

Minutes of the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Committee meeting held at the Council Chambers on 22nd March 2022, 6pm. Available to watch online via the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zysx1_gymhQ

In attendance: Cllr Dr Canet, Cllr Clayton, Cllr Eyre, Cllr Parry, Cllr Raikes, Charles George, Hugo Nowell (Remote Attendance), Elizabeth Dolding (Remote Attendance*), Sarah Williams, Cllr Streatfeild, Cllr Hunter, Cllr Purves, Linda Larter, Georgie Elliston.

1. Apologies

Cllr Hogarth

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th January 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2021 were received and approved.

4. Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan (STNP) – to receive a presentation from STC’s consultant for the NDP, Hugo Nowell of Urban Initiatives Studio. This to cover edits and progress made to the NDP since the last meeting.

The Committee received a presentation from STC’s consultant for the NDP, Hugo Nowell of Urban Initiatives Studio. This covered history of edits and progress made, including advice received from Historic England and AECOM as part of the SEA process. It was followed by a Q & A session. A summary of the most discussed question is provided below. See Appendix for a copy of the presentation slides.

Several members raised queries as to why the design quantum and guidance on height and density could not be retained in the Neighbourhood Plan. It was explained that these had been removed following advice from SDC and Historic England. Neither SDC or Historic England would support the Neighbourhood Plan if the quantum were retained in the document and therefore the Plan would not be able to proceed towards referendum.

The Consultation draft Neighbourhood Plan (January 2020) had included development quantum for sites however at that time it was assumed that the District Council’s emerging plan would be adopted in advance of the Neighbourhood Plan and that sites would be allocated in the Local Plan. In that context the Neighbourhood Plan would be providing additional design guidance over and above that in the Local Plan.

Whilst a Neighbourhood Plan can allocate sites it can only do this if it is supported by evidence to demonstrate that the development proposed is viable and deliverable and that development is supported by the site owner. Additional work would be required to satisfy this requirement and this would delay the Neighbourhood Plan process further.

The options for the NDP to progress therefore were to either:

- i) omit reference to the sites supported for development altogether;
- ii) ignore Historic England’s comments and submit to SDC. SDC advised that in this case they

would not accept the Plan; or

iii) set out the benefits that should be delivered were the sites to be allocated in the Local Plan or be brought forward for development.

The third option was preferred and following advice from AECOM the wording of the site policies (D1 and D2) were amended to make it clear that the sites would not be allocated (December 2021 draft); the form of words were still not acceptable to Historic England and the revised wording in the latest Plan (January 2022 draft) were drafted with Historic England's input.

5. **To receive and review the following:**

- **Full history of edits made to the STNP since last meeting**
- **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Final Report by AECOM**
- **Summary of the SEA Report as prepared by Hugo Nowell**
- **Full STNP as edited**

- a) The Committee discussed the changes made to the STNP since the last meeting. The following was agreed upon:
- a. The wording under Theme 7 that refers to Tarmac will be reviewed, noting that a planning application for the Quarry site has now been submitted
 - b. Sevenoaks Town Council seek an opportunity to re-open conversations between Sevenoaks District Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group for local provision
 - c. The Planning Committee, which is due to provide a recommendation to SDC on the Tarmac Quarry site on 4th April 2022, would add to its response that the Town Council recommends a Design Review that includes local input
 - d. A report of correspondence and advice received from Sevenoaks District Council, AECOM, and Historic England, be collated and provided to members at the next Steering Committee Meeting.
- b) It was noted that review and approval of the SEA Final Report would be deferred for the next Steering Committee Meeting on 4th April 2022 in order to give members sufficient time to read and provide comments on the contents. It was agreed that any comments and suggestions be forwarded to the Planning Committee Clerk at planning@sevenoakstown.gov.uk by 4pm on 29th March 2022, in order for them to be included in a collated response sheet.
- c) It was noted that Hugo Nowell's comments would accompany the afore-mentioned collated response sheet.

6. **STNP Final Draft – to review and consider edits made to the Final Draft 12th January 2021, and to discuss whether these be accepted.**

It was agreed that the STNP Final Draft would be deferred to the next Steering Committee Meeting on 4th April 2022, to be considered with the SEA Final Report.

7. **Dates of future meetings**

It was noted that the next Steering Committee Meeting would be held at 6pm on 4th April 2022, prior to the Planning Committee Meeting at 7pm. This to be held at the Council Chambers and open to the public, with remote attendance optional for Committee members.

