

**Minutes of the meeting of the STNP / Masterplan Working Group  
Held on Monday 07 April 2025 in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG**

Meeting commenced: 18:00

Meeting Concluded: 18:40

**In attendance** – Quorum minimum of 3 elected members

Sevenoaks Town Council – Elected member & Mayor	<b>Cllr Libby Ancrum</b>
Sevenoaks Town Council – Chair & Elected member	<b>Cllr Clayton</b>
Sevenoaks Town Council – Vice Chair & Elected member	<b>Cllr David Skinner OBE</b>
Sevenoaks Town Council – Elected member	<b>Cllr Claire Shea</b>
Sevenoaks Town Council	<b>Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet</b>
Sevenoaks Town Council – Town Clerk	<b>Linda Larter MBE</b>
Sevenoaks Town Council – Planning Committee Clerk	<b>Georgie Elliston</b>
Sevenoaks District Council – Leader	<b>Cllr Roddy Hogarth</b>
Sevenoaks Society	<b>Charles George</b>
Warners Solicitors	<b>Liz Dolding</b>
Member of the Public	<b>Tim Collingwood</b>

**Prior to the commencement of the meeting and for the benefit of new members, welcome and brief introduction from each attendee was provided.**

**1 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**Cllr Elizabeth Purves** (Sevenoaks District Council)

**2 - MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous STNP Monitoring and Implementation Group meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025 were received and agreed.

**3 - 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 Planning Committee Clerk summarised the trends/observations report and the following points of note were discussed:

- From 2023 onwards, Policy C6 (promoting energy efficient retrofitting) had been applied by SDC against 21 planning applications proposing solar panels, in contrast to 0 of the 8 applications which proposed air source heat pumps. It was therefore recommended that STC cite this policy when considering applications which proposed to improve a household’s energy efficiency in order to promote its use.
- Policy E5 (enhancing the function of neighbourhood centres) had recently been used by Planning Officers to support the approval of later operating hours for a shop in St John’s Ward. It was recommended that this Policy be cited by the Planning & Environment Committee for future improvements to the area, particularly as the

emerging St John's Area Masterplan could encourage an increase in applications which will complement this Policy's delivery.

- A recent application had been Granted despite its proposal to offset its required BNG offsite and within a different District. This had highlighted the need not only for work to be done locally to provide an evidence base to allow sites within Sevenoaks Town to be secured for developer BNG contributions, but also for a stipulation to be added to the STNP at its 5 year review stage, that contributions be sought in the first instance within the neighbourhood plan boundary.
- Cllr Skinner noted the importance of ensuring quality design, especially with the raised housing number requirements forecasting an increase of development in the Town. He suggested that Design Review Panels should be instigated more often and early in the design process – however, members were not clear as to the details of this process and how it could be initiated.

c) It was **agreed** that the following recommendations be presented to the Planning & Environment Committee for its approval and action:

- To request details and Cllr training from SDC, as to the process and implications of a Design Review Panel
- To consider and cite Policy C6 in relation to planning proposals for energy-saving interventions in order to promote its use by SDC Officers
- To consider and cite Policy E5 in relation to planning applications that propose improvements to the function of neighbourhood centres, in particular in St John's which the St John's Area Masterplan seeks to improve
- To request amendment to Policy L1 at the STNP's 5 year review stage, to include stipulation that offsite BNG contributions should be sought within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary, in the first instance and where possible.

d) It was noted that the second Annual Report is due after 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025, with the draft report to be provided at the next STNP / Masterplan Working Group meeting.

#### **4 - MASTERPLANS UPDATE**

a) The Working Group received notice that the public consultation for the St John's Hill Area had been extended by a further three weeks, with the revised deadline for comment being 11:59pm on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

b) The Town Clerk reported that feedback received on the draft St John's Area Masterplan to date had been largely positive so far, with support received for many of the potential improvements identified, and no particular aspects having been met with a majority of opposition. The Planning Committee Clerk expanded that 115 responses had been received to date, with all showing a range of opinion that indicated clear engagement with the supporting documents.

c) Thanks was noted in particular to Wealden Properties for allowing STC to advertise the Masterplan in its shop windows.

## **5 - SECOND SEVENOAKS TOWN SPORTS STRATEGY (Circulated separately)**

a) The Town Clerk provided a brief background of the second Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy, which had been produced over the previous year in close collaboration with local sporting groups, organisations and clubs via a Working Group. She explained that, following its adoption by the Town Council's Planning & Environment Committee, the Strategy would replace the previous Sports Strategy as an evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan at its 5 year review.

b) Charles George (Sevenoaks Society) praised the Town Council and those involved in the Strategy's creation, for the quality and clarity of its content. Members agreed it to be an impressive piece of work which set out a clear and structured strategy to improve sport provision in the Town.

c) Clarification was sought from a local resident as to the meaning behind recommendation D3, where it was stated that "The development of Hockey 2 x 3G pitches and clubhouse is supported. Current land resolution not available". This was a concern due to their interpreting it to imply the pitches were hoped to be delivered at Hollybush Recreation Ground, following an agreement or resolution. The Town Clerk confirmed the land to not be available at this location, and that the required pitches would need to be provided offsite.

d) It was **agreed** that the Sports Strategy be recommended to the Planning & Environment Committee for adoption, with a minor amendment to recommendation D3 to clarify that the supported 3G Hockey pitches would need to be delivered elsewhere due to lack of land at Hollybush.

e) The upcoming reorganisation of local government was noted, however this was not considered likely to affect the contents or implementation of the Sports Strategy due to the recommendations not being land-specific. The Strategy could instead avoid being considered "out of date" following the reorganisation simply by amending any allusions to land ownerships to read "As of ...". For instance: Hollybush Recreation Ground – Owned by SDC, as of April 2025.

f) Cllr Skinner emphasised the importance of the Sports Strategy not only in supporting existing users of sports facilities, but also new ones who do not currently engage in sporting activities. He considered the removal of barriers to people trying new sports to be equally important. It was noted that a key way for this to be encouraged is via free sports and publicly available open spaces – for instance with "mile markers" painted onto fields so that public can measure their progress.

g) It was noted that SDC and Everyone Active is currently trying to pursue such initiatives, and agreed that their engagement in future such projects would be beneficial.

**6 - NEXT MEETING DATES**

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025 and focus on Schedule 2 of the Sevenoaks Quarry Section 106 Agreement, relating to Affordable Housing provision.

There being no further business the Chair closed the Meeting.

Signed ..... Dated .....  
Chair

DRAFT