

## **Appendix 2**

### **Indicative Formatted Version of the Draft Regulation 18 Local Plan**

# Our Local Plan

Our Plan is split into twelve chapters which cover all aspects of development and conservation.



This Local Plan has been written and produced by Sevenoaks District Council. Sevenoaks Local Plan, Regulation 18 published November 2022.

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# Foreword



I am pleased to be able to introduce this new public consultation document for the emerging Sevenoaks District Local Plan. Once adopted, this Plan will provide the framework for managing development in the local area and addressing the key planning issues within the District.

Planning for the next 15 years is not a simple task, particularly in light of the fundamental social, economic and to some extent environmental challenges we have all experienced over the past few years, since our last consultation on the Local Plan. All of these factors influence land use planning and we need to plan for change, and have sufficient flexibility to respond to the unexpected.

We need your help to ensure that we have identified the right priorities and approaches for managing development and the sustainable and inclusive growth of the District. Sevenoaks faces a number of competing challenges, not least providing the affordable homes that our children and ageing relatives need whilst protecting the green spaces that our communities cherish.

This Plan contains policies to deliver new homes, vibrant high streets, the right type of employment spaces to ensure a healthy economy and new infrastructure to support growth, whilst protecting the natural environment and heritage buildings. It focuses on a number of key themes, to ensure that new development:

- promotes good mental and physical health,
- helps to deliver on our Net Zero 2030 commitment to tackle climate change, including through low carbon development, and
- supports high quality design, to create places and spaces that respect local character.

This Plan will replace the existing Core Strategy adopted in 2011 and the Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015). It is also the first of several public consultations that we anticipate being undertaken, so there will be plenty of opportunity to make your views known and help frame what we intend to be an ambitious and appropriate plan for the District.

The document is based on a comprehensive and up to date evidence base for the local area. We are working with an extensive range partners and stakeholders, including those responsible for health, education, transport and water, and our neighbouring authorities, to ensure that this Plan fully addresses all needs and challenges. It takes as its starting point the current state of the District and suggests a vision for 2040 that aims to protect and enhance the existing qualities of our area, whilst creating new places to help meet future needs.

We will particularly welcome contributions that help to achieve a genuinely shared and visionary plan with a focus on meeting the needs of all who live and work in the district. Please let us know your views.

**Councillor Thornton,**  
Development and Conservation Portfolio Holder

# How to use this document



## Chapter divider

The document is split into 10 Chapters covering the key issues and topics for the Local Plan.

## Strategic objectives:

- OB12: Ensure the District retains a high quality natural environment over the period of the Local Plan.  
OB13: Support the principles of bio-diversity net gain.

## Strategic objective

Each chapter sets out to meet at least one Strategic Objective and the relevant objectives are identified at the start of each chapter. The objectives reflect the key Vision and how this will be achieved.

## Policy NE1

### Landscape and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

#### This policy will seek to:

- Conserve and enhance the distinctive features that contribute to the special character of the district.
- Set out criteria for development in the AONB in line with the NPPF including resisting major development.

[www.sevenoaks.or.uk/localplan/policyST1](http://www.sevenoaks.or.uk/localplan/policyST1)

## Policy table

Policies are identified throughout each Chapter, which set out how our Local Plan objectives and vision can be addressed, both strategically and through Development Management.



## Consultation Questions:

- What could be included in the policy and design criteria for developments in the AONB?
- Do you agree that Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments should be required for all new large developments?



## Questions

Each Chapter has a set of questions, which usually follow a policy. When responding to this consultation, please refer to the question number identified.

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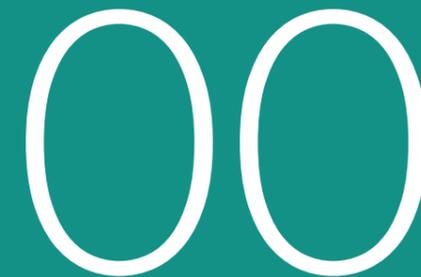
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This Local Plan explains how the Council intends to meet development needs and protect the environment in Sevenoaks District between 2022 and 2040. The documents focuses on the opportunities for new homes, employment spaces and infrastructure provision in existing settlements. A further document, covering all other parts of the District, will be issued next year. We are keen to receive your views on the proposed policies and allocations and hope that you will take the opportunity to submit your comments.



# Introduction





### How to Comment

The consultation period runs from **XXXX to XXXX**.

Copies of the supporting documentation, which supports this document, can be viewed online at **XXXX**.

Comments can be submitted via our online survey on the Sevenoaks District Council website at: **XXXX**.

Online responses are preferred, however, where you are unable to respond online a PDF version of the survey can be downloaded and printed from the consultation page on our website.

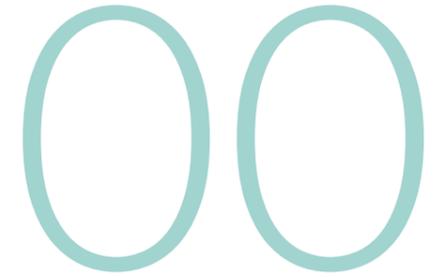
Alternatively, papers forms can be collected from the following locations during normal opening hours:

- Sevenoaks District Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 2SH
- Your local Town or Parish Council
- Any library within the Sevenoaks District

Completed paper forms should be sent by post to the Strategic Planning Team at Sevenoaks District Council using the address above.

Comments should be received no later than midnight on **XXXX**.

# The purpose of the Consultation



This Local Plan is issued for consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

These regulations ask for comments on *what the plan ought to contain* and we are seeking responses to the specific questions contained within the document.

The consultation questions are targeted, but there is an opportunity to provide additional information or comments at the end of the document.

The version of the Local Plan focuses on making best and most efficient use of land in towns and settlements across the District, reflecting the strategy for meeting development needs, as explained in Chapter 01.

A further Regulation 18 document, covering land outside of these settlements, will be published next year.

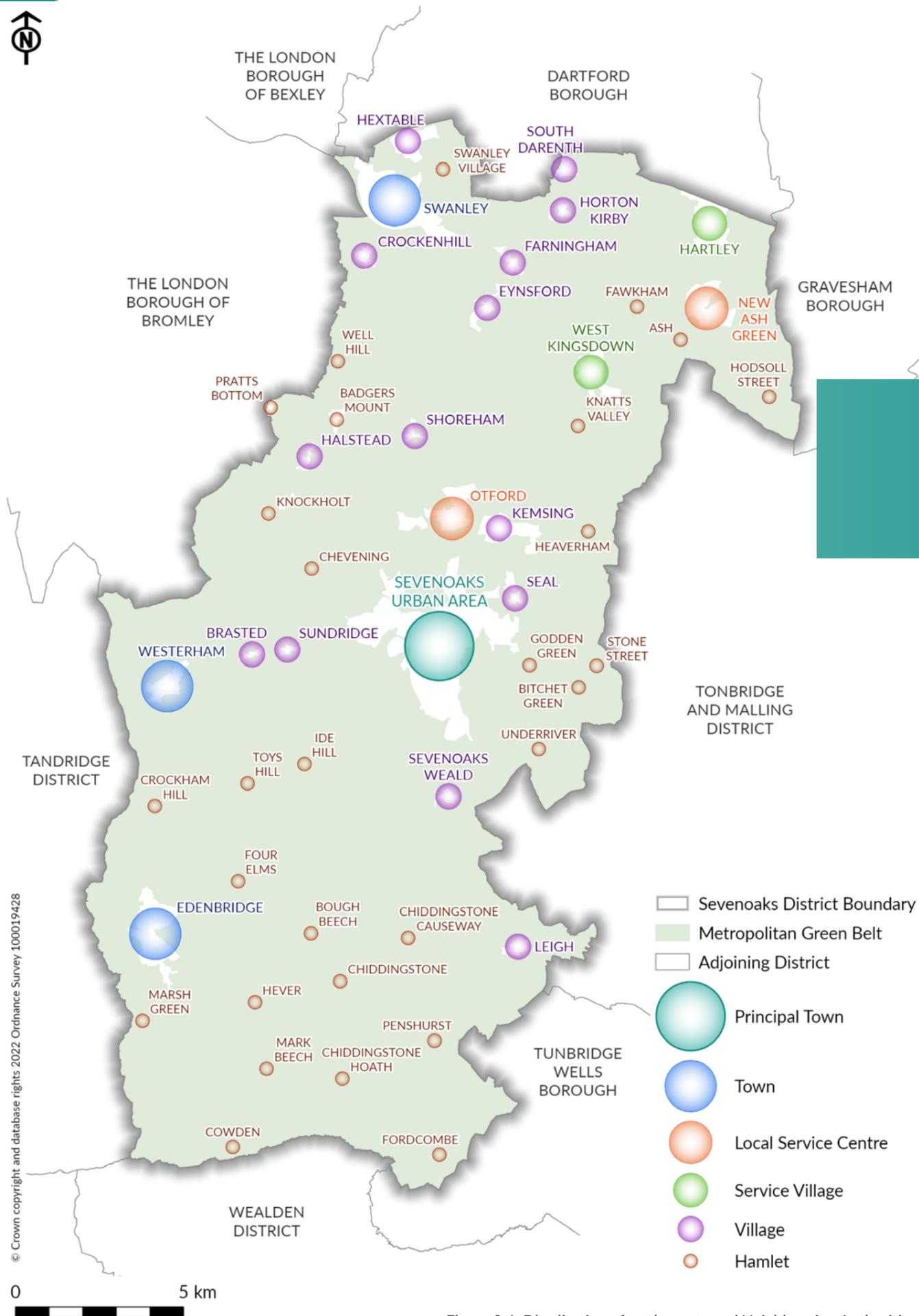
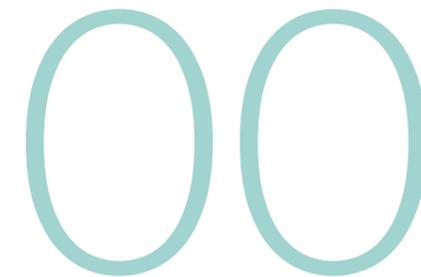


Figure 0.1: Distribution of settlements and Neighbouring Authorities

# What is the District like?



Sevenoaks District is located in West Kent, with the edge of Greater London to the north-west, Surrey to the west and East Sussex to the south.

The District has eight Neighbouring Authorities; London Borough of Bexley, London Borough of Bromley, Dartford, Gravesham, Tandridge, Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Wealden. Sevenoaks District covers approximately 143 square miles and has a population of 120,500 (2021 Census Data).

There are a total of 56 settlements in Sevenoaks District, as set out in the District's Settlement Hierarchy (July 2022).

This includes the Principal Town of Sevenoaks Urban Area, the Towns of Swanley, Edenbridge and Westerham and many smaller settlements, the largest of which are the Local Service Centres of New Ash Green and Otford.

