
Sevenoaks District Council

Local Development Scheme

February 2025



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1 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 This Local Development Scheme (LDS) is the **project plan** for the production of the Local Plan for Sevenoaks District Council and has been prepared in accordance with Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
- 1.2 This Local Development Scheme sets out the Council's programme for the preparation of the Local Plan for the period 2025-26. The LDS no longer needs to include the programme for preparing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). However, information on the Council's adopted SPDs is included for information.
- 1.3 Progress in producing Local Plan documents will be assessed on an annual basis and reported in the Council's 'Authority Monitoring Report' (AMR). The AMR considers whether Local Plan objectives are being met and will consider whether any changes are needed to the LDS in the light of changing circumstances or whether additional actions are needed to maintain the current timetable.

About The District

- 1.4 Sevenoaks District Council has an area of 142 square miles and is located in West Kent bordering Greater London, Surrey and Sussex. The District covers four towns, namely Sevenoaks, Swanley, Edenbridge and Westerham together with many other small villages and hamlets and extensive areas of countryside.

Strategic Planning Context

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- 1.5 The District is subject to a number of statutory national planning designations. 93% of the District lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and over 60% is within either the High Weald or Kent Downs National Landscape / Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are 24 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, approximately 2000 Listed Buildings and over 40 Conservation Areas within the District. In addition Sevenoaks has 17 designated Historic Parks and Gardens, the highest number in Kent.

