

SEVENOAKS TOWN

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2020-2038

SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL

BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT

June 2022





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INTRODUCTION

This Basic Conditions Statement supports the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan (STNP or 'the Plan'). It states how the Plan meets the legal requirements and basic conditions to qualify as a Neighbourhood Plan.

The five legal requirements are:

1. The neighbourhood plan is being submitted by a qualifying body;
2. The neighbourhood plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in the whole or any part of the neighbourhood plan area. It must include land use policies that can be used in the determination of planning applications and it must relate to a designated neighbourhood plan area;
3. The neighbourhood plan states the time period in which it is to have effect;
4. The policies do not relate to excluded development; and
5. The neighbourhood plan does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area.

The five basic conditions are:

1. Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the Plan;
2. The making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
3. The making of the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Local Development Plan;
4. The making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations; and
5. Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan and its policies is supported by a Consultation Statement, this Basic Conditions Statement and an extensive evidence base.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment SEA was also prepared to identify, describe, and evaluate the likely significant effects of the STNP and alternatives. The conclusions of the SEA are described in Section 3.4.

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LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Neighbourhood Plan is submitted by Sevenoaks Town Council, which, as a qualifying body, is entitled to submit a Neighbourhood Plan for its area.

The Plan contains policies relating to the development and use of land within the neighbourhood plan area. Proposals relating to planning matters (the use and development of land) have been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

The Plan identifies the period to which it relates as 2020 to 2038, which is clearly stated on the front of the Plan.

Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan Policy D2 identifies Sevenoaks Quarry (designated as a Minerals Safeguarding Area in the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-2030) as having potential for mixed use development once sand extraction is finished on-site. As this relates only to the future of the site once its use for mineral extraction is over and the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate this site for development, it is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan does not deal with county matters, nor does it deal with nationally significant infrastructure or any other excluded development.

The Plan relates only to the town of Sevenoaks. It does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area. There are no other neighbourhood development plans in place within the neighbourhood plan area.

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BASIC CONDITIONS

3.1 NATIONAL POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

This section demonstrates how the policies in the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan have regard to each relevant section of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021).

NPPF Section	Relevant STNP Policy
2: Achieving sustainable development	The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan and its policies and aims contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. This is detailed fully in section 3.2 below.
5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes	<p>The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan policies that support the aims of the NPPF to deliver a sufficient supply and mix of homes to meet local needs, including the delivery of affordable homes, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy D1, which supports residential development on 12 sites across the town should they be brought forward for development (note the STNP does not allocate these sites); • Policy D2, which supports the development of a mix of homes including affordable homes should the Tarmac Ltd. Site at Greatness be brought forward for development; • Policy D3, which expects larger development sites to provide a range of homes, including affordable housing; and • Policy D4, which encourages the development of key worker housing on larger sites.
6: Building a strong, competitive economy	<p>The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan policies and aims that contribute to the aim of the NPPF to support a strong and competitive economy in which business can thrive are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy E1, which supports the provision of space for start-up businesses; • Aim E2, which states that the Town Council will develop a tourism strategy for the town; • Policy E3, which supports increased parking provision where it is required to support economic development; • Policy E4, which supports the provision and retention of indoor and outdoor markets; and • Policy E5, which supports development proposals that enhance neighbourhood centres.