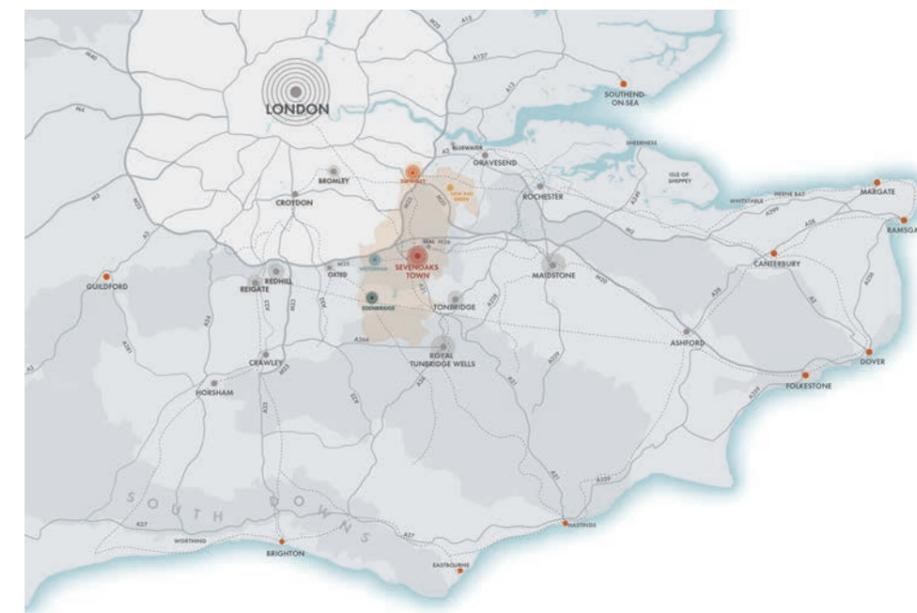


Figure 0.2: Regional Context



### Demographics

The population of the District is expected to grow, and the structure of the population expected to change, over the plan period, due to an ageing population, an increase in birth rate and internal migration patterns (largely people moving out of London into Sevenoaks). 22% of the District's population are currently aged 65 or over, and this figure is expected to grow to 24% over the plan period. This growing population and changing age structure presents a key challenge for the District.

There are areas of affluence in the District, as well as pockets of deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England. The IMD uses information about income, employment, health, education, crime and living environment to rank every small area in England from 1 (most deprived) to 32,844 (least deprived). According to the IMD, Sevenoaks District is the second least deprived local authority in Kent, behind Tunbridge Wells Borough, although there are areas that are within the 30% most deprived in the country, namely Swanley St Mary's and Swanley White Oak.

The District has generally high house prices. In 2020, the median house price in the District was £425,000, the highest in Kent, and house prices were 12.6 times annual earning. This makes it very difficult for first time buyers and young families to remain in the District. There is a requirement to provide 13,566 new homes over the plan period, including a buffer for flexibility in delivery, in order to meet the needs of the growing population. This includes a high proportion of affordable homes and specialist accommodation for older people.

The District has the lowest level of unemployment in Kent. The residents of the District are generally well qualified with only 8% of the population having no qualifications. There are a number of employment areas within the District, including at Vestry Estate in Northern Sevenoaks and in Swanley. The majority of residents work in the West Kent area, with more than 40% working in Greater London. The District also has a strong rural economy, and many residents work from home, but issues with connectivity and broadband are common.



### Landscape and Setting

The District has a high quality landscape with a mostly rural character. 60% of the District lies within the Kent Downs or High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are many areas of woodland, much of which is designated as Ancient Woodland. Parts of the District afford impressive views over Kent and the South East, particularly from the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge. The District is also rich in biodiversity with many Wildlife Reserves, designated areas as well as the River Darent, Eden and Medway.

There are many historic settlements in the District, as is reflected in the high number of Conservation Areas and listed buildings. The District boasts many nationally recognised heritage assets including the historic estates of Knole, Chartwell, Hever Castle, Penshurst Place and Lullingstone Castle. Other places of interest include the National Trust village at Chiddingstone, Eynsford Castle ruin, Lullingstone Roman Villa, Otford Palace and Toys Hill (the birthplace of the National Trust).



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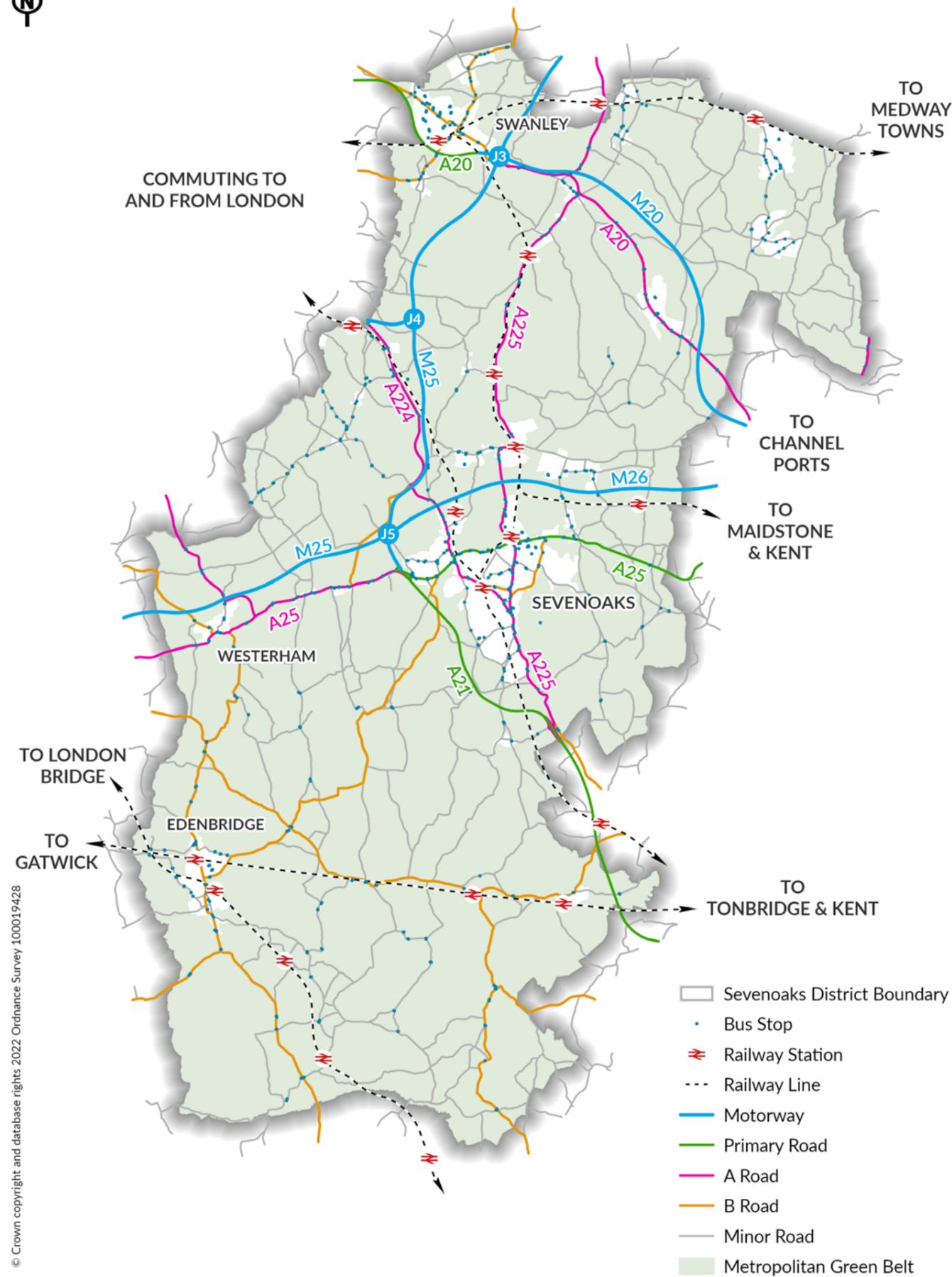


Figure 0.4: Connectivity

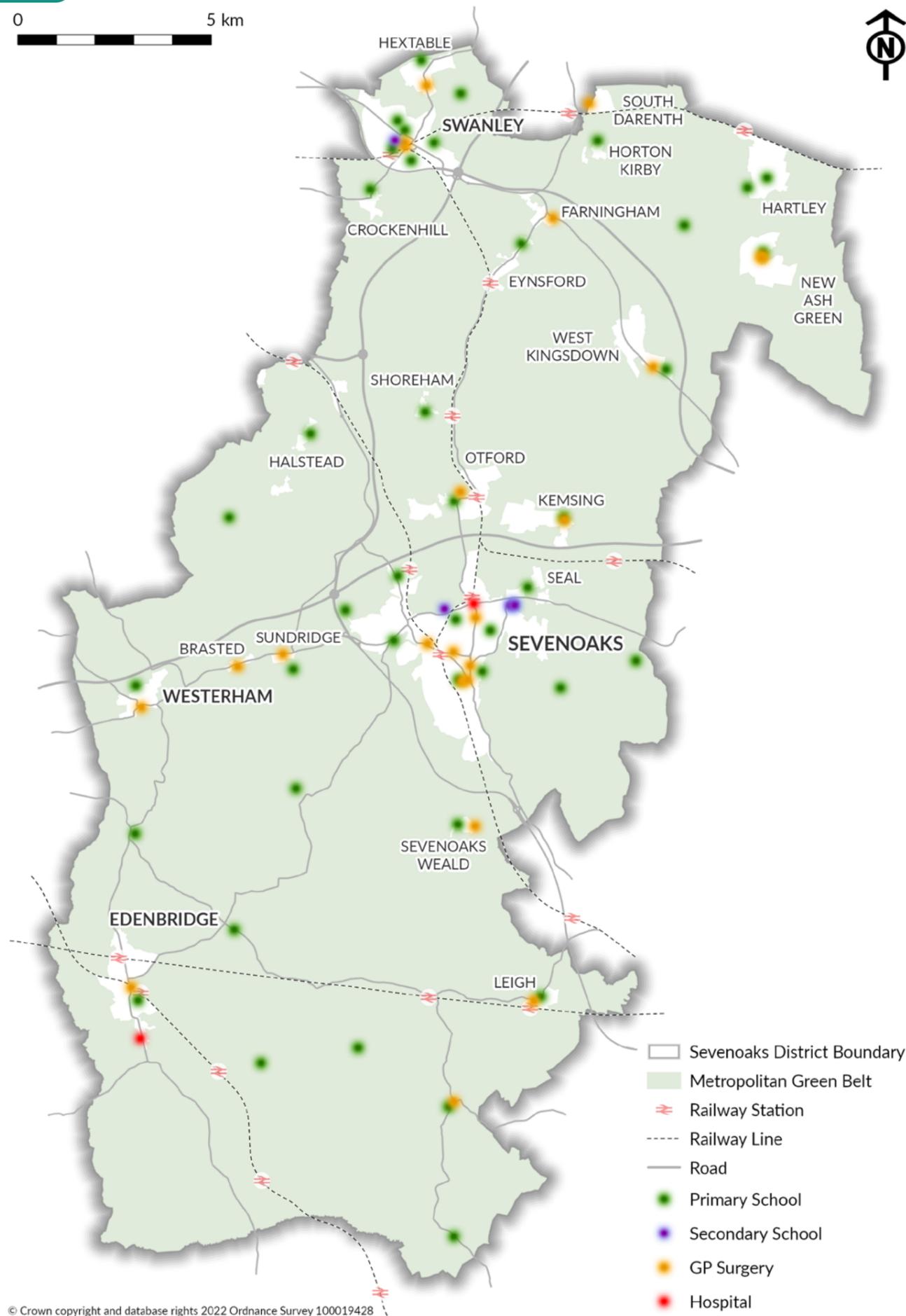


**Connectivity**

Sevenoaks District is a popular place to live, partly because of its proximity to London and accessibility to Europe. Strong road connections are provided by the strategic road network including access to the M25, M26, M20, A21, A20 and A25.

