

Appendix 7

1. Introduction

What is the Supplementary Planning Document?

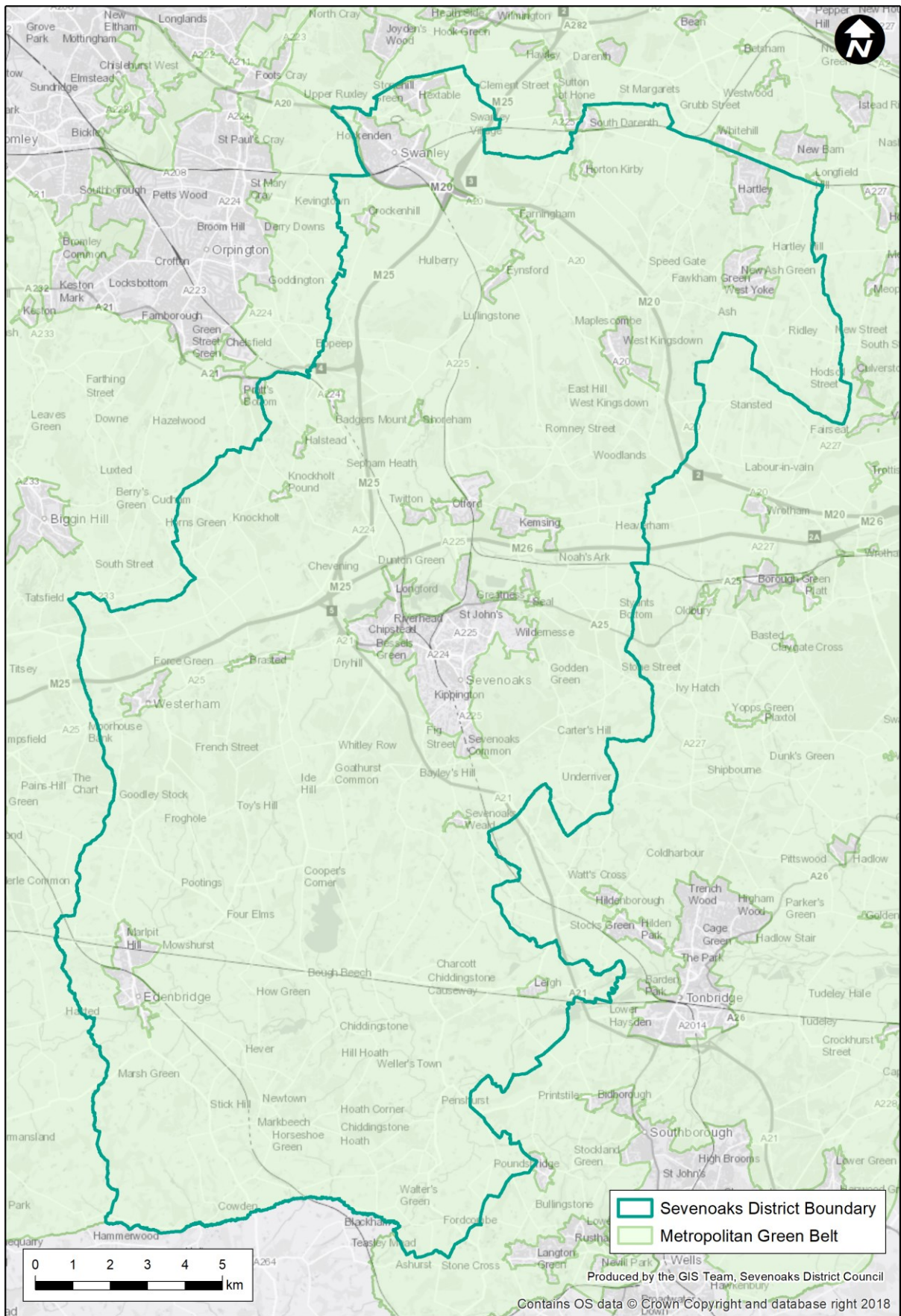
1.1 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides detailed guidance on applying for planning permission for development located within the Green Belt. The guidance will help to ensure consistency in decision making when determining planning applications in the Green Belt.

1.2 The SPD provides additional information to assist with the interpretation and implementation of Policy 4 of the Local Plan, and is used by the District Council in determining planning applications.

1.3 The District Council will take a positive approach to development in the Green Belt that accords with the Sevenoaks District Local Plan, including the guidance set out in this document and, where relevant, guidance contained within the Design Guidance SPD.

The Green Belt in Sevenoaks District

1.4 Sevenoaks is a large District lying to the south east of London with an overall area of just over 143 square miles (370 square km). Despite adjoining the outer edge of London it is predominantly rural in character with 93% of the District designated as Green Belt.



