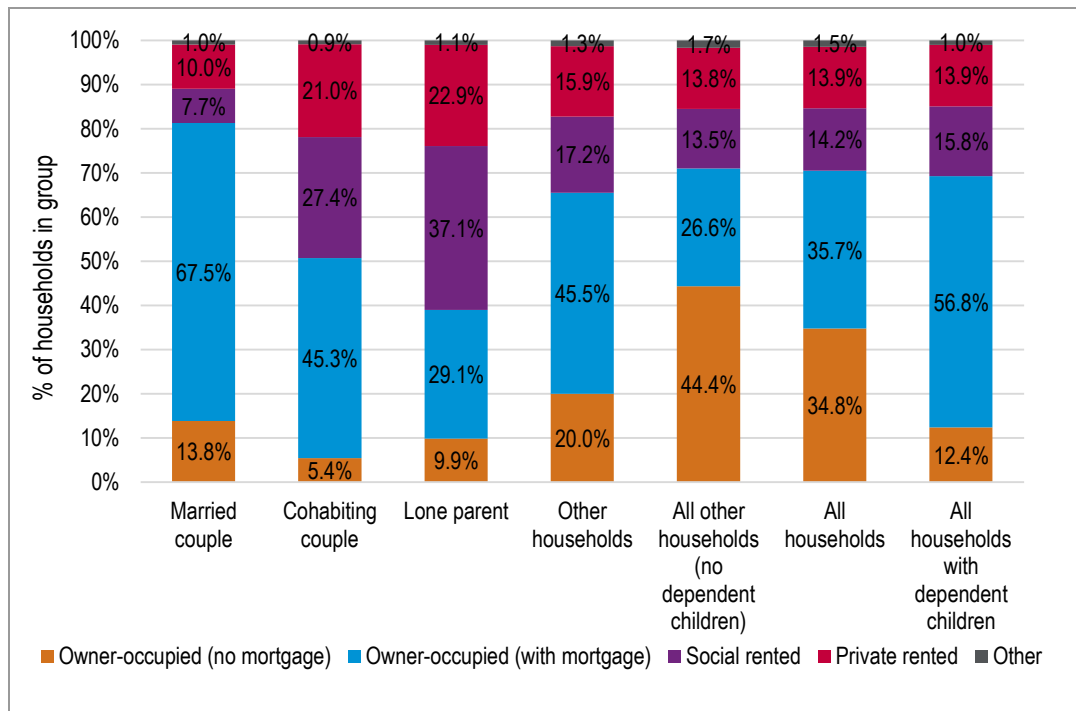
Table 71: Estimated change in population aged 15 and under (2013-33)

Area	Population aged 15 and under		Change (2013-33)	% change from 2013
	2013	2033		
Sevenoaks	21,540	24,928	3,388	15.7%
Tunbridge Wells	21,850	23,807	1,957	9.0%

Source: Derived from demographic modelling

7.58 Figure 71 shows the current tenure of households with dependent children. There are some considerable differences by household type with lone parents having a very high proportion living in the social rented sector and also in private rented accommodation. Only around two-fifths of lone parent households are owner-occupiers compared with 81% of married couples with children.

Figure 71: Tenure of households with dependent children – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells

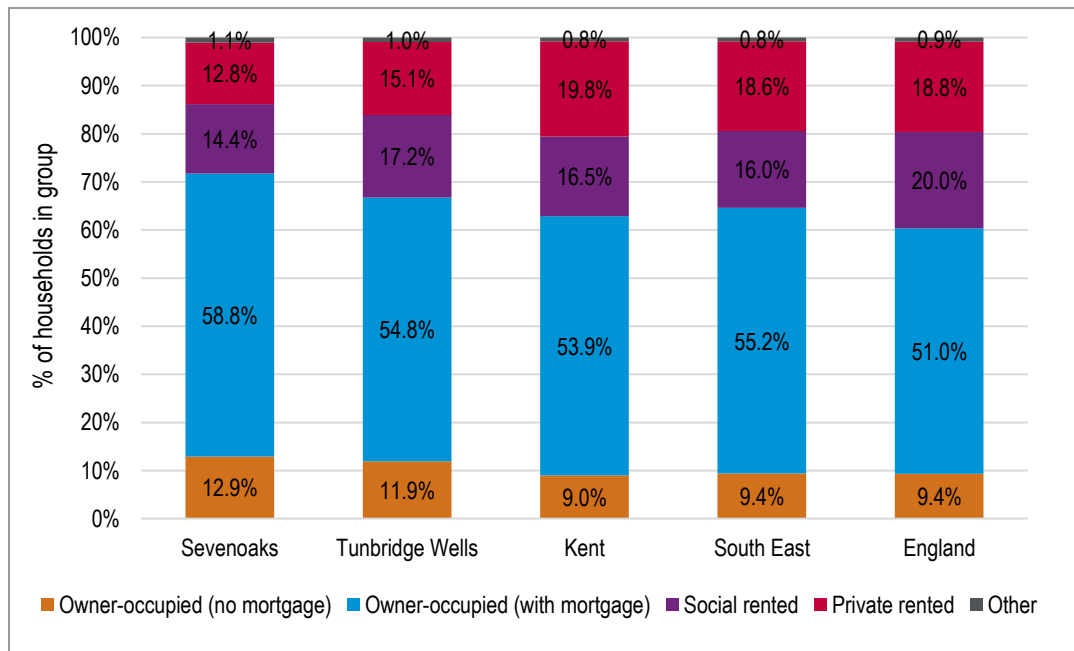


Source: 2011 Census

7.59 Figure 72 shows the current tenure of households with dependent children for each individual local authority area (the figures are for all households with dependent children combined). The data tends to show a similar pattern in each location although Sevenoaks stands out as having a lower proportion living in social and private rented accommodation. Overall, both Tunbridge Wells and to a greater extent Sevenoaks show higher proportions of households with dependent children living in owner-occupied accommodation and lower proportions in rented homes (both private and social) when compared with other comparator locations.

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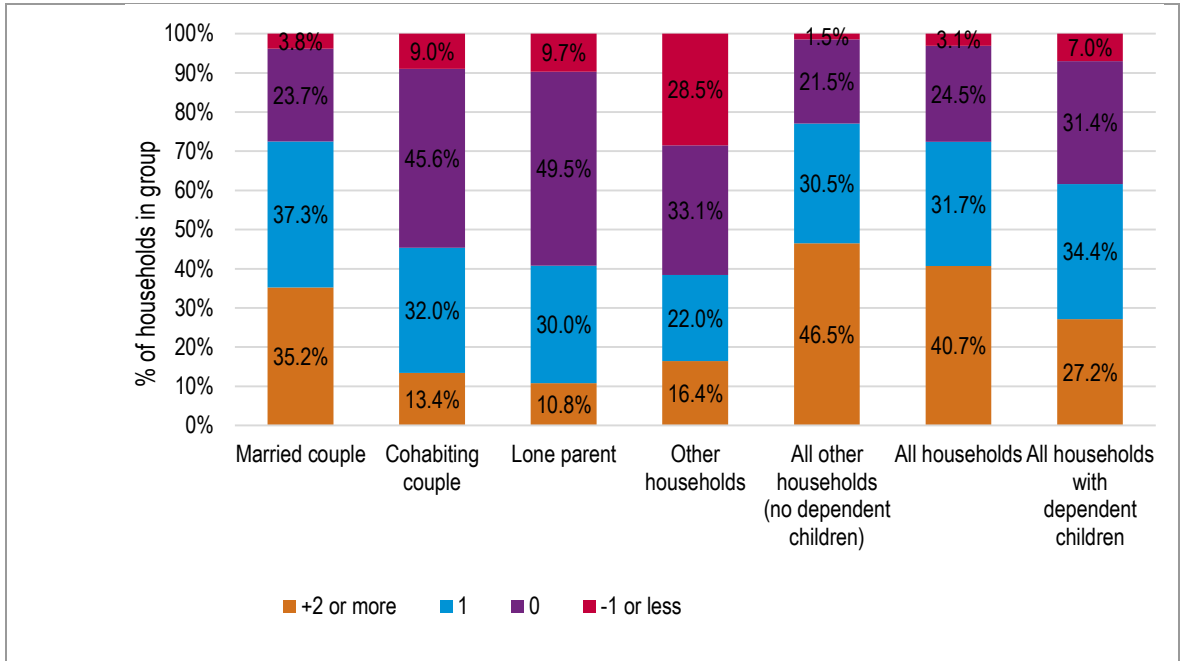
Figure 72: Tenure of households with dependent children – by local authority



Source: 2011 Census

7.60 Overcrowding is often a key theme when looking at the housing needs of households with children and Figure 73 shows that households with children are about five times more likely than other households to be overcrowded. In total, some 7% of all households with dependent children are overcrowded. Included within this, the data shows particularly high levels of overcrowding amongst lone parent households and ‘other’ households with dependent children. Other than for married couple households levels of under-occupancy are also very low.

Figure 73: Occupancy rating and households with dependent children – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells

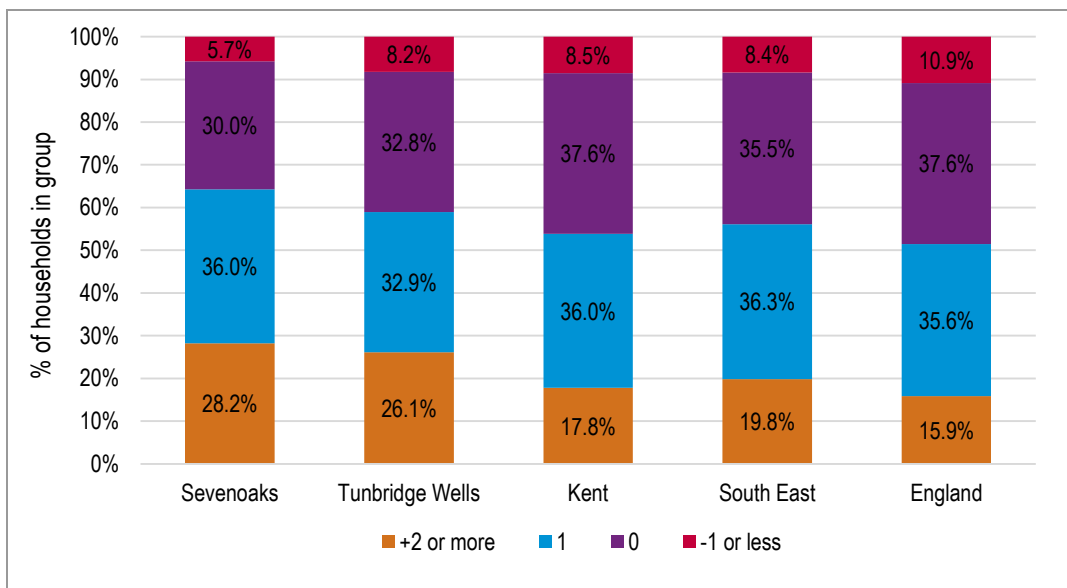


Source: 2011 Census

7.61 Figure 74 shows occupancy rates of households with dependent children by local authority and a range of comparator areas. The data shows a higher level of overcrowding in Tunbridge Wells along with a lower level of under-occupancy; however, when compared with other locations, overcrowding in this area is quite modest. When compared with other areas, the data reveals a particularly low level of overcrowding in Sevenoaks and well as a high proportion of households with dependent children who under-occupy.

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Figure 74: Occupancy rating and households with dependent children – by local authority



Source: 2011 Census

Young People

7.62 Providing for the needs of younger person households is an important consideration for the Councils. Given ageing populations, the ability to retain young people in an area can assist in providing a more balanced demographic profile as well as providing a vital part of the local workforce. Young people may however find barriers to accessing housing given typically low incomes and potential difficulties in securing mortgage finance due to deposit requirements. Additionally, LHA payments may limit choice for under-35s requiring private rented homes.

7.63 The demographic projections (linked to the 2012-based SNPP and CLG household projections) suggest that in 2013 there were around 12,700 households headed by someone aged under 35 and that this is set to remain virtually unchanged over the period from 2013 to 2033.

Table 72: Estimated change in households headed by someone aged under 35 (2013-33) – using 2012-based CLG household formation rates

Area	Households aged under 35		Change (2013-33)	% change from 2013
	2013	2033		
Sevenoaks	5,306	5,370	63	1.2%
Tunbridge Wells	7,348	7,249	-99	-1.3%

Source: Derived from demographic modelling

7.64 The data above uses the 2012-based CLG household projections; if the analysis is re-run with an uplift to the formation rates of the population aged 25-34 (as in the suggested market signals uplift)

then there is actually expected to be an increase in the number of younger households – increasing by 16% (860) in Sevenoaks and 3% (230) in Tunbridge Wells over the full 2013-33 projection period.

Table 73: Estimated change in households headed by someone aged under 35 (2013-33) – using 2012-based CLG household formation rates and a ‘market signals’ uplift

Area	Households aged under 35		Change (2013-33)	% change from 2013
	2013	2033		
Sevenoaks	5,306	6,167	861	16.2%
Tunbridge Wells	7,348	7,578	230	3.1%

Source: Derived from demographic modelling

7.65 As well as households headed by a younger person there will be others living as part of another household (typically with parents). Table 74 shows the number of households in the study area with non-dependent children. In total, some 10% of households (9,200) contained non-dependent children in 2011 (11% in Sevenoaks and 9% in Tunbridge Wells). This may to some degree highlight the difficulties faced by young people in accessing housing. Ineligibility for social housing, lower household incomes and the unaffordability of owner occupation for such age groups all contribute to the current trend for young people moving in with or continuing to live with parents. The proportion of households with non-dependent children in the study area is broadly similar to the County, regional and national average.

Table 74: Households with non-dependent children (2011)

		Married couple	Cohabiting couple	Lone parent	All other households	Total	Total with non-dependent children
		No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Sevenoaks	No.	3,179	240	1,562	42,039	47,020	4,981
	%	6.8%	0.5%	3.3%	89.4%	100.0%	10.6%
Tunbridge Wells	No.	2,579	231	1,427	42,937	47,174	4,237
	%	5.5%	0.5%	3.0%	91.0%	100.0%	9.0%
Kent	%	5.7%	0.5%	3.2%	90.6%	100.0%	9.4%
South East	%	5.5%	0.5%	3.1%	90.9%	100.0%	9.1%
England	%	5.6%	0.5%	3.5%	90.4%	100.0%	9.6%

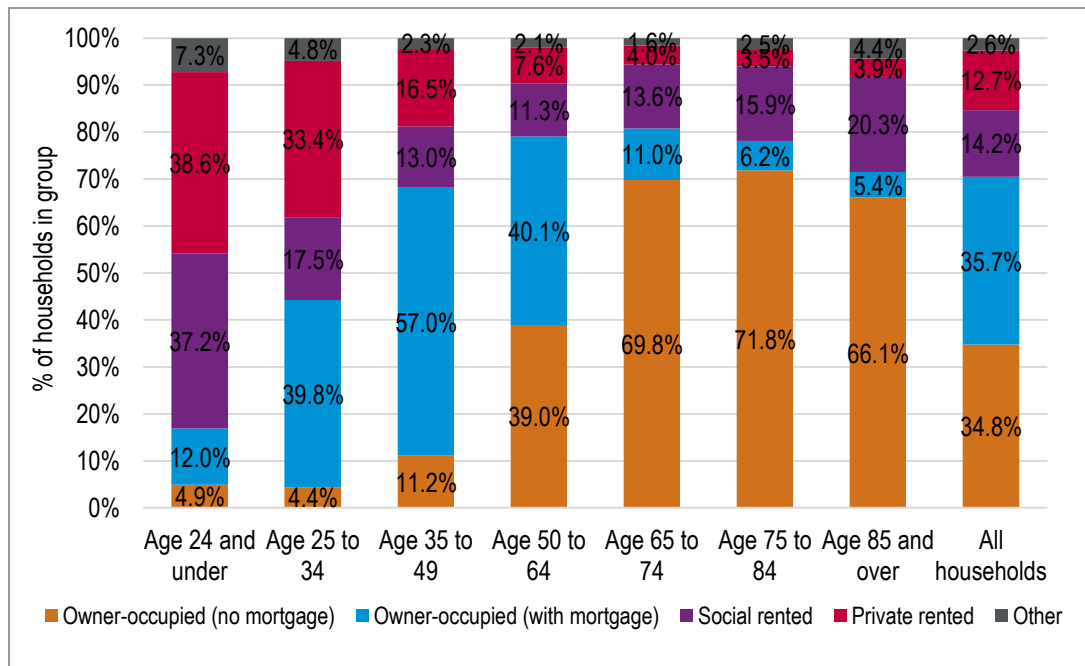
Source: 2011 Census

7.66 When considering households that are currently headed by a younger person we can use 2011 Census data to look at some key characteristics. The figure below shows the tenure groups of

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these households (compared with other age groups). The data clearly shows that very few younger households are owner-occupiers with a particular reliance on the private rented sector and to a lesser degree social rented housing.

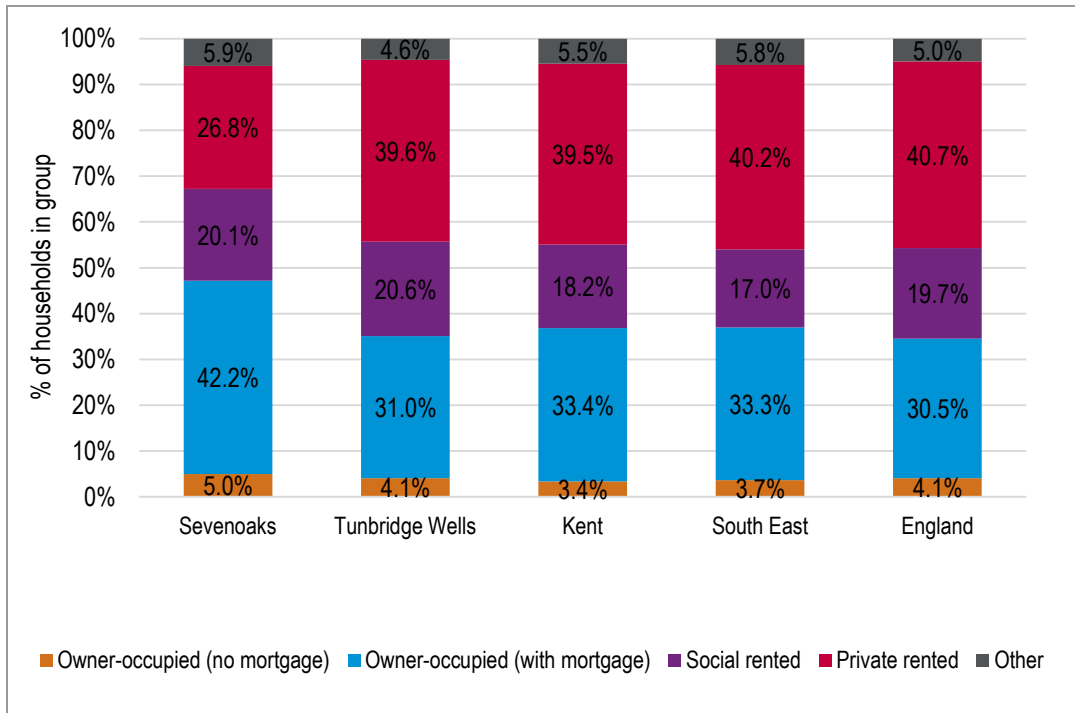
Figure 75: Tenure by age of HRP – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells



Source: 2011 Census

7.67 When looking at the tenure groups of younger households by district (based on household reference persons aged under 35) the data shows similar patterns in all areas (i.e. a high reliance on the private rented sector). This is particularly strong in Tunbridge Wells with a somewhat lower figure (of 27%) being seen in Sevenoaks. Compared with County, regional and national data, Sevenoaks shows a lower reliance on the private rented sector and a higher proportion of owner-occupiers – trends in Tunbridge Wells are broadly similar to that seen in other locations.