There are 14 train stations within the District, as well as others located just beyond the District border, many of which provide services into Central London in under an hour. The District is also well located for Gatwick and Heathrow airports, as well as the Channel Ports, Ashford and Ebbsfleet International stations.





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Figure 0.5: Doctors surgeries, hospitals, primary and secondary schools in the District



**Healthcare, Education and Retail**

We want to ensure that the District is a safe place for all to live, work and travel, while encouraging healthy lifestyles and providing people with access to good quality healthcare. There are two minor injury hospitals: Sevenoaks Hospital and Edenbridge & District War Memorial Hospital, as well as 21 Doctors Surgeries.

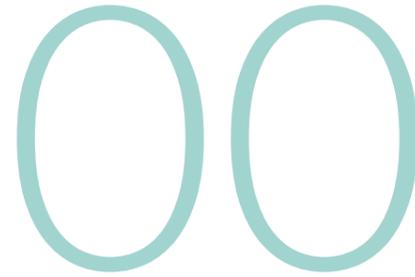
There are no major medical facilities within the District for residents, who have to travel out of District to Tunbridge Wells Hospital, the Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH) (Orpington), Queen Mary's Hospital (Sidcup), Darent Valley Hospital (Dartford), Maidstone Hospital and London hospitals.

Education within the District is varied with a mixture of state and private, primary and secondary provision. Whilst there are 42 primary schools, there are only five state secondary schools within the District; Knole Academy, Orchards Academy, Trinity School and the Sevenoaks annexes for Weald of Kent Grammar School and Tunbridge Wells Boys Grammar School. Many children are being sent outside of the District, or privately, for their secondary education.

The District has vibrant town centres with many independent shops and a good retail offering. There is, however, some strong competition from nearby areas including Tunbridge Wells, Bromley and Bluewater. Some areas are in need of regeneration, including Swanley Town Centre and New Ash Green Village Centre. Areas outside of the towns are served by local services and facilities within villages. These services are of great value to local communities and contribute to the District's rural economy.

# Strategic Issues

The Council thinks that following issues and considerations will be influential in shaping spatial development in Sevenoaks District over the period of the plan. They have informed the development of the Spatial Vision, that underpins the objectives and all strategic policies.



11. **Delivering on net zero:**  
The impact of climate change will be a significant and pressing challenge for all of us over the period of this Local Plan. The objectives and strategic policies support the Council's wider net zero agenda, to reduce carbon emissions.
12. **Healthy communities:**  
The global pandemic has reinforced the importance of spatial planning in maintaining public health. Policies should provide scope to deliver health infrastructure and promote positive physical and mental health outcomes.
13. **Promoting design excellence:**  
High quality design is central to the delivery of the strategic objectives in this plan. It lies at the heart of maintaining local character and more fundamentally, delivering places and spaces that function in a manner that is consistent with our planning policies.
14. **Homes to meet local needs:**  
Sevenoaks District remains an expensive place to live and many residents continue to struggle to find a home to meet their needs. Delivering genuinely affordable homes remains a key priority for the Council.



15. **Agile economy and resilient town centres:**  
The global pandemic has accelerated many of the existing trends, such as online shopping and home working, that have started to shape our local economy over recent years. Policies in the plan must provide a response to these issues alongside other Council strategies, to ensure our economy remains strong and resilient to change.
16. **Infrastructure to support planned growth:**  
The Local Plan must provide mechanisms to deliver the necessary infrastructure to support planned growth.
17. **Protecting the natural and built environment:**  
Natural resources and heritage assets remain key aspects of the District-wide character and continue to be valued by local residents. The emerging Local Plan will pursue a character-led approach to growth that protects these aspects.
18. **Resilience to Change:**  
Emerging evidence highlights the economic trends and demographic changes that will shape our District over the plan period. The plan must also incorporate flexibility to unexpected social, economic and environmental events.



## Consultation Question:

1. *Are there additional issues that are likely to influence spatial development in the District over the plan period?*



# Vision & Objectives



The Spatial Vision is vitally important in that it is both a starting point for all aspects of the Plan and a statement of how the District will look at the end of the Local Plan period, if strategic objectives are successfully delivered. The Vision has been informed by evidence that supports this Local Plan and also reflects the Council's wider objectives on matters such as net zero and health and wellbeing.

Key aspects of the Spatial Vision will be as follows:

- **Achievement of the Council's Net Zero aspirations** - Significantly reducing carbon emissions and adapting to a changing climate.
- **Delivery of sustainable and equitable infrastructure** - To meet the needs of all residents, regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, disability or social group. In transport terms, we want to encourage sustainable transport choices, as long as the approach does not alienate particular groups – for example, an active travel strategy that provides genuine choices for an aging population.  
  
Community infrastructure should be provided to meet the needs arising from planned growth, particularly in relation to health and education.
- **Healthy places and spaces, promotion of mental and physical health** - Incorporating green space and healthy design principles, to encourage good physical and mental health. Recognition of health as a principle that cuts across all policies in the plan.

- **Greater economic competitiveness** - Through vital and viable, unique and flexible town centres, capitalising on the strategic location of the District and its functional economic links. Ensuring the delivery of the right type of employment space and supporting the rural economy are equally important in encouraging economic competitiveness.
- **Continued protection of natural resources** - Including the natural environment and biodiversity.
- **Embracing emerging trends, such as smart technology** - Future proofing and allowing flexibility, promoting innovation.
- **Responding to demographic change** - Addressing migration trends and demographic pressures, such as the aging population.
- **Continued engagement with neighbouring authorities** - Including London Boroughs.
- **Meeting development needs in a way that respects local character and promotes design excellence** - Encouraging high quality design for new development, delivering enjoyable and attractive places to live, work and relax, that respect local character and provide innovative ways to support mental and physical well-being.

# Table 1

## Vision and Objectives

VISION	OBJECTIVE
<p><b>V1. Healthy places and spaces, promotion of mental and physical health -</b> Incorporating green space and healthy design principles, to encourage good physical and mental health. Recognition of health as a principle that cuts across all policies in the plan.</p>	<p><b>WE WILL:</b></p> <p><b>OB1:</b> Recognise the link between the places and spaces that we live in and the quality of residents' mental and physical health.</p> <p><b>OB2:</b> Work closely with healthcare providers to develop policies that promote good physical and mental health as an outcome.</p>
<p><b>V2. Achievement of the Council's Net Zero aspirations -</b> Significantly reducing carbon emissions and adapting to a changing climate.</p>	<p><b>OB3:</b> Ensure the Council's net zero objectives influence all development taking place in the District.</p> <p><b>OB4:</b> Provide sufficient flexibility in policies to enforce changing national standards, best practice and evidence base updates that will enviably occur over the plan period.</p> <p><b>OB5:</b> Allow residents to make lifestyle choices that make a positive contribution to net zero objectives.</p>
<p><b>V3. Delivering design excellence in our built environment that responds to our distinctive local character and creates the heritage of the future -</b> Demanding well-designed spaces that deliver exceptional places to live, work and relax, provide innovative ways to support mental and physical well-being.</p>	<p><b>WE WILL:</b></p> <p><b>OB6:</b> Deliver a character-led-approach to development that demonstrates the Government's priorities for well-designed places. (National Design Guide, 2021: The Ten Characteristics of Place).</p> <p><b>OB7:</b> Require the production of design codes for new development that meet the provisions of national planning guidance.</p>
<p><b>V4. Homes to meet identified needs -</b> Boosting the supply of homes including much needed affordable homes across the District:</p>	<p><b>WE WILL:</b></p> <p><b>OB8:</b> Deliver market and affordable homes to reflect the latest information on housing needs.</p> <p><b>OB9:</b> Optimise the supply of new homes in existing settlements.</p> <p><b>OB10:</b> Ensure new housing development makes best and most efficient use of land.</p>
<p><b>V5. Greater economic competitiveness -</b> Through vital and viable, unique and flexible town centres, capitalising on the strategic location of the District and its functional economic links. Ensuring the delivery of the right type of employment space and supporting the rural economy are equally important in encouraging economic competitiveness.</p>	<p><b>WE WILL:</b></p> <p><b>OB11:</b> Promote resilient and agile town centres that are able to respond to change.</p> <p><b>OB12:</b> Encourage the delivery of workspace to meet occupier demands.</p> <p><b>OB13:</b> Safeguard land to meet employment needs over the plan period.</p>

VISION	OBJECTIVE
<p><b>V6. Continuing to protect and take opportunities to enhance our irreplaceable historic and natural environment -</b> Our district's valuable natural and historic built environment makes an important contribution to the quality of life of our residents and all who visit.</p>	<p><b>WE WILL:</b></p> <p><b>OB14:</b> Ensure the District retains a high quality natural environment over the period of the Local Plan.</p> <p><b>OB15:</b> Support the principles of bio-diversity net gain</p>
<p><b>V7. Delivery of sustainable and equitable infrastructure -</b> To meet the needs of all residents, regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, disability or social group. In transport terms, we want to encourage sustainable transport choices, as long as the approach does not alienate particular groups – for example, an active travel strategy that provides genuine choices for an aging population.</p> <p>Community infrastructure should be provided to meet the needs arising from planned growth, particularly in relation to health and education.</p>	<p><b>WE WILL:</b></p> <p><b>OB16:</b> Work with stakeholders to address barriers that prevent residents from making sustainable transport choices.</p> <p><b>OB17:</b> Support equal access to public transport services for all residents.</p> <p><b>OB18:</b> Co-ordinate the delivery of necessary infrastructure to support planned growth</p>
<p><b>V8. Embracing emerging trends, such as smart technology -</b> Future proofing and allowing flexibility, promoting innovation.</p>	<p><b>WE WILL:</b></p> <p><b>OB19:</b> Acknowledge smart technology as an emerging trend that is likely shape development in the District.</p> <p><b>OB20:</b> Champion the use of smart technology, where it is able to address the key issues facing the District over the period of the plan.</p>
<p><b>V9. Responding to demographic change -</b> Addressing migration trends and demographic pressures.</p>	<p><b>WE WILL:</b></p> <p><b>OB21:</b> Bring forward policies with sufficient flexibility to respond to future demographic changes that will shape the District over the plan period.</p> <p><b>OB22:</b> Ensure demographic shifts form the starting point for future evidence base and discussions with neighbouring authorities.</p>
<p><b>V10. Continued engagement with neighbouring authorities -</b> Including London Boroughs.</p>	<p><b>WE WILL:</b></p> <p><b>OB23:</b> Continue to work with neighbouring authorities to respond to strategic matters.</p>

“

This Plan will deliver the new homes that our communities need, the right type of employment spaces and vibrant high streets to ensure a healthy economy and new infrastructure to support growth, whilst protecting the natural environment and our built heritage. This development strategy seeks to achieve these goals.

