

# SEVENOAKS TOWN

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2020-38

SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL

DRAFT

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# CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>15</b>
1.1 What is a Neighbourhood Plan?	15
1.2 The Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan	16
1.3 The Consultation Draft Plan and process	19
<b>2 ABOUT SEVENOAKS</b>	<b>21</b>
2.1 Location and Neighbourhood Plan area	21
2.2 A brief portrait of the town	22
2.3 Issues for the Neighbourhood Plan	30
<b>3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>33</b>
3.1 Vision statement	33
3.2 Neighbourhood Plan objectives	34
<b>4 PLANNING POLICIES</b>	<b>37</b>
4.1 Introduction to policies	37
4.2 Theme One: Character, Heritage and Identity	38
4.3 Theme Two: Landscape and Green Infrastructure	46
4.4 Theme Three: Movement and Public Realm	50
4.5 Theme Four: Local Economy	56
4.6 Theme Five: Community and Culture	58
4.7 Theme Six: Sports and Recreation	62
4.8 Theme Seven: Development and Housing	64
<b>APPENDIX A: TOWN PORTRAIT</b>	<b>79</b>



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## ABOUT THE PLAN

In 2010 the government announced its intention to devolve some decision-making powers from central government to individuals and communities. The Localism Act 2011 gives communities the right to shape development in their area through Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and the Community Right to Build.

Neighbourhood Plans (such as this document) can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in an area. When adopted, they form part of the Statutory Development Plan and are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

At the Sevenoaks Town Council Annual Town Meeting held on the 14th March 2013 residents signalled their support for the Town Council to begin the preparation work on a Neighbourhood Plan for Sevenoaks. This Plan is a once-in-a-generation chance for local people to shape and guide the future of the town and to ensure that development is sensitive to the town's character and identity and provides for the needs of future generations.

Since 2013 the Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee has undertaken extensive public consultation and engagement activities to ensure that the content 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.

In Summer 2017 Urban Initiatives Studio (UIS) was appointed by the Town Council to assist them with preparation of the Plan. UIS's brief was to bring together all of the background work and the outcomes of the public engagement undertaken by the Council, and translate this into the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan remains, however, firmly based on the work undertaken by the Town Council.

## THE VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The Neighbourhood Plan is based upon a vision and accompanying set of objectives. It draws upon the town's existing strengths, reflects the positive qualities identified by the local community and identifies a number of challenges and opportunities. These include the potential to:

- Respond positively to climate change and encourage a more sustainable approach to both land use and lifestyle choices;
- Enhance and preserve the town's heritage assets and special open spaces;
- Enhance the arrival experience into the town to create a more welcoming impression;
- Enhance the town's network of roads, footpaths and cycling routes to improve connections and create a safer and more attractive environment for users;
- Improve access to, and better connect, the town's open spaces;
- Regenerate and revitalise the Northern Sevenoaks area around Bat and Ball station;
- Deliver a sustainable expansion at Greatness, on land currently being worked to extract gravel by Tarmac Ltd. (subject to release from the Green Belt) in order to deliver new homes to meet local needs;
- Unlock new opportunities for leisure, recreation and community infrastructure — including a new watersports lake as part of this development;
- Grow the town's economy and support the creation of new jobs;
- Deliver new community assets including a new Community Centre at Bat and Ball and new health and education provision;
- Deliver enhanced recreational and sports facilities for the town; and
- Enhance the town's thriving cultural scene.

The Neighbourhood Plan is looking to the future and central to this is the need to respond to the increasing threat of climate change. In June 2019 the government committed to reaching 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2050. The Neighbourhood Plan promotes many policies that will help to deliver this target either through land use and development or through helping to facilitate and encourage more sustainable lifestyles.

This Neighbourhood Plan vision is set out in a statement on the facing page and describes what the town will be like in 20 years' time.

## A Vision for Sevenoaks in 2038

*'Sevenoaks is a successful and friendly market town set on the Greensand Ridge that takes advantage of its good connections and easy access to open countryside and to London. It has a **strong sense of community** with an active network of volunteers. The town is **proud of its history** and the legacy of fine historic buildings, spanning six centuries, that contribute to an attractive townscape in its leafy streets.*

*However, Sevenoaks is not stuck in the past but firmly wedded to the future and the quality of life of its children and their children to come. As one of the UK's first **carbon zero** towns, Sevenoaks is environmentally responsible and resource-efficient. Despite its undulating topography, walking and cycling are the standard mode of travel with a network of safe **walking and cycling routes** that provide access to the towns **excellent schools** and to recreational and employment opportunities. New buildings in Sevenoaks are built to the **highest environmental standards** and the town celebrates its connection with the surrounding landscape that the views to the Kent Downs provide.*

*The town centre provides a **good mix of shops**, including many independent traders, and provides a **rich cultural offer** within an emerging cultural quarter and thriving markets. The centre is easy to access and provides **attractive streets and spaces** for locals and visitors alike. Residents live in a variety of homes set within well-kept neighbourhoods and also benefit from convenient neighbourhood centres at St John's, Tubs Hill and Hollybush Lane.*

*Knole Park, Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve, Greatness Lake and Recreation Ground provide a **unique and rich natural environment** for both active sports and quiet contemplation, and the town is proud of its remarkable trees.*

*The town is protective of its landscape assets but also recognises the need to plan for and deliver new homes and community facilities to provide for future generations. **Sevenoaks celebrates its uniqueness, protects its special assets and is planning for future prosperity!***



The Vine Gardens

The Vision for Sevenoaks will be delivered over a 15 to 20 year time-frame through a number objectives set out under the following themes:

- **THEME ONE:** CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY
- **THEME TWO:** LANDSCAPE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
- **THEME THREE:** MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC REALM
- **THEME FOUR:** LOCAL ECONOMY
- **THEME FIVE:** COMMUNITY AND CULTURE
- **THEME SIX:** SPORTS AND RECREATION
- **THEME SEVEN:** DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

## THEMES AND OBJECTIVES

### THEME ONE: CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY

**Objective One:** To respect the town's character and heritage and ensure that all new development is responsive to its context and enhances the setting of the town's historic assets

**Objective Two:** To protect views both to local landmarks and to the open countryside

**Objective Three:** To enhance the gateways / arrival points into the town to create a more welcoming impression

### THEME TWO: LANDSCAPE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

**Objective Four:** To recognise the significant contribution that trees and hedgerows make to the town's character and biodiversity

**Objective Five:** To protect, improve and enhance access to existing publicly accessible open spaces and create new publicly accessible open spaces and green infrastructure

### THEME THREE: MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC REALM

**Objective Six:** To work with the District Council, and Kent County Council, in consultation with neighbouring Parish Councils, to identify a long-term strategic approach to transport in Sevenoaks to respond to and mitigate any impacts of new development on the existing network

**Objective Seven:** To promote a co-ordinated approach to transport and movement that encourages use of sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling, and reducing pollution levels, whilst ensuring that the centre is still accessible by car

**Objective Eight:** To deliver public realm enhancements to improve the pedestrian experience in the town

### THEME FOUR: LOCAL ECONOMY

**Objective Nine:** To support local businesses and retailers and encourage a more collaborative and entrepreneurial business environment in the centre

**Objective Ten:** To consolidate and enhance both the town centre and secondary shopping areas

### THEME FIVE: COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

**Objective Eleven:** To deliver enhanced community assets for the town

**Objective Twelve:** To develop and promote a cultural quarter in the town centre and to enhance the town's cultural offer and improve access to existing cultural assets

### THEME SIX: SPORTS AND RECREATION

**Objective Thirteen:** To deliver enhanced recreational and sports facilities for the town

### THEME SEVEN: DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

**Objective Fourteen:** To promote high quality development that enhances the town and consolidates vacant or under-utilised land

**Objective Fifteen:** To deliver a range of new homes to meet local needs

## POLICIES

The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan sets out policies that will help to deliver the vision and objectives.

The Plan contains two distinctive types of policies:

- Planning policies related to the development and use of land; and
- Non-planning related policies, defined here as 'Aims', that help to meet the vision and objectives.

Neighbourhood Plans are permitted to include both planning and non-related policies. However, these must be clearly distinguishable. In this Plan the planning policies are labelled 'Policy', and the non-planning related policies are identified as 'Aim'.


Policies will be used by planning officers to determine planning applications. Aims represent other strategies that will be pursued by the Town Council over the life of the Plan.

The policies are set out under the seven themes identified on the previous page:

- Theme One: Character, Heritage and Identity;
- Theme Two: Landscape and Green Infrastructure;
- Theme Three: Movement and Public Realm;
- Theme Four: Local Economy;
- Theme Five: Community and Culture;
- Theme Six: Sports and Recreation; and
- Theme Seven: Development and Housing.

Each theme has its own section in the Plan. The objectives related to each theme are clearly labelled. Each objective is then supported by one or more policies or aims.

Each policy or aim is supported by text that explains why the policy or aim has been included in the Plan and how the requirements within it will be met. A list of all of the policies under each theme are summarised over the following pages.

Those policies and aims that contribute towards the Neighbourhood Plan intention to meet the government's zero carbon commitment are highlighted with the  symbol.



Public art in the Shambles

## THEME ONE: CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY

**Objective One: To respect the town's character and heritage and ensure that all new development is responsive to its context and enhances the setting of the town's historic assets**

**Policy C1:** The Neighbourhood Plan will support development that positively impacts on a heritage asset or its setting. New development must be informed by local design guidance such as Conservation Area Appraisals

**Aim C2:** The Town Council will prepare guidance on the treatment of locally listed buildings and any other buildings with heritage value\*

**Policy C3:** New development in residential areas will be of a high quality and take account of the Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Planning Applications in residential areas should contain a brief statement to show how their proposals have responded to the character of their local area and meet the design guidance set out in the SPD

**Aim C4:** The Town Council will set up a formal design review process that either establishes a design review panel or utilises an existing panel. When established all major planning applications must be submitted to the panel for review early in the planning process\*

**Aim C5:** The Town Council will prepare design guidance for areas not included within the Residential Character Area Assessment

**Objective Two: To protect views both to local landmarks and to the open countryside**

**Policy C6:** Development in the town will be supported where it protects and enhances the setting of local landmarks

**Policy C7:** Development will be supported where it protects and enhances the landscape setting and character of the town and visibility to and from the open countryside


**Objective Three: To enhance the gateways / arrival points into the town to create a more welcoming impression**


**Policy C8:** The Neighbourhood Plan will support proposals that enhance the gateways and arrival points into the town at:

- Sevenoaks station / Station Square;
- Otford Road;
- Seal Road;
- Tonbridge Road;
- Bradbourne Vale Road;
- Bat and Ball junction and station;
- 'One Stop Shop' on Seal Road;
- The Vine;
- London Road / High Street junction; and
- London Road / Pembroke Road junction.

## THEME TWO: LANDSCAPE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

**Objective Four: To recognise the significant contribution that trees and hedgerows make to the town's character and biodiversity**

**Aim L1:** The Town Council will identify areas where trees and hedgerows make a significant contribution to local character and biodiversity\* 


**Policy L2:** Wherever possible, existing trees and hedgerows must be retained and protected as part of development proposals. Proposals to remove trees and hedgerows must be justified and any trees or hedgerows lost through development should be replaced. New tree and hedgerow provision should be of a species that is both suitable for the location and responds to the character and biodiversity of the site within which it is located 


\* Represents aims where further studies / actions will be pursued by the Town Council over the life of the Plan

**Objective Five: To protect, improve and enhance access to existing publicly accessible open spaces and create new publicly accessible open spaces and green infrastructure**

**Policy L3:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports the development of new public open space and leisure opportunities in the town. This includes new public open space, community use and leisure opportunities at the Tarmac Ltd. site in Greatness when gravel extraction has been completed. This space must be delivered as a pre-cursor to any residential development on the site 

**Aim L4:** The Town Council will work with and support Kent Wildlife Trust to enhance access to the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve and improve 'on-site' facilities\* 


**Aim L5:** The Town Council will support improvement and restoration proposals for Bradbourne Lakes developed in consultation with the local community\* 


**Policy L6:** The Town Council will support the provision of additional allotment provision in the town at Bradbourne Vale Road 


**THEME THREE: MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC REALM**


**Objective Six: To work with the District Council, and Kent County Council, in consultation with neighbouring Parish Councils, to identify a long-term strategic approach to transport in Sevenoaks to respond to and mitigate any impacts of new development on the existing network**


**Objective Seven: To promote a co-ordinated approach to transport and movement that encourages use of sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling, and reducing pollution levels, whilst ensuring that the centre is still accessible by car**


**Policy M1:** The Neighbourhood Plan promotes walking and cycling and supports the removal of barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement across the town 


**Policy M2:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports the Sevenoaks District Cycling Strategy and the District Council to deliver its recommendations 


**Policy M3:** The Neighbourhood Plan promotes the delivery of a new walking and cycling route that connects Bat and Ball / Otford Road with Dunton Green 


**Policy M4:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports the introduction of a 20mph speed limit close to schools and in some residential areas 

**Policy M5:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals for improved pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities at major junctions across the town 


**Policy M6:** The Town Council will progress proposals to refurbish Bat and Ball station and improve access to the station 

**Policy M7:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals to improve transport interchange facilities at Sevenoaks station 

**Policy M8:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports enhancements to bus services and facilities to serve the town 


**Policy M9:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports measures that will encourage a shift towards the use of greener modes of transport by businesses and residents 

**Objective Eight: To deliver public realm enhancements to improve the pedestrian experience in the town**

**Policy M10:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals for public realm improvements within the town centre particularly linking key town centre destinations. Such improvements should be part of a town centre-wide strategy to help improve the pedestrian experience in the town centre 

Where appropriate, the Neighbourhood Plan will support innovative proposals, such as shared surfaces, to improve the pedestrian environment and reduce the impact of traffic in both the town and neighbourhood centres


The Neighbourhood Plan supports the removal of street clutter including unnecessary street furniture and the adoption of a co-ordinated palette of materials and street furniture for the town and neighbourhood centres

**Aim M11:** The Town Council will identify locations across the town where repairs and improvements to paths and pavements are required to improve the pedestrian environment\* 

\* Represents aims where further studies / actions will be pursued by the Town Council over the life of the Plan

## THEME FOUR: LOCAL ECONOMY

### Objective Nine: To support local businesses and retailers and encourage a more collaborative and entrepreneurial business environment in the centre


**Policy E1:** Support will be given to the provision of sites for start-up business space across the town. Preferred locations include: 


- Allocated mixed-use and employment sites;
- The town centre;
- Neighbourhood centres; and
- Regeneration areas – such as at Bat and Ball.

**Aim E2:** 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\*

**Policy E3:** Proposals for increased parking provision will be supported when it can be proven that it is required to support the economic development of a local area. A preference will be for the intensification and improvement of existing car park sites over the development of new car parks. Any new car parks should be designed to the highest quality. New car parks should not be located where they will bring more traffic into residential areas or conflict with key pedestrian and cycle routes

### Objective Ten: To consolidate and enhance both the town centre and secondary shopping areas


**Policy E4:** Support will be given to the retention and development of indoor and outdoor markets and encouragement to the diversification of their offer 


**Policy E5:** Support will be given to spatial strategies and development proposals that enhance the function, accessibility and appearance of the neighbourhood centres such as: 

- Northern St John's;
- Southern St John's (hollybush Parade); and
- Tubs Hill Parade.

## THEME FIVE: COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

### Objective Eleven: To deliver enhanced community assets for the town

**Policy COM1:** Proposals for a new Community Centre at Bat and Ball station will be progressed by the Town Council 

**Policy COM2:** Promote new health and education provision, faith facilities and other necessary community infrastructure as an integral part of new development 

### Objective Twelve: To develop and promote a cultural quarter in the town centre and to enhance the town's cultural offer and improve access to existing cultural assets


**Policy COM3:** The Town Council will promote the development of a cultural quarter in the town centre together with an arts and cultural strategy

**Aim COM4:** The Town Council will support the development of a new amphitheatre at Knole Environmental Park\*

\* Represents aims where further studies / actions will be pursued by the Town Council over the life of the Plan

## THEME SIX: SPORTS AND RECREATION

### Objective Thirteen: To deliver enhanced recreational and sports facilities for the town


**Policy S1:** The Neighbourhood Plan will support the provision of new sports facilities across the town including the provision of new sports / watersports facilities at the Tarmac Ltd. site at Greatness, which will be required to be delivered either in advance of, or in parallel with, new homes on this site. 

All new sports facilities must adhere to sports governing body guidance for a particular sport (including schools) and should be developed with community access agreements.

The provision of new facilities, and enhancements and improvements to existing sports facilities across the town, will be delivered in line with the Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy.

## THEME SEVEN: DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

### Objective Fourteen: To promote high quality development that enhances the town and consolidates vacant or under-utilised land

**Policy D1:** Development to be promoted on sustainable sites. Sites include: 


- Community Centre, Bat and Ball\*;
- Travis Perkins, Bat and Ball;
- Cramptons Road, Water Works;
- Carpetright / Wickes, Otford Road;
- Sevenoaks Gasholder Station;
- Bat and Ball Enterprise Centre;
- Tarmac Ltd. site, Greatness;
- Sevenoaks station and surrounding area;
- Edwards Electrical, High Street;
- Buckhurst Lane sites;
- Post Office / BT Exchange;
- Town Council offices, Bradbourne Vale Road\*; and
- Adult Education site, Bradbourne Road.

