

**Sevenoaks Local Plan**

**Transport and Infrastructure**

**Topic Paper**

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## **Introduction**

The key purpose of this paper to show how the policy within the Local Plan “Chapter 4 – Ensuring Well-Connected Communities are supported by Appropriate Infrastructure” has been produced and evidenced.

This paper will:

- Set out the relevant policy context both locally and nationally
- Summarise the evidence including any need requirements up to 2035
- Give a brief summary and analysis of the consultation responses including from key technical specialists and stakeholders
- Set out the Local Plan Strategy and how the policy was developed

The following policy is included in Chapter 4:

### **Policy T1 - Transport and Infrastructure**

This policy sets out how the Local Plan will facilitate new, or improvements to, infrastructure to aid the delivery of the District’s needs. This includes providing more opportunities for sustainable travel modes, creating electrical vehicle charging points and explaining how deficiencies in infrastructure will be addressed.

## Background and Policy Context

### **Transport and Infrastructure (T1)**

#### National Context

The expectation of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is that local planning authorities look beyond the requirements to meet housing needs, and focus on creating sustainable communities during the course of the plan period and beyond. The emphasis on transport and infrastructure is shown throughout the NPPF but is best outlined under Chapter 3 – Plan Making and Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport.

Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states:

*Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for:*

- a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;*
- b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);*
- c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and*
- d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.*

For transport, NPPF paragraph 102 states:

*Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:*

- a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;*
- b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*
- c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*
- d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and*

- e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places*

Planning practice guidance for Local Plans emphasises the importance of engaging with infrastructure providers early in the plan-making process, as it is essential to understand their investment plans, development strategies and critical dependencies.

### Local Context

The current transport and infrastructure policies are contained within Policy SP9 and Appendix 4 (Infrastructure Delivery Plan Schedule) of the Core Strategy (2011), as well as Policies CF1, CF2, T1-3 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) (2015). In addition, the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule and Regulation 123 List also support the current policies.

Core Strategy Policy SP9 (Infrastructure Provision) sets out the expectations of how infrastructure will be delivered over the course of the Plan period. It is supported by Appendix 4, which sets out a schedule of potential infrastructure improvements that could be delivered.

ADMP Policy CF1 (Re-use of Redundant School Buildings) promotes bringing school buildings back into use while ADMP Policy CF2 (Loss of Neighbourhood Services and Facilities) looks to protect neighbourhood service and facilities to meet the day-to-day needs of the community.

ADMP Policies T1-3 (Mitigating Travel Impacts; Vehicle Parking; Provision of Electrical Vehicle Charging Points) relate to a number of transport matters including mitigating travel impacts, allowing enough vehicular parking on site and creating opportunities for electrical vehicle charging points within new residential and non-residential developments.

The Regulation 123 List lists the types of infrastructure that could be funded through the collection of CIL contributions from qualifying developments.

## Evidence Base

### **Transport and Infrastructure (T1)**

#### Transport Evidence - Sevenoaks District Transport Assessment

The Sevenoaks District Transport Assessment was published in December 2018. It was prepared for Sevenoaks District by SWECO in association with Kent County Council.

The Assessment included:

- An assessment of how the existing Transport Strategy 2010 has been performing;
- A contextual overview of current transport policy;
- Cumulative assessment of development within the District and how that would impact the District's transport networks;
- Policy considerations and recommendations for further information when considering planning applications on sites.

The main findings of the Assessment were:

- Generally, the District has good connections with London and the rest of the country by road and rail. This also includes good access to seaports and airports including Gatwick and Heathrow.
- While the District has a good public transport network, it is weakly performing due to the infrequency of services. This is especially prominent in rural areas where bus services particularly infrequent.
- There is a high dependency on the private car to make short- and long- journeys within the District. Sevenoaks has a higher than average car ownership than Kent and the South East.
- Rail is the second most favoured way to travel to work, due to the District's proximity to London.
- Whilst there is good connectivity for pedestrians, there is a lack of high-quality infrastructure for cyclists as well as poor connectivity with the National Cycle Network (NCN).
- An assessment of Strategic Sites in the Green Belt ('Exceptional Circumstances' sites) are assessed and a cumulative impact assessment is considered. For each site, a series of proposed mitigation measures and considerations were put forward. This included improving sustainable transport opportunities (i.e. walking, cycling, public transport) as well as suggesting additional information required should a planning application come forward.