# Development Strategy

# 01





“

New homes are required for a growing population and must be delivered if the District is to remain economically competitive

# Development Strategy

# 01

## Strategic objectives:

- OB3:** Ensure the Council's net zero objectives influence all development taking place in the District.
- OB10:** Ensuring new housing development makes best and most efficient use of land.
- OB18:** Co-ordinate the delivery of necessary infrastructure to support planned growth.
- OB23:** Continue to work with neighbouring authorities to respond to strategic matters.



Sevenoaks District is subject to numerous social, economic and environmental pressures that define our complex and often competing development needs. New homes are required for a growing population and must be delivered if the District is to remain economically competitive and supporting infrastructure is essential, if planned growth is to be truly sustainable. The need to protect our green and natural spaces for current and future populations, has also never been greater. The proposed development strategy within this chapter provides a framework to meet these needs.



To meeting District-wide development needs, the Local Plan will plan positively for new development and once adopted, will have primacy in planning decisions.

- 1.1 This Local Plan focuses on delivering the Council's Spatial Vision for 2040 and meeting the overarching objective of national planning guidance to bring forward sustainable development. It is prepared at a time of uncertainty across the three pillars of sustainability resulting from the societal changes that are emerging from the Coronavirus pandemic, economic instability and environmental impact of climate changes. The future direction of national policy also remains unclear and it is important that the Plan incorporates sufficient flexibility to respond, as these matters are resolved.
- 1.2 In addition to meeting District-wide development needs, the Local Plan will plan positively for new development and once adopted, will have primacy in planning decisions. This means the Council will be required to determine planning applications in accordance with policies, unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Council expects new development proposals to reflect the conclusions of relevant evidence base documents that have informed the production of policies in this document.
- 1.3 The Local Plan must be positive in planning for new homes to meet our pressing needs and some difficult choices will need to be made in seeking the right balance between providing new homes supported by infrastructure, protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, and supporting the urban and rural economies. It is vital that new development makes best and most efficient use of land in sustainable locations whilst ensuring that new development is designed to the highest quality and helps to meet our net zero 2030 commitment.



**Summary of Development Needs**

1.4 This Local Plan considers how best to meet identified development needs, as far as possible, given wider objectives. The headline needs for this District are:

- 714 homes pa (a figure provided by central government),
- 5.7 ha of employment land
- Maintaining existing level of retail floorspace.

1.5 The government provides a standardised assessment methodology for assessing housing need, which is based on household projections produced by the ONS that are adjusted to take account of affordability. For Sevenoaks, this means the provision of 714 homes per year. To put this figure in context, this would triple the approximately 250 homes which have been delivered each year over the past 10 years. Rolled forward, the Council’s housing need for the entire Plan period (2022-2040) is 12,852 homes. Due to difficulties in supply over recent years, our housing requirement will also require a buffer of one year (714) to provide flexibility in delivery which results in an overall housing need of 13,566.

1.6 Meeting development needs, particularly housing needs, within a constrained environment is clearly a defining factor for this Plan. But just as important is the need to place a high value on the varied and distinctive places and communities that make up Sevenoaks District and ensure that any new development respects these differences and is designed to respond to **local character**. We want to create healthy **communities**, not just houses, and these places need to be supported by services and infrastructure to promote **well-being**, so people and future generations will choose to live and work in these sustainable locations. We will promote low carbon development to help honour our **Net Zero 2030** commitment.

1.7 We are working closely with our town and parish councils whom are preparing Neighbourhood Plans for their areas. Where site allocations are proposed in areas that are developing a Neighbourhood Plan, the Local Plan will set the high-level strategic aims in terms of land-use and the approximate quantum of development and the Neighbourhood Plan can provide more detail in terms of design, infrastructure and local character and distinctiveness.

