

PLAN 2040 – a new Local Plan for Sevenoaks District

Regulation 18 Part 2 – Autumn 2023

Text Version for Development and Conservation Advisory Committee (DCAC)

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Introduction

This Local Plan explains how the Council intends to meet development needs and protect the environment in Sevenoaks District up to 2040. The document focuses on the opportunities for new homes, employment spaces and infrastructure provision in and around existing settlements. We are keen to receive your views on the proposed policies and allocations and hope that you will take the opportunity to submit your views.

How to Comment

The Plan 2040 Regulation 18 consultation period runs from 12:00am on Thursday 23rd November 2023 until 11:59pm on Thursday 11th January 2024.

Copies of the supporting documentation can be viewed online at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/plan2040.

Comments can be submitted via our online survey, on the Sevenoaks District Council website, using the link above.

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

- Sevenoaks District Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 1HG
- 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 11:59pm on Thursday 11th January 2024.

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.

Our initial Local Plan consultation ran from 16 November 2022 – 11 January 2023 and focused on making the 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.

This second Regulation 18 consultation considers land across the District, adjacent to our urban areas, and seeks comments on our proposed policies and site allocations. Alongside proposed allocations, additional potential sites are included in order to gather further information from our local communities, as well as statutory consultees, such as highways and infrastructure providers.

The consultation questions relate to specific policies, but there is an opportunity to provide additional information or comments at the end of the consultation.

The document includes both strategic and non-strategic policies, as is indicated in the list of policies.

**Figure 01: Distribution of Settlements and Neighbouring Authorities (MAP)*

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 due to 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 increase to 25.8% by 2043*. 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.

Sevenoaks 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 academic 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.

*2018-based population projections, ONS

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 Rivers 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).

**Figure 0.3: Connectivity MAP*

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 providing good links to the wider region.

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.

**Figure 0.4: Doctors Surgeries, Hospitals, Primary and Secondary Schools in the District MAP*

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 Doctor 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;
- Weald of Kent Grammar School Sevenoaks Annex; and
- Tunbridge Wells Boys Grammar School Sevenoaks Annex.

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. Tackling the challenge of climate change:

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 corporate agenda, to reduce carbon emissions.

12. Health 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 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 and be future-proofed to embrace emerging trends and innovation.

Vision and 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 Climate Change and Health and Wellbeing.

Key aspects of the Spatial Vision will be:

V1. 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.

V2. Achievement of the Council's Climate Change aspirations:

Significantly reducing carbon emissions and adapting to a changing climate.

V3. Delivering design excellence in our built environment that responds to our distinctive local character and creates the heritage of the future:

Demanding well-designed spaces that deliver exceptional places to live, work and relax, provide innovative ways to support mental and physical well-being.

V4. Homes to meet identified needs:

Boosting the supply of homes including much needed affordable homes across the District.

V5. 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.

V6. Continued protection of natural resources:

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.

V7. Delivery of sustainable, high quality and resilient infrastructure:

To meet the needs of all residents, businesses and visitors we want to deliver a sustainable movement network, provide high quality open spaces that offer health, wellbeing and social benefits, deliver excellent education, health and sports facilities close to where people live, and ensure appropriate investment in robust utilities and digital infrastructure.

Table 1 – Vision and Objectives

VISION	OBJECTIVES
<p>V1. 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.</p>	<p>WE WILL:</p> <p>OB1: Recognise the link between the places and spaces that we live in and the quality of residents' mental and physical health.</p> <p>OB2: Work closely with healthcare providers to develop policies that promote good physical and mental health as an outcome.</p>
<p>V2. Achievement of the Council's Climate Change aspirations:</p> <p>Significantly reducing carbon emissions and adapting to a changing climate.</p>	<p>WE WILL:</p> <p>OB3: Ensure the Council's Net Zero objectives influence all development taking place in the District.</p> <p>OB4: 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>OB5: Allow residents to make lifestyle choices that make a positive contribution to Net Zero objectives.</p>
<p>V3. Delivering design excellence in our built environment that responds to our distinctive local character and creates the heritage of the future:</p> <p>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>WE WILL:</p> <p>OB6: 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>OB7: Require the production of design codes for new development that meet the provisions of national planning guidance.</p>
<p>V4. Homes to meet identified needs. Boosting the supply of homes including much needed affordable homes across the District.</p>	<p>WE WILL:</p> <p>OB8: Deliver market and affordable homes to reflect the latest information on housing needs.</p> <p>OB9: Optimise the supply of new homes in existing settlements.</p> <p>OB10: Ensure new housing development makes best and most efficient use of land.</p>
<p>V5. Greater economic competitiveness</p> <p>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</p>	<p>WE WILL:</p> <p>OB11: Promote resilient and agile town centres that are able to respond to change.</p>

VISION	OBJECTIVES
<p>and supporting the rural economy are equally important in encouraging economic competitiveness.</p>	<p>OB12: Encourage the delivery of workspace to meet occupier demands.</p> <p>OB13: Safeguard land to meet employment needs over the plan period.</p> <p>OB14: Support rural economic activities that are consistent with the provision of the latest evidence on economic needs.</p>
<p>V6. Continued protection of natural resources:</p> <p>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>WE WILL:</p> <p>OB15: Ensure the District retains a high quality natural environment over the period of the Local Plan including delivering biodiversity net gain on new development.</p> <p>OB16: Continue to support development that protects and enhances the District's historic environment and ensures that it can be enjoyed by future generations.</p>
<p>V7. Delivery of sustainable, high quality and resilient infrastructure:</p> <p>To meet the needs of all residents, businesses and visitors we want to deliver a sustainable movement network, provide high quality open spaces that offer health, wellbeing and social benefits, deliver excellent education, health and sports facilities close to where people live, and ensure appropriate investment in robust utilities and digital infrastructure.</p>	<p>WE WILL:</p> <p>OB17: Work with stakeholders to address barriers that prevent residents from making sustainable transport choices.</p> <p>OB18: Support equal access to public transport services for all residents.</p> <p>OB19: Co-ordinate the delivery of necessary infrastructure to support planned growth.</p>

Chapter 1 – Development Strategy

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

Strategic Objectives

OB1: Recognise the link between the places and spaces that we live in and the quality of residents' mental and physical health.

OB2: Work closely with healthcare providers to develop policies that promote good physical and mental health as an outcome.

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 new employment space must be delivered if the District is to remain economically competitive. 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.

1.1. This development strategy and the plan as a whole responds to and aligns with national planning policy, to promote sustainable development across the District. In accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF para. 11 a-b), this Local Plan aims to positively plan for the development needs of the District, including housing, infrastructure, employment and retail, it aims to protect and improve the environment and respond to climate change. The plan has been prepared in accordance with NPPF Chapter 3 (Plan-making), to provide a clear, deliverable, evidenced-based plan, as a platform for local people to shape their surroundings.

1.2. This Local Plan focuses on delivering the Council's Spatial Vision to 2040, which complies with the NPPF requirement that plans should cover at least a 15-year timeframe from adoption. It is informed by an up-to-date evidence base and focuses on 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 the 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.

1.3. Once adopted, the Plan 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.

1.4. 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 both makes the best and most efficient use of land in sustainable locations and is of the highest quality sustainable design.

Summary of Development Needs

1.5. 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:

**Figure 1.1: Development Needs infographic showing:*

Homes	712 units per annum 712 x 15 years = 10,680 units over plan period (a figure provided by central government)
Employment land	5.7 hectares
Gypsy and Traveller pitches	43 pitches
Retail floorspace	Maintaining existing provision

1.6. 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 712 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 a fifteen year Plan period to 2040 is 10,680 homes.

1.7. 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 that people and future generations will choose to live and work in these sustainable locations. We will promote low carbon development to help tackle the challenge of **climate change**.

1.8. We are working closely with our town and parish councils who 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.

**Figure 1.2: Development Needs for Plan Period infographic*

**Figure 1.3 Place-making priorities infographic (map)*

Development Strategy

1.9. The Council's strategy is to meet development needs in sustainable locations. The first Regulation 18 consultation focused on opportunities in existing settlements and this second Regulation 18 takes a more district-wide approach, considering the potential contribution of Green Belt land. Green Belt boundaries will only be amended where there are exceptional circumstances for doing so and all other reasonable alternatives have been fully examined, including opportunities in neighbouring authorities.

Regulation 18 - Part One - Settlements

1.10. The first stage Regulation 18 consultation (November 2022 – January 2023) fully explored opportunities to accommodate strategic development needs in existing settlements. It focused on the potential that exists in settlements across the District, particularly in relation to new homes, and explored the opportunities to make the most of land in these areas. The initial consultation focused on optimising development within the boundaries of the District's towns and villages, where inset from the Green Belt, as 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, promotes sustainable transport choices which are key to tackling the challenge of climate change. The Council considered sites in existing settlements submitted through the call for sites process and has been proactive in identifying development opportunities, through the Settlement Capacity Study (2022) and Brownfield Register. The plan also explored 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. This includes opportunities to explore the development potential of land at and surrounding Sevenoaks Station.

1.11. In summary, the Part One consultation draft sought to:

1. Proactively identify suitable and achievable development potential in existing settlements;
2. Promote a character driven approach to meeting development needs;
3. Identify and provide criteria for key development opportunities;
4. Encourage proposals that make best and most efficient use of land, including the delivery of development at sustainable densities;
5. Support the delivery of new homes on small sites;
6. Actively encourage the exploration of other mechanisms to deliver new homes, such as the intensification of under-used land in existing settlements.

1.12. It considered three density scenarios for the settlements (Minimum Uplift, Optimum and Optimum Plus) based on examples of well-designed and high quality housing schemes that have recently been delivered in the District and the District-wide Characterisation Study. A 'character-led' approach supports the delivery of appropriate densities that make the best and most efficient use of land in settlement across the District.

1.13. These scenarios considered densities ranging from 40 dph at the edge of built up areas, through to 150+ dph in town centre locations and close to transport nodes. The responses to the previous consultation highlighted the diverging opinions in relation to density, but the need to retain local character was considered paramount. The middle 'Optimum' or 'balanced' option was most popular, suggesting there is recognition of the challenging balance which needs to be struck between building at higher density in towns versus building in the Green Belt.

Duty to Co-operate

1.14. All three scenarios which were subject to the Part One consultation resulted in a level of unmet need. Assistance with meeting need continues to be discussed with neighbouring authorities through the Duty to Co-operate.

1.15. 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:

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

1.15. However, there are numerous barriers which may prevent neighbouring authorities from assisting with any unmet needs. Please see Fig. 1.5 which sets out the strategic constraints within these areas including Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Flood Zones and internationally-designated wildlife sites. 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 multi-lateral discussions are not insignificant, particularly in the absence of a sub-regional strategy.

**Figure 1.4: Map of constraints in neighbouring areas (A4)*

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. But in the absence of a commitment from any of our eight neighbouring authorities, who are all varyingly constrained, the Part Two consultation draft considers the potential contribution of Green Belt land.

Regulation 18 - Part Two consultation draft

1.17. The previous Local Plan consultation focused on optimising densities and maximising opportunities in existing settlements, including on brownfield land. However, it is clear that the District is unable to meet needs within the existing urban areas, and there is a severe shortage of housing and particularly affordable housing.

1.18. This Plan therefore takes a more district-wide approach, considering the potential contribution of Green Belt land, in exceptional circumstances. To this end, a Stage Two Green Belt Assessment (2023) has been undertaken, focusing in more finer-grain detail on the areas adjacent to our eight higher-tier settlements (towns and service settlements), which has assisted in the site selection process. The eight higher-tier settlements are:

Towns - Sevenoaks, Swanley, Edenbridge and Westerham

Service Settlements – Otford, New Ash Green, Hartley and West Kingsdown

1.19. Development in and around these eight settlements is considered to be more sustainable than in other villages or hamlets across the District, since these higher tier settlements support a range of existing services and facilities. Therefore they are the focus for future development.

1.20. Where land is considered to be underperforming Green Belt (in relation to the five purposes of designation as set out in national policy), and where it is sustainably located next to a town or service settlement, these sites are included as potential allocations within this consultation. These attributes, combined with the pressing housing/affordable housing need in the District, may be considered sufficient to constitute the Exceptional Circumstances required to change the Green Belt boundary.

Options

1.21. This Plan sets out three *development scenarios or growth options or spatial strategies*. All of the options include, as a baseline, the sites which were found to be suitable through the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) process, including sites within settlements and on the edge of higher-tier settlements, in the Green Belt.

1.22. The options revolve around sites which are located in both the Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and whether it is preferable to allocate a number of smaller sites, or one large site, or a combination of the two.

Baseline: Sites which were found to be suitable through the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) process. This includes sites within settlements and in the Green Belt on the edge of higher-tier settlements (towns and service settlements), which have the services, facilities and connections, to promote a sustainable pattern of development.

Option 1: Baseline sites plus **Multiple Sites** on the edge of higher tier settlements (Sevenoaks, Westerham and West Kingsdown) which are located in both the Green Belt and AONB.

Option 2: Baseline sites plus **Stand-alone Settlement** in a single location, mindful that there are wide ranging benefits to strategic growth, as set out at NPPF paragraph 73, including co-ordinated infrastructure investment.

Option 3: Baseline sites plus **Combined** AONB/GB sites on the edge of higher tier settlements (Sevenoaks, Westerham and West Kingsdown) plus stand-alone settlement

Development Strategy Options

	Baseline	Option 1 'Multiple sites'	Option 2 'Settlement'	Option 3 'Combined'
Suitable sites – within existing settlements and on edge of higher-tier settlements, in the Green Belt	✓	✓	✓	✓
AONB and Green Belt sites on the edge of higher-tier settlements		✓		✓
Standalone settlement in AONB and Green Belt (Pedham Place)			✓	✓
Approximate total	8,500	9,500	11,000	12,000
Summary	Does not meet need	Approximately meets need	Meets need	Exceeds need

1.23. As set out above, the baseline in isolation does not meet identified need. Option 1 approximately meets need, Option 2 meets need and Option 3 exceeds need.

1.24. It is acknowledged these options would all have an impact on both the Green Belt and the AONB. All options include Green Belt release. Option one disperses growth across the AONB on medium-sized sites on the edge of three settlements (Sevenoaks, Westerham and West Kingsdown), whereas Option two

concentrates growth in one location within the AONB (Pedham Place) and Option three is a combination of all the above elements. Comments are sought on all these options in terms of which is considered the most sustainable and least impactful approach to accommodating development needs.

1.25. Pedham Place has been identified as a potential standalone settlement. The site currently includes an area used for car boot sales and a golf course complex and floodlit driving range, part of which was artificially transformed in the 1990s by a landfill tipping of inert aggregates onto the site (generated from Canary Wharf and the construction of the M25) to create a links-style golf course. This was the only site submitted which has the potential scale to accommodate a sustainable settlement, providing a range of facilities and services in addition to housing (2,500 units). These uses could potentially include education (primary and secondary), leisure, recreation, employment and community uses. The government's garden community programme, which sets an entry threshold of 1,500 units, was used as a guide determine the scale of a sustainable settlement.

1.26. In addition, we are aware that the site is also being considered as part of a wider mixed-use masterplan, to provide a new multipurpose stadium complex (24-28,000 seats) that could host sport, concerts, conferences and events, training ground facilities and a supporting hotel (for Wasps Rugby Football Club) and a new indoor and outdoor tennis facility (developed and managed in conjunction with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA). This site will need to demonstrate Exceptional Circumstances related to the scale, range and significance of proposed uses, and will need to demonstrate that the development is in the public interest, in relation to major development in the AONB.

1.27. Detailed site development guidance is being prepared, including presenting clear priorities and an ambitious vision for each site and exploring optimum densities. Development guidance for urban sites has been prepared and is subject to this consultation and development guidance for Green Belt sites will be available for the Regulation 19 consultation next year.

**Figure 1.5: Table of Breakdown of Housing Supply (A4) double page spread with Fig 1.4*

Housing Supply Options

	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3
Sites with planning permission at April 2023	1,995	1,995	1,995
Sites proposed for allocation	4,623	6,247	7,123
Windfall / small sites allowance	1,185	1,185	1,185
Future potential identified in Settlement Capacity Study	565	565	565
Strategic Sites with Resolution to Grant at April 2023	975	975	975
Potential identified through discussions with neighbouring authorities	TBC	TBC	TBC
TOTAL	9,343	10,967	11,843
APPROX. SHORTFALL (from 10,680)	1,337	-287	-1,163
Summary	Approximately meets need	Meets need	Exceeds need

*Figure 1.6: Pie charts showing housing supply components by geographical area (A4)

Policy ST1 A Balanced Strategy for Growth

This Plan seeks to deliver a balanced strategy for growth over a fifteen year period to 2040, as outlined on the Key Diagram, and aims to ensure that a minimum of 712 dwellings 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 optimised densities and prioritising 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. Major schemes will be required to demonstrate they have made best and most efficient use of land, taking account of all relevant evidence base documents;

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

The four towns within the District – Sevenoaks, Swanley, Edenbridge and Westerham, will sequentially be the focus for development, having regard to their role and function, with more moderate development within the Service Settlements. There will be small-scale limited development and infilling in villages and hamlets.

Sustainable patterns of development will be promoted by amending Green Belt boundaries only in 'exceptional circumstances', where sites have good access to services and facilities and their release has limited impact on the purposes of the Green Belt. This is likely to be on the edge of higher-tier settlements and/or a free-standing settlement.

Development within the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be limited to that which can be accommodated whilst still conserving its key characteristics, this being mostly small-scale, only promoting larger proposals where exceptional circumstances and public interest are demonstrated.

Our development scenario options:

- Baseline (suitable sites)
- Option 1 (Baseline plus AONB sites on the edge of settlements)
- Option 2 (Baseline plus Stand-alone settlement)
- Option 3 (Combined approach of all the above)

Questions

1. Which is your preferred option?

- a) Option 1
- b) Option 2
- c) Option 3
- d) None of the above

2. Please explain your answer

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

Policy ST2

Housing and Mixed Use Site Allocations

The following new housing and mixed use sites are included as potential allocations for development.

The sites will provide a range of housing types, density, mix and tenure and are subject to the site areas and development guidance.

Unimplemented housing and mixed use site allocations from the ADMP (2015) have been carried forward into this Local Plan and are also listed in the table.

Site Ref	Site Address	Urban / Green Belt	Use	No. of units
SEVENOAKS URBAN AREA - BASELINE SITES				
HO1	Pinetops, 5 Crownfields	Urban	HO	20
HO2	Abacus Furniture, Farm Road Garages, Greatness Lane	Urban	HO	10
HO3	Land rear of Bowerwood House, 15 St Botolphs Road	Urban	HO	7
HO4	42-44 Bullfinch Lane, Riverhead	Urban	HO	5
HO5	Land at Cramptons Road	Urban	HO	50
MX1	Sevenoaks Station and Car Park, Morewood Close	Urban	MX	184 (potential capacity up to 400)
MX2	Land east of High Street, Sevenoaks	Urban	MX	300
HO6	School House, Oak Lane & Hopgarden Lane	Urban	HO ADMP Allocatio n	56

Policy ST2

Housing and Mixed Use Site Allocations

HO7	Johnsons, Oak Lane & Hopgarden Lane	Urban	HO ADMP Allocation	54
MX3	Delivery & Post Office / BT Exchange, South Park	Urban	MX ADMP Allocation	100
HO8	Pounsley House, Pounsley Road, Dunton Green	Green Belt	HO	7
HO9	Land adjacent to Seal Hollow Road	Green Belt	HO	16
HO10	Land east of London Road, Dunton Green	Green Belt	HO	235
MX4	Sevenoaks Quarry, Bat and Ball Road	Green Belt	MX	950
SWANLEY - BASELINE SITES				
HO11	Garages, Conifer Way	Urban	HO	8
HO12	Bus Garage, Kingdom Hall, Swanley	Urban	HO ADMP Allocation	30
HO13	Bevan Place, Swanley	Urban	HO ADMP Allocation	100
MX5	Swanley Centre	Urban	MX	TBC
HO14	Land at Lullingstone Avenue, Swanley	Green Belt	HO	110
MX6	Land North and South of Maidstone Road, Swanley	Green Belt	MX	140
EDENBRIDGE - BASELINE SITES				

Policy ST2

Housing and Mixed Use Site Allocations

MX7	Edenbridge War Memorial Hospital	Urban	MX	34
MX8	78-80 – 82-84 High Street and 1-2 Leathermarket, Edenbridge	Urban	MX	14
MX9	Open Space, Community Hall and Shop, Farmstead Drive	Urban	MX	43
HO15	Land west of Ashcombe Drive and Meadow Lane, Edenbridge	Green Belt	HO	80
HO16	Land at Crouch House Road, Edenbridge	Green Belt	HO	91
HO17	Land north of Skinners Lane, Edenbridge	Green Belt	HO	150
MX10	Land at Breezehurst Farm, Crouch House Road	Green Belt	MX	450
MX11	Land east of Mead Road, Edenbridge	Green Belt	MX	120
WESTERHAM- BASELINE SITES				
HO18	Falcon House and grounds, Black Eagle Close, Westerham	Urban	HO	9
HO19	Land north-east of Bloomfield Terrace, Westerham	Urban	HO	10
HO20	Currant Hill Allotments, Westerham	Urban	HO ADMP Allocation	26
NEW ASH GREEN – BASELINE SITES				
HO21	The Forge, Ash	Urban	HO	10

Policy ST2

Housing and Mixed Use Site Allocations

MX12	New Ash Green Village Centre	Urban	MX ADMP Allocation	70
HO22	Grosvenor, Church Road, Hartley	Green Belt	HO	8 Specialist Units
OTFORD – BASELINE SITES				
HO23	Otford Builders Merchants, High Street	Urban	HO	14
HO24	Ryecroft, Ryecroft Road, Otford	Urban	HO	7
HARTLEY – BASELINE SITE				
HO25	Land to the west of Manor Lane, Hartley	Green Belt	HO	25
WEST KINGSDOWN – BASELINE SITES				
HO26	Land on the east side of London Road, West Kingsdown	Green Belt	HO	15
HO27	Land at London Road, West Kingsdown	Green Belt	HO	189

The following new housing and mixed-use sites are included for further consultation and consideration.

Site Ref	Site Address	Urban / Green Belt	Use	No. of units
SEVENOAKS URBAN AREA (OPTION 1 SITES)				
HO28	Land between Back Lane and the A21, Bessels Green	Green Belt (and AONB)	HO	183
HO29	Brittains Lane, Kippington, Sevenoaks	Green Belt (and AONB)	HO	300
MX13	Land at Moat Farm, off Homedean Road, Chipstead	Green Belt (and AONB)	MX	70
WESTERHAM (OPTION 1 SITES)				

Policy ST2

Housing and Mixed Use Site Allocations

HO30	Land south of Farley Lane, Westerham	Green Belt (and AONB)	HO	10
HO31	Land east of Croydon Road (Southern Parcel), Westerham	Green Belt (and AONB)	HO	82
HO32	Land east of Croydon Road (Northern Parcel), Westerham	Green Belt (and AONB)	HO	76
MX14	Land at Wolfe Westerham, 190 London Road, Westerham	Green Belt (and AONB)	MX	10
WEST KINGSDOWN (OPTION 1 SITES)				
HO33	Land at Mill Farm, West Kingsdown	Green Belt (and AONB)	HO	115
HO34	Land at Millfield Road, West Kingsdown	Green Belt (and AONB)	HO	30
STANDALONE SETTLEMENT (OPTION 2 SITE)				
MX15	Pedham Place, London Road, Swanley	Green Belt (and AONB)	MX	2500

STRATEGIC POLICY

Sevenoaks Railway Station

1.28. The Council recognises the significant 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 significant contribution towards District-wide development needs, through optimising density in this sustainable location. The local context, including the topography and scale of development already in the area, combined with the accessibility of the location, highlights this as an area of significant development opportunity. Development around the station supports the Council's wider objective to make the best and most efficient use of brownfield land in existing settlements, thereby reducing the need to release Green Belt land.

1.29. 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 north-west. Both the immediate station area and the adjacent car park provide an opportunity to increase the efficiency of the current land uses to unlock development potential, for example through car park decking, a multi-story car park, or by building above the car park and the station.

1.30. 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.

1.31. Working with local stakeholders, including Network Rail, the Council is preparing development guidance 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 Neighbourhood Plan for Sevenoaks Town, the Town Centre Strategy, District Wide Characterisation Study and Settlement Capacity Study. Initial proposals suggest that the station and adjacent surface car-park (to the north-west), could accommodate approximately 400 residential units, with a multi-storey car park retaining existing parking provision and active uses fronting a new station quarter.

1.32. The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan considers the site's potential for 'compact mixed-use development including retail and food and drink around the station, office, petrol station and new residential units'. In terms of opportunities, the Neighbourhood Plan highlights the:

- Significant opportunity for development that will transform the sense of arrival into Sevenoaks and could establish a new urban quarter for the town
- Taller buildings marking the station
- Opportunity to reconsider transport interchange and public realm treatment at the station.

1.31. The development brief also aims to:

- 1) Ensure development is co-ordinated to create a clear identity for the area;
- 2) Bring forward a range of active uses and a vibrant new neighbourhood, which respects existing uses, residents and local character;
- 3) Re-enforce the relationship between the station, the town centre and the development at Sevenoaks Quarry; including via improved walking and cycling links
- 4) Coordinate the proposals with other development opportunities, including Land East of the High Street, to deliver a coherent offer for the town;
- 5) Promote the brownfield development opportunities, through optimised density, in this highly sustainable location
- 6) Make the most of the existing public transport accessibility, encourage improvements to the rail network and explore the potential to create a more formalised public transport hub;

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

1.33. 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, cultural and community uses and improvements to the public realm. All of these aspects will be considered in the emerging development brief.

Chapter 2 – Housing Choice for All

Everyone deserves to have access to a high quality home that meets their needs, in an area they wish to live and that they can afford. This is fundamental to happy, healthy, successful residents and thriving communities. The policies in this chapter ensure that the right types of homes are built to meet the needs of our current and future residents, including the Gypsy and Traveller community.