Table 3.1 Part One: Conformity with the NPPF

NPPF Section	Relevant STNP Policy
7: Ensuring the vitality of town centres	<p>The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan policies and aims that support the aim of the NPPF to ensure the vitality of town centres are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim C2, which states that the Town Council will work with partners to encourage development of vacant and underused sites; • Policy E1, which supports the provision of space for start-up businesses; • Aim E2, which states that the Town Council will develop a tourism strategy for the town; • Policy E3, which supports increased parking provision where it is required to support economic development; • Policy E4, which supports the provision and retention of indoor and outdoor markets; • Policy E5, which supports development proposals that enhance neighbourhood centres; • Policy COM3, which promotes the development of a cultural quarter in the town centre; and • Policy D1, which supports development on vacant and under-utilised sites across the town including sites within the town centre (note the STNP does not allocate these sites).
8: Promoting healthy and safe communities	<p>The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan policies and aims that support the aims of the NPPF to create healthy, safe and inclusive places with open space, social, cultural and recreational facilities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy L1, which promotes the delivery of biodiversity net gain through new development; • Policy L2, which expects new development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems to minimise flood risk; • Policy L4, which seeks to protect and retain existing trees and hedgerows, where possible; • Policy L5, which supports the development of new public open space, community use and leisure opportunities; • Aim L6, which states that the Town Council will work with partners to enhance access to the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve; • Aim L7, which supports improvement and restoration proposals for Bradbourne Lakes; • Policy L8, which supports the provision of additional allotments in the town; • Policy M1, which promotes the removal of barriers to walking and cycling movement across the town; • Policy M2, which supports the provision of additional cycle facilities; • Policy M3, which promotes a new walking and cycling route between Bat and Ball / Otford Road and Dunton Green; • Policy M4, which supports the introduction of a 20mph speed limit close to schools and in some residential areas; • Policy M5, which supports proposals for improved pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities at major junctions across the town; • Aim M10, which promotes joint working to direct HGV movements away from the town centre; • Policy E5, which supports development proposals that enhance neighbourhood centres; • Policy COM1, which supports proposals for a new community centre at Bat and Ball Station; • Policy COM2, which promotes new health and education provision, faith facilities and other necessary community infrastructure as an integral part of new development; • Policy COM3, which promotes the development of a cultural quarter in the town centre; • Aim COM4, which supports the development of a new amphitheatre at Knole Environmental Park;

Table 3.1 Part Two: Conformity with the NPPF

NPPF Section	Relevant STNP Policy
8: Promoting healthy and safe communities (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy S1, which supports the provision of new sports facilities, including new sports/water sports facilities at the Tarmac Ltd. site at Greatness; • Policy S2, which supports the provision of new and enhanced play and outdoor sports and recreational facilities for children and young people; and • Policy D2, which supports the provision of public open space, community and leisure uses should the Tarmac Ltd. site at Greatness be brought forward for development.
9: Promoting sustainable transport	<p>The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan policies and aims that support the aims of the NPPF to promote sustainable transport modes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy M1, which promotes the removal of barriers to walking and cycling movement across the town; • Policy M2, which supports the provision of additional cycle facilities; • Policy M3, which promotes a new walking and cycling route between Bat and Ball/Otford Road and Dunton Green; • Policy M4, which supports the introduction of a 20mph speed limit close to schools and in some residential areas; • Policy M5, which supports proposals for improved pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities at major junctions across the town; • Policy M6, which supports proposals to refurbish Bat and Ball station and improve access to the station; • Policy M7, which supports proposals to improve transport interchange facilities at Sevenoaks station; • Policy M8, which supports enhancements to bus services and facilities to serve the town; and • Policy M9, which supports measures that will encourage a shift towards the use of greener modes of transport by businesses and residents; • Policy M11, which supports public realm improvements in the town centre; and • Aim M12, which promotes identification of locations across the town where repairs and improvements to paths and pavements are required.
10: Supporting high quality communications	<p>The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan supports the improvement of communications technology to support businesses (Theme 4: Local Economy), but does not have any specific policy on this topic. The Plan does not preclude the delivery of high quality communications set out in the NPPF.</p>
11: Making effective use of land	<p>The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan policies and aims that support the NPPF's aim to make effective use of land are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim C2, which states that the Town Council will work with partners to encourage development of vacant and underused sites; • Policy D1, which supports and identifies the benefits that should be secured through the design, layout and use of 12 sites across the town should they be brought forward for development (note the STNP does not allocate these sites); and • Policy D2, which identifies the benefits that should be delivered should the Tarmac Ltd. Site at Greatness be brought forward for development. • Policies D1 and D2 identify the planning status, designations and constraints, opportunity and urban design principles for each of the identified sites to which any development proposals should respond.