Figure 76: Tenure of households aged under 35 – by local authority

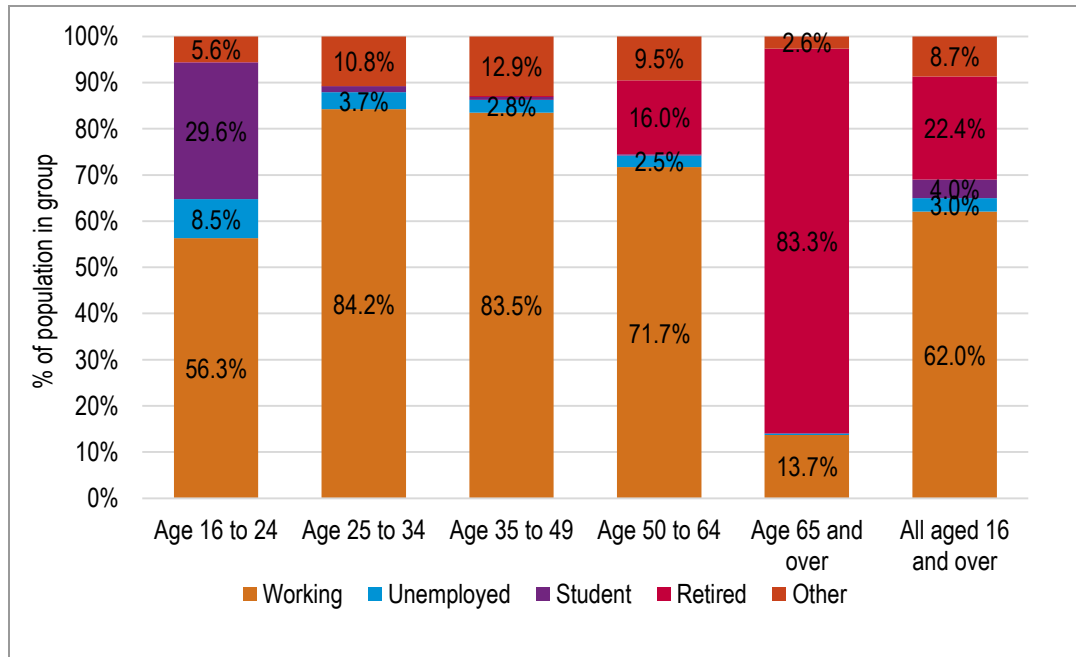


Source: 2011 Census

7.68 Census data can also be used to look at economic activity rates; including employment and unemployment levels. Data about this is shown in Figure 77. The data shows that younger people are more likely to be unemployed than other age groups. The data shows that of the population aged 16-24 some 8% are unemployed, along with 4% of the 25-34 age group.

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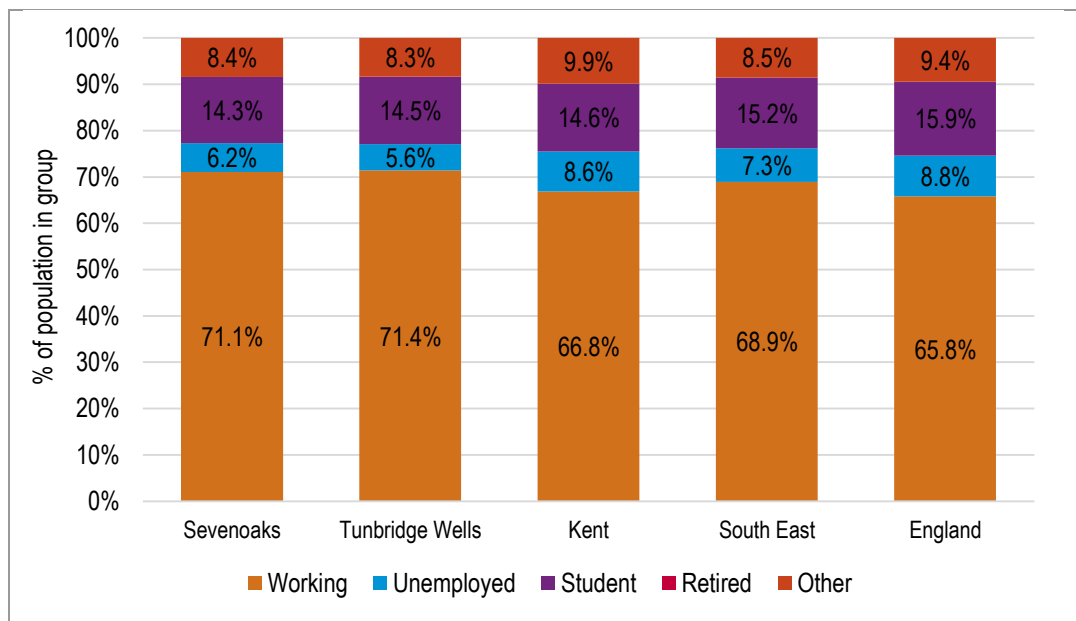
Figure 77: Economic activity by age – Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells



Source: 2011 Census

7.69 Data about economic activity has been provided below at a more localised level for the population aged under 35. The data shows that both Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells have around 6% of younger people who are unemployed. Compared with other locations (notably England) the data shows a relatively low level of unemployment amongst younger people in the two local authorities.

Figure 78: Economic activity by location (people aged 16-34)



Source: 2011 Census

Build-to-Rent

- 7.70 The size of the Private Rented Sector has grown in both Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells, and in Tunbridge Wells in 2011 accommodated more households than social rented housing.
- 7.71 Between 2001-11, the number of households living in the Private Rented Sector grew by 2046 in Sevenoaks, and 3460 in Tunbridge Wells; with the size of the sector increasing – from accommodating 6.8% to 10.8% of households in Sevenoaks; and from 10.6% to 16.9% of households in Tunbridge Wells. The evidence is clear that it has been the major growth sector in the housing market.
- 7.72 Linked in part to this, there is an increased interest from developers in “Build to Rent” housing, which is specifically built not for open market sale but for the Private Rented Sector. There is evidence occupier demand, linked to high house prices and borrowing restrictions which have resulted in an pool of young people in particular who are renting for longer.
- 7.73 The sector provide the opportunity for good quality, well-managed rental accommodation which is purpose-build. In particular the sector provides the opportunity to boost overall housing delivery, as it does not compete directly with traditional housing development schemes which are built for sale. There are a number of active institutional investors and developers who are actively engaged in the sector.
- 7.74 Government has been promoting Build-to-Rent housing. It has set up a Private Rented Sector Taskforce; and supported delivery through other measures – including a Build to Rent Fund which provides Government-backed loans to support new development.
- 7.75 The sector is currently relatively small, but is one with growth potential. To support development of Build to Rent housing, the Council may well however need to be flexible in how affordable housing policies are applied. The financing of development is different from that of market-led development schemes where the properties are sold within a short-time of completion, generating a capital receipt. For private rental development, the return on the investment is staggered over a number of years. This impacts on finance costs and overall scheme viability.
- 7.76 We would expect potential sites suitable for this type of product to be focused in the main towns and close to transport hubs.

Custom/Self-Build

- 7.77 SHMAs need to investigate the contribution that self-builds makes toward the local supply. *Laying the Foundations – a Housing Strategy for England 2010* sets out that only one in 10 new homes in

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Britain was self-built in 2010 – a lower level than in other parts of Europe. It identifies barriers to self or custom-build development as including:

- A lack of land;
- Limited finance and mortgage products;
- Restrictive regulation; and
- A lack of impartial information for potential custom home builders.

- 7.78 Government aspires to make self-build a ‘mainstream housing option’ and has thus sought to address these issues.
- 7.79 There are now a number of websites which provide information on self- and custom-build housing, including www.self-build.co.uk, www.selfbuildportal.org.uk and www.nacsba.org.uk. The level of information and advice available is increasing. The Councils could signpost people to these.
- 7.80 Government is proposing to introduce a “Right-to-Build” whereby Councils are required to set up and maintain a register of individuals who wish to build their own homes; and to use private sector land to provide service plots for individuals who want to build their own homes. A number of “vanguard” councils have been identified to test how this might work.
- 7.81 Government has also introduced a £150 million Custom Build Service Plots Loan Fund, through which developers can bid for loan finance to bring forward serviced plots with planning permission which can be sold to individuals for custom-build development. Government has also mooted at extension of the Help-to-Buy Scheme to Custom Build, allowing potential self-builders to access finance with a 5% deposit. These schemes aim to increase land supply, and address barriers identified above.
- 7.82 The SHMA needs to consider potential demand for self- or custom-build development. Sevenoaks District Council has set up a register of persons interested in self- or custom-build, but at the time of writing this report only one person has registered. As yet, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is still to set up a register and wider information available is somewhat limited.
- 7.83 We have sought principally to use the Custom Build Register maintained by BuildStore to consider potential demand. These are shown below, and should be treated as an indicative assessment as at September 2015.

Table 75: Interest in Self- and Custom-Build, Sept 2015

	Persons registered on BuildStore Custom-Build Register, Sept 2015	Active Members on BuildStore Plot Search Register, Sept 2015
Sevenoaks	39	152
Tunbridge Wells	64	340

Source: BuildStore, Sept 2015

- 7.84 There are a number of websites dedicated to advising and assisting people to self-build, of which BuildStore is the main one. BuildStore, as at September 2015, shows 7 potential plots available for self-build in Sevenoaks District; and 3 in Tunbridge Wells.

- 7.85 From a development point of view, key issues with this market are associated with skills and risk: whilst there may be notable number of people with an ‘interest’ in self-build, there is in some circumstances a significant financial outlay, risk and time-cost associated with self-build. Government’s drive is however likely to support some growth in this sector.

- 7.86 We would expect most new delivery through self-build to be on small windfall sites; although there is some potential through policy to encourage developers of larger schemes to designate parts of these as plots available for custom build.

- 7.87 While the focus of Self-build is understandably for market housing, there are opportunities for delivery of affordable homes through this method. One example of this is the ‘Build!’ programme run by Cherwell District Council in Oxfordshire. This programme offers individuals or interested groups the opportunity to come together to either build a new home, or to renovate and decorate an existing property. These properties are eventually available on a shared ownership or affordable rent tenure. In return for their labour, participants would receive reduced purchase price or lower rental rates. The level of discount applied would reflect the individual’s involvement in the build or renovation process.

- 7.88 Overall self- and custom-build homes is a small sector of the housing market, but one with some potential to grow. It can help to increase overall housing delivery.

- 7.89 To support growth, it would be appropriate for the Councils to consider whether planning policy for larger sites should require an element of land to be put aside to support Custom-build housing. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council should also investigate putting in place a register of individuals with an interest in Custom-Build to provide more detailed information on demand, to support and provide a justification for seeking provision of plots on larger development schemes.

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Summary and Implications – Specific Groups of the Population

- 7.90 A key issue over the period to 2033 will be meeting the needs of a growing older population, driven by demographic changes including increasing life expectancy. The number of people aged 65 and above expected to increase by 24,000 (54%) over the 20-years from 2013 to 2033. Demographic change is likely to see a requirement for additional levels of care/support along with provision of some specialist accommodation (particularly in the market sector).
- 7.91 A growing older population will generate a need for specialist housing, as well as potentially nursing/ care home provision. It will also result in a need for properties suitable for those with disabilities, and adaptations to existing homes to take account of people's changing needs. Demographic projections suggest a 135% increase in the population aged over 85 from 2013 to 2033 with Census data suggesting that around 80% of this age group have some level of disability.
- 7.92 The population from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups in the two local authorities is proportionally smaller than the regional and national average (and also slightly below equivalent figures for Kent). The BME population has however grown significantly over the past decade. Characteristics of BME groups (including tenure profiles and occupancy patterns) suggest that such households may be disadvantaged in the housing market. Where possible the Councils should provide advice to BME groups and in particular ensure that accommodation quality (particularly in the private rented sector) can meet the needs of such households which are disproportionately likely to contain children.
- 7.93 As we might expect, younger households have a greater reliance on rented accommodation than other groups. Given that the housing options for young people may be more limited than for other groups it will be important to monitor the accommodation quality – this will need to focus on HMOs given general trends of an increase in house sharing over time.
- 7.94 The analysis also points to potential for growth in the Private Rented Sector, including Build to Rent; but suggests that affordable housing policies may need to be applied somewhat flexibly given the different economics of this form of development compared to traditional market-led housing development schemes.
- 7.95 Lone parents are particularly disadvantaged in the housing market with a high reliance on rented housing. Projections suggest an increase in the number of children in the two local authorities over the next few years and if past trends are repeated this will also see an increase in the number of lone parents. Again advice about housing options and maintaining a good quality of accommodation will be critical to ensure that such households' needs are best met and that children are provided with a full range of opportunities (e.g. education) as they grow up.

- 7.96 Self- and Custom-Built Homes are identified as a further potential growth sector, with evidence of demand in both authorities. This is a small sector, but one with growth potential; and the analysis identifies a number of means through which the sector can be supported – including potentially through identifying plots on larger development schemes.

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8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 This final section of the report draws together the preceding analysis to draw conclusions (leaving aside supply-based considerations) on:

- Overall housing need;
- Need from different sizes of homes (both market and affordable); and
- Needs for particular types of homes, particularly from the growing older population.

8.2 This report defines a West Kent Housing Market Area (HMA) which includes Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells and extends to include Crowborough, Hawkhurst and Heathfield. Use of a 'best fit' to local authority boundaries would include Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells; but there are evident cross-boundary interactions with the northern parts of Rother and Wealden in East Sussex; between Swanley and Dartford; and with London.

8.3 An assessment of housing need is undertaken following the approach set out in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). This is one whereby the latest population and household projections are a starting point; and then consideration is given as to whether this needs to be adjusted to take account of market signals, evidence of affordable housing need or to support expected economic growth. This is a prescribed approach, which is clearly set out by Government, and against which the evidence base is tested – such as at local plan examinations. This approach is used to define the full, objectively assessed need (OAN) for housing on a 'policy off' basis. Housing need is defined for the two local authorities of Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells as the NPPF requires (and as clarified by the case law)¹⁷.

8.4 As national policy requires, the SHMA findings purposely "leaves aside" supply-side considerations and constraints to development – including land availability, infrastructure and Green Belt. These considerations are applied in bringing together the evidence, and testing options for development as part of the plan-making process. In effect, national policy sets out that development needs should be assessed leaving aside constraints (Stage 1); and then brought together with evidence related to land availability, development constraints, infrastructure and unmet housing needs from other areas in deriving policy targets for housing provision through the development of local plans (Stage 2). The requirement for this two stage approach is clearly outlined in the case law¹⁸.

8.5 Whilst national policy sets the bar high in terms of seeking to meet housing need¹⁹, and the ability to do so needs to be tested as part of the plan-making process, the housing need identified in the SHMA is not a housing target – and there may be sound reasons as to why the identified housing need cannot be sustainably accommodated.

¹⁷ Satnam Millenium Ltd. V Warrington BC [2015] EWHC 370 (Admin)

¹⁸ City and District Council of St Albans vs. Hunston Properties Ltd [2013] EWCA Civ. 1610

¹⁹ The Hunston Case describes this as a "consideration of particular standing"

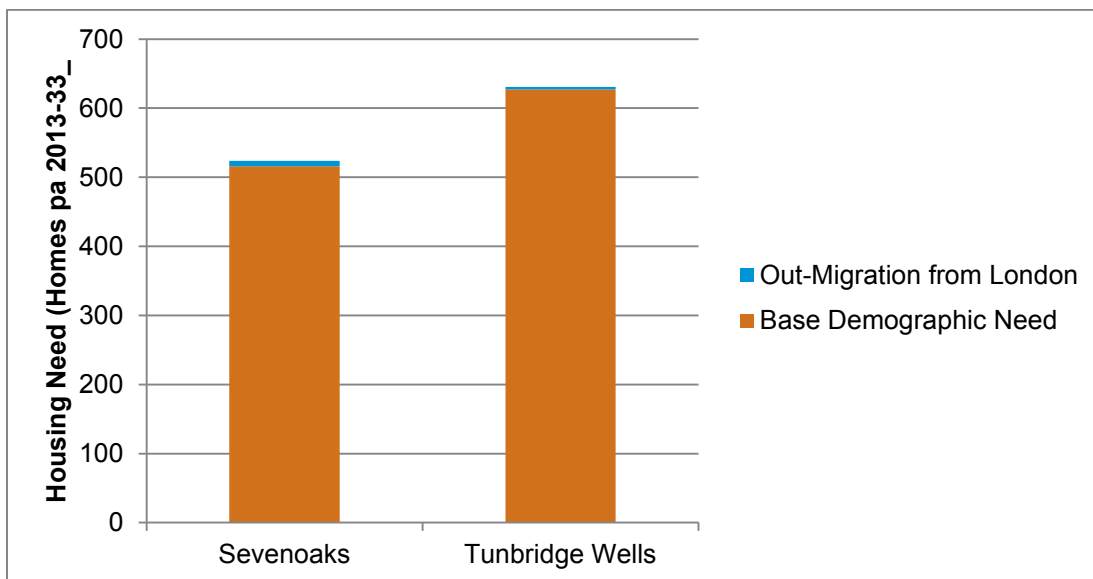
- 8.6 Housing targets will be set in local plans. The SHMA provides an important input into setting targets for housing provision, but these will also take into account factors such as the supply of land for new development, Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, local infrastructure capacity and wider environmental constraints. These factors may limit the amount of development which can be sustainably accommodated.

Demographic Projections – the Starting Point

- 8.7 Planning Practice Guidance sets out that “*household projections published by the Department for Communities and Local Government should provide the starting point estimate of overall housing need.*” The most up-to-date projections are the 2012-based CLG Household Projections published in February 2015. These projections were underpinned by ONS (2012-based) Sub-National Population Projections (SNPP) – published in May 2014.
- 8.8 The SNPP are based on trends in births, deaths and migration. Migration is projected based on trends in domestic migration over the 2007-12 period; and international migration between 2006-12 constrained to ONS national population projections. The projections are dynamic, and take account of how the age structure of the population in different areas is expected to change over time, and how this can be expected to influence migration flows.
- 8.9 Given that the projections are influenced by trends between 2007-12, a period which included an economic recession, the analysis suggests a moderate increase in migration from London might be expected moving forwards. The potential impact of this has been modelled using assumptions consistent with those adopted in Further Alternations to the London Plan (FALP).
- 8.10 The report concludes that an appropriate trend-based demographic projection would see population growth of 19,900 (17.0%) in Sevenoaks District and 19,200 (16.6%) in Tunbridge Wells Borough over the 2013-33 period.
- 8.11 The report applies (age-specific) assumptions on household formation to the population projections, and includes an allowance for vacant and second homes within the housing stock (based on levels shown by the 2011 Census). This results in a demographic-led need for 524 homes per year (2013-33) in Sevenoaks, and 631 homes per year in Tunbridge Wells. These provide the ‘starting point’ for assessing housing need, following the approach in the Planning Practice Guidance.

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Figure 79: Demographic-Led Assessment of Housing Need, Homes per Year 2013-33



8.12 The assessment is based on the latest available evidence, draws on the official projections which are advocated in Planning Practice Guidance as based on nationally-consistent assumptions, and which take account of how changes in the size and structure of the population in different areas nationally can be expected to influence movement between areas.

Supporting Economic Growth

8.13 Following the approach in the PPG, consideration needs to be given to whether future economic performance might result in higher net migration to Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells than has been seen in the recent past. Consideration is expected to be given to employment trends and/or forecasts.

8.14 Over the 1993-2010 period (which is equivalent to the last economic cycle), employment in Sevenoaks grew by an average of 1.0% per annum. In Tunbridge Wells, employment levels were static (0.0% growth).

8.15 The report has considered economic forecasts from the East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM), from both the 2013 and 2014 model runs. The latest 2014 forecasts expect 0.8% pa growth in employment in Sevenoaks and in Tunbridge Wells – above the growth rate expected across the South East region (0.7% pa) but below that forecast across Kent (0.9% pa).