8. Timetable for progressing STNP (shown below)

The committee received and noted the below projected timetable. Items number 2 and 3 to be edited due to the deferral of approving the SEA Final Report until 4th April 2022.

Meeting concluded at 7pm.

	NDP Projected Programme 2022	Date
1	Planning Committee – Considered and agreed changes following recommendations made by AECOM and Statutory Consultee Historic England.	10.01.2022
2	Planning Committee to receive and approve the Final Report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment from AECOM, to be forwarded to Statutory Consultees.	21.03.2022
3	NDP Steering Committee – consider and agree changes made to date, following recommendations made by AECOM and Statutory Consultee Historic England.	22.03.2022
4	STC to receive Statutory Consultee responses and recommendations following the 5 week consultation on AECOM’s SEA Report.	27.04.2022
5	Prepare Final NDP Draft of NDP in response to comments and recommendations received from Statutory Consultees	May 2022
6	Both NDP Steering Committee and STC Planning Committees to officially sign off the Final Draft as amended.	May 2022
7	Submit Draft Neighbourhood Plan to District Council along with Consultation Statement and Basic Conditions Statement.	June 2022
8	SDC to publicise the plan for a six week period, notify anyone referred to in the consultation statement that the plan has been received, and to appoint an independent examiner.	June 2022/July 2022
9	Examiner’s Report	August 2022
10	Modifications made to the NDP in response to Examiner’s recommendations	September 2022
11	Referendum	Autumn 2022

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Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan

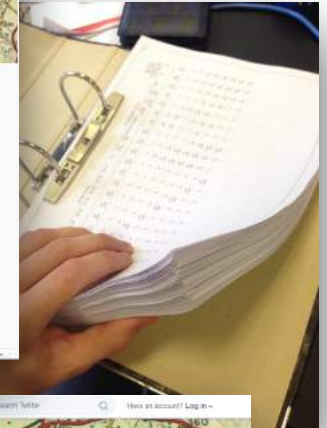
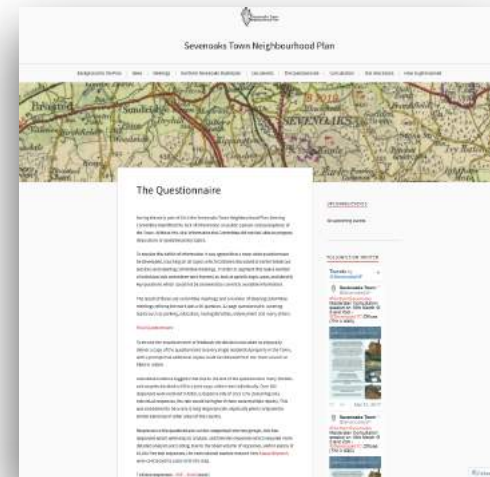
Planning Committee Presentation (21st March 2022)



BACKGROUND



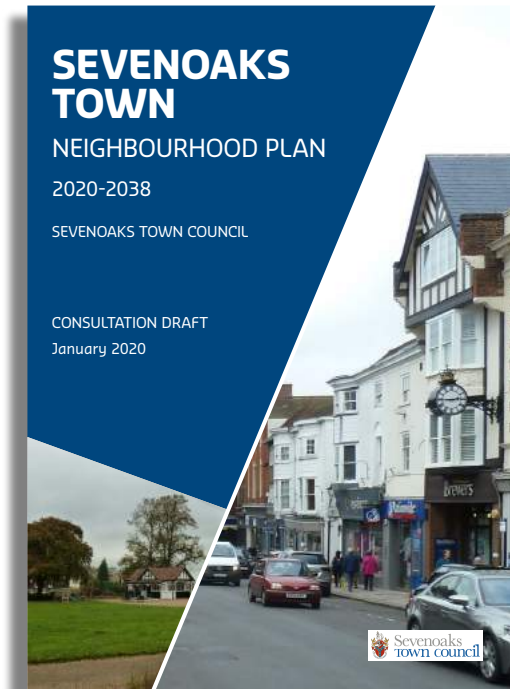
- Preparation of the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan started in 2013
- The Town Council:
 - Designated the Neighbourhood Area
 - Set up a web page and other social media accounts
 - Carried out an initial public consultation in 2015
 - Identified objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan
 - Developed the evidence base including commissioning Northern Sevenoaks masterplan
- The Town Council appointed **Urban Initiatives Studio** in Summer 2017 to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan for the Regulation 14 Consultation and later submission to the LPA.