Table 3.1 Part Three: Conformity with the NPPF

NPPF Section	Relevant STNP Policy
12: Achieving well-designed places	<p>The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan policies and aims that support the NPPF's aims to achieve of well-designed places are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim C2, which states that the Town Council will work with partners to encourage development of vacant and underused sites; • Policy C4, which expects new development in residential areas to be of a high quality and reflect Sevenoaks' character; • Aim C6, which states that the Town Council will normally require major applications or proposals on sites within sensitive locations to be submitted to a Design Review panel early in the planning process; • Aim C7, which states that the Town Council will work with partners to prepare design guidance for areas not already covered by the Residential Character Area Assessment; • Policy C8, which supports development that protects and enhances local landmarks; • Policy C9, which supports development that protects and enhances the landscape setting and character of the town and countryside views; • Policy C10, which supports development that enhances the identified gateways and arrival points into the town; • Aim M10, which promotes joint working to direct HGV movements away from the town centre; • Policy M11, which supports public realm improvements in the town centre; • Aim M12, which promotes identification of locations across the town where repairs and improvements to paths and pavements are required; • Policy D1, which supports and identifies the benefits that should be secured through the design, layout and use of 12 sites across the town should they be brought forward for development (note the STNP does not allocate these sites); and • Policy D2, which identifies the benefits that should be delivered should the Tarmac Ltd. Site at Greatness be brought forward for development. • Policies D1 and D2 identify the planning status, designations and constraints, opportunity and urban design principles for each of the identified sites to which any development proposals should respond.
13: Protecting Green Belt land	<p>The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan Policy D2 states that <i>'Should the Tarmac Ltd. Site at Greatness be brought forward for development, either as windfall or through allocation in the Local Plan, this should be guided by an agreed masterplan that indicates how development would be laid out to respond to, and provide a significant landscape resource for Sevenoaks, how it will be phased and the supporting infrastructure that would be delivered as part of the development'</i>.</p> <p>Policy D2 also sets out the benefits that the site should deliver for the area including community, green and transport infrastructure.</p> <p>The Tarmac Ltd. site is currently in use for sand extraction and is within the Green Belt. The Neighbourhood Plan states that exceptional circumstances will have to be identified by Sevenoaks District Council in order to remove the site from the Green Belt. This is currently under review as part of the Local Plan process. Therefore, the Plan is in accordance with the proper process set out in the NPPF, paragraphs 140 and 143.</p>

Table 3.1 Part Four: Conformity with the NPPF

NPPF Section	Relevant STNP Policy
14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change	<p>The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan policies that support the NPPF's aims to transition to a low carbon future, improve flood resilience and provide green infrastructure are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy L1, which promotes the delivery of net biodiversity gain through new development; • Policy L2, which expects new development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems to minimise flood risk; • Policy L4, which seeks to protect and retain existing trees and hedgerows, where possible; • Policy M1, which promotes the removal of barriers to walking and cycling movement across the town; • Policy M2, which supports the provision of additional cycle facilities; • Policy M3, which promotes a new walking and cycling route between Bat and Ball/Otford Road and Dunton Green; • Policy M4, which supports the introduction of a 20mph speed limit close to schools and in some residential areas; • Policy M5, which supports proposals for improved pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities at major junctions across the town; • Policy M6, which supports proposals to refurbish Bat and Ball station and improve access to the station; • Policy M7, which supports proposals to improve transport interchange facilities at Sevenoaks station; • Policy M8, which supports enhancements to bus services and facilities to serve the town; and • Policy M9, which supports measures that will encourage a shift towards the use of greener modes of transport by businesses and residents. • Policy D1, which encourages development to achieve the highest environmental standards to reduce carbon emissions during construction and use; • Policy D5, which promotes the delivery of new homes that are energy efficient, that are constructed using materials that reduce the impact on the environment and that are designed to maximise daylight and sun penetration whilst also avoiding overheating; and • Policy D6, which promotes the retrofitting of existing homes to increase their energy efficiency.
15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	<p>The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan policies and aims that support the NPPF's aims to conserve and enhance landscapes, the countryside and biodiversity are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy C9, which supports development that protects and enhances the landscape setting and character of the town and visibility to and from the open countryside; • Policy L1, which promotes the delivery of net biodiversity gain through new development; • Policy L2, which expects new development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems to minimise flood risk; • Aim L3, which states that the Town Council will identify areas where trees and hedgerows make a significant contribution to local character and biodiversity; • Policy L4, which seeks to protect and retain existing trees and hedgerows, where possible; • Policy L5, which supports the development of new public open space, community use and leisure opportunities; • Aim L6, which states that the Town Council will work with partners to enhance access to the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve; • Aim L7, which supports improvement and restoration proposals for Bradbourne Lakes; and • Policy L8, which supports the protection of existing and provision of additional allotments in the town.

