

Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan – Monitoring and Implementation Group

(Open to members of the public)

Tuesday 7th May 2024 6pm

Sevenoaks Town Council Chamber, Bradbourne Vale Road, TN13 3QG

Agenda

Chair: Cllr Varley

Vice Chair: Cllr Ancrum

1. Apologies for absence

2. Minutes (Pages 3-6)

To receive and agree the Minutes of the previous STNP Monitoring and Implementation Group meeting, held on 18th March 2024.

3. Sevenoaks Town Centre and St Johns Masterplans Update

a) To receive verbal update on the progress of the Sevenoaks Town Centre and St Johns Masterplans, both of which have undergone an initial Workshop event with local stakeholders and residents to identify key issues and strengths of the areas.

b) To note that a survey has been launched for each Masterplan area to gauge current use, strengths and weaknesses:

- Town Centre Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P9WMYSC>
- St John's area Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DPRP56W>

4. Theme Four – Work Stream (Pages 7-8)

a) To receive and note a list of actions as identified within the STNP under Theme Four: Local Economy.

b) To identify priority actions.

5. Monitoring (Pages 9-17)

a) To receive and note an update report, of how the STNP policies have been against planning applications within Sevenoaks Town since the last preliminary report.

b) To receive and note a list of trends/observations from the above report, as well as changes since the last report.

c) To discuss any other observations or trends noticed by members for bringing to attention of the Working Group, Sevenoaks Town Planning Committee, or Sevenoaks District Council.

6. Annual Report (To follow)

To receive and review a draft Annual Report which outlines key use and progress of the STNP throughout its first year of adoption, including live projects which support its vision.

7. Dates for future meetings

To discuss and agree future meeting date.

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Minutes of the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring and Implementation Group meeting held at the Council Chambers on 18th March 2024, 6:00pm.

In attendance:

Sevenoaks Town Council – Leader of the Town Council	Cllr Tony Clayton
Sevenoaks Town Council – Deputy Leader of the Town Council	Cllr Nigel Wightman
Sevenoaks Town Council – Mayor	Cllr Claire Shea
Sevenoaks Town Council	Cllr Marilyn Canet
Sevenoaks Town Council – Town Clerk	Linda Larter MBE
Sevenoaks Town Council – Planning Committee Clerk	Georgie Elliston
Sevenoaks District Council	Cllr Elizabeth Purves
Glenn Ball Chartered Architect	Glenn Ball
Sevenoaks Society	John Stambollouian
Helen Bowles	Member of Public

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Cllr Tony Clayton as Leader of the Town Council was nominated as Chair, in the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair of the STNP Monitoring & Implementation Group.

1. Apologies for absence

Liz Dolding (Warners Solicitors), **Paul Baker** (Wealden Properties), **Cllr Libby Ancrum** (Sevenoaks Town Council), **Cllr Nick Varley** (Sevenoaks Town Council), **Cllr Victoria Granville** (Sevenoaks Town Council).

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the previous STNP Monitoring and Implementation Group meeting held on 22nd January 2024 were received and agreed.

3. Kent County Council Results of its draft Emerging Local Transport Plan Consultation

The Group noted that Kent County Council (KCC) had published the responses received to its draft Emerging Local Transport Plan consultation.

4. Sevenoaks Town Centre and St Johns Masterplans

a) The Town Clerk summarised the progress and purpose of the above two projects, with a briefing document having been provided by the STNP's consultant, which sets out timelines and anticipated processes in producing the two Masterplans.

b) The following items of note were discussed:

- Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) is producing its own Masterplans for the Town, and although they have not yet reciprocated in providing specification details of their project, it is hoped that they will complement each other. The Town Council's Masterplans will build from the objectives of the already voted upon and adopted STNP.
- The main difference between the two Councils' Masterplans is expected to be in approach; SDC would approach the process as a significant landowner and likely find a developer to execute the Masterplan on its behalf, whereas the Town Council's will provide guidance and an action plan on the details of the policies and aims within the adopted STNP.

