

**Sevenoaks Town Council**  
**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023**  
**Held in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG**

Livestreamed and available to view on YouTube until approved by Council:

<https://youtube.com/live/yNajs1kQiqA?feature=share>

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 p.m.

**Meeting Concluded:** 7.47 p.m.

Cllr Claire Shea, <b>Mayor</b>	Present		Cllr Chloe Gustard	Present
Cllr Libby Ancrum, <b>Deputy Mayor</b>	Apologies		Cllr Sally Layne	Absent
Cllr Sue Camp	Present		Cllr Lionel O'Hara	Present
Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet	Present		Cllr Lise Michaelides	Present
Cllr Tony Clayton	Present		Cllr David Skinner OBE	Apologies
Cllr Catherine Daniell	Apologies		Cllr Nick Varley	Present
Cllr Peter Dixon	Present		Cllr Nigel Wightman	Present
Cllr Victoria Granville	Present		Cllr Gareth Willis	Present
			From 7.08pm	

**In Attendance:** Town Clerk (Remote attendance), Responsible Finance Officer/Deputy Town Clerk and Senior Committee Clerk

**Representations received from Members of the Public:**

1. Mr. P Julius submitted questions in relation to the 20mph scheme consultation, including: a request for information regarding accidents listed in the public consultation; query whether residents of Riverhead, Dunton Green, Chipstead, Otford and Seal were being consulted; and whether the format of the survey would be changed and reissued.

The Mayor responded to the points raised, explaining: the preparation of the scheme under consultation and the consultation document; the range of causes for the injury causing accidents in Sevenoaks between 2013 and 2023; she stated that residents of the areas referred to above were welcome to reply to the consultation but that as a Town Council consultation relating to Town Council policy and budget, the document was delivered only to Sevenoaks Town residents; and she discussed the impact and design of the scheme.

2. Cllr Richard Streatfeild, Sevenoaks District Council & Kent County Council (KCC), gave an update on key matters at KCC, including:
  - Budget difficulties at KCC which meant that only statutory services would be delivered. He referred to the "Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy" which set out action being taken.
  - Increased level of enquiries about potholes and the work undertaken
  - The new Integrated Health Strategy
  - The Adult Social Care Pressures Plan
  - SEND issues in the education services

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- Concern that grammar annexes in Sevenoaks were not able to support a sixth form offer
- Pressures on the fostering service

**516 Apologies for Absence**

516.1 Apologies for Absence were received and accepted as shown above.

516.2 Cllr David Skinner

**RESOLVED:** To provide Cllr David Skinner OBE extended Apologies of Absence in recognition of extended emergency humanitarian requirements out of the country.

**517 Requests for Dispensations:** none received.

**518 Declarations of Interest:** none received.

**519 Minutes of the Meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023**

**RESOLVED:** to accept and sign the minutes of the Meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023 as a true record.

**520 Minutes of Committees**

**520.1 Planning Committee**

**520.1.1 RESOLVED:** To receive and adopt the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 6<sup>th</sup> November and 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 as true records.

**520.1.2 Tarmac & KCC Liaison Group Terms of Reference and Town Council Membership**

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) To receive and note Minute 469 of the Planning Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- 2) To ratify the appointment of Cllr Shea, Cllr Dr Canet and Cllr Wightman as members of the Tarmac & KCC Liaison Group

**520.2 Finance & General Purposes Committee**

**RESOLVED:** To receive and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023 as a true record.

**520.3 Community Infrastructure Committee**

**RESOLVED:** To receive and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Community Infrastructure Committee held on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023 as a true record

**520.4 Personnel Committee**

**RESOLVED:** To receive and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023 as a true record

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**520.5 Youth Services Committee**

**RESOLVED:** To receive and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Youth Services Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 as a true record

**520.6 Open Spaces & Leisure Committee**

**RESOLVED:** To receive and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 as a true record.

**521 Sevenoaks Town Council Priorities 2023-2027**

**RESOLVED:** That the Sevenoaks Town Council Priorities 2023-2027, attached as Appendix A, be approved and adopted.

**522 Appointment of Leader/Deputy Leader for Sevenoaks Town Council**

The Council considered the process and protocol for the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader for the Town Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Clayton, seconded by Cllr Dr Canet, and agreed that amendments be made to the Process and Protocol (as shown in red on document attached as Appendix B)

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Process and Protocol for Sevenoaks Town Council Leader and Deputy Leader, as amended (and attached at Appendix B) be approved and adopted;
- 2) That the Process and Protocol be reviewed at each subsequent Annual Meeting

**523 Update to Freedom of Information Publication Schedule**

**RESOLVED:** That the amendment to the Freedom of Information Publication Schedule, to include reference to video recordings of council and committee meetings, be approved and adopted.