Table 3.1 Part Five: Conformity with the NPPF

NPPF Section	Relevant STNP Policy
16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	<p>The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan policy that support the NPPF's aim to conserve and enhance historic assets is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy C1, which supports development that sustains and enhances the significance of heritage assets and Conservation Areas; • Aim C3, which states that the Town Council will prepare guidance on the treatment of locally listed buildings and any other buildings with heritage value; • Policy C4, which expects new development in residential areas to be of a high quality and reflect Sevenoaks' character; • Aim C5, which encourages the naming of new streets to reflect people and places of historic significance to the town; • Aim C6, which states that the Town Council will normally require major applications or proposals on sites within sensitive locations to be submitted to a Design Review panel early in the planning process; • Aim C7, which states that the Town Council will work with partners to prepare design guidance for areas not already covered by the Residential Character Area Assessment; • Policy C8, which supports development that protects and enhances local landmarks; and • Policy C10, which supports development that enhances the identified gateways and arrival points into the town.
17: Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals	<p>The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan Policy D2 supports a mixed use development at the Tarmac Ltd. site at Greatness (Sevenoaks quarry), which is a sand extraction site and designated as a Minerals Safeguarding Area in the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-2030. The potential for development on the site is identified in the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan (2016), which was commissioned Sevenoaks Town Council. The Neighbourhood Plan states, <i>'The Masterplan includes proposals for the redevelopment of the Tarmac Ltd. site once sand extraction operations are complete. Planning for such development now will help ensure that it delivers the maximum benefits to the surrounding community.'</i></p> <p>It is therefore acknowledged that the site can only come forward for development once sand extraction has been completed, safeguarding this important mineral resource. This aligns with NPPF paragraph 210(d), which encourages 'the prior extraction of minerals, where practical and environmentally feasible, if it is necessary for non-mineral development to take place.'</p>

Table 3.1 Part Six: Conformity with the NPPF

3.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The NPPF states under paragraph 7 that ‘*the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*’. The NPPF then identifies three overarching objectives to achieve this - an economic objective, a social objective, and an environmental objective.

In this section, the policies of the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan (STNP) that support each of these objectives are described in turn in the tables below.

Economic Sustainability	
NPPF Definition	Help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
Relevant STNP Policies / Aims	C2, E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, COM3, D1, D2
Commentary	<p>These Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan policies contribute to economic sustainability by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging development of vacant and under-utilised sites; • Supporting the provision of sites for start-up businesses across the town; • Developing a tourism strategy for Sevenoaks; • Supporting local businesses and enhancing neighbourhood centres; • Promoting a cultural quarter in the town centre; and • Supporting the development of new homes and mixed-use schemes on a range of sites across the town.

Table 3.2: Meeting Economic Sustainability Objectives

Social Sustainability	
NPPF Definition	Support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being
Relevant STNP Policies / Aims	L5, L6, L7, L8, M4, M10, M11, M12, COM1, COM2, COM3, COM4, S1, S2, D1, D2, D3, D4
Commentary	<p>These Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan policies contribute to social sustainability by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the provision of new public open spaces, allotments and sports facilities; • Promoting the delivery of new social infrastructure facilities, including education and healthcare provision, and community, cultural and leisure facilities; • Improving the pedestrian environment through a reduction in vehicle speeds, diversion of HGVs away from the town centre and public realm improvements; and • Identifying and supporting the delivery of new homes on a range of sites across the town, with an appropriate mix of tenure types to reflect local needs.

