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Health and Wellbeing

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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.

The quality of the built and natural environment can directly influence healthy 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.

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



Health, Wellbeing and Safety

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 which we live in.

6.7 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.

6.8 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

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;
- 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

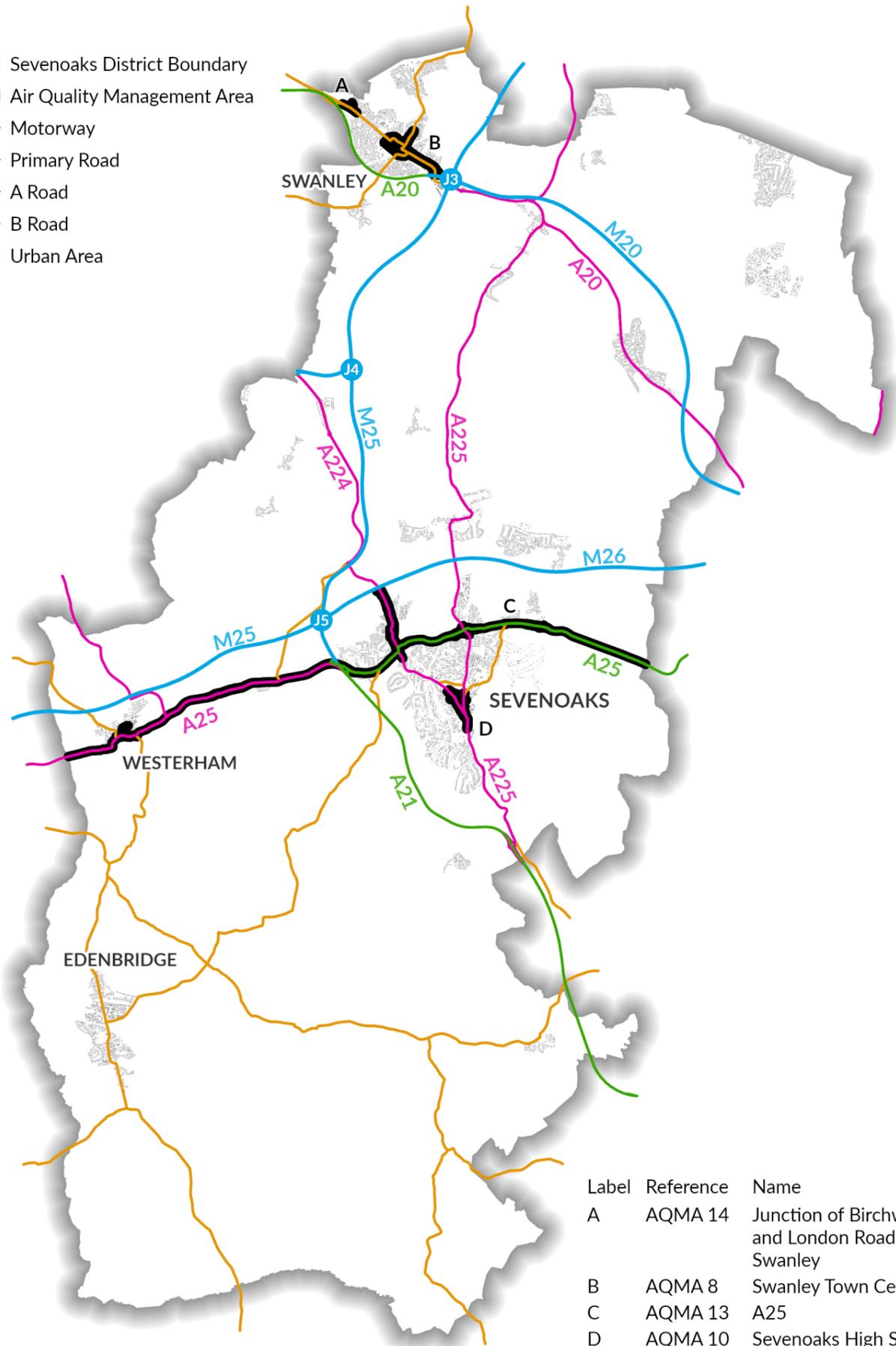
- 6.9 Vehicle Vehicle emissions are the main contributor to poor air quality in the District and there is a high dependency on private vehicles to make journeys to key locations within, and outside of, the District (e.g. stations, shops and community facilities). This has led to a number of hot spots 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.
- 6.12 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].
- 6.13 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.



-  Sevenoaks District Boundary
-  Air Quality Management Area
-  Motorway
-  Primary Road
-  A Road
-  B Road
-  Urban Area



Label	Reference	Name
A	AQMA 14	Junction of Birchwood and London Road, Swanley
B	AQMA 8	Swanley Town Centre
C	AQMA 13	A25
D	AQMA 10	Sevenoaks High Street

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Figure 6.2: Air Quality Management Areas in Sevenoaks District

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

This 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.