“Everyone deserves to have access to a high quality home that meets their needs, in an area they wish to live and that they can afford”.

Housing Choice for All 02

Strategic Objectives
OB8: Delivering market and affordable homes to reflect the latest information on housing needs.
OB9: Optimise the supply of new homes in existing settlements.
OB10: Ensure new housing development makes best and most efficient use of land.

Sevenoaks District is a very popular and well-connected place to live, but this also makes it expensive. Boosting the supply of market and affordable housing and ensuring the right types of homes are built in the right places will create a more dynamic housing market with more movement and where more people can find a suitable home that meets their needs.

**Figure 2.1: District-Wide Housing Needs Infographic*

**Figure 2.2: Older Persons Housing Needs Infographic*

Housing Choice for All

2.1. The District is facing some significant challenges in relation to housing:

- **A growing and ageing population**
The population of the District is expected to grow by 6% over the plan period up to 2040. But more significantly the proportion of people aged over 65 is expected to grow by 24% over the same period and by 2040 it is expected that there will be an additional 6,394 residents aged 65 and over, making up 26% of the total population*. Accommodating the changing needs of households will be key in order to provide greater choice for existing and future generations and to promote healthy and sustainable communities.
- **A need for new housing**
Using the government's standard methodology for calculating housing need, there is a need for 712 new homes per year over the plan period up to 2040, including a high proportion of new affordable homes and homes suitable for older people, presenting a major step change in the number of new homes needed compared with the previous Local Plan.
- **Affordability of housing**
Median house prices in the District are almost £100,000 higher than in the South East, and the highest in Kent, making it very difficult for first time buyers and young families to remain in the District. Delivering new housing that is genuinely affordable in an area where land prices are ever-increasing presents a major challenge.
- **Challenges to the supply of housing**
The District is significantly constrained by Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Not only does this put the larger built up areas under pressure to deliver new housing development at higher densities without compromising character, it also impacts our rural communities, where generally there are fewer housing choices for those in need.
- **Ensuring choice in the housing market**
The structure of the District's population is expected to change and new housing development must meet the needs of our current and future residents in order to create a dynamic and balanced housing market.

2.2. The policies within this chapter aim to address these challenges, not just by boosting the delivery of market and affordable housing, but by ensuring that the right types of homes are built to meet the needs of our changing population.

*2018-based population projections, ONS

Housing Mix

2.3. A mix of homes of different sizes and types to meet the needs of the current and future population is essential to help create inclusive, healthy and mixed communities. The District is home to a variety of household types including families, singles, older people, people with a range of disabilities and people wishing to build their own homes.

2.4. The Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs 2022 (TRHLN), our key evidence on housing needs, tells us that the structure of the population is expected to change over the plan period. The delivery of new housing development should reflect the changing needs of households in order to provide greater choice for existing and future generations and to promote healthy and sustainable communities.

Size of Homes

2.5. The District has a high proportion of larger homes, with 3, 4 and 5 bedroom homes making up 68% of the total housing stock. An ageing population means that household sizes are expected to fall over the plan period. By building more housing with a focus on smaller and family homes, this will increase the proportion of lower cost housing available to buy so that first time buyers and young families have greater choice in the market, as well as enabling older people to downsize or 'rightsize', which will then have the knock-on effect of freeing up additional family housing.

Types of Homes

2.6. The housing stock needs to adapt to meet the requirements of an ageing population, and to provide choices for older people who may be thinking of moving or who may need to move as their current home no longer matches their needs. A growing population is also expected to result in a substantial growth in people with dementia and mobility problems, and some of these households will require adaptations to properties to meet their changing needs whilst others may require more specialist accommodation or support. This can be achieved through the design features of the optional technical standards set out in the Building Regulations under M4(2) accessible and adaptable dwellings and M4(3) wheelchair user dwellings.

People Wishing to Build Their Own Homes

2.7. Self and custom build housing can offer benefits over developer-built housing and people may choose this option for various reasons e.g. their current and/or future needs aren't being met through volume housebuilding. It may allow a more bespoke or flexible design, and in some cases it may present a more affordable housing option. The Council maintains and publicises a self-build register (278 entries at September 2023) to monitor demand and, where appropriate, match people and available plots. The Local Plan supports the provision of self-built plots to meet demand and to meet the Council's 'duty to grant planning permission' as required by the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, provided they are located in sustainable locations, close to public transport, walking and cycling routes, local services and community facilities.

Policy H1 **Housing Mix**

A variety of house sizes and types should be delivered across the District to meet the needs of the current and future population.

Proposals for new housing development are required to meet the following technical and design criteria:

- Proposals should be informed by the dwelling mix profiles set out in the latest housing needs evidence where appropriate, unless it can be demonstrated that an alternative mix meets an identified need;
- For new built housing development, commit to delivering all homes to meet the M4(2) standard for accessible and adaptable homes;
- For new build schemes of 20 units or more, commit to delivering at least 5% of homes to meet the M4(3)b standard for wheelchair user dwellings, to be delivered as affordable housing for rent;
- Provide homes built to high sustainability standards with built-in resilience to climate change and fuel poverty, which contributes towards the Council's Net Zero 2030 commitment and for the District to become Net Zero; and
- Proposals should meet the minimum nationally described space standards.

Self-Commissioned Homes

Developments of 100 or more dwellings will be expected to provide at least 5% serviced plots for self-commissioned housing, including for self-build and community-led housing. Provision is to be informed by the latest evidence including the Council's Self and Custom Build Register and Local Housing Needs Surveys. The inclusion of self-commissioned properties on smaller sites will also be encouraged.

STRATEGIC POLICY

Provision of Affordable Housing

2.8. Affordable housing is provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. It is a key issue in the District given the high house prices relative to incomes. In December 2022 the median house price in the District was £480,000*, the highest in Kent, and house prices were 19.1 times annual earnings**, compared with 11.3 times across England. This means that many people are unable to afford their own home on the open market with assistance. High housing costs have led to an increase in the number of households privately renting, rather than buying, and the out-migration of younger and economically active groups in search of cheaper housing elsewhere, including local essential workers.

2.9. The TRHLN identifies a net annual need of 423 households that require financial support to meet their housing needs. Building new affordable homes will help to ensure that those requiring assistance receive it, and the increase in the supply of affordable housing will help to slow down the rise in housing costs, allowing those who aspire to own their own home the ability to get onto the housing ladder. In view of the scale of need, and subject to further viability testing, it is considered that a target of 30% affordable housing on brownfield sites and 40% affordable housing on greenfield sites is realistic and achievable in light of the evidence, and will go some way in meeting the identified affordable housing need.

2.10. The TRHLN recommends a tenure split of 65% social housing (social and affordable rented) and 35% intermediate housing (homes for discounted home ownership and rent including First Homes) in order to meet needs. The vast majority of social housing delivered in the District in recent years has been affordable rented. Our experience however is that social rented housing generally provides the most affordable option and is affordable to a greater number of households.

**December 2022 Median House Prices for Administrative Geographies, ONS*

***October 2022 Earnings and hours worked, place of work by local authority, ONS*

Policy H2

Provision of Affordable Housing

This policy will boost the delivery of affordable housing from developments with market housing, ensuring that overall viability is not prejudiced and that a mix of tenures is provided that meet the needs of the current and future population.

Proposals for all new housing development will be required to contribute to the provision of affordable housing as follows:

Number of new homes proposed (net) / size of site	Development is within a Designated Rural Area (S157 Housing Act 1985) - % affordable housing required	Development is not within a Designated Rural Area - % affordable housing required
0-5 homes and site is less than 0.5 hectares	0	0
0-5 homes and site is 0.5 hectares or more	10*	10*
6-9 homes and site is less than 0.5 hectares	20*	0
6-9 homes and site is 0.5 hectares or more	2-*	20*
Site is 0.5 hectares or more and number of dwellings is unknown	30**	30**
10-14 homes irrespective of size of site	30**	30**
15-24 homes irrespective of size of site	40**	40**
25+ homes irrespective of site size	40***	40***

*The affordable housing is provided in the form of a financial contribution payable on completion of the development. Subject to the clarification in para 4.1 in relation to the definition of major development in the NPPF and the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 2014 as amended.

**This triggers a small number of affordable homes, which may not provide a viable proposition for our delivery partners. A financial contribution in lieu of some, or all, of the affordable housing on site, may be sought. This would be payable on commencement of development. The Housing Strategy Manager will advise the Planning Officer in such cases.

***In exceptional circumstances, e.g. particular forms of development or the application site is considered to be in a remote location, it may not be considered suitable or economic for the provision of affordable housing on the development site. The Housing Strategy Manager will advise the Planning Officer in all such cases, based on the following options:

- A reduced level of affordable housing provision on site plus a financial contribution in lieu of the shortfall, payable on commencement of development; or
- A financial contribution in lieu of all affordable housing on site, payable on commencement of development.

Where the provision of on-site affordable housing applies, the recommended tenure split should reflect the Targeted Review of Local Housing Need, or the latest housing needs evidence.

Policy H2

Provision of Affordable Housing

First Homes should be offered at a discount of 30% of open market value. Where it is demonstrated that this is not viable due to site specific circumstances, whether this relates to the proposal as a whole or an element, an alternative tenure split is to be agreed with the Council.

If it is demonstrated that the required on-site provision is not viable or does not best meet identified housing needs and the Council agrees, one of the following options is to be agreed by the Council:

1. The provision of a reduced level of on-site affordable housing plus a financial contribution in lieu of the shortfall;
2. The provision of a reduced level of on-site affordable housing that meets a specific localised need e.g. a greater number of wheelchair accessible homes; or
3. The payment of a financial contribution in lieu of the provision of any on-site affordable housing.

If it can be demonstrated that the full affordable housing requirement is not viable and the Council agrees, a viability review is required upon first occupation or an alternative agreed trigger point. This is to ensure that any uplift in the development value of the scheme is shared and contributes to the affordable housing provision, whether this be on site or an off-site financial contribution. All affordable housing delivered should not generate housing costs of more than 35% of gross household income. Applicants are required to enter into discussions with the Council's Housing team, in consultation with registered providers, at the earliest stage of the application process where the provision of on-site affordable housing applies.

STRATEGIC POLICY

Housing in Rural Areas

2.11. Opportunities to provide housing (especially homes suitable for older people) in rural areas of the District (i.e. outside of urban confines) are much more limited than in the built up areas because of the Green Belt. Less scope for development in rural areas generally means fewer housing choices for those in need.

2.12. However, rural exception housing can provide homes to meet local housing needs as an exception to other Local Plan policies. It means that sites that would not normally be suitable for development, because of planning policy constraints, can be developed solely for housing to serve rural communities. Given the extensive network of rural settlements across the District, rural exception housing is a really important part of the housing stock. The Local Housing Needs Study (2017) confirms and increased level of demand for housing in rural areas.

2.13. All parishes are undergoing a five year rolling programme of local housing needs surveys, carried out in partnership with the independent rural and community-led housing enabler for Kent. Where a survey shows evidence of need, we will work with the local community and preferred affordable housing provider to identify and assist in delivering suitable sites.

2.14. We will also work with landowners of rural estates and Community Land Trusts to bring forward suitable rural exception housing to meet identified needs. This may be through an affordable housing provider or directly through the landowner where the Council's eligibility criteria for new affordable housing development partners can be met. The planning agreement attached to such development sites will ensure any landowner-led housing is delivered at the same cost to the tenant and held in perpetuity to meet identified housing needs.

Policy H3

Housing in Rural Areas

Proposals for new housing development in rural areas that meet a specific local need will be required to meet the following criteria to be permitted as an exception to other Local Plan policies:

- The local need has been identified in an up to date local housing needs survey;
- The local need identified cannot be met by any other means through the development of non-Green Belt sites within the parish or, where appropriate, in the adjacent parish; and
- A thorough site options appraisal has been carried out.

The Council expects rural exception housing schemes to provide 100% local needs housing to meet identified needs. However, on the occasion it can be demonstrated that a wholly local needs housing scheme is not viable or deliverable, and the Council agrees, it is expected that the market housing for sale will be used, in the first instance, to meet identified needs including housing for local essential workers, older people, plots for self-build and co-housing.

Proposals for up to 100% self-commissioned housing will be considered on rural exception sites, provided that housing is sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value in perpetuity or another agreed tenure of affordable housing, eligibility criteria is clearly identified and where it can be demonstrated as meeting an identified local housing need.

Housing for Older People

2.15. Sevenoaks District has an ageing population. Those over 65 make up nearly 22% of the District's population and this number is expected to increase by 24% over the plan period. By 2040 it is expected that there will be an additional 6,394 residents aged 65 and over.

2.16. We need to respond to the changing population structure to ensure the housing offer across the District meets the needs of our older people, who are a vital and integral part of any local community. This can be done by delivering a broader housing offer for older people across the District and we are keen to diversity the range of more modern and appealing housing options available.

2.17. The TRLHN identifies a need for 1,044 additional units of specialist older persons accommodation over the plan period up to 2040, of which 720 units should be provided as retirement housing (e.g. sheltered and extra care housing) and 324 units to be provided in the form of bedspaces in registered care homes. The characteristics of different types of specialist accommodation is set out in the table below. We will work with partners, including KCC Adult Social Care and other infrastructure providers, to deliver the right types of older persons accommodation in the right places.

Table 2.1: Characteristics of Different Types of Specialist Accommodation

Type of Specialist Accommodation	What we expect to see in a proposal/how this is characterised
Retirement housing e.g. sheltered and extra care (generally C3 use class)	<p>Purpose-designed self-contained living units (e.g. apartments) containing at least one bedroom often with a mini-kitchen with washing machine and living room, although in some cases these facilities may be shared/communal.</p> <p>The nature of this type of accommodation is akin to a small dwelling capable of accommodating a small household rather than a single occupant occupying a single room.</p> <p>Access to 24 hour care and support from support staff, warden of alarm system.</p>
Specialist nursing/residential care (C2 use class)	<p>Single bedrooms within a purpose-designed residential setting with communal kitchens, living rooms, quiet/family rooms, IT rooms and staff breakout rooms.</p> <p>Provision of personal and nursing care and support 24 hours a day with dedicated on-site nurse.</p>

**2018-based population projections, ONS*

2.18. We must also ensure that these homes are accessible, adaptable and technology enabled, as well as being safe and warm and in established and vibrant neighbourhoods, recognising the importance of attachment to place, social connections and access to services and facilities. Getting this right has a significant impact on people's health and wellbeing. Good quality housing where people can maintain their independence helps to prevent physical frailty, supports positive mental health and reduces hospital admissions.

2.19. Loneliness amongst older people is a growing issue and housing options that will help to reduce this are encourage. In many cases family support networks are essential in providing informal care and combating loneliness and isolation. This means housing options need to be provided in all settlements, including rural villages, to ensure older people may remain within their existing communities. This could be provided as co-housing schemes.

Policy H4

Housing for Older People

Proposals for new retirement housing are required to meet the following technical and design criteria, in addition to the criteria set out in the Housing Mix policy:

- Proposals should reflect the latest evidence on older persons housing needs set out in the latest housing evidence. Alternative methods of assessment will not be considered appropriate;
- Be within sustainability located and well-connected areas of the District, where there is easy access to shops, community facilities including healthcare, public transport and other services appropriate to the needs of the future occupiers.;
- Be located in rural villages where an up to date local housing needs survey identifies a local need for older persons accommodation;
- Incorporate the latest HAPPI (Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation) design principles, where possible, in order to offer attractive alternatives to the current home;
- Incorporate an accessible lift in flatted developments of 2 or more storeys;
- Provide access to private and/or communal outdoor space; and
- Provide high quality homes built to high sustainability standards with built-in resilience to climate change and fuel poverty, which contributes towards addressing the challenge of climate change.

Developments of 50 or more dwellings, in appropriate locations subject to the criteria above, will be expected to provide units for older people. This is to be informed by the latest evidence including up-to-date Local Housing Needs Surveys. The inclusion of housing for older people on smaller sites is also encouraged.

Build to Rent

2.20. Increasing housing supply is challenging in a District that is so constrained, but it is clear that we need to find new ways of delivering new homes so that we can create a more dynamic housing market with more movement and where more people can find a suitable home that meets their need.

2.21. One way to do this is to build high quality purpose built homes for private rent that are professionally managed and provide shared spaces and services, known as 'build to rent'. The build to rent sector can play an important role in meeting our identified housing needs, by boosting the number of smaller and more affordable units and delivering homes that can house people across a range of income levels, ages and household types. Whilst build to rent is well suited to house mobile professionals, it can also provide homes for local essential workers, for families and for older people.

2.22. The TRHLN sets out that, in Sevenoaks District, the private rented sector accommodates around 12% of households. 50% of these are located in Sevenoaks built up area with limited choice in the remainder of the District. Looking forward, the TRHLN identifies a need for 350 build to rent units over the plan period. Whilst this number is not particularly high we know that the current private rental market is buoyant in Sevenoaks, with upward rent pressure and fast lets, which are indications that the market is popular and demand may increase over the plan period. We are keen to engage with build to rent providers on the options available to meet this need.

2.23. Build to rent schemes are most appropriate in the built up areas of Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge, reflecting the most sustainable and well-connected areas of the District where there is easy access to shops, community facilities and public transport. This will help to promote health and wellbeing, support the local economy, reduce carbon emissions and promote environmental sustainability. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how they have taken this into account in finalising their proposals.

Policy H5

Build to Rent

Proposals for build to rent schemes are required to meet the following technical and design criteria, in addition to the criteria set out in the Housing Mix policy:

- Be within the built up areas of Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge. These are sustainably located and well-connected areas of the District where there is easy access to shops, community facilities and public transport;
- Meet the definition of Build to Rent as set out in the glossary;
- Provide 20% on-site affordable housing in the form of one and two bedroom affordable private rented homes with rents capped at 80% of the open market value including any service charges;
- Provide high quality homes built to high sustainability standards with built-in resilience to climate change and fuel poverty, which contributes towards addressing the challenge of climate change; and
- Wherever possible incorporate public realm improvements to the benefit of the wider community.

Smaller Sites

2.24. The NPPF requires us to identify land to accommodate at least 10% of our housing requirements on sites no larger than 1 hectare. Sevenoaks District needs to build approximately 10,680 new homes over the next 15 years, with 1,068 of these coming from sites no larger than 1 hectare (generally referred to as smaller sites).

2.25. Historically small sites have been crucial to housing delivery in Sevenoaks District and they continue to offer opportunities to grow the housing stock. Over the last 5 years small sites in our built up areas have provided over 20% of built homes district-wide.

2.26. The Settlement Capacity Study 2022 (SCS) identifies the potential for approximately 1,000 units to come forward in our existing built up areas, if we were to continue building at current densities. However, this potential is expected to rise significantly if all opportunities are fully explored and optimum densities are achieved in the most sustainable locations. Whilst these sites vary in character, ownership and existing usage, they are all considered to be suitable and achievable. Encouraging these sites to be developed to provide new homes, in a way that is consistent with other policies in this Plan, is vital to meeting the NPPF requirements.

2.27. This policy aims to encourage these sites to come forward and assist in demonstrating their deliverability/developability over the plan period. This approach also supports our development strategy by increasing densities and making effective use of land in our existing built up areas.

Policy H6 Smaller Sites

Proposals for new housing development on qualifying sites (no larger than 1 hectare) will be required to meet the following technical and design criteria:

- The proposal demonstrates that it makes the best and most efficient use of land, utilising higher densities where appropriate, whilst also contributing to the creation of healthy spaces with improved connectivity;
- The proposal meets identified development needs and contributes towards the delivery of different types and sizes of new homes;
- Any loss of use is robustly evidenced and reprovided where required; and
- Provides high quality homes built to high sustainability standards with built-in resilience to climate change and fuel poverty, which contributes towards the Council's Net Zero 2030 commitment and for the District to become Net Zero.

Housing Density and Intensification

2.28. This Plan sets a clear expectation for new residential development to make the best and most efficient use of land and respect local character. Homes across the District have traditionally been built at a relatively low density and proposals continue to come forward at densities below 35 units per hectare, which is now considered an inefficient use of land. There is scope to make better use of land, particularly on sites that are within settlements or close to public transport hubs.

2.29. The Council recognises that it is not necessary for new development to match the density of surrounding land uses. Well-designed higher density schemes can add variety and vitality to our places and spaces. Increasing the density of development in sustainable locations can help to ensure that land is used in the most efficient way, and that less land overall is developed. In Sevenoaks District, there are competing demands for use. The need for new homes is high, but the Green Belt covers the vast majority of the District. It is therefore crucial that the limited amount of land within settlement boundaries is used efficiently when considering proposals for new development.

2.30. Optimum densities should enhance the function of our places and meet the provisions of other policies in this Plan. Whilst there are some locations across the District that are suited to taller buildings there are other mechanisms for delivering higher density in a sustainable way, such as intensification of under-developed locations in existing settlements and the development of two storey terraced housing or townhouses to make better use of land.

2.31. The District Wide Character Study (DWCS) identifies six types of areas that are suited to higher density development:

- **Towns and local centres:** these are described as having the best access to services and therefore are the most sustainable and suitable for denser forms of development;
- **Walking distance to towns and local centres:** these areas encapsulate the 15 minute neighbourhood concept and advocate neighbourhoods in which those who live can find everything they need in terms of work, retail and leisure within 15 minutes of their home, via sustainable transport modes;
- **Train stations:** areas within a 10 minute walk of train stations are recognised;
- **Bus stops:** areas within a 5 minute walk of bus stops are recognised;
- **Bus service zones:** reflects the areas covered by a regular bus service; and
- **High frequency transit spots:** ranks train stations and bus stops based on their frequency and service with Swanley and parts of Sevenoaks ranked the highest.

2.32. Proposals for new residential development should reflect the conclusions of the Council's District Wide Character Study, respecting the sensitivity of places to change. Applicants will be required to demonstrate how these considerations have been taken into account and be prepared to discuss development options at the pre-application stage.

The Regulation 18 consultation in Autumn 2022 highlighted that the preferred density option amongst respondents was 'Optimum', although the responses were fairly evenly split between the three options presented. Further work will be undertaken to determine appropriate densities, including through site specific development guidance for proposed site allocations.

Policy H7

Housing Density and Intensification

Proposals for new housing development should explore the opportunities to achieve higher densities.

Proposals are expected to adhere to the following guidelines, where they can be achieved without a detrimental impact on local character or amenity:

- In highly sustainable locations including town centre locations and close to transport hubs, densities in excess of 150 dwellings per hectare should be achieved;
- In existing built up areas, densities of 50-150 dwellings per hectare should be achieved; and
- At the edge of the built up areas, densities of 40-60 dwellings per hectare should be achieved.

Gypsies and Travellers - Site Allocations

2.33. Gypsy and Travellers are an important part of the Sevenoaks District community and national policy states that we must plan for their housing needs in the same way as for the settled community. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) 2022 identifies a need for 43 additional pitches up to 2040 including those members of the community who do not meet the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) definition. This need has been increased by 4 pitches (to 47 pitches) up to 2040, due to the granting of planning permission and the outcomes of planning appeals since the GTAA was undertaken in April 2022.

2.34. A strategy to identify locations for additional permanent pitches has been developed, subject to site sustainability and suitability. Consideration has and will continue to be given to whether a site is:

- Is sustainable, prioritising those close to existing services and facilities;
- Has existing pitches, and whether those are permanent, temporary or unauthorised;
- Has impact on local character, prioritising those lying outside of the AONB and with existing built form;
- Has impact on protected areas such as Local Wildlife Sites, Ancient Woodland, SSSI; and
- Will provide an acceptable living environment for future occupants in terms of size, noise and air quality and is located within an area likely to flood.

2.35. It is noted that the allocations proposed in Policy GT1 do not yet meet the need identified in full. Additional work will be undertaken ahead of the Regulation 19 consultation to identify further sites for allocation to meet this need.

Policy GT1

Provision for the Gypsy and Traveller Community

The following sites are proposed to be allocated for Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

Site Ref	Address	Proposed Additional Permanent Pitches	Total pitches on site (existing and proposed)
GT1	Seven Acres Farm, Edenbridge	5	15
GT2	Station Court, Sevenoaks Road, Knockholt	12	16
MX11	Mead Road, Edenbridge	5	5

STRATEGIC POLICY

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

2.35. Not all Gypsy and Traveller pitches will be delivered through Local Plan site allocations. Proposals for new permanent gypsy and traveller pitches as well as transit pitches are likely to come forward and therefore for development management purposes we are proposing the following policy.

Policy GT2

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

Accommodation for Gypsy and Travellers and transit pitches must take account of the policies within the Local Plan and should take account of the following criteria:

- The site should be located close to services and facilities and access to public transport. Sites within or adjacent to towns or service settlements, as defined by the Settlement Hierarchy, will be preferred;
- The site will provide an acceptable living environment for future occupants in terms of size, noise and air quality and is not located within an area likely to flood;
- Safe and convenient vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access can be provided to the site;
- The development will minimise the potential impacts on the surrounding character, landscape, including in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and biodiversity; and
- Associated buildings, including amenity blocks, must be proportionate in scale and bulk to the pitches proposed.

Chapter 3 – Employment and Economy

Sevenoaks District has a vibrant local economy and is well located to service the economy, needs of London and the wider south east region. Maintaining a vibrant and flexible local economy is essential to the delivery of sustainable development and the wider vision of this plan.

“We want to maintain a vibrant economy and are keen to support our high streets and the tourist sector.”

Employment and Economy 03

Strategic Objectives

OB11: Promote resilient and agile town centres that are able to respond to change.

OB12: Encourage the delivery of workspace to meet occupier demands.

OB13: Safeguard land to meet employment needs over the plan period.

OB14: Support rural economic activities that are consistent with the provision of the latest evidence on economic needs.

Sevenoaks District has a vibrant local economy which is well located to service the needs of the District, London and the wider southeast region. The policies in this chapter seek to build on these locational advantages and support the Council's wider strategy of ensuring the local economy remains resilient to change. Reflecting the evidence, key aims over the plan period are to deliver the right type of employment space, maintain vibrant town centres and support our thriving tourism sector.