Table 3.3: Meeting Social Sustainability Objectives

Environmental Sustainability	
NPPF Definition	Contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
Relevant STNP Policies / Aims	C1, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10, L1, L2, L3, L4, L7, M1, M2, M3, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, D1, D2, D5, D6
Commentary	<p>These Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan policies contribute to environmental sustainability by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting the town's character and heritage; • Safeguarding and enhancing important nature sites and natural features such as trees and hedgerows; • Supporting new development that achieves net biodiversity gain and manages surface water through sustainable drainage systems; • Encouraging the greater uptake of sustainable transport modes; walking, cycling and public transport; • Supporting new development that achieves high environmental standards in construction and use; and • Promoting the retrofitting of existing buildings to increase energy efficiency.

Table 3.4: Meeting Environmental Sustainability Objectives

3.3 LOCAL PLAN CONFORMITY

Table 3.5 below sets out each of the strategic policies of the Sevenoaks District Local Development Plan 2011 (SDLDP) and explains how the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with them.

SDLDP Strategic Policy	How the STNP conforms
SP1 Design of New Development and Conservation Summary of policy aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All new development should be of high design quality and respond to local character. • Protect and enhance the District's heritage assets, landscapes and views. 	<p>The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan (STNP) seeks to protect and enhance the town's heritage assets, local landmarks, landscape setting and views of the countryside (Policies C1, C8 and C9 and Aim C3)</p> <p>It also expects development to be a high design quality, take account of local character and supports the use of Design Review for major applications (Policy C4 and Aims C6 and C7).</p> <p>Site-specific development policies are accompanied by urban design principles to ensure an appropriate design response (Policies D1 and D2).</p>
SP2 Sustainable Development Summary of policy aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New homes must achieve high sustainability standards and incorporate SUDS. • Reduce reliance on travel by car. • Improve air quality. 	<p>The STNP incorporates sustainability principles throughout its policies. The Plan supports development with a low environmental impact and promotes the retrofitting of existing homes for improved energy efficiency (Policies D1, D5 and D6).</p> <p>The STNP aims to promote walking and cycling and other greener modes through additional cycle facilities and infrastructure, public realm improvements, improved crossing facilities and the provision of cycling routes (Policies M1, M2, M3, M5 and M9).</p> <p>The Plan promotes great public transport use through improved access to Bat and Ball Station, improved interchange facilities at Sevenoaks Station and enhancements to bus services (M6, M7 and M8).</p>
SP3 Provision of Affordable Housing Summary of policy aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of affordable housing with new residential development. 	<p>The delivery of affordable housing in Sevenoaks is supported by SNP Policy D3, which states, <i>'Affordable housing provision will be required as part of all eligible developments.'</i></p>
SP4 Affordable housing in Rural Areas Summary of policy aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of affordable housing with new residential development. 	N/A