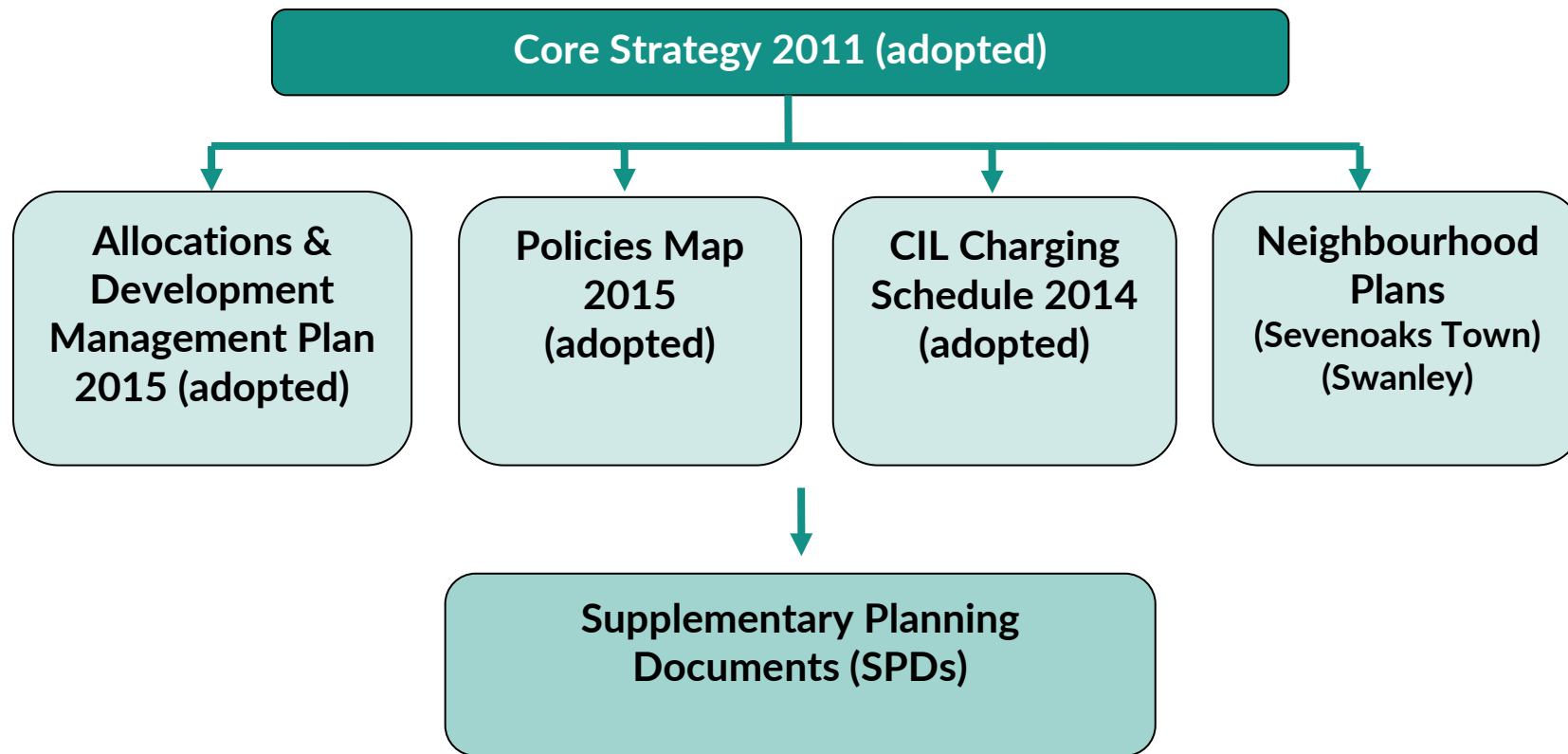
Current Statutory Development Plan

- 1.6 Following the adoption of the Core Strategy for the District in February 2011 and the Allocations and Development Management Plan in February 2015 the current Development Plan for the District comprises:
- *The Sevenoaks District Core Strategy 2011*
 - *The Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) 2015*
 - *the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (KMWLP) 2016 as amended by the Early Partial Review 2020 and Minerals Sites Plan 2020*

Existing Planning Policy Documents

- 1.7 The figure over the page outlines the relationship between existing planning policy documents. The Council adopted the Core Strategy in April 2011, the Allocations and Development Management Plan in February 2015 and a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule in 2014.
- 1.8 The Council has several adopted SPDs. Kent Design was adopted as SPD in 2007, whilst the Residential Extensions SPD was adopted in May 2009. The Affordable Housing SPD and Countryside Assessment SPD were adopted in October 2011. The Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment was adopted in April 2012 and the Edenbridge Character Area Assessment was adopted in March 2021. The Development in the Green Belt SPD was adopted in February 2015 to accompany the Allocations and Development Management Plan. A Local List SPD was adopted in September 2017. These documents, together with a number of adopted Village Design Statements and Parish Plans, form the Local Plan for the District. View the SPD documents on the Council's website:
- 1.9 The Council has adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Consultations will be carried out in accordance with the requirements set out in the SCI.
- 1.10 A number of Neighbourhood Plans are in preparation across the District. Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan was adopted or 'made' in May 2023 and Swanley Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in July 2024. Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan is currently at referendum stage. The District supports the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans but they are not included within the following timetable as their preparation is led by town and parish councils with community groups. The following towns and parishes have been designated as 'neighbourhood areas', which is the first stage of Neighbourhood Plan preparation: Ash-cum-Ridley, Badgers Mount, Chevening, Edenbridge, Halstead, Hartley, Hextable, Otford, Seal and Shoreham.

THE SEVENOAKS LOCAL PLAN KEY DIAGRAM



2 TIMETABLE FOR PRODUCTION OF THE LOCAL PLAN

2.1 The following is an indicative timetable for the production of the emerging Local Plan:

- Regulation 18 Consultation – October/November 2025
- Pre-submission Publication (Regulation 19) – Summer 2026
- Submission – before 31 December 2026
- Examination – 2027

2025												2026					
January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	
Evidence Base/ Policy Prep									Regulation 18 Consultation		Evidence Base/ Policy Prep			Regulation 19 Publication		Submission/ Examination	
Green Belt/ Grey Belt Assessment					Call for sites			Sign off									
			Site Assessments														

3 DOCUMENT PROFILES

3.1 The following table profiles our Local Plan documents.

3.2 This edition of the LDS includes amendments to bring the LDS up to date. The timetabling of the Local Plan has been updated to reflect the anticipated dates for Regulation 19 consultation and examination.

