
Statement of Common Ground

as agreed between

**Tandridge District Council and Sevenoaks
District Council**

Tandridge District Council Local Plan: Statement of Common Ground with Sevenoaks District Council,
December 2018

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1. Introduction

The basis for preparing this Statement of Common Ground

- 1.1** This Statement of Common Ground (SCG) has been prepared by Tandridge District Council (TDC) together with Sevenoaks District Council (SDC). It reflects the agreed position between the parties.
- 1.2** The purpose of this SCG is to set out the basis on which TDC and SDC have actively and positively agreed to work together to meet the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate. TDC have prepared their Local Plan for Regulation 19 consultation during the summer of 2018. SDC have prepared their Local Plan for Regulation 19 consultation during the winter of 2018/19. This statement also describes the established mechanisms for ongoing cooperation on strategic matters.
- 1.3** Under section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (amended by section 110 of the Localism Act 2011) and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 it is a requirement under the Duty to Cooperate for local planning authorities, county councils and other named bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in the preparation of development plan documents and other local development documents. This is a test that local authorities need to satisfy at the Local Plan examination stage and is an additional requirement to the test of soundness.
- 1.4** The Duty to Cooperate applies to strategic planning issues of cross boundary significance. Local authorities all have common strategic issues and as set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) "*local planning authorities should make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their Local Plans for examination.*" The statutory requirements of the Duty to Cooperate are not a choice but a legal obligation. Whilst the obligation is not a duty to agree, cooperation should produce effective and deliverable policies on strategic cross boundary matters in accordance with the government policy in the NPPF, and practice guidance in the NPPG.
- 1.5** The administrative areas set out in Appendix A show that TDC and SDC share a common boundary and hence are required to work cooperatively in an effective way to address key strategic matters pertaining to these areas.

2. Key Matters

2.1 Housing

- 2.1.1** Government policy places much emphasis on housing delivery as a means for ensuring economic growth and addressing the current national shortage of housing. Paragraph 47 of NPPF is very clear that '*local planning authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their local plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this framework...*'.

- 2.1.2 TDC prepared a Housing Market Assessment (HMA) Paper¹ as part of their Strategic Housing Market area Assessments (SHMAs) in 2015 and updated this in 2018. The HMA papers set out that *“...evidence points towards Tandridge being a functional component of a HMA including Croydon, Reigate and Banstead and Mid Sussex.”*
- 2.1.3 SDC sits outside this functional area, and whilst the SHMA 2018 paper identifies that *“Sevenoaks also continue to feature amongst the main destinations of out-migrants from Tandridge”* and that there is commonality in house prices. However, the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells SHMA published in 2015 identified that Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells fall within a West Kent Housing Market Area (HMA) which includes Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells
- 2.1.4 The Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells SHMA goes on to state that *“There is a close set of interactions between the towns of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells which reflect their geographical proximity. There is also a relationship into the northern part of Wealden. There are cross-boundary interactions between Swanley and Dartford and a stronger commuting relationship to London. Links from Tandridge are stronger to other authorities in Surrey and West Sussex.”*
- 2.1.5 The Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells SHMA conclude that *“The principal adjoining authorities with a strong relationship would be Tonbridge & Malling, Wealden and Rother. Equally the commissioning authorities would need to engage with those authorities in respect of any unmet housing needs arising from these other authorities’ areas. We would also advise the Councils to engage with the Greater London Authority and London Boroughs in respect of any unmet needs arising from London”*
- 2.1.6 TDC’s 2015 SHMA has identified an objectively assessed housing (OAN) need for the district of 470 houses per annum which amounts to 9,400 dwellings over 20 years. Following the publication of the 2018 household projections, TDC updated their OAN paper in line with the NPPF 2012², which includes the uplift of the projections based on market signals. The 2018 paper identified an OAN of 398 dwellings per annum.
- 2.1.7 TDC’s Housing Land Supply Paper 2018 sets out when considering all the evidence, including the constraints within the District, a total of 6,150 dwellings over 20 years is the maximum capacity achievable in the District. This includes a buffer of 5%. This will lead to an unmet housing need of approximately 1,904 dwellings in Tandridge based against the OAN 2018. In seeking to meet their unmet housing need, TDC has engaged with neighbouring councils within their HMA in the first instance to explore the possibility of them assisting TDC to meet this need.
- 2.1.8 Paragraph 179 states *“Joint working should enable local planning authorities to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own*

¹<https://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Planning%20and%20building/Planning%20strategies%20and%20policies/Local%20plan/Evidence%20base%20and%20technical%20studies/SHMA-2018-Defining-Housing-Market-Area.pdf>

² TDC are aiming to submit their Local Plan by January 2019, which is within the 6 month transitional window where existing plans are to be examined against the NPPF 2012.

areas – for instance, because of a lack of physical capacity or because to do so would cause significant harm to the principles and policies of this Framework”.