Table 3.5 Part One: Conformity with SDLDP Strategic Policies

SDLDP Strategic Policy	How the STNP conforms
<p>SP5 Housing Size and Type</p> <p>Summary of policy aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New development to deliver a mix of different housing types, including small units and those designed to lifetime homes standards. 	<p>The provision of a mix of housing types in Sevenoaks is supported by STNP Policy D3, which states, <i>'Where practical larger residential developments will be expected to provide a range of homes. New housing should contribute to meeting the identified local need.'</i></p> <p>STNP Policy D4 encourages provision of key worker housing on larger sites.</p>
<p>SP6 Provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople</p>	<p>There are no sites for Gypsies, Travellers or travelling showpeople within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The STNP does not prevent a site being delivered in the future.</p>
<p>SP7 Density of Housing Development</p> <p>Summary of policy aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New housing developments should achieve a density consistent with good design and the character of the District. Housing development within Sevenoaks to achieve 40 dwellings per hectare. Housing development within Sevenoaks town centre to achieve 75 dwelling per hectare. 	<p>STNP Policies D1 and D2 identify vacant and under-utilised sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>Sites are not allocated within the STNP but should sites come forward either as windfall or through allocation in the local plan potential benefits that should be secured through their design layout and use are identified.</p> <p>Urban design principles are identified for each site including consideration of potential uses, scale and massing, frontage condition and response to context and constraints.</p> <p>Development densities and quanta are not provided as the sites are not allocated.</p>
<p>SP8 Economic Development and Land for Business</p> <p>Summary of policy aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The retention and regeneration of existing business areas. The provision of new office space, space for start-up businesses and hotels. 	<p>The STNP supports the continuing growth of business within Sevenoaks.</p> <p>Policy D1 identifies the following sites with potential for office/workspace development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bat and Ball Community Centre; Travis Perkins, Bat and Ball; Bat and Ball Enterprise Centre Sevenoaks Station and surrounding area; Former Edwards Electrical; and Buckhurst Lane (Suffolk Way) Sites. <p>Policy E1 supports the provision of sites for start-up businesses in the town centre, neighbourhood centres, allocated mixed-use/employment sites and regeneration areas.</p>
<p>SP9 Infrastructure Provision</p> <p>Summary of policy aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development that creates a requirement for new physical, social and green infrastructure will be expected to provide or contribute to this provision. Support development required to resolve infrastructure deficiencies. 	<p>The STNP supports the delivery of additional green infrastructure, SuDs, social and cultural facilities and transport improvements to facilitate greater levels of walking, cycling and public transport in the town (Policies L1, L2, L5, L8, M2, M3, M5, M6, M7 and M8).</p> <p>STNP Policy D2 identifies the Tarmac Ltd. site as a potential future development site. Section 4.8 of the Plan states that the key requirements for new development here is to provide community infrastructure for Northern Sevenoaks, including health and education facilities, and significant green infrastructure provision, including a watersports centre, walking and cycling trails and play spaces. New development here will need to mitigate any impact on the surrounding transport network, including improvements to Bat and Ball Junction, and pedestrian and cycling routes.</p>

Table 3.5 Part Two: Conformity with SDLDP Strategic Policies

SDLDP Strategic Policy	How the STNP conforms
<p>SP10 Green Infrastructure, Open Space, Sport and Recreational Provision</p> <p>Summary of policy aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a green infrastructure network. • Retain open space, sport and recreational facilities. • Residential developments to provide open space or financial contribution where there is a shortage. 	<p>The STNP includes policies to enhance blue and green infrastructure in the town including the delivery biodiversity net gain as part of new development (Policy L1) and SuDs (Policy L2).</p> <p>The STNP recognises the significant contribution that trees and hedgerows make to the towns character and biodiversity and seeks to identify retain and protect them whenever possible (Policy L4).</p> <p>The STNP includes policies to protect, improve and enhance access to existing publicly accessible open spaces and create new publicly accessible open spaces and green infrastructure (Policies L5 and L8 and Aims L6 and L7). Policies L5, S1 and S2 support the provision of new public open space and sports and recreational facilities in the town, particularly at the Tarmac Ltd. site, if that comes forward for development.</p>
<p>Policy SP11 Biodiversity</p> <p>Summary of policy aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the District. • Protect nationally and locally designated sites of biodiversity importance while providing for appropriate levels of public access. 	<p>STNP policy L1 supports new development to achieve net biodiversity gain by retaining natural features and establishing new habitats using native species.</p> <p>Aim L6 states that, <i>‘The Town Council will work with and support Kent Wildlife Trust to enhance access to the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve and improve ‘on-site’ facilities.’</i></p> <p>Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve is located within the Sevenoaks Gravel Pits SSSI. Other SSSIs located within or adjoining the STNP area are Knole Park, Greatness Brickworks and Dryhill. Some development sites identified in the STNP are within the SSSI Impact Risk Zones, which must be considered when proposed development come forward. However, the Plan would not endanger or otherwise restrict the ongoing protection of these biodiversity sites.</p>

Table 3.5 Part Three: Conformity with SDLDP Strategic Policies

3.4 COMPATIBILITY WITH EU OBLIGATIONS

The Neighbourhood Plan, and the process under which it was made, conforms to the SEA Directive (EU 2001/42/EC) and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations).

The draft plan was submitted to Sevenoaks District Council for them to carry out a SEA Screening Assessment in March 2021. Whilst the District Council's screening assessment indicated that a SEA was not required Historic England were of a different opinion and felt that wording in relation to the sites within the plan could lead to impacts on heritage assets in the town and that a SEA was therefore required. A SEA was commissioned in Summer 2021 with AECOM appointed to prepare it.