## Transport Evidence - Swanley Transport Study

The Swanley Transport Study was published in two parts; Stage 1 “Data Collection and Problem Identification” (May 2018) and Stage 2 “Option Appraisal and Strategy Report” (August 2018). It was prepared for Sevenoaks District by SWECO in association with Kent County Council. The Swanley Transport Study was a result of further work following on from the Swanley and Hextable Master Vision work, which was carried out by Tibbalds in August 2016.

The Study included:

- A review of existing transport evidence and strategies for Swanley, Hextable and Crockenhill (the study area);
- Establishing the baseline situation for existing transport modes;
- Identification of issues and opportunities within the area’s transport networks;
- Policy considerations and recommendations for further information when considering planning applications on sites.

The main findings of the Study were:

- Generally, the Study area has good connections with the District, London and the rest of the country by road and rail.
- Further development in the Local Plan will need to consider the implications on local highway networks.
- There are a number of traffic and accessibility issues within Swanley, Hextable and Crockenhill.
  - Traffic issues include car parking, vehicular accessibility, highway safety and congestion.
  - Public transport issues including poor quality bus services and lack of connectivity across the Study area.
  - Pedestrian and cycling issues, which included poor quality routes raising issues around safety.
- A number of potential measures and options were considered as part of the Study which included:
  - Remodelling the junction to the west of Swanley for access to/from the A20;
  - Improving signage for the local highway network;

- Creating better access to Swanley Station as well as providing better step-free access;
- Enhancing the existing pedestrian and cycling networks in the area (including upgrading crossings and improving public safety); and
- Improvements to bus infrastructure, visibility and access within the Study area.

### Infrastructure Evidence - Infrastructure Delivery Plan

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) was published in March 2019. The Planning Policy team prepared the document in-house for the Sevenoaks District. The IDP will be treated as a “live” document and will be updated as a result of further information becoming available. Updates including information on infrastructure costings and potential funding gaps will be provided in due course.

The IDP sets out:

- The spatial context between the Local Plan and the requirements of planning for infrastructure;
- The types of infrastructure that are required in the District;
- Summarising the strategy for how infrastructure across the District will be funded and delivered during the Plan period;
- A summary of the strategic sites proposed in the Local Plan with the proposed infrastructure offer; and
- A draft infrastructure schedule drawn up from information collected from infrastructure providers and delivery partners.

The IDP concludes:

- As a CIL charging authority, SDC does not receive many developer contributions to bring forward necessary infrastructure improvements to meet the demands of development across the District;
- The expectation to funding and delivering infrastructure over the Plan period will be primarily through CIL. Any site-specific improvements will be dealt through S106 agreements, including delivering infrastructure on the proposed strategic sites in the Local Plan;
- The draft schedule of infrastructure shows a number of infrastructure improvements and new requirements to meet the needs of development over the

new Local Plan period, including new schools (primary and secondary education), GP surgeries and transport infrastructure.

### **Consultation Analysis**

The Local Plan has been subject to 3 public consultations along with input from technical specialists, stakeholders and interested parties throughout its development. Further information is provided within the Consultation Statement.

### **Transport and Infrastructure (T1)**

Consultation input has been sought from various parties at these stages in the policy development process:

#### **Evidence Base**

When considering the Sevenoaks District Transport Assessment, Officers from both SDC and KCC were asked for their input into the Assessment. Any transport information supplied by site promoters during the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation was also used to feed into the overall Assessment.

When preparing the Swanley Transport Study, local community representatives were invited to participate. This included:

- Sevenoaks District Ward Members for Crockenhill, Hextable and Swanley;
- Parish Council representatives for Crockenhill, Hextable and Swanley;
- The elected Kent County Council Member for Swanley;

In addition to the above, members of the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board and the District Council's Planning Advisory Committee were invited to a Stage 2 workshop to be briefed on the work carried out.

Infrastructure providers and stakeholders were invited to input into the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. A Call for Evidence was set up, with infrastructure providers giving information of potential infrastructure projects for the District, in light of proposed development in the Local Plan coming forward. Infrastructure providers have also provided input throughout the preparation of the Local Plan during the consultation stages.

#### **Issues and Options – Summer 2017**

The issues and options consultation document sought views on the objective to “Support lively communities with well performing town and village centres which provide a range

of services, facilities and infrastructure”. There were 5 technical questions (T26-30) relating to how the Local Plan should provide infrastructure to meet the needs of the District, and how it should be funded and the role of developer contributions. We received 123 responses to these questions.