Table 76: EEFM Economic Forecasts

Area	Forecast date	Forecast Employment Growth 2013-33	% change
Sevenoaks	2013	5,200	8.9%
	2014	8,900	16.5%
Tunbridge Wells	2013	5,500	9.1%
	2014	10,000	16.8%

- 8.16 The labour supply generated in the demographic-led projections is sufficient to support the expected growth in employment in the 2013 EEFM forecasts.
- 8.17 The EEFM 2014 forecasts for Sevenoaks look reasonable set against past trends; whereas there is no substantive evidence to suggest that employment growth in Tunbridge Wells will be substantially stronger than seen historically, where employment numbers have been broadly static.
- 8.18 GL Hearn conclude that, leaving aside supply-side constraints, economic performance in Sevenoaks District could drive an increase in net migration into the area than seen historically. The economic-led projection run shows a housing need for 577 homes per annum – 10% above the need shown in the demographic-led projections. This holds the ‘commuting ratio’ (the balance between residents in work and jobs) constant, but models some improvement to employment rates principally from expected increases in women and older persons within the workforce.
- 8.19 Each authority intends to prepare studies considering economic growth and employment land needs. In light of more detailed work on economic growth potential, it may be necessary to revisit conclusions on housing need herein, depending on the scale of employment growth anticipated.

Market Signals & Affordability

- 8.20 The Planning Practice Guidance indicates that *“the housing need number suggested by household projections (the starting point) should be adjusted to reflect appropriate market signals, as well as other market indicators of the balance between the demand for and supply of dwellings.”* It identifies that where market signals point to poor and worsening affordability and an imbalance between supply and demand, an appropriate adjustment should be made to future housing provision.
- 8.21 It indicates that rather than seek to estimate the precise impact of an increase in housing supply, plan makers should increase planned supply (relative to demographic projections) by an amount that, on reasonable assumptions and consistent with principles of sustainable development, could be expected to improve affordability, and monitor the response of the market over the plan period.
- 8.22 The median house price in Sevenoaks is £302,000, and in Tunbridge Wells £260,000; both of which are above those across the wider housing market area and Kent (where the average is £210,000). The mapping of house prices undertaken however clearly shows that prices are similar to other

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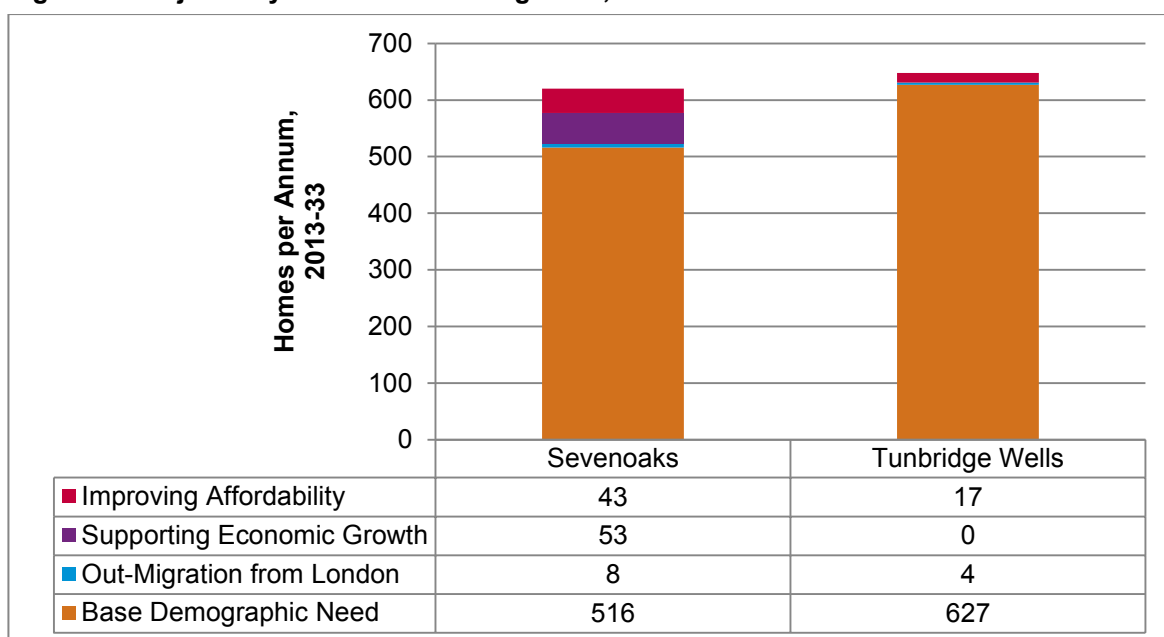
areas close to London. Whilst house price increases over the period since 2008 have been modest, particularly in real terms (taking account of inflation); growth in rents in both areas has been above inflation.

- 8.23 The evidence points to notable affordability pressures, with the lower quartile (entry level) house prices 11 times earnings of younger households in Sevenoaks; and 9.7 times earnings in Tunbridge Wells. This compares to a ratio of 6.5 nationally.
- 8.24 The analysis also suggests some real impacts of affordability pressures. Over the 2001-11 period, home ownership fell (with increasing numbers of households renting privately). Levels of over-occupied households and those in shared housing increased, albeit that levels of both remain below Kent and national averages.
- 8.25 As we might expect, the high housing costs have contributed to levels of households who require financial support in meeting their housing needs, and would be eligible for affordable housing. The report identifies a net need from 422 households per annum for affordable housing in Sevenoaks; and from 341 households per annum in Tunbridge Wells.
- 8.26 This includes need arising from concealed and homeless households – who will require additional housing – as well as from overcrowded households, or those who seek an alternative tenure of accommodation, but would release a home for other households should a new affordable home be provided. Households in the former categories will generate a need for additional homes overall.
- 8.27 The evidence from market signals, and from the affordable housing needs assessment, point to affordability pressures. The report provides evidence that deteriorating affordability (coupled with the credit crunch) resulted in a fall in household formation amongst households in their late 20s and early 30s over the 2001-11 period. An improvement in affordability can be expected to see a rise in household formation amongst these households.
- 8.28 Taking account of market conditions, where sales volumes remain below pre-2008 levels and market capacity issues, coupled with the tightening of lending criteria for accessing mortgage finance, it is reasonable to expect household formation for younger households to improve gradually over time (if supply-side considerations such as land availability are left aside). The report models an improvement in household formation rates amongst households aged 25-34, returning to 2001 levels by 2033. This adjustment is applied to the demographic and/or economic-led projections to derive conclusions on the objectively-assessed housing need.

Conclusions on Objectively-Assessed Housing Need

8.29 In drawing conclusions on the overall need for housing, we have followed the approach in the PPG, of starting out with trend-based demographic projections; and then considering whether these need to be adjusted to support economic growth or improve affordability. Drawing together the above analysis, **a need for 12,400 homes is identified over the 2013-33 period in Sevenoaks District (620 per annum); and 12,960 homes (648 per annum) in Tunbridge Wells Borough.** The need identified is built up as shown in the chart below.

Figure 80: Objectively-Assessed Housing Need, 2013-33



8.30 The assessment of housing need above does not include any specific provision from meeting unmet needs of adjoining areas. Where an adjoining authority has an unmet housing need, the potential to contribute to addressing this will need to be considered through the Duty to Cooperate.

8.31 GL Hearn considers that where an authority is planning for higher migration than is shown in trend-based projections, such as by seeking to accommodate economic growth, the upwards adjustments may provide scope to meet unmet needs from other areas. This recognises that if an authority is meeting unmet needs from another area, this would potentially support enhanced population and likely workforce growth in the recipient authority, which could contribute to support economic growth in its area.

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Need for Different Types of Homes

- 8.32 The NPPF in Paragraph 159 requires local planning authorities, through the SHMA, to identify the range of types and sizes of accommodation likely to be needed by the population in the future, including that required by those groups with specific housing needs.

Mix of Homes of Different Sizes

- 8.33 There are a range of factors which will influence demand for different sizes of homes. Section 6 modelled the needs for different sizes of market and affordable homes over the 2013-33 period, based on an understanding of how the size and structure of the population is expected to change, and analysis of how households of different ages occupy homes. The SHMA concludes that the following represents an appropriate mix of affordable and market homes to plan for over the 2013-33 period:

Table 77: Recommended Housing Mix – Sevenoaks District

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Market	5-10%	25-30%	40-45%	20-25%
Affordable	30-35%	30-35%	25-30%	5-10%
All dwellings	15-20%	25-30%	35-40%	15-20%

Table 78: Recommended Housing Mix – Tunbridge Wells Borough

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Market	5-10%	25-30%	35-40%	20-25%
Affordable	35-40%	30-35%	20-25%	5-10%
All dwellings	20%	30%	30%	20%

- 8.34 The evidence suggests that the strongest demand for market housing will be for two and three bedroom properties.
- 8.35 For affordable housing, there is a greater proportional need for one- and two-bedroom properties; however there remains a need for a balanced mix of dwellings of different sizes to come forward with delivery of larger properties being important in meeting the needs of households with an acute housing need, and releasing existing properties for other households.
- 8.36 In applying policies on housing mix to individual development sites regard should be had to the nature of the development site and character of the area, and to up-to-date evidence of need as well as the existing mix and turnover of properties at the local level.

8.37 The analysis of an appropriate mix of dwellings should also inform the ‘portfolio’ of sites which are considered through the Local Plan process, including: Site Allocations, Neighbourhood Plans and other planning documents. Equally it will be of relevance to affordable housing negotiations.

Affordable Housing Mix

8.38 In respect of the need for different types of affordable housing, the SHMA has considered what households can afford, together with the supply through re-lets of existing housing stock. Conclusions regarding the need for different forms of affordable housing are shown below:

Table 79: Need for Different Forms of Affordable Housing

	Intermediate	Social / Affordable Rent
Sevenoaks	24%	76%
Tunbridge Wells	36%	64%

8.39 The need for intermediate housing has been calculated on the basis of the proportion of households in need of affordable housing who can afford more than 80% of market rent levels. Such households might be eligible for:

- Help-to-Buy Shared Ownership
- Affordable Rent
- Rent-to-Homebuy
- Low Cost Sale / Starter Homes

8.40 Policies for the mix of affordable housing need to take account not just of the needs evidence, but the evidence base regarding development viability, as well as local policy aspirations. As such in finalising policies, needs and viability evidence should be brought together. It may be appropriate for viability studies to test potential alternative policies for the mix of affordable housing in order to support overall delivery.

Specialist Housing and Accommodation for Older Persons

8.41 The SHMA indicates that the population of persons aged over 65 accounts for 18% of the population in Tunbridge Wells; and 20% in Sevenoaks. The number of residents aged over 65+ is expected to grow substantially – by 49% in Sevenoaks and 61% in Tunbridge Wells to 2033, with particularly strong growth expected in those aged over 75, driven by improving life expectancy.

8.42 A growing older population and increasing longevity is expected to result in a substantial growth in people with dementia and mobility problems. Across the two areas, the number of people with mobility problems is expected to increase by over 6,000; with an increase of more than 2,500 persons with dementia projected (based on the SNPP) to 2033. Some of these households will require adaptations to properties to meet their changing needs whilst others may require more specialist accommodation or support. There is clear evidence of need for properties which are capable of accommodating people’s changing needs.

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- 8.43 There are currently over 2,800 units of specialist housing for older persons across the Study Area. Based principally on the expected growth in population of older persons, the SHMA estimates a need for an additional 1,300 specialist dwellings for older persons in Sevenoaks and 1,400 in Tunbridge Wells over the 2013-33 period. The need in different areas is shown below:

Table 80: Need for Specialist Housing for Older Persons, 2013-33

	Specialist Housing Need, 2013-33	Annual Need for Specialist Housing	% Overall OAN
Sevenoaks	1,319	66	11%
Tunbridge Wells	1,391	70	11%

- 8.44 It may be the case that some existing sheltered housing is in a poor condition or suffers from low demand and that there remains a need for additional extra care accommodation – such as to reduce the proportion of households accommodated in residential care. The Councils should bring the SHMA analysis together with local knowledge of demand and the stock profile in determining the appropriate mix of specialist housing in development schemes.
- 8.45 Specialist housing includes sheltered and extra care housing. The numbers of homes set out in the above table are considered to fall within a C3 use, and thus form part of the overall Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing identified in this report.
- 8.46 Decisions about the appropriate mix of specialist housing should take account of the current stock, other local needs evidence as appropriate, and policies regarding accommodation and care for older persons. The two authorities and county council should liaise as appropriate in this respect.
- 8.47 Each Council should give consideration to how best to deliver the identified specialist housing need, including for instance the potential to identify sites in accessible locations for specialist housing or to require provision of specialist housing for older people as part of larger strategic development schemes.
- 8.48 In addition to specialist housing, the potential for the wider housing stock to cater for a growing older population needs to be considered. Many older people live in homes which they may have lived in for some years. Adaptions to properties and floating support may help households requiring support to remain in their home.
- 8.49 Some households may wish to downsize, should suitable, attractive properties be available locally. This has been taken into account in deriving the findings regarding the future mix of market and affordable housing above.

Need for Registered Care Provision

8.50 Registered care provision falls within a C2 use class, with households who live in care homes counted as part of the institutional rather than the household population. As such provision of residential care is treated in the analysis of housing need separately in this report from that for C3 dwellings.

8.51 The SHMA indicates a net need for 511 C2 bedspaces for older persons in Sevenoaks and 796 bedspaces in Tunbridge Wells over the 2013-33 period. The assessment should be treated as indicative, and does not seek to set policies in how older persons with care needs should be accommodated.

Table 81: Need for Residential/ Nursing Care Bedspaces

Change in institutional population aged 75+, 2013-33	
Sevenoaks	511
Tunbridge Wells	796

8.52 These figures are important to note if the Councils intend to include C2 class uses in their assessment of 5-year housing land supply as it will be necessary to include figures on both the need and supply side of the equation.

Self and Custom-Build Homes

8.53 The SHMA indicates that there is potential for growth in housing delivery through self- and custom-build housing. The SHMA provides indicative information on needs, based on data from BuildStore, as shown below.

Table 82: Registered Interest in Self and Custom-Build Homes, Sept 2015

	Persons registered on BuildStore Custom-Build Register, Sept 2015	Active Members on BuildStore Plot Search Register, Sept 2015
Sevenoaks	39	152
Tunbridge Wells	64	340

8.54 To support growth in this market segment, responding to Government policy, it would be appropriate for the Councils to consider whether planning policy for larger sites should require an element of land to be put aside to support Custom-build housing. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council should also investigate putting in place a register of individuals with an interest in Custom-Build to provide more detailed information on demand, to support and provide a justification for seeking provision of plots on larger development schemes.

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Build-to-Rent

- 8.55 The Private Rented Sector has grown significantly in size over the 2001-11 period in both Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells. There is potential, moving forwards, for institutional investment in 'Build-to-Rent' housing schemes.
- 8.56 The Build-to-Rent sector is currently small but there is growth potential. It can contribute positively to overall housing delivery, however the Councils may need to consider how affordable housing policies are applied to this Private Rented Sector housing, given that the viability of such schemes is very different to those of more 'traditional' market or mixed-tenure developments.

Meeting the Needs of Other Vulnerable Groups

- 8.57 The SHMA has considered the needs of a number of other vulnerable groups. The two local authorities have a relatively modest Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population, but one which has been growing. BME households may be disadvantaged in the housing market. Where possible the Councils should provide advice to BME groups and in particular ensure that accommodation quality (particularly in the private rented sector) can meet the needs of such households which are disproportionately likely to contain children.
- 8.58 The evidence also suggests that lone parent households are more likely to be disadvantaged than other household groups. Advice on housing options and securing good quality of accommodation will be critical to ensure that such households' needs are best met and that children are provided with a full range of opportunities.
- 8.59 Younger households in the two areas typically have a higher reliance on rented accommodation. Given that the housing options for young people may be more limited than for other groups it will be important to monitor the accommodation quality – this will need to focus on the quality of shared accommodation and housing within the Private Rented Sector.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY AND DEFINITIONS

Definitions used in this report are set out below.

Affordable Housing Need

1. Affordable housing need is defined as the number of households who lack their own housing or who live in unsuitable housing and who cannot afford to meet their housing needs in the market.

Newly-Arising Need

2. Newly-arising (or future) need is a measure of the number of households who are expected to have an affordable housing need at some point in the future. In this assessment we have used trend data from CoRe along with demographic projections about the number of new households forming (along with affordability) to estimate future needs.

Supply of Affordable Housing

3. An estimate of the likely future supply of affordable housing is also made (drawing on secondary data sources about past lettings). The future supply of affordable housing is subtracted from the newly-arising need to make an assessment of the net future need for affordable housing.

Assessment of Affordability

4. Affordability is assessed by comparing household incomes, based on income data modelled using a number of sources including CACI, ASHE, the English Housing Survey (EHS) and ONS data, against the cost of suitable market housing (to either buy or rent). Separate tests are applied for home ownership and private renting (in line with the SHMA Guidance) and are summarised below:
 - A. Assessing whether a household can afford home ownership: A household is considered able to afford to buy a home if it costs 3.5 times the gross household income – CLG guidance suggests using different measures for households with multiple incomes (2.9×) and those with a single income (3.5×), however (partly due to data availability) we have only used a 3.5 times multiplier for analysis. This ensures that affordable housing need figures are not over-estimated – in practical terms it makes little difference to the analysis due to the inclusion of a rental test (below) which tends to require lower incomes for households to be able to afford access to market housing;
 - B. Assessing whether a household can afford market renting: A household is considered able to afford market rented housing in cases where the rent payable would constitute no more than 30% of gross income. The choice of an appropriate threshold is an important aspect of the analysis, CLG guidance (of 2007) suggested that 25% of income is a reasonable start point but also notes that a different figure could be used. Analysis of current letting practice suggests that letting agents typically work on a multiple of 40% (although this can vary by area). Government policy (through Housing Benefit payment thresholds) would also suggest a figure of 40%+ (depending on household characteristics). Hence a pragmatic view has been taken in this assessment with a figure of 30% being adopted. Analysis has also been carried out to test the sensitivity of affordable need at different percentages (from 25% to 40%).
5. It should be recognised that a key challenge in assessing affordable housing need using secondary sources is the lack of information available regarding households' existing savings. This is a key factor in affecting the ability of young households to purchase housing particularly in the current market context where a deposit of at least 10% is typically required for the more attractive mortgage

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deals. The 'help to buy' scheme is likely to be making some improvements in access to the owner-occupied sector although at present this is likely to be limited (although the impact of recent extensions to this scheme to include the second-hand market should be monitored moving forward). In many cases households who do not have sufficient savings to purchase have sufficient income to rent housing privately without support, and thus the impact of deposit issues on the overall assessment of affordable housing need is limited.

Affordable Housing

6. The NPPF provides the definition of affordable housing (as used in this report). The following is taken from Annex 2 of NPPF.

"Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should:

- *Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices;*
- *Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision."*

7. Within the definition of affordable housing there is also the distinction between social rented affordable rented, and intermediate housing. Social rented housing is defined as:

"Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also include rented housing owned or managed by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency as a condition of grant."

8. Affordable rented housing is defined as:

"Rented housing let by registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent."

9. The definition of intermediate housing is shown below:

"Intermediate affordable housing is 'Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents. These can include shared equity products (e.g. HomeBuy), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent but does not include affordable rented housing."

Specialist Housing

10. This is housing that has been specifically designed to meet the needs of people with particular needs. It can refer to housing that has been purpose designed or designated for a particular client group to assist tenants to live independently.

Sheltered Housing

11. Sheltered Homes are self-contained properties designated for older people that are linked to and supported by sheltered housing support staff. The support staff provides housing support to tenants to assist them live independently

Extra Care Housing

12. Extra Care Housing is designed with the needs of frailer older people in mind and with varying levels of care and support available on site. Extra-care housing is sometimes called very sheltered housing.

Registered Care Provision

13. This is housing for people living in registered care homes which are managed and run by a care provider who is responsible for all aspects of their daily needs and wellbeing. Such housing is not self-contained and is often referred to as either residential or nursing care.