**524 Councillor Reports: Town Council Representatives on External Organisations**

**RESOLVED:** To receive and note the reports from Cllr Clayton in respect of his attendance at ALDC/NALC Conference for Town and Parish Councillors and the South Eastern Trains Stakeholder Event.

**525 Mayor's Engagements**

**RESOLVED:** To note and accept the reports relating to Mayoral activities:

- a) functions attended by the Mayor or her representative up to 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023; and
- b) forthcoming Civic Events being organised by the Mayor during 2023-24

The Mayor and Councillors thanked staff for their work on the following very successful events: Sevenoaks Business Awards, Skatepark Reopening and Christmas Lights Switch On.

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**526    Press Release:** None

There being no further business the Mayor closed the meeting.

Signed .....  
Mayor

Dated .....

# Sevenoaks Town Council Blue Skies Draft Priorities 2023 -2027

Approved at Community Infrastructure Committee – 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Adopted at Sevenoaks Town Council Meeting – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Ref	Priorities	Officer Comment	Draft £'000	Year 1	4 Year Term	Priority Level	Cttee
<b>1</b>	<b>Character, Heritage &amp; Identity</b>						
	<b>Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan</b>						<b>Planning</b>
1.1	Use STNP to inform Council priorities and organisation.	A Steering Group has been convened for reviewing implementation of actions and policies.	65	*		1	
1.2	Use STNP in the STC planning process when assessing planning applications.			*		1	
1.3	Further encourage the development and evolution of the STNP for the whole Town			*		1	
1.4	As part of the evolution of the STNP, develop a <b>Masterplan</b> for the retail/business districts in the Town Centre and St Johns			*		1	
<b>2</b>	<b>Landscape &amp; Blue and Green Infrastructure</b>						
	<b>Green Community Investment Plan</b>						
2.1.	Further develop the <b>Green Community Investment Plan</b>			*		1	<b>OSL</b>
2.2.	Extend the tree planting programme throughout the town, including working with KCC Highways to establish an inventory of sites			*		1	<b>OSL</b>

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2.3	Encourage greater use of solar panels including through the planning system and provision of information to households.				*	2	OSL
2.4	Improve access to Mill Pond Woods (new steps)		5		*	3	OSL
2.5	Consider if Vine Pavilion could be enhanced for wider use.	Vine Pavilion has covenants restricting to sports use.			*	3	Planning
3	<b>Movement and Public Realm</b>						
3.1.	<b>Conduct further 20 mph Consultation</b> and implement outcome.	Consultation taking place 1 <sup>st</sup> November – 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	130	*		1	Planning/CIC
3.2	Work with KCC and SDC to encourage <b>cycling</b> safety and experience including by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adding more routes</li> <li>- Starting an E-bike scheme</li> <li>- Providing secure storage</li> <li>- Reducing HGV traffic in town</li> </ul>				*	2	
3.3.	Work with KCC and SDC to improve <b>pedestrian</b> safety and experience including by				*	2	Planning

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving safety around the station</li> <li>- Improving safety on the High Street</li> <li>- A crossing of Dartford Road at The Vine</li> <li>- Crossings of Seal Hollow Road at possibly multiple points</li> <li>- Reducing HGV traffic in the Town</li> </ul>		25		*	2	
3.4.	<b>Electrify the No 8 Orbital Bus</b>	CIL Application with SDC	300	*		1	CIC
3.5.	<b>Public Realm &amp; Wayfinding</b> Improve signage across the Town.	CIL Application with SDC	170		*	2	CIC
3.6.	Renovate street signs.				*	2	
3.7.	Provide digital notice boards in the Town Centre and Station				*	2	
4	<b>Local Economy</b>						
4.1.	<b>Develop Business Improvement District (BID)</b> – work with local businesses and SDC to establish a BID		TBC	*		1	TT/ F&GP

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4.2	Encourage SEN Employment				*	2	TT/ F&GP
4.3.	Encourage apprenticeships and work experience.				*	2	
4.4.	<b>Markets</b> – develop Market within Sevenoaks to reflect its Market Town status.  Work with SDC to improve offering including increased scope, more variety, more days and possible indoor market.				*	2	F&GP?
<b>5</b>	<b>Community &amp; Culture</b>						
5.1.	<b>Engagement</b>  Engage with communities on all key initiatives, for example. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 20 mph</li> <li>- Masterplan</li> <li>- Greatness Quarry development</li> <li>- Infrastructure budgeting</li> </ul>	STC as a general principle will liaise and consult with as many people as possible, via involvement in Working Parties, surveys, public consultation, topic-based groups e.g., Sports Panel, Youth Council.		*		1	All
5.2.	<b>Art and culture</b>  Support <b>Stag Community Arts Centre</b> development as the key	Cultural Strategy includes Stag recognition and other current and new cultural proposals.		*		1	OSL