Delivering Economic Success

3.1. The NPPF requires local plans to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt, taking into account existing business needs and wider opportunities for development. For Sevenoaks District, our vision is to foster a dynamic, growing and inclusive economy for our businesses, communities and visitors that is kind to the environment, contributes to the health and well-being of all and supports our commitment to tackling the challenges of climate change.

3.2. The local economy is strong and Sevenoaks District, like much of West Kent, is characterised by high levels of economic activity and a skilled resident workforce. In 2019, GVA in the District was £4066 million, the 3rd highest in Kent, with the GVA per job being the highest in Kent. The professional, scientific and technical, construction, and information and communication sectors account for 45% of enterprises. This results in the District having one of the highest proportions of businesses in the knowledge and high growth economy, performing above average in terms of business start-up and survival rates.

3.3. However, we face significant challenges. The economic, business and technological landscapes are evolving at accelerating rates, and when considered with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit, there is a great deal of change and uncertainty. Furthermore, land in the District is heavily constrained, with 93% being designated Green Belt and more than 60% in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The availability of land is therefore more limited than in other areas, and we will need to be innovative and flexible in our approach to delivering economic success.

3.4. The Council commissioned the Sevenoaks Economic Needs Study (ENS) 2022, a Town Centres Strategy (TC Strategy) 2022 and prepared an Economic Development Strategy (ED Strategy) 2022-2027 to assist in understanding our needs and opportunities. The key messages are that we will need to:

- In addition to identifying a small amount of additional land for employment needs, make the most efficient use of existing employment land through the intensification and co-location of uses where appropriate.
- Enable the delivery of flexible and creative workspace.
- Strengthen and diversify the rural economy.
- Support growth in our tourism sector, particularly with regard to a lack of visitor accommodation.
- Cultivate resilience in our town and local centres.

3.5. Applicants must have regard to the relevant studies and strategies, should work with the Council, local partners such as the West Kent Partnership and Kent and Medway Economic Partnership and contribute to the delivery of these needs in accordance with strategic Policy EMP1. This policy will be supported by a number of subsequent development management policies which will address these issues in more detail.

**Figure 3.1: Circular Economy*

**Figure 3.2: Employment Structure in Sevenoaks District*

Policy EMP1

Delivering Economic Success

This policy seeks to build a strong, competitive economy by:

- Delivering a minimum of 5.7 hectares of additional land to meet employment needs;
- Optimising existing employment land;
- Enabling the delivery of flexible and creative workspace and the co-location of uses where appropriate;
- Strengthening and diversifying the rural economy;
- Maintaining and enhancing our tourism offer; and
- Cultivating resilience in our town centres.

Measures to achieve this, amongst others, must include where relevant:

- Promoting locational strengths, including the proximity to London;
- Working with local partners;
- Making the best use of public transport links and seeking to improve these where possible;
- Developing active travel routes such as walking and cycling networks;
- Ensuring the economy is flexible enough to adapt to emerging trends;
- Promoting the benefits of the transition to a low carbon, circular economy; and
- Championing emerging technologies and economic sectors currently under-represented in the District.

STRATEGIC POLICY

*Figure 3.3: Map TBC

Delivering New Employment Land

3.6. The Council commissioned the Sevenoaks Economic Needs Study (ENS) 2022 to update our understanding of the District's economy and commercial property market, and determine future business space requirements. The industrial and office markets are small, but in good health with minimal vacancies and robust rents. By taking into account emerging economic trends, including forecast demand, vacancy rates and planned/unplanned losses, the ENS has identified a small need for 5.7 hectares of additional land to meet employment needs over the plan period. Gains and losses in employment land will be monitored and this figure may be updated throughout the plan period as necessary. Policy EMP2 identifies proposed site allocations and options to deliver this as a minimum. For more context on the proposed site allocations and options, please see Chapter 1 – Development Strategy. The approximate amount of employment land that these would deliver can be seen in the table below, but all scenarios would exceed the need identified.

Development Strategy Options

	Baseline	Option 1 'Multiple sites'	Option 2 'Settlement'	Option 3 'Combined'
Suitable sites – within existing settlements and on edge of higher-tier settlements, in the Green Belt	✓	✓	✓	✓
Suitable sites – previously developed land on edge of higher-tier settlements, in the Green Belt	✓	✓	✓	✓
AONB and Green Belt sites on the edge of higher-tier settlements		✓		✓
Standalone settlement in AONB and Green Belt (Pedham Place)			✓	✓
Approximate total (ha)	6.98	8.79	11.88	13.69

3.7. Applicants seeking to develop the eventual site allocations will be expected to future proof proposals through the delivery of flexible workspace that responds to longer term economic trends, in accordance with Policy EMP4.

3.8. Windfall applications for new employment land outside of these identified sites, but within the 4 towns and 4 service settlements as shown on the proposals map, will also be supported as they represent the District's most sustainable locations in line with the settlement hierarchy. Such proposals must have a clear economic benefit in accordance with Policy EMP1, such as facilitating the regeneration or most efficient use of land. Proposals will need to be well-located to, or enhance, public transport and active travel networks and consider the delivery of flexible and creative workspace and the co-location of uses in accordance with Policy EMP4. Where this would displace an existing use, compliance with Policies EMP3, EMP6, OS1, SL1 and COM1 will be required to avoid the loss of a use important to the economy or local community. Proposals will be required to demonstrate that the use and any associated development would be appropriate for the location and give rise to no unacceptable highways or amenity harm.

Policy EMP2

Delivering New Employment Land

The policy seeks to allocate sites to deliver a minimum of 5.7 hectares of additional land to meet employment needs.

The following new mixed-use and employment only sites are included as potential allocations for development. Unimplemented site allocations from the ADMP (2015) have been carried forward into this Local Plan and are also listed in the table. Planning applications for development on these sites will be assessed against all relevant policies but will be expected to make the most efficient use of land in a manner that is flexible and able to respond to longer term economic trends.

Site Ref	Site Address	Urban / Green Belt	Use	Employment floorspace (from site promotor) (ha)
BASELINE SITES				
MX2	Land East of High Street, Sevenoaks	Urban	MX	0.1
MX3	Delivery & Post Office / BT Exchange, South Park, Sevenoaks	Urban	MX ADMP Allocation	TBC
MX12	New Ash Green Village Centre	Urban	MX ADMP Allocation	TBC
MX6	Land North and South of Maidstone Road, Swanley	Green Belt	MX	3
MX10	Land at Breezehurst Farm, Crouch House Road, Edenbridge	Green Belt	MX	1.4
EM1	Land at Bartram Farm and adjacent to Vestry Road, Sevenoaks	Green Belt	EMP	1.33

Policy EMP2

Delivering New Employment Land

EM2	Land at Upper Hockenden Farm, Maidstone Road, Swanley	Green Belt	EMP	0.4
EM3	Otford Road depot, Otford Road, Sevenoaks	Green Belt	EMP	0.75

The following new mixed-use sites are included for further consultation and consideration.

Site Ref	Site Address	Urban / Green Belt	Use	Employment floorspace (from site promotor) (ha)
OPTION 1 SITE				
MX14	Land at Wolfe Westerham, 190 London Road, Westerham	Green Belt (and AONB)	MX	1.81
OPTION 2 SITE				
MX15	Pedham Place, London Road, Swanley	Green Belt (and AONB)	MX	4.9

Proposals for new employment land outside of allocated sites but within the 4 towns and 4 service settlements as shown on the proposals map, will be permitted where:

- There would be no unacceptable loss of an existing use important to the economy or local community in accordance with Policies EMP3, EMP3, EMP6, OS1, SL1 and COM1;
- They would enable the regeneration or most efficient use of land;
- They would be well-located to, or enable improvements to public transport links and active travel networks;
- They would provide flexible or creative workspace or the suitable co-location of uses in accordance with Policy EMP4; and
- Proposals would be appropriate for the location and give rise to no unacceptable highways or amenity harm.

STRATEGIC POLICY

Retaining and Optimising Existing Employment Land

3.9. In addition to the provision of new sites and taking into account the high level of constrained land in the District, the Sevenoaks Economic Needs Study (ENS) 2022 strongly recommends that the existing supply of employment land is retained and optimised unless it has been identified as being suitable for an alternative use. The most important land is identified as designated employment land on the proposals map and in Figure 3.4.

3.10. The ENS makes some recommendations for the release of specific sites but otherwise provides a strong basis for the retention of land. It is acknowledged that amendments to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 in 2020 and 2021 have expanded the ability for changes of use to take place without the need to apply for planning permission (although subject to prior approval in some cases). However, and in accordance with the recommendations of the ENS, the Council will robustly defend the retention of existing uses where an application for planning permission is required to change that use. This is to ensure that an appropriate mixture of economic uses is maintained. As such, proposals for the partial or complete redevelopment or conversion of existing employment land to alternative uses will only be permitted where at least one of the following criteria are satisfied:

- The ENS recommends the land for release.
- In the case of the partial redevelopment or conversion of land to another use, it is demonstrated that there would be an overall increase in employment capacity due to the optimisation of the remainder of the land.
- It is demonstrated that the land is not suitable or well located for the existing use. Consideration will be given to evidence of the following:
 - The poor quality of the land impeding the functioning of the business;
 - The existing use generating significant adverse impacts on the surrounding area;
 - The significant benefits of relocating the existing use, or using the specific site for an alternative use; or
 - The land being very poorly located either operationally or in terms of sustainability.
- It is demonstrated that the land is unlikely to be taken up for its continued use by another owner/occupier. This must be shown having completed a thorough marketing exercise at a price reflective of the current market and for a specified period at the existing use. For designated employment land, the specified period will be at least 1 year, and for non-designated land, at least 6 months. In both cases, this should have been carried out immediately prior to the submission of an application and at a time when the land is, or soon will be, available. Marketing evidence should include examples of adverts, dates and information on any interest received and why this was not pursued. It should also have addressed the potential demand from both the freehold and leasehold markets.

3.11. In all cases, it must be demonstrated that the loss of the existing use would not negatively impact the local economy. Proposals must have considered alternative uses in the following order:

- Appropriate uses within Use Classes E, B2 and B8.
- Appropriate residential employment-generating uses (Use classes C1, C2).
- A mixture of residential and employment-generating uses if compatible in accordance with Policy EMP4.
- A wholly residential scheme (Use Class C3).

3.12. The extent of evidence required may vary on a case-by-case basis and applicants are encouraged to seek pre-application advice.

3.13. Outside the Green Belt, the Council will support proposals to reconfigure or intensify activity on existing employment land provided this would make the most efficient use of land and optimise its employment capacity. In all cases, there should be a clear benefit to the local economy. Proposals will need to be appropriate to the location and have no unacceptable highways or amenity impacts.

Policy EMP3

Retaining and Optimising Existing Employment Land

This policy seeks to maintain and enhance a strong and diverse supply of employment land.

On land in existing employment use, there will be a presumption in favour of retaining that use. Proposals seeking to partially or wholly redevelop or convert existing employment land to alternative uses will only be permitted where at least one of the following criteria are satisfied:

- The most up-to-date Economic Needs Study recommends the land for release.
- In the case of the partial redevelopment or conversion of a site to another use, it is demonstrated that there would be an overall increase in employment capacity due to the optimisation of the remainder of the land.
- It is demonstrated that the land is not suitable or well located for the existing use. Consideration will be given to evidence of the following:
 - The poor quality of the land impeding the functioning of the business;
 - The existing use generating significant adverse impacts on the surrounding area;
 - The significant benefits of relocating the existing use, or using the specific site for an alternative use; or
 - The land being very poorly located either operationally or in terms of sustainability.
- It is demonstrated that the land is unlikely to be taken up for its continued use by another owner/occupier. This must be shown having completed a thorough marketing exercise at a price reflective of the current market and for a specified period at the existing use. For designated employment land, the specified period will be at least 1 year, and for non-designated land, at least 6 months. In both cases, this should have been carried out immediately prior to the submission of an application and at a time when the land is, or soon will be, available. Marketing evidence should include examples of adverts, dates and information on any interest received and why this was not pursued. It should also have addressed the potential demand from both the freehold and leasehold markets.

In all cases, it must be demonstrated that the loss of the existing use would not negatively impact the local economy.

Where the relevant criteria are satisfied, proposals must have considered alternative uses in the following order:

- Appropriate uses within Use Classes E, B2 and B8.
- Appropriate residential employment-generating uses (Use classes C1, C2).
- A mixture of residential and employment-generating uses if compatible in accordance with Policy EMP4.
- A wholly residential scheme (Use Class C3).

Proposals to reconfigure or intensify activity on existing employment land outside the Green Belt will be permitted where this would:

- Benefit the local economy and contribute to the aims of Policy EMP1;
- Facilitate the regeneration or most efficient use of land;
- Optimise the overall employment capacity of the site; and
- Be appropriate to the location and have no unacceptable highways or amenity impacts.

**Figure 3.4 Map of Designated Employment Land*

Flexible and Creative Workspace

3.14. The NPPF requires planning policies to allow for new and flexible working practices and enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances. The Sevenoaks Economic Needs Study 2022, Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027 and Town Centres Strategy 2022 further justify the need for the Council to be flexible and creative in its approach to enabling different types of workspaces at a time of economic uncertainty. Flexible workspace is designed to provide people with a variety of different places and ways to work. It can easily be re-arranged to accommodate changing objectives and occupiers and quickly scaled up and down to fit business requirements. It can come in the form of co-working hubs which allow different businesses to work together, or people to work from locations closer to home.

3.15. Flexible workspace is often linked to start-up businesses, but spaces catering to start-ups only are rare. More common is a mixture of start-ups and established small and medium enterprises (SMEs). SMEs can help support economic development, community engagement and regeneration, and given that 84% of businesses in Sevenoaks District have less than 10 employees, they have the collective potential to have a significant impact on the local economy. Furthermore, given the dramatic shift to homeworking and the District's proximity to London where costs are high, there is likely to be a sustained demand for co-working space which is lower in cost and reduces the need to commute.

3.16. Creative workspace is another type of workspace, involving any space that stimulates collaborative and individual creative work and allows people to be free to work as they need, to feel their best and to be innovative. Such spaces include artists' studios, spaces with creative facilities and those with bookable specialist production and rehearsal facilities, amongst others. The South East Creative Economy Network identifies Sevenoaks District as having a high potential for creative industries, but with a low trajectory. As such, the Council needs to support this sector to a greater extent to enable its positive contribution to the local economy.

3.17. Within the 4 towns and 4 service settlements, it may be possible to achieve flexible and creative workspace through the development of live-work units. A live-work unit is defined as "the genuine and permanent integration of living and working accommodation within a single self-contained unit, where the principal occupier both lives at and works from the property." Live-work units do not fall neatly into any specific class within the Use Classes Order but form a composite use that brings together, within a single unit, residential space (use class C3) and workspace. Usually, this workspace is an office space, but the work element of live-work could conceivably include small scale light industrial use. In some instances, it might include uses such as a treatment room for an alternative health practitioner, or an artists' studio.

3.18. Taking all of the above into account, the Council will support proposals which provide flexible and creative workspace aimed at start-ups, SMEs, homeworkers and creative industries in locations which make the most efficient use of land and with good transport links, in accordance with Policies EMP2 and EMP3. Major commercial developments should incorporate an element of flexible workspace unless it can be demonstrated that the entire space is needed for specific uses.

The Co-location of Uses

3.19. The co-location of uses is a mixed-use development model where new homes lie in close proximity to other uses such as light industrial, retail and offices. Given the level of highly constrained land in Sevenoaks District, competition for land between residential and commercial uses continues to intensify, and the co-location of uses offers the potential to integrate these uses where they could operate harmoniously, optimising land-use.

3.20. Proposals are encouraged to explore the potential to intensify activity on existing and new commercial land and whether some types of activity could be co-located with residential development in mix-used schemes. It will be essential to ensure that there is compatibility between uses, and proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis but supported in principle. The following matters will need careful consideration and should be discussed at pre-application stage:

- Safety and security for all uses;
- Layout, orientation, access, servicing and delivery arrangements to minimise conflict;
- Design quality, public realm and visual impact;
- Housing standards still meeting the requirements of all other relevant policies; and
- Amenity impacts including air quality (dust, odour and emissions) and noise.

**Figure 3.5: The Co-location of Uses*

Policy EMP4

Flexible and Creative Workspace and the Co-location of Uses

This policy seeks to enable and encourage the delivery of flexible and creative workspace, and the co-location of uses.

Proposals for flexible and creative workspace aimed at start-ups, SMEs, homeworkers and creative industries will be supported where in accordance with Policies EMP1-4 and where they can be adapted to meet changing occupier demands.

Proposals for major commercial development should include an element of flexible and/or creative workspace unless it can be demonstrated that the whole site is required for specific uses.

Proposals for live-work units will be supported within the 4 towns and 4 service settlements where the use is compatible with surrounding uses.

Proposals for the co-location of employment and residential uses will be supported where this would make most efficient use of land and:

- Be safe and secure for all occupiers;
- Be well designed, particularly in terms of layout, orientation and access/servicing needs;
- The quality of housing accords with all other relevant policies;
- There are no unacceptable highways impacts;
- There are no unacceptable amenity impacts, particularly in terms of air quality and noise.

The Rural Economy

3.21. Economic growth in the countryside allows our rural communities to prosper. The rural areas of Sevenoaks District are highly constrained by the Green Belt and two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but the Council wants to see a thriving, diverse and productive countryside. It is crucial that economic growth, social needs and environmental constraints are not traded off against each other but balanced together for the benefit of all.

3.22. The majority of land in Sevenoaks District is rural and the rural economy, more so than in other areas of Kent, is integral to the success of the wider economy. It is however facing significant challenges. Growing and rearing is continuing to undergo fundamental change which means that agricultural and other land-based businesses must also change. Farming has become less profitable and in the search for alternative forms of income, new forms of business must be explored.

3.23. It is acknowledged that the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) already allows for the change of use of agricultural buildings without the need to apply for planning permission (although subject to prior approval in some cases). However, where an application for planning permission is required, the Council will still support the diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses provided this allows for the continuation of the existing business in a modified form and any new uses are appropriate for the location. Proposals to enhance the functioning of an agricultural business or the sustainable management of woodland, including for new buildings, will also be supported.

3.24. At the same time, the rural economy extends beyond agriculture and the Council will also support other rural economic activity, recognising that some opportunities may be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements. However, all proposals must accord with national Green Belt policy. For proposals on existing and new land in the Green Belt, this means being innovative in the consideration of:

- Re-using, extending, altering and replacing existing buildings;
- Limited infilling in villages; or
- The use of previously developed land.

3.25. In all cases, design will be crucial, with a scale, layout and materials which respond positively to the character of existing buildings, the landscape and the purposes of the Green Belt. All proposals must also generate economic activity appropriate to the location and should take opportunities to enhance local services and facilities and make locations more sustainable through improving access by sustainable and active modes of transport. There must have no unacceptable highways or amenity impacts.

3.26. For renewable energy projects in the Green Belt, applicants will need to demonstrate very special circumstances, as per national policy.

3.27. Applicants are encouraged to engage with the Council's Economic Development team to explore opportunities arising from the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

Policy EMP5

The Rural Economy

The policy seeks to support, grow and diversify the rural economy.

Proposals relating to agricultural and other land-based businesses will be permitted where they:

- Diversify agricultural and other land-based businesses, allowing for the continuation of the existing business in a modified form;
- Extend the growing season or improve the reliability and availability of local crops;
- Provide new buildings for storage, distribution and other necessary activities;
- Increase the availability of locally grown food sold direct to the consumer; or
- Increase the sustainable management of woodlands.

All proposals, including for other rural economic activity, must accord with national Green Belt policy in relation to:

- The extension or alteration of buildings;
- The replacement of buildings;
- Limited infilling in villages and the redevelopment of previously developed land; or
- The re-use of buildings.

All proposals must also:

- Generate economic activity appropriate to the location;
- Take opportunities to enhance local services and facilities and make locations more sustainable through improving access by sustainable and active modes of transport;
- Have no unacceptable highways or amenity impacts; and
- Be well designed with a scale, layout and materials which respond positively to the character of existing buildings, the landscape and the purposes of the Green Belt.
- On agricultural land, demonstrate that land of a poorer quality has been considered over that of a higher quality.

“The District boasts a number of key heritage assets, including Knole House, Chartwell, Hever Castle and Penshurst Place.”

Tourism and the Visitor Economy

3.28. Tourism and the visitor economy are significant contributors to the local economy in Sevenoaks District. We benefit from an attractive natural environment, with more than 60% of land being covered by the High Weald and Kent Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are many historic towns and villages, as well as nationally recognised historic estates and heritage assets including Knole House, Chartwell, Hever Castle and Penshurst Place. In 2019, the sector was valued at £265 million per annum with a total of 465 enterprises, supporting some 5,500 jobs equivalent to approximately 10% of all employment in 2020.

3.29. However, the sector faces challenges in the District. The Sevenoaks Tourism Accommodation Study 2015 identified a lack of accommodation across the District, restricting the ability of existing attractions and facilities to succeed, and new ones to establish. The sector was also one of the hardest hit by the Covid-19 restrictions, as identified in the national tourism strategy, the Tourism Recovery Plan 2021. In Kent, an estimated 89% of tourism and hospitality facilities closed either temporarily or indefinitely – more than any other sector, although there was an increase in demand for our outdoor attractions such as Knole Park, National Trust gardens and the extensive Public Right of Way network.

3.30. As such, the Council seeks to support the provision of, and offering made by, tourist attractions, facilities and accommodation, in particular those that would help to extend the tourist season, improve the quantity and quality of visitor accommodation and meet the needs of both visitors and the local community. It is therefore important to retain existing sites and the change of use of existing visitor accommodation will be considered in accordance with Policy EMP3. The change of use of existing attractions and facilities will be strongly resisted unless it can be robustly demonstrated that the use is no longer required, and that the site is unlikely to be reused or redeveloped for visitor purposes. Evidence must be submitted demonstrating that:

- The site has been well promoted as an operational tourist facility over the last 3 years, or number of years trading if less. This should include details of brochures, advertisements, websites and social media promotion;
- The site has been marketed for sale for at least one continuous year at its existing use. This should have been at a price reflective of the current market and carried out immediately prior to the submission of an application and at a time when the site is, or soon will be, available. Marketing evidence should include examples of adverts, dates and information on any interest received and why this was not pursued; and
- A comprehensive business plan has been implemented without success and that the continued use is subsequently not financially viable.

3.31. Where these criteria are satisfied, alternative uses will be considered for their appropriateness according to the location.

3.32. The Council will support new and enhanced tourist attractions, facilities and accommodation in appropriate locations where needs are not being met by existing sites in the locality or where able to diversify the offering available to local communities and visitors. Within the 4 towns and 4 service settlements, consideration will be given to, as appropriate:

- Whether the location is or can be made readily accessible by public and active transport. Proposals should seek opportunities to improve such transport links, particularly ‘last mile’ links;
- Highways and amenity impacts; and
- The relationship between existing attractions and facilities and whether the proposal would contribute to the diversification and offering of sites in the District.

3.33. In rural locations, proposals will be considered in accordance with Policy EMP5 which considers rural diversification and development within the Green Belt.

“Tourism has great potential to have a positive impact on the economy and character of Sevenoaks District.”

**Figure 3.6: Distribution of Tourist Attractions Throughout the District*

Policy EMP6

Tourism and the Visitor Economy

This policy seeks to retain and enhance the provision of, and offering provided by, tourist attractions, facilities and accommodation.

There will be a presumption in favour of retaining existing tourist attractions and facilities unless it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer required and the site is unlikely to be reused or redeveloped for visitor purposes. To demonstrate this, robust evidence must be provided demonstrating that:

- The facility has been well promoted as an operational tourist facility over the last 3 years or number of years trading if less;
- The site has been thoroughly marketed for sale for at least one continuous year in its existing use at a price reflective of the current market; and
- A comprehensive business plan has been implemented without success and the continued use is subsequently not financially viable.

Where these criteria are satisfied, alternative uses will be considered for their appropriateness to the location.

The change of use of visitor accommodation will be considered in accordance with Policy EMP3.

Proposals for new and enhanced tourist attractions and facilities, including the offering they provide, and accommodation in the 4 towns and 4 service settlements will be permitted where:

- The location is or can be made readily accessible by public and active transport. Proposals should seek opportunities to improve such transport links, particularly 'last mile' links;
- There is no unacceptable highways or amenity harm; and
- They contribute to the diversification of sites in the District where needs are not being met by existing facilities in the locality or where able to increase the offering available to local communities as well as visitors.

For rural locations in the Green Belt, proposals will be considered in accordance with Policy EMP5.

Resilient Town and Local Centres

3.34. We want to ensure that the town centres within Sevenoaks District continue to thrive and remain at the heart of our local communities as a place for socialising, shopping, leisure and a wide variety of other activities. Our high streets will support the economic competitiveness of the District, to ensure our places remain vibrant and resilient.

3.35. The 'high street' has undergone rapid structural change in recent years, with the continued trend towards online shopping, click and collect and other forms of less place-based retail, which has no doubt been accelerated by the pandemic. However, other trends, including increased 'working from home' and the emergence of more independent retail, have also shaped our high streets. We need to support our high streets by allowing them the flexibility to manage and respond to change, to adapt and diversify and by promoting their individual, unique characters, as places where people continue to desire to visit.

3.36. The 2022 Town Centres Strategy recommends planning for stability (rather than expansion or contraction) in terms of the retail floorspace within our centres, supporting and improving the quality of existing retail and town centre offer and environment. Our evidence base assessment shows that there is no overriding need for an increase in either convenience (food) or comparison (non-food) floorspace in the District. It is acknowledged that high streets are changing, and Use Class E (commercial, business and services use) now allows for change of use between shops, offices, cafes and restaurants. The uses which attract people to different centres are widening and therefore a flexible approach is supported, to ensure that the high street meets a variety of needs and permits linked trips to a sustainable location.

3.37. There are four defined town centres within the District – Sevenoaks, Swanley, Edenbridge and Westerham. They each have a different role, character and catchment, and therefore have individual policies below, but together they form a network of small-scale centres which provide for the retail, leisure, employment and community needs of the District.