**DEVELOPMENT NEEDS PLAN PERIOD 2022 – 2040**

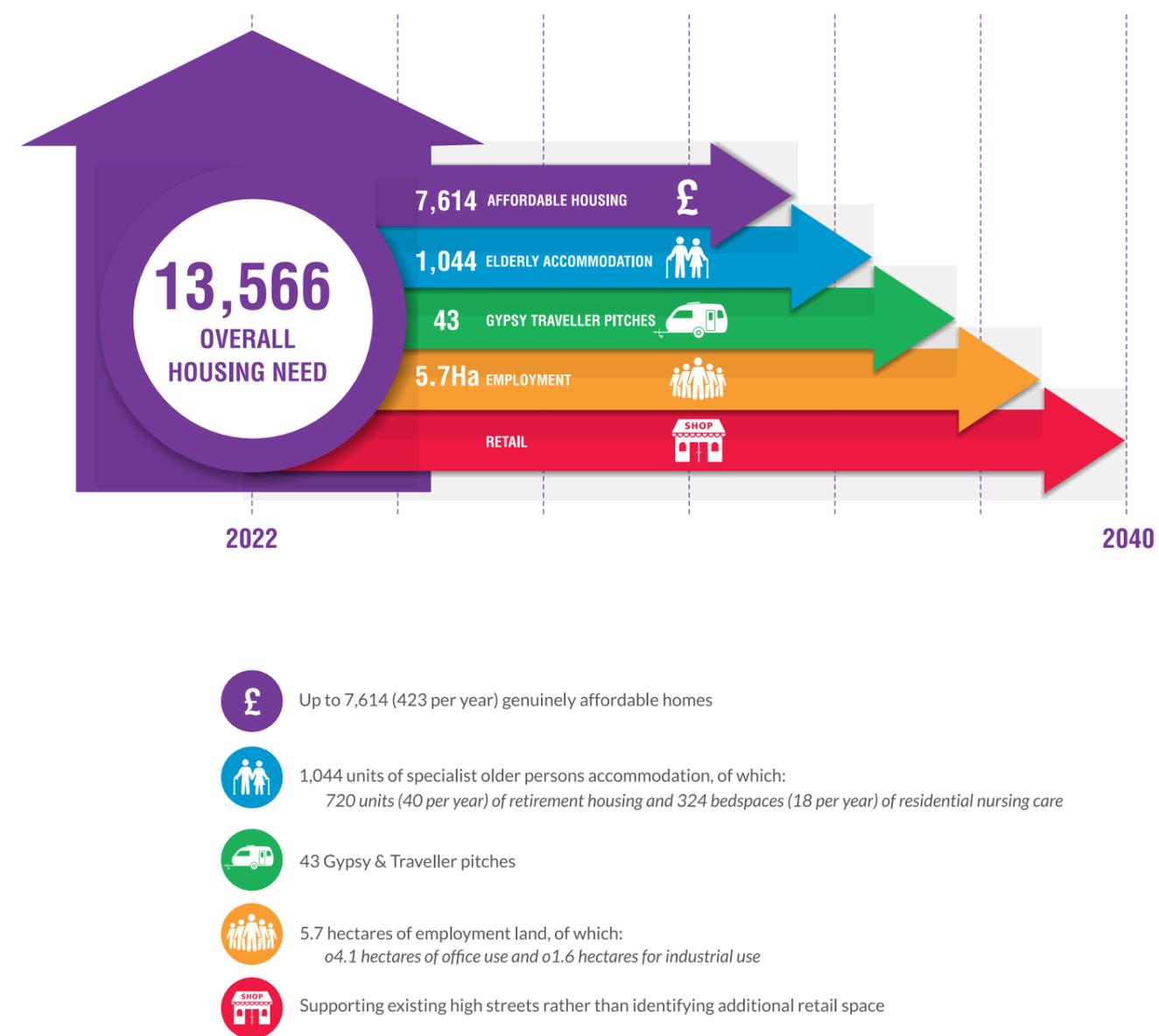


Figure 1.1: Development needs Plan period 2022 - 2040

## PLACE MAKING PRIORITIES

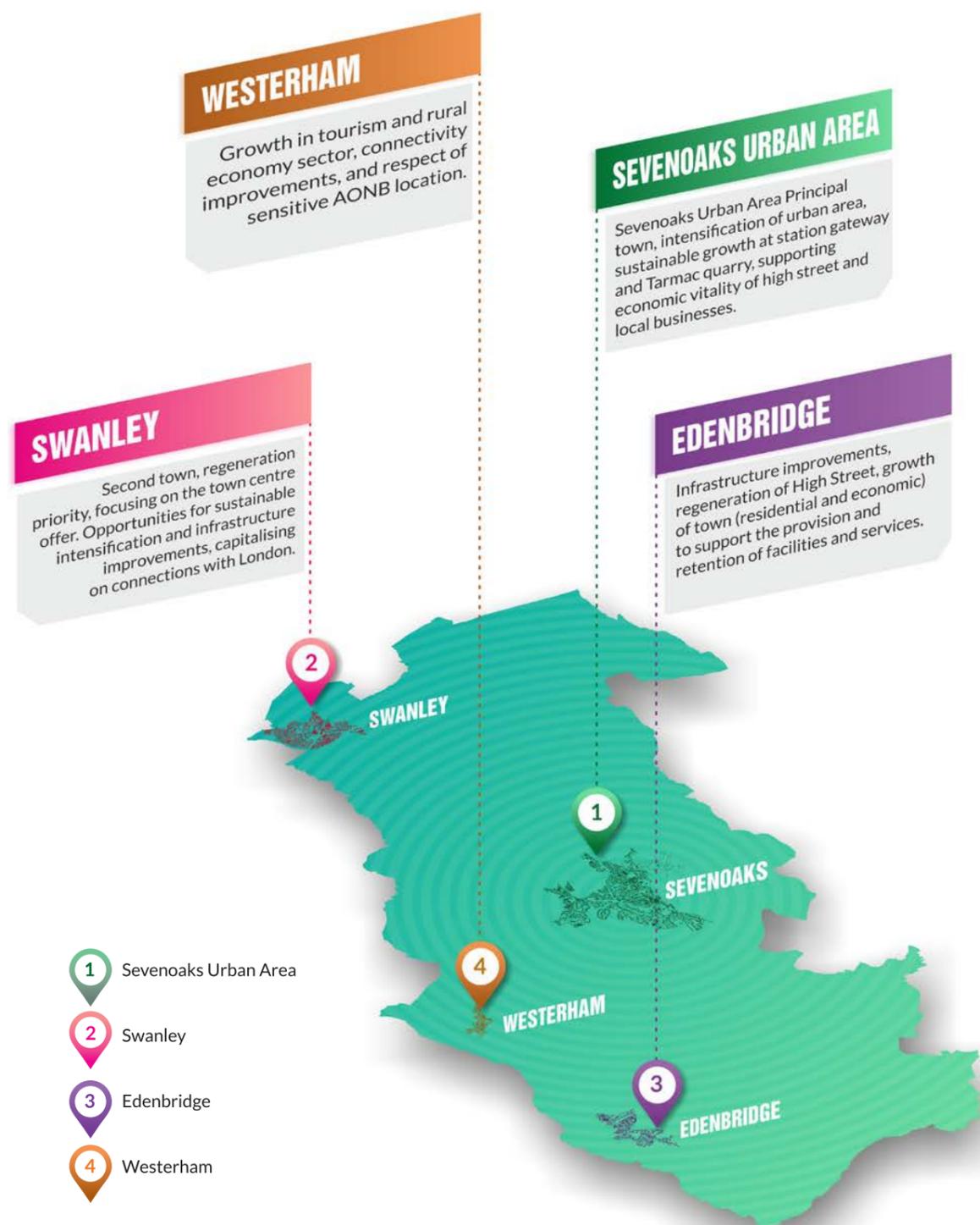


Figure 1.2: Place making priorities

### Development Strategy – Existing Settlements

- 1.8 The Council's strategy is to fully explore opportunities to accommodate its strategic development needs in existing settlements. Green Belt land will only be released where there are exceptional circumstances for doing so and all reasonable alternatives have been explored, including opportunities in neighbouring authorities.
- 1.9 This version of the Plan is central to the Council's development strategy because it focusses on the potential that exists in settlements across the District, particularly in relation to new homes, and explores the opportunities to make the most of land in these areas. Taking account of all strategic objectives and policy requirements the Plan seeks to:
- Promote a character driven approach to meeting development needs;
  - Proactively identify suitable and achievable development potential in existing settlements;
  - Identify and provide development aspirations and criteria for key development opportunities;
  - Encourage proposals that make best and most efficient use of land, including the delivery of development at sustainable densities;
  - Support the delivery of new homes on small sites up to 1 hectare in size;
  - Actively encourage the exploration of other mechanisms to deliver new homes, such as the intensification of under used land in existing settlements.

- 1.10 This initial consultation focuses on optimising development within existing settlements, within the boundaries of the District's towns and villages, where inset from the Green Belt. These are the most sustainable locations in the District, well served by public transport and with good access to services and facilities. Focusing development in these areas, in accordance with national policy, will promote sustainable transport choices which are key to achieving the Council's net zero 2030 commitment.
- 1.11 We have considered urban sites submitted under the call for sites, but have also proactively identified development opportunities, through the Settlement Capacity Study (2022). We have used the brownfield register and other tools to maximise the contribution from previously developed land and have sought to optimise density on these urban sites, using the District-wide character study (DWCS), to guide the form of development, including gentle densification in existing lower density areas, and optimising densities in highly sustainable locations. This plan also explores options for the best use of land, through co-location and mixed-use development, to combine different land uses to ensure the most efficient development scenarios. Further work will be undertaken on all of these aspects as the Plan progresses, to consider whether there is any additional potential available from further increased densities and intensification, informed by the DWCS. This includes opportunities to explore the development potential of land at and surrounding Sevenoaks Station, which is set out in the next section.



1.12 This consultation considers three density scenarios for the settlements, as defined below – Minimum Uplift, Optimum and Optimum + and comments are welcome on these options:

- **Minimum Uplift:**  
Modest density increase across all sites.
- **Optimum:**  
Optimising density on sites, whilst respecting local character, with higher densities in sustainable locations.
- **Optimum + (Maximum change):**  
Opportunities to maximise densities, particularly in town centres and close to transport hubs.

1.13 It should be noted that the minimum uplift scenario will result in greater unmet need which will need to be accommodated in neighbouring areas or in the Green Belt. Further details on density are set out in the Housing chapter.

	Minimum uplift (dph)	Optimum (dph)	Optimum + (dph)
Town centre locations and close to transport nodes	150	Mid-point, to be informed by character based approach	150+
Built up areas	50		150
Edge of built up areas	40		60

# HOUSING SUPPLY COMPONENTS



Figure 1.3: Housing Supply Components

HOUSING SUPPLY COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM UPLIFT	OPTIMUM PLUS
Baseline	Sites with planning permission at April 2022	2,800 (TBC)	2,800 (TBC)
Optimising potential in existing settlements	Sites within existing settlements proposed for allocation	1,200 (TBC)	2,100 (TBC)
	Windfall / small sites allowance	Up to 1,000 (TBC)	Up to 1,000 (TBC)
	Future potential identified in Settlement Capacity Study	665 (TBC)	1,480 (TBC)
Current major development in the Green Belt applications	Sites with planning applications under consideration at April 2022	1,775 + 150 C2 (TBC)	1,775 + 150 C2 (TBC)
Duty to cooperate	Potential identified through discussions with neighbouring authorities	TBC	TBC
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7,440 + 150 C2 (TBC)</b>	<b>9,155 + 150 C2 (TBC)</b>

Figure 1.4: Breakdown of Housing Supply

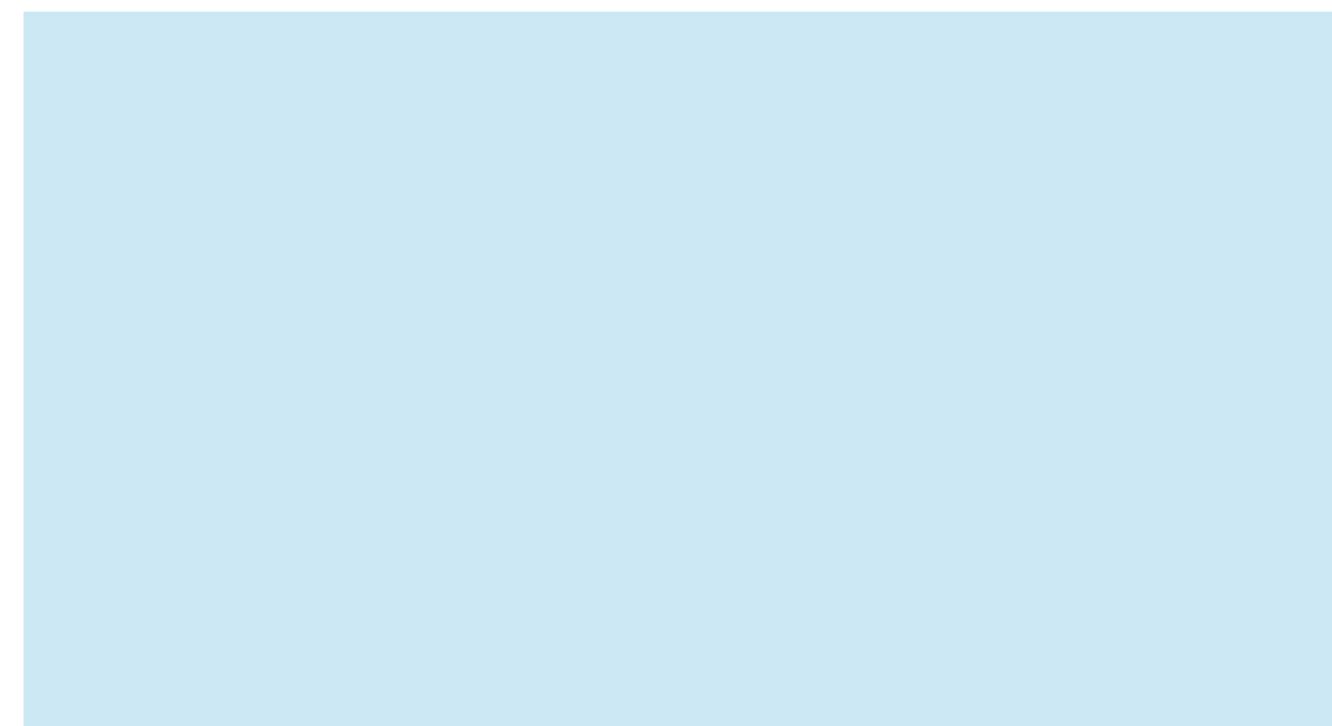


Figure 1.5: Pie charts showing housing supply components by geographical area

Sites within existing settlements submitted into the Call for Sites can be viewed on the SHELAA interactive map here [add link]

1.14 This initial 'settlement focus' starting point is advanced as the 'base' building block for the new Local Plan strategy. By clearly establishing what level of development can be achieved in our settlements, this will inform ongoing discussions with neighbouring authorities, under the Duty to Co-operate, as to whether they are able to assist with accommodating any unmet need. The NPPF (para.141) makes it very clear that before considering Green Belt release, all other reasonable options for meeting development needs should be fully examined. It directs authorities to develop a strategy which first:

- Makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites/underutilised land;
- Optimises density of development, particularly in town centres and locations well served by public transport;
- Is informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities as to whether they could accommodate need.

1.15 However, it should be recognised that there are numerous barriers which may prevent neighbouring authorities from assisting with any unmet needs. Please see Fig. 5 which sets out the strategic constraints within these areas. These authorities are also required to meet their own challenging needs, in addition to potentially meeting the unmet needs of authorities other than Sevenoaks. The challenges of reaching any agreement via bilateral discussions are not insignificant, particularly in the absence of a sub-regional strategy.

1.16 Clearly there will be a balance between how much can be achieved within the highly constrained settlements within Sevenoaks District, which make up 7% of the District, what might be achieved elsewhere in neighbouring authorities through the Duty to Cooperate, and what might be achieved through potential Green Belt release.