- Public engagement is highly encouraged, as the public consultation exercises provide opportunity to gauge level of public support for potential future developments in the Town, and to amend plans at their earliest development stages into a scheme which would be supported by local residents and businesses.
- It is estimated that the Masterplans will be completed by Autumn 2024, with hopes that they will input into the emerging Local Plan.
- The priority of the Masterplans is to facilitate growth of the Town, improving its attractiveness while maintaining its character, and above all improving the pedestrian and visitor experience.
- Sevenoaks Society representative John Stambollouian recommended that transport consultants be commissioned to consider the possibility of a one-way traffic scheme be included, in tandem with widening of footpaths. This was confirmed as part of the scope of the Masterplans, with a traffic consultant having been engaged, and input from Sevenoaks Society and other stakeholders welcomed.
- In addition, east-west pedestrian connections were recommended to be investigated, to support emerging developments on both sides of the Town.
- One of the main focuses of the Masterplans will be to create a Cultural Quarter, as aspired in the STNP. This will include the Library, Leisure Centre and surrounding area, as this will form the heart of the Cultural Quarter.
- STC would keep Group members aware of updates and relevant dates for the project. The first stage will be pursuing public opinions and ideas.

5. **20mph Public Consultation Results and Town Council Report**

Cllr Clayton summarised the results of the recent consultation held by STC on the revised 20mph plans for the Town. This had been created by a Working Group of the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board (JTB), following previous consultation on a wider scheme consulted on in 2023 by KCC:

- Over 2,500 responses were received, of which around 1,600 were from residents within the Town
- The concept of 20mph speed limits near schools and residential roads, as supported by the STNP Aim M4 had received 74% support from local residents, and 66% from all respondents including those outside the Town. This was noted as in line with the STNP Referendum results (73% in favour).
- The scheme as produced by the JTB was supported by 61% of local residents, and 53% of all respondents.
- STC will be deciding its stance and recommendation on the scheme at the Planning Committee to be held at 7pm 18th March 2024
- KCC Officers had confirmed that the scheme could be implemented without humps and chicanes, with the scheme to be signage only
- Seal Hollow Road was not included in its entirety, due to KCC Officers having concluded that a 20mph speed limit could not be achieved without further traffic calming, such as speed bumps
- Response data supports addition of Ash Platt Road and Pinewood Avenue to the scheme
- KCC is the decision maker, with the Portfolio Holder due to make the final decision following recommendation by the JTB
- The JTB, due to discuss the scheme on 20th March 2024, had been presented with two potential recommendations via its Agenda papers. These were to either implement the scheme as proposed, or to implement a reduced scheme with Dartford Road, St Botolphs Road, Hitchen Hatch Lane and Mount Harry Road removed.

- The zebra crossing at Dartford Road, previously consulted on by KCC in the last consultation, was heavily supported and STC confirmed it would support KCC in the delivery of it, regardless of the KCC Portfolio Holder's decision on the 20mph scheme.
- The scheme, delivered in tandem with the zebra crossing should make the Town and school routes safer and more walkable for residents and students.

6. Theme Three – Work Stream

a) Actions listed under the Theme Two Work Stream were discussed one by one, with comments or updates added to each item.

b) The following points of note were discussed:

- Action 3.1: The pedestrian bridge connecting the Tarmac site and Sainsburys Supermarket does not appear to form part of Tarmac's intentions for the site, despite its disrepair and KCC's initial insistence at early planning stages that its repair be included in any subsequent proposals for the site.
- Agreed that STC would remind KCC about this, and keep proposals for the bridge under review, to ensure it is resolved – whether by Tarmac, or potentially from contribution from the Town Council using CIL monies it receives from the development.
- It was also noted that the bridge forms part of one of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) routes.
- Actions 3.3 and 3.5: Noted that the Bat & Ball Station to Dunton Green Station Green route, proposed in the STNP is undergoing Feasibility Study. This would provide a safer alternative route for walkers and cyclists to Dunton Green, as opposed to via Riverhead and two major junctions.
- Action 3.8: Noted that the Bat & Ball Station refurbishment and station access improvements have been completed
- Action 3.9: Members were notified that the Town Council will be launching a Car Club from the Bat & Ball Centre very soon
- Action 3.11: See Minute Number 4 for discussions on the Town Centre and St Johns Masterplans.