In summary the responses were:

- Support for partnership working between SDC and infrastructure partners to deliver infrastructure to meet the requirements of development.
- Supporting Travel Plans for significant developments.
- Suggestions that the Local Plan should be promote sustainable transport options more.
- General consensus that the Local Plan should address issues with communications infrastructure and broadband, especially in rural areas.
- Concerns around the funding of infrastructure, especially with regards to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

#### Draft Local Plan – Summer 2018

The Draft Local Plan included a first draft of the new Policy T1 and sought views on the policy’s content. The draft policy included:

- Promoting the delivery of strategic infrastructure projects where they are needed to facilitate development;
- Supporting and promoting sustainable transport options across the District and within new developments;
- Provision of electric vehicle charging points;
- Outlining how infrastructure will be delivered over the Plan period.

The draft policy was based on existing policies as set out in the Core Strategy and the Allocations and Development Management Plan. The existing policies have been updated in light of recent evidence.

62 comments were received on the draft policy. In summary, the responses were:

- Infrastructure should be provided before land is allocated in the Plan for future development.
- The policy could go further by ensuring that all development considers sustainable transport modes.
- Questions about the delivery of critical strategic infrastructure on exceptional circumstances sites; and

- A number of comments supporting the provision of electric vehicle charging points within new residential and non-residential developments.

Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan – Winter 2018

Policy T1 – Transport and Infrastructure has been included in the Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan.

It includes:

- Promoting the delivery of strategic infrastructure projects where they are needed to facilitate development;
- Supporting and promoting sustainable transport options across the District and within new developments;
- Provision of electric vehicle charging points with residential and non-residential developments; and
- How infrastructure will be delivered over the course of the Plan period.

The policy received 48 comments, which included:

- New or improved infrastructure must be delivered at the same time as the development being brought forward;
- Traffic congestion on local/rural road networks must be considered as part of the policy.
- The provision of car parking must be addressed to meet future needs of development
- Support for the provision of electric vehicle charging points;
- Support for sustainable transport measures including better links with walking, cycling and public transport;
- Other types of infrastructure such as education and health, will be required over the new Local Plan period.

## Strategy and Policy

The Local Plan Strategy for meeting the transport and infrastructure needs of the District was developed after reviewing the evidence base and reviewing comments received during the consultation process.

Where new infrastructure or infrastructure improvements are required, from the result of new development, the planning system allows, through planning obligations, for developers to provide or appropriately contribute towards, the provision of this new or improved infrastructure. Local planning authorities have a number of options available to them when considering the funding of infrastructure.

As a CIL charging authority, it is expected that CIL will aid the delivery of infrastructure across the District, the Council will only use Section 106 agreements to bring forward any site specific improvements where required.

In the context of the Sevenoaks District, the following approach to funding and delivering infrastructure is as follows:

- 1) Using contributions collected through CIL to provide funding to deliver the necessary infrastructure (where funding gaps are identified);
- 2) To secure site-specific improvements (including strategic sites infrastructure) through a Section 106 agreement where justified;
- 3) Look to secure funding to deliver infrastructure through partnership working via third party sources (e.g. central Government programmes, Local Enterprise Partnerships, agencies and other public bodies)

Through the IDP, a number of significant social and community infrastructure improvements on strategic sites in the Green Belt are identified. The Council will continue to work with developers and the necessary infrastructure partners to deliver necessary infrastructure on these strategic sites.

## Conclusions

The Transport and Infrastructure topic paper sets out the background for how **Policy T1 – Transport & Infrastructure** has been developed in the context of national and local planning policy. The development of the policy has also been informed by local evidence gathered to support the Local Plan including:

- Sevenoaks District Transport Assessment (December 2018)
- Swanley Transport Study Parts 1 & 2 (August 2018)
- Sevenoaks Infrastructure Delivery Plan (March 2019)

The evidence produced establishes the existing conditions for transport and infrastructure within Sevenoaks District and highlights potential issues that need addressing as a result of the planned growth in the Local Plan. In addition to this, the evidence base sets out recommendations or policy considerations that the Local Plan utilises to address the transport and infrastructure issues raised.

The development of **Policy T1 – Transport & Infrastructure** has also accounted for all comments submitted during the public consultation sessions for the Local Plan including:

- Local Plan Issues and Options (Regulation 18) consultation;
- Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation; and
- The Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan (Regulation 19) consultation

It is through the process of evidence gathering and public consultation that the following policy has been included in the Local Plan:

### **Policy T1 - Transport and Infrastructure**

This policy sets out how the Local Plan will facilitate new, or improvements to, infrastructure to aid the delivery of the District's needs. This includes providing more opportunities for sustainable travel modes, creating electrical vehicle charging points and explaining how deficiencies in infrastructure will be addressed.