3.38. There are four defined service settlements – New Ash Green and Otford are defined as Local Service Centres and Hartley and West Kingsdown are defined as Service Villages within the Settlement Hierarchy 2022. Within defined local centre boundaries, small-scale town centre uses, which meet the needs of the centre they serve, will be encouraged and should contribute to improving the quality of the local centre environment. A range of shops and facilities will be maintained to meet the day-to-day retail needs of the communities which they serve.

3.39. We are proposing tailored policies for each of our four town centres, and for the local centre in New Ash Green, which remains a focus for regeneration. These policies build on the recommendations from the Town Centres Strategy and Neighbourhood Plans and developers are expected to demonstrate how it has been taken into account in any proposals for these areas. The Town Centre Strategy is also reflected in the activities within our Economic Development strategy.

3.40. Town centre boundaries and primary shopping areas are defined for each town centre. A small-scale boundary change is proposed in Sevenoaks Town – the local centre around the station is to be re-classified as part of the town centre. Both the existing primary and secondary retail frontages become the new 'primary shopping area' and this is extended to incorporate Blighs Meadow.

**Figure 3.7: Town and Local Centres Map*

3.41. The national default threshold of 2,500sqm for undertaking an impact assessment of any proposed retail and leisure development outside of defined town centre boundaries, is considered too high in the Sevenoaks context. The default position comprises a significant proportion of existing floorspace, and therefore a lower threshold of 500sqm gross is recommended by our Town Centres Strategy evidence base.

Policy TLC1

Town and Local Centres

This policy seeks to support our defined town and local centres to ensure they remain at the heart of our local communities, as a key location for retail, leisure, employment and a wide range of other services and facilities.

1. The unique characteristics of each of the town centres should be promoted to allow them to thrive and form a network of complementary centres, which provide for the needs of the District. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have taken into account place-making proposals for the relevant centres, as set out in the subsequent policies in this chapter and relevant Neighbourhood Plans.
2. Town centres remain the focus for retail, leisure and other town centre activities, bringing people together in accessible locations to meet their needs. The Council supports a 'town centres first' approach, to ensure town centre uses are conveniently clustered together within defined town centre boundaries, and retail provision is maintained within the primary shopping areas. New development for town centre uses should be located within defined town centre boundaries, and loss of town centres uses within the primary shopping areas will be resisted where possible;
3. Town centre uses (retail and leisure) proposed outside of the defined town centre boundaries, will be subject to the sequential test, to ensure all sequentially preferable locations are assessed in terms of their suitability and availability. An impact assessment will be required for any retail and leisure development with a floorspace of 500sqm gross or above outside of defined town centre boundaries.
4. Town centre proposals which include a proportion of residential floorspace will be supported, to provide customer footfall within the town centre, provided that the residential element is not at ground floor level within the primary shopping area, other than that which falls under permitted development.
5. Local centres provide for the day-to-day needs of the communities which they serve. The Council will resist the loss of shops and services from defined local centres where they are serving a local need, particularly where they are considered 'key' sustainable services in the Settlement Hierarchy, unless it is thoroughly demonstrated that the use is no longer suitable, in accordance with Policy EMP3.
6. Where strategic sites are proposed (100 units and above), it is expected that new small-scale convenience retail will be included within the site, to promote sustainable services which can be easily accessed on foot or cycle.
7. Town centre development, particularly where it includes work within the public realm, will be expected to meet the following criteria, where appropriate:
 - i. Development should be of the highest quality sustainable design to tackle the challenge of climate change, in accordance with Policy CC2.
 - ii. Development should be accessible, promoting walking/cycling and public transport use, with adequate parking, EV and cycling infrastructure and car clubs
 - iii. Development should promote health and well-being, including community space/green space

STRATEGIC POLICY

Policy SEV1

Sevenoaks Town Centre

The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in May 2023. It is structured around six key themes and focuses on enhancing gateway points to the town, creating new open spaces and community facilities, promoting active travel and developing a cultural quarter in the town. The Plan offers support and guidance for 13 key sites. Development proposals for Sevenoaks Town will need to demonstrate how they support the delivery of this Plan.

Over the plan period, proposals for Sevenoaks Town Centre should focus on:

1. Raising the profile of its best assets - its historic town centre, array of independent shops and the impressive Knole;
2. Expansion of its cultural scene and diversifying the town's offer to match other prominent towns, including more activities in the evening; and
3. An inclusive town centre - widening the leisure offer and providing new homes that support different income levels and life stages.
2. The following potential projects and development opportunities have been identified to help realise the future vision for Sevenoaks Town Centre. For further details of each of these projects, including delivery considerations, please see the Town Centres Strategy and Neighbourhood Plan.
 - i. Strengthening connections to Knole Park;
 - ii. Eastern town centre revitalisation;
 - iii. High streets streetscape enhancement;
 - iv. Improving station arrival; (see chapter one)

Some of these projects will be delivered over a medium/long term time-frame, but more immediate projects, including softer high street interventions, can be delivered through UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme, including supporting a Town Centre Officer role.

*Figure 3.8: Vision 1 - Sevenoaks

Policy SWN1

Swanley Town Centre

Swanley has recently prepared a draft Neighbourhood Plan for the town which is currently undergoing consultation and examination. The plan sets out that change will be accommodated in the town, to retain and improve the environment of the 'semi-rural settlement' and benefit its community. It seeks to do so by setting out policies allowing higher densities and guiding proposals for taller buildings, particularly within the Town Centre, and through support for a health and wellbeing centre, employment sites, and active travel measures, whilst including additional design guidance for Swanley Village.

Over the plan period, proposals for Swanley Town Centre should focus on:

- 1) A sustainable and welcoming market town that draws in residents and people from surrounding areas to come together and spend time;
- 2) An expanded retail offer with an emphasis on independents, food and drink, alongside an expanded community, leisure and civic offer;
- 3) A space for small businesses and co-working, and new homes of different types and tenures; and
- 4) High quality buildings and spaces that embrace and enhance Swanley's character.
- 5) The following potential projects and development opportunities have been identified to help realise the future vision for Swanley Town Centre. For further details of each of these projects, including delivery considerations, please see the Town Centres Strategy and draft Swanley Neighbourhood Plan.
 - i. Improving the arrival experience of the Town Centre;
 - ii. Transforming town square and Asda Walk;
 - iii. Rebalancing space for pedestrians;
 - iv. New and enhanced station connections;
 - v. Town Centre redevelopment – gradual; and
 - vi. Adjacent civic and community uses opportunity, particularly in relation to health.

Figure 3.9: Vision 2 - Swanley

Policy EDN1 Edenbridge Town Centre

Over the plan period, proposals for Edenbridge Town Centre should focus on:

1. A flourishing town centre that celebrates its history through investment and renewal of its handsome and historic High Street;
2. A transformed Leathermarket area as a focus for markets, events and activity in the heart of the town;
3. An aspirational place where people stay when visiting the District's attractions, with a variety of accommodation and a stronger food, drink, cultural and leisure offer; and
4. Sensitively enhancing connections to the river Eden with new activity alongside.

The following potential projects and development opportunities have been identified to help realise the future vision for Edenbridge Town Centre. For further details of each of these projects, including delivery considerations, please see the Town Centres Strategy.

1. Redevelopment of the Leathermarket site;
2. Shopfront renewal
3. Sensitively enhanced river connections;
4. Improved pedestrian access into the town centre;

**Figure 3.10: Vision 3 - Edenbridge*

Policy WST1

Westerham Town Centre

Over the plan period, proposals for Westerham Town Centre should focus on:

- 1) Being a charming rural town that celebrates its history and that remains a desirable place to live, work and visit;
- 2) A broadened offer for all age groups and families;
- 3) Connections to the wider Darent Valley, and improved public realm to create enjoyable streets and spaces; and
- 4) Meaningful alternatives to car-based travel.

The following potential projects and development opportunities have been identified to help realise the future vision for Westerham Town Centre. For further details of each of these projects, including delivery considerations, please see the Town Centres Strategy.

- i. Improving connections to the countryside – way-finding, paths and sustainable transport connections; and
- ii. A better visitor economy ('Sevenoaks – so much more')
- iii. High Street streetscape/public realm improvements, where space permits.

*Figure 3.11: Vision 4 - Westerham

Policy NAG1

New Ash Green Village Centre

Over the plan period, proposals for New Ash Green Village Centre should focus on:

- 1) A vibrant heart to a thriving village community, with shops and businesses supported by a refreshed and well-maintained shopping centre;
- 2) Flexible space for small and creative businesses bringing more footfall to the centre, as well as new homes of different types, sizes and tenures;
- 3) A renewed public realm with new focal points for events and pop-up activity;
- 4) Improving the edges of the shopping centre to open it up and draw people in, including new buildings which turn to face outwards; and
- 5) Celebrating the centre's one-of-a-kind character and modernist SPAN architectural style.

The following potential projects and development opportunities have been identified to help realise the future vision for New Ash Green Village Centre. For further details of each of these projects, including delivery considerations, please see the Town Centres Strategy.

- i. Shopping centre edges;
- ii. Shopping centre public realm;
- iii. Upper storey improvements;
- iv. Connection to Longfield Station; and
- v. Footpaths and arrival experience.

**Figure 3.12: Vision 5 – New Ash Green*

3.42. The projects identified are intended as flexible interventions that allow for further development opportunities to be explored in the future, if desired. This includes better integration with uses just outside of the village centre. Any proposal for the centre should consider its unique history and built character, continuity for existing businesses and the community significance of the local centre.

Town Centre Development Management

3.43. To promote health and wellbeing within our town centres, it is proposed to introduce criteria to manage planning applications which have an element of fast food. This will promote healthier food environments and control the concentration and clustering of Hot Food Takeaways. Applications for new hot food takeaways should not lead to an overconcentration of hot food takeaway use within any one individual locality by overly dominating the street scene or have an adverse impact on the standard of amenity. It is also appropriate to control the number of outlets where there are concerns regarding levels of obesity or where it exceeds average densities. Applications for hot food takeaway should include the provision of bins in the immediate vicinity to reduce littering in the public realm and consider the control of odour. It is acknowledged that there is a distinction between different types of hot food takeaway in terms of fast food and healthier/street food options and this can be considered through the development management process.

3.44. Evening economy uses can contribute positively to the vitality and vibrancy of town centres. However, if not properly managed, such uses can result in adverse amenity impacts for local residents and businesses (both individual and cumulative impacts) generated from anti-social behaviour, litter, noise and disturbance. To achieve a balance and protect local amenity, evening economy uses will be directed to town centre locations. Uses will be expected to support the broad objectives of the Council's Town Centre Strategy and Neighbourhood Plans. The evening economy is inherently linked to the Council's Licensing and Environmental Health functions. Applicants are encouraged to liaise with colleagues in these teams prior to the submission of a planning application.

Policy TLC2

Town Centres – Hot Food Takeaways and Evening Economy

This policy aims to ensure town centres are healthy and vibrant places to enjoy.

Applications for new 'fast food' hot food takeaways:

- should not lead to an overconcentration of these uses within any one individual locality. Planning permission will not normally be granted for hot food takeaway use where the number of approved establishments, within the ward, equals or exceeds the UK national average, per 100,000 population.
- should include the provision of bins in the immediate vicinity to reduce littering in the public realm.

Proposals related to the evening economy should:

- Be consistent with the Council's Town Centre Strategy and Neighbourhood Plan;
- Complement existing uses in the surrounding area and mitigate/prevent any adverse impacts on the amenity and continued operation of these uses;
- Demonstrate there would not be a significant adverse effect on amenity or function, particularly impacts on residential uses;
- Promote access via sustainable modes of transport and avoid reliance on private vehicular transport, including private hire vehicles; and
- Consider the potential for allowing daytime uses to activate the space, including on a meanwhile basis, where the use is only intended to operate during evening/night-time hours.

Chapter 4 – Climate Change

Addressing climate change is a pressing global and local concern. The measures to help tackle this significant issue, and the inevitable impacts, include energy efficiency and renewable energy generation, sustainable transport and active travel, air quality, health and wellbeing, habitats and biodiversity, flooding, water supply and consumption and more.

“The Local Plan will be a key driver in reducing carbon emissions.”

Climate Change 04

Strategic Objectives
OB3: Ensure the Council’s Net Zero objectives influence all development taking place in the District.
OB4: Provide sufficient flexibility in policies to enforce changing national standards, best practice and evidence base updates that will enviably occur over the plan period.
OB5: Allow residents to make lifestyle choices that make a positive contribution to Net Zero objectives.

The need to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change is found throughout the Local Plan and is central to our Spatial Vision. It is not limited to built development itself, but also incorporates elements of design, flood risk and water management, transport, open space, biodiversity and more.

Mitigating and Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change

4.1. We are living in a changing climate. The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022 stated that an increase in temperature will lead to future increased risks to human health and wellbeing, agricultural productivity, public water supply and natural assets, as well as an intensification of flood events up to 2050 and beyond.

4.2. The Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment for Kent and Medway 2020 sets out that the key climate risks with the greatest potential impact for Kent are increases in:

- Average temperatures
- Heatwaves
- Droughts
- Sea-level rise
- Heavy rainfall
- Flooding
- Soil destabilisation and landslides

4.3. Carbon emissions are a key driver of climate change. As of 2019, Sevenoaks produces more than 450K tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) each year. This equates to approximately 4 tonnes of CO₂ per person with the majority of emissions coming from domestic energy use and transport as shown in Figure 4.1.

4.4 The Council is committed to reducing its own carbon footprint, and this sits alongside the national and county target to be net zero by 2050. The Local Plan will be a key driver in assisting the whole District to reduce its carbon emissions. It includes policies relating to:

- High quality and careful design
- Reducing the need to travel long distances for everyday needs
- Promoting walking, cycling and public transport
- Locating development in sustainable locations
- Requiring lower carbon development and promoting low carbon technologies
- Protecting and enhancing the natural environment

4.5. These measures will have wider benefits too because they contribute to improvements in biodiversity, health and wellbeing, the economy and air quality.

4.6 Development, including the conversion and retrofitting of existing buildings, must be designed to be as low carbon and climate resilient as possible. It should also incorporate renewable energy generation and offset any remaining emissions where applicable through carbon sequestration. There are already a number of well-established sustainability standards for buildings such as Passivhaus and the Building Research Establishment Environment Assessment Method (BREEAM). Standards such as these are used to ensure that development meets higher standards of sustainability. Strategic Policy CC1 will be supported by development management policies and a climate change Supplementary Planning Document (or equivalent) to provide further detail on the implementation of these policies.

*Figure 4.1: CO₂ Emissions in Sevenoaks District as of 2019

Policy CC1

Mitigating and Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change

This policy seeks to ensure that all development in the District mitigates and adapts to impacts of climate change by:

- Recognising and supporting the Council's commitment to reducing carbon emissions;
- Adhering to the spatial strategy and delivering development in sustainable locations, which is well supported by, or capable of delivering better local services and facilities resulting in more sustainable movement patterns and communities;
- Delivering more sustainable buildings which significantly reduce carbon emissions and are energy efficient, having regard to the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy;
- Delivering renewable and low carbon energy;
- Offsetting carbon emissions and maximising opportunities for carbon sequestration;
- Making the most efficient use of resources;
- Avoiding areas at risk of flooding and reducing that risk where possible; and
- Ensuring development is suitable for, and adaptable to a changing climate through innovative design.

STRATEGIC POLICY

Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Development

4.7. The NPPF requires local plans to include policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting the delivery of highly efficient buildings which are resilient to a changing climate. Carbon dioxide accounts for the vast majority of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, and in Sevenoaks District, 44% of CO₂ comes from domestic uses, 36% from transport and 20% from industrial, commercial and public sector uses.

4.8. The scale of development in the District presents significant opportunities to improve the quality and sustainability of residential and non-residential buildings and how they can contribute towards the wider goal of achieving sustainable development. All development should pursue a fabric first approach to design and aim to minimise the demand for energy, reduce the embodied carbon of new development in line with current and future benchmarks, minimise waste in line with the principles of a circular economy and the wastage hierarchy and aim to increase buildings' lifespans with adaptations which are flexible both now and in the future.

4.9. BREEAM is a verification and certification scheme intended to improve the sustainability of non-residential development and residential conversions. As such, major non-residential proposals must achieve the BREEAM New Construction rating of 'Excellent'. Smaller schemes also have opportunities to reduce their environmental impact and minor non-residential proposals must achieve a BREEAM New Construction rating of 'Very Good' as a minimum. Proposals for the conversion of buildings to 10 or more residential dwellings must achieve a BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment rating of 'Excellent'.

4.10. For residential development, revisions to Part L of the Building Regulations in 2022 will significantly reduce baseline emissions from new buildings by 31% now, and by 75% from 2025. This represents a good milestone in the UK's decarbonisation strategy; however the reality is that we need to build low carbon buildings as soon as possible. With this in mind, major residential development must demonstrate additional significant low carbon and sustainability measures by achieving either a Home Quality Mark (part of the BREEAM family) rating of 4 stars or Passivhaus certification. Should any of these standards be replaced, or national standards increased, then these requirements will be replaced by such standards.

4.11. Having successfully minimised carbon emissions as set out above, proposals for major development will be required to offset any remaining regulated carbon emissions. Carbon offsetting is the permanent removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere to the equivalent of that emitted by development. This can be achieved by carbon sequestration, where appropriate planting and habitat creation and restoration absorb and store CO₂.

4.12. Where it can be demonstrated that it is not feasible or practical to fully achieve this on site, applicants will be able to purchase carbon credits through a carbon offsetting scheme, secured through the Section 106 process. This is where a financial contribution is made and ringfenced to fund carbon sequestration projects elsewhere. Such projects should be located within the District and only as a last resort elsewhere. The Council is currently working with local partners to identify suitable schemes but one such scheme currently in development is the Darent Valley Landscape Recovery project.

4.13. A common proposal in Sevenoaks District is for the demolition and re-building of individual homes. This process releases huge amounts of carbon and there are alternative options which release vastly smaller quantities. Given the need to drastically reduce carbon emissions now, such proposals will be required to demonstrate that consideration has first been given to the refurbishment, retrofitting and extension of the dwelling in question with practical reasons why this is not possible. A replacement dwelling will then only be appropriate if, over its lifetime, it would be built to a standard that would emit less embodied and operational carbon than the continued operational carbon of the existing dwelling over the same timeframe.

Policy CC2

Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Development

This policy seeks to ensure that all development is built to significantly reduce and offset carbon emissions and be resilient to a changing climate.

- As a minimum, all new residential development must achieve the reduction in regulated carbon emissions set out in current and future Building Regulations. Additionally, major residential development must achieve either a Home Quality Mark rating of 4 stars or Passivhaus certification.
- Proposals for the conversion of existing buildings to 10 dwellings or more must achieve a BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment rating of 'Excellent'.
- Major non-residential development must achieve a BREEAM New Construction rating of 'Excellent' and meet the maximum available water credits. Minor non-residential development must achieve a BREEAM New Construction rating of 'Very Good' as a minimum.
- Proposals to demolish and re-build individual dwellings must demonstrate that consideration has first been given to refurbishing, retrofitting or extending them with practical reasons why this is not possible. Replacement dwellings will only be appropriate if, over their lifetime, they would be built to a standard that would emit less embodied and operational carbon than the continued operational carbon of the existing dwelling over the same timeframe.
- All proposals must demonstrate how the scheme has adopted a fabric first approach by minimising heat loss and maximising solar gain, shading and natural ventilation through design, orientation and layout.
- All proposals must minimise the embodied carbon of new development and should favour natural, reused, recycled or renewable materials which are sourced locally where possible. Using a recognised calculator, all major development should demonstrate its predicted embodied carbon to be a maximum of 600 kgCO₂e/m² from 2025 and 300 kgCO₂e/m² from 2030.
- All proposals must demonstrate measures to minimise waste in the design, construction, use and life of buildings, and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management, including the reuse and recycling of construction waste and the promotion of layouts and designs that provide adequate, well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting.
- All proposals should aim to increase buildings' lifespans, incorporate climate change adaption measures and be designed to allow for future adaptations as technologies develop.
- All proposals for major development must offset any remaining regulated carbon emissions through onsite carbon sequestration. Where it can be demonstrated that it is not feasible or practical to achieve this on site, carbon credits to the equivalent value may be purchased from projects within the District and only as a last resort, elsewhere.
- For major development, the submission of Climate Impact Assessments will be the most effective way of setting out how this policy has been satisfied.

Low Carbon and Renewable Energy

4.14. Low carbon and renewable energy technologies have an important role to play in the transition to a low carbon society and the NPPF requires local plans to provide a positive strategy for their delivery while ensuring that any adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily. This policy builds on the measures in Policy CC2 that aim to reduce demand for energy by requiring development to consider the use of low carbon and renewable energy.

4.15. Heating and hot water for buildings accounts for 40% of UK energy use and 20% of greenhouse gas emissions. As such, all major development should incorporate renewable and low carbon energy production to meet at least 10% of predicted total energy requirements. This should only be calculated after the scheme is compliant with Building Regulations and reductions from energy efficiency measures have been calculated and deducted from the energy requirements. Proposals for minor development (excluding householder) are also encouraged to explore such opportunities. The Climate Change Committee estimates that decentralised energy could meet 20% of heating and hot water needs by 2030, and connection to existing or planned networks are encouraged where appropriate.

4.16. In considering standalone energy proposals, it is recognised that Sevenoaks District is highly constrained, with 93% of land designated Green Belt and more than 60% in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Within the Green Belt, and in accordance with national policy, renewable energy projects will only be permitted where very special circumstances have been demonstrated. Opportunities for low carbon and renewable energy generation, distribution and storage are therefore more limited than in other areas. However, at appropriate scales and in the correct locations, technologies such as solar panels could still result in significant benefits to the District. Such proposals will be supported where they do not harm the amenity of residents, businesses or the natural and built environment in an unacceptable way. Once operations have ceased, sites will be expected to be returned to their previous use. The Council understands that residents will be concerned about the impact of proposals on their amenity and as such, applications will be required to demonstrate effective engagement with the local community.

Policy CC3

Low Carbon and Renewable Energy

This policy seeks to support and increase the use of low carbon and renewable energy generation, distribution and storage.

All major development should incorporate renewable and low carbon energy production to meet at least 10% of predicted total energy requirements (after CO₂ reductions from energy efficiency measures). Proposals for minor development are encouraged to demonstrate a commitment to low carbon and renewable energy generation and seek opportunities for innovation.

Proposals for low carbon, renewable and decentralised energy schemes outside of the Green Belt will be permitted provided that:

- The development, either individually or cumulatively, would not result in unacceptable adverse impacts that cannot be satisfactorily addressed on:
 - The landscape and visual amenity;
 - The amenity of surrounding uses (such as from noise, odour, shadow flicker and glare);
 - The local transport network;
 - Biodiversity; and
 - National designations and their settings such as the Greenbelt, AONBs, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.
- Provision is made for the decommissioning of the infrastructure once operation has ceased, including the restoration of the site to its previous use.
- Evidence is provided to demonstrate effective engagement with the Council and local community; and
- Preference is given to existing commercial and industrial premises and previously developed land.

Proposals for low carbon, renewable and decentralised energy schemes in the Green Belt will not be permitted except where very special circumstances have been demonstrated in accordance with national policy. In this case, and where on agricultural land, it will be necessary to demonstrate that poorer quality land has been considered before higher quality, and that continued agricultural use has been explored.

A statement should be submitted alongside any planning application illustrating how the proposal complies with these criteria, any mitigation measures necessary and should be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment where appropriate.

**Figure 4.2: Flood Zones in Sevenoaks District*

Flood Risk

4.17. Historically, the main source of flooding in Sevenoaks District has been fluvial, with the most recent significant events occurring during Winter 2013/14, in Ightham in June 2016 and in Swanley in June 2019. The principal watercourses running through the District are the River Darent and River Eden (which is a major tributary of the River Medway), but there are several connected streams and brooks too. There are a number of other potential sources of flooding in the District, including from surface water, groundwater, reservoirs and sewers. Climate change is likely to result in more frequent and intense periods of rainfall which increase these risks.

4.18. In accordance with the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance, the Council is committed to managing flood risk from all sources in the District, taking account of advice from the Environment Agency and Kent County Council (as the Lead Local Flood Authority). The Council commissioned the Sevenoaks Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (2022) which assesses the extent and nature of flood risk across the District and the implications for land use planning, taking into account the anticipated impacts of climate change. The spatial strategy and policies of the Local Plan have been informed by the Level 1 SFRA, and a Level 2 SFRA is currently underway to inform site specific flood risks. Relevant proposals should refer to the information contained within the SFRA's during their preparation.

4.19. Figure 4.2 shows the areas of the District most at risk from fluvial flooding. It is essential that new development across the District avoids these, and areas at risk from other sources of flooding, in the initial instance. Where development is demonstrated as being necessary in such areas, in accordance with the tests set out in national policy, it must be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Policy W1 sets out how this must be demonstrated through the use of Flood Risk Assessments and how opportunities should be taken to reduce flood risk and make environmental improvements where possible.

Policy W1

Flood Risk

This policy seeks to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding and ensure that where development is necessary in such areas, it is made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Development will only be permitted where:

- It can be demonstrated that the site is safe from all sources of flooding, now and for the lifetime of the development, taking into account the effects of climate change; and
- It does not materially displace flood water or increase flood risk elsewhere.

Where development is proposed within an area at risk of flooding from any source, it will be required to comply with national policy, including to:

- Apply the sequential test by demonstrating that there are no reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding, and then apply the exception test as necessary;
- Incorporate flood protection, resilience and mitigation measures appropriate to the nature and scale of the risk;
- Incorporate measures which avoid an increase in flood risk, and where possible reduce the overall level of flood risk, both on the site and elsewhere; and
- Provide for a safe means of access and egress in the event of a flood.

