

Minutes of the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan / Masterplan Working Group meeting held at the Council Chambers on 10th February 2025, 6:00pm.

In attendance – Quorum minimum of 3 elected members

Sevenoaks Town Council – Elected member & Mayor	Cllr Libby Ancrum
Sevenoaks Town Council – Elected member	Cllr Lise Michaelides
Sevenoaks Town Council – Vice Chair & Elected member	Cllr David Skinner OBE
Sevenoaks Town Council – Elected member	Cllr Claire Shea
Sevenoaks Town Council – Elected member	Cllr Nigel Wightman
Sevenoaks Town Council	Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet
Sevenoaks Town Council	Cllr Gareth Willis
Sevenoaks Town Council – Town Clerk	Linda Larter MBE
Sevenoaks Town Council – Planning Committee Clerk	Georgie Elliston
Sevenoaks District Council	Cllr Elizabeth Purves
Sevenoaks Society	Charles George

Prior to the commencement of the meeting and in the absence of the Chair, Cllr David Skinner as Vice Chair was nominated to Chair the meeting.

306 Apologies for absence

Cllr Tony Clayton (Chair, Sevenoaks Town Council), **Cllr Roddy Hogarth** (Sevenoaks District Council – Leader), **Paul Baker** (Wealden Properties)

307 Minutes

The Minutes of the previous STNP Monitoring and Implementation Group meeting held on 27th August 2024 were received and agreed.

308 Monitoring

a) The updated monitoring report, which records how the STNP has been being applied to planning applications since the last report, was received and noted.

b) The Vice Chair summarised the trends/observations report and the following points of note were discussed:

- Self-build applications were observed to be a “grey area” for Biodiversity Net Gain, and it was noted that the Town Council’s response to the recent Government consultation on the NPPF had referenced this and recommended that BNG Policy remove the distinction between self-built and developer-led schemes.
- Regarding the Sevenoaks Gasholder Station planning application:
 - Members expressed disappointment that the Sevenoaks Gasholder Station planning application had been Granted against STNP guidance and despite objection from South East Water that the piling works could risk significant contamination of the local groundwater supply.
 - It was considered that the recent power cut at a water treatment works had highlighted the significant impact that even a small risk to water supply could have on residents, with around 5,000 homes having been left for three days without water or with low pressure.
 - Cllr Shea reported that she had written to the Member of Parliament for Sevenoaks District following this event, requesting that water providers be elevated to Statutory Consultee status.

- It was noted that, although the STNP provides design guidance as well as height restrictions which the Gasholder site proposals directly conflict with, the NDP had not been designed nor intended to be used as a housing allocation document or replacement to the Local Plan.
- Members disagreed with the Tree Officer’s grounds for deeming the two trees proposed for removal under 24/02395/HOUSE to be of limited amenity value. The Officer’s justification was that the trees were not visible from the front of the property, however members considered that the definition of amenity value should include contribution to biodiversity, habitat and wildlife contribution. It was **agreed** that recommendation be made for the STNP’s 5 year review, for the wording of Policy L4 to clarify this expanded definition.

c) The Town Clerk reported that Swanley Town Council’s NDP had been “made” by the District Council in 2024, and noted that it would be interesting to see if any similar observations or trends had been picked up by Swanley Officers. It was **agreed** that STC enquire as to this, as well as for copy of the latest monitoring and trends report be forwarded to the Town Council as an example of how the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan could be similarly monitored, if not already.

d) It was further **agreed** that copy of the Monitoring reports be forwarded to the District Council’s Planning Policy team, to inform their own monitoring exercises.

309 **Sevenoaks Quarry Section 106 Agreement and Tarmac Obligations**

a) It was noted that the summary report alluded to in the Agenda papers had been created by Tarmac for a previous Sevenoaks Quarry Steering Group, with the Town Council still awaiting receipt of a copy to share with the Working Group.

b) It was noted that the full Section 106 agreement between Tarmac, Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council is available via the following link to the District Council’s Planning Portal:

<https://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=R7THZFbk0L000>

c) Members received notice that the STNP / Masterplan Working Group would be reviewing the headline provisions covered in the Section 106 agreement under the following timeline, with recommendations as to Town Council action to be considered during these meetings:

Date	Section 106 Reference	Earliest trigger for provisions under this schedule
10.02.2025	Schedule 4 – Open Space and Community Uses	Restoration of the Oast House to be completed prior to occupation of 150th Residential Property*
07.04.2025	Schedule 2 – Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing Scheme to be agreed prior to development commencing on each Phase
02.06.2025	Schedule 5 – Bus Service Contribution and Bus Stops Schedule	Bus Stops Scheme to be approved prior to commencement of any development
TBC	Schedule 6 – Highway Works and PROW Contribution	Bat and Ball Road pedestrian and cycle Section 278 to be entered prior to commencement of any development
TBC	Schedule 7 – Residential Travel Plan, Car Club and Mobility Hub	Residential Travel Plan to be delivered no less than 3 months prior to first occupation of any Residential Development
TBC	Schedule 3 – Primary School Site	Plans to be prepared following commencement of development of the 350th Residential Property

d) Cllr Wightman provided a summary analysis of the Section 106 agreement, with the following points of note having been discussed:

- Management and ownership of assets is light in detail, particularly with regard to the Local Centre, Oast House, Parklands, Lake and Watersport facility.
- No mention is made of Sevenoaks Town Council in terms of potential involvement, including with the Oast House for which the Town Council's interest in owning and managing has been known since its identification as a proposed community asset in the STNP
- Furthermore, there was no consultation with the Town Council on the contents of the Section 106, either in its production or prior to its signing
- A total of £750,000 in bus service contributions has been agreed for payment to Kent County Council. Cllr Wightman recommended that the Town Council ask to be included in conversations as to how this is allocated
- A service charge will be payable by the future residents of the development site, with an exception for social housing residents. This would go towards the cost of maintaining the open spaces, however there is no detail as to how this will be collected or by who.
- It was noted that the future reorganisation of local government will bring significant changes in regards with ownership and operation of assets.
- With regards to the provision of a roundabout at Bat & Ball junction, Cllr Shea reported that West Kent Housing Association had recently discovered that the approved plans include a piece of land which they intend on reconfiguring to improve waste collection services. It was noted that a roundtable discussion had been requested from the Town Council, with Tarmac, Sevenoaks District Council, Kent County Council and West Kent Housing Association.
- There is no requirement in the Section 106 for medical facilities, however Cllr Shea reported that Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust had recently expressed their ambition for providing both primary and secondary at the Hospital.
- The Town Clerk also clarified that headline provisions on the Section 106 cannot be substituted for an alternative contribution not already included in the agreement after its signing. For instance, should the secondary school provision agreed to in the Section 106 no longer be needed, the funds for this cannot be swapped for provision of a doctor's surgery site instead. A pre-approved sum of money would instead be paid, either to the District Council or Kent County Council.

e) The Working Group considered Open Space and Community Uses provision under Schedule 4 of the Section 106, with the following points of note having been discussed:

- Sevenoaks Town Council has expressed interest in owning and managing the Oast House, and request had been made to Tarmac for the ownership to be transferred Freehold. The Town Council has aspirations for the site to become a key base for meeting the local community's needs, with a one stop shop and flexible community space.
- The Barn has been agreed for transfer to the Scouts.
- The Water Sports Centre is accompanied with various ancillary assets as well as a community facility. It was noted that the Sevenoaks Sea Cadets had expressed interest in the lake, and the Town Council could potentially be interested in the Water Sports Centre. It was noted however, that the associated open spaces and park appear to be inseparable from lake, the latter of which the Town Council would likely prefer not to adopt. It was therefore agreed that recommendation be made for the Town Council to express initial interest in obtaining this asset, however that request be made for the lake to remain in Tarmac ownership, similar to the

ownership and management structure of the Wildlife Reserve which is owner by Tarmac and operated by Kent Wildlife Trust.

f) The following recommendations were made, and it was **agreed** that these be reported to the appropriate Town Council Committee and processed through the Committee structure:

- Given the uncertainty as to Kent County Council and Sevenoaks District Council’s future, recommendation that a request be made for Sevenoaks Town Council to be added to the Section 106 as a potential successor of the District Council. In particular, as the hiring body of a Community Development Officer, amongst other potential responsibilities.
- For the Town Council to confirm **definite** aspiration to receive and operate the Oast House, **potential** aspiration to receive and operate the Water Sports Centre and Park with associated Open Spaces, and **potential** interest in managing the lake, should ownership be separable from this.

310 **Town Centre and St John’s Area Masterplans update**

a) Members received notice that the draft reports for the Town Centre and St John’s Area Masterplans are nearly complete, with consultation expected March 2025 and exact dates to be determined. It was noted however, that the **March 2025 public consultation would likely be limited to the St John’s Area Masterplan**, due to the potential for significant changes to be made to the Town Centre local asset ownership in the upcoming local government reorganisation.

b) It was noted that, while the local governance restructure would not significantly impact recommendations and options explored in the St John’s Area Masterplan, the Town Centre Masterplan was much more likely to be affected due to the number of significant assets owned by both Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council. Publishing the Town Centre Masterplan without exploring the future of these assets was considered a lost opportunity, with the Masterplan being at risk of being out of date not long after it is published.

c) The Town Clerk clarified that the Town Centre Masterplan would likely be delayed by a maximum of 3 months, in order to allow the Masterplan to be better informed as to the future management of council-owned assets.

Timeline	Activity
February 2025	Draft consultation material for St John’s Masterplan to be received and circulated to Councillors – including posters, information boards and questionnaire
First week of March 2025	Launch of public consultation for St John’s Masterplan, with information boards at key locations
17 th March 2025	Information stand for St John’s Masterplan at the Annual Town Public Meeting
End of March 2025	Close of consultation for St John’s Masterplan
~ June 2025 ESTIMATE	Launch of public consultation for Town Centre Masterplan

311 **Current Matters**

The Current Matters report was received and noted.

312 **Dates of future meetings**

The following future meeting dates were noted:

7th April 2025 – 6pm	2nd June 2025 – 6pm
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Meeting concluded at 6:50pm.