7. Monitoring

a) The Planning Committee's update monitoring report, which recorded how the STNP was being applied to planning applications since the last preliminary report, was received and noted.

b) The Planning Committee Clerk summarised the trends and observations provided on pages 34-35. The following points of note were discussed:

- Decision notices for approval were citing STNP policies more regularly, which had resulted in an increase of Policy L1 (Biodiversity Net Gain) being applied/conditioned.
- Vulnerabilities to Policy L1 had been identified via Case Officer Reports, including flexibility in whether a Case Officer can decide to enforce it, and inability to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain via Policy L1, in cases where the site has a 0% existing delivery.
- Policies L1 and L2 (Flood mitigation) were being applied more regularly, however not consistently despite the Case Officer having considered the issues which they relate to.

- Contrary to previous reports, there were no cases where a planning application had not been considered against STNP Policies. It was noted however, that decisions had still been made contrary to STNP Policy, due to the tilted balance.
- The Town Clerk clarified that the tilted balance still applies to Sevenoaks, as the STNP does not allocate housing sites. This would have required additional studies to prove feasibility and deliverability of the sites for housing. Sevenoaks Town is still better protected against prospective development than other parishes and towns inside the District however, due to the STNP's adoption, and Planning Officers at SDC had recently noted the value of this.
- The applicability of Policy L2 to smaller developments was questioned. The Planning Committee Clerk clarified that the supporting text sets out ways in which smaller developments can minimise surface water run off, via permeable paving and planting. It was agreed that the constraints and applicability of the Policy would be added to the recommendations to Planning Committee, for requesting additional information on from SDC.

c) It was agreed that the following recommendations would be made to the Planning Committee for further actioning:

- To bring to SDC's attention to and seek clarification on why Policy L2 (drainage) appears to be inconsistently applied – using 9 Crownfields (23/02649/FUL and 23/03428/HOUSE) as a case study.
- To seek clarification on when Policy L2 can be applied with regards to smaller developments and Householder applications – e.g. extensions.
- To request similarly clarification on why Policy L1 is inconsistently applied, and enquire whether it will become stronger following April 2024 when smaller developments are required to deliver BNG.
- For a case to be made to the Examiner at the 5 year review stage, for Policy L1 to be strengthened to eliminate potential for interpretation. To include in the Annual Report examples of when it has been unsuccessfully applied, or considered unnecessary by the Case Officer.

*All decisions must be approved by Sevenoaks Town Council's Planning Committee before they may be actioned, as per the Terms of Reference. All recommendations will be presented to the Committee for approval on 2nd April 2024.

8. **Dates of future meetings**

a) It was noted that the next meeting of the Monitoring and Implementation Group would be held at 6pm on Tuesday 7th May 2024, prior to the Planning Committee meeting scheduled for 7pm. This meeting would review the first Annual Report for the STNP, with the Theme of discussion due to be Theme Four of the STNP – Local Economy.

Meeting concluded at 6:50pm.

Theme Four: Local Economy Work Stream

	Proposed Project/Action	Notes	Identified by:	For actioning of:
4.1	<p>The Town Council will work with local providers, businesses and the District Council to develop a tourism strategy for the town to promote the visitor economy.</p> <p>As part of this strategy the Town Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local businesses to market the district as a place to work, live, travel and stay; • Help facilitate growth in the tourism industry; • Co-ordinate partnership working to develop longer-term destination plans to enhance the district’s offer as a key tourism destination in Kent; and • Support existing accommodation providers and attractions through training and knowledge sharing. <p>Sevenoaks Town Council would hope to work with other parties to promote destinations along the Sevenoaks to Swanley via Otford railway line. This would be branded as the ‘Darent Valley Railway’ and aim to enhance local tourism opportunities</p>		<p>STNP Aim E2</p> <p>Supporting text of Aim E2</p>	<p>Town Council in collaboration with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDC • Local businesses <p>Other parties</p>
4.2	The Council will work with stall-holders to develop proposals to expand provision and diversify the offer		<p>STNP Supporting text of Policy E4</p>	<p>Town Council in collaboration with: Local stall holders</p>
4.3	The Town Council will work with local business owners to identify the spatial and land use issues that they feel should be addressed in the centres. This information will be used to establish parameters for assessing future development proposals.	This is currently in progress via the production of a Masterplan for Sevenoaks Town Centre and St Johns area, in collaboration with	<p>STNP Supporting text of Policy E5</p>	<p>Town Council in collaboration with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local businesses / organisations