Development on these sites will follow the urban design principles set out in this Neighbourhood Plan. Developers will be encouraged to develop buildings constructed to the highest environmental standards to reduce carbon emissions through construction and later life.

**Policy D2:** Development proposals that fall within the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan study area boundary will follow the development principles set out in the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan.

### Objective Fifteen: To deliver a range of new homes to meet local needs

**Policy D3:** All residential development proposals must provide a range of homes to meet local needs. Affordable housing provision will be required as part of all eligible developments.

**Policy D4:** The development of on-site key worker housing will be supported as part of larger infrastructure developments where applicants can demonstrate need, and subject to a condition preventing sale or rent on the open market. 

\* Represents aims where further studies / actions will be pursued by the Town Council over the life of the Plan



# 1 INTRODUCTION



## 1.1 WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

In 2010 the government announced its intention to devolve some decision-making powers from central government to individuals and communities. The Localism Act 2011 gives communities the right to shape development in their area through Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and the Community Right to Build.

Neighbourhood Plans (such as this document) can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in an area. When adopted, they form part of the Statutory Development Plan and are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Neighbourhood Plans must be in general compliance with higher level planning policies and cannot block development proposals already contained in these documents. However, Neighbourhood Plans can specify where new development could go and what it should look like. Policies in a Plan can be detailed or general, depending on what local people want.

The Neighbourhood Plan process is generally led by a Parish or Town Council, with continual involvement from the Local Planning Authority. Neighbourhood Plans must be supported by the local community and this is tested through a referendum. If there is majority support for the Plan it will then be adopted by the local authority.

Neighbourhood Plans allow local people to get the right type of development for their community, but the Plan must still meet the needs of the wider area. This will mean that Neighbourhood Plans will have to take into account the local council's assessment of housing and other development needs in the area.

## 1.2 THE SEVENOAKS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

At the Sevenoaks Town Council Annual Town Meeting held on the 14th March 2013 residents signalled their support for the Town Council to begin the preparation work on a Neighbourhood Plan for Sevenoaks. The Plan will set out a vision of how the community wants development in the town to be guided over a 20 year period.

Subsequently, the Plan area was designated by Sevenoaks District Council in October 2013.

Since 2013 the Town Council has been working closely with the local community to prepare this Plan. It held a series of open meetings and in 2014 initiated a town-wide survey to gather public opinion and perceptions of the town.

The questionnaire was focused around a number of topics including the

- Character of the Town;
- Education; Sports;
- Leisure and Community Facilities;
- Health and Green Spaces;
- Housing;
- Transport; and
- Economic Development.

A copy of the questionnaire was delivered to every house within the Civil Parish of Sevenoaks. The questionnaire was also available to complete online.

Over 800 questionnaires were completed by households; a response rate of approximately 10%.

Following the town-wide survey, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee used the information collated to prepare a set of themes and initial objectives to structure the Neighbourhood Plan and develop its evidence base. The public were again consulted on 11th and 12th December 2015 at Sevenoaks station and Stag Theatre respectively.

Engaging with the next generation is important and the Youth Council have been actively involved in the Neighbourhood Plan and young people have been engaged through presentations at school assemblies. The Town Council also carried out a competition aimed at children, which invited submissions of drawings setting out their vision for what they would like to see in Sevenoaks over the next 30 years.

The following objectives were considered most important by respondees:

- Improve areas that detract from the positive character of the town;
- Undertake an integrated transport study;
- Improve the gateways into and out of the town, including stations;
- Protect the architectural characteristics of the town;
- Retain pathways, historic alleyways and promote for pedestrian use;
- Support tree retention and tree planting;
- Protect Green Belt and green spaces;
- Promote an effective pedestrian, cycling and vehicle strategy;
- Consider inclusion of Sevenoaks in TfL's Oyster card charging zone; and
- Consider 20mph speed limits in areas of town;

A range of background studies have also been undertaken to support the content of this Plan including the Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy, an Integrated Transport Strategy and the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan. These inform the policies within the Plan.

The Plan will be reviewed every five years to ensure that it responds to local issues and remains in accordance with higher level policies.



## NORTHERN SEVENOAKS

Through the preliminary work on the Plan the Town Council’s Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee identified Northern Sevenoaks as one of the only areas of the town that was suitable for larger scale new development. It was also seen as an area with untapped potential that was in need of regeneration. It was, therefore, agreed that a dedicated Masterplan would be prepared for the area.

Urban Initiatives Studio and Regeneris were appointed in late 2016 to prepare a Masterplan for Northern Sevenoaks. The Masterplan was developed through a series of meetings and workshops with local people and stakeholders, including a formal public consultation which took place in May 2017. The views expressed through this process informed the Masterplan and form part of the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Masterplan was also consulted upon as part of the District Council’s Local Plan ‘Issues and Options’ Consultation. The Plan received overwhelmingly positive support through this consultation. 66% of respondents stated that they either ‘Strongly supported’ or ‘Supported’ the Plan (based on responses from 13,654 people).



Neighbourhood Centre at St John’s — one of the areas identified for improvement in the Masterplan



Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve — one of Northern Sevenoaks’ most valuable assets



Figure 1.1: Extract from the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan



Bat and Ball station

## 1.3 THE CONSULTATION DRAFT PLAN AND PROCESS

The Town Council developed the Plan through the work of a number of sub-committees each focusing on specific elements of the Plan including Character of the Town, Economic Development, Transport, Housing, Leisure and Environment.

The Plan's preparation was co-ordinated through a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, which also ensured that targets for community engagement were met. Both the sub-committee and Steering Committee members were appointed at open, public meetings.

Throughout the Neighbourhood Planning process the public were free to engage with the process and all meetings were open at each and every stage. Agendas, minutes and other documents were all made publicly available via the Town Council's website and standalone Neighbourhood Plan website (stnp.co.uk). The Town Council also set up a dedicated Twitter account to publicise the Plan.

In Summer 2017 Urban Initiatives Studio (UIS) was appointed by the Town Council to assist them with preparation of the Plan. UIS's brief was to bring together all of the background work and the outcomes of the public engagement undertaken by the Council, and translate this into the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan remains, however, firmly based on the work undertaken by the Town Council.

The Plan is presented here in draft form. The Town Council is legally obliged to publicise the draft Neighbourhood Plan to bring it to the attention of those who work, live and run businesses in the Neighbourhood Plan area and to gain feedback. The Town Council will also consult with stakeholders outside of the Plan area that may be affected by the Plan, including neighbouring Parish Councils and statutory bodies, including Natural England. A copy of the draft Neighbourhood Plan will also be provided to Sevenoaks District Council.

A six-week public consultation is set to run from **xx to xx 2020**. Details of how to comment on this Plan can be found on **page X** of this document. **(DATES TO BE ADDED IN CONSULTATION DRAFT).**

When the consultation process is completed, the Town Council will consider the public responses carefully and make any amendments necessary before submitting the final version to the District Council. Once submitted, Sevenoaks District Council will be responsible for publicising the Plan, arranging for an independent examination and carrying out a public referendum.

The District Council is currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the district which will set out where, when and how much development will occur in the district up to 2035. This is important planning policy that will, when adopted in 2019, replace the Core Strategy 2011 and Allocations and Development Management Plan 2015. The Neighbourhood Plan policies will need to be in accordance with the new emerging Local Plan's strategic policies.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed every five years to ensure that it responds to local issues and remains in accordance with higher level policies.



Figure 2.1: Aerial image of the Neighbourhood Plan area

# 2 ABOUT SEVENOAKS



## 2.1 LOCATION AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

Sevenoaks is located to the south-east of London in the county of Kent. The town is the principal settlement within Sevenoaks district and has a population of 20,409 (2011 census). The town is covered by Sevenoaks Town Council and it is their boundary that has determined the Neighbourhood Plan area. The Neighbourhood Plan covers an extensive area that encompasses both the built-up portion of the town and also a significant area of the open countryside within which it is set, including Knole Park. The Neighbourhood Plan area extends to approximately 1,600 hectares.

Sevenoaks is set within rolling countryside with attractive views northwards to the Kent Downs. It is located on one of the principal commuter railway lines to London and benefits from proximity to the M25 and M26 motorways. These connections, and the town's historic character and picturesque setting within the Kent countryside, make it a popular place to live. The town is home to a skilled resident workforce with good access to employment opportunities. People both commute into and out of the town for work to and from central London and other parts of the district and beyond.



## 2.2 A BRIEF PORTRAIT OF THE TOWN

### HISTORY AND HERITAGE

#### Early development

Early records of Sevenoaks date back to the 13th Century when a market was first held here.

Flemish weavers settled in the area in the 14th Century and their industry was to flourish in the district for 300 years. These immigrants were followed in Tudor times by others bringing new industries such as papermaking, market gardening, hop growing and the extraction of coal. Iron smelting followed in the 17th Century providing the area with a rich assortment of productive occupations. **(Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area Appraisal)**

The settlement grew from the 15th Century after the construction of Knole House, between 1456 and 1486. The house, which still stands today, has been extended many times through history and is now one of England's largest homes and an important local landmark.

The structure of the town, with the market located within The Shambles area between the High Street and London Road, was well established by the 17th Century and provided accommodation for both local tradesmen above their shops and labourers working on the Knole Estate.

Most early development in Sevenoaks focused around the town centre along the main roads (London Road and High Street). This original core area has been well preserved and is a highly recognisable and distinctive part of the town.

Land to the north of Sevenoaks was largely agricultural with a number of estates including Wildernesse, Bradbourne, Greatness and Montreal.

#### 19th Century industrialisation

The railway arrived in Sevenoaks in the mid 19th Century. The first station, Bat and Ball, opened in 1862, followed by Sevenoaks station in 1868. Both stations were located to the north of the town centre. This spurred a northward expansion of the town with streets of new houses providing a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached properties.



FROM TOP: **Greatness House (image from Anckorn); Knole House; Gas Works on Cramptons Road**

#### 20th Century expansion

Expansion of the town continued throughout the 20th Century. However, the designation of the Green Belt and the presence of other important landscapes, including Knole Park, has limited the potential for further expansion of the town through the post-war years.

## Heritage

Much of Sevenoaks' historic character has been preserved to this day and this forms an important part of the town's identity. This is recognised by the District Council with the designation of eight Conservation Areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The majority of the town's listed buildings are located within these Conservation Areas.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: St Nicholas Church; Old Market House; The Old House, Upper High Street; Vine Gardens; historical buildings on Upper High Street

## LANDSCAPE

Sevenoaks is surrounded by the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the town's relationship with the countryside is an important part of its character. The undulating nature of the topography, with the town centre located on elevated land, means that views to the surrounding Downs are experienced from numerous locations such as The Vine, Quaker's Hall Allotments and Hollybush Recreation Ground. These enhance the sense of connection with the landscape and add to the overall character of the town.

Knole Park abuts the town centre to the south-east and this 400 hectare deer park is a huge asset for the town. It, along with a number of other open spaces distributed across the town, make a significant contribution to local character.

To the north of the town the landscape has been exploited to extract gravel and this provides a legacy of waterbodies and waterside habitats at the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve.

Land around the town is designated as Green Belt and this has both protected the countryside setting from development and restricted opportunity for growth.

A particular feature of Sevenoaks are its trees. Sevenoaks is famed for its oaks but there are many other species and individual trees that are important to the character of the town.

Tradition has it that Sevenoaks is named after a conspicuous group of oak trees that existed over 1,000 years ago near the summit of the hill on Sevenoaks Common. To commemorate these trees seven oaks were planted on the site on Tonbridge Road in the late 18th or early 19th Century. These were replaced in the 1950s. The trees on The Vine were planted in 1902 to celebrate the coronation of King Edward VII, although famously, six were felled by the storm in 1987.



FROM TOP:  
Sweet chestnut avenue in Woodland Rise thought to date from 1509; Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve; the seven oaks on Tonbridge Road; Waterloo limes on Wildernesse Avenue planted in 1815; site of King Edward VII oaks on The Vine.



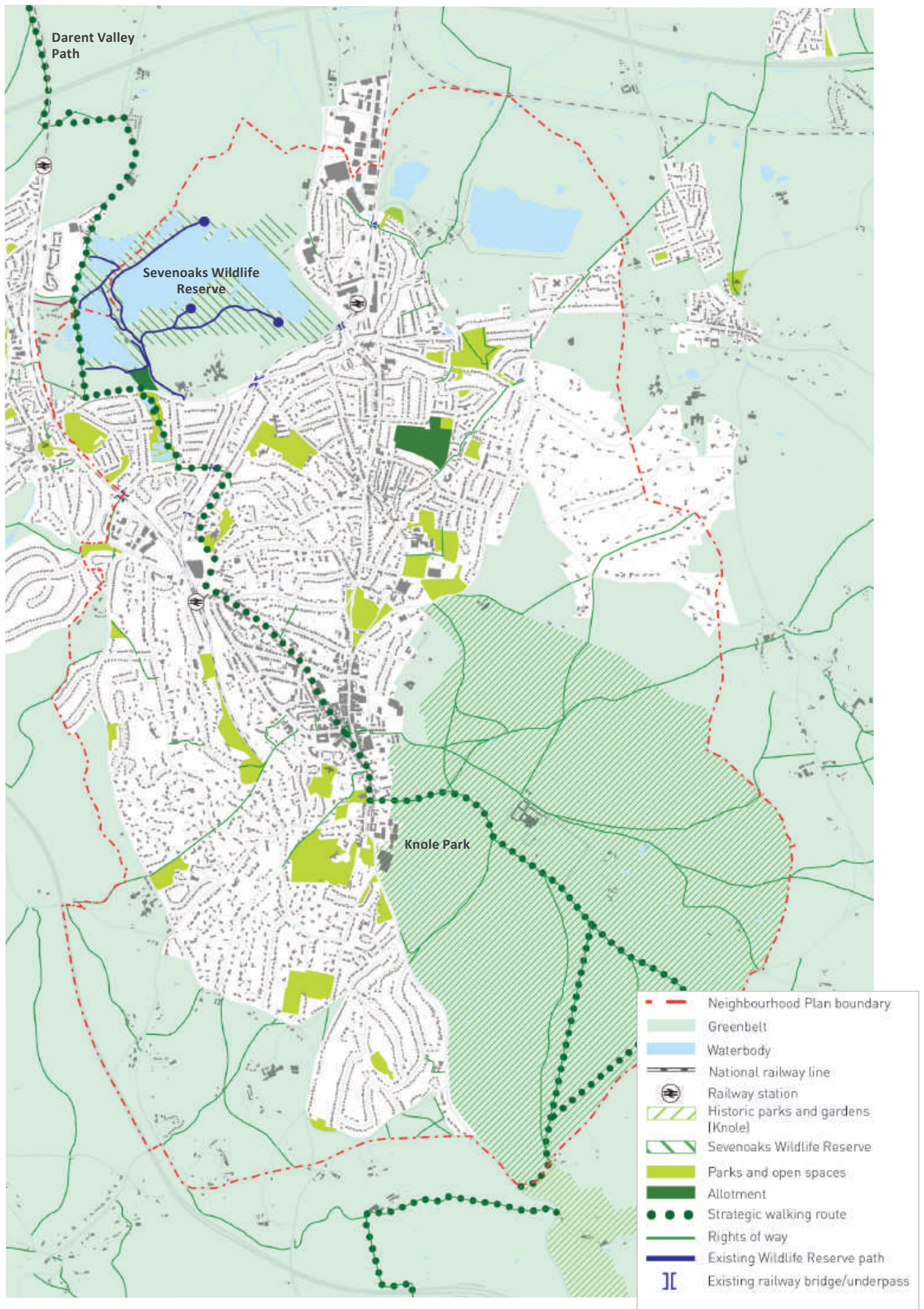


Figure 2.2: Open spaces and landscape setting

## TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

Sevenoaks is well connected to the strategic road network and benefits from frequent rail services to London, Kent and Sussex. The town experiences traffic congestion in the peak hours on all three of the main approach routes into the town centre, including London Road, Dartford Road to the north and Tonbridge Road to the south.

Traffic passing through the town centre uses the historic streets and this undermines the environmental quality, particularly on London Road and High Street, and results in air pollution.

The town is served by two railway lines. The principal station is on the Southeastern line and provides northbound services to London Charing Cross, Cannon Street, London Bridge and Waterloo East; and southbound to Ashford International, Ramsgate via Dover Priory or Tunbridge Wells and Hastings.

Bat and Ball station is located on a branch line and provides services to London Blackfriars, St Pancras and London Victoria via Otford and Swanley. Whilst the Sevenoaks mainline station building is in fairly good condition the quality of the environment and arrival experience at the station is poor. The station building at Bat and Ball has recently been sympathetically refurbished.

There is little scope to expand capacity of the direct services between Sevenoaks station and Charing Cross / London Bridge. The regular and fast service on this line is attractive to commuters and residents, but in the peak it is often operating at or above capacity. There is scope for additional capacity via Otford, with a planned service along the Darent Valley line fast to Swanley and London Bridge. This would make Bat and Ball station accessible to London Bridge within 44 minutes. Delivery of this service is important to support additional homes on the north side of Sevenoaks. Both stations are also important for access to a good range of schools.