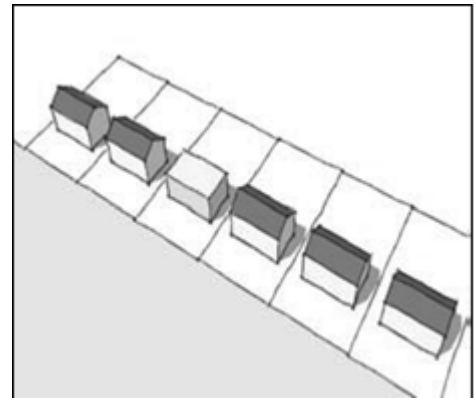
2. Limited Infilling and Redevelopment of Previously Developed Land

Infilling

2.1 Development within villages in the Green Belt is limited to small scale infilling only, due to the limited range of services and facilities in these settlements and the need to protect the openness of the Green Belt.

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 145 states that limited infilling in villages in the Green Belt and redevelopment of previously developed land is not regarded as inappropriate.

2.3 The District Council defines limited infill development as the completion of an otherwise substantially built up frontage by the filling of a narrow gap normally capable of taking one or two dwellings only.



2.4 The District Council defines a substantially built up frontage as an otherwise continuous and largely uninterrupted built frontage of several dwellings visible within the street scene.

Edge of settlements with Green Belt boundaries

2.5 For settlements where a Green Belt boundary has been defined, the boundary usually marks the edge of the settlement where there is a break in development or a change in character to more loose-knit development. Where this is the case, infill development beyond a defined settlement boundary would compromise the purposes of the Green Belt and would constitute inappropriate development.

2.6 Where a change of character is not apparent between the defined settlement and development within the adjoining Green Belt, there may be circumstances where infill development is appropriate in the Green Belt, provided the purposes of the Green Belt would not be compromised.

Villages washed over by the Green Belt

2.7 Sevenoaks District contains villages which are 'washed over' by the Green Belt. Some of these have substantially built up frontages whereas others are loose knit. There may be opportunities for limited infill development within parts of villages washed over by the Green Belt which have substantially built up frontages. Limited infilling will not be acceptable in low density areas, where gaps between dwellings form part of the character of the area and contribute to openness. Limited infilling is also not acceptable in isolated or loose-knit groups of dwellings, where there is a break between the

dwellings and the continuous built-up frontage of the village in order to protect the openness of the Green Belt.

Redevelopment of Previously Developed Land

2.8 Paragraph 145 g) of the NPPF considers exemptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, including:

limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings) which would:

- not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
- not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

2.9 In line with the NPPF the Council will consider redevelopment proposals of brownfield sites based on whether they would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The Council will consider the impact of proposals on a case by case basis and the unique circumstances of the site but in order to maintain the same impact on the openness of the Green Belt and fulfil its purpose, the Council would generally expect redevelopment proposals to:

- a) have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible have less;
- b) not exceed the height of the existing buildings; and
- c) not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings.

2.10 The most relevant area for the purpose of (c) is the aggregate ground floor area of the existing buildings (the "footprint"), excluding temporary buildings, open spaces with direct external access between wings of a building, and areas of hardstanding. However the Council will consider alternative approaches to determining impact where there is justification to do so.

2.11 The character and dispersal of proposed redevelopment will need to be considered as well as its footprint. For example many buildings may together have a much smaller footprint than a few large buildings, but may be unacceptable because the dispersal of the buildings and their curtilages over a large part of the site may have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt and its' purposes.

3. Extensions to a dwellings and replacement dwellings

3.1 Proposals to extend or replace buildings in the Green Belt are not inappropriate development provided extensions are proportionate and replacements are like-for-like or 'not materially larger' in scale, in comparison to the 'original' building.

What is the original building?

3.2 In determining proposals for extensions or replacement buildings in the Green Belt an assessment will be made against the impact of the 'original' existing building.

3.3 Establishing what the Council deems to be the 'original building' depends on when the property in question was first built. In many cases the 'original building' will refer to the floorspace of the building when it was first constructed on site. This excludes replacement buildings.

3.4 However for older buildings constructed prior to July 1st 1948, the 'original building' refers to the floorspace of the building as it was on this date, when the Town and Country Planning Act was first introduced.

3.5 In either case any additions that have occurred since the 'original' building date will be considered cumulatively and will be counted as part of the overall increase in bulk and floorspace of the building when considering whether a proposal would be disproportionate or materially larger.

Consideration of volume, scale and bulk

3.6 The volume, scale and bulk of an extension or replacement building should not result in a large, bulky or intrusive structure which would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original buildings.