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APPENDIX B: ANALYSIS OF LOCAL PRICES AND RENTS

Local Prices & Rents

1. An important part of the SHMA is to establish the entry-level costs of housing to buy and rent – this data is then used in the assessment of the need for affordable housing. The affordable housing needs assessment compares prices and rents with the incomes of households to establish what proportion of households can meet their needs in the market, and what proportion require support and are thus defined as having an ‘affordable housing need.’
2. In this appendix we establish the entry-level costs of housing to both buy and rent across the study area. Our approach has been to analyse Land Registry and Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data to establish lower quartile prices and rents. For the purposes of analysis (and to be consistent with CLG guidance) we have taken lower quartile prices and rents to reflect the entry-level point into the market.
3. Table 83 shows estimated lower quartile property prices by dwelling type. The data shows that entry-level costs to buy are estimated to start from about £150,000 for a flat (in either area), and rising to £435,000 for a detached home in Sevenoaks District. Prices for all types of accommodation other than detached homes are fairly similar in the two areas. Looking at the lower quartile price across all dwelling types the analysis shows a range from £205,000 in Tunbridge Wells, up to £232,500 in Sevenoaks.

Table 83: Lower quartile sales prices by type (2014)

Dwelling type	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells
Flat	£150,300	£149,700
Terraced	£206,400	£208,000
Semi-detached	£250,000	£250,000
Detached	£435,000	£385,000
All dwellings	£232,500	£205,000

Source: Land Registry (2014)

4. A similar analysis has been carried out for private rents using Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data – this covers a 12-month period to September 2014. For the rental data information about dwelling sizes is provided (rather than types); the analysis shows an average lower quartile cost (across all dwelling sizes) of between £675 per month (in Tunbridge Wells), rising to £850 in Sevenoaks. When compared with the price data, it is worthwhile to note that rents in Sevenoaks are higher for all dwelling sizes – with the price data figures broadly similar other than for larger (detached) properties.

Table 84: Lower quartile private rents by size and location (year to September 2014) – per month

Dwelling type	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells
Room only	-	£368
Studio	-	£475

1 bedroom	£695	£595
2 bedrooms	£825	£795
3 bedrooms	£1,100	£850
4+ bedrooms	£1,900	£1,488
All dwellings	£850	£675

Source: Valuation Office Agency

5. In addition to rental costs from our internet survey we have looked at the maximum amount of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) payable on different sized properties within the area. Maximum LHA payments are based on estimates of rents at the 30th percentile and should therefore be roughly comparable with our estimates of lower quartile costs.
6. The geographical areas used to determine LHA are not however co-terminus with local authority boundaries and so any comparison is not exact. LHA levels are based on Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMA). The BRMA is an area where a person could reasonably be expected to live taking into account access to facilities and services for the purposes of health, education, recreation, personal banking and shopping (as defined by the Rent Office).
7. Parts of each of the two local authorities fall into three different BRMAs, however the majority of both districts are within the High Weald BRMA – this area does extend some way beyond the boundaries of the two local authorities and most notably includes the towns of Tonbridge, Crowborough and Uckfield (in East Sussex). A small part of Sevenoaks District is within the North West Kent BRMA (Swanley being the most notable settlement) whilst small parts of Tunbridge Wells are within the Ashford BRMA. Given that the majority of the two areas are within the High Weald BRMA, this area has been used for comparison purposes.
8. Table 85 therefore shows the LHA rates in the High Weald BRMA, along with the lower quartile rents identified from the VOA analysis above. The analysis shows that maximum LHA payments are lower than lower quartile rents for all property sizes in Sevenoaks and lower for all sizes other than three bedroom properties in Tunbridge Wells. This analysis would suggest that some households may find it difficult to secure a private rented tenancy without having to top-up benefit payments to be able to afford the rent.

Table 85: Maximum LHA payments by Size and BRMA (per month)

Size	High Weald BRMA	Sevenoaks (LQ)	Tunbridge Wells (LQ)
Room only	£335	-	£368
1 bedroom	£587	£695	£595
2 bedrooms	£765	£825	£795
3 bedrooms	£967	£1,100	£850
4 bedrooms	£1,460	£1,900	£1,488

Source: VOA data (April 2015)

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Cost of Affordable Housing

9. Traditionally the main type of affordable housing available in an area is social rented housing and the cost of social rented accommodation by dwelling size can be obtained from Continuous Recording (CoRe) – a national information source on social rented lettings. Table 86 illustrates the rental cost of lettings of social rented properties by size in 2013/14. As can be seen the costs are below those for private rented housing indicating a gap between the social rented and market sectors. This gap increases for larger properties. The figures in the table include service charges.

Table 86: Monthly social rent levels

Size	Sevenoaks	Tunbridge Wells
1 bedroom – average	£399	£397
2 bedrooms – average	£464	£483
3+ bedrooms – average	£521	£538
Lower quartile (all sizes)	£418	£398

Source: CoRe (2014)

10. Changes in affordable housing provision has seen the introduction of a new tenure of affordable housing (Affordable Rented). Affordable rented housing is defined in the NPPF as being '*let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable)*'. In the short-term it is likely that this tenure will replace social rented housing for new delivery.
11. Affordable Rented housing can therefore be considered to be similar to social rented housing but at a potentially higher rent. The 80% (maximum) rent is to be based on the open market rental value of the individual property and so it is not possible to say what this will exactly mean in terms of cost (for example the rent for a two-bedroom flat is likely to be significantly different to a two-bedroom detached bungalow). In addition, market rents for new-build homes are likely to be higher than within the existing stock and may well be in excess of 80% of lower quartile rents. However, for the purposes of analysis we have assumed that the 80% figure can be applied to the lower quartile private rented cost data derived from VOA information.

APPENDIX C: EXTENDING PROJECTIONS TO 2035

1. The projections run in this report are summarised below:
 - **SNPP** – based on the 2012-based subnational population projections (SNPP) with an update to include 2013 ONS mid-year population data (MYE). Household formation/headship rates based on 2012-based CLG household projections (SNHP)
 - **London Adjustment** – the same assumptions as SNPP but with an uplift to population growth post-2017 to take account of post-recession changes in migration patterns to/from London
 - **10-year Migration Trends** – a demographic projection based on levels of migration over the past ten years (2003-13). Household formation/headship rates based on 2012-based SNHP
 - **UPC Adjustment** – a demographic projection linked to the SNPP but with an adjustment to take account of Unattributable Population Change (UPC) within ONS components of change data (headship again from the SNHP)
 - **2013 EEFM** – projection linked to estimates of population growth required to meet the job growth forecasts in the 2013 East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM) - headship again from the SNHP
 - **2014 EEFM** – projection linked to estimates of population growth required to meet the job growth forecasts in the 2014 EEFM - headship again from the SNHP
 - **SNPP with Affordability Adjustment** – the same projection as SNPP but with an uplift to the household formation/headship rates for people aged 25-34.
 - **2014 EEFM with Affordability Adjustment** – the same projection as 2014 EEFM but with an uplift to the household formation/headship rates for people aged 25-34. This projection has only been run for Sevenoaks.
 - **London Adjustment with Affordability Adjustment** – the same projection as London adjustment but with an uplift to the household formation/headship rates for people aged 25-34. This projection has only been run for Tunbridge Wells

2. The tables overleaf provide estimates of the housing need set against the range of projections set out in the report. The figures in the tables below provide the overall need and annualised figures. As well as the core projection period of 2013-33, the analysis has been expanded to provide outputs for the 2013-35 period.

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Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Strategic Housing Market Assessment
 Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Councils, Final Draft Report, September 2015

Table 87: Results of Projections – Sevenoaks

Projection	2013-33		2013-35	
	Total need	Per annum	Total need	Per annum
SNPP	10,317	516	11,267	512
London adjustment	10,479	524	11,450	520
10-year migration trends	9,638	482	10,491	477
UPC adjustment	9,928	496	10,833	492
2013 EEFM	8,635	432	9,380	426
2014 EEFM	11,543	577	12,641	575
SNPP with affordability adjustment	11,138	557	12,109	550
2014 EEFM with affordability adjustment	12,394	620	13,516	614

Table 88: Results of Projections - Tunbridge Wells

Projection	2013-33		2013-35	
	Total need	Per annum	Total need	Per annum
SNPP	12,532	627	13,639	620
London adjustment	12,618	631	13,738	624
10-year migration trends	11,191	560	12,071	549
UPC adjustment	16,669	833	18,253	830
2013 EEFM	10,353	518	11,197	509
2014 EEFM	13,600	680	14,835	674
SNPP with affordability adjustment	12,874	644	13,995	636
London adjustment with affordability adjustment	12,961	648	14,096	641

Item 8 – Otford Village Design Statement

The attached report was considered by the Planning Advisory Committee on 13 October 2015, relevant minute extract below:

Planning Advisory Committee - 13 October 2015 (Minute 22)

Members considered the report which proposed that the Village Design Statement (VDS) for Otford which had been prepared by local groups, be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It was noted that as required by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended) Consultation Statements had been prepared for each document.

The Planning Policy Team Leader also [tabled](#) an alternative wording for a paragraph 3.5 of the Village Design Statement (VDS) which had been received from Otford Parish Council which Members considered.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that approval be given for the adoption of the Otford Village Design Statement as a Supplementary Planning Document, subject to paragraph 3.5 being amended to read

‘3.5 The future of the Archbishop’s Palace Tower and Palace Field
The remains of the Archbishops Palace’ (c. 1518) are an iconic Otford landmark and amongst the oldest in the Sevenoaks region. They form an important part of Otford’s identity. There has been a recent proposal that ownership and responsibility for the whole site be transferred from Sevenoaks District Council, to the Otford community. This proposal has been received with a great deal of local support.’

ADOPTION OF OTFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Planning Advisory Committee

Report of the: Chief Planning Officer

Status: For Decision

Also considered by: Cabinet – 5 November 2015

Key Decision: No

This report supports all the Key Aims of the Community Plan

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Piper

Lead Officer Claire Pamberi, Ext. 7178

Recommendation to Planning Advisory Committee: That it be recommended to Cabinet that approval is given for the adoption of the Otford Village Design Statement as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Recommendation to Cabinet: That approval be given for the adoption of the Otford Village Design Statement as a Supplementary Planning Document

Reason for recommendation: To allow the guidance given in these documents to be brought forward by the local community, to be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Background

- 1 A Village Design Statement [VDS] is a practical document produced by local people, which can form a material consideration when assessing planning applications and development in their local area.
- 2 Once adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), a VDS can provide a clear statement of the character of a village against which planning applications can be assessed. It can also provide a guide for development and can also assist decision makers in providing guidance about how development should be approached and undertaken so as to respect the local identity and also meet the concerns of local residents.

Agenda Item 8

Proposed SPD

- 3 The proposed SPD looks at different issues affecting the village of Otford, including landscape character and open spaces, building design, conservation area, housing development, extensions and alterations, property boundaries and street furniture, public footpaths and bridleways, the Vestry Estate and surrounding land and agriculture and the surrounding natural environment. Under each category the local community have laid out some of the issues that the village faces and through this discussion have then raised a number of design principles at the end of each section that the local community would wish to see followed for development in their village.
- 4 Local groups have prepared the VDS for Otford. It is now proposed that this document be adopted as SPD. As required by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended) Consultation Statements have been prepared for each document. These are attached in Appendix A.
- 5 The statements illustrate that the proper procedures have been followed in the preparation of this document.
- 6 The document clearly reflects the wishes and aims of the local community and follows on from the policies laid out in the Development Plan. It is therefore recommended that the approval is given for them to be adopted as an SPD.

Key Implications

Financial

Any cost will be met out of the existing budget and DCLG funding for local planning authorities to support neighbourhood planning will applied.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The SPD and Neighbourhood Plans are prepared under planning legislation. The regulations regarding notification of adoption/approval of these documents will be followed.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.]

Appendices

Draft Otford Village Design Statement 2

Appendix A Consultation Statements

Richard Morris
Chief Planning Officer.

OTFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT 2



2015

PREPARED BY THE OTFORD COMMUNITY

THE OTFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT 2

FOREWORD

The first Otford Village Design Statement, (VDS) prepared in 2007, was accepted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Sevenoaks District Council in 2008. Since then, much has undergone change in our parish. It was the declared intention of those who contributed to the first VDS that a revised version be updated as circumstances in planning changed.

This new document (VDS2) has subsequently been approved by Sevenoaks District Council as a further Supplementary Planning Document, superseding the earlier VDS document of 2007. The revised edition (VDS 2) seeks to provide a clear expression of the community's wishes in 2015. It has taken several years in its compilation but we believe it encompasses the importance of good design within all the elements which make up a village, not just its houses. It is our hope that in the coming years VDS2 will continue to provide architects, developers and district planners with helpful information when considering applications for any buildings or extensions in Otford.

The status of this document ensures that it may be considered as material guidance by planners within Sevenoaks District Council, when considering planning applications within Otford parish in the future. It will join the Otford Parish Plan as well as the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as providing material guidance on all planning matters within the community.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has radically changed much planning regulation. Mr. Greg Clark, the minister responsible, has written: *"it makes clear that all plans and all decisions should respect the special character of each area, and in particular, the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside."* It is with that statement in mind that the Otford VDS 2 has been prepared. This document seeks to point out and emphasise the special character of Otford and its buildings, which any future planning proposals should respect.

There are still many outside pressures put upon a rural village which is in such close proximity to the Sevenoaks urban area. The parish is under threat of concentration and enlargement. Developers are continually on the look-out to purchase properties throughout the village often with the intention of replacing them with atypically larger buildings or cramped, two-for-one developments.

On our borders, large developments like the recently-expanded Sainsbury's superstore dominate our landscape and continual applications for large, new development in this important buffer zone area demonstrate how close we are to urban creep. To be able to maintain and nurture the integrity of our historic, rural village, we desperately need as much legislation and support on our side as possible. It is for that reason that this new Village Design Statement 2 is as important today as the first edition was, seven years ago.

THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first Village Design Statement was the result of much dedicated work by many individuals and groups within the village. Thanks must go to:

- The twelve members of the Design Team, who worked for over a year to collate the wide range of information and comments used in the preparation of this report and convert it all into the final text;
- The whole community of Otford, who expressed their views, participated in work shops and meetings and commented on aspects of the VDS during its preparation;
- Those outside the Design Team who offered the benefit of their insights, experience and specialist knowledge and thus enabled the accuracy, validity and potential for impact of the document to be enhanced.
- Those authorities and associations including the SDC, Kent Downs AONB, Action with Communities in Rural Kent and all those who generously gave so much of their advice and support to this project.
- Phil Clucas (MDA) whose design talents led to the final preparation of the finished printed document;

The *Village Design Statement 2* was prepared to take account of changing requirements within the village since 2007 as well as the significant amendments, both national and regional, which have been incorporated into present planning regulation.

The proposals contained within the up-dated (VDS 2) version were studied and approved by the members of the Parish Council in November 2012. A full public display of its contents then took place over two days during February 2013 in the village Memorial Hall. This event was well attended following announcements being made at the Otford Society meetings and Parish Council meetings. Residents were provided with post-it notes and pens to add their views on any factors they wished amended or deleted. These were all taken into account in the submitted version. The full draft of the proposed document was then put on-line at otford.info/vds and further comments invited. Following its submission and consideration by Sevenoaks District Council, a number of guidance amendments were recommended. These were incorporated in the final, shortened draft, submitted in October 2014.

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Designations applying to the area

The terms “parish, “village” and “village envelope” are used in this document.

The *parish* of Otford comprises the whole geographical area within the parish boundary (as designated by maps drawn up by Sevenoaks District Council.) It covers the largest area since it includes not only the built environment but also many fields, woods, rivers, railways and roads.

Village is used to refer to the main residential area, largely consisting of the Conservation Area and including those dwellings and other buildings in or emanating from the original historical village centre, based on the east-west axis of High Street and Station Road as far as the rail bridge.

Village envelope refers to the habitable area clearly designated by the SDC map and covering all the inhabited areas within the parish.

1: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND OPEN SPACES

1.1 Otford's rural setting

The landscape surrounding Otford plays an integral part in the village. It is the result of many centuries of evolution. The pattern of roads, tracks, field boundaries and hedgerows is firmly rooted in the past. Our community recognise this and have made clear that they are committed to maintaining these patterns of the historic landscape both in the village and outside. Much of Otford village and all the surrounding countryside is fortunate to be located within an area designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As such it is afforded protection against development which fails to protect or enhance its natural beauty. (See Appendix map 3)

1.2 Preserving the countryside to the North of the village

The North Downs escarpment, below which Otford is sited, has changed little since the last Ice Age. Its high position forms an iconic backdrop to the whole village. Any proposals to introduce new housing or to extend homes located on the periphery of this important landscape feature could potentially have an effect upon the whole community. Thus visible prominence should be taken into account in consideration of any proposals or applications which can affect an unspoilt view of the Downs. The SDC Core Strategy states: "*The distinctive features that contribute to the special character of its landscape ...will be protected and enhanced where possible...The character of the Kent Downs... and their settings, will be conserved and enhanced...to ensure that all development conserves and enhances the local landscape character.*" (Policy LO8) This is a view shared by Otford residents. Protecting the biodiversity of the whole downland area is also reflected in the designation of the Otford to Shoreham Downs as an area of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Otford community have indicated a clear commitment to its protection.

1.3 Green areas within the village

Otford village contains a number of green areas adjacent to homes. These include the central *Green* and *Palace Field* as well the *Recreation Ground* and *Allotments*, all located close to the village centre. Less evident are other green areas like the *Chalk Pits*, beyond the station, *Telston Park* and *Hale Lane Recreation Ground*, to the west of Otford, the *Community Woodland* beside Sevenoaks Road and *Oxenhill Woods* to the south of Tudor Drive. Each of these areas is of great importance to the community and is continually maintained and in continual use.

1.4 Preserving the countryside to the South of the village

Most of the countryside surrounding Otford is contained within the Metropolitan Green Belt (*see appendix*). It therefore enjoys national protection from creeping development.

The fields, woods and water meadows located to the south of Otford, stretching to the M26 and the nearby parish boundary, are valued by all as a green breathing space establishing the village as an independent entity separated from the northern urban area of Sevenoaks. The major role of this area is to absorb and hold heavy rainfall and reduce the risk of serious flooding by the river Darent. They form an important part of our green infrastructure.

Land lying to the north of the Vestry Estate has been worked farmland for over a century. The introduction of the M26 motorway, however, left a narrow unproductive strip running along the rising ground of Ladds Hill beside the Old Otford Road. This continues to be designated 'Green Belt' land. Residents have indicated its importance to the village as it forms an important buffer zone between the green fields and the light-industrial buildings of the Vestry Estate. Its role is perceived as protecting our village from creeping development from the Sevenoaks urban area.

1.5 Sports and playground areas

Otford has a varied and active sports community which extensively utilizes the recreation grounds and other open-space areas. Junior and senior cricket teams play on the carefully maintained cricket square and practice in the custom built nets adjoining their changing rooms in the village hall. The football club's principal pitch is flood-lit and the club utilizes a custom-built pavilion. This is owned by the Parish Council but for which the club raised most of the money. The junior football teams are based at the pavilion and pitch at Hale Lane recreation ground. An alternative recreation area at the Chalk Pits is used occasionally by the junior footballers. As well as a public court, the tennis club, which also has a junior section, plays on three hard courts. Close-by, the Otford Petanque club has its own terrain located on the recreation ground.

There is a much-used junior playground on the village Recreation Ground which is fully enclosed. A new toddler's playground has recently been installed on the Hale Lane Recreation Ground. Both are now in continual use.

Residents have indicated that on-road cycling is considered dangerous on local roads which have no provision for cyclists. It is hoped though, that funds can be raised for one of the Parish Plan's objectives, to introduce further out-doors fitness equipment for use by senior residents. The SDC Core Strategy also indicates its support '*where there is clear evidence of support from the local community*' (5.6.4)

Design Principles

- 1a** The community wish to retain the existing pattern of roads, footpaths and field boundaries. *(CS SP11/ LO.8 and ENV 13)*
- 1b** All areas within the current designated Metropolitan Green Belt should ideally be kept free of inappropriate new development. However we accept that in the light of Supplementary Local planning policy, applications may be considered under certain circumstances. *(ADMP GB1-GB9; CS SP10; RESPD 3.2, GBSPD)*
- 1c** Proposals for new homes or extensions sited on or near the periphery of the North Downs, should not compromise the uninterrupted views of this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. *(CS LO8:)*
- 1d** Every effort should be taken to protect the important agricultural land to the south of Otford. The community has indicated that particular care is required to protect the Green Belt 'buffer zone' lying beside the Vestry Estate from intrusive development. *(CS LO8; RESPD 3.2)*
- 1e** The community supports the preservation of all remaining areas of permanent pasture, cultivated land and woodland within and adjoining the village envelope and which contribute to the sense of open space within the village.