Sevenoaks is served by a large number of bus routes. These are focused on the main vehicular routes, the A25 and A225, and provide services to Sevenoaks town centre, Seal and Riverhead and more regional links to locations such as Bromley, Tunbridge Wells and Gravesend. Most services are low frequency. Sevenoaks bus station is located within the town centre at Buckhurst Lane. The environment at the bus station is unattractive.

Within the town itself walking can be challenging as a result of topography and transport infrastructure. In some parts of the town, particularly in the southern residential areas and on older streets to the north of the town (eg. Hartslands, Bethel and Prospect Roads) footways are narrow, incomplete or absent. This impacts on the quality of the pedestrian experience. There is, however, a wide network of walking routes and public rights of way that link Sevenoaks to the countryside that surrounds it.

There is very little provision for cyclists within Sevenoaks, either in terms of dedicated routes or cycle parking; however, Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council, supported by Sevenoaks Town Council, prepared the Sevenoaks District Cycling Strategy in 2012, which advocates new cycle routes, safer cycling, cycle parking and promotion.



FROM TOP:  
**Poor streetscape outside Sevenoaks station; narrow footways on Upper High Street**

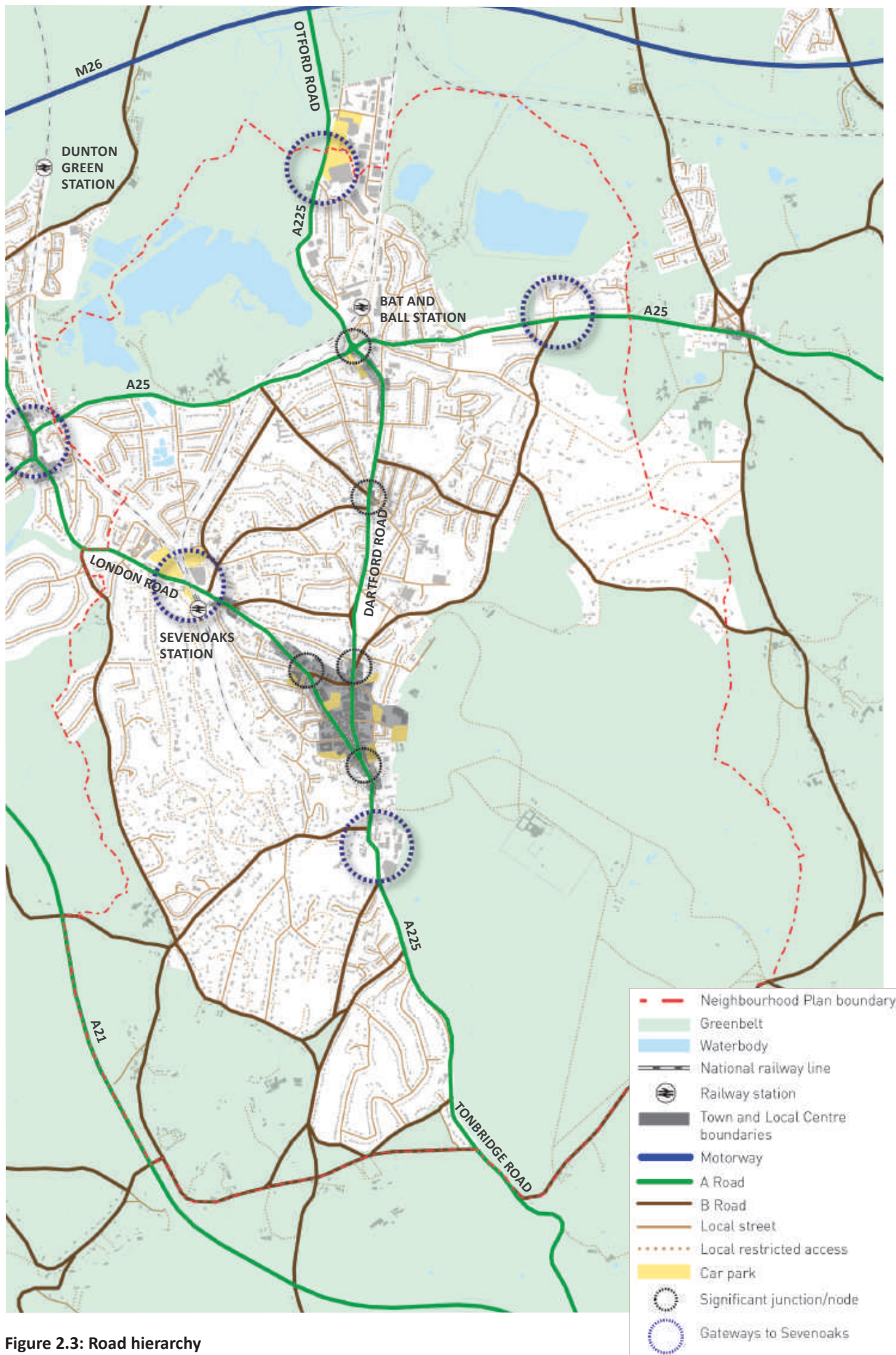


Figure 2.3: Road hierarchy

## ECONOMY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

There are around 30,000 people living in the Neighbourhood Plan area, accounting for a quarter of the total Sevenoaks district population. The population grew by 4% from 2011-2016 in line with national averages. Approximately 61% of the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan area population is of working age. This is lower than that of the district, Kent County Council area and England as a whole reflecting the higher than average proportion of children within the population.

There are currently around 17,800 jobs in the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan area, accounting for around a third of all jobs in Sevenoaks district. This represents 3,600 more people employed in the area than five years ago, and the area has experienced over double the level of growth seen across the rest of Kent and England.

However, whilst there has been a significant increase in the number of jobs the growth in the number of businesses is below national average. Despite fewer start-ups, business survival data suggests that Sevenoaks district is a strong place to start a business, with 46% of businesses that started up in 2011 still trading in 2016; a greater degree than that seen across the rest of Kent and England.

Within the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan area a high proportion of jobs are in public administration, education and health (4,740 jobs), financial and professional services (3,065 jobs) and business support services (2,160 jobs), which include activities such as human resource provision, cleaning services and office administrative services.

The Neighbourhood Plan area is characterised by micro-sized businesses (up to nine employees), which represent 87% of the area's total business base. This proportion of micro businesses is larger than that seen across the rest of Sevenoaks district; however, it is smaller than the profile seen nationally. There are currently around 235 sole proprietor businesses in the Neighbourhood Plan area. This is low relative to Sevenoaks district and England.



**Contemporary office development off London Road**

The office market in Sevenoaks has been performing strongly in recent years, with vacancy levels falling by two-thirds over the last six years and rental values increasing by 32%. Loss of office space through permitted development rights (conversion of office to residential) has placed pressure on employment floorspace in some areas. Demand for space in the future is likely to be driven by micro and small businesses, which dominate the local economy and have grown in size in recent years.

The Sevenoaks district has higher median resident earnings than wider Kent and England. The median resident earns £33,600 per annum, while the median Kent resident earns £30,000 and the median England resident earns £29,000. Levels of unemployment and deprivation are low in the district.

The town centre is the focal point for most of the town's shops, leisure and commercial uses. The town hosts a variety of national chain shops, restaurants and independent retailers and businesses. The town is also home to two markets; a charter market on the High Street every Saturday and a general market on the car park on Buckhurst Lane every Wednesday.

As well as the town centre, there are three neighbourhood centres within the Plan area at St John's, Hollybush Lane and Tubs Hill. These are home to a variety of local (predominantly independent) shops and businesses.

## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Sevenoaks is well served by community infrastructure and arts and cultural facilities.

Most of the town's cultural attractions are located in the town centre. These include The Stag Theatre and cinema, the library and museum and several small private galleries.

Primary and secondary schools are located throughout the town. These include a mix of private and state schools. The number of school children in Sevenoaks has recently grown with the opening of Trinity School in 2013. This number is set to increase again over the coming years. Whilst this will bring new facilities to the town it will also increase pressure on the town's road, cycle and walking network. Delivering safe routes to schools that offer alternatives to vehicle modes is becoming increasingly important.

Sevenoaks Hospital is located to the north of the town on Hospital Road, close to St John's neighbourhood centre and Bat and Ball station.

The Town Council is progressing plans to redevelop the existing Community Centre site adjacent Bat and Ball station, to provide a new community facility and has recently refurbished the listed station building at Bat and Ball to provide a café and community meeting spaces.

## SPORTS AND RECREATION

Sevenoaks is well served by sport and recreational facilities. There are two significant sports 'clusters' in the town:

- A cluster to the north-east of the town centre around The Vine / Hollybush Recreation Ground / Knole Paddock and the leisure centre; and
- A cluster to the north of Bradbourne Vale Road including Greatness Recreation Ground and the Community Centre adjacent to Bat and Ball station.

Sports and recreational facilities within some schools (eg. Sevenoaks School and Walthamstow Hall School) are also available to hire for sports and cultural activities.



FROM TOP:  
Stag Theatre on London Road; the recently refurbished Bat and Ball station; Greatness Recreation Ground

## 2.3 ISSUES FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The public consultation and background and evidence-based review carried out to inform this Plan resulted in the identification of a number of issues that this Plan will address. These have been grouped under seven themes. The themes are repeated throughout the remainder of this document to structure the Plan objectives and policies.

### Character, Heritage and Identity

- The need to preserve the town's historic character and assets;
- The need to improve areas with poor character – especially in and around the town centre and at arrival points into the town; and
- The need to improve the quality of the arrival experience into the town.

### Landscape and Green Infrastructure

- The need to support the retention of trees and encourage tree planting;
- The need to protect the Green Belt and other green / open spaces; and
- The need to retain views to the open countryside.

### Movement and Public Realm

- The need to promote an effective pedestrian, cycling and movement strategy;
- The consideration of a 20mph speed limit to slow traffic down;
- The need to reduce air pollution;
- The need to improve pedestrian routes and pathways across the town;
- The need to improve pedestrian and cycle access to schools;
- A desire for Sevenoaks to be included within TfL's Oyster charging zone;
- The need to ease traffic congestion across the town;
- The need to improve the environment at, in, and around, the town's two railway stations and the bus station;
- The need to progress the delivery of cycle routes in the town; and
- The need to improve pedestrian movement in the town centre and remove clutter from the streetscape.



### Local Economy

- The need to improve the town centre and neighbourhood centres;
- The need to protect and maintain existing employment in the town and encourage opportunities;
- The need to provide better connections between the town's cultural assets; and
- The need to support and encourage further tourism.

### Community and Culture

- The need to ensure that development delivers enhanced community assets and provides additional health and educational infrastructure to serve a growing population; and
- The need to better link and promote the cultural offer in the town.

### Sports and Recreation

- The need to continue to support existing and develop new sports facilities as set out in the Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy.

### Development and Housing

- The need to provide additional housing including a range of housing types and tenures (including smaller units and affordable housing) with limited development sites available;
- The need to deliver high quality development that responds to the character of the town and to establish processes that can help to deliver this improved design quality;
- The need to identify locations for residential development in accessible locations within walkable distance of the town centre or railway stations; and
- The opportunity presented by the Tarmac Ltd. site at Greatness.

The above issues have helped to shape the vision, objectives and policies that are promoted within the Plan.





# 3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

## 3.1 VISION STATEMENT

*'Sevenoaks is a successful and friendly market town set on the Greensand Ridge that takes advantage of its good connections and easy access to open countryside and to London. It has a **strong sense of community** with an active network of volunteers. The town is **proud of its history** and the legacy of fine historic buildings, spanning six centuries, that contribute to an attractive townscape in its leafy streets.*

*However, Sevenoaks is not stuck in the past but firmly wedded to the future and the quality of life of its children and their children to come. As one of the UK's first **carbon zero** towns, Sevenoaks is environmentally responsible and resource-efficient. Despite its undulating topography, walking and cycling are the standard mode of travel with a network of safe **walking and cycling routes** that provide access to the towns **excellent schools** and to recreational and employment opportunities. New buildings in Sevenoaks are built to the **highest environmental standards** and the town celebrates its connection with the surrounding landscape that the views to the Kent Downs provide.*

*The town centre provides a **good mix of shops**, including many independent traders, and provides a **rich cultural offer** within an emerging cultural quarter and thriving markets. The centre is easy to access and provides **attractive streets and spaces** for locals and visitors alike. Residents live in a variety of homes set within well-kept neighbourhoods and also benefit from convenient neighbourhood centres at St John's, Tubs Hill and Hollybush Lane.*

*Knole Park, Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve, Greatness Lake and Recreation Ground provide a **unique and rich natural environment** for both active sports and quiet contemplation, and the town is proud of its remarkable trees.*

*The town is protective of its landscape assets but also recognises the need to plan for and deliver new homes and community facilities to provide for future generations. **Sevenoaks celebrates its uniqueness, protects its special assets and is planning for future prosperity!***

## 3.2 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES

The Vision for Sevenoaks will be delivered over a 20 year timeframe through a number objectives set out under the following themes:

- **THEME ONE:** CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY
- **THEME TWO:** LANDSCAPE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
- **THEME THREE:** MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC REALM
- **THEME FOUR:** LOCAL ECONOMY
- **THEME FIVE:** COMMUNITY AND CULTURE
- **THEME SIX:** SPORTS AND RECREATION
- **THEME SEVEN:** DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

### THEME ONE: CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY

**Objective One:** To respect the town's character and heritage and ensure that all new development is responsive to its context and enhances the setting of the town's historic assets

**Objective Two:** To protect views both to local landmarks and to the open countryside

**Objective Three:** To enhance the gateways / arrival points into the town to create a more welcoming impression

### THEME TWO: LANDSCAPE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

**Objective Four:** To recognise the significant contribution that trees and hedgerows make to the character of the town and support their retention

**Objective Five:** To protect, improve and enhance access to existing publicly accessible open spaces and create new publicly accessible open spaces and green infrastructure

### THEME THREE: MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC REALM

**Objective Six:** To work with the District Council, and Kent County Council, in consultation with neighbouring Parish Councils, to identify a long-term strategic approach to transport in Sevenoaks to respond to and mitigate any impacts of new development on the existing network

**Objective Seven:** To promote a co-ordinated approach to transport and movement that encourages use of sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling, and reducing pollution levels, whilst ensuring that the centre is still accessible by car

**Objective Eight:** To deliver public realm enhancements to improve the pedestrian experience in the town

#### **THEME FOUR: LOCAL ECONOMY**

**Objective Nine:** To support local businesses and retailers and encourage a more collaborative and entrepreneurial business environment in the centre

**Objective Ten:** To consolidate and enhance both the town centre and secondary shopping areas

#### **THEME FIVE: COMMUNITY AND CULTURE**

**Objective Eleven:** To deliver enhanced community assets for the town

**Objective Twelve:** To develop and promote a cultural quarter in the town centre and to enhance the town's cultural offer and improve access to existing cultural assets

#### **THEME SIX: SPORTS AND RECREATION**

**Objective Thirteen:** To deliver enhanced recreational and sports facilities for the town

#### **THEME SEVEN: DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING**

**Objective Fourteen** To promote high quality development that enhances the town and consolidates vacant or under-utilised land

**Objective Fifteen:** To deliver a range of new homes to meet local needs



# 4 PLANNING POLICIES



## 4.1 INTRODUCTION TO POLICIES

This part of the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan sets out the policies and aims that will deliver the vision and objectives set out in Chapter 3.

Neighbourhood Plans are permitted to include both planning and non-related policies. However, these must be clearly distinguishable. In this Plan the planning policies are labelled, 'Policy', and the non-planning related policies are identified, that help to meet the vision and objectives, as 'Aim'.

The policies in this section are set out under the same themes identified in the vision. These are:

- Theme One: Character, Heritage and Identity;
- Theme Two: Landscape and Green Infrastructure;
- Theme Three: Movement and Public Realm;
- Theme Four: Local Economy;
- Theme Five: Community and Culture;
- Theme Six: Sports and Recreation; and
- Theme Seven: Development and Housing.

Each theme has its own section in the Plan. The objectives related to each theme are clearly labelled. Each objective is then supported by one or more policies or aims.

Each policy or aim is supported by text that explains why the policy or aim has been included in the Plan and how the requirements within it will be met. Policies will be used by Planning Officers to determine planning applications. Aims represent other strategies and ambitions that will be pursued or supported by the Town Council over the life of the Plan.

## 4.2 THEME ONE: CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY

**Objective One:** To respect the town's character and heritage and ensure that all new development is responsive to its context and enhances the setting of the town's historic assets

**Policy C1:** The Neighbourhood Plan will support development that positively impacts on a heritage asset or its setting. New development must be informed by local design guidance such as Conservation Area Appraisals

**Aim C2:** The Town Council will prepare guidance on the treatment of locally listed buildings and any other buildings with heritage value

The town-wide questionnaire carried out as part of the evidence base for this Plan revealed that a vast majority of respondents thought that buildings of historical significance should be preserved (79% of 883 respondents ranked this as high priority).

Higher level planning policies require development to enhance the character, appearance and setting of the heritage assets. These assets include:

- Scheduled monuments;
- Archaeological sites;
- Listed buildings;
- Locally listed buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Registered and non-registered historic parks and gardens;
- Ancient woodland and ancient trees; and
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Whilst adopted policies provide a good level of protection some buildings may remain vulnerable to insensitive development. This includes unlisted buildings that are not in Conservation Areas or locally listed buildings (that do not require listed building consent). The Town Council will create additional guidelines to protect these structures.