- 2.1.9 The Sevenoaks Local Plan is still in development but within their Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) the preferred development strategy has been set out, which involves higher densities within existing settlements, delivery growth on suitable 'brownfield' Green Belt land and where 'exceptional circumstances' exist. The Regulation 18 Plan outlined sites for approximately 13,400 new homes, and included 12 potential 'exceptional circumstances' sites in the Green Belt. The OAN for SDC is 12,400 and the government 'local housing need' figure is 13,960 (for the period 2015-2035).
- 2.1.10 As SDC are currently finalising their Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan, which includes two strategic sites in the Green Belt and one broad location for growth in the Green Belt, and outlines a degree of unmet housing need. Sevenoaks District Council are constrained by the Green Belt (93%) and the AONB (60%) and note in the response to TDC Regulation 19 Local Plan that it may not be possible for SDC to meet their own need in full within the District. Discussions have taken place with neighbouring authorities in the HMA to discuss assistance with any unmet need, but no authority to date has been in a position to assist SDC with unmet need.
- 2.1.11 Consequently, both councils will continue to work together and identify the position as both TDC and SDC prepare to review their Local Plan every 5 years.

Actions

- TDC and SDC will engage through the wider Duty to cooperate forum with other neighbouring authorities outside TDC HMA in relation to housing related matters, including unmet need, five year housing trajectory, best fit HMAs, affordability, London's growth, large scale developments and opportunities for meeting unmet need.
- TDC and SDC to undertake a 5 year review of the Local Plan.

2.2 Gypsies and Travellers

- 2.2.1 In March 2014 TDC issued a "call for sites" to establish land in the District that may be suitable for traveller accommodation, but there was a limited response. TDC also reviewed existing unauthorised sites and temporary permissions. However, through a robust assessment of the sites, insufficient sites have been identified to meet the need of 5 traveller sites and 21 travelling showpeople plots.
- 2.2.2 There are currently some planning applications submitted to TDC that could assist in meeting the 5 traveller sites; these applications are to be determined by the end of the year. However, there are no suitable sites in the first 10 years, until the Garden Community comes forward for travelling showpeople.

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2.2.3 There has been a need to cooperate with neighbouring authorities to assist in meet TDC unmet need.

2.2.4 SDC are looking to allocate gypsy and traveller sites through their local plan to meet their need but are unable to assist with any unmet need in TDC due to district-wide constraints. Both Councils will continue existing joint working arrangements through the wider Duty to Cooperate forum to ensure that suitable provision can be made as appropriate.

Actions:

- TDC and SDC engage through the wider Duty to cooperate forum with other neighbouring authorities outside TDC HMA in relation to housing related matters, including gypsy and traveller provision.
- TDC to undertake a 5 year review of the Local Plan.

2.3 Conservation and enhancement of natural and historic environment - Ashdown Forest

2.3.1 Both authorities are active members of the Ashdown Forest officer steering group and have worked with the Planning Advisory Service as a pilot to produce a Statement of Common Ground, setting out a joint approach to this internationally-designated site.

Actions:

- TDC and SDC to continue to form part of the working group and undertake the actions set out in the signed Statements of Common Ground.

2.4 Highways infrastructure cross boundary

2.4.1 In relation to highway infrastructure specifically, TDC and SDC are committed to continue working together in partnership, with the aim of ensuring the necessary highways improvements to support sustainable growth are delivered in a timely manner over the period of the TDC and SDC Local Plan.

2.4.2 TDC and SDC recognise that securing sufficient funding to deliver highway improvement schemes is important. The two parties are committed to working together to secure the necessary funding and will positively consider all available mechanisms.

2.4.3 TDC and SDC are committed to continued partnership working, including exploring joint bids to unlock funding to support sustainable growth in the Districts over the Local Plan period

2.4.4 TDC and SDC will keep each other fully informed of any changes to highways improvements and will continue to liaise on this matters at all levels and for all types of development, where appropriate, including through planning applications that are cross boundary.

Actions:



- Continue to liaise on cross boundary highways matters, including planning applications.

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3. Actions going forward

Key Issue	Agreed Action	Other comments
Housing / Gypsy and Traveller	TDC and SDC will engage through the wider Duty to Cooperate forum on all housing related matters, including unmet need, five year housing trajectory, best fit HMAs, affordability, London's growth, large scale developments and opportunities for meeting unmet need , prior to the 5 year review of the TDC's Local Plan.	
Ashdown Forest	TDC and SDC will continue to form part of the Ashdown Forest working group and implement actions set out in the signed Statements of Common Ground.	
Highways	Continue to liaise on highways matters that are cross boundary	

4. Signatories/Declaration

Signed on behalf of Tandridge District Council (Councillor)	Signed on behalf of Tandridge District Council (Chief Executive)
	
Pos:	Position: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Date:	Date: 11/12/18

Signed on behalf of Sevenoaks District Council (Councillor)	Signed on behalf of Sevenoaks District Council (Chief Executive)
	
Position: Portfolio Holder for Planning	Position: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Date: 11/12/18	Date: 11/12/18

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Appendix A: Administrative Areas