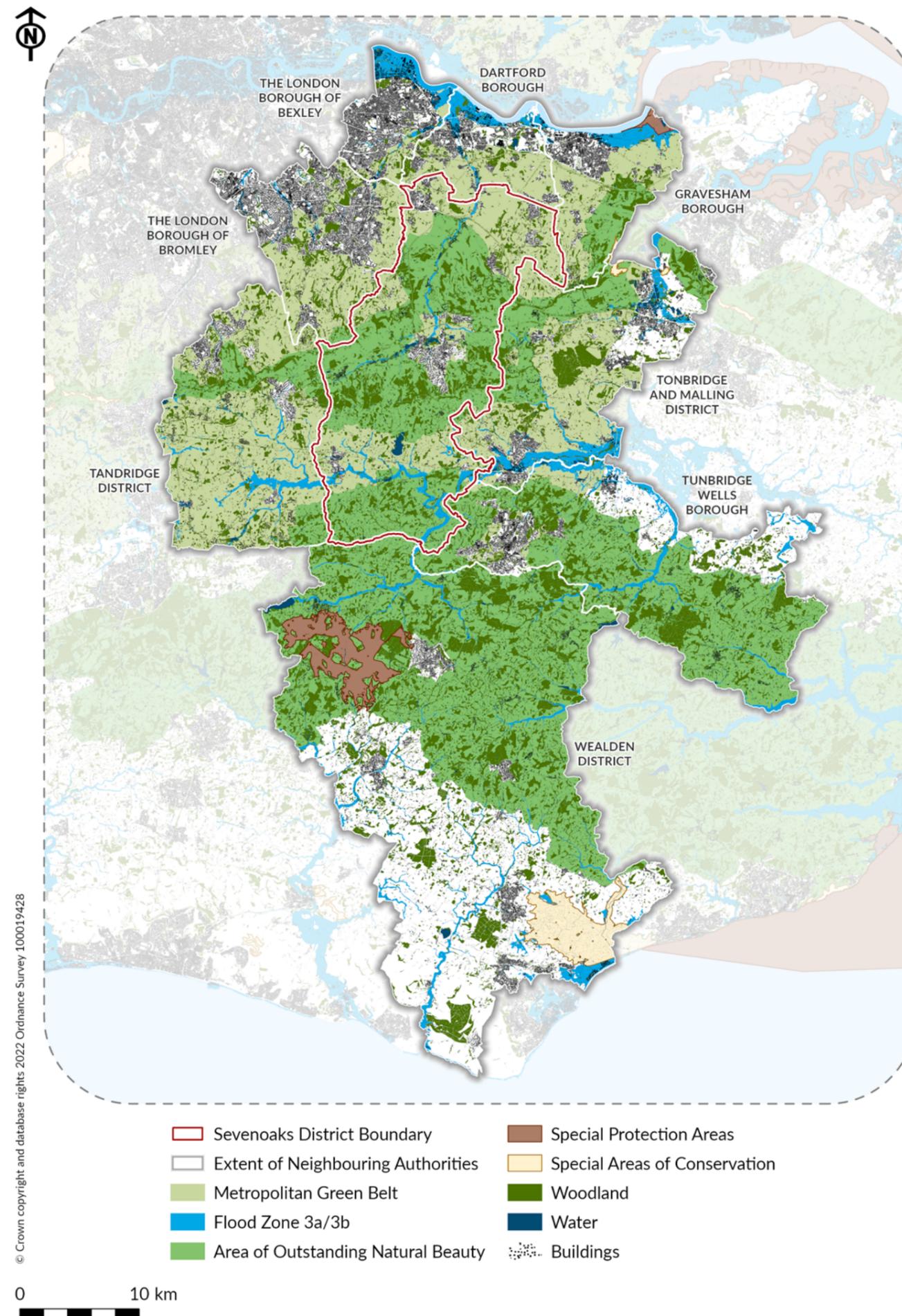


Figure 1.4: Map of constraints in neighbouring authorities

# Policy ST1

## A Balanced Strategy for Growth in a Constrained District

It is suggested that the over-arching strategic development strategy for the District focuses on the following priorities:

The balanced strategy for growth over the period 2022-2040, as outlined on the Key Diagram, is to ensure that a minimum of 714 dwelling pa, together with 5.7 ha of employment land are developed, supported by strategic infrastructure and services.

Development should be focused within the boundaries of existing settlements, including building at higher density and optimising the use of previously developed 'brownfield land'. There will be a particular focus on sites that are close to services and facilities and/or well-connected by public transport, walking and cycling.

The four towns within the District - Sevenoaks, Swanley, Edenbridge and Westerham, will sequentially be the focus for development, with more moderate development within the Local Service Centres and Service Villages.

Development proposals for the four towns will be expected to comply with the place-making proposals and priorities listed in the supporting text and emerging Neighbourhood Plans.

We will promote sustainable patterns of development by amending Green Belt boundaries only in 'exceptional circumstances', where there is a clear need, where sites have good access to services and facilities and their release has limited impact on the purposes of the Green Belt. Green Belt release will be required if we are unable to meet needs within existing settlements or via the Duty to Co-operate with neighbouring authorities (and this will be subject to the subsequent Local Plan (Reg.18) consultation in 2023).

[www.sevenoaks.or.uk/localplan/policyST1](http://www.sevenoaks.or.uk/localplan/policyST1)



### Consultation Questions:

Our proposed development strategy is summarised below:

**Step 1:** Focus on optimising density and utilising brownfield land in existing settlements (the focus of this Regulation 18 consultation).

**Step 2:** Robust Duty to Co-operate discussions with neighbouring authorities, informed by step 1 and the constraints of the District.

**Step 3:** Green Belt release, where required, in Exceptional Circumstances (to be covered within the subsequent Regulation 18 consultation).

- Do you agree with this proposed development strategy? (range)

We are considering density within existing settlements at different levels - Minimum Uplift, Optimum and Optimum + - which is your preferred approach? (select one of 3)

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

#### Supporting evidence

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) including standardised methodology for calculating Local Housing Need
- Targeted Review of Housing Need 2022
- Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment - urban sites 2022
- Green Belt Assessment 2017
- Settlement Hierarchy 2022





### Sevenoaks Railway Station

**1.17** The Council recognises the development potential of land at and surrounding Sevenoaks Railway Station. There are opportunities to improve the public realm, enhance the arrival experience, complement the nearby town centre and make a meaningful contribution towards District-wide development needs. Development around the station that meets other policies in the Local Plan, supports the Council's wider objective to make best use and most efficient of land in existing settlements, before releasing Green Belt land.

**1.18** The Station Area is one of the most accessible locations in Sevenoaks District, with fast and frequent train services to London, the south coast and across the wider county of Kent. Located approximately 750 metres to the north-west of the main retail and commercial core of Sevenoaks town, the station itself comprises a modern glass box style ticket hall to the west of London Road and a surface car park of 517 parking spaces to the east.

**1.19** The station buildings are surrounded by an eclectic selection of land uses and under utilised sites, which give a unique but somewhat uncoordinated appearance. Overall, the area would benefit from a clearer sense of identity and cohesion that reinforces its relationship to Sevenoaks town centre, and other nearby development opportunities.

**1.20** Working with local stakeholders, the Council will explore the preparation of a development strategy for the Station Area that provides a clear spatial vision, and considers factors such as the quantum and type of uses, scale and massing, development phasing and how these aspirations could be delivered. This work will build on existing evidence and Plans, such as the Town Centre Strategy, District Wide Characterisation Study, Settlement Capacity Study and the Draft Neighborhood Plan for the area.

**1.21** Other objectives of the strategy could be to:

- Ensure development is co-ordinated to create a clear identity for the area;
- Bring forward a range of active uses and a vibrant new neighbourhood, which respects existing uses, residents and local character;
- Re-enforce the relationship between the station, the town centre and the wider District;
- Coordinate the proposals with other development opportunities, including Sevenoaks Quarry and Land East of the High Street, to deliver a coherent offer for the town;
- Make the most of the existing public transport accessibility and explore the potential to create a more formalised public transport hub;

- Deliver an enjoyable and attractive environment for local residents and the many thousands of people that pass through the station each year;
- Respond to new ways of living and working that are emerging from the pandemic;
- Create a new destination for Sevenoaks town around the station that adds value and variety and brings prosperity to the wider District.

**1.22** In addition to new residential development, it is considered that the area has the potential to support other uses, including flexible workspaces, a retail offer that complements the nearby town centre, cultural and community uses and improvements to the public realm. All of these aspects would be considered in an emerging development strategy.



### Consultation Questions:

1. What would you like to see in a development brief for the Station Area?
2. Do you have a view on the area of land that the brief should cover and sites that could be included?



“

Sevenoaks District has a high quality and beautiful natural environment with a predominantly rural character. The sweeping landscape incorporates the chalk hills of the North Downs, stretches of enchanting woodland, historic parkland and areas rich in biodiversity.

# Natural Environment

# 08



# Natural Environment

# 08

## Strategic objectives:

**OB14:** Ensure the District retains a high-quality natural environment over the period of the Local Plan including delivering a 20% bio-diversity net gain on new development.



Sevenoaks District is an attractive place to live and work. The natural environment is a key character component of the District and should be conserved and enhanced for current and future generations.

**8.1** More than 60% of the District lies within the Kent Downs or High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and 11% of the District is covered in irreplaceable Ancient Woodland (compared with the UK average of 2%).

**8.2** The District is rich in biodiversity and has a range of habitats varying from chalk grasslands, acid grassland, woodlands, rivers and open water and heathland.