**Policy C3:** New development in residential areas will be of a high quality and take account of the Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Planning Applications in residential areas should contain a brief statement to show how their proposals have responded to the character of their local area and meet the design guidance set out in the SPD

Higher level planning policies set out the requirement for development to be of a high quality and respond to local character.

Local character, and design guidance on how to respond to it, are set out in a number of planning documents including the Kent Design Guide, Conservation Area Appraisals and the Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment. The Residential Character Area Assessment is particularly relevant as it is specific to Sevenoaks and identifies distinctive local features. It states that new development should: *'respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.'*

A requirement for a statement to be submitted with all planning applications outlining how development proposals respond to the Residential Character Area Assessment will ensure that planning applications take this guidance into account. It will also make it easier for Council officers to assess whether the application meets the design requirements set out in the assessment.

**Aim C4:** The Town Council will set up a formal design review process that either establishes a design review panel or utilises an existing panel. When established all major planning applications must be submitted to the panel for review early in the planning process

The delivery of high quality design is a requirement of higher level planning policy. A Design Review, or when appropriate, series of reviews, to assess significant planning applications would add to the existing delivery mechanisms to ensure that high quality design is delivered in Sevenoaks.

There is currently no formal design review process that can make use of external expertise from built environment professionals including architects, urban designers, landscape architects and engineers. The most effective way to achieve this may be to make use of an established panel, for example Design South East.



**Aim C5:** The Town Council will prepare design guidance for areas not included within the Residential Character Area Assessment

Design guidance specific to Sevenoaks is provided through the Residential Character Area Assessment and Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. These documents do not, however, cover the whole of the town. This leaves certain areas (including parts of the town centre and other non-residential areas) without any specific character-related design guidance.

Many of the areas not covered by the Residential Character Area Assessment and Conservation Area Appraisals were identified by the Town Council's town-wide questionnaire as areas the public would like to see improved including:

1. The area around Sevenoaks station;
2. Around Bat and Ball station and other areas in Northern Sevenoaks;
3. Buckhurst Lane area including the Sencio Leisure Centre, the library and museum and associated car parks;
4. The South Park area including The Stag and Post Office / BT Exchange; and
5. Around the Sevenoaks District Council offices on London Road / Argyle Road.

The Town Council will prepare design guidance for these and other sites not included within the Residential Character Area Assessment and Conservation Areas as shown on Figure 4.1 opposite.



**Buckhurst Lane area including the Sencio Leisure Centre, library and museum and associated car parks**



**Offices on London Road / Argyle Road**



**Post Office and BT Exchange on South Park**

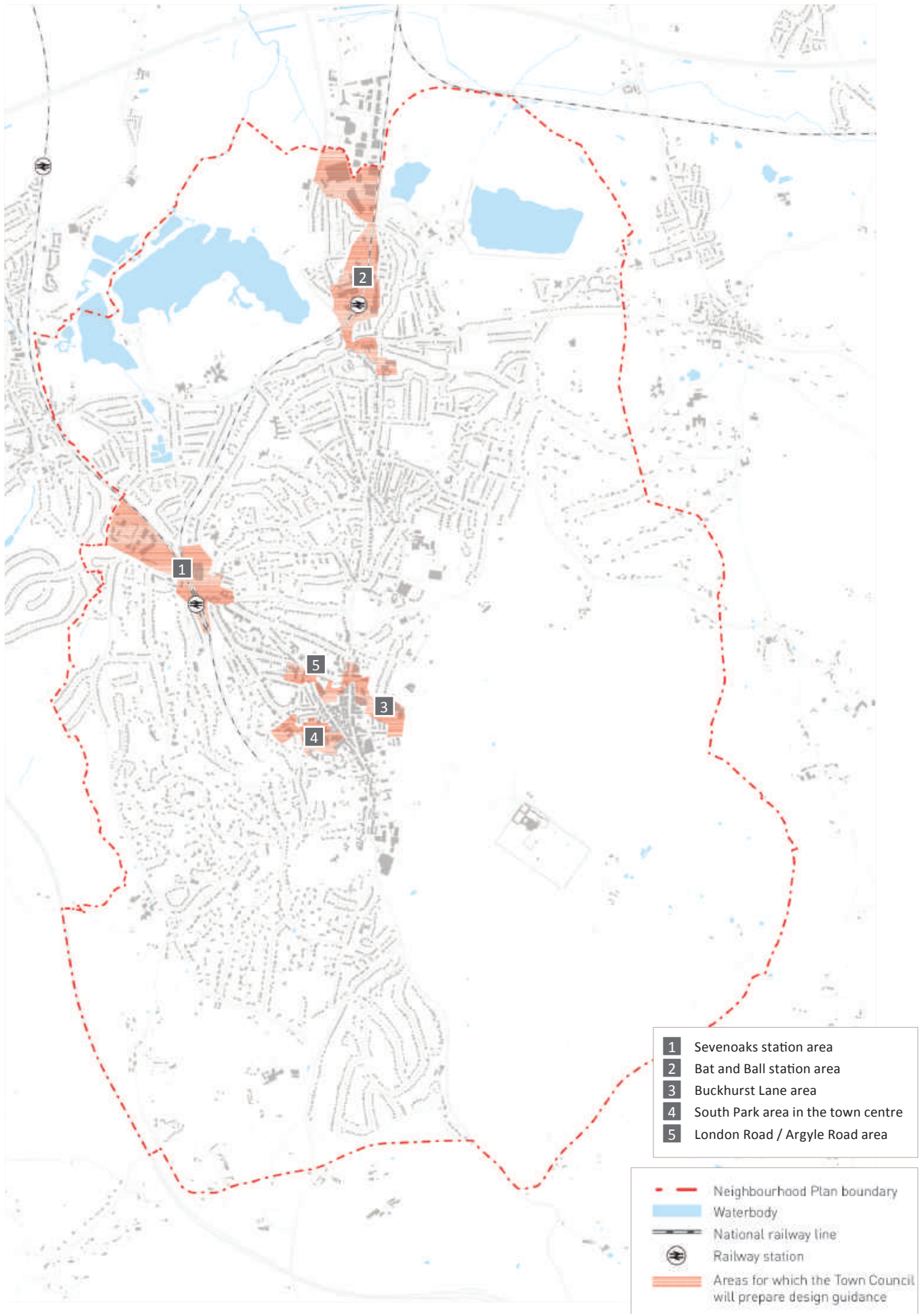


Figure 4.1: Areas where additional design guidance may be prepared

**Objective Two: To protect views both to local landmarks and to the open countryside**

**Policy C6:** Development in the town will be supported where it protects and enhances the setting of local landmarks

Local landmarks provide local distinctiveness and play an important role in establishing the mental picture and identity of a place. They also assist orientation and navigation.

Recognised local landmarks in Sevenoaks include:

1. St John's United Reformed Church;
2. Bandstand and clubhouse at The Vine;
3. Old Market House, High Street;
4. St Nicholas Church tower, High Street; and
5. Knole House, Knole Park.

New development should not adversely impact on the visibility to or the setting of the local landmarks as listed above and indicated in Figure 4.2 opposite.

**Policy C7:** Development will be supported where it protects and enhances the landscape setting and character of the town and visibility to and from the open countryside

Higher level planning policy sets out a requirement that new development responds to local character. One of Sevenoaks' most defining characteristics is its landscape setting. The town is surrounded by the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and by open countryside designated as Green Belt. Fine views of open countryside and the Downs can be seen from many locations within the town. Many of the town's residents benefit from these views, they form an important part of the character of the town and should be preserved.



**St John's United Reformed Church on St John's Hill**



**Bandstand and clubhouse at The Vine**



**Old Market House, High Street**

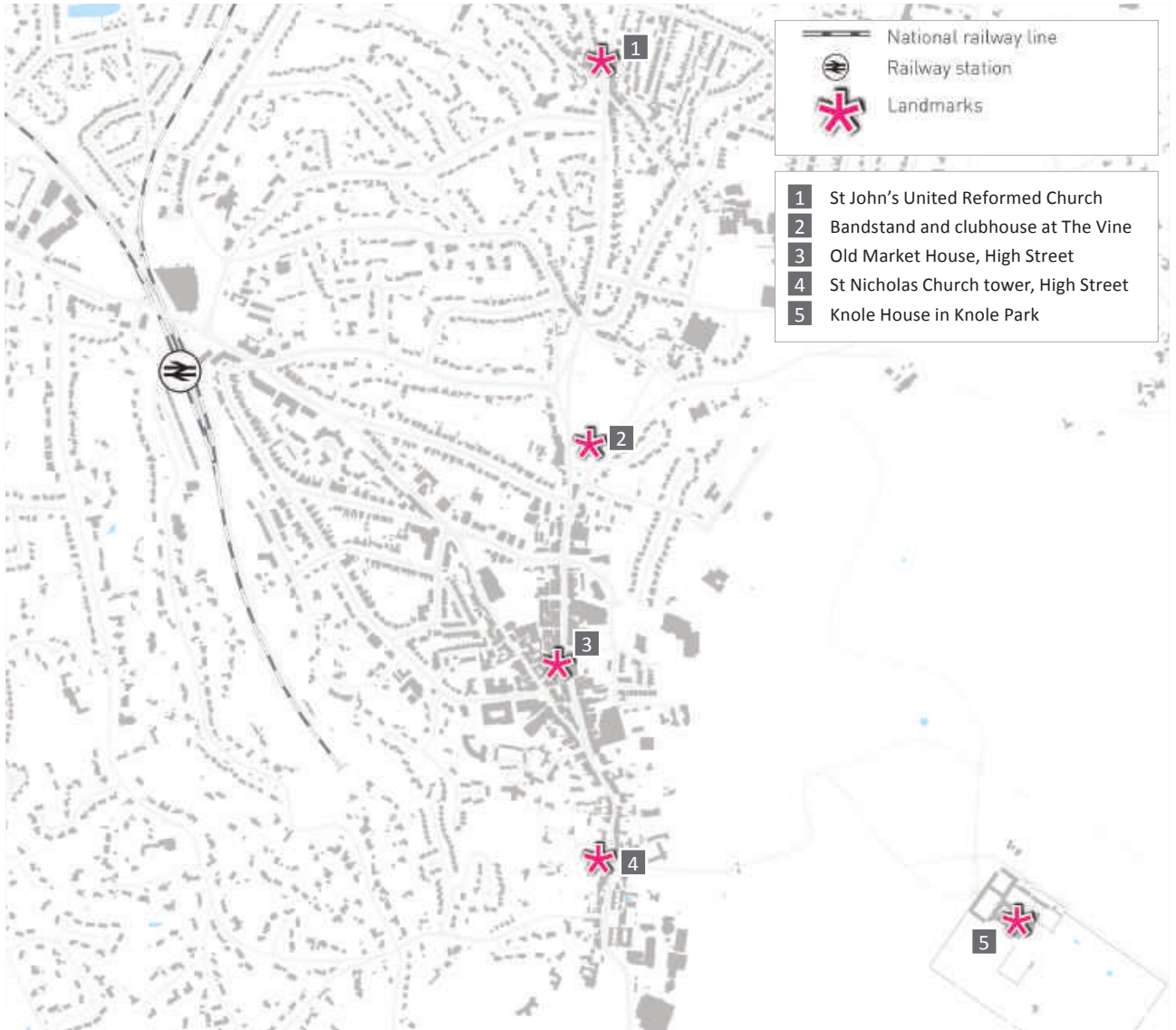


Figure 4.2: Local landmarks



St Nicholas Church tower, High Street



Knole House, Knole Park

**Objective Three: To enhance the gateways / arrival points into the town to create a more welcoming impression**

**Policy C8:** The Neighbourhood Plan will support proposals that enhance the gateways and arrival points into the town at:

- Sevenoaks station / Station Square;
- Otford Road;
- Seal Road;
- Tonbridge Road;
- Bradbourne Vale Road;
- Bat and Ball junction and station;
- 'One Stop Shop' on Seal Road;
- The Vine;
- London Road / High Street junction; and
- London Road / Pembroke Road junction.

New development should aim to function well and add to the quality of the area, establish a strong sense of place, respond to local character, create safe and accessible environments and be visually attractive.

Analysis carried out as part of the evidence base for this Plan identified the key points at which vehicle users and pedestrians enter the town. The quality of these gateways is variable. Some, such as the arrival point on London Road at the railway station, have a very fragmented townscape and low quality environment. This provides a poor quality first impression of the town.

It is essential that plans are made to co-ordinate new development in these locations in order to improve the quality of the arrival experience.

Design guidance should be prepared that defines the scale, form, massing and character of development and the landscape that is appropriate in these locations.



**Sevenoaks station could present a better arrival experience into the town**



**The recently refurbished Bat and Ball station provides a more welcoming arrival experience into the town**



**Approach into Sevenoaks on Otford Road**

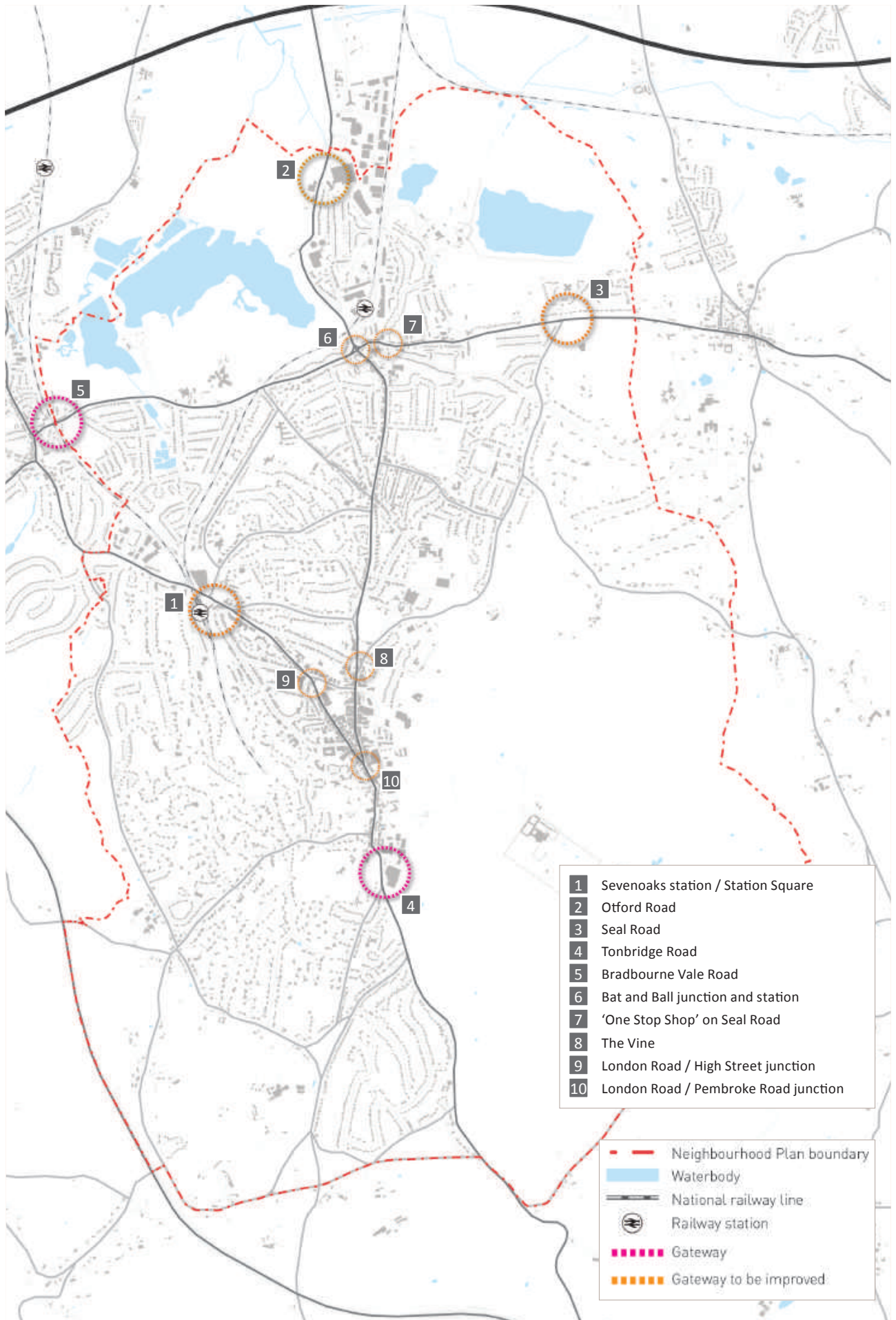


Figure 4.3: Gateways and arrival points

## 4.3 THEME TWO: LANDSCAPE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

**Objective Four: To recognise the significant contribution that trees and hedgerows make to the town's character and biodiversity**

**Aim L1:** The Town Council will identify areas where trees and hedgerows make a significant contribution to local character and biodiversity



Public consultation carried out as part of this Neighbourhood Plan revealed that the public consider that trees and woodland are an important part of the character of Sevenoaks. Whilst many of the town's trees benefit from the protection afforded by Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) many others, that contribute to the town's character, are not protected.

The Sevenoaks Society has been locating, recording and celebrating some of the most important trees under a project known as 'The Remarkable Trees of Sevenoaks'. This project involved consultation with the community to understand trees that were important to them and included an exhibition held at Knole in September to October 2014. However, the results of this exercise have not been formally recorded.

