

**Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Proposed Submission Version
Response to Inspector's Initial Question 5 – Additional Information
July 2019**

Strategic v detailed elements of policy

This note is prepared in response to Inspector's Question 5:

5. Does the Plan clearly identify which policies are strategic in accordance with paragraph 21 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)?

The Council's response (ED3 June 2019) was:

The two policies within Chapter 1 are labelled as strategic (ST) policies, namely ST1 (A balanced strategy for growth in a constrained District) and ST2 (Housing and mixed use site allocations).

NPPF paragraphs 20-21 outline the extent of strategic policies concerning housing (and affordable housing), employment, retail and leisure, infrastructure, community facilities, natural/built/historic environment and climate change.

These elements are also covered in policies H1 (Housing Mix), H2 (Affordable Housing), EMP1 (Economy), EMP2 (Town/Local Centres), T1 (Transport and Infrastructure), LA1 (Landscape and AONB), EN1 (Design), HEN1 (Historic Environment) and CC1 (Climate Change, Flooding and Water Management).

*It is suggested that the strategic elements of the above policies (as opposed to the more detailed development management aspects of these policies) are set out in the policy text as **bold type**, to distinguish them from the non-strategic elements of the policy. The Council would be willing to consider any alternative approaches to distinguish the strategic elements of the above policies.*

Therefore, this note reproduces the following policies, which now incorporate bold type, to indicate the strategic elements of the policy:

- H1 (Housing Mix)
- H2 (Affordable Housing)
- EMP1 (Economy)
- EMP2 (Town/Local Centres)
- T1 (Transport and Infrastructure)
- LA1 (Landscape and AONB)
- EN1 (Design)
- HEN1 (Historic Environment)
- CC1 (Climate Change, Flooding and Water Management)

(Please note where there are '...' at the end of the policy wording in this document, this indicates that the remainder of the policy covers non-strategic matters)

**Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Proposed Submission Version
Response to Inspector’s Initial Question 5 – Additional Information
July 2019**

Policy H1 - Market and affordable housing mix

New housing development, including through conversion and change of use, will be expected to contribute to a variety of housing types to reflect and respond to the identified needs of different groups, and to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. This includes housing for Local Essential Workers and people wishing to build their own homes.

New housing development, including through conversion and change of use, will be expected to contribute to a variety of house sizes in line with the below requirements, where appropriate, to increase the proportion of smaller units across the District, unless it can be demonstrated that an alternative mix meets an identified local need:

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Market	5-10%	25-30%	40-45%	20-25%
Affordable	30-35%	30-35%	25-30%	5-10%
All dwellings	15-20%	25-30%	35-40%	15-20%

New housing development specifically designed for older people, including specialist retirement accommodation and registered care homes (particularly dementia-specialist) both market and affordable, will be supported where they are in sustainable locations close to services, facilities and transport links. Flatted developments of 4 or more storeys must incorporate an accessible lift. Proposals for retirement villages will be supported where they meet an identified need.

All new build housing development will be expected to meet the optional technical standard M4(2) for accessible and adaptable dwellings, as set out in the Building Regulations, in order to provide homes for life.

On new build housing developments of 20 units or more, at least 5% will be expected to meet the optional technical standard M4(3) for wheelchair user dwellings, to support people with physical disabilities. These units should be provided as affordable housing.

New build housing development must meet the minimum nationally described space standards unless it can be demonstrated that there are unique circumstances why some, or all, of these requirements cannot be met (for example micro homes).

**Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Proposed Submission Version
Response to Inspector’s Initial Question 5 – Additional Information
July 2019**

Policy H2 - Provision of Affordable Housing

New housing development will be expected to contribute to the delivery of affordable housing (including social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing) as follows:

Number of new homes in the development (net)	% affordable housing required	Type of provision required
0-5	0	n/a
6-9	20	Financial contribution
10+ (already developed sites)	30	To be provided on-site unless the Council advises that a financial contribution is preferred
10+ (greenfield sites)	40	

Where there are differing affordable housing needs across the District, as set out in the LHNS and in the Affordable Housing SPD, proposals will be expected to address the localised identified need, where appropriate. This will help to deliver new affordable housing where there is the highest level of need.