	Proposed Project/Action	Notes	Identified by:	For actioning of:
		local people, businesses and organisations.		
0.1*	<p>Review and potential updating of existing evidence base to ensure that the information is satisfactorily accurate enough to inform the Plan’s policies.</p> <p>Existing evidence base:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sevenoaks Town Portrait • Sevenoaks Transport Strategy • Sevenoaks Cultural Strategy • Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy • Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan 	<p>The function of the Appendices are to “inform the policies within the Plan”, and on this basis the Independent Examiner confirmed that he was satisfied for the appendices to be retained. He noted however that evidence may change over the life of the STNP, and advised therefore that it be reviewed.</p> <p>The evidence base documents relevant to Theme Four are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sevenoaks Town Portrait • Sevenoaks Transport Strategy • Sevenoaks Cultural Strategy <p>Whether update of the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan is necessary and to be pursued in the future is to be confirmed.</p>	Examination Process – Independent Examiner	STC

*Action 0.1 applies to all Work Streams, with different evidence base documents feeding into each Theme. Comments under each Work Stream for Action 0.1 will be collated once available, in order to have a final list of which evidence base documents should be prioritised for updating.

Update to Monitoring Report:

Planning applications decided by Sevenoaks District Council and with reference to the STNP, since the last report to STNP M&I Group on 18th March 2024

Purpose: To record the successful application of Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan policies against Planning Applications within Sevenoaks Town, in order to decide or influence decisions and conditions.

Decisions made since 12 th March 2024, with full report of compiled decisions to be published on STNP M&I Group webpage:					
Date	Reference Number & Case Officer	Address	Proposal description	Policies & Issues measured against – as per headings/sub-headings (non-bold, if a particular issue is raised)	Document
<u>21/02/24</u> 18/03/24	24/00064/HOUSE Summe Aucoin	19 Brattle Wood	Erection of an outbuilding and proposed landscape works to the front of the property.	C4 – Impact on the character of the area C4: Condition on materials	Officer Report <u>Decision Notice (Approval)</u>
<u>22/02/24</u> 15/03/24	24/00101/HOUSE Samuel Odell	Cumbrae, Brittains Lane	Relocation of front door with new porch to the front elevation and internal alterations	C4 – Impact on the character of the area C4: Condition on materials	Officer Report <u>Decision Notice (Approval)</u>
28/02/24	23/03609/CONVAR Samantha Yates	Ground & First Floor Flats, School House, 73 Solefields House	Variation of condition 2 (occupation of accommodation) of SE/89/02141 for erection of Headmasters house and subsidiary staff accommodation. To remove occupancy condition for staff accommodation	C1 – Heritage: Archaeology C4 – Design in residential areas: Impact of variation on the character of the area	Officer Report
04/03/24	24/00139/HOUSE Summer Aucoin	65 Weald Road	Removal of existing mock Tudor details with replacement finishes, replacement porch canopy, painted fascias and soffits.	C4 – High Quality Design: Impact on the character of the area	Officer Report
<u>14/03/24</u> 19/03/24	24/00093/HOUSE Abbey Aslett	27 The Drive	Demolition of existing single storey side extension and proposed new single storey rear/side extension with rooflights and solar panels,	C1 – Impact on the character of the area	<u>Officer Report</u>

			internal alterations including the addition of an internal lift and associated landscaping.	C4 – Conservation Area Impact C1 & C4: Condition requiring details on external materials	Decision Notice (Approval)
<u>15/03/24</u> <u>28/03/24</u>	24/00181/HOUSE Summer Aucoin	25 St Johns Road	Extend existing dropped kerb, provision of new permeable driveway and associated landscaping.	C4 – High Quality Design: Impact on the character of the area C4: Condition on materials	<u>Officer Report</u> <u>Decision Notice (Approval)</u>
<u>18/03/24</u> <u>19/03/24</u>	24/00168/HOUSE Summer Aucoin	Tanglewood Muchley, Ashgrove Road	Double storey side extension, single storey side extension, porch and two garages. Internal alterations and roof alterations.	C4 – High Quality Design: Impact on the character of the area C4: Condition on materials	<u>Officer Report</u> <u>Decision Notice (Approval)</u>
20/03/24	24/00068/FUL Samantha Yates	The Old Meeting House, St Johns Road	Change of use to a place of worship. Works to fenestration.	C1 – Heritage: Impact on character of the area C4 – Design and Character: Impact on character of the area L1 – Biodiversity L4 – Trees: Impact on character of the area COM1 – Health, Education and Faith facilities: Principle of development and Impact on the local community	Officer Report
<u>25/03/24</u> <u>25/04/24</u>	24/00258/HOUSE Summer Aucoin	24 The Crescent	Single storey rear extension	C4 – Design: Impact on the character of the area C4: Condition on materials	<u>Officer Report</u> <u>Decision Notice (Approval)</u>
<u>27/03/24</u> <u>28/03/24</u>	23/03620/FUL Stephanie Payne	155 Seal Hollow Road	Subdivision of the plot and erection of new dwelling.	C1 – Character: Impact on character and appearance of the area	<u>Officer Report</u> <u>Decision Notice (Approval)</u>