Further work is required to draw together the Remarkable Trees study, a record of existing TPOs, the contribution that these trees make to local character and the impact should they be lost. This work will also need to reference the Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment and Conservation Area Appraisals which identify areas where trees are an important part of local character.



Policy or aim that contributes towards the Neighbourhood Plan zero carbon commitment

**Policy L2:** Wherever possible, existing trees and hedgerows must be retained and protected as part of development proposals. Proposals to remove trees and hedgerows must be justified and any trees or hedgerows lost through development should be replaced. New tree and hedgerow provision should be of a species that is both suitable for the location and responds to the character and biodiversity of the site within which it is located



Higher level planning policies state that new development should respect the character of a site and sensitively incorporate natural features within a site. Trees and hedgerows are an important part of the character of the town. They also have a positive impact on the biodiversity value of the town and can help mitigate against climate change. They should, therefore, be retained whenever possible.

Justification for tree and hedgerow removal may include poor condition of a tree or inappropriate species for its location.



Mature trees are an intrinsic part of Sevenoaks' character

**Objective Five: To protect, improve and enhance access to existing publicly accessible open spaces and create new publicly accessible open spaces and green infrastructure**

**Policy L3:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports the development of new public open space and leisure opportunities in the town. This includes new public open space, community use and leisure opportunities at the Tarmac Ltd. site in Greatness when gravel extraction has been completed. This space must be delivered as a pre-cursor to any residential development on the site



The Neighbourhood Plan will support the provision of new, high quality, publicly accessible, open space.

The most significant opportunity for new open space is located on the Tarmac Ltd. site in the north of the town where gravel is being extracted. This was identified in the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan (refer to Policy D2). The site is located directly to the north of Greatness Recreation Ground and covers approximately 100 hectares. Gravel extraction on this site is set to complete in the coming years and the site will then be returned to public use by 2030 / 2032. Extraction of the gravel will result in a remodelling of the land and the existing lake will move towards the north-east quadrant of the site.

When the gravel extraction is completed the site will offer a significant opportunity to create new recreational open space for northern Sevenoaks. An existing public right of way extends through the land and connects northwards to Otford. There will be potential to establish a network of walking and cycling routes that will open up access to the site from surrounding areas including Greatness, Seal and Bat and Ball. The new lake could be used for water sports.



**Policy or aim that contributes towards the Neighbourhood Plan zero carbon commitment**

The new open space must be delivered as part of an integrated 'Green Infrastructure Strategy' for the area with strong physical and visual links to Greatness Recreation Ground and walking routes to Millpond Wood and the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve.

The site also contains a number of historic buildings including a former oast house. Subject to further investigation, it is anticipated that they can be brought back into active use for the benefit of the local community. The funding of new open space and recreational facilities may be dependent on enabling development.

The site is currently designated as Green Belt and is partly located within Seal Parish.

**Aim L4:** The Town Council will work with and support Kent Wildlife Trust to enhance access to the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve and improve 'on-site' facilities



The Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve is one of the area's most valuable ecological assets. It serves both as a recreational and educational resource. However, access to the Reserve is restricted to a single point off Bradbourne Vale Road, which is not easy to locate.

The Reserve provides a wonderful tranquil environment, however, walks are linear and there are currently no opportunities to take a circular route through the area, which would appeal to many people. The introduction of a circular walk is supported as a first step in improving the Reserve. A new route would join the paths that run to the north and south of the East Lake — the Reserve's largest body of water.

Kent Wildlife Trust have ambitions to construct a new 'Nature and Wellbeing Centre' on the site of their current visitor centre. This will help attract new visitors to the Reserve.

The Town Council would support provision of a new entrance to the Reserve on Otford Road to improve access to the site.

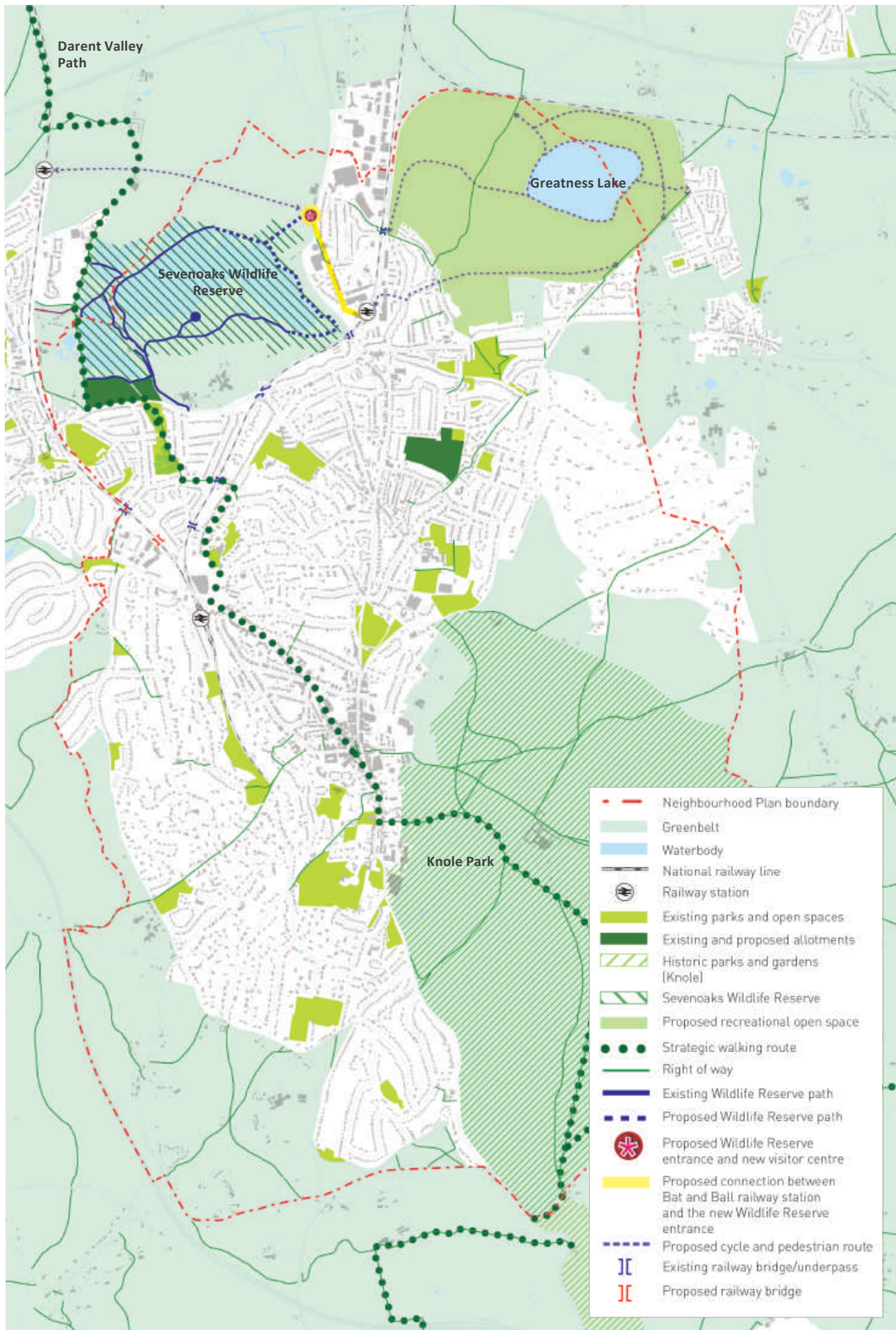


Figure 4.4: Proposed landscape and infrastructure enhancements and new connections

**Aim L5:** The Town Council will support improvement and restoration proposals for Bradbourne Lakes developed in consultation with the local community



Bradbourne Lakes is an attractive, yet underused, space that was identified by the public as a space that contributes to the character of Sevenoaks and which should be preserved.

The Darent Valley Path, a strategic walking route connecting Dartford to Sevenoaks, runs through the site and connects it with other open spaces including the Wildlife Reserve and Knole Park. This path is an essential part of the district's green infrastructure network. Improvements to the Bradbourne Lakes site will help strengthen the District's Green Infrastructure Network of accessible multi-functional green spaces.



**Bradbourne Lakes**

**Policy L6:** The Town Council will support the provision of additional allotment provision in the town at Bradbourne Vale Road



Over recent decades allotments have become increasingly popular and are valued for their recreational and practical benefits. The Town Council will develop new allotment provision adjacent to their site on Bradbourne Vale Road.



**Allotments are popular within the town**



**Policy or aim that contributes towards the Neighbourhood Plan zero carbon commitment**

## 4.4 THEME THREE: MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC REALM

**Objective Six: To work with the District Council, and Kent County Council, in consultation with neighbouring Parish Councils, to identify a long-term strategic approach to transport in Sevenoaks to respond to and mitigate any impacts of new development on the existing network**

The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that any development proposals within its boundaries may have impacts on the wider highway network. Whilst some impacts may be mitigated through a co-ordinated approach to encourage use of sustainable modes, wider transport issues must be addressed strategically. This is outside the scope or remit of the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Objective Seven: To promote a co-ordinated approach to transport and movement that encourages use of sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling, and reducing pollution levels, whilst ensuring that the centre is still accessible by car**

**Policy M1:** The Neighbourhood Plan promotes walking and cycling and supports the removal of barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement across the town



Adopted planning policy aims to achieve an improvement in the walking and cycling environment by:

- Enhancing safety and security on existing routes with improved surfacing, lighting and crossings;
- Providing new routes, particularly where they close gaps in the existing network or link to major trip generators or public transport;



Policy or aim that contributes towards the Neighbourhood Plan zero carbon commitment

- Providing, where feasible, wheelchair-friendly routes, in town centres (including Sevenoaks) in association with 'Shop-mobility';
- Improving the walking environment ; and
- Providing cycle-friendly infrastructure, introducing new cycle routes along the main transport corridors and improving home to school links.

To achieve these aims existing barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement should be tackled. These include:

- Sub-standard crossing facilities at junctions;
- Indirect crossings where priority is given to motor vehicles;
- Narrow and cluttered footways in parts of the town centre, notably along London Road;
- Lack of cycle parking; and
- Blocked or unattractive footpath / cycle routes under or over the railway line (eg. Bosville Drive to the north-west of the town centre or at Bat and Ball Road to the north).

The Town Council will support initiatives that reduce these barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement and will promote new routes that provide safer streets and convenient access to schools and other community assets.



The Neighbourhood Plan promotes walking and cycling and the creation of facilities similar to the above

**Policy M2:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports the Sevenoaks District Cycling Strategy and the District Council to deliver its recommendations



Cycling accounted for less than one percent of trips to work in the Sevenoaks district in 2001. This is considerably lower than the equivalent figures for the South-East (3.1%) and England (2.8%). The percentage of children cycling to school in Sevenoaks, at both the primary and secondary school level, is considerably lower than the Kent and national averages. In addition, there has been a small decline over the last two year period on which data is available, dropping from 0.5% in 2008 to 0.4% in 2010.

The Sevenoaks District Cycling Strategy aims to enable more people to cycle safely in the district so as to encourage a shift towards more sustainable transport choices and healthy leisure activities. In order to achieve this, a number of priority areas for action have been identified, namely:

- Creating new routes and linkages;
- Providing safer cycling infrastructure;
- Providing improved cycle parking;
- Promoting and encouraging cycling; and
- Maintaining existing facilities.

The Town Council will work with the District Council to encourage increased provision for cyclists.

**Policy M3:** The Neighbourhood Plan promotes the delivery of a new walking and cycling route that connects Bat and Ball / Otford Road with Dunton Green



There are few east-west routes in northern Sevenoaks and connection from Bat and Ball to Dunton Green is reliant on the A25 Bradbourne Vale Road, which is neither pedestrian nor cycle friendly. This new route will provide both a leisure route that links to the Darent Valley Path and a convenient connection to Dunton Green station. It is recognised that the western part of this route is within Dunton Green Parish.

**Policy M4:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports the introduction of a 20mph speed limit close to schools and in some residential areas



Improving road safety in Sevenoaks could be achieved by:

- Promoting low speed limit regimes in built-up residential areas consistent with the government's advice on the setting of local speed limits; and
- Targeting measures to calm traffic in areas of high pedestrian activity including school entrances and shopping areas.

Subject to the outcomes of transport modelling, a 20mph speed limit in certain locations could help to achieve the aims above and also help to improve the environment for walking and cycling.



Policy or aim that contributes towards the Neighbourhood Plan zero carbon commitment

**Policy M5:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals for improved pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities at major junctions across the town



Despite Sevenoaks having a good network of pedestrian routes the district has the lowest percentage of walking / cycling to work and education in the country. One of the ways to tackle this situation is to enhance safety and security on existing routes through improved surfacing, lighting and road crossings.

Support will, therefore, be given to high quality design-led proposals that improve crossing facilities at major junctions across the town including:

- At the junction of Pembroke Road and London Road;
- Outside Sevenoaks station; and
- Bat and Ball junction to the north of the town.

**Policy M6:** The Town Council will progress proposals to refurbish Bat and Ball station and improve access to the station



One of the priority objectives of higher level planning policies is to improve public transport interchange facilities, in particular at the main bus and train stations in the district.

Sevenoaks Town Council has acquired a long-lease on the Grade II listed Bat and Ball station building, which originally opened in 1862. Following decades of neglect, the Town Council has recently sympathetically restored the station building to provide a community café, public toilets, new hireable space, improved external lighting and new cycle parking provision. This proposal significantly improves the environment at the station and has led to an increase in passenger numbers and a reduction in crime.

The Council will continue to improve access to the station and surrounding area and investigate the potential to provide additional car parking should this be required.



The recently refurbished Bat and Ball station building



New café within the refurbished Bat and Ball station



Better interchange facilities, including for drop-off and pick-up, and an improved taxi rank, should be provided at Sevenoaks station



Policy or aim that contributes towards the Neighbourhood Plan zero carbon commitment

Furthermore, the Town Council is currently developing plans to deliver a new Community Centre to the west of Bat and Ball station. Emerging proposals include opening up pedestrian access to the western station platform through the Community Centre site. This will improve accessibility at the station, which is currently only accessed from the eastern platform. The Town Council will also support any further improvements to the station including provision of real time information on trains and bus services.

**Policy M7:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals to improve transport interchange facilities at Sevenoaks station



**Sevenoaks bus station — there is significant potential to improve this facility**

As stated under Policy M6, higher level planning policies aim to improve the district’s transport interchanges. Support will, therefore, be given to high-quality, design-led proposals that improve interchange facilities at Sevenoaks station. This should make it easier for users of the station to switch between rail and bus services and should include real time travel information for both buses and trains. Facilities for drop-off and pick-up and an improved taxi rank, should also be provided.

The Neighbourhood Plan will also support improvements to the public realm at the station entrance along London Road. This area is dominated by guard rails and other street clutter that create a poor first impression of the town and create barriers to pedestrian movement.



**Bus station improvements should include real time travel information in addition to printed timetables**

**Policy M8:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports enhancements to bus services and facilities to serve the town



As stated under Policies M6 and M7 higher level planning policies and strategies aim to improve the town’s bus network and facilities.

The Town Council will, therefore, support high quality development proposals that will help enhance the town’s bus services and facilities. These should include the provision of real time travel information and the physical improvement of the bus station.

**Policy M9:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports measures that will encourage a shift towards the use of greener modes of transport by businesses and residents



In addition to the policies to promote walking, cycling and to increase the attractiveness and use of public transport, support will be given to greener modes of transport such as electric cars, e-bikes and scooters.

Businesses will be encouraged to move to electric fleets and charging points will be introduced in appropriate public locations.

Greener approaches to transport will be encouraged through active campaigns such as green travel exhibitions, electric car shows and car-free days.



**Policy or aim that contributes towards the Neighbourhood Plan zero carbon commitment**

**Objective Eight: To deliver public realm enhancements to improve the pedestrian experience in the town**

**Policy M10:** The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals for public realm improvements within the town centre particularly linking key town centre destinations. Such improvements should be part of a town centre-wide strategy to help improve the pedestrian experience in the town centre.

Where appropriate, the Neighbourhood Plan will support innovative proposals, such as shared surfaces, to improve the pedestrian environment and reduce the impact of traffic in both the town and neighbourhood centres.

The Neighbourhood Plan supports the removal of street clutter including unnecessary street furniture and the adoption of a co-ordinated palette of materials and street furniture for the town and neighbourhood centres



**Aim M11:** The Town Council will identify locations across the town where repairs and improvements to paths and pavements are required to improve the pedestrian environment



Despite Sevenoaks having a good network of pedestrian routes the district has the lowest percentage of walking / cycling to work and education (schools and colleges) in the country. One of the ways to improve this situation is to improve the walking environment. Public realm improvements could help to achieve this aim.

Site visits and public consultation carried out as part of the preparation of this Plan revealed several locations where the public realm could be improved.