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5.3.	part of the <b>Town Cultural Quarter</b>						
	Support art exhibitions including local initiatives and street performance.				*	2	
5.4	Support annual Music, Arts and Literature Festivals				*	2	
	<b>Youth Provision</b>						<b>Youth/OSL</b>
5.5	Support current Youth Facilities and if possible, extend.	STC 100% funds HitB Youth Café Retaining current is a financial challenge.		*		1	
5.6	As part of above, consider how to provide Girl Friendly Places				*	2	
5.7	Also consider how further to support School Workshops				*	2	
5.8	Also consider provision of Natural Play areas	STC has a Play Policy can be expanded to include this.			*	2	
5.9	Consider and implement outcome of Greatness Recreation Ground consultation.				*	2	

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<b>5.10</b>	<b>Education</b>  Consider how to address the shortage of Children's Nurseries	STC currently supports a children's nursery with a 25-year peppercorn lease.  STC could create a planning policy (STNP) to support the needs for children's nurseries.			*	<b>3</b>	
<b>5.11</b>	Since the town is a major education hub, consider with other stakeholders whether a Tertiary Facility (e.g., university annex) could be developed.	STC could create a planning policy (STNP) to support this.			*	<b>3</b>	
<b>5.12</b>	<b>Events</b>  Reinstate Town Fireworks if possible.	Conversation taking place with Sevenoaks School			*	<b>2</b>	<b>F&amp;GP?</b>
<b>5.13</b>	Hold Town event in 5/2024 (STC's 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary) to raise the profile of STC amongst residents.			*		<b>1</b>	
<b>5.14</b>	Hold 80 <sup>th</sup> D Day Commemoration in 6/2024			*		<b>1</b>	
<b>5.15</b>	Consider a programme of other themed town centre events.	Additional resources would be required.			*	<b>3</b>	

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<b>6</b>	<b>Sports and Recreation</b>						
<b>6.1</b>	Work with local sports clubs and groups to create an integrated Town sports strategy.	Arrangements in place	<b>(200) 87.5</b>	*		<b>2</b>	<b>OSL/F&amp;GP/CIC</b>
<b>6.2</b>	Develop a Town sports promotion policy – perhaps a sport week.	Part of Sports Strategy Review.			*	<b>2</b>	
<b>6.3</b>	Consider how additional sports facilities might become available.	Part of Sports Strategy Review			*	<b>3</b>	
<b>6.4</b>	Consider how new activities e.g. Padel can be facilitated.	Part of Sports Strategy Review			*	<b>3</b>	
<b>6.5</b>	Support building of a new <b>Greatness Football Pavilion</b> , to include a community café.	Planning Permission obtained. CIL Bid to SDC.		*		<b>1</b>	
<b>6.6</b>	Provide outdoor games e.g., chess, table tennis	Currently provided in some locations, expand as resources become available.			*	<b>3</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Development and Housing</b>						
<b>7.1</b>	Work with Tarmac, KCC and SDC to maximise the public benefit from the <b>Greatness Quarry</b> redevelopment (including affordable housing, road improvements, the Oast House, schooling and public health)	STC member of Liaison Group STNP principles outlined.	<b>TBC</b>	*		<b>1</b>	<b>Planning</b>

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7.2.	Consider long term plan to move STC offices, freeing current site for housing.	STC took the decision that it would not move premises for at least 10 years and to invest in the site spending £250k on restoring old building for Business Hub.  Further investment is being considered for retro fitting carbon reduction initiatives.  The investment would not be worthwhile if the buildings are to be demolished.	50	*	*	3	Planning/CIC
7.3	Refurbish St John's public toilets.	Funding agreed.			*	1	
7.4	Identify and list Community Assets	STC has a good Asset Register of its assets.  Ongoing for new applications for applying for Community Assets of Value.				2	
7.5	Press for development of derelict or underused sites in Town as identified in the STNP including Farmers, Edwards, BT, Waterworks	STNP Policy.			*	2	Planning

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7.6	Lobby for better provision of public health facilities including better GP coverage and the future of Sevenoaks Hospital				*	3	?
7.7	Only approve qualifying developments that include affordable housing.	STC can recommend approval on this basis.		*		1	Planning

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## Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council Process & Protocol

In the unusual situation where all councillors on Sevenoaks Town Council are from a single party, to ensure transparency, clarity and accountability in the way the Council operates, for life of the current Council the following Process & Protocol for Sevenoaks Town Council Leader and Deputy be adopted and reviewed at each subsequent Annual meeting.