				<p>C4 – Character, Heritage and Identity: Impact on character and appearance of the area L1 – Landscape and Blue and Green Infrastructure: Landscape and Biodiversity L4 – Landscape and Blue and Green Infrastructure</p> <hr/> <p>C1 & C4: Conditions on materials and condition revoking Permitted Development Rights under particular classes L1: Condition requiring a bat mitigation strategy L4: Condition on tree protection measures L1 & C4: Condition requiring soft and hard landscaping details L1: Condition requiring ecological enhancement details</p>	
<u>28/03/24</u> <u>05/04/24</u>	24/00364/HOUSE Stephenia Payne	11 Knole Road	Proposed single storey side extension with lantern skylights.	<p>C4 – Character, Heritage, Identity: Impact on the character of the area</p> <hr/> <p>C4: Condition on materials</p>	<u>Officer Report</u> <u>Decision Notice (Approval)</u>
<u>08/04/24</u> <u>09/04/24</u>	23/03714/FUL Samantha Yates	Sevenoaks School, Solefields Road	Purpose built metal barn for storage.	<p>C1 – Heritage: Impact on heritage assets C4 – Design: Design and impact on the character of the area</p>	<u>Officer Report</u> <u>Decision Notice (Approval)</u>

				L1 – Biodiversity: Other issues C4: Condition on materials	
09/04/24	23/03677/HOUSE Summer Aucoin	16 Knole Road	Raised patio and new landscape in the rear garden, new retaining walls.	C4 – High Quality Design: Impact on the character of the area	Officer Report
<u>15/04/24</u> 15/04/24	24/00383/HOUSE Abbey Aslett	6 Merlewood	Demolish garage, and erect two storey front and side extension, new bay window to front elevation, replacement roof raising ridge with gable to rear and rooflights, single storey rear extension, change elevational treatments, alteration to fenestration and new gates and fencing.	C4 – Impact on the character of the area C4: Condition on materials	Officer Report <u>Decision Notice</u> (Approval)
<u>16/04/24</u> 19/04/24	24/00305/HOUSE Summer Aucoin	5 Clenches Farm, Clenches Farm Road	Extension of and alterations of existing semi-detached garage and change into office/storage. Addition of new brick arch linking garage and the main house. Associated landscaping.	C4 – Design: Impact on the character of the area Omitted: C1 – Conservation Area Impact C4: Condition on materials	Officer Report <u>Decision Notice</u> (Approval)
15/04/24	24/00306/MMA Christopher Park	24 Redlands Road	Amendment to 22/01902/HOUSE	C4 – Character Area Assessments	Officer Report
19/04/24	24/00095/HOUSE Summer Aucoin	79A Weald Road	3m rear extension	C4 – Design L4 – Tree and Hedgerow Protection	
<u>22/04/24</u> 24/04/24	23/03718/FUL Stephanie Payne	First Floor, 114 High Street	Conversion of former office space to domestic apartment with reinstatement of timber bay window	C1 – Design and Impact on the character of the Conservation Area C4 – Impact in the character of the area: Impact on protected mature Oak tree L4: Ground for refusal due to predicted harm to trees and protected mature Oak	Officer Report <u>Decision Notice</u> (Refusal)