The following issues were identified:

- Poor quality and badly signed routes between town centre destinations including the cultural facilities, town centre car parks, main shopping areas and open spaces (such as Knole and The Vine);



**Policy or aim that contributes towards the Neighbourhood Plan zero carbon commitment**



**Public realm improvements could dramatically improve the town centre environment in the Buckhurst Lane area**



**There is opportunity to improve the quality of the footways and planting near the Post Office on London Road**



**Street clutter in the town impacts on the attractiveness of the town centre**

- Unattractive secondary connections along lanes and alleys connecting the town centre to car parks on Buckhurst Lane and to the leisure centre, library and museum;
- Sub-standard crossing facilities within the town centre and at junctions including High Street with Pembroke Road and London Road with Pembroke Road;
- Narrow footways — especially along London Road in the town centre, on Seal Road and in St John’s neighbourhood centre; and
- The prevalence of street clutter across the town centre including bins, shop displays, advertising A-boards, dated poor quality signage and tables and chairs, and a lack of co-ordination in the design of street furniture.

The Town Council will support innovative proposals to improve the quality of the pedestrian experience in the town and neighbourhood centres, investigating the potential for shared surfaces, where appropriate. This should be considered as part of the public realm strategy.

The Town Council would support the recruitment of a town centre manager to co-ordinate events and activities, encourage initiatives to reduce street clutter and manage waste and improve the town centre environment and support traders.

A town centre public realm strategy should be prepared to guide public realm improvements across the town. This should include an analysis of existing movement patterns, review of the paving quality and audit of street furniture / signage and clutter across the town centre. The strategy should set out key priorities for the public realm across the town centre addressing the issues above and any others identified.



**Poynton, Cheshire: an example showing the sort of innovative solutions that could be used in the town centre to reduce the impact of traffic and give more space over to pedestrians**

## 4.5 THEME FOUR: LOCAL ECONOMY

**Objective Nine: To support local businesses and retailers and encourage a more collaborative and entrepreneurial business environment in the centre**

**Policy E1:** Support will be given to the provision of sites for start-up business space across the town. Preferred locations include:

- Allocated mixed-use and employment sites;
- The town centre;
- Neighbourhood centres; and
- Regeneration areas – such as at Bat and Ball.



Sevenoaks has a high proportion of micro and small businesses and, despite fewer start-ups than the national average, the business survival rates are high. With office rents rising and vacancy levels falling it is important to create the conditions to allow small businesses to flourish. Higher level planning policy states that the sustainable development of the district's economy will be supported by the development of start-up units for small businesses in suitable locations, together with improvements to information and communications technology to facilitate more flexible working practices.

Potential hubs for small businesses could be established as part of development of sites.

**Aim E2:** 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

The Sevenoaks Economic Development Strategy identifies that tourism is a major contributor to the economic viability and growth of the district and contributes £230million to the local economy annually.



**Policy or aim that contributes towards the Neighbourhood Plan zero carbon commitment**

As part of this strategy the Town Council will:

- 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.

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.

The Town Council will work with the District Council to develop a Tourism Strategy for Sevenoaks.

**Policy E3:** Proposals for increased parking provision will be supported when it can be proven that it is required to support the economic development of a local area. A preference will be for the intensification and improvement of existing car park sites over the development of new car parks. Any new car parks should be designed to the highest quality. New car parks should not be located where they will bring more traffic into residential areas or conflict with key pedestrian and cycle routes

The priority of this Plan is to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport rather than the use of the private car. However, it is also recognised that provision of sufficient car parking spaces is critical to support the town's shops, businesses and public transport network. In specific local circumstances, where it can be proven that additional parking provision is needed to support economic growth, the development of new car parks will be supported.

Analysis of town centre character (Appendix A, Section A7) carried out as part of this Neighbourhood Plan reveals the impact existing areas of car parking can have on the townscape. The extensive areas of car parking around Sevenoaks station and the library and museum and leisure centre result in large areas of poorly defined open space and poor quality routes between car parks and key destinations. For this reason, extensive new areas of surface car parking should be avoided. Preference will be given to the intensification of existing sites. This could be achieved by redesigning the layout of existing car parks or by providing multi-storey / decked solutions as has recently been delivered on Buckhurst Lane. Any new car parks should be designed to the highest standards and provide legible, well-lit and attractive pedestrian connections to local destinations.

**Objective Ten: To consolidate and enhance both the town centre and secondary shopping areas**

**Policy E4:** Support will be given to the retention and development of indoor and outdoor markets and encouragement to the diversification of their offer



Markets are an attractive draw for town centres and the provision of specialist markets (particularly a farmers' market) were supported by the public throughout the consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan.

The town's two markets (the general market on Wednesday and charter market on the High Street on Saturday) are operated by the Town Council. The Council will work with stall-holders to develop proposals to expand provision and diversify the offer.



**Policy or aim that contributes towards the Neighbourhood Plan zero carbon commitment**

**Policy E5:** Support will be given to spatial strategies and development proposals that enhance the function, accessibility and appearance of neighbourhood centres such as:

- Northern St John's;
- Southern St John's (Hollybush Parade); and
- Tubs Hill Parade.



Neighbourhood centres are generally protected by planning policies that place restrictions or protections on the land uses that are permitted in these locations.

Planning policies do not, however, identify strategies to address some of the spatial issues that may be affecting the performance of neighbourhood centres such as lack of car parking, poor quality paving and unattractive shop fronts.


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.



**Shopfront improvements can provide an economic boost to local centres**

## 4.6 THEME FIVE: COMMUNITY AND CULTURE


### Objective Eleven: To deliver enhanced community assets for the town

**Policy COM1:** Proposals for a new Community Centre at Bat and Ball station will be progressed by the Town Council 

The Town Council is currently progressing proposals to construct a new Bat and Ball Centre to the west of Bat and Ball station. It is anticipated that this will include a large community event space, a small hall, kitchen area, nursery facility, toilets, lift, external play area and storage with a staff room, offices, meeting / function rooms, toilets and kitchen.

It is anticipated that the existing Community Centre will remain operational throughout the construction period of the new facility to ensure a continuity of service.

The design of the new centre will also open up access to the western platform of Bat and Ball station. This will help satisfy the priority objective of the Sevenoaks District Transport Strategy to improve public transport interchange facilities.

**Policy COM2:** Promote new health and education provision, faith facilities and other necessary community infrastructure as an integral part of new development 

Development proposals that generate a requirement for new or improved physical, social and green infrastructure must provide this as an integral part of any planning application.

The Neighbourhood Plan provides a long-term strategy for Sevenoaks and identifies development opportunities including the potential for approximately 1,000 new homes in Northern Sevenoaks of which approximately 600 homes, together with a significant new open space will be at the Greatness Quarry site (refer to Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan and to Policy D2). These new homes will require supporting infrastructure and in particular health care, schools provision and other community infrastructure including space for faith groups.

The Town Council will work with the District and County Councils, and also with health providers, to ensure that this community infrastructure is provided. Initial discussions have been held to consider the potential to provide a new primary school on land adjacent to Knole Academy, together with key worker accommodation.



Policy or aim that contributes towards the Neighbourhood Plan zero carbon commitment

The following statement has been received from the NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group:

*'Inevitably any increase in the local population has an impact on provision of healthcare requirements both in terms of service, workforce and infrastructure. The proposals for Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan, whilst incremental, would have a significant impact on local general practice due to existing pressures and limited capacity.'*

*To ensure sustainable general practice in Northern Sevenoaks a further assessment of the impact of this development is required to be undertaken with general practices in order to ensure that the growth can be accommodated over the plan period. At this time the Clinical Commissioning Group is signalling that the options for infrastructure to be further explored include the expansion / reconfiguration of existing general practice premises and the inclusion of a general practice premises as the part of the masterplan, including the opportunity to secure land and / or capital contributions through CIL.'*

**6 November 2017**

At the appropriate point the Town Council will hold further discussions to support the additional assessment and ensure robust plans are developed.



FROM TOP:  
**The existing Community Centre at Bat and Ball will be re-provided; new development must deliver new health and education provision**

**Objective Twelve: To develop and promote a cultural quarter in the town centre and to enhance the town's cultural offer and improve access to existing cultural assets**

**Policy COM3:** The Town Council will promote the development of a cultural quarter in the town centre together with an arts and cultural strategy

**Aim COM4:** The Town Council will support the development of a new amphitheatre at Knole Environmental Park

Sevenoaks already has an extensive variety of cultural facilities including The Stag Theatre and cinema, the library and museum (Kaleidoscope), bandstand, Knole House and Park and several other smaller private galleries. These are a significant resource for the town.

The Town Council is currently working with Kent County Council officers, local artists and designers and managers from cultural institutions, preparing an arts and cultural strategy for the town. When complete, this will promote a number of spatial and non-spatial initiatives which will include:

**Spatial / land use proposals:**

- A strategy for improving pedestrian links between cultural venues — this should also be considered as part of the public realm strategy for the town;
- A strategy for temporary arts interventions to improve poor quality spaces in the town centre;

- A strategy to allow the temporary occupation of empty shop units for arts and cultural uses; and
- The construction of a new amphitheatre at the Environmental Park in Knole to provide additional space for outdoor performances, and also strengthen the area around the leisure centre and Kaleidoscope as a key civic hub for the town.

**Non-spatial activities:**

- The creation of an e-forum for local arts / cultural groups and individuals to share ideas;
- A strategy to foster better co-operation and shared promotion of arts and culture throughout the town; and
- A strategy to engage future generations in arts and cultural facilities.

This Neighbourhood Plan will support development proposals that come forward, which help to deliver the spatial proposals included in the Arts and Cultural Strategy for Sevenoaks town centre.



Figure 4.5: Plan of the proposed cultural quarter and the connections between town centre cultural assets

- Knole amphitheatre (proposed)
- Theatre
- Library
- Museum
- Bandstand
- Market
- Gallery
- Area of high quality public realm (proposed)
- Improved pedestrian links
- Development sites
- Existing frontage
- Proposed frontage
- Greenbelt
- The Vine




## 4.7 THEME SIX: SPORTS AND RECREATION

### Objective Thirteen: To deliver enhanced recreational and sports facilities for the town

**Policy S1:** The Neighbourhood Plan will support the provision of new sports facilities across the town including the provision of new sports / watersports facilities at the Tarmac Ltd. site at Greatness, which will be required to be delivered either in advance of, or in parallel with, new homes on this site.

All new sports facilities must adhere to sports governing body guidance for a particular sport (including schools) and should be developed with community access agreements.

The provision of new facilities, and enhancements and improvements to existing sports facilities across the town, will be delivered in line with the Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy 

As identified in Neighbourhood Plan Policy L3, gravel extraction on the Tarmac Ltd. site, north of Greatness Recreation Ground, is set to complete and the site returned to public use by 2030 / 2032. The ground will be remodelled and a new lake will be provided in the north-east quadrant of a new Greatness Park.

In contrast to the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve, which provides a quiet and contemplative environment and a haven for wildlife, Greatness Park will be an active space. The lake will be used for a range of water sports and will be served by a visitor centre and boatyard. Greatness Park will provide a new recreational resource for the wider community, and new walking and cycling routes will ensure that the park is accessible by sustainable modes.

The Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy sets out a long-term strategy for future sports provision in the town. It was prepared in 2015 by the Town Council in close consultation with local sports organisations and the community and promotes enhancements and improvements to existing facilities at The Vine, Hollybush Recreation Ground and Park, Knole Paddock, Greatness Recreation Ground and the Sencio Leisure Centre.

Some of the proposals set out in the Sports Strategy have already been delivered including the provision of a 3G pitch at Greatness Recreation Ground, refurbishment of the pavilion and public toilets at The Vine and the introduction of improved drainage and spectator seating at Knole Paddock. Future development proposals, which comply with the Sports Strategy, will be supported.

The Town Council will continue to investigate and support promotion of potential sites for sports that are not well provided for in the town including basketball, netball, archery, hockey and badminton.

Community access agreements should be sought with all planning applications for new sporting facilities in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

The Town Council will continue to update the Sports Strategy document over the life of this Plan to reflect changing circumstances. The current version can be accessed on the Neighbourhood Plan website at <https://sevenoaksndp.wordpress.com/>

Development for new sports facilities will only be supported if they adhere to guidance provided by the relevant governing body for the particular sport. This will ensure that the facilities can be used effectively in the future and maximise the value of the investment for the community. Planning applications must be accompanied by a statement explaining how this has been achieved.



Policy or aim that contributes towards the Neighbourhood Plan zero carbon commitment



## 4.8 THEME SEVEN: DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

**Objective Fourteen: To promote high quality development that enhances the town and consolidates vacant or under-utilised land**

**Policy D1:** Development to be promoted on sustainable sites. Sites include:

- Community Centre, Bat and Ball;
- Travis Perkins, Bat and Ball;
- Cramptons Road, Water Works;
- Carpentry / Wickes, Otford Road;
- Sevenoaks Gasholder Station;
- Bat and Ball Enterprise Centre;
- Tarmac Ltd. site, Greatness;
- Sevenoaks station and surrounding area;
- Edwards Electrical, High Street;
- Buckhurst Lane sites;
- Post Office / BT Exchange;
- Town Council offices, Bradbourne Vale Road; and
- Adult Education site, Bradbourne Road.

Development on these sites will follow the urban design principles set out in this Neighbourhood Plan. Developers will be encouraged to develop buildings constructed to the highest environmental standards to reduce carbon emissions through construction and later life.



**Policy or aim that contributes towards the Neighbourhood Plan zero carbon commitment**

These sites have been identified from existing site allocations, survey work undertaken as part of this Neighbourhood Plan and the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan.

The Tarmac Ltd. site at Greatness is within the Green Belt. All other sites are located within the Sevenoaks Urban Area.

However, the Sevenoaks District Council's Green Belt Assessment (prepared by Arup) identifies part of the Tarmac Ltd. site as: 'Weak performing Green Belt.' Any development on this site would be dependent on the successful removal of the site from the Green Belt and emerging Exceptional Circumstances Policy.

It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design. To achieve this, the Neighbourhood Plan identifies urban design principles for each of the above development sites.

These principles are detailed on the following pages and include:

- Existing features to be retained on-site including any buildings or landscape features / trees;
- Proposed mix of uses on-site;
- Scale, height and massing of buildings;
- Development frontage / interface;
- Movement, connectivity, access and parking; and
- Approximate development quantum.

In order to reduce the impact that development has on climate, developments should be built to the highest environmental standards with new homes meeting or exceeding the government's 'Future Homes Standard' and non-residential buildings aiming for BREAAAM excellent ratings.

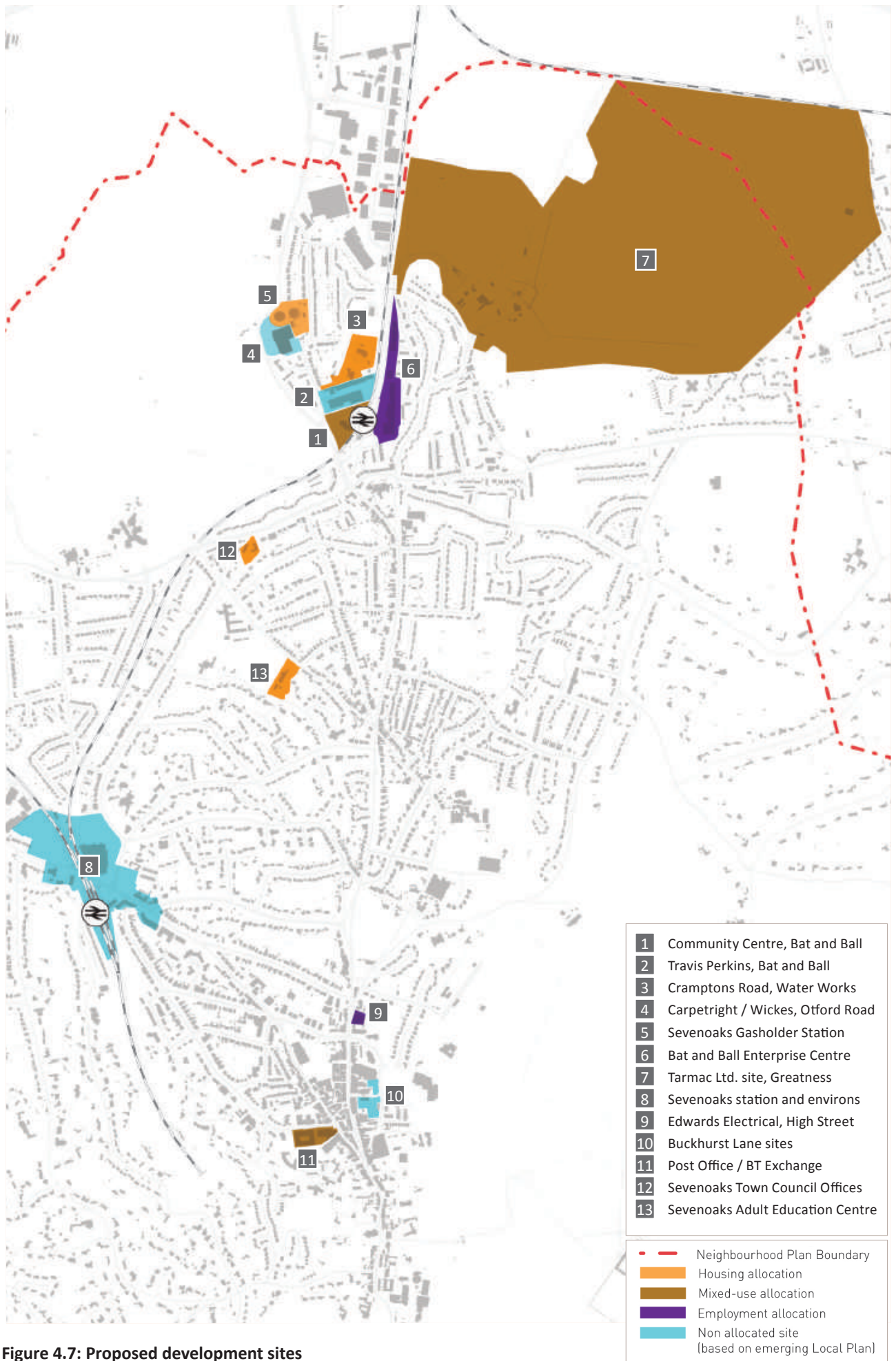


Figure 4.7: Proposed development sites

1

**SEVENOAKS COMMUNITY CENTRE  
OTFORD ROAD**

0.89Ha



<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occupied by the Sevenoaks Community Centre, associated car parking and a tennis court. Immediate development potential</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed-use allocation in the emerging Local Plan</li> </ul>
<b>CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjacent uses — light industrial to the north; rail line to the south and east, busy road to the west</li> <li>Single point of access from the north-west corner</li> <li>Land is steeply sloping to the western boundary</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES AND QUANTUMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Community Centre, re-provision of the children’s nursery</li> <li>Office space (approx. 300m2)</li> <li>Up to 25 residential apartments</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed-use development accommodating community use, office use and residential dwellings within buildings of up to four storey</li> <li>Potential southern access and entrance to Bat and Ball station</li> <li>Building layout should facilitate enhanced access to Bat and Ball station and provide an arrival space in front of the new southern entrance to the station</li> </ul>