PROGRESS ON THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Sevenoaks Town Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Minutes 22-03-2022

- Consultation draft Plan agreed in January 2020
- Regulation 14 Consultation took place from 31st January to 31 March 2020
- Comments received from Statutory Consultees, stakeholders and members of the public
- All comments carefully considered and changes agreed by Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in January 2021
- Revised Neighbourhood Plan completed in March 2021



and to ensure that future development is sensitive to the town's character and identity and to provide for the needs of future generations.

Since 2018 the Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Committee have undertaken extensive public consultation and engagement activities, including a Masterplan for Northern Sevenoaks to ensure that the contents of the plan reflects what local people want. They have used this information to develop background work for the Plan and commission strategies and studies to support the emerging plan policies.

A six-week public consultation is set to run from Friday 31st January 2020 until Friday 13th March 2020. The public consultation will be launched in the Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope Gallery on Buckhurst Lane on Friday 31st January and Saturday 1st February 2020. An exhibition will be available to view at the launch and at locations across the town through the six-week period (see below for details). Further information about the Neighbourhood Plan and how to comment on it are available on the Neighbourhood Plan website at <https://sevenoaksndp.wordpress.com>.

Feedback from this initial consultation will be included where appropriate into the plan which will then be progressed through a statutory programme carried out by Sevenoaks District Council concluding in a referendum for the residents of Sevenoaks.

Dates	Times	Location
Friday 31 st January 2020	10.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.	Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope Library
Saturday 1 st February 2020	10.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.	Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope Library
Friday 14 th February 2020	10.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.	Sevenoaks Town Council Chambers
Saturday 15 th February 2020	10.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.	Sevenoaks Town Council Chambers
Monday 3 rd February – 13 th March 2020 (excluding 18 th – 20 th Feb)	10.00 a.m. – 4.45 p.m.	Stag Theatre Café
Monday 3 rd February – 13 th March 2020	Monday - Saturday	Sevenoaks Mainline Railway Station Foyer
	Station Opening Times	

quiries to: Sevenoaks Town Council, Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3QG. planning@sevenoakstc.org

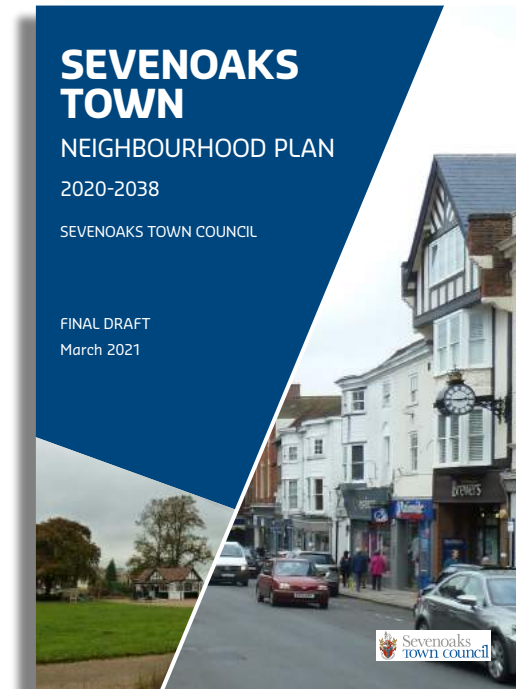


Sevenoaks Town Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Minutes 22-03-2022

PROGRESS ON THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Agreed Changes