<p><u>22/04/24</u> 29/04/24</p>	<p>24/00275/FUL Abbey Aslett</p>	<p>53 Bradbourne Vale Road</p>	<p>Demolition of existing dwelling; erection of 3no. dwellings with amended access and all associated works.</p>	<p>C4 – Design and Impact on Character of Area L1 – Ecology L2 – Drainage L4 – Design and Impact on Character of Area</p> <hr/> <p>C4: Condition on materials and condition removing permitted development rights for particular classes. L2: Condition requiring foul drainage strategy C4 and L4: Condition requiring tree protection plan, and condition requiring soft and lard landscaping details L2: Condition requiring BNG Plan, Monitoring Plan and 10% BNG L1: Condition prohibiting external lighting without permission</p>	<p><u>Officer Report</u> Decision Notice (Approval)</p>
<p>24/04/24</p>	<p>24/00390/MMA Samantha Yates</p>	<p>Oak Croft, West Heath Lane</p>	<p>Amendment to 22/00221/FUL</p>	<p>C4: Impact on the character of the area L1: Impact on biodiversity L4: Impact on biodiversity</p>	
<p><u>24/04/24</u> 26/04/24</p>	<p>24/00396/HOUSE Christopher Park</p>	<p>Crossways, 112 Oakhill Road</p>	<p>Single storey side extension, infill front extension, alterations to fenestration, alterations to the patio and associated retaining wall.</p>	<p>C1 – Heritage Assets: Conservation Area Impact C1: Condition on materials</p>	<p><u>Officer Report</u> Decision Notice (Approval)</p>
<p><u>25/04/24</u> 26/04/24</p>	<p>23/03054/ADV Stephanie Payne</p>	<p>Ground Floor, 26-28 Pembroke Road</p>	<p>Signage to identify the company on the external facade of the premises plus directional signage for car parking and entry way. Covering the front and rear elevations of the building and use of</p>	<p>C4 – Character, Heritage and Identity: Visual amenity</p>	<p><u>Officer Report</u> Decision Notice (Approval)</p>

			boundary wall along with two freestanding pillar mounted signs at angles to the road replacing current signage	C4: Condition on materials and condition on soft and hard landscaping L1: Condition securing biodiversity enhancements prior to occupation	
<u>25/04/24</u> 29/04/24	24/00357/HOUSE Christopher Park	38 Bradbourne Road	Ground floor side infill with rooflight, internal alterations and all associated works.	C4 – Character Areas: Impact on the character of the area C4: Condition on materials	<u>Officer Report</u> Decision Notice (Approval)
<u>25/04/24</u> 30/04/24	24/00557/HOUSE Christopher Park	Si Rusa, Hopgarden Lane	Raise roof with loft conversion to habitable space. Dormer and rooflights, solar panels, Connect existing garage to main house. Alterations to fenestration, external materials, porch.	C4 – Impact on the character of the area C4: Condition on materials	<u>Officer Report</u> Decision Notice (Approval)
<u>30/04/24</u> 30/04/24	24/00569/HOUSE Sean Mitchell	6 Woodside Road	Proposed rear, side and flank extensions. Front porch. First floor bay roof alterations . Proposed front and rear dormers gable roof alterations. Loft conversion to habitable space. Rooflights. Chimney removal.	C4 – Character: Impact on the character of the area C4: Condition on materials and condition requiring soft and hard landscaping details.	<u>Officer Report</u> Decision Notice (Approval)

Trends and observations:

- A note on STNP Policy COM1, whose interpretation was questioned by members of the public during the Town Council’s and District Council’s appraisal of 24/00068/FUL – The Old Meeting House. This is noted in the Case Officer’s report, and clarification on its meaning provided which may be useful for future reference of STC’s Planning Committee members:

“73. *Local policy COM1 of the STNP supports new faith facilities as part of the objective of delivering enhanced community assets for the town, and in line with the sustainable development objectives of national policy, where uses to serve communities are directed to sustainable urban locations.*

75. *Whilst third party representations dispute the interpretation of local policy, indicating that faith uses are supported solely as part of new, separate development, this is not stated within the policy, and would be contrary to the national and local policy basis for promoting the effective use of previously developed land and for providing places of worship in sustainable environments.*

76. *Where schemes come forward within existing residential developments, local policy COM1 supports such provision of these community services to serve ongoing, and growing communities' changing needs."*

- Also to note with the above planning application, that whilst there was support via COM1 amongst other Local Plan and STNP policies, it was refused by the Development Management Committee (DMC) against recommendation of the Case Officer. Monitoring-wise, this leaves it debatable whether in this case, Policy COM1 has been successful in delivering its objective; the Case Officer considered it strong enough to support granting the application, but members of the DMC did not.
- There is still a very small number of applications being considered without appraisal of STNP policies in the decision process (being 2). This could be because the issues considered (Conservation Area Impact and Character of the area) are covered by SDC policies, with support given to them by the STNP policies C1 and C4. Although this doesn't impact the decision therefore, there is the risk that another planning application which doesn't conform with other STNP policies, such as retaining or replacing trees and hedgerows, could be missed at a later date. There is also the matter of the Local Plan and its policies being out of date, so although some STNP policies could be seen as simply reiterating existing Local Plan policies, they still add additional "planning weight" and should therefore be considered. Decisions for approval can be just as controversial as those for refusal and should therefore be robustly supported by up-to-date planning policy.