Where an element of affordable housing is required, the preferred tenure mix is 76% social/affordable rented and 24% intermediate housing, unless it can be demonstrated that an alternative mix meets an identified local need.

On the rare occasions that it is demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction through an independent assessment of viability that on-site provision in accordance with the policy would not be viable, the Council will consider the following options in priority order:

1. A reduced level of provision on-site plus a financial contribution in lieu of the shortfall;
2. A financial contribution in lieu of any affordable housing provision on-site;
3. Provision of the number of affordable units on an alternative site within Sevenoaks District, to be secured by the applicant and agreed by the Council.

**Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Proposed Submission Version
Response to Inspector's Initial Question 5 – Additional Information
July 2019**

Policy EMP1 - Supporting a Vibrant and Balanced Economy

Non-residential use of land and/or buildings will be retained unless it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer feasible or viable. For any proposed redevelopment or conversion all employment generating uses will need to be fully considered before a residential scheme. This includes considering the location, existing use, heritage value and local needs of the site and surrounding area. Redevelopment of employment sites no longer fit for purpose to provide for high quality non-residential premises will be supported where the economic value of the site is retained, either through an equivalent amount of floorspace or total number of jobs, demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council.

Employment sites (allocated or non-allocated) will be retained in existing use to support the vibrant and balanced economy of the District. Applicants seeking to redevelop existing employment sites (allocated or non-allocated) must provide sufficient information to show that the site has been proactively marketed, at the appropriate price and using all relevant publications, for potentially suitable uses of the existing buildings, or the partial or comprehensive redevelopment of the site. Marketing must be for a period of at least one year at a time when the site is available or will be available shortly. In addition, applicants must demonstrate that forecast changes in market conditions will not result in the take up of all or part of the site.

Where it has been demonstrated, to the Council's satisfaction, through an independent assessment, that the current use is no longer viable and that there is no reasonable prospect of their take up or continued use during the Plan period, proposals for redevelopment must consider these uses in the following in order:

1. Other business uses (B1a, B1b, B1c, B2, B8 or A2)
2. All other non-residential, employment generating uses
3. Residential employment generating uses (C1, C2)
4. Wholly residential schemes (C3)

Redevelopment of employment sites (allocated or non-allocated) for mixed use may be permitted where such development:

- would facilitate the regeneration of the site to more effectively meet the needs of modern business, and
- where the employment capacity of the site, represented by commercial floorspace, is maintained,
- and where a mixed use development would represent a sustainable approach consistent with the general distribution of development.

All office accommodation on allocated sites will be served an Article 4 direction to retain important business space to meet the needs of the District's economy.

The following sites, will be retained, intensified and regenerated for employment use...

**Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Proposed Submission Version
Response to Inspector's Initial Question 5 – Additional Information
July 2019**

Policy EMP2 - Town and Local Centres

The distribution of additional retail floorspace required over the course of the Local Plan will be allocated according to the most sustainable locations as defined by the Settlement Hierarchy and Retail Study. Proposals will encourage the reuse of existing retail units, where appropriate, to ensure active frontages.

Within the defined town centre boundaries of Sevenoaks, Swanley, Edenbridge and Westerham, town centre uses which meet the needs of the town they serve will be permitted. Town centre developments which include a residential element will be permitted, providing that the residential element is not proposed at the ground floor.

New development in the town centre should be of a scale consistent with the existing character of the centre and should contribute to improving the quality of the town centre environment. Town centre car parking will be managed to ensure adequate and convenient provision for shoppers and appropriate provision for long stay car parking. Charging points for electric vehicle charging will be provided where possible.

Within the defined local centres boundaries of Hartley, New Ash Green and Otford, appropriate small scale town centre uses which better meet the needs of the town centre that they serve will be permitted. New development in the local centre should be of a scale consistent with the existing character of the centre and should contribute to improving the quality of the town centre environment.

Proposals to develop new retail provision in neighbourhood and village centres will be permitted, where the development is of a scale consistent with the existing character of the centre and does not undermine the balance of existing uses.

New development for town centre uses outside of the defined town or local centre boundary will be assessed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework sequential test. An impact assessment will be required for any proposed retail development with a net floorspace of 1,000 sqm.

Within village and neighbourhood centres a range of shops (A1 Class use) and facilities (A2, A3, A4 and A5) will be maintained to meet the day-to-day retail needs of the communities which they serve.