- 1f** The community fully supports all opportunities to extend or promote safe cycle routes within the parish (*CS SP2*)

NPPF= National Planning Policy Framework

CS = Sevenoaks District Council Core Strategy

RESPD = SDC Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Doc.

GBSPD = SDC Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document.

CAAMP = Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

ADMP = Allocations and Development Management Plan

2: BUILDING DESIGN WITHIN THE VILLAGE ENVELOPE

2.1 The general vernacular of village housing

Otford is a village community. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that new buildings "*should respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials...*" This is a view shared by the residents of Otford. Thus the general vernacular and colouration of new buildings will benefit by integrating easily with neighbouring homes.

Otford buildings, in the main, maintain a very traditional identity. For that reason the use of traditional facing materials on new properties appear far more suitable than non-traditional ones. These include: facings of traditional brick or tile rather than plasticised wood or composite materials; laid bricks rather than pre-fabricated blocks; tiles rather than metallic sheet. Materials which reflect the general vernacular help to integrate new design within the built community.

The evolved character of the village has relied upon a haphazard variety of individual house designs. Today, there is so much opportunity for original design to continue to bring individuality to the housing mix. Regrettably some developers seek to economise by using repetitious designs. Proposals for new homes which appear to urbanise the village by the use of repetitious designs appear inappropriate. These are out-of-place in this village. Steep roofs or shallow pitched roofs are untypical of established local design. They introduce a discordant look to the integrity of a village that still seeks to remain a rural community.

The majority of buildings in the village have two storeys. Design proposals which incorporate dormer windows facing the street, give the impression of 3-stories. Such houses would appear untypical within the Otford community. Otford's roofs are mostly covered in Kent peg or nib tiles with the occasional use of slate. Many have the traditional Kentish 'barn hip' and gable detail at the gable ends. Brick is the most common building material but there are examples of local ragstone and timber framing.

Upper floors often have tile hanging matching the roof tiles, particularly in the case of the older timber-framed buildings. The preponderance of local brick and tile imbues the settlement with an overall warm colouration. Extensive plaster rendering or painting of the facia, therefore appears out of place in Otford.

2.2 Consistency of house size

Otford is a village of typical family homes. Its houses and gardens reflect this purpose. Proposals to introduce properties whose mass far exceeds the normal requirements of a home for a single family, simply appear out-of-place and unsuitable within this small community. They can create a discordant effect upon the rest of the community.

In recent years, particularly in the north of the village, very large and un-typical homes have been permitted to be built with features such as 3-storey *Tudorbethan* designs. In discussions, the community have indicated that such properties do not fit comfortably within the design of the wider, essentially rural, village. They are not typical of the settlement and appear to erode the coherence of the overall village design.

When such out-of-scale buildings include close-boarded fencing and electric gates, the effect appears to alienate the residents from the general community. Developers however have already begun to point to such properties as 'acceptable precedents' which the community strongly feel they are clearly not. In discussions, the community considers that the building of further homes on this scale will be contrary to the aims of coherent village design.

2.3 Introducing dormer windows and roof-lights/Velux

Loft extensions have been a popular development in many of Otford's older properties with an additional 'spare' room with a small, rear dormer, created within the available loft space. There has been concern expressed however, when new development proposals include a line of dormer windows or roof-lights facing the street. This is perceived as a clear intention to introduce a third floor to the property under the guise of it being 'spare rooms'. The fact that these windows are just below the roof line is not seen as a mitigating factor in a village, largely made-up of two-floored houses. The village supports general planning policy that dormer windows and roof-lights/Velux windows should not face to the front. (With those exceptions allowable under terms of permitted development)

2.4 The perception of height

Acceptable design within the village is occasionally compromised by the difference in ground level between properties. A significant number of houses within the community are sited on rising ground. Inevitably, the perceived effect that one property can have upon another can be increased by differences in ground level. This cannot readily be appreciated from a proposed ground plan. It is suggested that architects, when considering extensions in areas of rising land, provide information on the effects of their comparative height with near-by properties.

2.5 Allowing provision for off-street parking

The pleasing design of the village relies upon restricting on-road parking to a minimum. Many outside factors contribute to parking problems but residential parking should not exacerbate the situation further.

Whilst acknowledging the requirement within the NPPF regarding car parking spaces, it is strongly recommended that any proposed development should always allow for a minimum of two off-road parking spaces per 3-bedroom household. If future extensions increase this number, then the community feels that there should be a provision for further off-road parking to match. Many residents have expressed a view that only the minimum area of a front garden should be used for parking.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

2a Respect for local building design, materials, and general colouration should be evident in any planning proposal. (*CS L07; ADMP EN1 and EN2*)

2b Whenever possible, natural materials should always be employed on fascias in preference to look-alike substitutes. (*RESPD 4.48*)

2c Proposals to introduce front-facing dormers or roof-lights/Velux windows giving the perception of a third storey are not encouraged. (*RESPD 4.34*)

2d The scale and mass of any proposed new dwelling or extended dwelling should be comparable to the majority of existing homes within the adjoining community. (*ADMP EN1 and EN2*)

2e Most houses within the village have individual designs or features. Proposals for urban-style designs which employ repeat or 'mirrored' features are therefore not encouraged. (*SP1: L07; CS L07, ADMP EN1 and EN2*)

2f It is recommended that any new development or an extension which increases the number of bedrooms, should take account of the number of off-street parking spaces it will require and where possible include this in its application or provide justification as to why it cannot be provided.

2g Proposals for any developments or extensions sited on rising ground, should carefully consider their perceived affect upon near-by properties. (*RESPD 4.16*)

2h Wherever possible, only the minimum of the available front garden area should be replaced with permeable hard-standing for cars. (*RESPD 4.56 and 4.57*)

NPPF= National Planning Policy Framework

CS = Sevenoaks District Council Core Strategy

RESPD = SDC Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Doc.

CAAMP = Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

ADMP = Allocations and Development Management Plan

3: THE OTFORD CONSERVATION AREA

3.1 Protecting our Conservation Area.

There is a great richness, variety and history contained within the centre of Otford village. The character of our Conservation Area can so easily be altered or lost through inappropriate action; no matter how apparently small it may appear. The challenge is to manage change in ways that maintain and reinforce the area's special qualities. It is for that reason that this part of the Village Design Statement has been prepared.

3.2 The content and character of the Conservation Area

The Otford Conservation Area covers some 16 hectares and contains approximately 40 listed buildings and the Scheduled buildings of the Archbishop's Palace (which is currently on the National Heritage 'At Risk' register). A separate area of Special Scientific Interest outside the Conservation Area contains the archaeological site of the Progress Roman Villa. Sevenoaks District Council produces a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) every 5-6 years and this may be used as Material Guidance when assessing the appropriateness of applications for building or extensions within the conservation area. The most recent review was in 2010. Much of the content of this part of the VDS is drawn from that document.

The Otford Conservation Area comprises the entire centre of the village. It is bordered to the west by the river bridge and to the east by the east boundary of Moat Cottage (excluding the houses of Colet's Orchard). To the north it runs from the Oast House, sited in Park Lane, down to its southern extremity along the north side of Bubblestone Road. This marks the original southern edge of the Archbishop's palace. The Conservation Area includes residential, retail and public buildings as well as the ancient monument of the Archbishop's Palace and the Norman church of St. Bartholomew – a true cross-section of village property and the historic nucleus of the settlement. The ages of the properties range from modern to medieval and earlier. There is plenty of open green space. It is essentially the unspoilt ancient heart of a typical West Kent village. The overall architectural style is an eclectic blend of the Kentish vernacular tradition.

(Details of the Otford conservation area are to be found in Appendix 3 (maps)).

3.3 Development issues within the Conservation Area

In general, building and extensions within the Conservation Area have, in the past, been sympathetically carried out. No matter how apparently insignificant or small an addition may be, if it is out-of-keeping, it can contribute to the steady erosion of the area as a whole. The community supports the view that extensions within the Conservation Area should reflect the form and character of the original building.

Views, setting and topography are particularly important. Similarly, original boundaries such as walls, fences or hedges should be retained whenever possible. Schemes for their replacement will require careful planning consideration.

The street scene, street furniture and signs should be compatible with and enhance the appearance of the area. In Otford, this is not always the case. Otford village still retains

much standard, old and often unnecessary, highways signage. Despite intensive work by the community to highlight this issue, there has been no attempt to install a style of signage which might reflecting the special status of the village as occurs in several other historic locations. The community has indicated a hope that future signage might be compatible with and enhance the appearance of the area.

Conservation plays a key part in promoting prosperity, particularly for our village retailers. A coherence of discreet shop signage would benefit the overall perception of the area and help increase the footfall of visitors. As shops change, the wishes for larger and brighter shop signage has been to the general detriment of the street scene in the village and introduced urbanization to the village High Street. A-frame display boards have been part of the street-scene for generations. When however, a local outlet employs more than one, it can become street-clutter. The visual appeal of the Conservation area appears adversely affected by advertising and promotions hoardings stuck onto shop-fronts or attached to street furniture. It is generally felt that these have an adverse effect upon the quality of this historic location by introducing unsightly clutter to a valued heritage site.

3.4 Shared space. The effect of re-design upon the village centre.

A reduction in both the volume and speed of traffic within the village is a priority for our community. Though control of traffic is not a concern of the Design Statement, the community's recommendation for 'a means to control it', can have important design implications for the centre of the village. One possible approach, proposed by the Kent Downs AONB Unit and supported by the SDC Conservation Management report (2010), would be to create a 'shared space' around the pond at the centre of the village. This method has been used very successfully in many historic English towns in order to slow traffic movement, free up pedestrian access and bring an attractive coherence to an area. The community has made clear their belief that introducing shared space into the centre of the village would benefit the design of the whole central conservation area. Because of the cost involved in amending the layout and re-surfacing the whole area, this would, if pursued, be a long-term objective for Otford. Whilst addressing the problem of speed, it would not have an effect upon the volume of traffic. It would however, create a more people-friendly and usable pedestrian space with easier and safer access to the village pond and the Green.

(For further information on this type of scheme, refer to Ministry of Transport's recommendation document: "Streets for all")

3.5 The future of the Archbishop's Palace Tower and Palace Field

The remains of the Archbishop's Palace' (c. 1518) are an iconic Otford landmark. They form an important part of Otford's identity. There has been a recent proposal that ownership and responsibility for the whole site be transferred from Sevenoaks District Council, to the Otford community. This proposal has been received with a great deal of local support.

However, the tower structure has already been registered as 'At Risk' by English Heritage and is in a progressively poor state. If the means can be found to restore the Tower to the satisfaction of English Heritage, then there is every hope that the site can form part of an active community asset, benefitting all. How the Tower may be enhanced and made of greater benefit to the village, will be a decision made with the support of English Heritage, the conservation architect and the outcome of much local discussion. (NPPF 6:55)

3.6 Areas of enhancement within the Conservation Area

A: St Bartholomew's Church

Recently, considerable restoration work was carried out to the tower of St. Bartholomew's Church, replacing an earlier cement render with the original style of lime-plaster which once covered it. The beautifully carved church porch has also undergone restoration and this has considerably enhanced this beautiful village building. Any future alterations to the interior of this medieval building should only be undertaken with considerable care and community involvement.

B: The village pond

The village pond has similarly undergone a major-make-over in recent years. Not only have its borders been carefully re-built and made impermeable, but considerable re-design of the pond's water-features have, with the re-introduction of reed-beds and small islands, made the look and lay-out of this central village feature much more attractive both to humans and bird life. Its grass borders with the road however, endure continual damage from turning lorries.

C:1 Information boards (Palace)

One of the enjoyments of visiting a Conservation Area is to gain a greater understanding of its history and role in the development of the community. There are no imaginative publicly-displayed boards within the whole Conservation Area. We hope, with local support, future opportunities will be found to respond to this need.

C: 2 Information boards (Village)

One or two of the older homes within the village have fascinating histories which, if made more generally known, could increase the enjoyment of both visitors and local residents. A proposal to introduce 'historic' plaques on village houses of particular interest is under consideration. The inspired mosaic which adorns the side of the Luyten's-designed church-hall would also benefit from an explanatory text. The objective is not to turn the village into a museum exhibit but to bring fresh interest to our rich historical environment.

D: The Heritage Centre and Solar System model

The fascinating Otford Heritage Centre (OHC) is a welcome asset to our village. Open every morning it is also staffed by volunteers over weekends. The OHC is a fund of local information, models and exhibits, used by all our local schools and very popular with visitors. The extensive Solar System model, located on the recreation ground is also a popular visitor attraction. The introduction of timber finger posts within the village centre directing visitors to these amenities would be of great help and could help provide coherence to the whole Conservation Area.

E: Archaeological remains

Within the parish, there is clear archaeological evidence of a Roman farm (Progress villa), an extensive villa complex (Church Field), a significant Roman cemetery (Frog Farm), a small settlement and several other Roman homes. It would appear that Otford was well inhabited during the Roman period. On-going work by local archaeology groups has indicated even more important finds from this period. It is therefore of paramount importance to Otford residents that no development (or extensions) should take place in what could be considered sensitive areas without a thorough archaeological watching brief being undertaken.

All of these proposals are not only to the benefit of the residents of Otford but to our many visitors, retailers and restaurants. The National Planning Policy Framework (3.28) states that it will: “*support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, (including) the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations.*”

Design Principles

- 3a** Proposal for development of any kind within the Conservation Area should take cognisance of the role it plays in determining the essential character of the area. Only appropriate materials and designs should be used at all times. *(ADMP EN4; RESPD 2.6)*
- 3b** Street furniture and signs should be compatible with and enhance the appearance of the area. Wherever possible, cluttered standard traffic signage and un-required street furniture would be better removed or replaced. *(CAAMP 4.32)*
- 3c** Original boundaries such as walls, fences or hedges should be retained whenever possible. *(CAAMP 4.33 and 4.36)*
- 3d** New or replacement shop signage should, whenever possible, be discreet in their size and colouration in order to maintain the overall cohesion of the conservation area *(ADMP SP1 and EN1; CAAMP 4.32)*
- 3e** Promotional or advertising material attached to street furniture or period buildings within the Conservation Area, including retailers, are considered out-of-place and unsuitable. *(CAAMP 4.32)*
- 3f** It is a long-term objective, voiced by the community in their Parish Plan, that the surface of the central part of the village, street and pavements be adapted to become ‘shared space’ and permit easier pedestrian routes and safer vehicle movement. *(CAAMP.12.5: NPPF 3.23)*
- 3g** The introduction of well-designed information boards would be of benefit and to the greater enjoyment of the area’s history and heritage.
- 3h** The introduction of timber finger posts giving directions to local points of interest would provide coherence to the Conservation Area.
- 3i** Every effort should be made to repair the Palace Tower, already designated as ‘At Risk’. All its parts should be protected from further weather deterioration *(Listed Building & Conservation Act Statement 5: Policy SP1: ADMP EN4)*
- 3j** No development should take place in an area considered by archaeological specialists to be of potential archaeological interest without a thorough archaeological watching brief being undertaken. *(ADMP EN4)*

Abbreviations:

NPPF= National Planning Policy Framework

CS = Sevenoaks District Council Core Strategy

RESPD = SDC Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Doc.

CAAMP = Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

ADMP = Allocations and Development Management Plan

4: HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS

4.1 It is important to maintain the separateness of the village

The individuality of Otford as a separate village is clearly recognised by the whole community as supported by the VDS research. Otford should not appear as a suburb of Sevenoaks, nor should it become one in fact or in appearance.

For this reason, any development which is proposed outside the existing built area which would have the effect of extending the village envelope into the surrounding countryside would be considered as having the potential to erode the separateness of the village settlement.

4.2 Development needs to be appropriate to a village.

The SDC Core Strategy 5.1.3 states that: *“New development must be accommodated without damaging the features that contribute to the quality of the rural environment. Therefore it is important that development is designed to respect and improve the character and distinctiveness of the area in which it is located.”* As the local characteristics of Otford are those of a rural village the community supports this statement.

Otford is a village in the countryside, surrounded by fields. It is not an urban area surrounded by houses. The SDC Core Strategy states that *‘all new housing will be developed at a density that ...does not compromise the distinctive character of the area in which it is situated’* (Policy SP7) An increase in a rural village’s housing density such as Otford, based upon urban requirements will neither help to sustain nor improve the character of this village. The community therefore wishes to ensure their view is understood.

4.3 Integration with the countryside is part of the village heritage

Throughout its history, most private homes in Otford have been constructed with sufficient space provided on either side, through which the surrounding fields and hills may be seen. It is one of the reasons visitors and residents alike find Otford so attractive and it is something which the community clearly wishes to retain. This is applicable to proposed extensions in addition to new developments, particularly if backing on to open countryside.

The community’s view is clearly supported by the SDC’s Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (RESPD). For that reason, house extensions in particular should, whenever possible, be designed to maintain the existing spacing between properties and not reduce the views of the countryside beyond. By closing a gap, an extension can steadily erode one of the special qualities of this village.

4.4 Gardens form an important part of our community

Judging from the many written comments in the VDS workshop sessions, it is clear that any form of new development should be required to incorporate clear plans for soft landscaping, including (where appropriate) the use of natural foliage on front, side and rear boundaries to provide a more evolved appearance and soften the visual impact of a new development on the surrounding area. The effects of introducing an extension can, on occasion, significantly reduce the garden and amenity area.

The loss of a growing garden is a loss for the wider community as well as the ecology of the area. Whenever possible, whether designing a new home or paving an area for parking, a space for a natural garden should always be retained in the front of a home. Our community is situated in the country, not the town and the community have clearly indicated that every effort should be made to retain a natural growing environment around our homes. Otford residents have clearly supported the view that when hard-standing is required, home owners should always try and utilise porous materials to permit the rain to enter the ground, rather than flow wastefully into local drains and sewers.

4.5 Two-for-one developments

The re-use of a single residential plot on which to build a number of houses are not encouraged in this village. Where it has taken place previously, the results have sometimes created untypical congestion within the street scene. Residents, in their questionnaire replies, have been quite clear that such examples should not set a precedent. Planning proposals should be compatible with the established surrounding properties and the available plot size. Compressing two-for-one developments into a village community can have an adverse effect upon the local area and the village as a whole. Although all development proposals will be judged on their merits, plot size and access are relevant factors. Residents have however indicated that it is important; both on environmental grounds and to preserve the cohesion of the village, that substantial garden areas remain a strong feature of Otford.

4.6 Garage development

The building of larger (often two-storey) garages can have a significant impact on the space surrounding homes. New garages should not be considered an automatic excuse to add another spare room to a property. A number of these have been allowed in Otford in recent years and in many cases, the effect has been to 'over-fill' the frontage facing the road. Residents have indicated that generally, within the village environment, garages should be only of one storey. New garages should *'fit unobtrusively with the building'*. SDC's supplementary planning document presents clarity on the matter, in that new garages should *'not have an unacceptable impact on the space surrounding buildings'* (RESPD 4.49 and 4.53)

4.7 Planning Loft Extensions and dormers

Loft extensions should not cause any alteration in the height or the pitch of a roof. An important consideration is that they should maintain a common continuity of roof profile when seen from the street. It is desirable also that dormers should always be sited to the rear of the building and be of a scale and size that complements the building. What is untypical of Otford homes is when a proposed dormer size is either of a disproportionate scale or misaligned with the other windows of the house. Front-facing dormers and roof-lights/Velux windows are not encouraged as they are felt to be un-typical and out-of-place in the village.

4.8 Extension and alterations

The majority of older Otford homes have evolved over time. It is the view of residents that all forms of extension or alteration to a building, no matter what its age, should always try and blend naturally with the existing structure by using similar materials and colouration. However extensions which are perceived to give a terracing effect are not encouraged.

4.9 Housing will be sought for older residents wishing to down-size

The community's Parish Plan set a long-term objective to create, on the principle of the almshouse, a series of low-profile properties, sited on common ground, that can be leased by older long-term residents of Otford until such time as they shall choose to leave, where-upon their capital is returned in full and the property passes to another long-term resident. Such a scheme has worked successfully elsewhere (i.e. Rockdale) but would be dependent upon suitable land becoming available, the support of the District Council and a developer willing to support such communal aims.