The natural environment is a key component of the character of the District



- Sevenoaks District Boundary
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Biodiversity Areas
- Parks, Open Spaces and Woodland
- Rivers and Areas of Open Water
- Urban Area

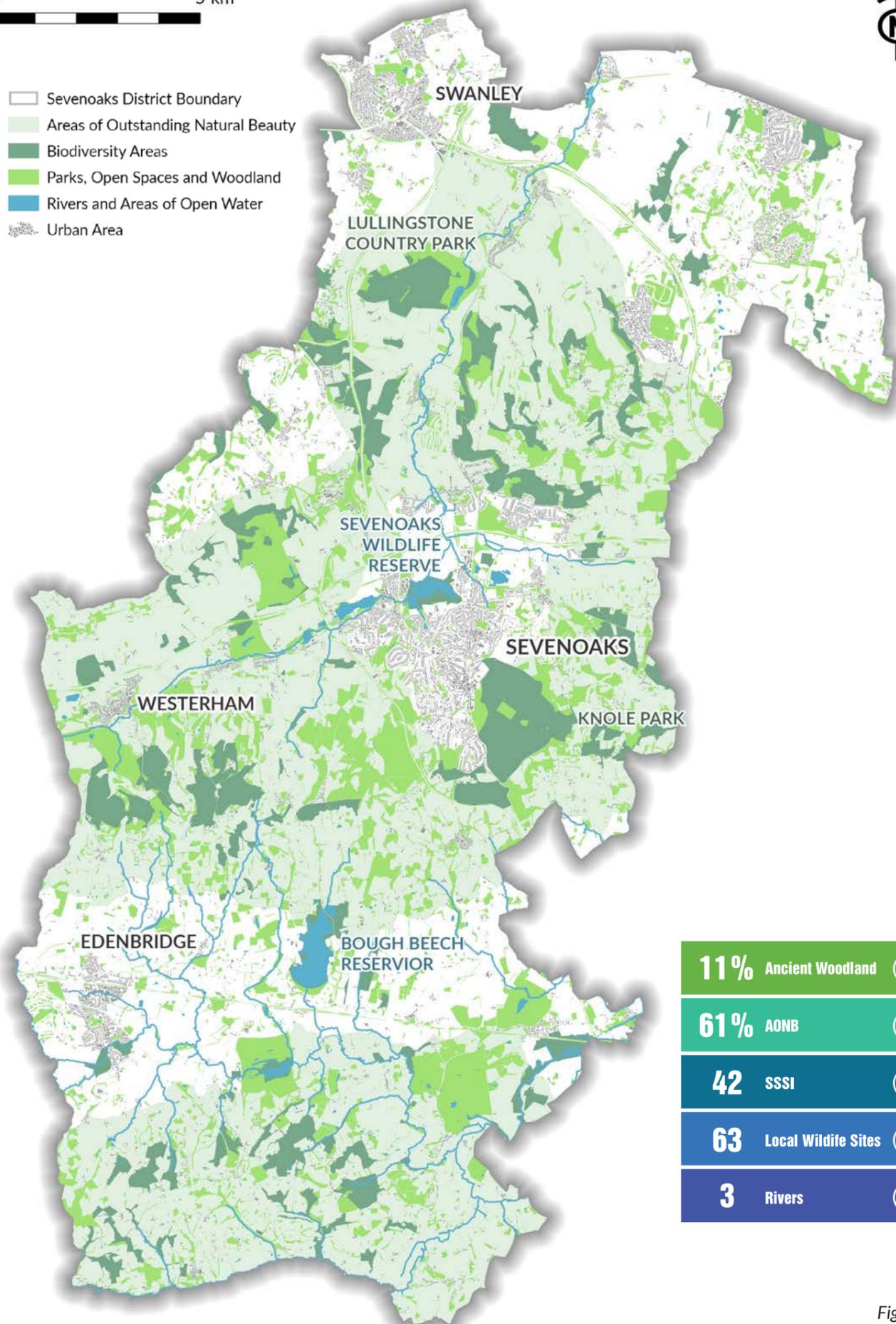


Figure 8.1

Key Natural Environment Features of Sevenoaks District



**Landscape and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

- 8.3 The Landscape Character Assessment 2016 provides a detailed review of the entire District including the AONBs. National policy and legislation already set out how the different designated areas should be managed and protected.
- 8.4 Developments in AONBs are expected to be modest and in line with the NPPF. They should conserve and enhance the District character of the AONB. Proposals should take account of the relevant Management Plan and associated guidance to produce sensitive and carefully designed schemes.

- 8.5 New developments should enhance the character of the AONB and the Management Plans can help to guide how a scheme may achieve this. Enhancements may include:

- Improvement of scenic beauty such as, the removal or improvement of currently detrimental buildings or features; or by obscuring or distracting from negative features such as pylons, substations and major roads;
- Supporting climate mitigation and resilience;
- Restoring historic features and replacing existing materials with more appropriate and local materials;
- Supporting the local economy by using local materials, including features reliant on local materials such as wood for biomass boilers, supporting new rural business etc.;
- Restoring historic settlement patterns, historic field patterns or historic routeways;
- Allowing new appropriate public access;
- Restoring native planting and natural features including trees, hedgerows, meadows and grassland;
- Improving tranquillity and reducing the existing impact of noise and lighting.





“

There are emerging proposals around the Bough Beech reservoir and Bore Place sites, for potentially opening up Bough Beech reservoir to be more of a community resource.

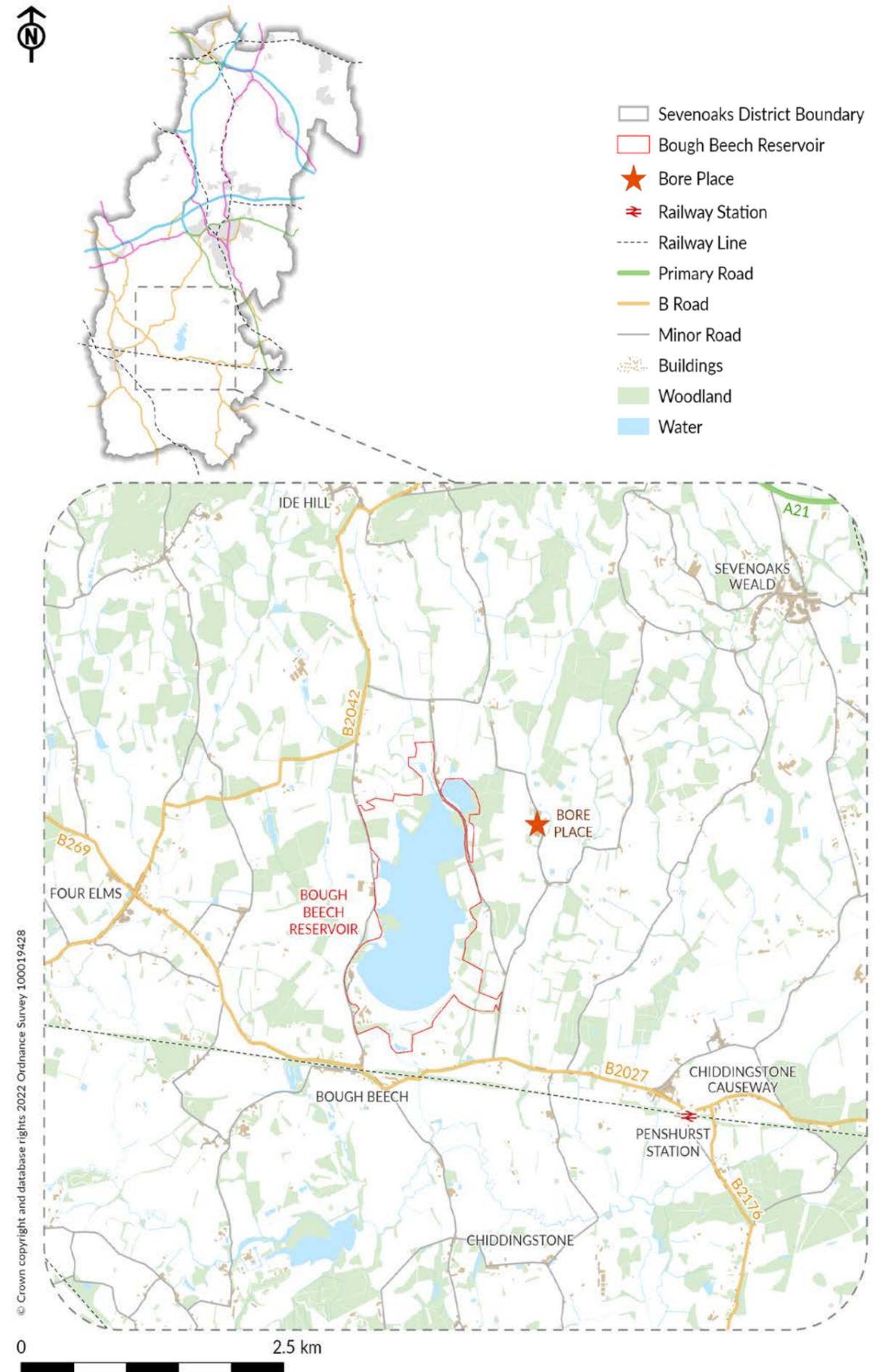


Figure 8.2 Bough Beech Reservoir and Bore Place



The District has a number of nationally designated sites which will be shown on the policies map. There are also has a number of locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Roadside Nature Reserves, Kent Wildlife Trust Reserves.



### Biodiversity and Ecosystems

**8.9** Sevenoaks District has a wide range of habitats and protected areas, including 42 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 63 Local Wildlife Sites and 19 nature reserves.

**8.10** The District is home to a number of nationally designated sites which will be highlighted on the policies map. There are also has a number of locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Roadside Nature Reserves, Kent Wildlife Trust Reserves. These are protected for their biodiversity and ecological value.

**8.11** The The various ecological and habitat components across the District, alongside other areas of open space, are collectively known as the blue green infrastructure network. The network consists of the following sites and is shown as an interactive map:. Land of biodiversity value, including:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs);
- Registered Historic Parks and Gardens;
- Land designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) including Common Land and Public Rights of Way;

- Local Wildlife Sites;
- Nature Reserves;
- Woodland and Ancient Woodland;
- Country parks;
- Trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders;
- River corridors and open bodies of water;
- Cycle routes;
- Sites identified in the Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens;
- Sites designated as Open Space including:
  - Amenity Greenspace;
  - Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace;
  - Provision for Children and Young People;
  - Outdoor Sports facilities, playing pitches and playing fields;
  - Allotments and community gardens
- Green corridors;
- Cemeteries and Churchyards.

# Policy BW1

## Safeguarding Places for Wildlife and Nature

This policy will seek to:

- Protect the blue green infrastructure network;
- Designate biodiversity areas that are not already protected through legislation such as Local Wildlife Sites;
- Support schemes and projects to enhance the blue green infrastructure network.