Site specific Flood Risk Assessments will be required, in accordance with the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, in the following circumstances:

- For all proposals in Flood Zones 2 and 3;
- For proposals in Flood Zone 1 of 1 hectare or greater, or where there is an identified critical drainage problem (these should include a surface water drainage strategy);
- For proposals which may be subject to other sources of flooding such as surface water (including proposals which could affect or be affected by overland surface water flow routes);
- For proposals where there may be the risk of a breach of a local defence;
- Where there is an intention to discharge water to the catchment or assets of a water management authority;
- Where evidence of historical or recent flood events has been provided to the Council; and
- On land in the vicinity of a small watercourse or drainage features that might not have been demarcated as being in a flood zone in national mapping.

All proposals for major development will also require the submission of a suitable surface water drainage strategy.

Flood protection and mitigation measures, including sustainable drainage systems, should be multi-functional where possible and maximise opportunities for landscape, biodiversity and green blue infrastructure improvements.

Flood mitigation measures shall be installed and maintained in perpetuity at developers' own expense or put into a management company to ensure their long-term retention, maintenance and management. The provision of any other flood protection and resilience measures required will be informed by the Flood Risk Assessment.

Sustainable Drainage

4.20. As identified in Policy W1, one source of flooding in Sevenoaks District is from surface water. The Level 1 SFRA identifies Edenbridge, Hever, Penshurst and Chipstead as the most notable locations at risk from surface water flooding. With this and the impacts of climate change in mind, it is essential that all development provides sufficient drainage provision to manage surface water.

4.21. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are a collection of water management practices that are designed to control surface water runoff close to where it falls and mimic natural drainage as closely as possible. They can provide multifunctional benefits by reducing flood risk, removing pollutants from runoff and combining water management with green space with benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife. SuDS may also enable development in areas where existing drainage systems are close to capacity, thereby enabling development in existing urban areas.

4.22. In most cases, SuDS are the most effective way to manage surface water and the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance require major development to give priority to their use unless they can be demonstrated to be inappropriate. Within Sevenoaks District, taking into account the potential for the multifunctional benefits of SuDS and the flood risks identified, they will be expected to be incorporated into minor development too.

4.23. Proposals should refer to Defra's non-statutory technical standard for sustainable drainage systems which provides guidance on minimum standards for the design, maintenance and operation of SuDS. In 2015, Kent County Council became a statutory consultee as the Lead Local Flood Authority and adopted a Drainage and Planning Policy Statement which should also inform the development of drainage schemes. There will also be situations where consultation with the Environment Agency will be necessary, such as where there may be a risk to groundwater Source Protection Zones or vulnerability zones.

4.24. The Council expects SuDS to form an integral part of the development design process. This is because successful SuDS require a range of discharge or infiltration techniques that need to be designed in a sequential order. Whilst primarily used to attenuate runoff, early consideration of SuDS provides the opportunity to design-in other benefits which will deliver more sustainable developments. Whilst it is acknowledged that some sites can be more challenging than others, SuDS can be applied to almost every site.

Policy W2 Sustainable Drainage

This policy seeks to ensure that all development includes adequate drainage provision for the disposal of surface water from all sources to prevent adverse impacts on water quality and reduce flood risk.

All development must include adequate drainage provision for the disposal of surface water from all sources, accounting for the latest climate change predictions. This should be an integral part of the design process and be in the form of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) unless demonstrated to be inappropriate.

SuDS should be designed to have multifunctional benefits, using a mixture of built and nature-based solutions to support other relevant policies relating to design, water management, biodiversity, blue green infrastructure, leisure, amenity and the landscape.

Proposals must demonstrate that clear arrangements have been established for the operation and maintenance of the SuDS for the lifetime of the development.

All drainage schemes must deliver a net reduction in runoff rates, mimic natural drainage flows as closely as possible and manage surface water as close to the source as possible.

All drainage schemes must follow the drainage hierarchy in the following order:

1. Discharge into the ground, unless this would lead to the deterioration of groundwater quality in Source Protection Zones or vulnerability zones in accordance with Policy W3.
2. Discharge into a surface water body.
3. Discharge into a surface water sewer, highway drain or other drainage system.

Surface water will not be permitted to enter the foul water system.

Water Management, Stress and Efficiency

4.25. Water is a finite resource essential for human health and wellbeing, the economy and the wider environment and it needs to be managed carefully. Sevenoaks District lies in an area of serious water stress (as per the Environment Agency's classification) which is under growing pressure due to increased demand, pollution, poor land management, unsustainable abstraction and the impacts of climate change.

4.26. As a result, all development will need to manage water demand and incorporate efficiency measures to reduce demand in the first instance, followed by making the most efficient use of water in the second. For residential development, the Government updated Part G of the Building Regulations in 2015, introducing an optional consumption requirement of no more than 110 litres per person per day for residential development. As a result of the water stress identified in Sevenoaks, this requirement will be implemented through the Local Plan. This is supported by the Kent Water for Sustainable Growth Study (2017).

4.27. Groundwater provides a third of England's drinking water, as well as the baseflow for our rivers and other watercourses. It is crucial that the quantity and quality of groundwater is protected and improved to ensure the stability of water resources. The Environment Agency has defined groundwater Source Protection Zones as well as vulnerability zones. Where development is proposed in these zones, or wherever else there may be a significant adverse impact, it will be necessary to investigate and risk assess those impacts.

4.28. For the wider water environment, the Water Framework Directive is a legal framework established to protect and improve the quality of all water resources, requiring inland and coastal waters to reach 'good status' by 2027. Proposals must have regard to this, and for Sevenoaks District this includes the Thames River Basin Management Plan (including the management plans for the Rivers Darent and Eden).

Policy W3

Water Management, Stress and Efficiency

This policy seeks to ensure that all development recognises that Sevenoaks District is in an area of serious water stress and includes water management measures.

All development must minimise the use of mains water, make the most efficient use of water and incorporate water saving measures and technologies such as rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling.

All residential development must be built to ensure that wholesome water consumption is not greater than 110 liters per person per day.

Development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it would not result in the deterioration of the quantity or quality of ground and surface water resources. Where a site is within a groundwater Source Protection Zone, vulnerability zone, or where a significant adverse impact is likely, an appropriate site investigation and risk assessment will be required in consultation with the Environment Agency.

All development must, where appropriate, incorporate measures to protect and restore the physical state, biodiversity and natural function of watercourses, for example by using clear spanning bridges where crossing points are necessary to allow wildlife to continue to utilise the river corridor.

Chapter 5 - Design

Design is so much more than what a place looks like, it is how it functions and how it is experienced. A well-designed space can have a huge impact on people's lives, affecting health and wellbeing, our sense of security and belonging. Fundamentally a well-designed space is key to the successful delivery of the strategic objectives of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.

Design 05

Strategic Objectives

OB6: 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).

OB7: Require the production of design codes for new development that meet the provisions of national planning guidance.

5.1. All new development will create well-designed places that promote sustainable and healthy communities.

5.2. The government has put design at the forefront of national planning policy and our local policies are being updated to reflect this. We will be ambitious in ensuring that all elements of the Local Plan will be successfully achieved through good quality design. Previously we proposed that each chapter of this Plan will contain a design policy, where appropriate, which will set out how development can demonstrate that it complies with the policy. We have decided that it is more appropriate, following the evolution of Government policy relating to authority-wide design codes, for this information to be included within a Design Code for the District. The aim is to make this a clear and user friendly document in order to support successful delivery.

5.3. This over-arching Design chapter sets out how we can ensure that the standards of good design are incorporated into the District's new development.

Design Review Panel

5.4. A Design Review Panel (DRP) is a panel of experienced design professionals from a range of disciplines, (for example: architecture, infrastructure, master-planning, sustainability) who meet to assess the quality of a proposed development. Following the presentation they produce a report based upon their findings.

5.5. They are commonly used by local authorities to provide specific expert advice to support the determination of an application and are usually part of the pre-application process. Design South East is the local body that manages these for Local Planning Authorities.

5.6. Applicants should engage in the DRP process as early as possible and ideally within the Pre-application process. Planning Performance Agreements will be expected to accommodate the DRP process within the timeframes. DRP can also support the production of Design Codes as well as assessing the adherence of the development to the codes.

Further supporting guidance will be produced.

Policy DE1

Design Review Panel

New development will be required to engage with the Design Review Panel. The following criteria for presentation will be applied;

- Residential developments of more than 50 new dwellings
- Non-residential developments of more than 10,000 sq m of floor space (gross) or mixed – use developments of an equivalent size
- At the discretion of the Council, smaller developments which have significant impact on the surrounding area for example, increase in density and changes in character and scale from the surrounding local character.

Ensuring Design Quality

5.7. Government design guidance, the National Design Guide (2019) uses the 10 Characteristics of Well-Designed Places as a framework for assessing development. These are;

1. Context – enhances the surroundings;
2. Identity – attractive and distinctive;
3. Built form – a coherent pattern of development;
4. Movement – accessible and easy to move around;
5. Nature – enhanced and optimised;
6. Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive;
7. Uses – mixed and integrated;
8. Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable;
9. Resources – efficient and resilient; and
10. Lifespan – made to last.

5.8. To support the understanding of the District's character, the Council commissioned a district-wide character study. The Sevenoaks District Character Study (DWCS) 2022 tells the story of the District by exploring its past and how it has evolved into what it is today. It identifies important themes and recent trends that are shaping the District as a whole, including how people live, work and spend time in the District. It identifies the different areas that make up the District and explores what makes each place special.

5.9. Additionally, Development Briefs have been produced for the allocated sites within this plan to reflect our priorities and aspirations and to ensure design excellence.

Policy DE2

Ensuring Design Quality

New development will be expected to demonstrate that it adheres to the principles of the National Design Guide and the 10 characteristics of place. Development will also reflect local character and distinctiveness taking into account the following documents:

- Sevenoaks District Character Study (DWCS)
- Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment
- The Kent Downs and The High Weald AONB Management Plans, where applicable
- Neighbourhood Plan policies, where applicable
- Kent Design Guide
- Village Design Guides

New Development proposals of 10 or more units will be expected to submit a 3D digital model of the external envelop for inclusion in the 3D mapping tool of the District.

Design Codes

5.10. A design code is a set of simple, concise and illustrated design requirements, that are visual and numerical wherever possible, to provide specific and detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area.

5.11. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Design codes and guides should provide a framework for creating high-quality places.

5.12. SDC will define the scope of a district wide design code (DwDC) working with our residents and stakeholders. The DwDC will also articulate how development will address the wider policies of the Local Plan. The DwDC will also include;

- Baseline analysis of the District
- Design Vision
- Area types and a coding plan
- Methodology

5.13. In addition to a DwDC specific area Design Codes will be required for the following development;

- Sites that are allocated as part of the Local Plan and where it is identified in the site Development Brief
- Windfall sites of a size appropriate for a Design Code
- Areas identified as Regeneration areas in the Local Plan

Policy DE3 Design Codes

New development will be required to produce a Design Code as part of the application process that will deliver a well-design sustainable place. This will be produced in accordance with the Guidance of the National Model Design Code and SDC methodology and developed in partnership with SDC and the local community.

Chapter 6 - Health and Wellbeing

The Local Plan promotes the health and wellbeing of residents, workers and visitors to the District, through its role in shaping the built and natural environment. Through collaboration within partners and the design, construction and management of spaces and places, planning plays a key role in alleviating some of the District's most pressing health challenges.

Health and Wellbeing 06

Strategic Objectives

OB1: Recognise the link between the places and spaces that we live in and the quality of residents' mental and physical health.

OB2: Work closely with healthcare providers to develop policies that promote good physical and mental health as an outcome.

“It is important to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to improve their mental and physical wellbeing”

The quality of the built and natural environment can directly influence health behaviours and have positive impacts on reducing health inequalities

6.1. It is important that provision is made to ensure all residents have the opportunity to improve their wellbeing, reduce social exclusion and isolation, stay physically active and live healthier lives. The importance of this has been particularly emphasised by the recent Covid-19 pandemic.

6.2. Good quality housing in a sustainable location, with access to green open space, can positively benefit social networks and opportunities for active travel.

Health and Wellbeing

6.3. There are areas of affluence in Sevenoaks District, as well as pockets of deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure for small areas in England. According to the IMD, Sevenoaks District is the second least deprived local authority in Kent, although it should be noted that there are areas within the District that fall within the 30% most deprived in the country, namely Swanley St Mary's and Swanley White Oak. Opportunities to improve the wellbeing of the more vulnerable aspects of the community, and reduce social exclusion, will be sought and proposals supported.

6.4. Current population data shows that 22% of the District's population is aged 65 and over, and this proportion is expected to increase to 25.8% by 2043*. There is an increasing need to identify opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of the older population, through medical infrastructure, social, community and recreational opportunities.

6.5. Public safety is of paramount importance and everyone has the right to feel safe in the places they live, work and relax at all times of the day. We will work closely with the Health and Safety Executive, The Environment Agency and Kent Police to establish whether additional measures should be included in the Local Plan to identify hazardous establishments, ensure risks to public safety are minimised and to take reasonable measures to prevent major incidents.

6.6. A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a useful tool in determining planning applications where there are expected to be significant or adverse impacts on health and wellbeing. HIAs help to achieve sustainable development by finding ways to create healthy and active communities, which can be shaped by the built environments that we live in.

This Sevenoaks District Council Health and Wellbeing Action plan aims to address the health focused priorities and actions outlined within the Sevenoaks District Community Plan (2022-25) and the SDC Local Plan. The Planning Policy team work alongside the Health and Communities team to ensure both documents work concurrently.

Public health England has identified five aspects of the built and natural environment as the primary characteristics that local planning policy can influence. These five aspects are as follows:

- **Neighbourhood design** – building healthy neighbourhoods by enhancing neighbourhood walkability, street connectivity and encouraging environmentally conscious design choices.
- **Housing** – to focus on improving the quality of housing and increasing the provision of affordable and diverse housing.
- **Food environment** - Healthy, affordable food for the general population and enhanced community food infrastructure. There is emerging evidence showing a positive link between urban agriculture and improved attitudes towards healthier food, opportunity for more physical activity and social connectivity, as well as increased fruit and vegetable intake.
- **Natural and sustainable environments** - Reduce exposure to environmental hazards and access to the natural environment, including adaptation to climate change.
- **Transport** - Provision of active travel infrastructure, provision of public transport, prioritisation of active travel, road safety and mobility for all ages and activities.

*2018-based population projections, ONS

Determinants of Health

**Figure 6.1: Determinants of Health infographic*

6.7. Many factors combine to affect the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. To a large extent, factors such as where we live, the state of our environment, genetics, our income and education level, and our relationships with friends and family all have considerable impacts on health, whereas the more commonly considered factors such as access and use of health care services often have less of an impact.

6.8. The determinants of health include:

- The social and economic environment;
- The physical environment; and
- The person's individual characteristics and behaviours.

Policy HW1 Health and Wellbeing

Proposals which support healthy living opportunities, promote social inclusion and improve community cohesion will be supported where they are in accordance with other relevant policies.

To support healthy and safe communities, and reduce health inequalities, new development should:

- Be located within easy access to services and facilities;
- Create opportunities for better active travel to including provision for safe cycle and pedestrian routes;
- Be designed to minimise threats and improve public safety; and
- Be designed to improve mental health and reduce loneliness and isolation. It is encouraged that schemes incorporate green and community spaces for social prescribing.

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA), setting out the expected impact on health, wellbeing and safety, will be required for the following new developments:

- All major housing developments of 10 units or more;
- For non-residential developments containing any of the following uses:
 - Education facilities;
 - Health facilities;
 - Leisure or community facilities;
 - Publicly accessible open space;
 - Betting shops;
 - Hot food takeaways;
 - Restaurants; and
- For any other uses that the Council considers to have a detrimental impact on physical or mental health (E.g. payday loan shops/vapour parlours/nightclubs).

Where unavoidable negative impacts on health, wellbeing and safety are identified, mitigation measures must be incorporated into the proposal.

The above aspirations should be read together with other relevant policies and the Sport England Active Design guidance, which provides advice for making places for the wellbeing of people and communities.

Air Quality

6.9. Vehicle emissions are the main contributor to poor air quality in the District and there is a high dependency on private vehicles to make journeys to key locations within, and outside of, the District (e.g. stations, shops and community facilities). This has led to a number of hot spots in Sevenoaks, Swanley and other smaller settlements along the A25, where air quality is particularly poor.

6.10. The District currently has 4 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), all of which have been declared in relation to traffic emissions.

6.11. Measures to improve air quality include reducing the need to travel, providing electric vehicle charging points and promoting alternative modes of transport, including cycling. Secondary effects of these measures can also improve general health and wellbeing.

6.12 Looking forward to 2040, we would hope to see road transport emissions gradually decreasing as the proportion of zero and low emission vehicles increase, driven by current and forthcoming legislation and/or policy changes.

6.13. Likewise, emissions from other sources, such as building heating systems, should also decline with wider uptake of zero emission technologies. Nevertheless, local authorities will be expected to work towards reducing other emissions, specifically concentrations of PM_{2.5}, in line with legislation [*the Environment Act 2021 and Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023*].

6.14. PM_{2.5}, is fine particulate matter of 2.5 micrometres or less, it is a hazardous pollutant that can penetrate the lung barrier and enter the blood stream, causing disease and cancers. By improving air pollution levels, we can reduce disease and both long and short-term illness.

*Figure 6.2: Air Quality Management Areas in Sevenoaks District Map

Policy AQ1 Air Quality

New development should result in a positive or neutral impact on air quality for new residents, the existing surrounding area and other areas connected to the development. It is expected that proposals should:

- Ensure that onsite and offsite air quality issues are included when assessing the environmental impact of proposals;
- Ensure that development which may have an adverse impact on air quality will be required to incorporate measures to reduce the impact to an acceptable level;
- Ensure that suitable onsite and offsite mitigation measures are incorporated into the scheme, including a financial contribution to strategic air quality improvement measures, if appropriate, such that future air quality is either improved or sustained at a level that would be achieved without the development; and
- Require design and location of new development to take account of the need to improve air quality, in accordance with the District's Air Quality Action Plan.

An Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA) will be required for the following new developments:

- All major housing developments of 10 units or more;
- All development proposed within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA); and/or
- The development site is within 50 metres of a major road or heavily trafficked route.

Schemes where unacceptable impacts cannot be overcome by mitigation will be refused.

Noise

6.13. All development should provide an acceptable standard of amenity for its occupants and should not result in significant harmful effects to surrounding uses. These harmful effects can include overlooking, loss of privacy or light, noise and pollution.

6.14. The Noise Policy Statement for England (DEFRA, March 2010) seeks to promote good health and a good quality of life through the effective management of noise within the context of Government policy on sustainable development.

6.15. Noise sensitive developments should be located away from existing sources of significant noise, and potentially noisy developments should be located in areas where noise will not be such an important consideration or where its impact can be minimised. Acceptable noise levels will be based on acoustic assessments by accredited professionals.

Policy HW2

Noise and Vibration

Proposals which would result in, or be subject to, noise pollutions and/or vibration should:

- Ensure that new development provides adequate residential amenity for existing and future occupiers of the development with regards to noise and vibration;
- Safeguard the amenities of existing and future occupants of nearby properties by ensuring that development does not contribute to and avoids areas where occupiers of the development would be subject to excessive noise and vibration; and
- Ensure that development would not result in unacceptable noise and/or vibration levels from existing sources, which cannot be adequately mitigated.
- Provide a Noise Impact Assessment, where the Council considers it necessary.

Chapter 7 – Historic Environment.

The historic environment is a valuable asset which can contribute to creating a sense of place and the wider strategic objectives of the District.

Historic Environment 07

Strategic Objectives

OB16: Continue to support development that protects and enhances the District's historic environment and ensures that it can be enjoyed by future generations.

7.1. Sevenoaks District is home to a wealth of heritage assets, including around 1,700 listed buildings. This rich and diverse built heritage is set within a stunning medieval natural landscape of ancient woodland and farmland. A large proportion of the District lies within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the southern tip lies within the High Weald AONB. Other areas lie within the distinctive historical Low Weald and North Kent Plains that sit within the Green Belt. The myriad of historic parks and gardens encompass aesthetic, botanic, scientific and social heritage and form an important part of the areas landscape heritage character.

**Figure 7.1: Map of Heritage Assets and Conservation Areas*

7.2. The historic environment is a valuable asset which can contribute to creating a sense of place and the wider strategic objectives of the District. These include economic development, urban regeneration, high quality urban design, placemaking and planning, the vitality and viability of our centres and rural economy, tourism, leisure, education and sustainability.

7.3. It is important that planning decisions consider heritage assets in the District, alongside wider objectives as set out in this Plan. To achieve this, the policies in this Plan will draw together a comprehensive approach to conserving and enhancing the District's historic environment.

7.4. Heritage assets are identified in national planning policy as either designated or non-designated heritage assets.

7.5. Designated heritage assets are those with a statutory designation, such as:

- Listed buildings;
- Scheduled monuments;
- Conservation areas; and
- Registered parks and gardens.

7.6. Non-designated heritage assets do not have a statutory designation, but are still of local heritage significance. These include:

- Locally listed buildings, structures and places;
- Buildings and structures identified as making a positive contribution to the character of a conservation area;
- Buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of their heritage interest;
- Kent Compendium Of Historic Parks and Gardens; and
- Assets identified in the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER).

7.7. The Kent Historic Environment Record is a useful source of information on the local historic environment of the District and can also be used when assessing archaeological potential. It can be especially useful in identifying non-designated heritage assets, such as the historic farmsteads identified in the District through the Kent Farmsteads & Landscape Project (2012), which may be considered non-designated heritage assets.

7.8. The Council commissioned a Historic Environment Review (2017) to help us understand the District's historic environment as a whole. It considers the historic environment and designated and non-designated heritage assets, whilst also recognising that the landscape and local character are intrinsically linked to the setting of heritage assets and historic settlements, the pattern of development and land uses. As well as focusing on specific assets, it is important to consider the main themes and characteristics which help to form the District's local distinctiveness and which make a significant contribution to its heritage.

7.8. The Council wants to achieve development which is compatible with its local character and to protect and positively respond to heritage assets and their setting, as required by national planning policy.

Policy HEN1

Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Development proposals affecting heritage assets will preserve, and where appropriate enhance, the District's historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets, including change within the setting of heritage assets, to ensure they are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. This includes applications affecting:

Designated heritage assets, such as:

- Listed buildings;
- Scheduled monuments;
- Conservation areas; and
- Registered parks and gardens.

Non-designated heritage assets, such as:

- Locally listed buildings, structures and places;
- Buildings and structures identified as making a positive contribution to the character of a conservation area;
- Buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of their heritage interest;
- Kent Compendium Of Historic Parks and Gardens; and
- Assets identified in the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER).

Proposals for development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, and respond sensitively to change within the historic environment, taking into account national planning policy and the following guidance:

- a) Local Plan policies relating to design, heritage assets and landscape character;
- b) Relevant research to understand the significance of the historic environment and specific assets it contains, including the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER) as a minimum;
- c) Current best practice guidance produced by Historic England; and
- d) Other principles set out in relevant local guidance, including the Kent Design SPD, Local List SPD, Sevenoaks District Historic Environment Review, Conservation Area Appraisals and Design Guidance, Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment, or any subsequent versions, and any historic environment guidance adopted by the Council.

STRATEGIC POLICY

Sensitively Managing Change in the Historic Environment

7.9. National planning policy requires applicants to describe the significance of heritage assets affected by proposals, including any contribution made by their setting. Understanding the significance of heritage assets, and the contribution of their setting, is fundamental to the positive management and protection of heritage assets and the historic environment in a manner appropriate to their significance.

7.10. All new development should demonstrate how it has understood and responded positively to the historic environment and the heritage assets it contains by making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and, where possible, better revealing and enhancing the heritage significance of the District.

Policy HEN2

Sensitively Managing Change in the Historic Environment

Where heritage assets may be affected by a proposal, Planning Statements, Design and Access Statements and/or Heritage Statements will be expected to demonstrate:

- a) An identification and assessment of heritage assets, including an assessment and description of their significance, and the contribution of their setting;
- b) How this information has been used to inform proposals that sustain and enhance the historic environment and, where relevant, minimise and mitigate harm; and
- c) That new development responds positively to local historic character and preserves the significance of heritage assets.

Archaeology

7.11. Most archaeological sites are not scheduled monuments, but nonetheless play an important role in the historic environment. They contribute to a sense of place and provide people with a direct physical link to the past, as well as bringing to life stories and events occurring at an international, national, regional and local level.

7.12. The known sites and areas of archaeological interest within the District are included within the Historic Environment Record as Areas of Archaeological Potential. Sevenoaks District Council will follow Kent County Council's guidance on 'Areas of Archaeological Potential'. They are considered to be heritage assets.

Policy HEN3

Archaeology

Where an application is located within, or would affect an Area of Archaeological Potential or suspected area of archaeological importance an archaeological assessment should be provided. Preference will be given to preservation in situ unless it can be shown that recording of remains, assessment, analysis report and deposition of archive is more appropriate.

Whenever practicable, opportunities should be taken for the enhancement and interpretation of archaeological remains. Developers will be required to record any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and possible impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. This includes the recording of historic buildings where features will be lost through alteration or demolition.

Locally Listed Buildings and Assets

7.13. The Council, working in partnership with key stakeholders, produced a Local List of buildings and other assets that are of local architectural and historic interest or that made significant contribution to local distinctiveness. Heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of their heritage interest. Further information on heritage assets in Sevenoaks can be found in the Sevenoaks Local List SPD. The historic assets on this list are considered non-designated heritage assets. This policy will be applicable to any future expanded Local List.

Policy HEN4

Locally Listed Buildings and Assets

Development affecting Locally Listed Buildings and Assets should have regard to the impact on the asset's significance and its setting and demonstrate that the significance of the asset and its conservation has informed the design of the proposed development.

Proposals will be supported for developments that secure the preservation, and where appropriate enhancement, of Locally Listed Buildings and Assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Schemes that show a positive commitment to retaining the asset, as an active part of the site will be encouraged. Development that would result in the loss of, or demonstrably harm the significance or setting of a Locally Listed Building or Asset, will be resisted, unless the proposed development has other public benefits that clearly outweigh the loss of, or harm to, the asset, or it can be demonstrated that there is no other feasible means of bringing a key development site forward.