It is often mooted at local meetings of residents, that opportunities to create housing for older, long-term residents be sought within the parish. This is also reflected in the Otford Parish Plan. The community recognises the complexities of achieving such an aim. However it continues to seek any opportunity to realise such a wish. Core Strategy policy SP5 supports the requirement for housing being developed for older residents. One day it is hoped that Otford can build its own small 'retirement hamlet', designed to fit discreetly within the village envelope.

4.10 Otford's requests for benefits from the Infrastructure Levy

The government has introduced an Infrastructure Levy on new developments being built in the region. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) requires developers to pay a standard charge per sq.m on all qualifying new development to Sevenoaks District Council. The majority of the money raised from this levy can only be spent by the Parish Council on infrastructure, its installation or improvement. A small percentage will be allocated to those parishes where applicable developments have occurred. In the main, these funds will be used in relation to support the developments themselves however parishes have been asked to list what other infrastructure projects they may wish to support. Amongst Otford's requests which relate to future design within the village, are:

- the creation of a retirement homes community for older residents;
- funding to support the introduction of Shared Space within the village centre to control car speed and facilitate greater pedestrian movement;
- the development of an 'over-spill' car park to respond to future needs (NPPF 9:90);
- the development of Palace Field as a communal and visitor heritage facility;
- the introduction of an area for outdoor adult exercise equipment.

Design Principles

- 4a** Proposals for new dwellings should not be located in a way where the village might appear to merge with neighbouring villages or with Sevenoaks. *(CS L07 and SP1)*
- 4b** The appropriateness of new homes should conform to policy EN1 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015) and be of a scale, height and mass similar to adjoining buildings. *(CS L07; ADMP EN1 and EN2)*
- 4c** The appropriateness of any new development or extension should be judged by its prominence and/or intrusion within the landscape. *(RESPD 3.6: 3.7: 3.11: 3.12 and 3.13, AONBP)*
- 4d** Maintaining existing spaces between buildings will help integration with the surrounding countryside. This should be encouraged whenever possible. *(CS L0.8 (RESPD 4.17: 4.18 and 4.19)*

- 4e** The ratio of building to plot size should always be in harmony with other homes in the vicinity, without the effect of crowding. This is particularly applicable to applications for front extensions and 2-for-1 developments. *(CS L07)*
- 4f** Any form of extension should always try to retain a consistency of style with the original building. *(RESPD 4.48 and 4.23)*
- 4g** When building an extension, whenever possible, the original boundary materials should be retained or be re-instated. Please note the community would wish it to be noted that gaining permission for an extension does not imply permission to change the original boundary materials. *(RESPD 4.62: Summary)*
- 4h** Proposals for properties to introduce forward-facing dormer windows or roof-lights/Velux windows which appear to introduce a third storey, are not typical in Otford homes and are not encouraged *(RESPD 4.31: 4.34 and 4.35)*
- 4i** The height of the roof ridge should be similar to the majority of other properties in the surrounding street scene. *(RESPD 4.11 and 4.14)*
- 4j** Garages should generally not exceed one storey in height *(RESPD 4.49: 4.50 and 4.51)*
- 4k** In order to promote individuality in new housing, the inclusion of local vernacular designs like gables and hips are welcome as typical of the area. *(CS L07)*
- 4l** Garden size and ratio are an important element of integration with village home design and should be considered as part of any proposal *(RESPD 6.11 and 6.12)*
- 4m** In response to an initial need, support will be given by the Parish Council to advance a proposal for the building of a number of suitably designed, low-profile lease-hold homes for older residents within the parish in a suitable location. *(CS SP 54 and CS5)*

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CAAMP = Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

AONBMP – Kent Downs AONB Management Plan

AONB= Roads Handbook

5: PROPERTY BOUNDARIES AND STREET FURNITURE

5.1 Types of local boundary material

Much of the character of Otford is reflected in the house boundaries bordering public streets. Historically, Otford house boundaries have generally been formed from traditional species of hedging, or traditional picket fencing. On some residential roads, open-plan gardens with trees have been preferred, providing the area with an unenclosed environment. A large proportion of residential roads have grass verges, often carefully maintained by local residents although Kent County Council is responsible for maintaining verges which are not part of private properties. Generally, hedges and fences are low, permitting a view of the house and the land beyond. Well-maintained hedgerows commonly bound agricultural land bordering our roads.

5.2 Close-board fencing

Developers of new (mainly large) detached private homes have, in recent years, incorporated high close-boarded fencing and gates. Villagers feel that this has had an urbanising effect on the area and gives the properties an isolated and stockaded appearance. A large proportion of Otford residents consider this unattractive, untypical and unsuitable in our rural village community. A community is defined as a group of people living together, not separately. Recent revisions in planning regulations recommend such fences and their close-boarded high gates although they are not encouraged in Otford village.

5.3 Verges

Although not strictly street furniture, trees are a feature of the verges in a number of residential roads. They beautify the area and are also of ecological benefit to all. A general concern has been expressed that in recent years these roadside trees have not been maintained and that many trees have been removed by Kent County Council and not replaced.

5.4 Lighting

The residents of Otford have for many years resisted the installation of street lighting. Many properties have their own external lighting such as security or porch lights and these can be helpful to visitors. Any new proposals for lighting, in particular on new development, should be carefully placed and angled and not so powerful that they are detrimental to neighbouring properties. ADMP EN 65 is quite clear on this point.

Though Otford football pitch has high level lighting, it is not considered to set a precedent as it is not for residential use and is required for specific purpose. Should any new lighting be proposed it should be designed in a way which minimises light spill.

5.6 Planters and street furniture

There are a number of timber planters located within the village. Maintaining planters and protecting their plants from vandalism requires much attention and the volunteers and Parish Council who support this work are to be thanked.

There are also a number of well-maintained public bench seats located within the open areas of the village. Some smart cast-iron waste-bins are located on the Green and the village centre. Well designed and selected elements of street furniture, using natural materials are encouraged in Otford as they can help to enhance the character of the village. Our listed public telephone box on the Green, already forms part of the village heritage.

Design Principles

- 5a** Any proposal to incorporate high, close-boarded, fencing and gates facing the street should be discouraged (*RESPD 4.62/Summary*)
- 5b** Roadside trees are valued and should, wherever possible, be replaced if removed.
- 5c** For front boundary hedging, the use of traditional tree and shrub species or of traditional picket fencing is encouraged. (*ADMP EN1 and EN2; RESPD 6.11 and 6.12*)
- 5d** Planters, window boxes and hanging baskets are encouraged in public areas throughout the village. Members of the community should be encouraged to take responsibility for their maintenance.
- 5e** An excess of unsympathetic road and direction signs should be avoided and wherever possible redundant signs and posts removed. Signs within the village centre should, whenever possible, be of a traditional design in keeping with the village character. (*CAAMP 4.32.*)
- 5f** Within the village, an increase in sympathetically designed pedestrian signage should be encouraged. (*CAAMP 4.32:*)
- 5g** The introduction of appropriate historical information boards would be to the benefit of visitors and should be supported
- 5h** Where possible, exterior lighting in private homes should be of limited power and designed with care. New development should avoid creating light spillage to the detriment of adjoining properties or road users. (*ADMP EN 65*)

Abbreviations:

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6: PUBLIC FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS

6.1 Importance to the community

Footpaths and bridleways within the parish are the pedestrian arteries of the community, prized and used daily by the people of Otford and our many visitors. Most paths have been established for many centuries, providing a far safer route than along the busy main roads. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, there should be no diversion or obstruction of footpaths by encroachment from existing properties or new developments. The two pedestrian railway crossings in the village are essential for ease of movement, maintaining the current right-of-way and for connecting the various parts of the village.

6.2 Village Paths

Typical of these important pedestrian routes, used by a high proportion of residents to and from the village centre, is the ancient long distance footpath known as the Greenway (49). This runs from the Village Green across the railway and on to the next village of Kemsing. Other popular village paths include the path (51) connecting Sevenoaks Road to Pickmoss Lane in the village centre, and the path between Bubblestone Road and St Bartholomew's Church (50). Maintenance of these attractive, established village pedestrian routes is essential both for practical and environmental reasons. This is particularly important for the disabled and elderly who find overhanging branches and encroaching nettles an often alarming hazard.

Residents have expressed concern that on occasion, these important pedestrian arteries are not adequately maintained. Each summer many village paths become narrowed by swathes of leaning stinging nettles and brambles which are a hazard to young people especially and particularly to children in push-chairs. It is hoped that a more efficient means of maintaining the borders of the paths can be found. An inevitable consequence otherwise is that more and more people will take to their cars rather than risk walking along footpaths that are becoming unfit for purpose.

6.3 Countryside Paths

Our footpaths leading out into the countryside and valley are one of the reasons so many walkers come to visit Otford (see the footpath map for details.) The prehistoric track way, the North Downs Way (International Route E2), which follows the high chalk escarpment of the North Downs from Salisbury Plain to Folkstone, crosses the Darent Valley at this point. One can follow it from Donnington Manor Hotel, across the fields into Telston Lane (58), through the village and then north-eastward up Otford Mount (14) and along Birchin Cross Road. Despite attempts to use unsympathetic surfacing of one section, this important ancient track way still retains much of its original nature. Protecting its integrity is considered the ongoing responsibility of each generation.

Footpath 66 provides a route to Bat & Ball (Sevenoaks). Leading from St. Bartholomew's Church southward, it runs beside Palace Field down the Old Walk to cross the fields to Long Lodge. This is the location, it is believed, of one of Henry VIII's hunting lodges within what was once a deer park. The path, having crossed the railway and motorway, then skirts the land-fill site of Greatness Quarry to arrive at Bat & Ball.

Three path routes head northward up the valley toward Shoreham. Walking up Park Lane (aka. Cow Lane) from the village centre, one can bear right to take a scenic path (47) across the railway and then up the fields of the steep escarpment (60) to look back across the head of the valley to the Vale of Holmesdale and Sevenoaks atop the Lower Greensand Ridge beyond.

An alternative route is to stay on Park Lane and take the bridle path (32) which leads through the Darent Valley Golf Club to Shoreham village. This bridleway is however in serious need of maintenance. The section between Park Lane and the golf links is churned, contains deep ruts and turns to deep mud after October. Work is needed urgently on this section to level and hardcore it. During winter months it is a dangerous obstacle to walkers and our many visitors on this popular walking route.

A second path, the Darent Valley Path (17), follows a lower route across the fields to rejoin the former path to Shoreham. The recent introduction of metal self-closing gates has meant that older walkers, the disabled and young children are no longer hampered by the old fashioned, though attractive, wooden stiles.

Rye Lane follows the line of an ancient winding track from Dunton Green. Where it forms a junction with Pilgrims Way West, a footpath (43) continues northward, running parallel with the Darent. A rougher walk, but none the less pleasurable, can be enjoyed by taking the path as it follows a route across Twitton Brook and into the grounds of Filston Farm and its great oast houses. The moated Filston Hall, now a separate private residence, was once a medieval hall house, leased in 1529 to Thomas Cromwell. All these countryside paths are well used throughout the year and are generally (with a few exceptions) well maintained. Occasional information boards on the local history, flora and fauna could, in the future, bring added enjoyment to visitors and ramblers. The District Council and KCC support this view : *"...and will seek improvements in interpretation facilities to promote enjoyment and understanding of the countryside"* (Core Strategy SP10)

6.4 Private house boundary materials

Where a house boundary lies along a public footpath, security for the householders is naturally very important. However, over recent years, the convenience of using close-boarded fencing as a barrier has led some paths to look like narrow alleyways rather than footpaths. The decision by a householder to use high fencing, whilst understandable, has a wholly negative effect upon the path itself and the villagers and visitors who use it. The path becomes perceived as dangerous because it has become enclosed. High fences are also a magnet for graffiti and removal is an unwelcome job which falls on the parish office rather than the householder, who usually is unaware of the problem. In public meetings, many residents have recommended the use of robust open-mesh fencing planted through with natural shrubs, hedges and trees, rather than employing panel- or close-boarded fencing. By amending the design in this way, the pathway gains natural light and openness, and both

householder and public benefit in terms of appearance, security and privacy. Turning footpaths into narrow alleyways between high fencing is not safe for the walker or in any way community-spirited.

Design Principles

- 6a** Footpaths, bridleways, public rights-of-way and railway crossings should be kept properly maintained throughout the year. *(CS SP2)*
- 6b** In line with existing legislation, properties adjoining established footpaths should not encroach upon them or in any way make them narrower. *(CS SP2)*
- 6c** Close-boarded fencing is not encouraged as a boundary material adjoining public footpaths. With any new development householders are recommended to soften the design of their boundary by use of strong mesh or un-pointed railings with associated plant-through natural shrubs. *(CS SP2: RESPD 4.62)*
- 6d** The community have made it clear that they would not like to see trees felled and natural shrubs and flora removed from alongside public footpaths, unless to maintain the path itself. *(CS SP2: RESPD Summary)*
- 6e** Otford residents welcome the creation of new linking footpaths (statutory or permissive) and support opportunities for these being explored with landowners. *(CS SP2)*
- 6f** Greater use of interpretation boards particularly on country paths would be of great benefit to walkers and families. *(CS SP10)*
- 6g** All opportunities to support and expand rural tourism within the parish should be encouraged as well as appropriate visitor facilities. *(NPPF 3.28)*

Abbreviations:

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CAAMP = Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

OPP = Otford Parish Plan

7: THE TRADING ESTATE AND SURROUNDING LAND

7.1 Location and History

The Vestry Light Industrial Trading Estate is located near the southern parish boundary, with access on the A225, Sevenoaks Road. On the south side, this Estate adjoins the Riverside Retail Park, containing a variety of retail outlets and a supermarket, through whose car park and following the line of the ancient Gunnilda Brook, the Otford parish boundary lies.

The Vestry Estate is built upon extensive earlier brickwork excavations that were used for 70 years as a rail-supplied landfill site for Southwark Vestry (Southwark Borough Council). The area was designated a trading estate in 1960. It is separated from the village community by the east-west M26 motorway, the Otford cemetery and the public woodland of Palace Park Wood. To its west and beyond the A225, lies the expanse of attractive water-meadow land that acts as a water-retention area, reducing the likelihood of the river Darent flooding.

7.2 The Vestry Estate

Given the reclamation area that this once was, the majority of buildings are light-weight pre-fabricated warehouse structures, not requiring extensive foundations. Apart from the siting of Becket House, the majority of the buildings (warehousing and light industry) are set well back from the A225 and, as seen from the main road, do not intrude into the attractive rural quality of the local landscape. This is a designated Biodiversity Opportunity Area located between the trading estate and the Green Belt. Therefore all new building, or replacement buildings, must be sited sensitively. Proposals to site new warehousing, light industrial buildings or office buildings closer to the A225 or the M26 are unlikely to be supported by the community because of the intrusion they would have upon the essentially rural nature of the area. For similar reasons, it would be beneficial if designs for new buildings maintain a low visible profile against the skyline and do not invite attention through use of bright colours or extensive use of glass. Careful use of landscaping will support such a recommendation.

7.3 The effects of reflection and use of artificial light.

The retail and the trading estates to the south of Otford are clearly visible from the many footpaths on the surrounding hills above the village.

The effect of the sun's reflection from buildings whose design employs a lot of glass or bright colouring on their fascias can make them highly visible from a long distance away. The effect is contrary to the valued tranquillity and muted tones of the meadows and countryside which face them. For that reason, the village community appeal to commercial developers in this area of the parish bordering Sevenoaks, to be aware when designing, of the high visibility of their designs when seen from afar.

Otford is still an un-lit village. It does not employ street-lighting. That is the community's choice. Thus proposed developments which employ high-mounted lighting visible from the village are felt particularly inappropriate in the effect they may have upon residents and will be considered un-welcome.

7.4 Bartram Farm Estate

Bartram Farm was built in the early 1900s and held considerable land beyond what are now the M26 motorway and the Sevenoaks Road (A225). As happened to many such farmsteads with the advent of major road-building schemes, the original estate became untenable.

Today the Victorian farm building and its ancillary bungalow occupy the centre of a triangular site at the entrance to the Vestry Estate in front of Becket House. This is located within the Green Belt area. Within its curtilage where once there were farm buildings, there are now a wide range of independent small businesses which carry out their trade from separate utility buildings. The whole site is located above the adjoining Sevenoaks Road, being on the side of Ladds Hill which, when seen from the main road, is effectively screened with shrubs and trees. It is located on the Old Otford Road.

A number of proposals have been put forward over recent years for different forms of recreational and commercial development of this site. Until recently, all have been refused as they represented inappropriate development in the Green Belt and therefore harmful to its openness. The form and bulk of many of the proposals detracted from the character of this area and its street scene. This area is also surrounded by potential protected species and insufficient information was provided to show that the proposal would not be harmful to these species or their habitat.

Among the purposes of the Green Belt are the prevention of unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas. The Green Belt also seeks to prevent neighbouring towns merging one into another. It is therefore recognised by both Otford residents and district planners that this area of land between the industrial estate and the countryside beyond is an important area to protect from inappropriate development. We would therefore seek to ensure that the aims of the Green Belt are maintained to prevent urban sprawl and keep this land permanently open.

7.5 Riverside Retail Park

The retail park is a group of industrial-scale retail stores, together with a McDonald's and a petrol outlet for Sainsbury's. The total mass of building that these buildings occupy appears out of scale within our rural parish. These tall, retail outlets exist as an outcome of an earlier planning system, and our community must continue to live with them within our boundary. This document is however not giving implicit or explicit approval of their design or location, which run contrary to the requirement for buildings to integrate with the surrounding area. In parish design terms, the danger is that such developments can then, despite their inappropriate nature, be quoted by other developers as precedents for similar schemes. Familiarity may have made them less visually intrusive to residents who pass them every day, but they remain out of place in our rural landscape. As long as the community of Otford has a voice about what is sited within its parish, it is unlikely to support any further building proposals on this scale. Any opportunities to introduce tree and shrub screening, however limited, would be beneficial and help to improve the prospect.

7.6 Sainsbury's Supermarket

The recently extended Sainsbury's building is not located within the parish of Otford. The parish boundary follows the ancient Gunnilda brook (aka. Watercress Brook), which runs

through the centre of its car park. Every one of our village food retailers has closed since its arrival. Our community is therefore directly affected by its presence and would certainly wish to be consulted in any planning applications in the future. In terms of maintaining a quality of design within this parish, Otford is likely to be concerned with any future alterations or changes of this scale, even when the development is not directly within the parish boundaries. We appreciate that the supermarket provides employment for a number of Otford residents as well as provisions and services, however in parish planning terms, it is hoped that the community's views will be taken into account since the visual impact of a building such as this, is not affected by boundary lines.

7.7 Residential homes within the area.

The small residential enclave of Vestry Cottages is the important historical heart of the original estate. The estate is of great value both historically as well as part of Otford's heritage. The upkeep and maintenance of this attractive Victorian line of cottages is important to the whole community. All the Vestry Cottage residents have indicated their pride in being part of Otford parish. To the rear of Vestry Cottages is the boundary of the Green Belt which continues up to Otford village. The line of the Old Otford Road runs northward at this point until it is terminated at the motorway. There are also several detached homes located on this spur of road.

