

July 2022

# Sevenoaks District Settlement Hierarchy



This page has been left intentionally blank.

## Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Executive Summary and the Sevenoaks District Settlement Hierarchy	5
Introduction	7
Policy Context	10
District Profile	13
Methodology	17
Settlement Scoring	19
Settlement Hierarchy for Sevenoaks District 2022	30
Settlement Profile	33
Conclusion	35

Figure 1: Example of a Settlement Hierarchy	8
Figure 2: Sevenoaks District map showing key transport routes	14
Figure 3: Settlement Hierarchy map	32

This page has been left intentionally blank.

## Executive Summary

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to identify within their Local Plans, appropriate locations for development. These should account for social, economic and environmental opportunities and ensure that the location of development is sustainable.

The Settlement Hierarchy is a useful tool to determine the role of settlements, according to a number of factors, including population size, services and facilities available within a settlement, consideration of Green Belt boundaries and transport connections.

The Settlement Hierarchy for Sevenoaks District has six settlement classifications, ranking from the most sustainable (Principal Town Centre) to the least sustainable type of settlements (Hamlets), including the addition of a new category, Service Villages.

This updated Settlement Hierarchy focuses more than ever on the sustainability of settlements. We have taken into consideration a greater range of services, as well as re-evaluating the scoring in order to afford more weight to the most important facilities.

This Settlement Hierarchy has also taken into account the changes the country has seen in light of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the national and district-wide priority of Climate Change.



Image 1: Sevenoaks Town

## Settlement Hierarchy for Sevenoaks District

<b>Principal Town</b>	Sevenoaks Urban Area (Sevenoaks Town including Bessels Green, Chipstead, Dunton Green and Riverhead)
<b>Towns</b>	Swanley, Edenbridge (including Marlpit Hill) and Westerham
<b>Local Service Centres</b>	New Ash Green and Otford
<b>Service Villages</b>	Hartley and West Kingsdown
<b>Villages (14)</b>	South Darenth, Kemsing, Hextable, Eynsford, Brasted, Seal, Halstead, Crockenhill, Shoreham, Farningham, Sevenoaks Weald, Leigh, Sundridge and Horton Kirby
<b>Hamlets (29)</b>	<u>Four Elms</u> , <u>Hever</u> , Knockholt (including Knockholt Pound), <u>Penshurst</u> , <u>Ide Hill</u> , Badgers Mount, <u>Chiddingstone Causeway</u> , <u>Chiddingstone</u> , <u>Fordcombe</u> , <u>Cowden</u> , <u>Crockham Hill</u> , <u>Fawkham</u> , <u>Underriver</u> , <u>Ash</u> , Pratts Bottom, <u>Stone Street</u> , <u>Mark Beech</u> , <u>Bitchet Green</u> , <u>Bough Beech</u> , <u>Hodsoll Street</u> , <u>Swanley Village</u> , <u>Heaverham</u> , <u>Chiddingstone Hoath</u> , <u>Marsh Green</u> , <u>Toys Hill</u> , <u>Chevening</u> , <u>Godden Green</u> , <u>Knatts Valley</u> and <u>Well Hill</u>

N.B. Settlements that have been underlined are washed over by the Metropolitan Green Belt. Whilst Knockholt (including Knockholt Pound), Badgers Mount and Pratts Bottom have been classified as Hamlets due to limited services and facilities, the settlements do have a defined Green Belt boundary.

## Introduction

- 1.1. In 2011, Sevenoaks District Council adopted its Core Strategy, which sets out the overarching strategy and vision for the District up to 2026 as well as identifying a number of key strategic policies to enable the vision to be delivered.
- 1.2. The Council also adopted its Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) in 2015. The Council is currently developing a new Local Plan. In order to achieve this, the Council is preparing a new evidence base to reflect the current circumstances of Sevenoaks District. Once adopted, the new Local Plan will replace the current Core Strategy and ADMP.
- 1.3. The Settlement Hierarchy is a key piece of evidence that will be used to prepare the emerging Local Plan. It helps to define the role, function and sustainability of each settlement within Sevenoaks District. This document will help to inform the profile of settlements as well as their capacity to accommodate future development requirements.



Image 2: Swanley

- 1.4. The Sevenoaks District has a total of 56 settlements which vary in size, character and function. These include a number of towns, villages and hamlets, which consist of only a small number of homes.
- 1.5. The Settlement Hierarchy is a way of categorising the settlements in the District, in order to understand their different roles. The hierarchy groups together the settlements that have similar characteristics.
- 1.6. An example of a Settlement Hierarchy is shown at Figure 1 below. At the top of the hierarchy are the larger settlements that fulfil the most functions, have the best infrastructure provision (facilities and services) and are the most accessible by sustainable forms of transport. The smaller settlements, with fewer functions, infrastructure and transport links are nearer to the bottom of the hierarchy. This will help the Council determine which settlements are the most suitable to accommodate additional growth

Figure 1 – Example of a Settlement Hierarchy



N.B. Settlements with the best access to services and are considered the most sustainable are located at the top of the Settlement Hierarchy, whereas settlements with little to no access to services, which are considered least sustainable, are located towards the bottom of the Settlement Hierarchy.



- 1.7. The Sevenoaks District Settlement Hierarchy was first prepared in 2007/2008 and subsequently updated in July 2009 and October 2014.
- 1.8. The most recent iteration of the Settlement Hierarchy was published in 2018 and included an audit of key services and facilities for each settlement. An update to the Settlement Hierarchy is now necessary due to the recent changes to local centres, which have been influenced by outside factors such as climate change, population changes, a shift to online shopping and more recently the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.9. The purpose of this document is to outline the new Settlement Hierarchy for Sevenoaks District and how it will help to inform the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.10. This document:
  - Provides a brief overview of the national and local planning policy context;
  - Describes the broad methodology used to develop the Hierarchy; and
  - Outlines and justifies the classification of each of the District's Settlements.



Image 3: Edenbridge

## Policy Context

### National Policy Context

“Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area”

(NPPF 2021, Paragraph 9)

- 2.1. National planning policy states that any development should take place within the most sustainable and deliverable locations. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 states that a series of land-planning principles should be used when undertaking plan making and decision taking, in order to maintain sustainable development.
- 2.2. At Paragraph 93, the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should “*plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments*”.
- 2.3. The NPPF sets out individual planning policies for specific elements of development. Regarding the development of town centres, paragraph 86 states that planning policies and decisions should “*support the role that town centres play at the heart of their local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation*”. This include the development of strong rural economies, which is important for the majority of settlements within the Sevenoaks District.
- 2.4. The Settlement Hierarchy plays a key role in ensuring development takes place in the most sustainable locations. Paragraph 142 of the NPPF promotes “sustainable patterns of development” and highlights that, when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, Local Planning Authorities should “consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary”.
- 2.5. Where Green Belt is required to be released for development, Paragraph 142 makes clear that “plans should give first consideration to land which is well-served by public transport”.

### Local Policy Context

The Council promises to “Protect the strong local identities of our neighbourhoods, ensuring residents will be safe, healthy and proud of the area in which they live and work”

(The Council Plan, 2018)

- 2.6. Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) is currently preparing a new Local Plan. The Council has produced adopted policies through the Core Strategy (2011) and the Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) (2015) to reflect the national planning policy and guidance.
- 2.7. The over-arching aims of the Core Strategy’s Spatial Vision promote sustainable development within the District throughout the plan period, including the commitment to “locate development in sustainable locations” as well as “[...] ensuring that the main focus for major developments is Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge” (ADMP, paragraph 1.5).
- 2.8. The policies within the ADMP are reflective of the adopted policies within the Core Strategy, while maintaining compliance with the NPPF. ADMP Policy SC1 sets out that all development within the District will be in favour of sustainable development whereby “[...] the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the National Planning Policy Framework”.
- 2.9. This allows the Sevenoaks District to develop in a positive and sustainable manner. The Council is aware of the constraints that affect development within the District and have adopted policies that consider these. This accounts to protection of community services and amenity, within settlements of the District, especially rural settlements.
- 2.10. The ADMP recognises that local shopping provision is important to many settlements within the District and small scale retail development should be allowed, in scale with the settlement. This can be split into town and local centres.
- 2.11. Under Core Strategy Policy LO7, the Council seeks to retain local services and facilities, in order to manage the sustainability of rural locations and settlements, including the local character and the needs for services. This has been extended within the ADMP, whereby neighbourhood services within urban confines are equally important as those services that can be lost in rural settlements (ADMP Policy CF2).

## Emerging Local Plan

- 2.12.** The Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan. The emerging Local Plan will be based on an up-to-date evidence base, including demographic changes and the need for new homes, employment and retail land across Sevenoaks District.
- 2.13.** It is expected that development will be distributed and delivered according to the sustainability of the settlements within the District. The Settlement Hierarchy will therefore form part of the Evidence Base, which will help to inform and determine the general distribution of development in the emerging Local Plan.

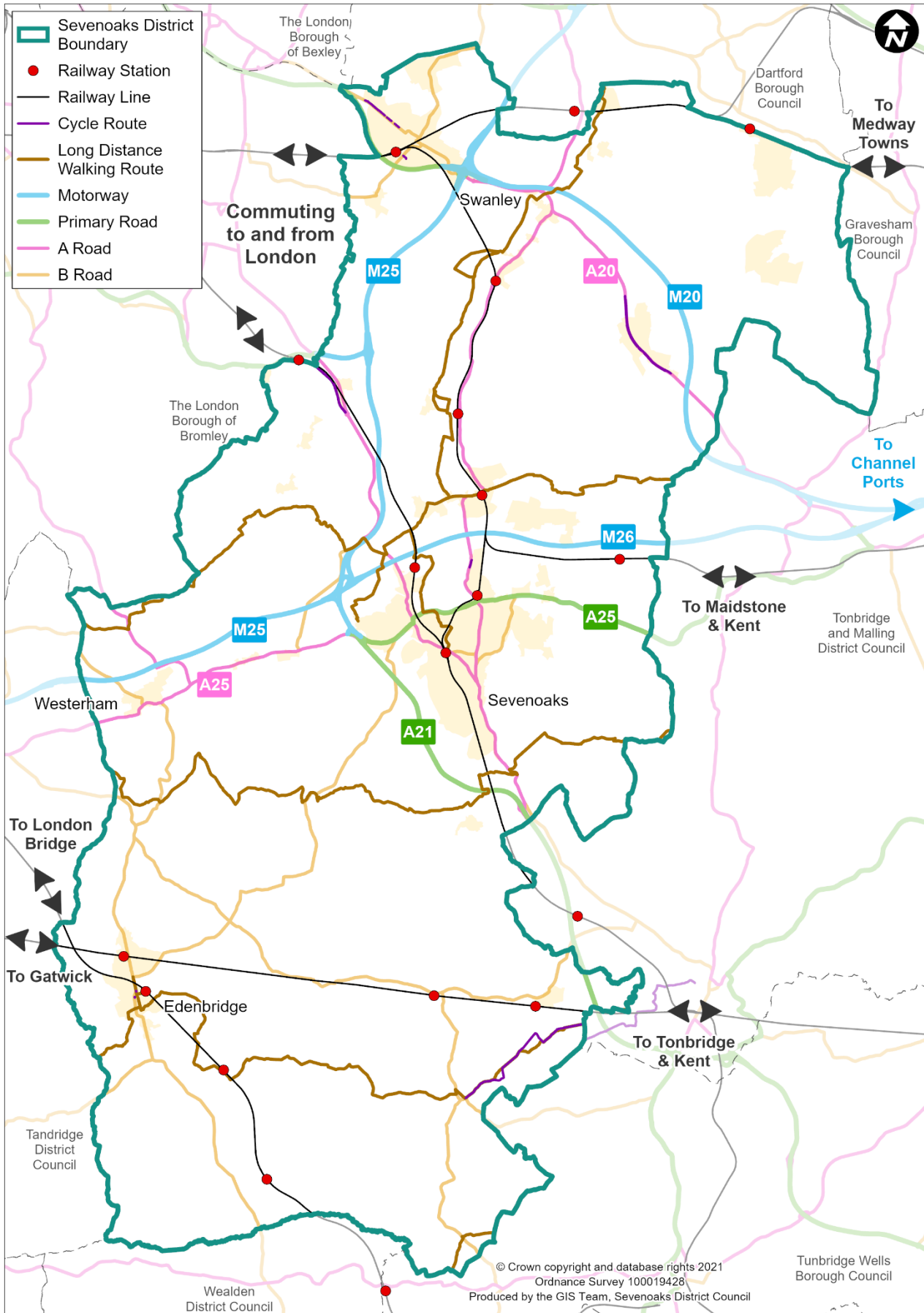


Image 4: Westerham

## District Profile

- 3.1.** Located in West Kent, Sevenoaks District is a high quality landscape with a mostly rural character. The District covers almost 143 square miles, of which 93% is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB). 60% of Sevenoaks District lies within the Kent Downs or High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Both land designations are important in terms of national planning policy and guidance, with AONBs seen as landscapes of national importance.
- 3.2.** Within Sevenoaks District, there are also many areas of woodland, much of which is designated as Ancient Woodland, one Country Park and a large network of Public Rights of Way (PROWs).
- 3.3.** The District has a number of major roads, including the M25, M26, M20, A25 and A21 (as shown in Figure 2 overleaf). These provide access to Greater London, Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted airports, as well as Ashford and Ebbsfleet international stations and the Channel Ports.
- 3.4.** Rail services are focused on lines to London, though services also run towards the Kent and Sussex coastline, Gatwick (via Redhill and Edenbridge), Uckfield and East Croydon. A majority of the larger settlements, as well as a number of the smaller settlements, in the District have access to at least one rail station (as shown in Table 7).
- 3.5.** There are 56 settlements within Sevenoaks District. As it is a predominantly rural District, there are a number of villages and smaller settlements as well as some well-defined urban areas.

Figure 2: Sevenoaks District map showing key transport routes



3.6. Approximately half of the settlements within the District have a defined Green Belt boundary. These tend to be the larger settlements and villages, with the remainder of the settlements washed over by the Metropolitan Green belt. This is set out in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Settlement Green Belt Boundaries**

Settlements with defined Green Belt boundaries	Settlements washed over by the Green Belt
Sevenoaks Town	Four Elms
Bessels Green	Hever
Chipstead	Penshurst
Dunton Green	Ide Hill
Riverhead	Chiddingstone Causeway
Swanley	Chiddingstone
Edenbridge	Fordcombe
Marlpit Hill	Cowden
Westerham	Crockham Hill
New Ash Green	Fawkham
Otford	Underriver
Hartley	Ash
West Kingsdown	Stone Street
South Darenth	Mark Beech
Kemsing	Bitchet Green
Hextable	Bough Beech
Eynsford	Hodsoll Street
Brasted	Swanley Village
Seal	Heaverham
Halstead	Chiddingstone Hoath
Crockenhill	Marsh Green
Shoreham	Toys Hill
Farningham	Chevening
Sevenoaks Weald	Godden Green
Leigh	Knatts Valley
Sundridge	Well Hill
Horton Kirby	
Knockholt	
Knockholt Pound	
Badgers Mount	
Pratts Bottom	

- 3.7. Settlements across the District provide a range of facilities and services which support the day to day activities of residents, with some settlements having a wider and greater number of services than others.
- 3.8. Due to the rural character of the Sevenoaks District, a number of smaller settlements have a limited number of services and facilities available to them, and residents may travel to the larger settlements, as well as surrounding areas outside of the District, to use particular services.
- 3.9. It is worth noting that some settlements may be washed over by the Green Belt and offer a greater number of services and facilities than those which do have defined Green Belt boundaries.



Image 5: Chiddingstone



## Methodology

- 4.1. This section sets out the methodology and justification for producing this update to the Settlement Hierarchy.
- 4.2. The NPPF states at paragraph 150 that Local Plans “are the key to delivering sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities”. Paragraph 152 also sets out that Local Plans should seek to achieve sustainable development across social, economic and environmental dimensions. Therefore, it is important that the Local Plan allocates potential development sites in sustainable locations, which would meet the future requirements of residents.
- 4.3. The Settlement Hierarchy uses the criteria set out in Table 2 below to determine the position and grouping of the settlements.

**Table 2 – Criteria Included in the Settlement Hierarchy**

Criteria Used	Justification
<b>The population of a settlement</b>	The population of a settlement serves as a good indicator of its size. This can then be used proportionally against the other criteria to determine the position of a settlement in the hierarchy
<b>Facilities and services to meet the daily needs of residents</b>	The range of facilities and services available in each settlement gives an indication to how sustainable a settlement is. It also indicates whether a settlement is dependent on others to provide the facilities and services for its residents
<b>Access to education</b>	Access to education is considered as a key service for a settlement and the local community. Access to education encompasses all forms of education provision (i.e. primary, secondary and higher education), with the exception of private education.
<b>Access to health services</b>	Access to health services is an important service within a community. Therefore, this is identified as a facility that contributes towards a settlement being sustainable.
<b>Connectivity and access to public transport</b>	It is important that a settlement is connected by public transport and allows greater choice and opportunities for residents to travel. Therefore, public transport is important when looking at the sustainability of a settlement.

Criteria Used	Justification
<b>A defined Green Belt boundary</b>	Settlements with a defined Green Belt boundary are more likely to be sustainable locations than those that are washed over by the Green Belt. Identifying opportunities for urban renewal and regeneration to contribute towards the sustainability of a settlement is increasingly likely with larger towns and villages which are not designated as Green Belt.



Image 6: Otford

## Settlement Scoring

### Population

- 5.1. As the 2011 Census population data is now considered outdated, approximate population figures for each settlement have been derived from the mid-year population projections (2020) from the Office of National Statistics, using Output Area (OA) data.
- 5.2. In most cases, OA boundaries are not the same as the settlement boundaries. Where a OA lies fully within the settlement boundary, then the total population for the area has been included in the settlement population total. If a OA lies partially within the settlement boundary, then a percentage of the population has been included in the total, depending on the percentage of residential unit that lie within both the settlement boundary and the OA. Therefore, the quoted populations may not be exact.
- 5.3. For settlements which do not have a defined Green Belt boundary, it has not been possible to calculate the populations in the same format. However, since these settlements are much smaller in size and their populations would be under 1000 residents, this will not have an effect on the scoring.
- 5.4. One point has been awarded for every 1000<sup>th</sup> resident within each settlement. It is important to note that the populations have not been rounded up for the purposes of scoring. The population total for Sevenoaks Urban Area includes all settlements that lie within the defined Green Belt boundary. The population findings and scores are set out in Table 4.



Image 7: Penshurst

Table 3 – Settlement Population and Scores

Settlement	Population	Population Score (per 1000 <sup>th</sup> resident)
Sevenoaks Urban Area (Sevenoaks Town including Bessels Green, Chipstead, Dunton Green and Riverhead)	30,663	30
Swanley	16,860	16
Edenbridge (including Marlpit Hill)	8,833	8
Westerham	3,229	3
New Ash Green	5,557	5
Otford	3,264	3
Hartley	4,786	4
West Kingsdown	4,032	4
South Darenth	2,054	2
Hextable	4,011	4
Kemsing	3,725	3
Eynsford	1,417	1
Brasted	488	0
Seal	1,387	1
Halstead	618	0
Crockenhill	1,185	1
Shoreham	662	0
Farningham	933	0
Sevenoaks Weald	650	0
Leigh	878	0
Sundridge	636	0
Horton Kirby	747	0
Four Elms	N/A	0
Hever	N/A	0
Knockholt (including Knockholt Pound)	497	0
Penshurst	N/A	0
Ide Hill	N/A	0
Badgers Mount	584	0
Chiddingstone Causeway	N/A	0
Chiddingstone	N/A	0
Fordcombe	N/A	0
Cowden	N/A	0
Crockham Hill	N/A	0
Fawkham	N/A	0
Underriver	N/A	0
Ash	N/A	0
Pratts Bottom	135	0
Stone Street	N/A	0
Mark Beech	N/A	0

Settlement	Population	Population Score (per 1000 <sup>th</sup> resident)
Bitchet Green	N/A	0
Bough Beech	N/A	0
Hodsoll Street	N/A	0
Swanley Village	N/A	0
Heaverham	N/A	0
Chiddingstone Hoath	N/A	0
Marsh Green	N/A	0
Toys Hill	N/A	0
Chevening	N/A	0
Godden Green	N/A	0
Knatts Valley	N/A	0
Well Hill	N/A	0



Image 8: Eynsford

## Green Belt Boundaries

- 5.5. Settlements with a defined Green Belt boundary are more likely to be sustainable locations than those which are washed over by the Green Belt. Identifying opportunities for urban renewal and regeneration to contribute towards the sustainability of a settlement is increasingly likely with larger towns and villages which are not designated as Green Belt.
- 5.6. The following settlements have a defined Green Belt boundary and therefore will receive one point each:

**Table 4 – Settlements with defined Green Belt boundaries:**

Sevenoaks Urban Area	Seal
Swanley	Halstead
Edenbridge (including Marlpit Hill)	Crockenhill
Westerham	Shoreham
New Ash Green	Farningham
Otford	Sevenoaks Weald
Hartley	Leigh
West Kingsdown	Sundridge
South Darenth	Horton Kirby
Kemsing	Knockholt (including Knockholt Pound)
Hextable	Badgers Mount
Eynsford	Pratts Bottom
Brasted	

- 5.7. It is important to highlight that Sevenoaks Urban Area has been given one point between all settlements within the defined settlement boundary.

## Transport Links

- 5.8. The District has strong rail connections, given its proximity into London and other nearby key destinations such as Bromley, Tunbridge Wells and Hastings. There are four rail lines that run through the District:
- The London to Tonbridge mainline servicing Sevenoaks, Dunton Green and Knockholt;
  - The Swanley to Maidstone East line servicing Eynsford, Kemsing, Otford, Shoreham and Swanley
  - The Tonbridge to Redhill (via Edenbridge) line which services Leigh, Chiddingstone Causeway and Edenbridge; and
  - The Uckfield to London line servicing Cowden, Hever and Edenbridge

- 5.9.** Sevenoaks Urban Area has three stations available, which offer services to different destinations. Sevenoaks Station, Bat and Ball Station and Dunton Green all have services to London Terminals. Edenbridge has two stations, with Edenbridge Town having services to London Terminals, and Edenbridge Station also having access to Gatwick Airport via the Tonbridge to Redhill line. There is no direct service between Sevenoaks and Edenbridge.
- 5.10.** It is important to highlight that in this update to the Settlement Hierarchy, the following changes have been made:
- Knockholt Station has been listed as serving Halstead, Badgers Mount and Pratts Bottom. The scoring has not been included for the Settlement of Knockholt, due to its distance from the station.
  - Farningham Road station has been included as serving the settlement of South Darenth.
- 5.11.** For the purposes of this scoring, peak and off peak times have been defined as follows:
- Peak – services that depart from the station between 07:00 and 10:00
  - Off-peak – services that depart from a station after 10:00
- 5.12.** The following stations are located outside of the District boundary, and have been included due to their proximity to settlements within the District and playing a key role in the sustainability of the settlement:
- Farningham Road Station
  - Knockholt Station
  - Longfield Station
- 5.13.** It is also important to highlight that Hildenborough Station also serves many residents in the south of the District, providing services to London and the south coast. Since this serves a number of residents across the south of the District, and not any particular settlement, Hildenborough Station has not been included in the scoring.
- 5.14.** Table 5 overleaf sets out the methodology for rail service scoring. The final scores are then set out in Table 6 on page 25.

Table 5 – Methodology for rail service scoring

<b>Peak Scoring</b>	One service per hour: 1 point Two or more services per hour: 2 points
<b>Off-Peak Scoring</b>	One service per hour: 1 point Two or more services per hour: 2 points
<b>Number of Lines</b>	One point has been given for each additional line serving the station
<b>Fast Service to London</b>	One point has been given if the station has a fast service to London
<b>Within Walking Distance</b>	One point has been given where the station is within walking distance (up to 800m) from the settlement



Image 9: Swanley Station



Table 6 – Scoring for Rail Services

Settlement	Railway Station	Peak Score	Off-Peak Score	More than one line	Fast service to London	Within Walking Distance	Total Points
Chiddingstone Causeway	Penshurst	1	1	0	0	Yes	3
Cowden	Cowden	1	1	0	0	No	2
Dunton Green	Dunton Green	2	2	0	0	Yes	5
Edenbridge	Edenbridge Town	2	1	0	0	Yes	4
Edenbridge	Edenbridge	2	2	0	0	Yes	5
Eynsford	Eynsford	2	2	0	0	Yes	5
Hartley	Longfield*	2	2	0	0	Yes	5
Hever	Hever	1	1	0	0	No	2
Kemsing	Kemsing	2	1	0	0	No	3
Halstead	Knockholt*	2	2	0	0	No	4
Badgers Mount	Knockholt*	2	2	0	0	No	4
Pratts Bottom	Knockholt*	2	2	0	0	No	4
Leigh	Leigh	1	1	0	0	Yes	3
Otford	Otford	2	2	1	0	Yes	6
Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks	2	2	2	1	Yes	8
Sevenoaks	Bat and Ball	2	2	0	0	Yes	5
Shoreham	Shoreham	2	2	0	0	Yes	5
Swanley	Swanley	2	2	2	1	Yes	8
South Darent	Farningham Road*	2	1	0	0	Yes	4

\*Stations which are marked with an asterisk are located outside of the District boundary.

Facility Scoring

- 5.15. Many services and facilities contribute towards the sustainability of a settlement, meeting the daily needs of residents and providing a variety of services for a range of people.
- 5.16. It is important to recognise that the services and facilities that contribute towards a sustainable settlement and meet the daily needs of residents change regularly with current affairs. For example, in this Settlement Hierarchy it was important for us to include an audit of cycling routes and infrastructure, as well as Electric Vehicle Charging Points due to national and district-wide climate change priorities.
- 5.17. The way in which we have scored these services and facilities has also changed in this update to the Settlement Hierarchy. In this version, what we consider 'key' services and facilities have been afforded more weight and therefore scored higher, to account for the fact that they contribute more significantly to the sustainability of a settlement. For example, a Doctors Surgery would score 2 points, whereas a Flower Shop would score 1 point. This change to the scoring ensures that the most sustainable settlements are higher up the Hierarchy.
- 5.18. Table 7 below sets out the services and facilities which were audited, the services we consider as 'key' to the sustainability of a settlement and also sets out the scoring methodology.

Table 7 – Services and Facilities Scoring Methodology

	Services and Facilities	Key Service?	Scoring
<b>Transport</b>	Rail Services	Yes	See Table 6
	Bus Services	Yes	1 point per route
	Electric Vehicle Charging Points		1 point if Yes
	Public Bicycle Storage		1 point if Yes
	Cycle Lanes		1 point if Yes
<b>Education</b>	Primary School	Yes	2 points
	Secondary School		1 point
<b>Employment</b>	Designated Business Area		1 point (as designated in ADMP Employment policies)
<b>Health</b>	Doctors Surgery	Yes	2 points
	Dentist		1 point
	Hospital		1 point
	Older Persons Care Facility		1 point

	Services and Facilities	Key Service?	Scoring
<b>Retail</b>	Post Office	Yes	2 points
	Convenience Store / Newsagents / Pharmacy	Yes	2 points
	Bank / Building Society		1 point
	Superstore (over 2,500m <sup>2</sup> )		1 point
	Other Shops and Services (e.g. Butchers / Hairdressers)		1 point
	Pubs / Takeaways / Restaurants / Tea Rooms		1 point
<b>Community Facilities</b>	Community Hall	Yes	2 points
	Recreation Ground / Park	Yes	2 points
	Permanent / Mobile Library		1 point
	Place of Worship		1 point
	Recycling Facilities		1 point
	Playing Pitch		1 point
	Outdoor Sports Facilities		1 point
	Children's Play Area / Provision for Young People		1 point
	Major Indoor Sports & Leisure Facility		1 point
	Veterinary Practice		1 point
Hotel		1 point	



Image 10: Bessels Green

5.19. Table 8 shows the total facility score for each individual settlement, taking into account the criteria set out in Table 7. With the exception of Transport provision, each service has been given 2 points or more if there are multiple of the same facility. For example:

- If the settlement has a single doctor's surgery, it would score 2 points
- If the settlement has three doctor's surgeries, it would score 6 points, 2 for each surgery

5.20. Please note that the Services and Facilities scoring in Table 8 incorporates the scoring for both Green Belt boundaries and rail services, as identified in Tables 4 and 6.

**Table 8 – Services and Facilities scoring per settlement**

Settlement	Facility Score
Sevenoaks Urban Area (Sevenoaks Town including Bessels Green, Chipstead, Dunton Green and Riverhead)	722
Swanley	176
Edenbridge (including Marlpit Hill)	160
Westerham	98
New Ash Green	76
Otford	75
Hartley	66
West Kingsdown	61
South Darenth	48
Hextable	44
Kemsing	43
Eynsford	42
Brasted	40
Seal	38
Halstead	38
Crockenhill	35
Shoreham	33
Farningham	32
Sevenoaks Weald	31
Leigh	29
Sundridge	25
Horton Kirby	25
Four Elms	24
Hever	23
Knockholt (including Knockholt Pound)	22

Settlement	Facility Score
Penshurst	21
Ide Hill	20
Badgers Mount	19
Chiddingstone Causeway	19
Chiddingstone	17
Fordcombe	13
Cowden	12
Crockham Hill	11
Fawkham	10
Underriver	9
Ash	9
Pratts Bottom	9
Stone Street	6
Mark Beech	6
Bitchet Green	6
Bough Beech	6
Hodsoll Street	5
Swanley Village	5
Heaverham	5
Chiddingstone Hoath	5
Marsh Green	5
Toys Hill	4
Chevening	3
Godden Green	3
Knatts Valley	2
Well Hill	2

## Settlement Hierarchy for Sevenoaks District 2022

6.1. The final scoring and classifications for each settlement within Sevenoaks District are set out in Table 9 below.

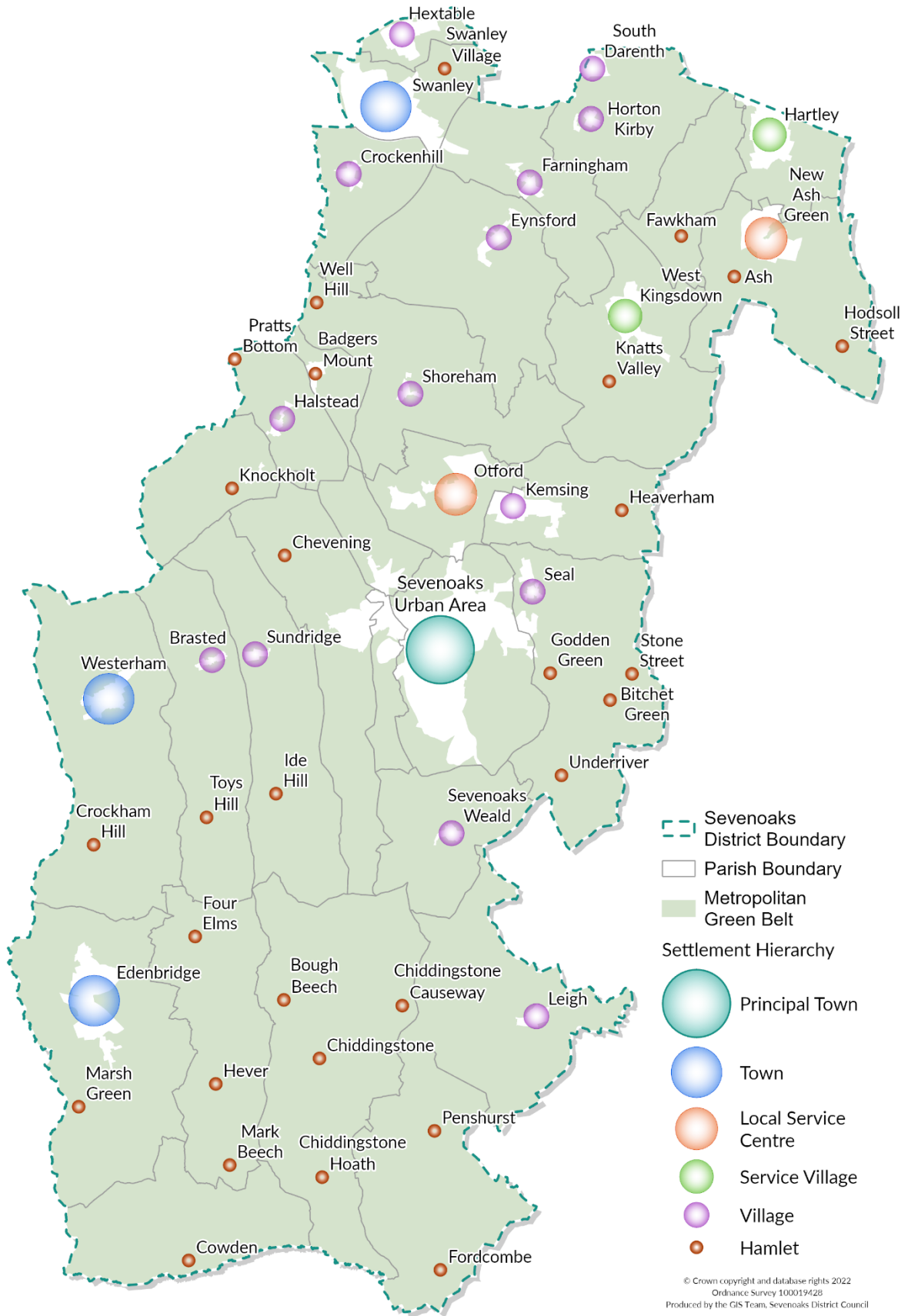
Table 9 – The Settlement Hierarchy for Sevenoaks District

Settlement Classification	Settlement	Population Score	Facility Score	Final Score
<b>Principal Town</b>	Sevenoaks Urban Area: Sevenoaks Town including Bessels Green, Chipstead, Dunton Green and Riverhead	30	722	<b>752</b>
<b>Towns</b>	Swanley	16	176	<b>192</b>
	Edenbridge (including Marlpit Hill)	8	160	<b>168</b>
	Westerham	3	98	<b>101</b>
<b>Local Service Centres</b>	New Ash Green	5	76	<b>81</b>
	Otford	3	75	<b>78</b>
<b>Service Villages</b>	Hartley	4	66	<b>70</b>
	West Kingsdown	4	61	<b>65</b>
<b>Villages</b>	South Darenth	2	48	<b>50</b>
	Hextable	4	44	<b>48</b>
	Kemsing	3	43	<b>46</b>
	Eynsford	1	42	<b>43</b>
	Brasted	0	40	<b>40</b>
	Seal	1	38	<b>39</b>
	Halstead	0	38	<b>38</b>
	Crockenhill	1	35	<b>36</b>
	Shoreham	0	33	<b>33</b>
	Farningham	0	32	<b>32</b>
	Sevenoaks Weald	0	31	<b>31</b>
	Leigh	0	29	<b>29</b>
	Sundridge	0	25	<b>25</b>
	Horton Kirby	0	25	<b>25</b>
<b>Hamlets</b>	<u>Four Elms</u>	0	24	<b>24</b>
	<u>Hever</u>	0	23	<b>23</b>
	Knockholt (including Knockholt Pound)	0	22	<b>22</b>
	<u>Penshurst</u>	0	21	<b>21</b>

Settlement Classification	Settlement	Population Score	Facility Score	Final Score
	<u>Ide Hill</u>	0	20	<b>20</b>
	Badgers Mount	0	19	<b>19</b>
	<u>Chiddingstone Causeway</u>	0	19	<b>19</b>
	<u>Chiddingstone</u>	0	17	<b>17</b>
	<u>Fordcombe</u>	0	13	<b>13</b>
	<u>Cowden</u>	0	12	<b>12</b>
	<u>Crockham Hill</u>	0	11	<b>11</b>
	<u>Fawkham</u>	0	10	<b>10</b>
	<u>Underriver</u>	0	9	<b>9</b>
	Ash	0	9	<b>9</b>
	Pratts Bottom	0	9	<b>9</b>
	<u>Stone Street</u>	0	6	<b>6</b>
	<u>Mark Beech</u>	0	6	<b>6</b>
	<u>Bitchet Green</u>	0	6	<b>6</b>
	<u>Bough Beech</u>	0	6	<b>6</b>
	<u>Hodsoll Street</u>	0	5	<b>5</b>
	<u>Swanley Village</u>	0	5	<b>5</b>
	<u>Heaverham</u>	0	5	<b>5</b>
	<u>Chiddingstone Hoath</u>	0	5	<b>5</b>
	<u>Marsh Green</u>	0	5	<b>5</b>
	<u>Toys Hill</u>	0	4	<b>4</b>
	<u>Chevening</u>	0	3	<b>3</b>
	<u>Godden Green</u>	0	3	<b>3</b>
	<u>Knatts Valley</u>	0	2	<b>2</b>
	<u>Well Hill</u>	0	2	<b>2</b>

Please note: Settlements which are underlined do not have a defined Green Belt boundary.

Figure 3: Sevenoaks District Settlement Hierarchy Map





## Settlement Profile

### Principal Town

- 7.1. The Principal Town is defined as Sevenoaks Urban Area (including Sevenoaks Town, Dunton Green, Riverhead, Chipstead and Bessels Green).
- 7.2. The Sevenoaks Urban Area comprises Sevenoaks Town, Riverhead, Dunton Green, Chipstead and Bessels Green, which share the same Green Belt boundary. The area has been classified as the District's Principal Town as it has the greatest population with 30,663 residents, as well as the greatest number of services and facilities (722), giving it an overall score of 752.

### Towns

- 7.3. The three settlements of Swanley, Edenbridge (including Marlpit Hill) and Westerham have been classified as Towns. It should be noted that, although all three settlements are classified as towns, they are recorded in hierarchical order (i.e. second town, third town, fourth town).
- 7.4. Swanley has the second largest population in the District with 16,860 residents. It is also one of the Districts major employment centres. Swanley has good transport links, with rail and bus connections to surrounding areas and Central London, as well as retail provision focused towards convenience facilities and services. Additionally there is both primary and secondary education provision in the Town. This is reflected in the overall score of 192 for Swanley.
- 7.5. Edenbridge is the third largest settlement within the District, with 8,833 residents. The town provides a good range of services and facilities for residents, as well as two train stations providing links to Central London as well as a variety of other destinations including Gatwick Airport. Edenbridge (including Marlpit Hill) has an overall score of 168.
- 7.6. Westerham is the smallest Town in Sevenoaks District, and has a good provision of services and facilities for its 3,229 residents. However, Westerham does not have a train station and therefore scores lower than Swanley and Edenbridge, with an overall score of 101.

### Local Service Centres

- 7.7. New Ash Green and Otford have been classified as Local Service Centres.
- 7.8. Local Service Centres do not offer as wide a range of services and facilities as Town Centres. However they do offer a proportionate range of service, facilities and

employment opportunities for the daily needs of the local community and surrounding settlements.

### Service Villages

- 7.9. Hartley and West Kingsdown have been classified as Service Villages.
- 7.10. Service Villages is a new category that has been added in this Settlement Hierarchy update. It was necessary to introduce this new category in order to separate this and the Local Service Centres, which have more services and are more sustainable.
- 7.11. Similar to Local Service Centres, Service Villages offer services and facilities that meet the daily needs of the local community and surrounding settlements. However, it is recognised that Service Villages tend to have a smaller range of services than Local Service Centres.

### Villages

- 7.12. Classified as Villages are South Darenth, Kemsing, Hextable, Eynsford, Brasted, Seal, Halstead, Crockenhill, Shoreham, Farningham, Sevenoaks Weald, Leigh, Sundridge and Horton Kirby.
- 7.13. Villages are smaller settlements than those further up the Hierarchy and offer fewer services and facilities. However, many of these settlements score higher than Hamlets due to them having access to multiple key services which contribute to the settlements sustainability. In addition, all Villages have a defined Green Belt boundary which allows for more opportunities for potential small scale or minor development.

### Hamlets

- 7.14. Classified as Hamlets are: Four Elms, Hever, Knockholt (including Knockholt Pound), Penshurst, Ide Hill, Badgers Mount, Chiddingstone Causeway, Chiddingstone, Fordcombe, Cowden, Crockham Hill, Fawkham, Underriver, Ash, Pratts Bottom, Stone Street, Mark Beech, Bitchet Green, Bough Beech, Hodsoll Street, Swanley Village, Heaverham, Chiddingstone Hoath, Marsh Green, Toys Hill, Chevening, Godden Green, Knatts Valley and Well Hill.
- 7.15. These Hamlets have very small populations (less than 1,000 inhabitants) and have a limited range of services and facilities. All the settlements in this classification, with the exception of Knockholt (including Knockholt Pound), Badgers Mount and Pratts Bottom, are washed over by the Green Belt. As such, it would be unrealistic to expect these settlements to accommodate much new development.

## Conclusion

- 8.1. The Settlement Hierarchy is a key piece of evidence that will be used to inform and prepare the emerging Local Plan, helping to define the role, function and sustainability of each settlement within Sevenoaks District.
- 8.2. The District has a total of 56 settlements which all offer a differing variety of services and facilities to meet the day to day needs of the community. The settlements range from the most sustainable Principal Town (Sevenoaks Urban Area) to the least sustainable Hamlets, with the inclusion of an additional category of Service Villages.

To find out more,  
please contact us:

t 01732 227000

---

e [planning.policy@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@sevenoaks.gov.uk)

---

w [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk)

---

Sevenoaks District Council, Council Offices,  
Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1HG

---

**Visit our Sevenoaks offices:**

Monday to Thursday, 8.45am to 5pm

Friday 8.45am to 4.45pm

---

**This publication is available in large print  
and can be explained in other languages  
by calling 01732 227000**

---

 [sdc\\_newsdesk](#)

 [Sevenoaks District Council Official](#)

---