Responding to Climate Change in the Historic Environment

7.14. The retention and reuse of our historic building stock can help reduce climate change by avoiding the higher carbon footprint associated with new construction. The inherent embodied energy of historic buildings means that their retention and care is consistent with modern concepts of sustainability and with the ambitions to reduce carbon emissions.

7.15. Heritage assets also need to adapt to meet changing needs by understanding and exploring opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings in a manner appropriate to their significance. Certain energy efficiency or retrofit measures, specifically those for modern construction, are not appropriate for historic buildings. Adopting a 'whole building approach' to understand the building, its construction, and significance will help to ensure that suitable energy efficiency measures are selected that do not harm the significance of heritage assets.

Policy HEN5

Responding to Climate Change in the Historic Environment

Development should secure the conservation and continued beneficial use of heritage assets through their retention and sensitive adaptation which will avoid harm to their significance.

The conversion and change of use of heritage assets should preserve the significance of heritage assets and without significant alteration or change to character and appearance, or loss of historic fabric. Development for change of use or conversion of a heritage asset should demonstrate that the proposed use is considered to be compatible with the fabric, interior and setting of the building, taking into account the optimum viable use that is likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset.

Applications to improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings and mitigate and adapt to climate change will only be supported where they consider a whole building approach, informed by an understanding of the building performance, significance and all factors affecting energy use.

Proposals will need to demonstrate that they are sensitively designed to avoid harm to the significance of heritage assets and their setting, having regard to other less harmful alternatives. Consideration should be given to the reversibility of any proposals.

Shopfronts

7.16. Shopfronts and signage form an important element in the street scene, both individually and in terms of the wider street setting. They can not only enhance the vitality of a place, but also contribute to the local distinctiveness and character of the townscape.

7.17. Retaining historic shopfronts makes a positive contribution to the historic character of a place and visual amenity. When a replacement shopfront is necessary it can be successfully integrated into their setting through the use of quality materials and by respecting the proportions of the building and character of the street scene.

Policy HEN6 Shopfronts

Historic shopfronts should be retained and restored where they are of historic or architectural merit and contribute to the character and visual amenity of a building or area.

Opportunities should be taken for the enhancement of unsympathetic shopfronts within conservation areas.

Applications for new shopfronts, or alteration to existing shopfronts and other forms of advertisement affecting heritage assets will be supported where the design, detailing, positioning, materials, colour, proportion and illumination respond positively to the character and design of the existing building and surroundings. This is both for the replacement of historic shopfronts and the enhancement of unsympathetic shopfronts and signage where they are to be replaced for historic buildings and areas.

Historic Parks and Gardens

7.18. Historic parks and gardens are an important part of the historic and natural environment of the District. Some of these historic parks and gardens are designated, and others are non-designated assets and are identified in the Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens and on the Sevenoaks Local List. There are likely to be others that are yet to be formally identified.

7.19. These contain a variety of features, such as: historic association with places, events and people, the open space itself, views in and out, the planting, water features, built features and archaeological remains. They often also play an important role in the setting of listed buildings and structures, to which they are intrinsically linked. There is a need to protect such sites and their settings from new development that may have a detrimental impact on the historic interest.

Policy HEN7

Historic Parks and Gardens

Proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it:

- a) Preserves, and where applicable enhances, the special interest, significance and settings of Historic Parks or Gardens, both registered or of local importance and historic landscapes; including the restoration of lost features where possible;
- b) Respects the distinctive characteristics of existing designed or natural landscapes and would not harm the enjoyment, layout, design, character and appearance; and
- c) Can be demonstrated that any harm can be outweighed by public benefits commensurate to the level of harm arising.

Chapter 8 - Natural Environment

Strategic Objectives

OB15: Ensure the District retains a high quality natural environment over the period of the Local Plan including delivering biodiversity net gain on new development.

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

8.2. 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%).

8.3. 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.

Landscape and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

8.4. All of our landscape is of value for its contribution towards making Sevenoaks an attractive place to live, work and visit. The Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment 2017 provides a detailed review of the entire District, including the AONBs. It identifies what makes a place unique and defines the character of the landscape, identifying 13 landscape character types (areas with broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern) sub-dividing these into 31 landscape character areas (areas which share generic characteristics with other areas of the same type but with their own particular identity) and identifies key characteristics. It also evaluates landscape condition, key sensitivities and valued attributes and provides guidance, including a useful flow chart setting out key stages and a series of questions to act as prompts to assist in shaping proposals and in planning decisions. It updates and superseded the Countryside Character Assessment SPD 2011.

8.5. Other sources of information include local landscape character assessments, which should also be used, where they exist and where applicable.

8.6. In addition, the two Areas of Outstanding natural Beauty have their own Management Plans, which outline the key components, special characteristics and qualities which together make up their natural beauty. In the Kent Downs these comprise its dramatic landform and views, biodiversity-rich habitats, farmed landscape, woodland and trees, its historic and cultural heritage, heritage coasts, geology and natural resources and tranquillity and remoteness, including dark skies. Within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, its Management Plan identifies five defining components of character comprising a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform, dispersed historic settlements, a dense network of historic routeways, an abundance of woodland and small, irregular fields bounded by hedgerows and woods and areas of lowland heath.

8.7. National policy sets out that 'valued landscapes' should be protected and enhanced in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan and that Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have the highest status of protection in relation to conserving and enhancing their landscape and scenic beauty.

8.8. Developments in the AONBs are expected to be limited and in line with the NPPF. They should conserve and enhance the landscape and natural beauty of the AONB. Proposals, both within the AONBs and within the setting of the AONBs, should take account of the relevant Management Plan and associated guidance to produce sensitive and carefully designed schemes. Both the High Weald and Kent Downs AONB have supporting guidance which can be found on their websites. They currently include the following:

Kent Downs

- Kent Downs AONB Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development
- Kent Downs AONB Farmsteads Guidance
- Landscape Design Handbook
- Kent Downs AONB Rural Streets and Lanes: a design handbook

High Weald

- High Weald Planning Advice Note
- High Weald Housing Design Guide
- High Weald Colour Study

Policy NE1

Landscape and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The landscape character of the District's countryside will be conserved and, where possible, enhanced. All proposals should have regard to the Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment 2017 and where applicable, any local landscape character assessment.

The Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and their settings will be given the highest level of protection.

Proposals within or affecting the setting of the AONBs should conserve and enhance their landscape and natural beauty, having regard to the relevant Management Plan, associated supporting guidance, documents and position statements.

Development within the AONBs should be landscape-led and its scale, layout and design, including use of materials and colours, should be appropriate, both individually and cumulatively, having regard to the historic pattern and character of development.

Proposals within the setting of the AONBs should avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated area, including in relation to views into or out from the designated area, individually or cumulatively. Proposals within the AONB will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Proposals within or relating to a damaged landscape and/or feature should seek to improve the landscape and/or feature.
- Proposals should have regard to and where appropriate and applicable, protect, conserve and/or restore locally distinctive patterns and species composition of natural features e.g. hedgerows
- Proposals should have regard to and where appropriate and applicable, protect, conserve and/or restore the locally distinctive character of settlements, their settings and the relationship between built development and the natural landscape.
- Proposals should protect visually sensitive skylines and geological and topographical features
- Proposals should have regard to and protect the landscape's cultural, historic and heritage value
- Proposals should protect important views and visual amenity
- Proposals should protect tranquillity and remoteness, by avoiding light and noise

Enhancements may include but are not limited to:

- The removal or improvement or currently detrimental building or features;
- 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 planning and natural features including trees, hedgerows, meadows and grassland;
- Improving tranquillity by reducing the existing impact of noise and lighting.

Major development proposals within the AONBs will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it is demonstrated they are in the public interest.

Proposals within the AONBs or their settings should be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or Landscape and Visual Appraisal as appropriate.

STRATEGIC POLICY

Biodiversity and Ecosystems

Designated sites

8.9. Sevenoaks District has a wide range of habitats and protected areas. It is home to both nationally and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity. Nationally designated sites comprise 42 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and these will be highlighted on the policies map. The locally designated sites include 63 Local Wildlife Sites and 19 nature reserves, comprising Local Nature Reserves, Roadside Nature Reserves and Kent Wildlife Trust Reserves. These are protected for their biodiversity and ecological value.

8.10. The various types of locally designated sites are identified and designated by a range of bodies and mechanisms. For example, potential Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) can be identified by the Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT), outside agencies or individuals. They are then appraised against specified selection and delineation criteria (drawn up by the Kent Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Kent Nature Partnership), following which a recommendation will be made. We will continue to work with the relevant bodies, as appropriate, on reviewing and designating local sites, as they come forward.

Blue Green Infrastructure

8.11. The various ecological and habitat components across the District, alongside other areas of open space, are collectively known as the blue green infrastructure (BGI) network. Our blue green infrastructure network provides multiple benefits. These include its essential role in mitigating and adapting to climate change, ensuring that future generations can enjoy a healthy and thriving environment for years to come. Climate change is one of the biggest environmental concerns of our time and as a Council we have committed to helping the District reduce carbon emissions and become more resilient to climate change.

8.12. Our blue green infrastructure network provides other benefits. It contributes to the character of our District, it provides a network for wildlife, it can help deliver biodiversity net gain and it provides ecosystem services, e.g. the air we breathe. Moreover, access to the natural environment can also have a positive impact on health and wellbeing and can help reduce social and health inequalities.

The network is shown as an interactive map and consists of the following:

- Land of biodiversity value, including Biodiversity Opportunity Areas;
- 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;
- Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGs);
- 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

8.13. In order to conserve and enhance our blue green infrastructure, planning applications should identify existing blue green infrastructure, both on-site and in close proximity, and should protect and enhance it, maximising opportunities for new provision, where possible. This can be incorporated through the proposed landscaping scheme and other measures and can help deliver biodiversity net gain.

8.14. Natural England's Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide sets out the building blocks, a selection of which can be used, as appropriate, to provide BGI infrastructure. These include features such as sustainable drainage systems, green and blue roofs, green walls, rain gardens, swales, features for species and trees in hard landscapes.

8.15. In planning and designing BGI regard should be had to appropriate and applicable evidence and strategies to ensure it responds to the local character and to locally identified need e.g. landscape character assessments, conservation area appraisals, open space studies, AONB Management Plans and local biodiversity priorities.

8.16. For example, when including features for species regard should be had to the Kent Biodiversity Strategy 2020, or its successor. This identifies and focusses on a number of priority habitats and species. One of these is the swift which has experienced a decline in breeding numbers of 57% between 1995-2016. This is considered to be caused, in part, by the loss of their nesting sites, which are found under eaves or in gaps in stones or brickwork but which are often blocked. To address this the Kent Biodiversity Strategy sets a target of every new house containing one swift-box or nest brick.

Policy BW1

Safeguarding Places for Wildlife and Nature

Designated Sites

Designated sites of importance for biodiversity will be protected in line with the hierarchy set down in the NPPF.

Locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity will be protected from development which would result in an adverse effect, directly or indirectly, to its nature or geological conservation interest.

Locally designated sites include:

- Local Wildlife Sites;
- Nature Reserves including Local Nature Reserves, Roadside Nature Reserves and Kent Wildlife Trust Reserve.

The enhancement of biodiversity through the creation, enhancement, extension and management of sites locally will be supported.

Blue-Green Infrastructure

The District's Blue Green Infrastructure (BGI) network will be protected. Proposals which maintain, restore and enhance the Blue Green Infrastructure network will be supported.

Proposals for major development will be expected to identify, as a baseline, existing Blue Green Infrastructure features and its condition, on-site, off-site and links with the BGI network.

Blue green infrastructure features include, but are not limited to:

- Open space
- Green roofs and walls
- Trees, hedges and hedgerows, including street trees
- Sustainable drainage systems
- Ponds, ditches and watercourses
- Features for species e.g. bird boxes or nests

Development proposals on sites containing existing Blue Green Infrastructure will be expected to protect, retain and enhance existing blue and green infrastructure features. All development proposals are expected to maximise opportunities for the provision of new or additional BGI.

Development proposals will be supported where the BGI has been fully considered, has taken account of the existing network, is suitable for the location, addressing local need, and includes new connections to the existing network, where possible and has had regard to and responded to appropriate and applicable strategies and evidence.

Any BGI should be multi-functional and supporting documentation should set out what functions it provides.

Proposals will be expected to include details demonstrating how it will be maintained and managed, including how it will be funded, for the life of the development.

Schemes and projects which would enhance the blue green infrastructure network will be supported.

Partnership Working in the Natural Environment

8.17. Projects which provide improvements to the natural environment, strengthen the blue green infrastructure network, increase and improve public access, understanding and enjoyment, promote climate resilience and provide health benefits will be supported by the Council. This includes projects at both the landscape scale, such as the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme and the Sevenoaks Greensands Commons Project, and at the local scale, such as woodland management projects, community led habitat management, health walks and wildlife/nature experiences, especially those which encourage children and young people to engage with the natural environment.

We will continue to work with partners to develop projects. Partners such as:

- The North West Kent Countryside Partnership;
- Kent Wildlife Trust
- Kent Downs and High Weald AONB units;

8.18. There are emerging proposals around the Bough Beech reservoir and Bore Place sites (see figure 8.2), for potentially opening up Bough Beech reservoir to be more of a community resource. We will continue to work closely with both Bore Place and SES Water to enhance the linked sites for people and nature.

8.19 This exciting project will play a part in delivering health and wellbeing (both physical and mental) over the plan period which is a central theme in this Plan. Nature and biodiversity and resilient employment are also local priorities, and this is likely to align well with many of the economic and environmental policies of the Council. Further information on this important site, which represents a significant opportunity for the District, will be included in subsequent versions of the Plan as it progresses towards adoption.

Ashdown Forest

8.20. 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 (its Northern Atlantic wet heaths and European dry heaths) and the presence of Great Crested Newts. These European designations cover around 3,000ha. Ashdown Forest is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

8.21. The District's nearest settlement to Ashdown Forest is Edenbridge, which is approximately 12km from the site. However, whilst Ashdown Forest lies entirely within Wealden district, development in surrounding authority areas is still capable of having an impact as a result of:

- recreational pressure arising from population growth, which can affect the SPA;
- increases in vehicle emissions arising from vehicles using roads that run through and adjacent to the forest, which can affect the SAC.

8.22. Accordingly, our Local Plan will be tested through a 'Habitat Regulations Assessment' (HRA) as to whether there are any adverse effects on the integrity of the European sites, as a result of development provided by the Plan, alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

8.23. Mitigation measures developed to address recreational impacts upon Ashdown Forest comprise Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). Visitor surveys undertaken in 2009 and 2016 have confirmed that the greatest impact arises from within a 7km zone of the forest, commonly referred to as the 'zone of influence'. This zone just reaches into the District (a very small area around Fordcombe and Cowden as shown in figure 8.3), but currently there is no development proposed in these areas as it is entirely washed over by the Green Belt. A 2021 visitors' survey found that less than 2% of visitors to the Forest are from within Sevenoaks District.

8.24. However, despite having only a very small portion of our District falling within this zone and a small percentage of visitors coming from Sevenoaks, we are members of the Ashdown Forest Officer Working Group (SAMMS Partnership) and have signed a Recreational Pressure Statement of Common Ground with 5 other local authorities and Natural England to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to joint-working on this important issue. We will continue to work proactively with Natural England, neighbouring authorities and any other relevant bodies to understand and address the impact of the Local Plan on the Ashdown Forest.

8.25. With respect to mitigation, to date, neighbouring authorities have sought modest developer contributions towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring from new development, within the 7km zone of influence. Only a small area of Sevenoaks falls within the 7km zone and no development is proposed in it through the Local Plan, however due to the possibility of windfall development, Natural England has recommended that SAMMs contributions are sought for any windfall development which may come forward within the 7km zone. 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

8.26. Mitigation of recreational pressure also includes Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace but as there 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.

8.27. With regards to emissions, we will be seeking to understand the impact of our emerging Local Plan alone and in combination with other plans and whether or not it would have an adverse impact upon the integrity of the Ashdown Forest SAC. We are a member of the Ashdown Forest Working Group which is focussing on air quality impacts on the SAC and we are signatories of the Statement of Common Ground which seeks to address the strategic cross boundary issue of air quality impacts. This has included securing air quality monitoring and agreeing to a strategic, bespoke transport model. We will continue to work with the Ashdown Forest Working Group to improve understanding and to support strategic work on air quality issues for Ashdown Forest.

Policy AF1 Ashdown Forest

All residential development resulting in a net increase in dwellings within the 7km zone of influence (see map) will be required to address visitor impact on Ashdown Forest, in line with the SAMM strategy, by means of a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMMs) contribution. and through provision of or contributions towards Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace.

If any major development is adjacent or close to the zone, applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine any additional mitigation requirements.

Any proposals considered likely to have a significant adverse effect on the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) will not normally be permitted.

Biodiversity in Development

8.28. Biodiversity is found throughout the rural and urban areas of the District. As well as being important in its own right, the natural environment provides a range of services e.g. clean air, it can help provide natural solutions to the impact of climate change, including mitigation and adaptation measures, and it provides health and wellbeing benefits. The wellbeing of our residents is at the heart of everything we do and a healthy and protected environment is key to wellbeing; as such we are seeking to protect our high-quality natural environment, including its biodiversity.

8.29. However, it is under pressure. The UK-wide State of Nature 2019 report highlights that the abundance and distribution of biodiversity has declined since 1970 and that it has continued to decline. England has experienced a 35% national decline in the abundance of species since 1970s, with 13% of England's species threatened with extinction. A number of pressures have been identified, amongst which is urbanisation, leading to direct habitat loss and fragmentation. The Government's 25 year Environment Plan (2018) highlighted the scale of human impact including human-induced extinction and set out a number of actions, including embedding an 'environmental net gain' principle for development in light of the Government's housebuilding ambitions and to initially mainstream the use of biodiversity net gain (BNG). A mandatory BNG requirement was subsequently included in the Environment Act 2021, which strengthens the current NPPF (2023) requirement at paragraphs 174 and 179. The Environment Act received Royal Assent on 9 November 2021, following which there has been a two-year implementation period.

8.30. Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach which aims to leave biodiversity in a measurably better state than before. The Government has legislated for a 10% increase in biodiversity, measured using a statutory biodiversity metric, on most development but will be exempting some types and scales of development through secondary legislation e.g. householder applications.

8.31. At the time of writing, regulations and guidance remain outstanding and it is not yet mandatory. However, the Government has indicated that it will become mandatory for major development (schemes of 10 homes and over) as of January 2024 with it becoming mandatory for small sites (1-9 dwellings on sites of less than 1 hectare) in April 2024.

8.32. 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 and in September 2020 set out its justification. This highlights the ecological crisis being faced at a national level but more specifically for Kent it highlights its rich and varied biodiversity resource, including globally rare habitats and habitat which supports over 3,400 rare and threatened species, with some only found in Kent. Moreover it highlights specific pressures on Kent, due to its strategic location and from significant and unprecedented levels of growth that has led to a highly fragmented landscape. Major losses in Kent's wildlife were identified in The State of Kent's Wildlife 2011 report, with a number of species becoming extinct or declining over the preceding 100 years. The headlines in the more recent State of Nature in Kent 2021 report, note that of the 3,684 species that have had their threat status assessed, 10% are classified as threatened with extinction.

8.33. Furthermore, the justification for a 20% BNG target in Kent is supported by a Kent wide viability study. A 0% target for Sevenoaks District is still under consideration, and will be tested in the forthcoming viability assessment.

8.34. The Government has sought to incentivise on-site or local off-site provision through the biodiversity metric. Its spatial risk multiplier penalises proposals where off-site habitat is located at a distance from the site, with the score being lower where it is both outside of the local planning authority's (LPA) administrative area and outside of the national character area (NCA) the planning application site sits within. It gets progressively lower scoring for being in neighbouring LPA or NCA areas, to the lowest where it is beyond these. However, even with the highest scoring, this could effectively result in the compensation/off-site habitat being outside of Sevenoaks District, provided it sits within the wider NCA. Therefore where it is not possible to deliver all or any of it on-site, off-site where it is local (within Sevenoaks District) should be prioritised. A Kent wide register is being developed which will help facilitate the market in biodiversity units.

8.35. A key tool in targeting off-site BNG will be the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS); a spatial strategy setting out priorities for nature recovery. This will map the most valuable existing areas for nature, as well as specific proposals for creating or improving habitat in locations where they would contribute to achieving those priorities. They are likely to be important in determining the 'strategic significance' score within the biodiversity metric, giving a higher value to habitats located in preferred locations for biodiversity.

8.36. The responsible authority (Kent County Council), which will lead on the preparation of the LNRS for Kent, was announced in August 2023 and as such work on the LNRS, which is likely to take 12 to 18 months, is at an early stage of development. Until the LNRS is published, where off-site BNG is required, it should be directed to areas of noted conservation value and/or existing known areas where there are the greatest opportunities for habitat enhancement, restoration and recreation within the District e.g. Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and the Darent Valley Landscape Recovery Project (see case study). Interim Strategic Significance Guidance has been developed to provide guidance until the LNRS has been published, at which point the LNRS will supersede the interim guidance.

8.37. Guidance will be prepared to set out the detailed requirements for biodiversity net gain, including both on-site and off-site net gain provision.

Case Study: Darent Valley Landscape Recovery

8.38. A partnership of landowners in the North Downs working with Kent Wildlife Trust, South East Rivers Trust and others to restore northwest Kent's landscape and wildlife within the river Darent catchment. It is seeking to create and enhance c1,500 ha of biodiverse habitats and restore the natural function of the river Darent, with the aim of creating a large network of high-quality habitats. It is expecting to generate a significant uplift in biodiversity, with potential to provide a large number of biodiversity units and to contribute towards carbon sequestration, from a mixture of woodland, grassland, heathland and freshwater habitats, including both enhancement of existing habitats and creation of high-quality semi-natural habitats from agricultural land. Its initial development phase is being funded by Landscape Recovery, one of the Government's Environment Land Management Schemes (ELMS), with habitat restoration works ready to begin in 2024.

Policy BW2

Biodiversity in New Development

All proposals for new development (qualifying development), which are not exempted through regulations, must provide 20% biodiversity net gain.

Proposals must:

- Demonstrate the pre-development biodiversity value of the site and the post-development biodiversity value of the proposal and it must be measured using the latest version of the statutory biodiversity metric.
- Demonstrate that the mitigation hierarchy (avoid, mitigate, compensate) as set out in the NPPF has been strictly applied.
- Provide net gain on or adjacent to the application site, wherever possible.
- Where off-site provision is proposed, clearly demonstrate and justify why it is not possible to provide all or even some of the biodiversity net gain on or adjacent to the application site.
- Provide off-site biodiversity net gain units locally within Sevenoaks District and they should be delivered within or provide connections between areas of noted conservation value such as designated sites, priority habitats, Local Wildlife Sites, Nature Reserves and irreplaceable habitats. Regard should be had to the:
 - Interim Strategic Significance guidance (until the LNRS for Kent is published)
 - Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent (once published)
- Use biodiversity credits from Natural England, or successors, as a last resort and it should be demonstrated why on-site and/or off-site biodiversity units cannot be secured.

A management and monitoring plan must be submitted and it must be demonstrated that the proposed creation, enhancement or restoration of habitat can be secured for a minimum of 30 years. An appropriate funding mechanism will need to be secured to include funding for the Council to cover the costs of long-term monitoring, where applicable.

Proposals for new development which are exempt under the regulations should seek to minimise their impact on biodiversity. Opportunities for enhancement will be sought and achievement of a measurable net gain in biodiversity encouraged.

Chapter 9 – Infrastructure and Community

Infrastructure underpins the successful operation and connectivity of a place. The existing and future provision of infrastructure is needed in the right place, at the right time, to support the District's growth and development. It is fundamental that places and communities are well connected with each other to access day-to-day services and facilities for future generations.

**Figure 9.1: Sevenoaks District Infrastructure Provisions*

Infrastructure and Community 09

Strategic Objectives

OB19: Co-ordinate the delivery of necessary infrastructure to support planned growth.

This Plan supports the delivery of necessary infrastructure to meet the needs arising from new development. The timely provision of suitable and appropriate infrastructure to support growth, alongside the maintenance of existing infrastructure, is crucial to the wellbeing of residents, those who visit, provide services, invest and work in the District.

9.1. In order to successfully deliver the sustainable and balanced growth identified in this Local Plan, significant investment in infrastructure is required to meet the needs of our communities. Suitable provision can include new facilities and services or the upgrading of existing infrastructure. It is fundamental that places and communities are well connected with each other to access day-to-day services and facilities for future generations.

9.2. The definition of infrastructure is wide and includes a range of services and facilities provided by both public and private bodies. This includes:

- **Transport infrastructure:** Local and strategic, junctions, sustainable transport, parking;
- **Green and blue infrastructure:** Public open space, play space, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), Public Rights of Way (PRoW), protected landscapes;
- **Social infrastructure:** Education, health, sports and leisure facilities, emergency services, libraries and community centres; and
- **Utilities and hard infrastructure:** Electricity, gas, water, sewerage, waste, telecommunications and broadband, flood defences.

9.3. This chapter sets out how the Council will ensure that the infrastructure required to support the proposed growth as identified in the Local Plan will be delivered, and should be read in parallel with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The IDP sets out the specific infrastructure projects identified, the organisation responsible for delivering each item of infrastructure, the period over which the relevant investment will be required, and the cost of each item and how it is to be funded. This will ensure that new development is served by the necessary infrastructure and delivered in a timely manner. It is a live document that has been developed in collaboration with the infrastructure providers and will be updated periodically to ensure that it reflects the most up to date infrastructure requirements.

Infrastructure Delivery

9.4. The retention and improvement of existing infrastructure, and the timely provision of new infrastructure to meet the needs of development, is a key objective of this Local Plan.

9.5. The extent to which current infrastructure needs are met is variable across the District. Existing settlements are generally better served by public transport and medical and community facilities, although many of these services are operating close to capacity. The rural areas can be more isolated with less access to, and provision of, infrastructure.