Local Development Document	Area	Chain of Conformity	Led	Local Development Document	Area	Chain of Conformity
Core Strategy (adopted Feb 2011) The Core Strategy sets out the vision for the District. It contains spatial policies that deal with the distribution of development in the District and general policies that help to deliver the vision.	Whole District	National Policy ▼ Core Strategy	SDC Policy Team	Adopted	Adopted	The Core Strategy is the first stage in preparing the spatial expression of the Community, and other strategies. It is a statutory requirement. It provides a strategic framework for the preparation of other local planning documents.
The Allocations and Development Management Plan (adopted Feb 2015) The plan identifies land use site allocations including housing and other land use designations such as the Green Belt and AONB boundaries. It also includes detailed policies for the management of development that will be used in the determination of planning applications and to ensure that	Whole District	National Policy ▼ Core Strategy ▼ Allocations and Development Management	SDC Policy Team	Adopted	Adopted	This deals with the allocation and designation of areas of land. In terms of allocations it identifies housing sites to meet the Core Strategy provision. It shows national designations such as Green Belt, AONBs (National Landscapes) and local designations which aim to protect existing uses under development pressure such as green spaces, shopping frontages and business areas. It also includes detailed development management policies and provides an up to

Local Development Document	Area	Chain of Conformity	Led	Local Development Document	Area	Chain of Conformity
development will achieve the vision of the Core Strategy.						date local policy framework for the detailed consideration of development proposals.
The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (adopted Feb 2014) The charging schedule sets out the charges applicable to new developments to fund necessary infrastructure improvements for the District.	Whole District	National Policy ▼ Core Strategy ▼ CIL Charging Schedule	SDC Policy Team	Adopted	Adopted	The preparation of a charging schedule is a requirement for authorities introducing CIL. Funding from CIL is necessary to support infrastructure improvements required to support new development in the District. The charging schedule is supported by evidence of infrastructure needs and costs drawing on the Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The charging schedule is in the process of being reviewed in 2024/25.
The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (adopted Feb 2014) The charging schedule sets out the charges applicable to new developments to fund necessary infrastructure improvements for the District.	Whole District	National Policy ▼ Core Strategy ▼ CIL Charging Schedule	SDC Policy Team	Adopted	Adopted	The preparation of a charging schedule is a requirement for authorities introducing CIL. Funding from CIL is necessary to support infrastructure improvements required to support new development in the District. The charging schedule is supported by evidence of infrastructure needs and costs drawing on the Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The charging schedule is in the

Local Development Document	Area	Chain of Conformity	Led	Local Development Document	Area	Chain of Conformity
						process of being reviewed in 2024/25.
Local Plan – ‘Sevenoaks Plan 2040’	Whole District	National Policy ▼ Local Plan	SDC Policy Team	Chief Officers Parish/ Town Councils Neighbouring Authorities Statutory Consultees	Officer and Member time Development & Conservation Advisory Committee / Cabinet Financial resources for consultation, publication, and publicity	The Council committed, as part of the ADMP examination, to undertake a review of the Core Strategy. A revised Local Plan was submitted for examination 2019, which was unsuccessful. The Council’s evidence base is in the process of being completed and a revised Local Plan is in preparation for Regulation 18 consultation in autumn 2025, Regulation 19 publication in summer 2026 and subsequent examination.