3.7 Where a development is acceptable in principle, its form should be well proportioned and present a satisfactory composition with the building. Rural buildings often have a simple form or may possess a visual symmetry which should not be significantly altered.

Floorspace increase

3.8 National and local policies allow for a limited extension or moderately increased replacement building directly related to the original structure. The size of the original building rather than the size of the plot will be used in assessing the appropriate size increase that is likely to be acceptable.

3.9 Previously, versions of the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document included guidance which stated that extensions that result in an increase in floor space of more than 50% above the original dwelling would be unacceptable.

3.10 Whilst floorspace alone does not reflect the impact of the development on the openness of the Green Belt, the percentage increase in floor area from the original building should be used as a guide as to the size of scheme that may be acceptable and not disproportionate or materially larger.

3.11 Loft conversions create extra floorspace accommodation in the roof space but do not involve significant change to the roof form. Conversely development can occur that adds significantly to the physical size of the building without affecting floorspace, for example a replacement roof that is much bulkier but does not include extra accommodation.

3.12 Applicants should be aware that an addition may be considered 'disproportionate' or 'materially larger' as a result of unacceptable design even where it is below a 50% floorspace increase, depending on the other individual circumstances of the site, and the design and scale of the development proposed.

3.13 The principles that determine the acceptability of a proposal are based on the design and the impact that the form and appearance of the extension have on the openness of the Green Belt.

Basements

3.14 The introduction of basements to residential properties is covered in Policy 4 of the Local Plan which states:

'Proposals for the provision of basements in buildings in the Green Belt will be permitted where:

- a. the basement would be situated entirely underground with no part of it visible at any point externally and there would be no external windows, light wells, entrances or exits to the basement; and
- b. the building would not be artificially raised above natural ground level and the topography of the site would not be altered-re-graded, to accommodate the basement'.

3.15 The policy supports basements which would be situated entirely underground with no part of it visible at any point externally, no external windows, light-wells, entrances or exits and no artificial raising of the building above natural ground level

to accommodate a basement. Compliance with these three criteria is essential if an applicant wishes to have the basement floor space excluded from the 50% floor space increase.

Residential outbuildings in the Green Belt

3.16 Permitted development rights exist for certain outbuildings and many proposals may not require planning permission in the first instance. Specific local policy on outbuildings requiring planning permission is not included in the Local Plan and is covered by the National Planning Policy Framework.

Buildings permitted as Rural Exceptions

3.17 Where new buildings are permitted in the Green Belt as part of a rural exception scheme, the council may consider removal or certain permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings to prevent future additions that cumulatively impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. This is will ensure that the affordable housing remains small in line with the need evidenced in the Local Housing Needs Study.

4. Glossary

Explanation of some planning terms commonly used:

Brownfield/ Previously Developed Land – Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.

Cumulative Impact - A number of developments in a locality or a continuous activity over time that together may have an increased impact on the environment, local community or economy.

Development Management - The process whereby a local planning authority receives and considers the merits of a planning application and whether it should be given permission.

Design South East – is a regional trust which provides impartial design advice and assistance to support Local Authorities, developers and communities. It is a non profit and independent organisation.

Dwelling - A self-contained building or part of a building used as a residential accommodation, usually housing a single household. A dwelling may be a house, bungalow, flat, maisonette or converted farm building.

Green Belt - A designation for land around certain cities and large built-up areas, which aims to keep this land permanently open or largely undeveloped.

Infill Development - The completion of an otherwise substantially built-up frontage, by the filling of a narrow gap normally capable of taking one or two dwellings.

Local Plan - The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law, this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Local Planning Authority - The authority entitled to make a particular planning decision. Sevenoaks District Council determine all planning applications in their administrative area.

National Planning Policy Framework - Produced by the Government in March 2012, and revised in July 2018, to guide Local Authorities when they are producing their Local Plans and determining planning applications. The NPPF replaced most of the guidance previously contained in Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Policy Statements (PPGs/PPSs).

Planning Permission - Permission to carry out development issued by a local planning authority.

Rural Exception Sites - Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection.

Supplementary Planning Documents – provide further guidance on how Local Plan policies should be implemented.

Urban Sprawl - The uncontrolled or unplanned extension of urban areas into the countryside.

Very Special Circumstances (VSC's) - unique and rare situations that may allow certain developments to take place in the Green Belt, which under any other circumstances would not be allowed.

Washed Over - If a settlement is 'washed over' by the Green Belt, it is treated as being part of the Green Belt and the Green Belt policies apply to any development in the village.

7. Useful Links:

- **National Planning Policy Framework:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2>
- **Local Plan:** [insert link]
- **Pre-application Advice:**
https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20013/planning_applications/11/request_p_re-application_planning_advice
- **Design Supplementary Planning Document:** [insert link]