9.6. In order to deliver the sustainable and balanced growth identified in this Plan, significant investment in infrastructure is required to meet the needs of our communities. The Council has developed an understanding of the infrastructure needed to support growth through the production of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), drafted with input from our key infrastructure providers. The IDP covers a wide range of infrastructure and its priorities will inform the Council's annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS). This document reports on the Council's infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure to be prioritised for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding in the next financial year.

9.7. Successful infrastructure delivery is dependent on partnership working with infrastructure providers, developers and neighbouring authorities, to ensure the services and facilities needed to support development are delivered in a timely manner. The Council will usually expect this to be before any development is operational or occupied, and in some cases this may involve the suitable phasing of development in order to ensure that essential infrastructure is in place when needed.

9.8. The Council currently operates two mechanisms to collect financial contributions from developers towards infrastructure provision in the District. The provision of, or funding towards, site specific infrastructure is sought through the use of Section 106 agreements, and help to mitigate the impact of development.

9.9. In addition, Sevenoaks District Council is also a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging authority. This means that in addition to site specific infrastructure secured through Section 106 agreements, developers also pay a standard charge per square metre of qualifying new development, to help pay for wider infrastructure improvements across the District. The Council is responsible for prioritising the spend of CIL. The current CIL Charging Schedule was adopted in 2014 and this will be reviewed in parallel with the timetable for the production of this Local Plan.

Policy IN1

Infrastructure Delivery

1. All new development must be served and supported by appropriate on and off-site infrastructure and services as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
2. Development proposals will be required to take into account the capacity of existing infrastructure and to provide or contribute to the provision of infrastructure made necessary by the development, or where the development would result in a need for additional or improved infrastructure. This also includes retaining land for essential educational, community, health, movement, flood defence and green and blue infrastructure.
3. If the full infrastructure contribution cannot be delivered in order to mitigate the impact of development, the development will only be permitted where:
 - a. The applicant has submitted a viability appraisal that has been produced in accordance with national guidance and has been independently verified by the Council;
 - b. The value of the planning obligations has been maximised having regard to likely viability;
 - c. Where appropriate, a clawback mechanism has been incorporated into a legal agreement to ensure that additional contributions are required if final development viability is better than anticipated in the viability assessment; and
 - d. Following a viability assessment process the benefits of the development outweigh the lack of full mitigation for its impacts, having regard to other material considerations.

Where viability constraints can be demonstrated by evidence, the Council may consider prioritising contributions in line with the IDP and phasing developer contributions appropriately.

The Council will work with partners including infrastructure and service providers and stakeholders, including neighbouring authorities, to ensure that the necessary physical, social and environmental infrastructure is provided to support development and help to ensure a high quality of life for residents and communities of all ages.

STRATEGIC POLICY

Open Space

9.10. Open spaces are spaces of value for sport, recreation and visual amenity. They include sports pitches, open areas within development, linear corridors and country parks and are not just restricted to publically accessible land. They can include areas of woodland and scrubland as well as formal parks and gardens and allotments. Open spaces are an important part of the landscape, local character and the setting of built development. They can provide health, wellbeing and social benefits acting as locations for community and social events. Open spaces

can also provide the "green lungs" for settlements and can contribute to the reduction in atmospheric carbon dioxide and improved air quality particularly in areas including trees, woodland and hedges.

9.11. The public rights of way (PRoW) network is extensive across the District and is well used. Projects to improve the network through management, maintenance, opportunities to make the network more disability friendly and providing better access to the network will be supported. Proposals for new recreational cycling routes will also be supported.

9.12. The Open Space, Sport and Leisure Study (2017) provides the key evidence for this policy. The Study assessed both the quantity and quality of the existing open spaces within the District under the following categories:

1. Amenity greenspace;
2. Natural and semi-natural greenspace;
3. Provision for children and young people;
4. Outdoor sports facilities;
5. Allotments and community gardens;
6. Green corridors; and
7. Cemeteries and churchyards.

9.13. The Study found that although the District has an adequate supply of most types of open space, the quality of the spaces could be improved. We will therefore work with partners to identify opportunities to redevelop areas that are currently not fit for purpose or where improvements can be made.

9.14. The open spaces identified through the Study will be protected against inappropriate development, wherever possible. These spaces can be viewed on the interactive map.

Policy OS1

Open Space and Recreation

1. The District's designated open spaces, as shown on the interactive map, will be retained for their current use and type of open space unless it can be demonstrated that the tests set out in national policy have been met.
2. All other open spaces of value to the local community, either through use or contribution to local character, will also be retained. It is expected that Local Green Spaces, as defined in national policy, will be designated through the Neighbourhood Plan process.
3. Development proposals will be required to incorporate good quality open space. Where an adequate quantity of open space exists in the local area, consideration may be given to improving the quality of the existing open space to benefit new and existing residents. All new or improved open space must include arrangements for long term maintenance and management.

Children and Young People’s Play Space

9.15. Play space for children and young people is a necessity in the creation of a new community.

9.16. The Open Space, Sport and Leisure Study (2017) provides the key evidence for this policy. It identifies an existing undersupply of children and young people's play areas across the District. Recommended standards for the type and amount of play space that should be provided in new developments, prepared by Fields in Trust, provides a clear benchmark for provision. The Council has adopted these standards as a minimum. Additionally, informal play spaces in developments can provide important spaces for children to be active.

Policy OS2

Children and Young People’s Play Space

1. All new housing developments, but excluding proposals for older persons accommodation, must include provision for children and young people’s play space. Proposals will be expected to apply, as a minimum, the below Fields in Trust requirements for the inclusion of equipped play space, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this is not feasible or viable, in which case a lower level of provision can be provided as agreed with the Council.

Fields in Trust Children and Play Space Standards			
Size of Development	Local Area for Play (LAP)	Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)
5-10 dwellings	?	N/A	N/A
11-200 dwellings	?	?	N/A
201-500 dwellings	?	?	Considered
500+ dwellings	?	?	?

2. All new children and young people’s play space must be of high quality, include multiple pieces of attractive and engaging equipment including natural play, be accessible and inclusive to all users including those with special educational needs and disabilities, and appropriate to the location and the local community it serves to enable effective use.
3. In cases where it can be demonstrated that it better meets local need, provision may be secured through the improvement and expansion of existing facilities within the local area, rather than new provision. This will be considered on a case by case basis for minor developments only.

Education

9.17. The District's education facilities are vital to the continuing success of our residents and communities. Educational facilities are fundamental to support children and young people gain the necessary work and life skills and improve life opportunities.

9.18. We are in regular contact with Kent County Council as the education authority. There are 34 state primary schools in the District but only three secondary schools – Knole Academy and Trinity in Sevenoaks, and Orchards Academy in Swanley (and two grammar satellite premises). Planning permission has recently been granted to rebuild Orchards Academy in Swanley, to upgrade the current outdated buildings to provide new modern facilities. Despite this, Kent County Council has advised that the existing three secondary schools are at capacity with no scope to expand.

9.19. A need has been identified for a new secondary school in the central/northern part of the District to be delivered within the plan period. Land for this is likely to be identified in conjunction with a strategic development site as the preparation of the Local Plan progresses. There is safeguarded land for a secondary school within Edenbridge up until 2040, subject to a legal agreement and sufficient demand being demonstrated in the local area.

9.20. There is also need for additional Special Educational Needs provision in the North of the District. Kent County Council has recently secured funding to deliver a new special free school in Swanley, with 250 places for children with profound, severe and complex needs.

Policy ED1

Education

Provision will be made for sufficient school places in the form of existing, expanded or new primary and secondary schools, together with special educational needs, early years and adult education facilities. All relevant development will be expected to contribute to these through developer contributions (via S106 or CIL) and/or the setting aside of land. We will continually work in conjunction with Kent County Council to determine any new provision, particularly in relation to the delivery of new secondary school places.

Sports and Leisure Facilities

9.21. High quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation make a valuable contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities. It is therefore important to safeguard existing sports and recreational buildings and land from development, unless certain policy tests can be met.

9.22. The Open Space, Sport and Leisure Study (2017) assessed the level of open space, sport and leisure provision within the District. The Study found that the District is generally well served by leisure provision with sufficient indoor sports facilities, affording residents a range of activities including badminton, swimming and fitness suites. Much of this provision is within local authority owned formal sports centres, informal village halls or within educational establishments. However, the Study did identify a shortage of formal community use agreements for educational establishments.

9.23. The Playing Pitch Strategy (2018) assessed the quality and quantity of playing pitches across the District. It recommends all pitches should be retained, quality improved and provision for new facilities sought and supported. The Strategy projected the impact of the level of demand in relation to the available facilities by 2035. The demand identified in the Study is set out below.

Playing Pitch Strategy (2018) - Sports Demand	
Sport	Demand Impact and Location
Football	<p>The level of football provision demand is projected to grow by over 25% over the study period, with the greatest amount of growth attributed to Sevenoaks and Surrounds sub-area.</p> <p>The requirement for youth and mini pitches is likely to increase significantly. This growth is concentrated, but not limited to, the Sevenoaks and Surrounds and Upper Darent Corridor sub-areas.</p>
Cricket	<p>The future demand for cricket is projected to increase across the District, with an additional 104 matches to be played in 2035, taking the total demand for cricket pitches beyond 1,000 match equivalents for the season.</p> <p>The largest growth for cricket in the District is in Darent Valley sub-area which is projected to have an additional 42 matches played in 2035.</p>
Rugby	<p>The future demand for rugby is projected to increase across the District. This projected growth will further exacerbate the shortage of rugby pitch provision unless the issues with pitch quality are addressed.</p> <p>The maintenance regime for sites across Sevenoaks is not adequate to ensure that pitches are fit for purpose and able to withstand the high levels of demand for rugby, especially at the New Ash Green Sports Pavilion.</p> <p>There is projected growth of supply in the Sevenoaks and Surrounds subarea. There are the beginnings of plans to bring a WR22 AGP provision (capable of being used for contact rugby) in the area but these are at the very early stages. This should be encouraged as it appears to be the only feasible method of addressing the shortage of capacity for Sevenoaks and Surrounds.</p>
Hockey	<p>Projected growth indicates that unless the current situation changes, there is going to be a significant under supply of pitches particularly in Sevenoaks and Surrounds.</p>
Tennis	<p>To meet future demand of non-member play, it is imperative to invest in community accessible tennis courts particularly in the major population centres and growing urban areas within the District.</p>

9.24. We have recently begun work on a new Playing Pitch, Outdoor Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy, which will update the key evidence on sports and leisure facilities to a base date of 2023. The Study will take account of recent changes to White Oak Leisure Centre in Swanley and other facilities across the District. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by early 2024, at which point the policy will be updated to take account of the latest assessment of quantity and quality of sports and leisure facilities within the District.

9.25. Looking forward to 2040, the Council has an ambition to create a world class cluster of sporting facilities in the north of the District. Building on the success of Brands Hatch and the London Golf Club, planning permission has recently been granted for Millwall Football Club to build state of the art training facilities in this location. These high quality sporting facilities that are easily accessible cumulatively create a diverse range of local employment opportunities and attract visitors to the area, as well as providing world class and competition standard sporting facilities outside of London. There is significant potential to develop this ambition and for the area to grow into a wider sporting corridor.

Policy SL1

Sports and Leisure Facilities

The Council recognises the important role that high quality sporting facilities play in the District's economy and in attracting visitors to the District.

1. To help achieve the Council's ambition to create a world class cluster of sporting facilities in the north of the District, proposals for new large scale sporting facilities will be supported, where:
 - a. They meet an identified need;
 - b. They are sustainably located with good transport links and access;
 - c. They create new local employment and skills opportunities and contribute to the local economy;
 - d. They make a valuable contribution to the health and wellbeing of the local community; and
 - e. They are in accordance with other relevant Local Plan policies.
2. The existing sport and leisure provision within the District will be retained, unless it can be demonstrated that the tests set out in national policy have been met. Any re-provision of sport and leisure facilities must take account of local needs and quality improvements. These include:
 - a. All indoor sports facilities including swimming pools;
 - b. All sports pitches;
 - c. Golf courses;
 - d. Multi-use games areas;
 - e. Outdoor gyms; and
 - f. Playing fields and sites on educational establishments.
3. Any redevelopment of sports and leisure provision must prioritise other sport and leisure uses in the first instance, followed by other non-residential employment generating uses before a residential use.
4. Proposals to improve the quality of the District's existing sport and leisure provision including playing pitches, indoor sports provision, as well as informal sports areas to provide facilities and access for all, will be supported. New playing pitches must be appropriately surfaced and capable of competition use unless not technically feasible. Pitch sizes should be informed by the updated Playing Pitch Strategy and constructed to FA recommended pitch size guidance.
5. Proposals to increase the quantity of 'pay and play' provision and/or community access will be supported.
6. New educational establishments must include facilities for community use and be subject to formal community use agreements.
7. Development to support open space, sport or leisure facilities will be supported where it is ancillary to the overall use of the site and is in accordance with other relevant Local Plan policies.

Community Facilities and Services

9.26. Community facilities and services provide for the health and wellbeing, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community. The provision of local community facilities such as post offices, banks, public houses, schools (and redundant school buildings), surgeries, churches, community facilities and public transport, help to build sustainable communities by supporting the local economy and/or providing day-to-day facilities minimising the need to drive.

9.27. This Local Plan seeks to retain local services and facilities in appropriate locations, to maintain the sustainability of our towns, local and neighbourhood centres, and ensures that communities continue to maintain access to day-to-day services and facilities. The policy should be applied to retail units considered to be addressing a need outside of established town and neighbourhood centres.

9.28. The Community Right to Bid and Assets of Community Value, which were introduced in the Localism Act 2011, give communities powers to help them buy local facilities threatened with closure, which might offer communities an alternative option to retain community facilities.

Policy COM1

Retention of Community Uses

1. Proposals that would result in the loss of local services and facilities that serve a local need will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that:
 - a. Equivalent replacement facilities that are equally accessible to the population they serve are provided;
 - b. The continued operation of the service or facility is no longer needed or financially viable, or
 - c. There are clear operational reasons for closing/moving the service or facility and the wider importance of the service or facility to the community has been taken into account.
2. Where school and community buildings become vacant or redundant and there is no requirement for an alternative educational use or the existing community use, priority will be given to reusing the buildings or site to address an identified local need for community facilities.
3. Proposals for the change of use, or redevelopment for alternative non-community uses, will only be considered if it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that there is no identified community need that can be facilitated on the site, or that the provision of community facilities that meet the identified need are incorporated into a wider mixed use scheme.
4. Proposals for new local services and facilities will be supported subject to design and location, where a need has been identified and is in accordance with other relevant Local Plan policies.

Utilities and Digital Infrastructure

9.27. The delivery of essential utilities to support new development is a key consideration when planning for future growth. Utilities infrastructure includes water, waste water and sewage treatment, solid waste, gas, electricity and telecommunications.

9.28. The impact of climate change is evident in hotter drier summers and less predictable rainfall. This and population growth contribute to water stress and shortages. This issue is particularly important as the District falls within an area of serious water stress. There is a pressing need to use water more sustainably and manage its demand.

9.29. To ensure new development does not have a negative impact on the water supply and existing households are not negatively affected, we will continue to work and engage with stakeholders to address these issues.

9.30. We will continue to work with infrastructure providers to manage the removal of foul water throughout the District. Thames Water have recently consulted on their draft Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan. The Long Reach Catchment Plan proposes a new sewerage treatment works (STW) site in Sevenoaks District to help manage future pressures on the existing STW. This needs further investigation and we will engage with Thames Water and Kent County Council as this develops.

9.31. High quality digital infrastructure is crucial to the efficient running of the District's economy, particularly in the rural areas, and also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services. Access to high quality digital infrastructure can also facilitate social inclusion, enabling everyone (providing they have the necessary skills and equipment) to take up employment, education and social opportunities, as well as access a wide range of services that are increasingly provided online.

Policy UD1

Utilities and Digital Infrastructure

1. Proposals will be required to demonstrate that there will be sufficient capacity within the utilities infrastructure to meet the needs of the development. Applicants will be expected to engage with the utilities providers to ensure that this is the case, and may be required to undertake assessments to demonstrate sufficient capacity.
2. The Council will need to be satisfied that applicants and utilities providers have worked together to ensure the appropriate provision of required utilities infrastructure at the right time.
3. Large scale developments may need to be phased to ensure that there is sufficient capacity, and that any required upgrades can take place at the right time.
4. Through the use of planning conditions, developers will be required to ensure any necessary water or waste water upgrades are in place before the occupation of a development in order to avoid adverse impacts such as sewer flooding, pollution or issues of low/no water pressure.
5. The expansion and improvement of digital infrastructure is supported. Development proposals will be expected to provide access to superfast broadband, as a minimum, and full fibre connections where available. This will include provision for multiple infrastructure providers to access the site.
6. In locations where superfast broadband and full fibre connectivity are not currently available:
 - a. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they have held discussions with a range of providers to upgrade infrastructure to deliver superfast broadband or, where possible, full fibre connections;
 - b. Where one or more providers have agreed to provide superfast broadband connectivity or full fibre, the development should be designed to connect to this service and make it available to occupiers; and
 - c. Where no agreement can be reached to provide superfast broadband or full fibre connectivity at the present time, the development will be expected to incorporate additional dedicated telecommunications ducting to enable the provision of superfast broadband or full fibre connectivity in future.

Chapter 10 - Transport 10

Transport connects people, goods and services between places. It is a necessity to access employment, housing, leisure, education and other elements of daily life. Transport is an integral consideration for the Local Plan's aspirations for Sevenoaks District to be a place to live, work and thrive.

*Figure 10.1 Sevenoaks District Transport Features

Strategic Objectives
OB17: Work with stakeholders to address barriers that prevent residents from making sustainable transport choices.
OB18: Support equal access to public transport services for all residents.

Residents and visitors need to travel to work, shops, schools and other services across the District. This Plan supports the delivery of sustainable transport choices helping all people to move conveniently and safely.

10.1. Sevenoaks District has good access to London and other parts of Kent by rail and is a popular place to visit. There is a high level of car ownership but limited public transport links to employment, education and tourism destinations.

10.2. The rural nature of the District can isolate residents contributing to loneliness and making it difficult for some people to access services. The rural areas lack public transport increasing reliance on private vehicles. This creates barriers to social connections and services for older, younger and low-income people.

Figure 10.2: Sevenoaks District Congestion Hot Spots

Sustainable Movement Network

10.3. The District has higher than average car ownership in the majority of the wards indicating reliance on private vehicles. The land use patterns and the rural nature of the District encourages use of private vehicles as the primary mode of transport, and the distances involved and gradients do not allow for a high use of non-motorised transport modes. However, travel also produces issues such as congestion, air pollution and noise and can have negative health implications.

10.4. The Initial Baseline Transport Assessment 2022 determines the baseline transport data identifying any challenges and opportunities. It has identified congestion hot spots shown on Figure 10.2 above, and these centre on M25 junction 3, Swanley Town Centre, Sevenoaks Town Centre, the A25 and the Edenbridge bypass. The second stage Transport Assessment is being carried out to determine the transport implications of the proposed site allocations of this draft Local Plan. Policies will be updated to reflect this for the Regulation 19 consultation.

10.5. The Council's Movement Strategy explains our key priorities for sustainable movement and transport within the District. This includes reducing the need to travel, promoting active travel, and improvements to the electric charging point networks and public transport services. It is noted that ultra low emission vehicles have a part to play in reducing carbon emissions, but we cannot rely on this, or any measure, on its own. As such, an integrated approach to a sustainable movement network is suggested to address it from various angles. To facilitate a sustainable movement network across the District, a balance between society's desire for convenient, private transport modes and their environmental impact needs to be established. We cannot deliver a sustainable movement network alone and will continue to work with infrastructure providers to progress this.

Policy T1

Sustainable Movement Network

Partnership working is integral to delivering sustainable movement across the District. We will continue to work in partnership with stakeholders including but not limited to Kent County Council, National Highways, transport providers and developers to ensure growth is supported by the necessary transport provisions and a range of movement is available. Through partnership working we will:

- Promote and support improvements to the transport network which increase safety, improve air quality and encourage use of sustainable modes of transport;
- Support the improvement of public transport service and provisions for journeys around and out of the District;
- Engage with bordering local authorities to address improvements needed for cross boundary trips;
- Encourage partnership working between strategic site developers where sites are located close together to ensure successful delivery of transport provision;
- Create and strengthen interchanges between different transport modes (such as rail, bus, walking, cycling) to improve access and support first and last mile journeys by active travel;

- Where existing facilities and services are in place, locate new development near public transport infrastructure, services and facilities to enhance sustainable places;
- Amplify Sevenoaks Railway Station's potential by improving the station's environment, including public realm, and accessibility by active travel modes and making best use of the surrounding land to create a transport hub and strengthen the location's sustainability;
- Support the incorporation, enhancement and creation of walking, wheeling and cycling routes and provisions within a new development that is connected to the wider transport network;
- Place accessible, secure and weatherproof cycling parking facilities at transport interchanges, employment and retail areas;
- Support the implementation of identified routes in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans;
- Enhance the existing cycling and walking routes, including Public Rights of Way (PRoW) routes;
- Integrate new pedestrian and cycle routes with the PRoW and wider travel network;
- Create new routes to fill existing gaps thereby enhancing PRoW network connectivity;
- Support the improvement of the public electric vehicle-charging network in accessible and strategic locations to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles.

STRATEGIC POLICY

Sustainable Movement

10.6. We aim to facilitate sustainable movement across the district for our residents to help them make healthy journeys and not be reliant on private vehicles. A range of transport choices are needed to suit resident's needs and local circumstances. We will continue to work in partnership with infrastructure providers to ensure transport needs are met.

10.7. Wherever possible, new developments will be expected to prioritise transport in the following order: walking and wheeling, cycling, public transport, shared transport (for example, car clubs), private vehicle. This is particularly applicable to the urban areas where there is scope for more active, sustainable journeys. It is acknowledged that the rural areas face more transport challenges with a greater reliance on private vehicles and there may not always be an opportunity to prioritise all of these transport modes.

10.8. There is potential to encourage modal shift for shorter journeys particularly in the District's towns. We aim to improve the infrastructure and environment to encourage people to walk, wheel and cycle as an alternative to the car where appropriate. Wheeling refers to the activity of people moving at a similar speed to walking with the assistance of wheels, for example, manual and powered wheelchairs, on pavement space. However, we also recognise the difficulty of people walking with pushchairs and other similar items and include this when referring to wheeling. We want to encourage, more attractive and safe car-free journeys, that will also help to improve local air quality, positively impact the health of our residents, and help to tackle the challenge of climate change. A Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Sevenoaks Urban Area has been completed. The plan proposes new walking, wheeling and cycling routes to encourage people to move more sustainably. The Swanley LCWIP is progressing and will be completed for the next Local Plan consultation.

10.9. To assist with tackling the challenge of climate change, we will support electric and low emission vehicles and promote the necessary infrastructure. The Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Study identifies future demand for electric vehicles within Sevenoaks district. It then utilises bespoke modelling to predict the future need for public infrastructure geographically and numerically. This study is integral to understanding the charging needs for areas where there is little off-street parking. We will expect new development to take this study into account where appropriate.

Policy T2 Sustainable Movement

New development proposals will be expected to:

- Consider the impact on the wider transport network and contribute to meeting the wider transport needs generated by the impact of development in the area. Development should consider the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Local Transport Plan, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, and, where needed and viable, contribute to the delivery of proposals;
- Wherever possible, prioritise transport in the following order in the development design: walking and wheeling, cycling, public transport, shared transport, private vehicle;
- Wherever possible, provide maximum flexibility on travel mode choices, including walking, wheeling and cycling, shared transport, and with accessibility for all potential users;

Walking, Wheeling and Cycling

- Provide an adequate amount of cycle storage that is accessible, secure and weatherproof within new development;
- Link to and improve the existing cycle and walking network within the development's vicinity, particularly connecting services and facilities;
- Take account of the proposed routes in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plans for the site's design.
- Comply with the latest government guidance for any walking, wheeling and cycling routes when new routes are constructed as a part of the development;

Other Transport Modes

- Provide shared transport schemes such as car clubs, bicycle sharing or other similar schemes on sites where feasible and viable;
- Comply with national standards on the quantum of charging points and cable routes as a starting point with greater provision where feasible;
- Include publicly accessible rapid electric vehicle charging points where possible and appropriate for non-residential development.

Vehicle Parking

10.10. Car parking standards are required to ensure new developments provide an adequate level of off-street parking to meet the needs they generate and are not detrimental to the surrounding areas. New developments will need to provide an appropriate amount of car parking spaces suitable for the location and local circumstances. Kent County Council's (KCC) current Parking Standards in KCC's Supplementary Planning Guidance 4 (SPG4), or any superseding standards, provide a starting point for new developments. Whilst rural locations are more reliant on private vehicle use and will need to have parking spaces to reflect this, there are opportunities in sustainable locations near transport hubs for some discretion on the amount of parking spaces where suitable and appropriate.

10.11. A flexible approach is required to reflect the availability of non-car alternatives and the proximity of key services, shops and jobs. The provision of car clubs on new developments can allow flexibility in car parking standards. We encourage new major developments in the District's towns to include car club spaces where feasible.

10.12. To ensure new developments provide an appropriate level of residential parking, we will work on providing custom Sevenoaks District parking levels. This will be consulted on as part of the Regulation 19 consultation.

Policy T3 Vehicle Parking

New proposals will need to demonstrate:

- Where appropriate to the location and local circumstances, compliance with the transport hierarchy set out in Policy T2- Sustainable Movement to maximise sustainable transport opportunities and reduce the need for vehicle parking;
- An appropriate level of vehicle parking taking account of the development's size, location setting, local data and circumstances and proximity to public transport infrastructure and provisions. The current KCC vehicle parking standards in Supplementary Planning Guidance 4 (SPG4) (or any subsequent replacement) provide a starting point for vehicle parking levels for residential and non-residential developments;
- Vehicle parking is conveniently located and overseen by the development;
- Sensitive screening and integration of soft landscaping improving visual amenity in parking areas;
- For residential developments with unallocated parking spaces, sufficient space provided for electric vehicle charging points;
- For non-residential developments, sufficient space within the site for the parking, unloading, loading of goods and manoeuvring of vehicles delivering and collecting goods;
- Vehicle parking is not overly dominant in the public realm;
- Bicycle parking meets minimum standards with greater provision where feasible.