4 SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Background Studies

4.1 The Council has commissioned a number of background studies that will be used as an evidence base to support the Local Plan:

Study	Date
Biodiversity Analysis Sevenoaks BNG Strategy	Completed February 2018 <i>In progress 2025</i>
Economic Needs Study (ENS)	Completed 2016 Updated 2022 <i>Update in progress 2025</i>
Sevenoaks Urban Area Economic Study	Completed 2019
Settlement Capacity Study	Completed 2019 Updated 2022
Green Belt Assessment	Stage 1 - January 2017 Stage 2 - September 2023 <i>Stage 2 extension - in progress 2025</i>
Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)	Completed March 2017 Updated 2022 <i>Update in progress 2025</i>
Landscape Character Assessment & Sensitivity Study Landscape and Visual evidence for the Sevenoaks Local Plan	Completed 2017 Completed 2024
Historic Environment Review (HER)	Completed 2017
Open Space Study, Sport and Leisure	Open Space Study 2018 Sports Facility Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy completed 2024
Retail / Town Centres Strategy	Completed November 2016 Updated 2022
Settlement Hierarchy	Completed 2022 <i>Update in progress 2025</i>
Sevenoaks District Tourist Accommodation Study	Completed September 2015

Study	Date
	Update as part of ENS 2022
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	Level 2 completed January 2025
Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)	Completed July 2018 <i>Update in progress 2025</i>
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	Completed September 2015
Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs (TRLHN) Update including self-build review	Updated Jan 2022 <i>in progress 2025</i>
Older Persons Housing Study	Updated Jan 2022
Sevenoaks District Character Study	Completed in 2022
Infrastructure Delivery Plan	<i>Update in progress 2025</i>
Swanley Transport Study	Completed May 2018
Strategic Transport Assessment	<i>Update in progress 2025</i>
Whole Plan Viability Assessment	<i>Update in progress 2025</i>

Duty to Co-operate

- 4.2 Discussions with neighbouring authorities and statutory providers are ongoing, in relation to the Duty to Co-operate, and will continue throughout the plan-making process, to ensure strategic, cross-cutting issues are addressed. The Council will also undertake regular check-in meetings with the government department (MHCLG) to ensure plan-making remains on track.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 4.3 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is required to assess how the Local Plan will impact on the social, economic and environmental fabric of the District. SA involves five stages and the preparation of three key reports as follows:

- *Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the Scope (Scoping Report)*
- *Stage B: Developing and refining options (Initial SA Report)*
- *Stage C: Appraising the effects of the plan (Final SA Report)*
- *Stage D: Consulting on the plan and SA Report*

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- *Stage E: Monitoring implementation of the plan*

4.4 Sustainability Appraisal was carried out at all stages in the preparation of the Core Strategy and Allocations and Development Management Plan and is being carried out for the preparation of the Local Plan.

Reporting Structures

4.5 Cabinet is responsible for making executive decisions affecting preparation of Local Plan documents, scrutinised by the Development and Conservation Advisory Committee. The Draft Local Plan goes to Full Council for approval prior to submission.

Resources

4.6 The Planning Policy Team is located within the Planning Services section of the Council. Members of the team have other duties in addition to the preparation of the Local Plan. For the preparation of specific evidence base documents, the Council will call on the expertise of other appropriate members of staff. These include members of the Development Management Team, Housing Policy team and the People and Places Team.

4.7 The Council will draw on expertise from Kent County Council and also has access to a range of expertise and skills within the Kent Downs and High Weald AONB/National Landscape Units.

4.8 A Service Plan with Performance Management targets based on LDS milestones and internal reporting is prepared annually and will be reviewed in line with the Authority Monitoring Report and any revisions to this LDS. This will be used to inform individual work plans for team members. A 5 year budget plan has been prepared in consultation with the Chief Officer, Finance and Trading which will form part of the Council's overall budget setting.

5 GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT FORMS

Date: February 2025
 Service: Local Plan
 Assessed By: Hannah Gooden
 Location: Planning Policy
 Review Date: February 2026

No	Hazard	Severity 1-5 1=low 5=high	Likelihood 1-5 1=low 5=high	Level of Risk	Control Action / Contingency Action	Result	Triggers for Action
1	External factors such as implications of the National Planning Policy Framework leading to uncertainty in the strategic planning background and potential delay	3	4	12	<p>This is beyond the Council's direct control</p> <p>Maintain close liaison with PINS, and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).</p> <p>Monitor outcome of comparable Local Plans and identify relevant lessons</p>	N	Inspector's advice
2	Government planning reforms likely to lead to changes in future requirements for Local Plans, in relation to proposals set out in the LURA (Levelling Up and Regeneration Act)	3	4	12	<p>Monitor proposals and be prepared to carry out a further review of the LDS if necessary.</p> <p>Give priority to the Local Plan if there are additional demands on available resources</p>	N	Progress on implementation of LURA
3	Staff turnover, sickness or retirement	4	3	12	Incentives maintained to retain staff including market payments and career grade structures.	N	Appraisal System and 1-1 sessions.