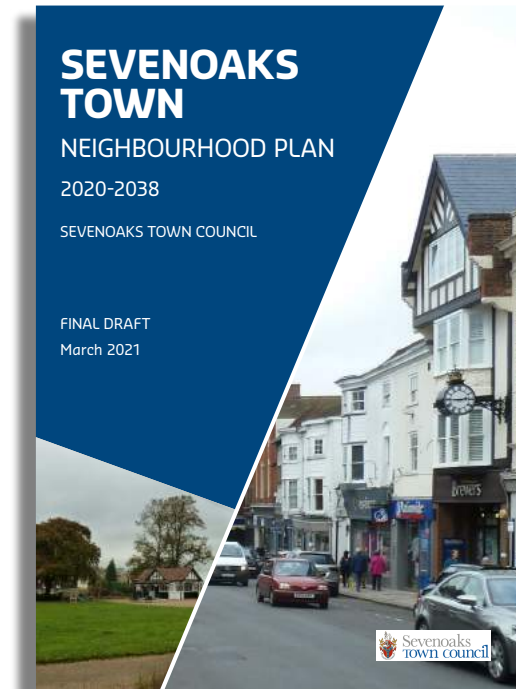
- **Additional policies and aims**
 - Encouraging development of vacant and under utilised sites
 - Naming of streets to reflect people and places of historic significance
 - Delivering biodiversity net gain as part of development
 - Managing surface water to minimise flood risk
 - Directing HGV movements away from the town centre
 - Enhanced play and sports provision
 - Separate policy relating to Tarmac site
- **Revisions to existing policies and to supporting text**



STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Sevenoaks Town Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Minutes 22-03-2022

- Updated Plan submitted to the District Council to assess whether a **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** was required (April 2021)
- **Initial screening opinion was that an SEA was not required but Historic England disagreed**
- AECOM appointed to prepare SEA in August 2021



STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Savenoaks Town Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Minutes 22-03-2022

- **SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan**
- **Aim of SEA:** to inform the Plan and to avoid and mitigate any potential negative impacts, and to maximise the Plan's contribution to sustainable development
- AECOM issued SEA Scoping Report in September 2021
- Scoping was carried out under eight environmental themes:
 - Air Quality
 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity
 - Climate Change
 - Landscape and Townscape
 - Historic Environment
 - Land, Soil, and Water Resources
 - Community Wellbeing
 - Transportation.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Sevenoaks Town Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Minutes 22-03-2022

- Consultation on Scoping Report with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency
- Recommendation on minor changes to strengthen policies in the Neighbourhood Plan made by AECOM in November 2021
- These were incorporated into the January 2022 Neighbourhood Plan



ALLOCATING SITES

Sevenoaks Town Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Minutes 22-03-2022

- The purpose of the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan is to ensure that new development is delivered in a coordinated way that **maximises benefits** to the town and is **supported by local people**.
- The Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan **must be in compliance with the District Council's Local Plan**
- The consultation draft Neighbourhood Plan was prepared to align with the emerging **Local Plan (2015-2035)** and **assumed that sites identified within the plan would be allocated**
- Delays to the Local Plan mean that this is no longer the case - wording in the plan has therefore been amended to align with the current planning policy
- Whilst a Neighbourhood Plan can allocate sites this would require additional evidence (proof that development is viable and deliverable and that development is supported by owners)
- **The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites** but instead sets out the benefits that development should deliver through the design, layout and use of each site



STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Sevenoaks Town Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Minutes 22-03-2022

- SEA Environmental Report issued by AECOM on 21 March 2022
- SEA Environmental Report includes an assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan policies against the eight themes:

- Air Quality
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Climate Change
- Landscape and Townscape
- Historic Environment
- Land, Soil, and Water Resources
- Community Wellbeing
- Transportation.

Beneficial Approaches

Positive Effects

Potential Positive Effects

Positive Effects

Positive Effects

Significant Positive Effects

Beneficial Approaches

- Once SEA finalised Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency will be consulted (5 weeks).



NEXT STEPS

- **Sign off Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan** with Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Town Council **May 2022**
- **Submit Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan** to District Council along with Consultation Statement, Basic Conditions Statement and SEA **June 2022**
- SDC will then: **June / July 2022**
 - **publicise the plan** for a six week period;
 - notify anyone referred to in the consultation statement that the plan has been received; and
 - **appoint an independent examiner**

Any representations received on the plan during the 6-week consultation period will be passed to the independent examiner for consideration.
- **Examiners Report** **August 2022**

At the end of the 6-week period the independent examiner will issue a report to the SDC and the Town Council and may make recommendations on modifications required to the plan prior to going to referendum.
- **Modify Neighbourhood Plan** in response to Examiner’s recommendations **September 2022**
- **Referendum** **Autumn 2022**

Assuming that the plan is found to be satisfactory then SDC will organise a referendum. They will need to publicise this 28 working days before the referendum is held.

If more than 50% of those voting in the referendum vote yes to support the plan, then it becomes a part of the statutory development plan.