### PROCESS

#### Leader of the Council

1. The Annual Council Meeting **may** elect a Councillor as Leader of the Council, at the same time they may elect a Deputy Leader of the Council.
2. The Leader of the Council may be replaced at any meeting of Full Council. Motion to replace the Leader must be notified in the Agenda.
3. The Leader of the Council will usually be the Leader of the largest political group of Councillors.
4. The Leader is the most senior Councillor of the Council politically. The Leader will lead the decision-making process at Councillor level and liaise with the Town Clerk on those issues, forward plans and matters of policy or strategic direction. The Leader has no legal status or civic and ceremonial responsibilities.
5. The Town Clerk may use the Leader and **chairs of Committees** as a 'sounding board' in advance of formal consideration of any matter to assist in gauging likely Councillor reaction to a proposal,
6. The Deputy Leader can deputise for any actions normally carried out by the Leader.

### LEADER PROTOCOL

#### Introduction

This protocol aims to ensure that the Leader and the Town Clerk are guided by a set of ground rules designed to maintain high standards of public accountability, mutual respect, and an understanding of the Council's decision-making structures. If a Deputy Leader has been elected, this protocol shall also apply when the Deputy is acting in place of the Leader.

#### 1. General Principles

- i) In accordance with the Statutory Code of Conduct, the Leader must not use Council resources for party political purposes. The Leader must uphold the political impartiality of the Town Clerk, and not ask the Town Clerk to act in any

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way which would conflict with the Council's Officer Professional Code of Conduct, Protocol on Member / Officer relationships, or Conditions of Service.

- ii) The Leader does not have line management responsibilities for the Town Clerk and should not issue management instructions to the Town Clerk.
- iii) Where a decision is required following discussion between the Leader and the Town Clerk, the matter will be submitted to Council or a Committee for consideration, unless the matter is already delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader.
- iv) Matters wholly within the responsibility of the Town Clerk, or which have been delegated to the Town Clerk without consultation requirements, may still be discussed between the Leader and the Town Clerk.
- v) In undertaking their roles, the Leader and Town Clerk should respect the following principles:

**Principle 1** As a 'visible' and accountable elected representative, with defined responsibilities, the Leader will need to be properly briefed on all significant aspects of the work of the Council. The Town Clerk should ensure a proper information flow so as to ensure that the Leader can effectively 'lead'.

**Principle 2** Good communications can be best achieved through planned and programmed meetings and briefing arrangements. On the basis that the Town Clerk should be ensuring that the information needs of the Leader are met. The Leader, should in turn, seek to avoid making requests for unanticipated briefings.

**Principle 3** The Leader (and all the Councillors) should channel significant requests for information, advice, and other support via the Town Clerk (or in absence Deputy Town Clerk – in which case the Town Clerk will be copied into requests). Other arrangements may apply as agreed and established between the Leader and the Town Clerk. The Leader shall not approach other staff directly with requests for information (except in the cases of emergency in the absence of the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk) or seek to commission work from individual staff, as this may confuse day-to-day line management accountabilities.

**Principle 4** The Leader may work with the Town Clerk and or the other senior managers in the development of policies and programmes.

**Principle 5** All Councillors have collective responsibility to the Council for the conduct of employment policy, and the Council acts as the employing body for all Council staff. Employment policies, having been set by the Council, are implemented via the Town Clerk.

**Principle 6** When a report to Committee or Council is being prepared, the Leader is entitled to discuss issues with the Town Clerk and with other officers concerning the contents of such reports and the framing of recommendations. Whilst the Leader may wish to make suggestions on content and drafting, the Leader should not attempt to edit out or



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override any content of reports which the Town Clerk or other officer feels is important to put before the Council.

**Principle 7** When the Leader (and all Councillors) wish to put forward proposals of their own, it is the responsibility of the Councillor (via the Town Clerk) to produce a report to the relevant Committee for consideration. The Town Clerk may wish, and has a right, to add comments to such reports.

**Principle 8** The Town Clerk, managers and other officers exercise statutory functions and have individual responsibilities. The Leader should understand and respect these roles.

## **2 The Leader and Fellow Councillors**

- i) The distinctive role of the Mayor, Committee Chairs and Councillors are already well established at the Town Council.
- ii) The Leader should ensure to consult as necessary with colleagues in the early stages of formulating proposals. Committee Chairs, in particular, should be consulted on issues relevant to their Committee and the Mayor should be involved in any civic related matters or issues which may affect the conduct of Council meetings.

**Principle 9** Nothing in these arrangements shall infringe:

- the right and duty of each individual councillor to speak and vote according to their best judgement
  - the right of all councillors to information and guidance from Council officers, or
  - the duty of Council officers to support each councillor with equal consideration
-