AECOM issued an SEA Scoping report in September and consultation with Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England followed.

As part of the SEA process AECOM carried out a high-level appraisal of the Neighbourhood Plan (March 2021 version) and found that the policies and aims performed favourably in sustainability terms. AECOM made a number of recommendations on how policies in the plan relating to biodiversity, climate change, the historic environment and surface water management could be strengthened. These have been incorporated in the Submission Draft Plan.

AECOM issued a SEA Environmental Report in March 2022. This was revised and finalised in April 2022 following minor comments from the Town Council.

Chapter 5 within the main body of the Environmental Report presents the findings of the appraisal of the submission version of the STNP. Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the SEA process has assessed the policies put forward through the submission version of the STNP.

The Environmental Report has presented the findings of the assessment under the following SEA Themes:

- Air Quality;
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Climate Change;
- Landscape and Townscape;
- Historic Environment;
- Land, Soil, and Water Resources;
- Community Wellbeing; and
- Transportation.

In the context of the above, the assessment concluded that the submission version of the STNP is likely to have significant positive effects in relation to the 'Community Wellbeing' SEA Theme. This principally links to the STNP's support for high-quality development proposals which would deliver suitable and appropriate housing for the local community (via a range of types and tenures), improve availability and accessibility to services, facilities and amenities, and support the regeneration of key opportunity areas within the STNP area (such as town and local centre environments) which will encourage employment opportunities. These policy provisions will support social inclusion, and community and economic vitality. The STNP is also likely to facilitate improvements to the public realm (including through green infrastructure enhancements) and encourage healthier and active lifestyles. These policy provisions will support the quality of life of residents.

The STNP will also bring positive effects in relation to the 'Landscape and Townscape' and 'Historic Environment' SEA Themes. These benefits largely relate to the STNP's emphasis on protecting and enhancing the relationship between the natural and built environment (i.e. between the town and the open countryside), delivering high-quality design which respects and enhances local distinctiveness and sense of place, protects important landscape and townscape features, facilitates improvements to quality of the public realm, and increases awareness, understanding and appreciation of the historic environment. Given the Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment SPD and the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan also set out a comprehensive range of provisions relating to the natural and built environment, this will help provide an appropriate basis for any development proposals which may come forward during the plan period.

3.5 PRESCRIBED MATTERS

Additionally, the STNP will bring positive effects in relation to the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' SEA Theme by encouraging proposals to protect existing and establish new habitats and wildlife corridors, enhance ecological networks (including through green infrastructure enhancements), and embrace opportunities for nature conservation.

Regarding the 'Climate Change' SEA Theme, the STNP will potentially lead to positive effects through supporting proposals which deliver energy efficient designs and layouts, proactively respond to the potential impacts of climate change (i.e. flood risk concerns from increased storms / rainfall events), and by encouraging active and sustainable travel within the STNP area. However, this is dependent on the extent to which development proposals incorporate these mitigation and adaptation measures through design.

The STNP will also initiate several beneficial approaches regarding the 'Transportation' and 'Air Quality' SEA Themes, given its focus on enhancing the active travel network (including public rights of way and cycle routes), supporting the principles of healthy streets and low-traffic neighbourhoods, and encouraging a greater use of sustainable modes of transportation.

More broadly in relation to the 'Land, Soil, and Water Resources' SEA Theme, the STNP outlines several provisions will help support the capacity of the landscape to regulate soil and water quality. As the STNP does not contain any site allocations for development, it is also not likely that the STNP (in its current form) would result in the loss of any areas of productive agricultural land.

An additional basic condition is prescribed under regulation 32 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as follows:

'The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is not likely to have any significant effect on a European Site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species regulation 2012 (2)) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats & c) Regulation 2007 (3)) (either alone or in combination with other plans and projects).'

There are no internationally designated sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The nearest internationally designated sites are over 15km to the north east and to the south of the STNP area, specifically: Thames Estuary & Marshes Ramsar and Special Protection Area, and Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation.

The SEA Screening Assessment states that, *'there is no SPA, SAC or Ramsar site that will be impacted by the Neighbourhood Plan.'*