Design Principles

- 7a** Proposals for siting of industrial buildings or offices on the Vestry Estate closer to the Sevenoaks Road than at present are unlikely to be welcome. Any large proposals that could be harmful to the street scene or of an inappropriate size and scale would be considered unacceptable. *(CS LO8: RESPD3.2)*
- 7b** Any new proposal to alter or replace buildings within the Vestry Estate or Riverside Retail Park should seek to harmonise and integrate them with the rural surroundings. *(CS LO8: RESPD 3.2:)*
- 7c** Any proposal for the development of the Bartram Farm estate should seek to minimize its visual intrusion within this agricultural, Green Belt site and minimise its visibility on the hillside. *(CS LO8: RESPD3.2)*
- 7d** The community has made clear that increases in the volume of heavy vehicle traffic through Otford village are not welcomed. (There already exists a width restriction of 7' 6" between pond and railway bridge). The community would wish that any proposed development, whether inside or outside the parish boundary, that will have a further impact on the volume of traffic passing through the village, should provide an accurate prediction of future traffic flow and volume increase as part of its planning submission. *(ADMP LO8, SP10, SP11, EN1, G11 and G12)*
- 7e** The introduction of trees between the A225 and the Vestry Estate and throughout the Estate would help soften the harshness of the industrial buildings and better mirror the rural character bordering on the Green Belt would be welcome. Any new development in the estate will therefore be encouraged to introduce planting to soften the harshness of the industrial buildings. *(CS LO8: RESPD 3.2)*
- 7f** When developing or re-cladding industrial units or new office units, particularly on the margins of the estate, proposed designs should seek to maintain a low profile within the landscape and owners be requested to use cladding and paint which will merge into the natural background. *(CS LO8: RESPD3.2)*

- 7g** Proposals for any large-scale development of land adjoining the residential properties close to the Estate should be resisted, acknowledging the role of the area as Green Belt and the effects of traffic and noise on local residents. *(CS LO8: RESPD 3.12 and 3.13)*
- 7h** Proposals within the Vestry Estate or Retail Park which employ an extensively glazed, or partially glazed frontage or the use of reflective white or light-coloured fascia material, should consider the effects of high visibility within the nearby Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. *(CS LO8: RESPD 3.12: 3.13 and 4.48)*

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8: AGRICULTURE AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

8.1 Introduction

The local landscape that we see today is the result of many centuries of evolution. The pattern of roads, tracks, field boundaries and hedgerows, that gives the modern landscape its character, is firmly rooted in Otford's past. We live in a sought-after scenic valley which annually receives an increasing numbers of visitors, many of whom come here to walk and explore the surrounding countryside. It is already becoming evident that this increase in visitor numbers, while welcome in so many ways, can have an adverse effect upon the countryside. Community volunteer groups working with the authorities will need to maintain the area and protect it from unintentional harm. There is considerable practical support available from a number of agencies to help such initiatives. The Government has made clear their overall support through their statements in the National Planning Policy Framework.

8.2 Agriculture

Agriculture has been for millennia an essential and valued part of the life of the village and its surroundings. It is primarily arable in nature, though it also supports dairy herds and sheep on the North Downs pastures and sheep along the low-lying southern river plain. Well-established fields are mostly bordered by ancient hedging with traditional plant species. These hedgerows act as essential wildlife corridors and support the natural and evolved nature of the countryside. Current legislation to protect them is welcomed. Coppices and mature trees add to the quality of the natural environment. The open, rolling, arable nature of the parish with its scattered woodlands ensures its popularity with residents, day-visitors and the many visiting walkers and cyclists. There are no natural stone walls as the local chalk is not a robust boundary material and flint is rarely used.

There is limited agricultural building, none sited within the public open-space areas. Careful location and screening can help to reduce any negative visual impact that such buildings might otherwise have. Any new structures such as domestic stabling and field shelters should be similarly carefully placed. The recent change of use of the Park Farm agricultural buildings as a horse livery stable has introduced many more horses into the local fields. The community agrees that any permanent caravan or mobile home sites should not be allowed within the parish.

8.3 Natural Woodland

There are some wooded areas on the upper part of the Downs, but the main area of woodland in the Parish is contained within Oxenhill Woods which extends from the eastern part of the village. This is a managed wooded area and is considered a unique example in the South-East of naturally regenerated woodland. It is now a prime recreational walking site. Sevenoaks District Council, assisted by Otford and Kemsing Parish Councils manages this area. Unfortunately vandalism within some of the area has become a recurring problem and occasional motor biking causes destruction to the paths. Coppicing and good tree management occasionally causes alarm with some local residents who may not appreciate the concept of managed, rather than wild, woodland. More information would help in this regard. The other area of managed woodland runs beside the Sevenoaks Road and is called Palace Park Wood. Being low-lying it is prone to some surface water retention in the winter

months, however it is a popular venue with dog-owners and local walkers, and provides a rural backdrop to the Otford burial ground at its Southern quarter.

8.4 An Area of Special Scientific Interest.

A large part of the south-facing escarpment of the Downs, which lies on Otford's eastern perimeter, between Otford and Shoreham, is registered as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The flora and fauna which exist on this sunny grassed escarpment are varied. Over 130 different varieties of moth were identified in a recent one-night survey. The area is also a protected butterfly habitat for similar reasons. A wide range of meadow and other flowers grow here, and the escarpment is the location for a wide variety of wild orchids native to the down-land. Preserving and protecting this important habitat is of great importance, and volunteer groups help to monitor and maintain the area throughout the year. The future will present the problems of balancing the enjoyment such an area brings to visitors and families whilst its maintenance and protection remain secured.

8.5 The Darent

In 2013 the Government finally agreed that the benefit to the river outweighed the cost of adapting abstraction practices and agreed that there should be a significant reduction in abstraction at Eynsford, Lullingstone and Shoreham. It is hoped this will have a positive effect upon flow along the whole course of the river.

The Darent has a broad rain catchment area which includes most of the Vale of Holmesdale up to Westerham and as far as Dartford. However the chalk bed which provides its clarity is also greatly fissured and leakage of water into the aquifer is considerable. Rainfall does however have a very immediate effect upon water levels, which can change rapidly.

The flooding risk to Otford village is reduced by the presence of the water-meadows to the South which store much of the flow until the river can cope with the drainage, and by the fact that the flow is divided within the village into the mill's leat and the river itself. A new association, the Darent Catchment Improvement Group, working with the Environment Agency, are now actively seeking ways in which the quantity and quality of the water as well as the improvement to fish passage can be improved. Otford is actively participating in this endeavour. It is hoped that steadily the river will regain its importance and benefit the lives of both visitors and villagers.

8.6 Action

Biodiversity is a key concept in the maintenance of our rich natural habitat. Not all residents can be involved in helping to coppice woodland or making reed bundles to maintain water flow in the river. However, all can help by suitable approaches to gardening, for example by not using pesticides which kill off the food on which local birds rely; by keeping a pile of wood and twigs in a far corner to provide a home for insects as well as wintering hedgehogs; by composting vegetable waste; and by using water-butts rather than a hose. The examples are numerous and small in themselves, but when carried out "en masse" they can help protect the shared environment.

Design Principles

- 8a** The continuance of farming should be actively encouraged within the parish. **(CS SP11)**
- 8b** Traditional hedgerows need to be protected and maintained as a key feature and an important animal habitat within the rural landscape. **(CS SP11)**
- 8c** Coppices and trees in agricultural areas are greatly valued and should be maintained and retained. TPOs should be sought and applied where possible and appropriate. **(CS SP11)**
- 8d** Any new agricultural buildings should be so designed to meet a functional need but should also be sited in a way to minimise their visual impact within the countryside. **(CS SP11)**
- 8e** Areas of special importance for the survival of animal or plant species should be afforded protection. **(CS SP11)**
- 8f** The banks of the Darent should be kept clear of excessive overgrowth and the flow clear of obstructions. **(CS SP11)**
- 8g** Maintenance of Oxenhill Woods should be fully supported by the Parish Council as it is recognised locally as an important area of local woodland and part of it is designated as Ancient Woodland. **(CS SP11 and NPPF)**
- 8h** Information boards should be encouraged to be introduced and maintained at suitable sites so that visitors can appreciate the importance and special interest of the area. **(CAAMP.12.5)**

Abbreviations:

NPPF= National Planning Policy Framework

CS = Sevenoaks District Council Core Strategy

RESPD = SDC Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Doc.

APPENDIX 1

OTFORD ROADS GAZETEER

CENTRAL OTFORD

The heart of the historic village, centred on the Parish Church and Green, with remains of the nationally important Archbishops of Canterbury's Manor house, later Royal Palace to the south.

Station Road (A225) The eastward extension of the High Street had two farms, Hilldrop Farm and Moat Farm in the 19c. In the early 20c a few large detached houses were built opposite the station, and a row of Council Houses erected nearer the village.

Becket's Place, a speculative development of large houses erected in 2005 on the former coal yard adjacent to the Station Yard.

Colet's Orchard was developed on the adjoining land as a cul-de-sac of individually designed bungalows in the early 1960s at which time Colet's Well ceded Otford Pond to the village. The walled rear garden of Colet's Well, the principal house overlooking the Green, still abuts Station Road, but the grounds extended eastwards to include Friar's Pool, the weather-boarded house on the roadside, which was formerly the laundry.

Leonard Avenue, originally partly built up with terraced houses c1900. Several were destroyed by bombing in 1940, and semi-detached houses replaced them and also completed the development, with the surgery at its northern end dating from c1970.

The Green, with its 'listed' Pond, has been Otford's focal point for more than a thousand years. The Parish Church, dedicated to St. Bartholomew, whose present fabric partly dates from c1050, was probably established many centuries earlier.

The adjacent, late 18c, Colet's Well was built on the site of a Tudor mansion of similar name. By the church gate is the Chantry, formerly Church Gate Cottages, originally built in the 15C as the village Court Hall.

Other interesting buildings around the Green include Holmesdale and Pond House, an unusual pair of 18c semi-detached houses and The Corner House - formerly Mount View, an 18C rebuild of an earlier, timbered farm house. Its substantial boundary wall from the earlier period once also encompassed Bubblestone Farm.

To the south of the Green are the still impressive remains of Otford Palace, the Tudor North range being the only upstanding ruins of an estate originally conveyed to the Church by a King of Kent in 821.

The north side includes commercial properties, formerly cottages, together with the Crown PH (16c), and the Woodman PH, a farmhouse until the 1860s. The Green and High Street comprise the centre of the village Conservation Area.

The High Street, still the only east-west route through the parish, is the present-day guise of the prehistoric track-way linking Dover with central England. It is also part of the modern North Downs way. The upper part is lined with a variety of smaller cottages now mainly commercial. The Bull PH formerly a Tudor dwelling, retains some original features as well as a fine weather-boarded barn.

The School and adjoining Headmaster's House (now the Parish Office and Heritage Centre) were built in 1871. Opposite is the Church Hall (designed by Sir Edwyn Lutyens), backed by the Car Park and Village Memorial Halls. The lower part of the High Street is filled with mainly 19c semi-detached and terraced houses. The Library (1980) and the Methodist Church (1935) are modern buildings in harmony with the street scene.

Pickmoss Lane, formerly Worth Lane, is a row of mainly 19c cottages while Pickmoss, a refurbished hall House and attached cottages in the High Street, faces the Horns PH, formerly three 16c cottages.

Mill Lane, a charming cul-de-sac of cottages and a converted oast, leads to the site of the water mill - replaced after a disastrous fire in 1924, beyond which is Troutbeck, a much altered polygonal house dating from 1905. Opposite Mill Lane is The Grange, 18C, a former vicarage on the site of a tannery,.

At the bottom of the High Street is the modern Catholic Church (1985), opposite the fine Broughton Manor, late medieval and later, for many years the seat of the Polhill family, the local squirearchy. Next to School House is the imposing Old Parsonage, a 15C house once the home of the incumbents of Shoreham with Otford.

Park Lane, to the north, serves Park Farm and two dwellings originally a part of the farm.

Warham Road, a cul-de-sac of mainly semi-detached houses erected in a variety of styles in the 1970s, most having open plan front gardens,

FOOTPATHS

SR. 17 Darent Valley Path to Shoreham from Mill Lane.

BR. 32 (bridleway) Park Lane northwards to Shoreham.

SR. 729 A new east-west path linking SR. 17 at Lower Barn with SR. 32.

APPENDIX 2

HISTORIC AND GEOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

Historical Summary

Otford has grown up at where the river Darent traverses the escarpment of the chalk North Downs at a river crossing of the ancient east-west trackway known today as the Pilgrims Way. The light soils of the valley sides were cultivable by early farmers, and there is evidence of late Neolithic/Bronze Age habitation some 4,000 years ago in the Combe, a steep-sided re-entrant valley, today dry, overlooked by a round barrow on Otford Mount, itself the probable site of an Iron Age hillfort. Intensive Roman settlement including three villa/farmsteads, a 'township' (village) and a cemetery are known.

Reference to a battle here in 775 provides the earliest mention of 'Otta's ford', though pagan burials indicate earlier Anglo-Saxon settlement. In 821 a gift of land by Cenulf, King of Kent, to Wulfred, Archbishop of Canterbury, formed the basis of a vast estate centred on Otford Palace, which became one of the most prestigious houses in medieval England, visited by virtually all the Kings of England. The moated house was rebuilt and greatly expanded in Tudor times by Abp. William Warham, the last of the great medieval prelates, and in 1537, at the desire of King Henry VIII, was exchanged by Warham's successor, Thomas Cranmer, for lesser crown properties in east Kent. It thus became a royal palace. Queen Elizabeth I disliked the house and allowed it to fall into ruin by 1600, and shortly afterwards the estate was broken up after 800 years. The Polhill family, with its seat at what is now Broughton Manor, was the principal landowner until the 19C. From 1882 Otford station provided a direct link with London, and the beginnings of commuting, and an incentive for expansion of the village and diversification of employment, hitherto predominantly agricultural and extractive (brick-making and chalk-quarrying). The 20C saw an expansion of the population from under 1000 to 3200, and the construction of business parks at the southern edge of the parish, though Otford's incorporation within the officially-designated Metropolitan Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Special Landscape Areas, and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, has curbed indiscriminate large-scale housing development.

Geographical Summary

Otford is located at the point where the eastward flowing river Darent leaves the Gault clay of the Holmesdale Vale and turns north, cutting through the chalk hills of the North Downs, one of only five rivers to do so between the English Channel and Salisbury Plain.

Holmesdale Vale is a low-lying valley with water meadows, in contrast to the steep-sided valley carved through the Downs. On each side of the river the land rises some 500ft (170 metres) above the valley floor. Springs at the junction of the chalk and underlying Gault provide rivulet tributaries of the Darent, with water of purity sufficient to support a fish farm and watercress beds.

Distant buildings in the landscape

In addition to Twitton, a settlement of ancient origin remote from the village, there is only one significant group of farm buildings away from the centre, that at Long Lodge, formerly a lodge in the archbishop's deer-park. Today it comprises a single house and an imposing group of oasts, converted into a dwelling. The remaining farms are essentially a part of the village, whilst one large inappropriate milking parlour, which was inserted into Green Belt land in the centre of the valley, was ultimately re-located at the heart of the farm it served. A

late-Victorian hunting lodge on the scarp slope of the Downs was converted in the earlier twentieth century into a preparatory school, and extensions to meet educational needs have been very sympathetically designed and implemented.

Past, present and future

The centre of the village comprises the church and a good representative group of vernacular architecture of various ages surrounding the Green with its 'listed' pond. An extension to the Green leads to the imposing remains of the Tudor wing of the archiepiscopal, later royal, Otford Palace, which stands in Palace Field, a public open space within the village. In recent years the Parish Council has been instrumental in obtaining two significant blocks of land south and east of the village, Palace Park Wood and Oxenhill Meadow and Shaw, extending to some 72 acres (30 hectares) for community access and recreation, and creating a permanent green wedge between both the M26 motorway and the neighbouring village of Kemsing, a partner in the latter scheme. The village, besides being a part of the Metropolitan Green Belt, has been designated as AONB, SLA and SSSI. Whilst there are no nature reserves within the parish, two long distance footpaths, the national North Downs Way and the regional Darent Valley Path cross at Otford. A network of footpaths and bridleways provide access to the surrounding countryside, with its rich flora and fauna and a variety of rural views.

With the proposals for extensive new housing schemes being planned along the Thames Gateway, the Darent Valley naturally provides an attractive area for relaxation and tourism. The valley is also the first area of genuinely open country to the south east of London and in consequence already attracts large numbers of visitors from the conurbation. Tourism, with both its benefits and disadvantages, will therefore become a staple part of the human environment in which all the valley communities will need to operate in the future. Sevenoaks District Council is helping to promote tourism in the valley with an emphasis on walking and access by public transport. The effect, however, will likely be felt in every village and therefore planning for a significant influx of visitors should form part of Otford's forward planning. The character of the village and its surroundings must be safeguarded if planned tourism is not to adversely affect the quality of the village or its heritage.

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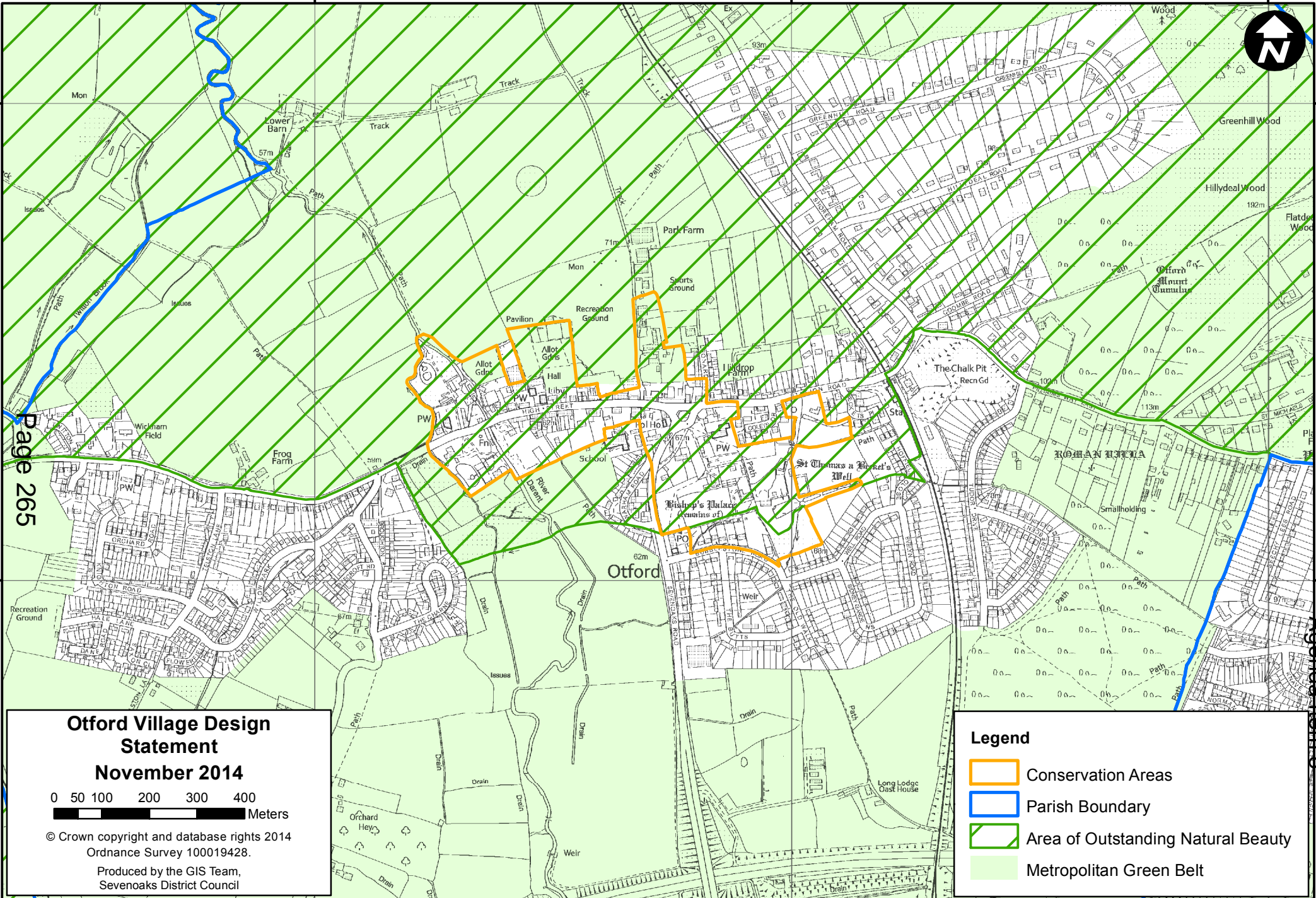
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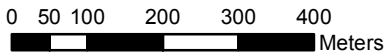


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


Otford Village Design Statement November 2014



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Legend

-  Conservation Areas
-  Parish Boundary
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Metropolitan Green Belt