2

**TRAVIS PERKINS, BAT AND BALL  
SEVENOAKS BUSINESS CENTRE**

1.27Ha



<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Light industry and builders’ merchants</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No allocation; however, policy presumption to retain employment use (Policy EMP1)</li> </ul>
<b>CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travis Perkins has recently expanded their operation on the site</li> <li>Numerous other businesses are located within the Sevenoaks Business Centre</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES AND QUANTUMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office space</li> <li>Up to 127 residential apartments @ 100dph (dwellings per hectare)</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Longer term opportunity to relocate light industrial uses northwards to Vestry Industrial Estate / Otford and redevelop the site with mixed-use development within compact blocks of up to four storey height</li> <li>Remove the conflict between the light industrial employment uses and residential accommodation within the Bat and Ball area</li> <li>Create improved access towards the station and better animation of the streets in the area</li> </ul>

### 3

## CRAMPTONS ROAD WATER WORKS CRAMPTONS ROAD

1.26Ha



#### EXISTING USE

- Southern portion of the water treatment works (northern portion retained in operational use)
- Includes two vacant waterworks buildings and a residential property

#### PLANNING STATUS

- Residential site allocation in the existing and emerging Local Plan

#### CONSTRAINTS

- Existing homes which may impact on layout
- Access to water treatment works must be retained
- Access onto Cramptons Road is constrained
- Requires a comprehensive approach that responds to adjacent sites

#### POTENTIAL USES AND QUANTUMS

- Mix of residential houses and apartments — up to 126 dwellings @ 100dph

#### OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Residential development close to Bat & Ball station
- Development layout should facilitate a potential future pedestrian connection through Sevenoaks Business Centre to the station
- Development form should respond to lower scale properties to the west

### 4

## CARPETRIGHT / WICKES OTFORD ROAD

1.13Ha



#### EXISTING USE

- Big box retail uses

#### PLANNING STATUS

- Site not allocated for development

#### CONSTRAINTS

- Site is adjacent to former gas holder station and ground remediation is likely to be required
- Comprehensive approach required that anticipates potential change on gas holder station site

#### POTENTIAL USES AND QUANTUMS

- Residential use: houses fronting Cramptons Road but potential for apartments fronting Otford Road (85 dwellings @ 75dph)

#### OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Relocate these uses northwards to the Vestry Industrial Estate where they are more appropriate
- Strengthen the residential character of the area and remove the conflict between the big box retail uses and existing homes
- Deliver buildings that create a positive frontage to Cramptons Road (houses) and Otford Road (apartments)
- Development proposal would work more effectively in conjunction with adjacent gas holder station site (Site 5)

5

**SEVENOAKS GASHOLDER STATION**  
CRAMPTONS ROAD

0.98Ha



<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site of former gas works — gasholders were removed in 2018</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential site allocation in the existing and emerging Local Plan</li> </ul>
<b>CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site remediation will be required</li> <li>Development opportunity is impacted by adjacent big box retail uses to the south</li> <li>Comprehensive approach required that anticipates potential change on adjacent sites</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES AND QUANTUMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential use: houses fronting Cramptons Road but potential for apartments fronting Otford Road (73 dwellings @ 75dph)</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential development close to Bat and Ball station that supports the regeneration of Northern Sevenoaks</li> <li>Development layout should provide positive frontages to streets and retain and front onto the pedestrian path that connects Cramptons Road with Otford Road through the site</li> <li>Scale and massing should respond to the context (i.e. two storey buildings on Cramptons Road but with potential for four storeys on Otford Road)</li> </ul>

6

**BAT AND BALL ENTERPRISE CENTRE**  
BAT AND BALL ROAD

1.80Ha



<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Light industry / businesses within two storey buildings. Car parking located either to the front or sides of buildings</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocated employment site within existing and emerging Local Plan</li> </ul>
<b>CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While Greatness Quarry is still operational Bat and Ball Road is used by numerous heavy vehicles</li> <li>Employment uses impact on accessibility of station from Greatness to the east</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES AND QUANTUMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for area to become mixed-use with the addition of residential development (additional 90 apartments @ 50dph)</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Longer term opportunity to change area around the station to mixed-use</li> <li>Strengthen the residential character of the area and improve access to the station for people living in Greatness through pedestrian routes that are overlooked by new development</li> <li>Deliver apartment buildings (with ground floor employment) that create a positive frontage to Bat and Ball Road</li> <li>Buildings could be up to four storeys in this location</li> </ul>


**EXISTING USE**

- Greatness Quarry a site for gravel extraction
- Site includes a number of buildings, including oast houses, towards the west of the area

**PLANNING STATUS**

- Mixed-use allocation in the emerging Local Plan
- Located within the Green Belt

**CONSTRAINTS**

- Gravel extraction is ongoing and the site will need to be re-profiled following completion of the extraction
- There are a number of mature trees and woodland belts within the area
- A public right of way extends through the area
- Part of the site is a SSSI
- A landfill site is located to the north-east of the area
- Access is constrained with the current main access off Bat and Ball Road in the south-western corner

**POTENTIAL USES AND QUANTUMS**

- Open space
- Community uses
- Residential homes (approx. 600 at a density of 30-40dph) on the western portion of the site

**OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

- Potential to deliver a significant open space resource for North Sevenoaks and the wider area. This to include an extensive waterbody offering potential for watersports, a network of paths for pedestrians and cyclists and range of attractive habitats for both people and wildlife
- Retain and refurbish the historic buildings within the site for community uses (including the oast houses)
- Locate new homes within an attractive green environment focused in the south-western portion of the site where they can serve to overlook routes and open spaces
- Provide a range of homes to meet local needs. Properties to be generally two and three storeys
- Provide a network of safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes offering legible access from the surrounding residential areas and to Bat and Ball station
- Improve pedestrian access over the railway line to Vestry Road to the west of the site
- Carefully manage vehicular access to the site to avoid impacting detrimentally on adjacent residential areas and the wider movement network in the area

**EXISTING USE**

- Station and arrival car park: station and retail units
- Farmers site: vacant
- London Road shops: retail
- BT offices at One 60 London Road
- Tubs Hill Parade: retail with residential above
- Shell Garage and Kwik Fit: petrol filling station and car repairs
- Sevenoaks station car park: parking

**PLANNING STATUS**

- BT offices are an employment allocation in the emerging plan

**CONSTRAINTS**

- Area is generally low lying and so can accommodate greater height than elsewhere in the town; however, there are notable views down London Road towards the Downs to the north
- Car parking will need to be retained but could be re-provided within a multi-storey car park
- Conflicts between road users and pedestrians around the station
- Fragmented ownerships may make delivery challenging (eg. Tubs Hill Parade)

**POTENTIAL USES AND QUANTUMS**

- Potential for compact mixed-use development including retail and food and drink around station, some B1 office, petrol station and new residential units

**OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

- Significant opportunity for development that will transform the sense of arrival into Sevenoaks and could establish a new urban quarter for the town
- Scale typically four to six storey with taller building marking the station
- Opportunity to reconsider transport interchange and public realm treatment at the station

9

**FORMER EDWARDS ELECTRICAL**  
166 HIGH STREET

0.16Ha



<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vacant site</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Located within Sevenoaks Town Centre</li> </ul>
<b>CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development must respond to the character of the existing streetscape both in terms of design language and height and massing – two / three storeys is appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES AND QUANTUMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A2, A3 or B1 ground floor uses: 350m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>12 residential units (eight apartments and four mews units)</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development should provide a positive and active frontage to the High Street that is aligned to frontages on adjacent plots and is sympathetic to adjacent built form</li> <li>Potential for mews houses to the rear</li> </ul>

10

**BUCKHURST LANE SITES**  
SEVENOAKS TOWN CENTRE

0.08 AND 0.24Ha



<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Car parking</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Located within Sevenoaks Town Centre</li> </ul>
<b>CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access will need to be maintained to service yards of properties on High Street</li> <li>Challenges in terms of interface with some of the existing properties</li> <li>Loss of town centre car parking / need to relocate</li> <li>Removal of some trees required</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES AND QUANTUMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ground floor B1 workspace and potential for an indoor market</li> <li>Residential apartments above (approx. 12 on northern site / 35 on southern site)</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential to provide development that provides a positive frontage to Suffolk Way and Buckhurst Lane</li> <li>Potential for three storey building plus an additional set back storey</li> <li>Development should front streets whilst concealing existing service yards from public view</li> <li>Pedestrian connections through area to be retained and any trees that are removed to be replaced</li> </ul>



<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post Office and BT Exchange</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed-use allocation in existing and emerging Local Plan</li> </ul>
<b>CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjacent to Conservation Area</li> <li>Prominent site on gateway to town centre</li> <li>On elevated ground with land dropping away to the south means that any development will be highly visible from a number of locations. Height and massing needs to be carefully considered and modelled. Maximum height four storeys with upper floors set back</li> <li>Town centre car park to the rear</li> <li>Adjacent The Stag Theatre</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES AND QUANTUMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ground floor active uses (A1-A3) onto High Street: 300m2</li> <li>90 residential units (apartments) @150 dph</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant town centre site</li> <li>Potential to redevelop to provide active ground floor uses onto London Road with apartments above. Total building height three storeys plus an additional set back storey</li> <li>Frontage onto London Road should be set back to create a public space that serves the adjacent theatre and provides a setting for the new ground floor uses</li> <li>Development should provide a positive frontage to the lane connecting the car park to the rear of The Stag Theatre with London Road</li> <li>Potential public realm enhancement to South Park</li> <li>A comprehensive scheme needs to be prepared but could be delivered as two independent phases (Post Office and BT Building)</li> </ul>

**Legend**

- Site Boundary
- Active Frontage
- Residential Frontage
- New Public Space



Site opportunities / design guidance

12

## SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

BRADBOURNE VALE ROAD

0.32Ha



<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town Council offices and car parking</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing allocation in emerging Local Plan</li> </ul>
<b>CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mature trees on site boundaries</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES AND QUANTUMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential development — 32 apartments @ 100dph</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential development in the form of apartments that provide a frontage to Bradbourne Vale Road with other dwellings to the rear</li> <li>Development up to three storeys</li> <li>Potential to relocate existing office space to the Community Centre site at Bat and Ball station</li> </ul>

13

## SEVENOAKS ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE

BRADBOURNE ROAD

0.60Ha



<b>EXISTING USE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adult Education Centre and associated outbuildings and car parking</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Located within Sevenoaks Town Centre</li> </ul>
<b>CONSTRAINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>College building locally listed</li> <li>Part of the site is allocated as open space</li> <li>Mature trees on the site</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL USES AND QUANTUMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential development through refurbished college building and a new-build residential annex to the south of the site</li> <li>Potential for approx. 19 apartments (11 in refurbished college and eight in annex)</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITY / URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential development opportunity</li> <li>College must be sensitively refurbished / converted to maintain integrity of existing building</li> <li>Annex must be subservient to main college building in respect of its design and scale and massing</li> <li>Retain mature trees and quality of landscape setting</li> </ul>

**NOTE: All proposals for residential development on the above pages must deliver the required quantum of affordable housing.**

**Policy D2:** Development proposals that fall within the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan study area boundary will follow the development principles set out in the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan.

The Masterplan for Northern Sevenoaks was commissioned by Sevenoaks Town Council in November 2016. Its remit was to examine the development potential of the northern part of the town.

The study area for the Masterplan is different in character from the rest of Sevenoaks. Historically, the area developed later. For many years it was occupied by a series of country estates. The railway and Bat and Ball station arrived in 1865. A gas works, water works and several brickworks located to the area and it became a focus for employment and industry in the town. Through the 20th Century, gravel extraction has led to the creation of a number of significant waterbodies.

Whilst some homes were built alongside the industry it was not until the inter-war period that the area was developed for housing. Sevenoaks' first council houses were built at Greatness with most

homes in the area being modest two storey semi-detached and terraced houses.

These sit within a fragmented townscape that has developed around large footprint employment uses and the former railway sidings. There remains a conflict between the small-scale residential uses and larger footprint industrial uses. This is most noticeable around Bat and Ball station. Here the dominance of industrial uses creates a poor quality arrival experience with little or no activity after business hours to animate or enliven the area.

The study area is dominated by heavy traffic running along the A25 and A225 roads. These act as barriers between Northern Sevenoaks, the town centre and the surrounding countryside. The railway line is a further barrier to movement in an east-west direction.

However, the area does have a number of very attractive features. The local centre at St John's provides most of the area's local shopping needs and is home to Sevenoaks Hospital. The high street at St John's, although in need of some regeneration, has some attractive buildings that provide character.

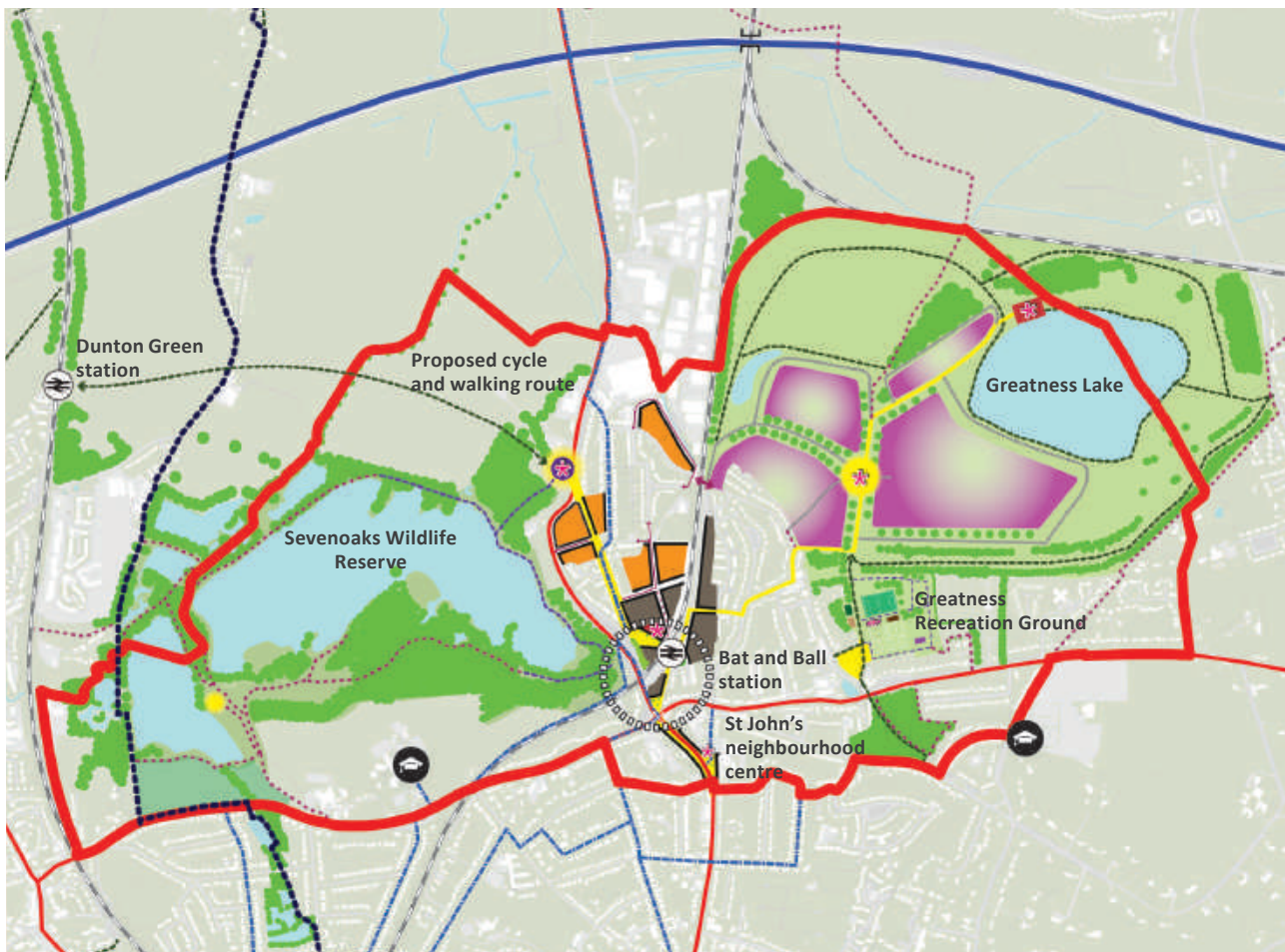


Figure 4.8: Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan

The area benefits from good transport links including a direct rail link to London from Bat and Ball station, and good vehicular connections to the motorway network.