Protection of Community uses

The loss of local services and facilities will be resisted where they are serving a local need. Exceptions will be made where equivalent replacement facilities equally accessible to the population served are provided, or where it is demonstrated, through evidence submitted that the continued operation of the service or facility is no longer needed or financially viable.

**Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Proposed Submission Version
Response to Inspector's Initial Question 5 – Additional Information
July 2019**

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 local need for community facilities.

Proposals for change of use or redevelopment for alternative non community uses will only be considered if it is demonstrated by the applicant that there is no identified community need that can be facilitated through the site, or that community facilities that meet the identified need are incorporated into a wider mixed use scheme.

**Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Proposed Submission Version
Response to Inspector's Initial Question 5 – Additional Information
July 2019**

Policy T1 - Transport & Infrastructure

Working in partnership with Kent County Council, Highways England and other transport delivery partners, the Local Plan will mitigate any adverse travel impacts created by new developments, including impacts on traffic congestion and safety, environmental and noise impact, air quality and impacts on amenity, health and wellbeing. This may mean ensuring adequate provision is made for integrated and improved transport infrastructure (such as rail, bus and cycling) with other appropriate mitigation through direct improvements and/or developer contributions.

Promotion of safe and convenient cycle routes must be considered, where development is situated in sustainable locations with access to day-to-day services and facilities. This may include:

- Provision of new cycling routes to key locations and transport interchanges;
- Enhancing existing cycling routes and improving the existing cycle network within the vicinity of the development;
- Adequate cycle storage that is accessible and secure within new development;
- Integrating new pedestrian and cycle routes with the Public Rights of Way (PROW) network.

Vehicle parking, including cycle parking, in new residential and non-residential developments should be made in accordance with advice provided by Kent County Council as the Local Highway Authority as well as the current KCC vehicle parking standards in Interim Guidance Note 3 to the Kent Design Guide (or any subsequent replacement).

Notwithstanding, the Council may depart from established maxima or minima standards in order to take account of specific local circumstances that may require a higher or lower level of parking provision, including as a result of the development site's accessibility to public transport, shops and services, highway safety concerns and local on-street parking problems.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

All non-residential development proposals with car parking must include electric vehicle charging points for use by employees or customers. In addition, all schemes must include publically accessible rapid electric vehicle charging points where possible and appropriate. The number of points to be provided will be at the discretion of the Council and will be determined by:

- The size and type of the new development
- The number of expected employees, customers or car parking spaces
- The accessibility of the location
- The expected length of stay

**Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Proposed Submission Version
Response to Inspector's Initial Question 5 – Additional Information
July 2019**

Within new residential developments all new houses with a garage or off street parking must include an external electrical socket with suitable voltage and wiring for the safe charging of electrical vehicles.

Schemes for new apartments and houses with separate parking areas must include a scheme for communal charging points. The number of points to be provided will be determined by the number of housing units to ensure charging points are readily available.

All new developments must also have sufficient infrastructure to provide additional charging points to meet future demand.

Management arrangements should be in place for all publically available or communal electric vehicle charging points to ensure charging points are working and readily available. This may include:

- Regular maintenance to ensure points are not faulty
- Ensuring any faulty points are fixed quickly
- Maximum charge times and sanctions for users who block access to a point for other users.

Infrastructure Delivery

The development of infrastructure facilities required to resolve existing deficiencies will be supported, in relation to the scale and distribution of development proposed in the Local Plan. The phasing of development must be coordinated with the delivery of infrastructure from infrastructure providers to serve the development and wider area. Developers must demonstrate that the phasing of development will not place additional pressure on the existing provision.

Where new development creates a requirement for new or improved infrastructure beyond existing provision, developers will be expected to provide, or contribute towards, the additional requirement to maintain sufficient provision of infrastructure for the community.

Where new development occurs, developers will be expected to ensure that development is technology-ready, including the provision for high quality telecommunications and broadband connections.

The Community Infrastructure Levy will continue to be used to secure contributions to help fund strategic infrastructure and facilitate sustainable growth throughout Sevenoaks District. Any strategic infrastructure projects that are identified as "critical" will be identified on the Regulation 123 List.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan supports the implementation of the Local Plan and outlines how and when necessary infrastructure schemes will be delivered.

**Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Proposed Submission Version
Response to Inspector's Initial Question 5 – Additional Information
July 2019**

Policy LA1 - Landscape and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The landscape character of the District and the countryside, including areas of tranquillity, will be conserved and the distinctive features that contribute to the special character will be protected and will be enhanced where possible.

The Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and their settings will be given the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.

Proposals within the AONB and their settings must conserve and enhance the character of the landscape and its special qualities with regard to the relevant management plan, associated documents and position statements. It must be demonstrated that consideration has been given to the:

- Rural economic impact, either positive or negative
- Historic use of buildings, site and surroundings
- The historic landscape and impact on the historic environment
- Impact on scenic beauty.

Developments must demonstrate appropriate:

- Scale and form
- Layout in relation to adjacent settlements and settlements patterns
- Use of materials and colours

Enhancement may include but is not limited to:

- Improvement of scenic beauty e.g. the removal or improvement of currently detrimental buildings or features; or by obscuring or distracting from negative features such as pylons, substations and major roads.
- Restoring historic features and replacing existing materials with more appropriate and local materials
- Supporting the local economy e.g. 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
- Restoration of native planting and natural features including trees, hedgerows, meadows and grassland.
- Improving tranquillity and reducing the existing impact of noise and lighting

**Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Proposed Submission Version
Response to Inspector's Initial Question 5 – Additional Information
July 2019**

Policy EN1 - Design Principles

Proposals must exhibit high quality design and respond to the distinctive local character of the area. New development must create safe, inclusive and attractive environments that meet the needs of users, incorporate principles of sustainable development and maintain and enhance biodiversity. Developments must all be designed to promote healthy living opportunities both mental and physical.

Applicants will be expected to follow a thorough design process appropriate to the scale of development proposed. This should include survey and analysis of the site and its wider context including policy, guidance and character assessments, early engagement with the community and other relevant stakeholders, establishment of clear design principles for the site and exploration of design options.

All new developments must meet the following design criteria and set out how this has been achieved in a supporting statement. The additional details set out in the Design Appendix also needs to be addressed...

**Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Proposed Submission Version
Response to Inspector's Initial Question 5 – Additional Information
July 2019**

Policy HEN1 - Historic Environment

Proposals for development will be required to reflect the local distinctiveness, condition and sensitivity to change of the historic environment as defined in the following guidance:

- Local Plan policies relating to design, heritage assets and landscape character
- Other relevant principles in the hierarchy of local guidance including the Kent Design SPD, Kent Historic Environment Record (HER) and the Local List SPD
- Findings as set out in the Sevenoaks District Historic Environment Review, Conservation Area Appraisals, Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment.

All new development should demonstrate an awareness and commitment to the overall protection and, where possible, enhancement of the historic environment of the District by making positive reference to the themes in the Historic Environment Review and demonstrating the following in Planning Statements or Design and Access Statements:

- a. Clear consideration of the relationship with the historic evolution of the District and local area
- b. A broad appreciation of the historic character of the local area including current conditions
- c. An understanding of the presence of heritage assets and their associated significance, vulnerabilities and opportunities

**Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan Proposed Submission Version
Response to Inspector's Initial Question 5 – Additional Information
July 2019**

Policy CC1 – Climate Change, Flooding and Water Management

Climate Change

We will contribute to reducing the causes and effects of climate change by promoting best practice in sustainable design and construction to improve the energy and water efficiency of all new development. We will support climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, including:

- a. Appropriate small scale community led renewable energy schemes;
- b. Small scale renewable and low carbon technologies where appropriate (e.g. solar panels);
- c. Reducing the need to travel by sustainably locating new housing and supporting the level of services and facilities;
- d. Promoting sustainable design measures for new developments including passive solar design;
- e. Utilising opportunities for decentralised energy and heating where appropriate;
- f. Protecting existing green spaces, trees and vegetation to absorb carbon dioxide, provide summer shading, retain and create habitats and reduce surface water runoff; and
- g. Resilient drainage design which includes a climate change allowance.

All new non-domestic development (including conversions) must achieve BREEAM "Excellent" standards. Applicants will be expected to provide certification evidence of the levels for BREEAM at the design stage and on completion of development...