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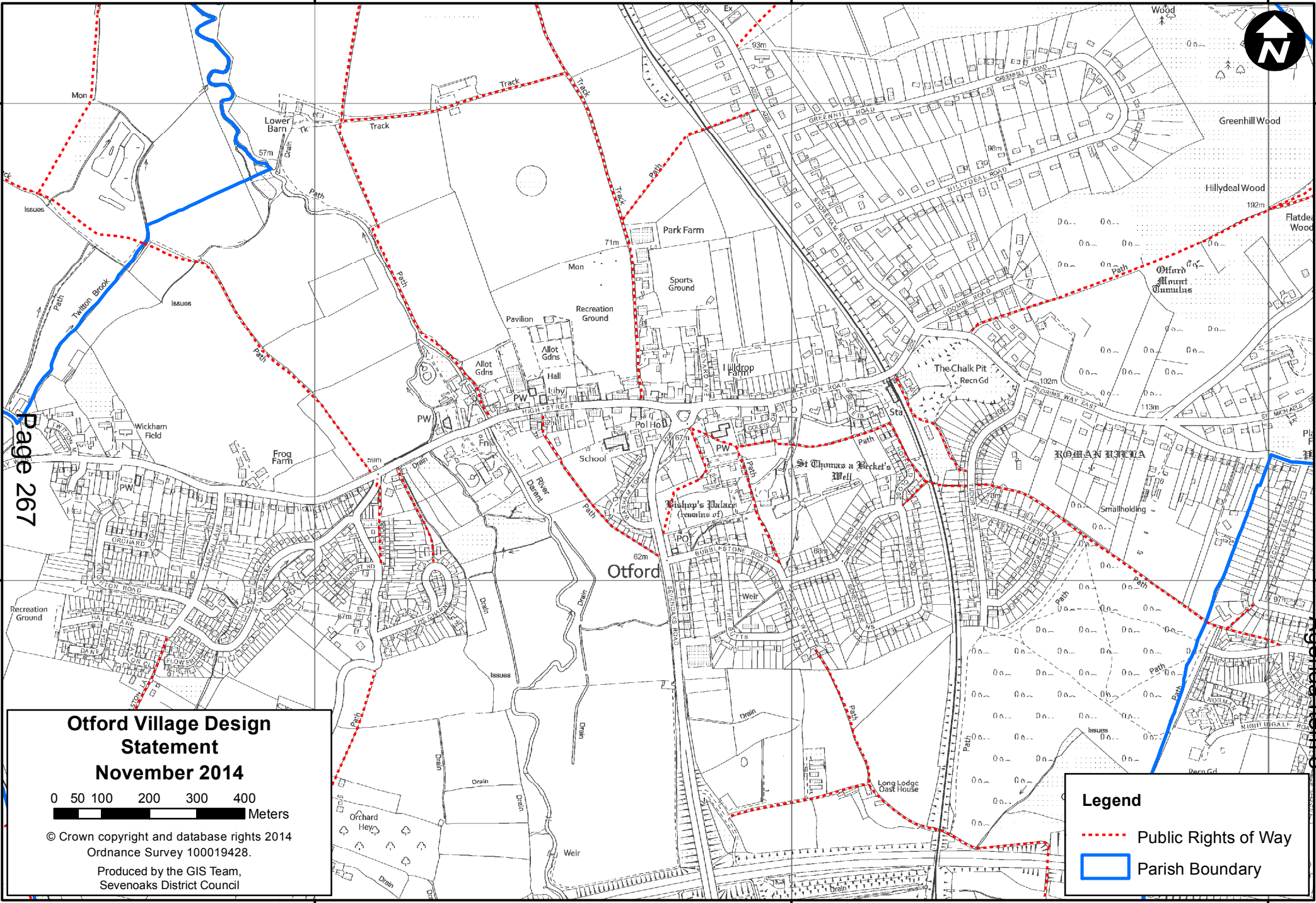
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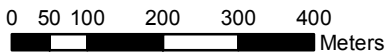
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Legend

-  Public Rights of Way
-  Parish Boundary

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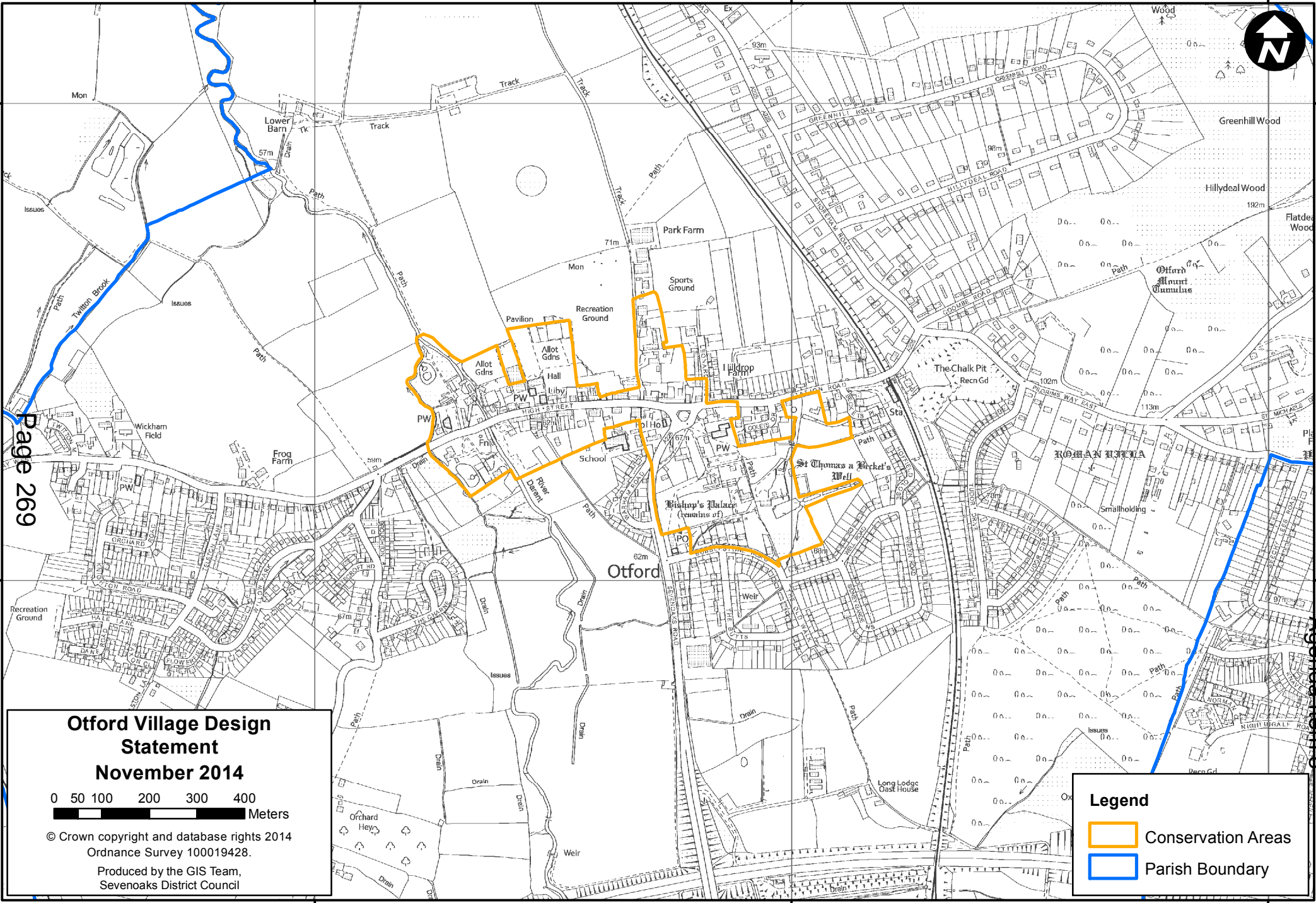
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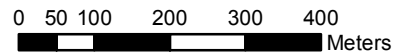
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
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Otford Village Design Statement
November 2014



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 Sevenoaks District Council

Legend

-  Conservation Areas
-  Parish Boundary

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Summary of Issues Raised and Responses to the Otford VDS2

Name of Respondent	Organisation	Summary of Comment	Response	Amendment
Response: #368198	*	Most disappointed that the only reference to cycling comes under the leisure and recreation category section 1.5. It does deserve consideration also as transport especially as a proposal for safe cycle facilities between Otford and Sevenoaks from part of the Districts Cycle Strategy.	<p>Whilst it is recognised that cycling is mainly referred to in the landscape character and open spaces section, it does highlight the fact that the local community considers that on-road cycling is dangerous and also states that the Parish Council supports all opportunities to extend or promote safe cycle routes within the Parish.</p> <p>It is therefore the officer's view that the VDS meets the aims of the respondent. It should also be noted that the VDS can only control issues with the Parish and this proposal would partly cover issues outside the area covered by the VDS. In addition there is not a separate section in the VDS for transport to discuss this issue as requested. The Parish did not consider that it was necessary to have a separate transport section.</p>	None
Carla Jackson	Natural England	<p>Otford Village Design Statement - Sevenoaks District Council.</p> <p>1. Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 27 November 2014, which was received by Natural England on 27 November 2014. Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural</p>	<p>1. These are standard comments. The Parish Council have also taken into account Catherine Tonge's comments below which are more specific comments.</p>	1. None.

		<p>environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development. Natural England welcomes design guidelines that respect, and where possible, enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the surrounding natural and built environment; use natural resources more sustainably; and bring benefits for the local community, for example through green space provision and access to and contact with nature. The following is offered as general advice which we would expect to have been considered in the preparation of a Town or Village Design Statement;</p> <p><u>Landscape</u></p> <p>2. To preserve the wider landscape character of area, the Town or Village Design Statement should recognise and give appropriate consideration to the impact of the design statement on protected landscapes such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), if the town or village is within or adjacent to one.</p> <p>Landscape Character Assessments (LCA) provide a context for looking at possible changes and for seeking to ensure that the countryside character is protected and enhanced. Local area LCAs and those for protected landscapes (where applicable), should be cross-referenced as they are a useful tool to ensure that the Village Design Statement makes a positive contribution in terms of design, form and location, to the character and functions of the landscape, and avoids any unacceptable impacts. Following the principles of LCA at a local scale helps to capture the significant features, style and patterns of settlement and setting within the</p>	<p>2. The VDS recognises the importance of the protected AONB landscape and states that the existing pattern and features of the landscape will be maintained. It also makes clear the community supports the need to conserve and enhance the AONB. The Parish Council also consider that they have identified the parts of the Landscape Character they wish to protect and enhance and therefore there is no need to use the LCA tool.</p>	<p>2. VDS now identifies the land covered by AONB.</p>
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		<p>landscape and key views in and around the village. National Park and AONB Management Plans can also provide useful information for design statements within or adjoining protected landscapes.</p> <p>Natural England is revising the suite of 159 National Character Area (NCA) profiles to make environmental evidence and information easily available to a wider audience. NCA profiles are guidance documents which include a description of the key ecosystem services provided in each character area and how these benefit people, wildlife and the economy. They identify potential opportunities for positive environmental change and provide the best available information and evidence as a context for local decision making and action.</p> <p>The revised and current NCA profiles are available on the NCA pages of our website for you to refer to. The complete series of revised profiles will be published by April 2014.</p> <p><u>Green Infrastructure and Sustainable Design</u></p> <p>3. Green infrastructure is a term used to refer to the living network of green spaces, water and other environmental features in both urban and rural areas. It is often used in an urban context to cover the benefits including space for recreation, access to nature, flood storage and urban cooling to support climate change mitigation, food production, wildlife habitats and health & well-being improvements provided by trees, rights of way, parks, gardens, road verges, allotments, cemeteries, woodlands, rivers and wetlands.</p>	<p>3. The VDS identifies green areas within the village that are important and also in particular seeks to protect and identify important public rights of way. Within the design principles there are clear aims to protect land that contributes to the open space and public footpaths.</p>	<p>3. None.</p>
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		<p>Green infrastructure is also relevant in a rural context, where it might additionally refer to the use of farmland, woodland, wetlands or other natural features to provide services such as flood protection, carbon storage or water purification. Green infrastructure maintains critical ecological links between town and country. The Design Statement could usefully promote high quality and multifunctional green infrastructure. Green Infrastructure by Design provides an introduction to delivering green infrastructure at the micro and neighbourhood scale through features such as street trees, green facades and green roofs, where consistent with the local character. These features can be extremely important in increasing ecological connectivity between green spaces, particularly when footpaths and green corridors are not feasible.</p> <p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <p>4. The Design Statement should have recognised and referenced designated wildlife sites¹ and other biodiversity assets in the immediate area, such as protected species, ecological networks, habitats and green spaces. Design guidelines should respect, and where possible, enhance the town or village’s local and neighbouring biodiversity resources. The Town and Country Planning Association has produced a practical and design orientated Biodiversity by Design guide to achieving high levels of biodiversity in developments, which may be of use. When preparing the Design Statement, your local Wildlife Trust and local environmental record centre should have been consulted, and local and national Biodiversity Action Plans should be referenced where relevant.</p>	<p>4. The Parish Council have spoken to the relevant bodies. The report will be amended to show more reference to biodiversity.</p>	<p>4. In paragraph 1.2 the protection of the biodiversity in the down land area is now mentioned as well as the SSSI.</p> <p>The Biodiversity Opportunity Area next to the Vestry Trading Estate is now recognised in paragraph 7.2.</p>
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		<p><u>Community Engagement</u></p> <p>5. As an organisation, we are committed to involving the community in our work, ensuring that local people and the organisations that support them are consulted at the earliest possible stage. We are keen to see this principle adopted as part of the village design statement formulation process so that local people have a chance to contribute to the development of the statements from the outset. We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.</p>	5. Noted	5. Noted
Jennifer Wilson	Environment Agency	<p><u>Oxford Village Design Statement</u></p> <p>Thank you for consulting us on the above. Overall we have no major concerns with the details within this document. We would however, recommend a minor change to the following text for clarification purposes.</p> <p>8.5 The Darent In 2013 the Government finally agreed that the benefit to the river outweighed the cost of adapting abstraction practices and agreed that there should be a significant reduction in abstraction at Eynsford, Lullingstone and Shoreham. It is hoped this will have a positive effect upon flow along the whole course of the river.</p>	Change proposed regarding the Darent was agreed.	Amendment was included in paragraph 8.5.
Barbara Barnes	Highways Agency	<p>The Highways Agency (HA) is an executive agency of the Department for Transport (DfT). We are responsible for operating, maintaining and improving England's strategic road network (SRN) on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport. The</p>	No changes required.	No amendments made.

		HA will be concerned with proposals that have the potential to impact the safe and efficient operation of the SRN and in this case the M25. The Highways Agency offers no comment with regard to the Otford Village Statement.		
Catherine Tonge	Natural England	<p>Thank you for giving Natural England the opportunity to comment on Otford’s Village Design statement. My brief comments are as follows:</p> <p>1. We welcome the commitment to protecting Biodiversity and landscape character, particularly the recognition of the importance of green spaces (such as gardens) within the village boundary and use of hedgerows as wildlife corridors. Specific reference to the Otford to Shoreham Downs SSSI by name may help clarify the location to the reader.</p> <p>2. We note that Kent Downs AONB has been among early contributors to this document and support their input. The NPPF states that “Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty” (NPPF para 115). Therefore, as much of Otford Village falls within the AONB, it may be worth briefly defining this boundary somewhere in the main document (even if just referencing the map in Appendix 3) and making loose reference to the AONB Management Plan.</p> <p>Due to the current pressure of consultations on land-use plans, I have not been able to spend the time I would have wished reviewing and commenting on your Neighbourhood Plan. Nevertheless, I hope you find these comments helpful.</p>	<p>1. Agreed that the location should be clarified.</p> <p>2. Agreed the AONB Map should be referenced.</p>	<p>1. The following was added: <i>“Protecting the biodiversity of the whole downland area is also reflected in the designation of the Otford to Shoreham Downs as an area of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Otford Community have indicated a clear commitment to its protection”.</i></p> <p>2. AONB boundary map is now referenced and mention is now made to the AONB Management Plan.</p>

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Sevenoaks District Council

Otford Village Design Statement

Consultation Statement

Introduction

In accordance with the relevant Planning Regulations, before a Local Authority adopts a supplementary planning document;

“It must prepare a statement setting out the persons the local planning authority consulted when preparing the SPD, a summary of the main issues raised by those persons, and how these issues have been addressed in the SPD...”

This paper fulfils this requirement and sets out the public participation in the preparation of the document (Regulation 17 (1) (b)) and then the statutory public consultation undertaken on the draft Supplementary Planning Document (Regulation 18).

Once adopted, Otford Village Design Statement 2 SPD will form part of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan. It will not form part of the formal development plan for the area but will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Approach to consultation

Sevenoaks District Council considers that when preparing SPDs it is appropriate to inform, consult and seek the participation of organisations and/or individuals in order to ensure that the documents more closely reflect local needs and priorities.

The Council undertook an 8 week formal consultation on the Otford Village Design Statement 2 between 27th November 2014 and 22nd January 2015.

As part of this consultation, the Council:

- Published the draft Otford Village Design Statement 2 on the Sevenoaks District Council website and through the Council’s consultation system;
- Made the draft SPD available for inspection at the Council’s offices and libraries in the Council’s administrative area during normal office hours;
- Invited persons and organisations on the Council’s LDF mailing list and those registered on the Council’s consultation database, to make representations during the consultation period.

Agenda Item 8

Public Participation in the Preparation of the VDS by the Parish Council

Following on from the first Village Design Statement, the following has taken place in preparing the Otford Village Design Statement 2;

- Twelve members of the Design Team worked for over a year to collate the wide range of information and comments used in the preparation of this report and converted it into the final text;
- The whole community of Otford expressed their views, participated in work shops and meetings and commented on aspects of the VDS during its preparation;
- The Design Team offered the benefit of their insights, experience and specialist knowledge and thus enabled the accuracy, validity and potential for impact of the document to be enhanced.
- Authorities and associations including the SDC, Kent Downs AONB and Action with Communities in Rural Kent gave advice and support to this project.

The proposals contained within the up-dated (VDS 2) version were studied and approved by the members of the Parish Council in November 2012. A full public display of its contents then took place over two days during February 2013 in the Village Memorial Hall. This event was well attended following announcements being made at the Otford Society meetings and Parish Council meetings. Residents were provided with post-it notes and pens to add their views on any factors they wished amended or deleted. These were all taken into account in the submitted version.

Sustainability Appraisal

A Sustainability Appraisal for the Village Design Statement has not been undertaken as Sec.180 (5)(d) Planning Act 2008 removed the compulsory requirement for a Sustainability Appraisal for a Supplementary Planning Document.

Comments

Comments were received from:

Natural England (Carla Jackson)
Environmental Agency (Jennifer Wilson)
Highways Agency (Barbara Barnes)
Natural England (Catherine Tonge)
One interested party

One of the responses raised an issue and the others made points designed to strengthen some of the document or suggested amendments to clarify the text.

Summary of Issues Raised and Responses

See table following.

TABLED AT THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 12

Adoption of Otford Village Design Statement

Paragraph 3.5 of the VDS provided in the Committee Papers, reflects changes that were made following the discussions with members.

Otford Parish Council has however provided an alternative paragraph which reflects the current situation regarding the Archbishops Palace Tower and Palace Field.

Recommended replacement copy:

3.5 The future of the Archbishop's Palace Tower and Palace Field

The remains of the Archbishops Palace' (c. 1518) are an iconic Otford landmark and amongst the oldest in the Sevenoaks region. They form an important part of Otford's identity. There has been a recent proposal that ownership and responsibility for the whole site be transferred from Sevenoaks District Council, to the Otford community. This proposal has been received with a great deal of local support.

However, the tower structure has already been registered as 'At Risk' by English Heritage and is in a progressively poor state. The District Council is currently undertaking essential structural works on the tower which were identified by their condition survey. Following this first stage, if the financial means can be found to restore the Tower to an acceptable state as a heritage asset which will permit it to be visited by the public , then there is every hope that the site can form part of an active community asset, benefitting the district. How the Tower may be enhanced and made of greater benefit to the village and district, will be a decision made with the support of English Heritage, the conservation architect and the outcome of much local discussion. (NPPF 6:55)

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