No	Hazard	Severity 1-5 1=low 5=high	Likelihood 1-5 1=low 5=high	Level of Risk	Control Action / Contingency Action	Result	Triggers for Action
					Give priority to Local Plan over SPDs / NPs should there be an extended loss of staff resources.		
4	Production and Council approval of the various components of the Local Plan are late (for whatever reason) with subsequent knock-on effect on the overall timetable	3	2	6	Reporting procedures in place to review progress against timetables and intervene at an early stage to keep Local Plan work on track.	A	Failure to meet targets and milestones in the LDS
5	Extended systems failure. Failure of main computer server - inability to access software programs	5	1	5	Return to conventional network system Set up limited paper files for essential records	T	IT support and advice
6	The budget for Local Plan work is inadequate financial resources to complete the Local Plan according to timetable.	4	2	8	A long term rolling budget programme has been set and agreed by Members. The LDS has been reviewed to re-programme activity and achieve a substantial saving by reducing the number of separate Local Plan documents. Undertake joint working with partners to cut costs Maximise use of the website to reduce printing costs	A	Budget over spend
7	The Inspector for the Local Plan Examination considers the Plan	4	3	12	The Council will seek to minimise this risk by ensuring that the Local Plan is	N	Inspector's Report

No	Hazard	Severity 1-5 1=low 5=high	Likelihood 1-5 1=low 5=high	Level of Risk	Control Action / Contingency Action	Result	Triggers for Action
	as unsound/not legally compliant resulting in considerable extra work for planning officers and failure to meet planned timescales				<p>sound, founded on a robust evidence base and high standard to stakeholder and community engagement</p> <p>Use of Counsel to advise on procedural and soundness issues</p> <p>Establish and maintain close liaison with key stakeholders and maintain close liaison with PINS, and the MHCLG</p> <p>Monitor outcome of comparable Local Plans and identify relevant lessons</p> <p>Maintain staff training.</p>		
8	There is a legal challenge to the adoption of the Local Plan	4	2	8	The Council will seek to minimise this risk by ensuring that the Local Plan is sound, founded on a robust evidence base and high standard of stakeholder and community engagement	A	Notice of challenge

Key

N = Not adequately controlled (11-25)

A = Adequately controlled (6-10)

T = Trivial risk (1-5)

6 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abbreviation	Document Name	Document Description
AMR	Authority Monitoring Report	Authorities are required to produce AMRs to assess the implementation of the LDS and the extent to which policies in the Local Plan are delivering the Council's spatial vision.
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	A levy on new development to fund infrastructure improvements. The levy is supported by a charging schedule which sets out the levy for different types of development supported by evidence of future needs and costs of provision.
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	MHCLG sets policy on local government, housing, urban regeneration and planning.
LDS	Local Development Scheme	The LDS sets out the programme for preparing the Local Plan.
LURA	Levelling Up and Regeneration Act	The Act, which includes changes in the planning system, including in relation to the production of Local Plans
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	Government statement of national planning policy.
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance	Government Planning Practice Guidance providing explanation of the NPPF
PINS	Planning Inspectorate	Independent body which undertakes examination of the Local Plan.
SA	Sustainability Appraisal	Assessment of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the policies and proposals contained within the Local Plan.
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement	Document explaining to stakeholders and the community, how and when they will be involved in the preparation of the Local Plan, and the steps that will be taken to facilitate this involvement.
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document	Documents which provide further guidance (but not policy) regarding how development plan policies should be implemented.