Planning applications decided by Sevenoaks District Council – with no reference to the STNP:				
Reference Number & Case Officer	Address	Proposal description	Policies & Issues which could have been relevant	SDC Decision
24/00474/HOUSE Anna Horn	31 Sandy Lane	Loft conversion with rear dormer and roof window.	C1 – Conservation Area Impact: Found compliant with SDC policies C4: Impact on the character of the area: Found compliant with SDC policies	19 th April 2024: SDC Granted, 3 conditions.

Appeals decided by a Planning Inspector – with reference to the STNP					
Date	SDC Planning and Appeal Portal References, Appeal Reference, Number Inspector name	Address & Ward	Proposal description	Policies & Issues measured against (non-bold, if something in particular in that section is raised)	Document
31/01/24	23/00068/RFPLN (SDC Appeal Portal reference) Re 22/03572/HOUSE APP/G2245/D/23/3328771 M Evans	72 Brattle Wood	Demolition of existing rear wall and removal of chimney. Demolition of 1.5 storey structure with dormers. Two storey side and front extension with alterations to roofline. New covered porch with steps. Ground floor rear extension with rooflights. New garage. Extension to existing driveway. Extension to existing vehicular access. Landscaping. Alterations to fenestration and external materials.	C4 – High quality design and local character	Inspector's Report on Decision to DISMISS the Appeal
16/02/24	23/00029/COND Re conditions disputed from 22/03345/MMA APP/G2245/W/23/3318386 A Wright	Summerhill, Seal Hollow Road	Appeals against conditions 14 and 15 attached to 22/03345/MMA	L4 – Protection and retention of trees and hedgerows (found not in conflict)	Inspector's Report on Decision to ALLOW the Appeal
27/02/24	23/00067/RFPLN Re 23/01585/FUL APP/G2245/W/23/3328339 Stewart Glassar	Site Formerly Known as Sevenoaks Open Air School, Oakhill Road	Demolition of existing open air school building and garage and construction of 2no. new Business use units.	C1 – Responding to area context and protecting urban area and heritage assets	Inspector's Report on Decision to ALLOW the Appeal

Appeals decided by a Planning Inspector – with no reference to the STNP				
SDC Planning and Appeal Portal References, Appeal Reference, Number Inspector name	Address	Proposal description	Potential policies & issues which could have been relevant (deduced either from site constraints or other policies cited by the Inspector)	Inspector Decision
22/00099/RFPLN Re 22/00893/HOUSE APP/G2245/D/22/3308941 A Price	The Old Bakehouse, Six Bells Lane	Conversion of disused outbuildings (washroom and outdoor WC), and an enclosed courtyard into a one bedroom annexe.	Listed Building, Character and Conservation Area	Appeal Allowed 21st November 2023
23/00041/RFPLN Re 23/00237/FUL APP/G2245/W/23/3322158 R Lawrence	Site Formerly Known as Sevenoaks Open Air School, Oakhill Road	Demolition of school building and garage and construction of one single storey dwelling.	Character and appearance of the area and Conservation Area	Appeal Allowed 18th December 2023
23/00021/RFPLN Re 22/02628/HOUSE APP/G2245/D/23/3317507 A M Nilsson	Gable Cottage, Fig Street	Roof dormer to south side elevation.	Openness of the Green Belt Impact on character of the area	Appeal Dismissed 3rd January 2024

Trends and observations:

Planning Inspectors appear to be less consistent with recognising the STNP than SDC Case Officers, despite observations of Inspectors citing changes in the NPPF. Two separate appeals for the same site, Site Formerly Known as Sevenoaks Open Air School, was seen by two different Inspectors – one of whom considered the STNP and the other who did not. The decisions however did not differ in the allowing of the Appeal between where the STNP was considered and where it was not.