[www.sevenoaks.or.uk/localplan/policyST1](http://www.sevenoaks.or.uk/localplan/policyST1)

### Consultation Questions:

1. *Is there anything else that should be identified as part of the District's blue green infrastructure network?*
2. *Do you agree that locally designated sites should generally be protected from development?*



### Ashdown Forest

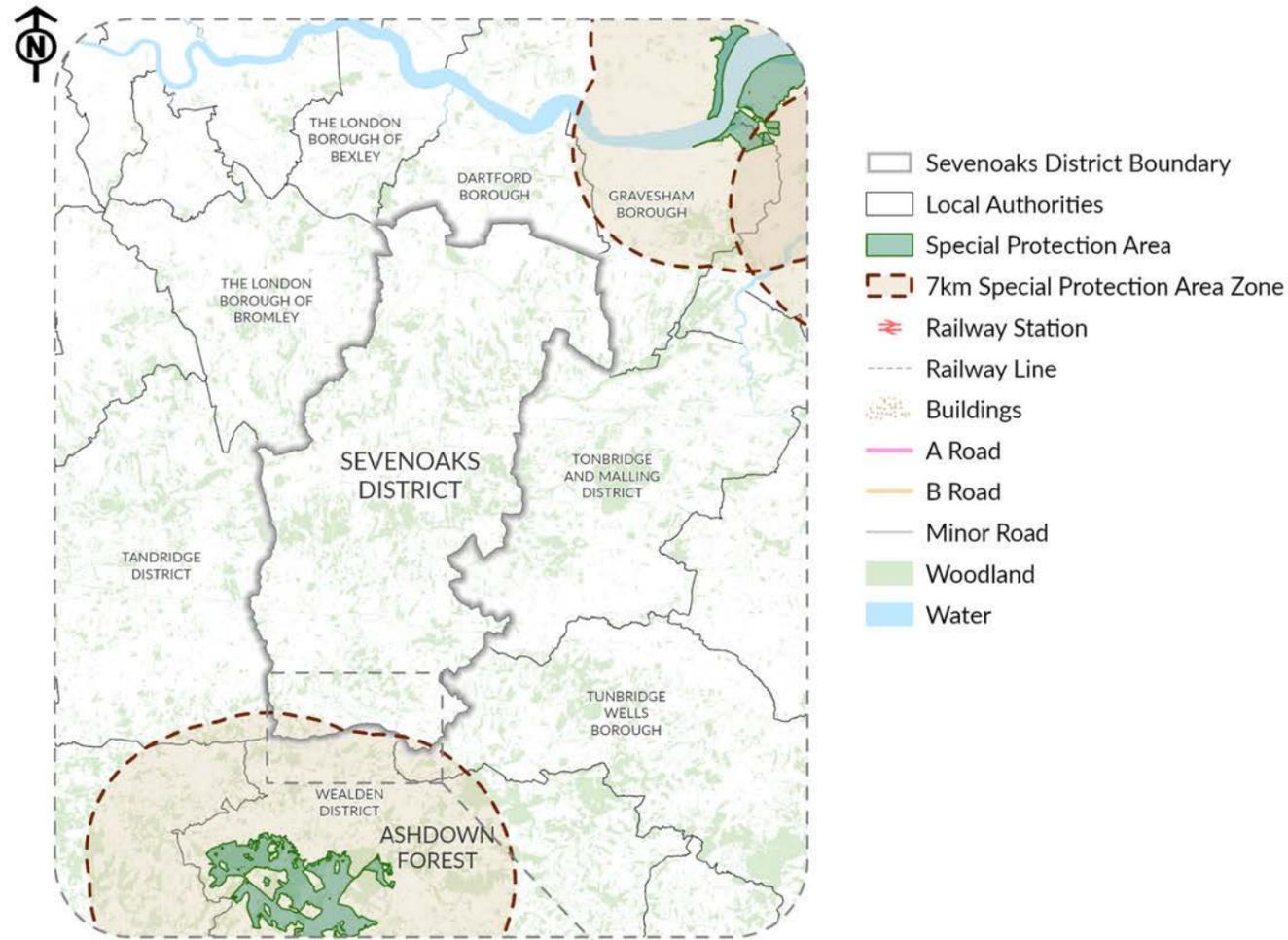
8.12 There are four internationally important sites within 10km of the boundary of the District, the most significant of which is Ashdown Forest which lies approximately 6km south of the District boundary. It is internationally important for nature conservation, reflected in its designation as a Special Protection Area (SPA), due to the presence of breeding Nightjars and Dartford Warblers and as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), primarily due to heathland habitats. The European designations cover around 3,000ha.

8.13 The District's nearest settlement to Ashdown Forest is Edenbridge, which is approximately 12km from the site and a 2021 visitor's survey found that less than 2% of visitors to the Forest are from within Sevenoaks District.

8.14 We are members of the Ashdown Forest Officer Working Group and have signed a Statement of Common Ground to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to joint-working on this important issue. Once adopted the Local Plan will be accompanied by a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' (HRA) to assess whether there are any adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites, as a result of development provided by the Plan, even in combination with other plans and projects. We will continue to work proactively with Natural England, neighbouring authorities and any other relevant bodies to understand the impact of the Local Plan on the Ashdown Forest.

8.15 To date, neighbouring authorities have sought modest developer contributions towards mitigating the impact of recreational pressure from new development, within a 7km zone of the forest. This zone just reaches into the District (a very small area around Fordcombe and Cowden as shown in figure 8.3), but there currently is no development proposed in these areas as it is entirely washed over by the Green Belt. However, due to the possibility of windfall development, Natural England has recommended that Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMMs) contributions are sought, to allow any windfall development within the 7km zone to proceed, whilst addressing their impact on the forest.

8.16 As there currently are no proposed site allocations within the 7km zone in the District, a strategic Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) is unlikely to be feasible but we will explore options for alternative provision. Tariff guidance is set out in the following document and is currently set at £1,170 per new residential unit  
[www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/file/1140/ashdown\\_forest\\_special\\_protection\\_spa\\_strategy\\_tariff\\_guidance](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/file/1140/ashdown_forest_special_protection_spa_strategy_tariff_guidance)



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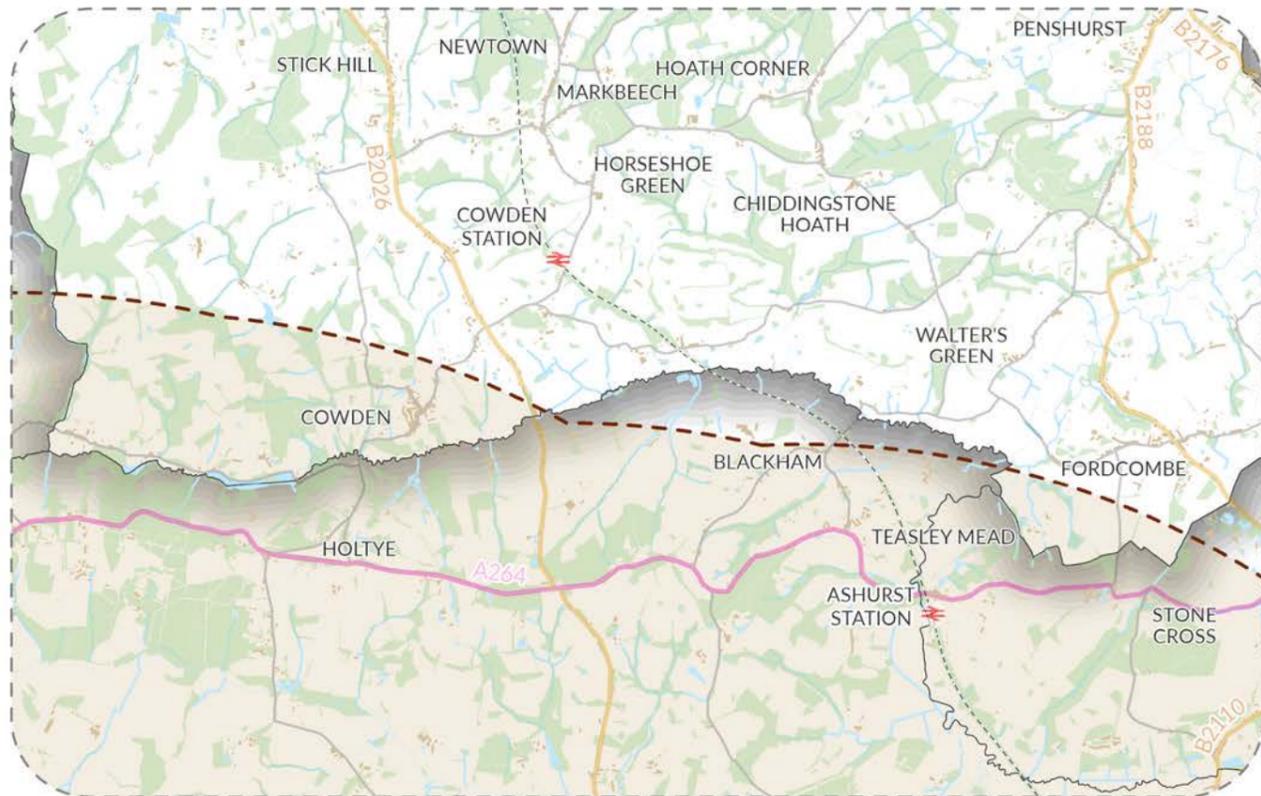


Figure 8.3 - Ashdown forest

# Policy AF1 Ashdown Forest

This policy will require:

- Any residential development in the 7km zone to provide a strategic access management and monitoring (SAMMs) contribution to address visitor impact on Ashdown Forest, in line with the SAMM strategy;
- Major development within or adjacent to the 7km boundary to be assessed on a case by case basis to determine any additional mitigation measures.

[www.sevenoaks.or.uk/localplan/policyST1](http://www.sevenoaks.or.uk/localplan/policyST1)

## Consultation Question:

1. Do you agree with the approach to protecting the Ashdown Forest?





### Biodiversity in Development

**8.17** Biodiversity is found throughout the rural and urban areas of the District. All development can have a positive impact on biodiversity and should provide a measurable net gain.

**8.18** Access to the natural environment and areas of high biodiversity value supports our spatial vision. It can also have a positive impact on health and wellbeing and can help reduce social and health inequalities. We are supportive of countryside projects such as community led habitat management, health walks and wildlife/nature experiences especially those which encourage children and young people to engage with the natural environment.

**8.19** Blue green infrastructure is essential to mitigating and adapting to climate change, ensuring that future generations can enjoy a healthy and thriving environment for years to come. The Council has committed to helping the District reduce carbon emissions and become more resilient to a changing climate through its Net Zero 2030 commitment.

**8.20** The Council will continue to work with partners to develop projects to strengthen the blue green infrastructure network and improve access to and the understanding of the natural environment. Partners include:

- The North West Kent Countryside Partnership
- Kent Wildlife Trust
- Kent Downs and High Weald AONB units
- Town and Parish Councils

**8.21** Working with local authorities across Kent and Kent County Council, the Kent Nature Partnership, has concluded that a 20% target for biodiversity net gain for new development should be included in Local Plans. This is supported by a Kent wide viability study. A 20% target for Sevenoaks District is under consideration, and will be tested in the forthcoming viability assessment.

**8.22** A Supplementary Planning Document covering biodiversity net gain will be prepared to set out the detailed requirements for biodiversity net gain and will include both on-site and off-site net gain provision.

## Policy BW2

### Biodiversity in new development

This policy will seek to:

- Achieve 20% biodiversity net gain from new development;
- Ensure proposals incorporate natural environment measures that help to support biodiversity, mitigate climate change and integrate climate resilience.

[www.sevenoaks.or.uk/localplan/policyST1](http://www.sevenoaks.or.uk/localplan/policyST1)

### Consultation Question:

1. *Is the 20% biodiversity net gain target appropriate for Sevenoaks District?*