Notwithstanding the above, the Council may depart from the established maxima or minima standards in order to:

- Consider specific local circumstances including the development's accessibility to public transport, shops and services, highway safety concerns and local on-street parking problems;
- Ensure the successful restoration, refurbishment and re-use of listed buildings or buildings affecting the character of a Conservation Area;
- Allow the appropriate re-use of the upper floors of buildings in town centres or above shop units;
- Consider the existing parking provision (whether on or off-site) for the building's existing use for redevelopment or change of use proposals and for the use of existing public car parks outside of normal working/trading hours by restaurants and leisure uses;
- Consider a proposal's inventive parking design justifying less than the minimum provision.

Glossary

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply:

Glossary and Abbreviations	
Affordable Housing	Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers).
Affordable rented housing	Owned by a housing association and let to eligible households in housing need (applicants have been accepted onto the Sevenoaks District Housing Register). Rents and service charges can be set at up to 80% of market rents, but tend to be capped at a lower level to ensure housing benefit can cover all eligible costs.
Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	The NPPF defines AQMAs as “Areas designated by Local Authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines”. The Environment Act 1995 requires local councils to regularly assess the air quality in their area to see if any of the key pollutants in the National Air Quality Strategy are likely to exceed the targets currently set. In locations where this is likely to happen and where the public are exposed to pollution, the Council is required to designate an “Air Quality Management Area”.
Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP)	The Allocations and Development Management Plan was adopted in 2015. It is a document that sets out the planning policies which manages development across the District, as well as setting out site allocations for housing, employment and mixed-use developments. This document sits alongside the Core Strategy and covers the plan period up to 2026. The new Local Plan will replace this document and the Core Strategy.
Ancient Woodland	An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	An area with statutory national landscape designation, the primary purpose of which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Together with National Parks, AONB represent the nation’s finest landscapes. AONB are designated by Natural England.
Article 4 Direction	Direction removing some or all permitted development rights, for example within a conservation area or curtilage of a listed building. Article 4 directions are issued by local planning authorities.
Assets of Community Value	Land or property of importance to a local community which is subject to additional protection from development under the Localism Act 2011.
Basins	Basins can be used to store and treat water. ‘Wet’ ponds/basins have a constant body of water and run-off is additional, while ‘dry’ basins/ponds are empty during periods without rainfall. Ponds can be designed to allow infiltration into the ground or to store water for a period of time before discharge.

Glossary and Abbreviations	
Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA)	Regional priority areas of opportunity for restoration and creation of Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) habitats areas of greatest of greatest potential for restoration and creation. They are areas of opportunity, not constraint. The BOAs are designated by the South East England Biodiversity Forum.
Bioretention area/ Bioattenuation	A vegetated area with gravel and sand layers below designed to channel, filter and cleanse water vertically. Water can infiltrate into the ground below or drain to a perforated pipe and be conveyed elsewhere. Bioretention systems can be integrated with tree-pits or gardens.
Bird Brick	A brick bird box which can be integrated into an external wall.
Blue Green Infrastructure	<p>Green infrastructure goes beyond traditional site-based landscaping. It requires an assessment of both natural/semi-natural features and biodiversity within the site, and furthers its links with the natural environment of its surroundings and, where appropriate, the wider character of the area. The provision of Green Infrastructure can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating “living roofs”; • Connecting with existing PROW network; • Using plants and trees which extend existing native habitats around site boundaries; and • The provision of formal and informal recreational spaces (including the provision for children and young people where appropriate). <p>Blue Infrastructure includes blue corridors, or a network of water bodies, are intimately connected with green corridors. The ‘blue’ environment can encompass natural water courses, lakes and ponds as well as man-made water bodies and manufactured drainage features</p>
Brownfield (locally defined)	For the purposes of the identification of potential land in this consultation, ‘brownfield’ has been defined in the widest sense i.e. land that has been previously developed (is no longer a green field), without considering the exclusions outlined in the NPPF. Once the Local Plan is further developed, consideration will be given as to whether the exclusions set out in the NPPF are relevant for the development of the strategy.
Brownfield land	See “Previously developed land”
Bug Hotel/ Bug Box	An insect hotel, also know as a bug hotel or insect house, is a manmade structure to provide shelter for insects.
Building for Life	Building for Life 12 (BfL 12) is the industry standard for the design of new housing developments and has been produced by the Design Council. Developments are assessed against 12 questions using a traffic light system. A well designed scheme should perform well against all 12 of the new questions – the top score being 12 Greens.
Build to Rent	A development, or block/phase within a development, of at least 50 homes but boroughs can choose to set their own threshold to reflect their housing market;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the homes to be held as build to rent under a covenant for at least 15 years; 1 Homes for Londoners, Affordable Housing and Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance 2017, The Greater London Authority: August 2017. 4 • all homes are self-contained and let separately; • operate under unified ownership and management; • offer longer tenancies (three years or more), with break clauses that allow the tenant to end the tenancy with one month's notice after six months; • provide certainty about the rent for the length of the tenancy including the basis of any increase, which should be linked to a formula; • provide on-site management, although it does not have to be on-site full-time; • operated by a provider with a complaints procedure in place and are members of a recognised ombudsman scheme; and • not charge up-front fees of any kind to tenants or prospective tenants, other than deposits and rent-in-advance
Cellular Storage	Water can be stored in tanks, gravel or plastic crates beneath the ground to provide attenuation.
Change of Use	A change in the way that land or buildings are used (see Use Classes Order). Planning permission is usually necessary in order to change from one 'use class' to another.
Climate Change	<p>A change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.</p> <p>https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/climate_change</p>
Climate change adaption	Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities. Various types of adaptation can be distinguished, including anticipatory, autonomous and planned adaption.
Climate change mitigation	<p>Involves reducing the flow of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, either by reducing sources of these gases (for example, the burning of fossil fuels for electricity, heat or transport) or enhancing the "sinks" that accumulate and store these gases (such as the oceans, forests and soil).</p> <p>https://climate.nasa.gov/solutions/adaptation-mitigation/</p>
Co-living/Co-housing	
Combined Heat and Power	Combined heat and power (CHP) is the use of a heat engine or power station to generate electricity and useful heat at the same time.
Community Infrastructure Ley (CIL)	A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in the area. A local authority is allowed to set its own rates (£. per m ²) on particular qualifying developments. Contributions raised on qualifying developments are then used for infrastructure delivery within the local authority area.

Glossary and Abbreviations

Community Right to Bid	Allows communities and parish councils to nominate buildings or land for listing by the local authority as an asset of community value. If the assets comes up for sale, the community can ‘pause’ the sale and take up to six months to find the funding required to buy the asset.
Comparison retail	Retail goods that are typically non-food (e.g. clothing, electrical goods), and bought less frequently.
Conservation Areas	Areas of special architectural or historical interest, where development should preserve and enhance their special character and qualities. These areas are designated by the Local Planning Authority under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which gives them statutory recognition and protection.
Convenience retail	Everyday essential shopping goods, which typically relate to food.
Core Strategy	The Core Strategy is a long term, strategic document which forms part of the District’s spatial strategy. The Core Strategy was adopted in February 2011 and covers the current plan period up to 2026. The new Local Plan will replace the Core Strategy and the Allocations and Development Management Plan.
Custom Build	Custom build homes are self build homes facilitated in some way by a developer. This still offers the chance to have a unique home that suits your needs, lifestyle and design preferences, but through a more hands off approach than a traditional self build.
Dead Frontage	A façade that is blank (e.g. lacking a window display, entrance and offers no life or activity to the street).
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	A ministerial department that leads on a wide range of issues, including improving and protecting the environment. They aim to grow a green economy and sustain thriving rural communities. They also support our world-leading food, farming and fishing industries.
Density	In the case of residential development, a measurement of either the number of habitable rooms per hectare or the number of dwellings per hectare.
Designated Heritage Asset	A World heritage Site, Scheduled Ancient Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.
Design Panel	A panel of independent experts and practitioners who review the design of schemes put forward to the panel. They provide advice and comments in regard to the design of the scheme and suggest improvements where necessary.
Design South East	Design South East is a regional trust which provides impartial design advice and assistance to support Local Authorities, developers and communities. It is an non profit and independent organisation.

Glossary and Abbreviations

Development Plan Document (DPD)	<p>The documents that a local planning authority must prepare (to make up its Local Plan) and which have to be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination. It should contain the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A spatial strategy for the District; • Site specific allocations of land and development management policies; and • Policies map (with insets, where necessary)
District Heating	<p>A heating system in which centrally generated heat is distributed via ducts and pipes to multiple buildings or locations.</p>
Draft Revised NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework)	<p>The draft revised National Planning Policy Framework incorporates policy proposals previously consulted on in the Housing White Paper and the Planning for the right homes in the right places consultation – the government responses to these are available at the respective consultation pages.</p>
Duty to cooperate	<p>The duty to cooperate is a legal test that requires cooperation between local planning authorities and other public bodies to maximise the effectiveness of policies for strategic matters in Local Plans. It is separate from but related to the Local Plan test of soundness.</p>
District-wide character study (DWCS)	<p>The District-wide character study aims to understand the key characteristics across the District which, when read alongside other evidence base documents, will inform a context led approach to growth and change.</p>
Dwelling/ Dwellinghouse	<p>A self-contained building or part of a building used as a residential accommodation, and usually housing a single household. A dwelling may be a house, bungalow, flat, maisonette or converted farm building.</p>
Economic Development	<p>Development for employment use, including those within the B Use Classes as well as other employment generating uses (but excluding housing development).</p>
Economic Needs Study (ENS)	<p>A study which is an important component of the evidence base for the development of the new Local Plan by providing an objective assessment of the need for employment land over the emerging plan period to 2033/35. This reflects the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and builds upon previous evidence base studies including the 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).</p>
Exceptional circumstances (local)	<p>The Government does not define exceptional circumstances, but as part of the new Local Plan it is suggested that this may occur, for example, where new housing development achieves the sustainable reuse of brownfield land; ensures the delivery of new and needed key infrastructure; is needed to achieve regeneration and helps achieve significant compensatory improvements in the Green Belt.</p>
Fitness Station	<p>Individual apparatus for fitness usually found in a fitness gym but can also include outdoor resistance apparatus.</p>

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Fields in Trust	an independent charity with over 90 years' experience protecting parks and green spaces. They work with landowners, community groups and policy makers to champion the value of parks and green spaces to achieve better protection for their future at both local and national level. Fields in Trust's benchmark guidelines are a crucial tool for developers, planners, urban designers and landscape architects in the design of outdoor sport, play and informal open space and are in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.
Flood Zone	Flood zones refer to the probability of river and sea flooding over areas of land. There are varying levels of flood risk which are set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance.
Fluvial flooding	Flooding resulting from water levels exceeding the bank level of a main river.
Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA)	Economic analysis is best undertaken at the spatial level at which the relevant economic market operates – or the 'functional economic market area'
Granny Pod	A Granny Pod is a tiny home built, or placed, on the same property as the home of someone who will look after the occupant.
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.
Green Corridor	A green corridor is a route by which wildlife can move from one habitat to another such as river banks, railways embankments and roadside verges. They can also include human recreational connections such as public rights of way and cycle routes.
Green Lung	An area of open space within a settlement which contributes to a healthy environment.
Green Roof	A planted soil layer is constructed on the roof of a building to create a living surface. Water is stored in the soil layer and absorbed by vegetation.
Greenfield Land or Site	Land (or a defined site) usually farmland, that has not previously been developed.
Groundwater	An important part of the natural water cycle present underground, within strata known as aquifers.
Gypsies and Travellers	Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependents' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.
Gypsy and Traveller	Evidence base document to support the Local Plan outlining the District's objectively assessed need for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation.

Glossary and Abbreviations	
Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)	
Habitat Regulation Assessment	Is a recognised step by step process which helps determine likely significant effect of development on a habitat and where appropriate they can be used to assess the adverse impacts on the integrity of a European site. An assessment will examine alternative solutions and provide justification for imperative reasons of over riding public interest for the development (IROPI).
Health Impact Assessment (HIA)	Health Impact Assessment is a tool to identify and optimise the health and wellbeing impacts of planning.
Heritage asset	Heritage Asset – A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage Asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the Local Planning Authority (including Local Listing)
Historic Parks and Gardens	A park or garden of special historic interest. Graded I (highest quality), II* or II. All designations are made by Historic England.
Housing Market Area (HMA)	Planning for housing takes place on a scale that is larger than most local authorities because market dynamics and population changes do not respect administrative boundaries. They cut across them, operating at different scales. The West Kent Housing Market Area (HMA) includes Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells
Housing White Paper	At the time of this document’s publication (August 2017), the Housing White Paper was a consultation paper on the Government’s proposed housing and planning reforms. This was consulted upon between March and May 2017. Whilst it is not Government policy at the moment, it is important that we recognise its significance and potential challenges that the White Paper poses whilst producing a new Local Plan.
Index of Multiple Deprivation	The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England.
Infrastructure	Basic services necessary for development to take place (e.g. roads, electricity, water and sewerage, education and health facilities).
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)	A document which shows the amount of infrastructure required to facilitate development
Intermediate housing	Owned by a housing association which is sold or rented to eligible households at a cost above social rent levels but below market levels. Applicants must be registered under Help to Buy and can have a household income of up to

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	<p>£80,000 per year. Priority is given to military personnel and, for a limited period, to those with a local connection to the District. Intermediate housing includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared equity housing – purchasers typically buy a 75-80% share of the property with no rent payable to the housing association on the remainder. • Shared ownership housing – purchasers buy a 25-75% share of the property and pay a subsidised rent to the housing association on the remainder. • Intermediate rented housing – generally let on Assured Shorthold tenancies, the rent plus service charge is no more than 80% of the market rent.
Urban Intensification	Urban intensification optimises the use of previously developed land, reduces travel demand and revitalises and repopulates cities.
Kent Nature Partnership	The Kent Nature Partnership was awarded Local Nature Partnership (LNP) status by the government in July 2012 to drive positive change in the local natural environment. The Partnership takes a strategic view of the challenges and opportunities involved in managing the natural environment as a system benefiting biodiversity, people and the local economy.
Kent Wildlife Trust Reserves	Nature reserves managed by Kent Wildlife Trust (a nationally recognised registered charity).
Key Worker	A Government scheme running since 2004 helping key workers in London, the South East and East of England to buy a home, upgrade to a family home or rent a home at an affordable price.
Landscape Character	The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.
Lead Local Flood Authority	Unitary authorities or County Councils that are responsible for developing, maintaining and applying a strategy for local flood risk management in their areas and for maintaining a register of flood risk assets. They also have lead responsibility for managing the risk of flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses.
Listed Building	A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings of permanent structures (e.g. wells with its curtilage). Designations are made by Historic England.
Living roofs and walls	Roofs and walls that are partial or completely covered with vegetation and a growing medium, planted over a waterproofing membrane. It may also include additional layers such as a root barrier and drainage and irrigation system.

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Local Centre	Locally significant areas of retail to which protection policies apply, in accordance with the NPPF. Local centres have been divided into neighbourhood and village centres in the Local Plan.
Local essential worker	<p>A 'Local Essential Worker' is someone employed in the District and in one of the following occupations, as defined in the Sevenoaks District Local Plan as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sector employees providing frontline services in areas including health, education and community safety and can include NHS staff, teachers and school support staff, police, firefighters, military personnel, social care and childcare workers (as per NPPF definition); • Council employees who provide frontline services (including County, District or Town/Parish); • Private sector employees and the self-employed providing frontline services in care and includes teachers and school support staff, health care, social care and childcare workers; • Private sector employees and the self-employed who provide frontline services in amenities and includes cleaners, kitchen/catering staff, shop workers, hairdressers, local transport and agriculture; and • Any other frontline occupational group experiencing recruitment or retention issues - such issues being first evidenced to the satisfaction of the District Council and inclusion as a local essential worker is at the sole discretion of the District Council
Local Housing Need	<p>Affordable rural housing (or Local Needs Housing) is housing that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is developed and managed by a Housing Association and made available for rent or shared ownership. Is exclusively for people who have strong connections to a village. Remains affordable for local people in perpetuity. Is a small development, sensitively designed to be in keeping with the character of the village. Can help a community remain thriving and sustainable. Enables families to remain living in close proximity and provide support to each other. Including local needs market housing and affordable housing
Local List	A range of buildings and structures that together make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the District. The Local List (which currently covers Sevenoaks Town only) does not provide any additional planning controls but buildings on the list have the status of heritage assets and their conservation is an objective of the NPPF. The inclusion of a building or structure on the list will be a material consideration that we will take into account when considering planning applications.
Local Nature Reserves	Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are for both people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They offer people special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it.
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

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	as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
Local Wildlife Site	Local wildlife sites, previously known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs), are sites which are important to nature conservation interests in a local context. They are designated by the Kent Wildlife Trust.
Micro House	A Micro House is a small house that is often energy-efficient and designed strategically to maximise usable space while minimizing the home's footprint.
Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)	An enclosed area, using a synthetic grass or hard surface for playing sports, for example five-a-side football or netball.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The document that sets out national planning policies from Government for England and how they are to be applied during the planning process. The NPPF must be taken into account when preparing Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. It must also be used as a material consideration when determining planning applications. Further guidance on particular topics is set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), and is updated regularly to reflect the application of national planning policies (https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance).
Neighbourhood Plans	A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
Non-designated heritage assets	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified by the Local Planning Authority as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It can include assets identified by the Local Planning Authority (including Local listing) but does not include any asset formally designated under the relevant legislation i.e. Conservation area, Listed Building or scheduled ancient monument.
Objectively Assessed Need (OAN)	An unconstrained figure based on the latest Government population and household projections, but is not considered as the District's housing target. This evidence is used against other evidence bases gathered to determine the District's housing target.
Office for National Statistics (ONS)	Independent producer of official statistics and the recognised national statistical institute of the UK
Older People	People over retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly, whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing for those looking to downsize from family housing and the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

Glossary and Abbreviations	
Original Building	A Building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.
Outdoor Accommodation	Glamping, camping, caravanning, free sleeping
Permeable Paving	A range of sustainable materials and techniques for permeable pavements with a base and subbase that allow the movement of stormwater through the surface. In addition to reducing runoff, this effectively traps suspended solids and filters pollutants from the water.
Pitch for Gypsy and Traveller	There is no set definition of what should be contained within a pitch, but it is generally accepted that an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating a large trailer and touring caravan, an amenity building, parking space and a small garden area.
Playing Pitch Strategy	A document outlining the needs and supply of playing pitches within a local authority area. The document is prepared in partnership with Sport National Governing Bodies and endorsed by Sport England.
Previously Developed Land (PDL)	Previously developed land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.
Primary Shopping Frontage	Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods.
Public Right of Way (PRoW)	An adopted right of way available for public use defined on the Definitive Map.
Rain Gardens	A rain garden is a planted depression or a hole that allows rainwater runoff from impervious urban areas, like roofs, driveways, walkways, parking lots, and compacted lawn areas, the opportunity to absorb.
Rainfall Event	A storm with a specific intensity and duration
Rapid Electric Vehicle Points	Rapid charge points can charge an electric vehicle battery in around 30 minutes. They allow high mileage users, such as electric taxi and private hire drivers and freight and fleet operators, to quickly charge their vehicle.
Registered Parks and Gardens	A park or garden of special historic interest. They are graded I (highest quality), II* or II. All designations are made by Historic England.
Retail Study	An up-to-date evidence base on the existing and future roles and performance of the District's Town, and Service Centres and assess future demand for retail floorspace in the District over the period to 2035. The study has full regard to the expected levels of growth in Sevenoaks and neighbouring authorities, as well as recent and emerging changes in consumer behaviour.

Glossary and Abbreviations	
Return Period	The probability of a rainfall event occurring over a set period of time
River Basin Management Plan (RBMPs)	These Management Plans set out how organisations, stakeholders and communities will work together to protect and improve the quality of our water environment. These plans were updated in 2015 and set out how the minimum of 680 (14%) of waters will improve over the next 6 years from around £3 billion investment.
Roadside Nature Reserves	Areas adjacent to road which have been identified, protected, and managed by the Kent and Medway Road Verge Project. These areas provide vital wildlife corridors for many species and include a number of scarce and threatened habitats.
Rural Exception Site	Rural exception site policy allows local planning authorities to grant planning permission for affordable housing on land that would not normally be used for housing because, for example, it is subject to policies of restraint. Hence an exception is made to normal planning policy to address proven local housing need. However, other planning issues such as site suitability, scale, design, etc. must still be addressed.
Rural Housing Enabler	The Rural Housing Enabler helps communities identify suitable sites for the development of local needs housing.
Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMMs)	A project overseen by Natural England that implements monitoring, warden arrangements and public education messages.
Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)	Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace' (SANGS) is the name given to the green space that is of a quality and type suitable to be used as mitigation in the context of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.
Scheduled Ancient Monument	Section 61(12) of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 defines an ancient monument as “any scheduled monument” and “any other monument which in the opinion of the Secretary of State is of the public interest by reason of the historic, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching to it”.
Secondary Shopping Frontage	Secondary frontages likely to include a diversity of uses such as retail, restaurants, cinemas and businesses.
Secured by Design	Secured by Design (SBD) is a police initiative to guide and encourage those engaged within the specification, design and building of new homes to adopt crime prevention measures in the design of their schemes.
Self Build	The building of homes by their owners

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Self Build Register	Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.
Shepherd Hut	A small home on wheels
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	A site identified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) as an area of special interest by reasons of any of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features (e.g. plants, animals, and natural features relating to the Earth's structures).
Soakaway	a pit typically filled with hard core, into which waste water is piped so that it drains slowly out into surrounding soil.
Social Housing	Social rented housing and affordable rented housing. Social housing is let to those with an identified housing need. It is generally only let to those who are accepted onto the Sevenoaks District Housing Register and let through Kent Homechoice.
Social Prescribing	<p>Social prescribing connects people to practical and emotional community support, through social prescribing link workers, who are based in GP practices and take referrals from all local agencies.</p> <p>It helps people get more control over their healthcare, to manage their needs and in a way that suits them. It can especially help people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have one or more long-term condition • need support with their mental health • are lonely or isolated • have complex social needs which affect their wellbeing.
Source Protection Zones (SPZ)	Source Protection Zones are defined as zones which show the level of risk to the source from contamination. This could be from any activity that might cause pollution in the area. For example, storing pollutants like petrol underground, soakaways from septic tanks to the ground. The closer the activity, the greater the risk.
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)	This assessment provides an overview of the methodology, assumptions, uncertainties, tasks undertaken and the links to the wider sustainability appraisal process. It provides policy recommendations and guidance for the application of the Sequential Test, the preparation of flood risk assessments and the use of sustainable drainage systems, within the Council's administrative boundary.
Strategic Housing & Economic Land Availability	<p>A Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify sites and broad locations with potential for development; • assess their development potential; and

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Assessment (SHELAA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess their suitability for development, and the likelihood of development coming forward (the availability and achievability). <p>This approach ensures that all land is assessed together as part of plan preparation to identify which sites or broad locations are the most suitable and deliverable for a particular use. The assessment is an important evidence base to inform plan making. However, it does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. This is because not all sites considered in the assessment will be suitable for development (e.g. because of policy constraints or if they are unviable). It is the role of the assessment to provide information on the range of sites which are available to meet need, but it is for the development plan itself to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those needs.</p>
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	<p>A Strategic Housing Market Assessment should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimate housing need and demand in terms of affordable and market housing. • Determine how the distribution of need and demand varies across the plan area, for example, as between the urban and rural areas. • Consider the future demographic trends and identify the accommodation requirements of specific groups such as homeless households, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, first time buyers, disabled groups, older people, Gypsies and Travellers, and occupational groups such as key workers, student and operational defence personnel.
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)	<p>An alternative approach from the traditional ways to manage runoff from buildings and hardstanding. They can reduce the total amount, flow and rate of surface water that runs directly to rivers through stormwater systems.</p>
Swales	<p>Swales are vegetated shallow depressions designed to convey and filter water. These can be ‘wet’ where water gathers above the surface, or ‘dry’ where water gathers in a gravel layer beneath. Can be lined or unlined to allow infiltration.</p>
TBC	<p>To be confirmed</p>
The Councils Net zero 2030 commitment	<p>The Council has made a commitment to work towards achieving net zero carbon emissions to the Council and its assets by 2030 (Council Emissions). This is alongside an ambition to assist the District in becoming net zero, by working closely with local communities (District emissions) and to improve the resilience of the District to a changing climate (Climate resilience). This is collectively known as the Net Zero 2030 commitment. More information can be found at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/netzero.</p>
Town Centre	<p>A defined area, including the primary shopping area and areas predominately occupied by main town centre uses.</p>

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Transport hub	A place where passengers and cargo are exchanged between vehicles or between transport modes. Public transport hubs include train and bus stations and airports.
Targeted review of local housing needs 2022 (TRLHN)	A series of documents that have been prepared to provide an evidence base to the Local Plan. These reflect the requirements of the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), they include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing and economic needs assessment • Housing needs of different groups • Housing for older and disabled people • Housing: optional technical standards • First Homes
Use Classes	A list that categorises types of development (see the end of the glossary for the full Use Class Order)
Village Design Statements (VDS)	Documents prepared by local people to guide new development in their villages. They are used when assessing planning applications for development and other changes within these villages.
Visitor Attraction	A visitor attraction is a place of interest where tourists visit, typically for its inherent or exhibited natural or cultural value, historical significance natural or built beauty, offering leisure and amusement.
West Kent Leader Programme	A source of funding available to farmers, growers, foresters, rural businesses and communities to help secure a sustainable future for rural West Kent.
Wildlife Corridor	Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations