

Statement of Common Ground

Between: Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and Kent County Council Broadband Delivery (KCC BD).

Relating to: The provision of digital connectivity infrastructure to support the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.

1. Purpose of this Statement

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground records the shared understanding between Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and Kent County Council Broadband Delivery (KCC BD) regarding the provision of digital connectivity infrastructure, including gigabit-capable broadband networks, in supporting the level and distribution of growth proposed in the Sevenoaks District Local Plan. It provides evidence of ongoing engagement and collaboration and supports the Local Plan by confirming areas of agreement and identifying any matters where further work may be required.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 SDC is responsible for preparing the Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan, identifying infrastructure needs arising from growth, and securing delivery through planning policy and developer contributions.
- 2.2 KCC BD is the service within KCC responsible for supporting the delivery of broadband and digital connectivity infrastructure across Kent. The service works in partnership with government, infrastructure providers, district councils and other stakeholders to improve digital connectivity for residents and businesses. KCC BD plays a key role in supporting and coordinating digital infrastructure delivery across the county, and in providing evidence and advice to inform plan-making and infrastructure delivery.

3. Evidence Considered

- 3.1 Both parties have considered the following evidence in forming this Statement:
- The scale and distribution of growth set out in the Sevenoaks District Local Plan;
 - Information relating to existing broadband and digital connectivity provision across the District;
 - Information relating to planned broadband infrastructure upgrades and investment programmes;
 - Relevant national and local policy and guidance relating to digital infrastructure and connectivity; and
 - Sevenoaks District Council Economic Development Strategy (2022).

4. Areas of Agreement

4.1 SDC and KCC BD agree that:

1. Proportionate engagement has taken place between SDC and KCC BD in the preparation of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan, including consideration of digital connectivity requirements to support planned growth.
2. Both parties recognise the importance of high-quality digital infrastructure and digital connectivity in supporting sustainable growth, economic development and communities across the District.
3. Both parties acknowledge that the provision of appropriate digital infrastructure is consistent with the objectives of Local Plan Policy UD1 and supports the sustainable delivery of planned growth.
4. Both parties acknowledge that the delivery and upgrade of broadband and mobile networks is primarily undertaken by telecommunications providers and is outside the direct control of SDC and KCC BD, with connectivity to new development supported through existing industry delivery mechanisms and relevant Building Regulations requirements.
5. KCC BD considers that digital connectivity requirements associated with planned growth can continue to be addressed through existing industry delivery mechanisms, telecommunications network investment, and relevant government-supported programmes.
6. Both authorities are committed to ongoing engagement throughout the plan period and working in partnership where appropriate to support improved digital connectivity across the District.

5. Areas of Ongoing Work / Matters Not Yet Agreed

5.1 The following matters will continue to be monitored through ongoing engagement:

1. Identifying gaps in digital connectivity provision and opportunities to support improvements across the District.
2. Engagement, where appropriate, with telecommunications providers and Government-supported programmes to encourage investment in broadband and mobile connectivity.

5.2 Both parties are committed to ongoing engagement on these matters throughout the plan period.

6. Delivery and Phasing

- 6.1 SDC and KCC BD acknowledge that the delivery and enhancement of digital connectivity infrastructure will primarily be undertaken by telecommunications providers through ongoing network investment and relevant government-supported programmes.
- 6.2 The timing and delivery of digital connectivity improvements will be dependent on investment decisions made by telecommunications providers, the delivery of new development, and any relevant government-supported programmes.

7. Signatures

Signed on behalf of Sevenoaks District Council	
Name:	
Role:	
Date:	

Signed on behalf of Kent County Council Broadband Delivery	
Name:	
Role:	
Date:	