The area also benefits from an abundant selection of open spaces. The study area is home to the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve — a 71 Ha former gravel pit that has been given over to the public to enjoy.

More active pursuits can be undertaken at Greatness Recreation Ground, which is owned by the Town Council. Facilities here include playing fields and a skate park. There are also a number of public rights of way and paths through Northern Sevenoaks that connect it to the attractive countryside beyond. There is significant potential to link these spaces together and improve their offer.

The Masterplan objectives are:

### **OBJECTIVE 1: TO STRENGTHEN THE HEART OF NORTHERN SEVENOAKS**

#### **Improving the arrival experience**

The Masterplan proposals aim to enhance the environment around the station including provision of public spaces to either side, removal of the wall between Bat and Ball Road and Chatham Hill Road, an improved pedestrian connection on Chatham Hill Road and new residential development to enliven the area and overlook routes and spaces. The proposals integrate with the Town Council's proposed new Community Centre and proposal to open up a western entrance to the station.

#### **St John's Village**

The Masterplan proposes improvements to the quality of the public realm in the local centre at lower St John's and Bat and Ball junction. Where possible, footways will be widened to give more space to pedestrians, slow traffic and create a more pleasant environment for people and businesses.

#### **Developing around the station**

The Masterplan anticipates that some of the employment land located in proximity to Bat and Ball Station and the local centre at St John's could be redeveloped over time. Big box employment uses could be replaced by mixed-use development blocks. These could have commercial uses at ground floor and residential uses above. Changing the uses in this area would enliven the streets and spaces and improve the arrival experience at the station.

### **OBJECTIVE 2: TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE AREA'S NATURAL ASSETS**

#### **The Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve**

The Masterplan investigates ways in which access to the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve could be improved whilst respecting its wildlife value. Proposals include the creation of a circular walk around the site and a new entrance and visitor centre on Otford Road.

#### **Greatness Recreation Ground**

The Masterplan includes a number of proposed long-term improvements to the offer at the Recreation Ground including the construction of a new sports pavilion and provision of a new 3G sports pitch.

### **OBJECTIVE 3: SUSTAINABLE EXPANSION OF NORTHERN SEVENOAKS**

The Masterplan includes proposals for the redevelopment of the Tarmac Ltd. site once gravel extraction operations are complete. Planning for such development now will help ensure that it delivers the maximum benefits to the surrounding community.

If developed, new housing could help deliver a number of community assets including a lake for watersports, walking and cycle routes, a visitor centre and the refurbishment of some of the historic buildings on the site (if financially viable).

The Tarmac Ltd. site is currently within the Green Belt. For development on this site to come forward exceptional circumstances will have to be identified by Sevenoaks District Council in order to remove the site from the Green Belt. This is currently under review as part of the Local Plan Review.

The Local Plan Consultation carried out in late 2017 asked residents whether they would support protecting the Green Belt by building new homes on land which has been previously been built on (i.e. brownfield land). 71% stated that they agreed with this concept.

Whilst it is not yet certain whether the site will come forward the potential of this site is clear. It is in a sustainable location, on a brownfield site, with connections to the surrounding townscape and access to local shops and services.

The Neighbourhood Plan will support high quality development on this site as long as the following criteria are delivered:

### 1. Community Infrastructure

The proposals deliver new community infrastructure for Northern Sevenoaks. Early planning will allow the District Council to assess the impact of a rise in population and plan new infrastructure requirements accordingly. This should include all necessary health and education provision.

### 2. Green Infrastructure

One of the key requirements of new development on the Tarmac Ltd. site is the provision of a new lake for sport, recreation and leisure. Development around the lake and the green spaces around it should include:

- A centre for watersports;
- A lake-side trail for running, walking and cycling as part of the wider green network;
- A new pedestrian / cycle link from Greatness Recreation Ground;
- Good levels of connectivity through the new housing provided on-site and to the wider area; and
- Opportunities for play spaces.

### 3. Transport Infrastructure

Development on-site must be contingent on the adequate resolution of the impact on the surrounding transport network. The development must be planned around a clearly defined, safe and well connected network of pedestrian and cycle routes that link the site to the surrounding area.

### 4. Re-use of historic buildings

The Tarmac Ltd. site contains a number of interesting historic buildings, including a former oast house. Where possible these should be re-used and integrated into the development.

### 5. Size and mix of dwellings

New development will only be supported if the requirements for affordable housing are met and delivered on-site. These should be designed to meet local needs.

New development will only be supported if the size and mix of houses reflects local needs. This must include smaller units.

## Objective Fifteen: To deliver a range of new homes to meet local needs

**Policy D3:** All residential development proposals must provide a range of homes to meet local needs. Affordable housing provision will be required as part of all eligible developments

**Policy D4:** The development of on-site key worker housing will be supported as part of larger infrastructure developments where applicants can demonstrate need, and subject to a condition preventing sale or rent on the open market



The shortage of affordable homes, which is more acute within Sevenoaks than in the wider district, contributes to a shortage of ‘key workers’ living locally. This means inward commuting and additional traffic as a consequence.

A range of housing is needed to satisfy the key drivers identified in the Sevenoaks District 2017 Housing Needs Study. These include a need to increase the range of housing and support for older people and to offer a diverse range of affordable housing models.

The range of homes to include:

- Starter homes;
- Key worker housing;
- Smaller units (less than three beds);
- Houses of various of sizes that provide flexible accommodation to suit changing needs — for instance, allowing the development of annexes to facilitate multi-generational living and home working;
- Care homes, sheltered housing and special needs housing;
- Co-housing and self build;
- Build to rent; and
- Lifetime homes.



Policy or aim that contributes towards the Neighbourhood Plan zero carbon commitment



A range of homes should be provided in Sevenoaks to meet local needs



# APPENDIX A: TOWN PORTRAIT



## A1 INTRODUCTION

Sevenoaks is located to the south-east of London in the county of Kent. The town is the principal settlement within Sevenoaks district and has a population of 20,409 (2011 census).

Sevenoaks is set within rolling countryside with attractive views northwards to the Kent Downs. It is located on one of the principal commuter railway lines to London and benefits from proximity to the M25 and M26 motorways. These connections, and the town's historic character and picturesque setting within the Kent countryside, make it a popular place to live. The town is home to a skilled resident workforce with many people commuting into the town for work as well as commuting out to central London and other Kent towns.

The town is covered by Sevenoaks Town Council and it is their boundary that has determined the Neighbourhood Plan area. The Neighbourhood Plan covers an extensive area that encompasses both the built-up portion of the town and also a significant area of the open countryside within which it is set, including Knole Park. The Neighbourhood Plan area extends to approximately 1,600 hectares.

This section of the Plan provides a portrait of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

## A2 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN

### EARLY DEVELOPMENT

There is no mention of Sevenoaks in the Domesday Book. Early records of Sevenoaks date back to the 13th Century when a market was first held here.

Flemish weavers settled in the area in the 14th Century and their industry was to flourish in the district for 300 years. These immigrants were followed in Tudor times by others bringing new industries such as papermaking, market gardening, hop growing and the extraction of coal. Iron smelting followed in the 17th Century providing the area with a rich assortment of productive occupations. **(Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area Appraisal)**

The settlement grew from the 15th Century after the construction of Knole House, between 1456 and 1486. The house, which still stands today, has been extended many times through history and is now one of England's largest homes and an important local landmark.

As well as Knole House, other early developments in the town included Sevenoaks School. The school was founded in 1432 and is one of the oldest lay foundations in England.

The Vine Cricket Ground was one of the town's early landmarks. It was established in 1734 making it one of the oldest grounds in England.

The structure of the town, with the market located within The Shambles area between the High Street and London Road, was well established by the 17th Century and provided accommodation for both local tradesmen above their shops and labourers working on the Knole Estate.

The town's name derives from the old English word *Seouenaca* — a small chapel near seven oak trees in Knole Park. The trees that gave the town its name have been replaced several times. Black's 1874 'Guide to Kent' states that the original oaks: *'which conspicuously occupied the summit of the hill ... are now represented by seven younger trees nearly opposite the White Hart Inn on the Tunbridge Road'*.

In 1902, seven oaks were planted on the north side of The Vine Cricket Ground to commemorate the coronation of King Edward VII. Six of these fell in the Great Storm of 1987. These have subsequently been replaced.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: **Knole House;**  
**Sevenoaks School crest;**  
**The Vine Cricket Club**

Most early development in Sevenoaks focused around the town centre along the main roads (London Road and High Street). This original core area has been well preserved and is a highly recognisable and distinctive part of the town.

Land to the north of Sevenoaks was largely agricultural with a number of estates including Wildernesse, Bradbourne, Greatness and Montreal.

In the 18th Century the area included a number of mills. These included a mill owned by Peter Nouaille — a french Huguenot. He converted the mill for water-powered silk weaving and employed over 100 people including French refugees and many children. Business was prosperous and Nouaille built himself a substantial house, Greatness House, with formal gardens and a lake between it and the mill. As industrial processes advanced, the silk mill industry declined and the Greatness Silk Mill closed in 1827.

Two turnpikes were opened through the area in the 18th Century: the east-west Reigate to Wrotham (1765) and the north-south Farningham to Sevenoaks (1766). These met at Bat and Ball junction and a toll gate and inn were established at that location. It is said that in 1780 a journey to London took less than four hours by coach.

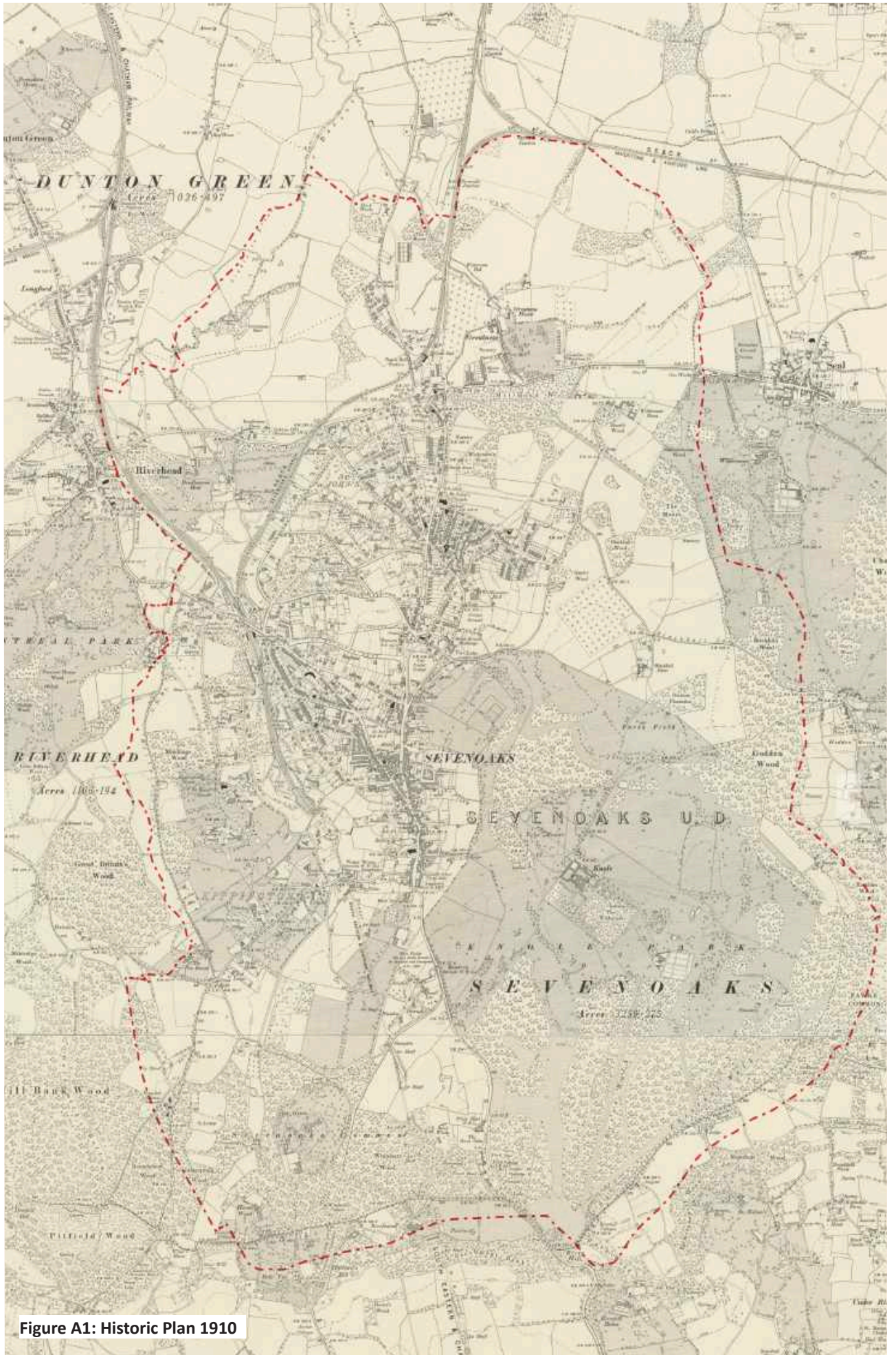
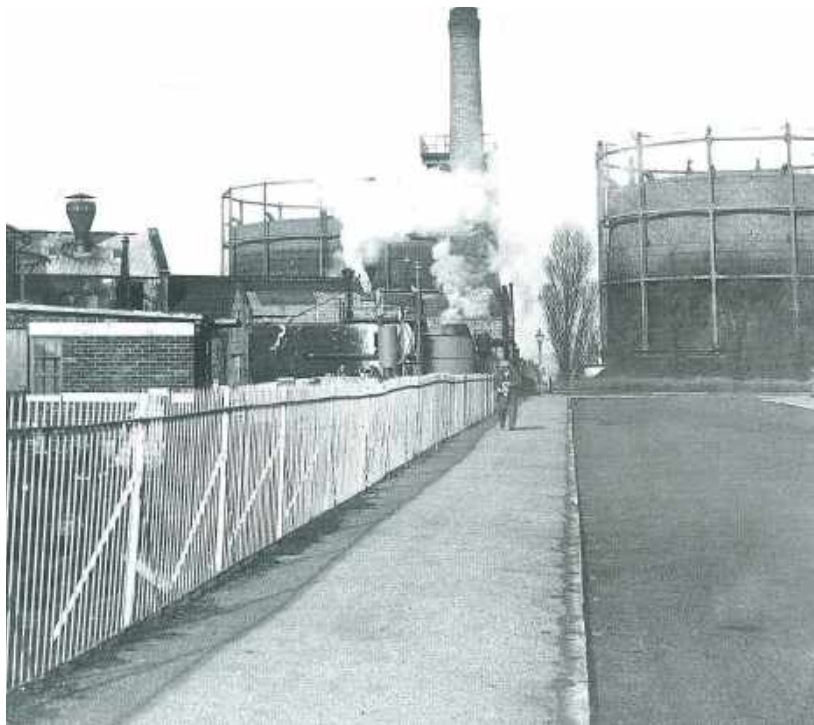


Figure A1: Historic Plan 1910



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
**Sevenoaks Gas Works on Cramptons Road; Bat and Ball station circa 1920; aerial view of the Gas Works 1939.**



## 19TH CENTURY INDUSTRIALISATION

The railway arrived in Sevenoaks in the mid 19th Century. The first station, Bat and Ball, opened in 1862, followed by Sevenoaks station in 1868. Both stations were located to the north of the town centre. This spurred a northward expansion of the town with streets of new houses providing a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached houses being developed.

Soon after the arrival of the railway, Sevenoaks Gas Works was established on Cramptons Road (also in 1862). Gas production ceased in 1960, but the holders remained a recognisable feature in northern Sevenoaks until they were dismantled in 2018.

Brick making had been a feature of the area for several centuries, with Tudor bricks from the area used to build Otford Palace which were dug and fired next to Otford Road. The 1910 plan of the area indicates brickworks to either side of Otford Road on the site of the current Vestry Industrial Estate to the north of the town.



## 20TH CENTURY EXPANSION

Expansion of the town continued throughout the 20th Century. This growth focused primarily in the north and west of the town centre and included the Wildernesse Estate, a residential development of large, detached houses set within woodland, to the north-east of the town centre.

In the inter-war years, the demand for bricks and sand to construct new homes led to further works being established in northern Sevenoaks, including the Greatness Brickworks and sand and gravel extraction to the west of Bat and Ball.

The designation of the Green Belt and the presence of other important landscapes, including Knole Park, has limited the potential for further expansion of the town through the post-war years.

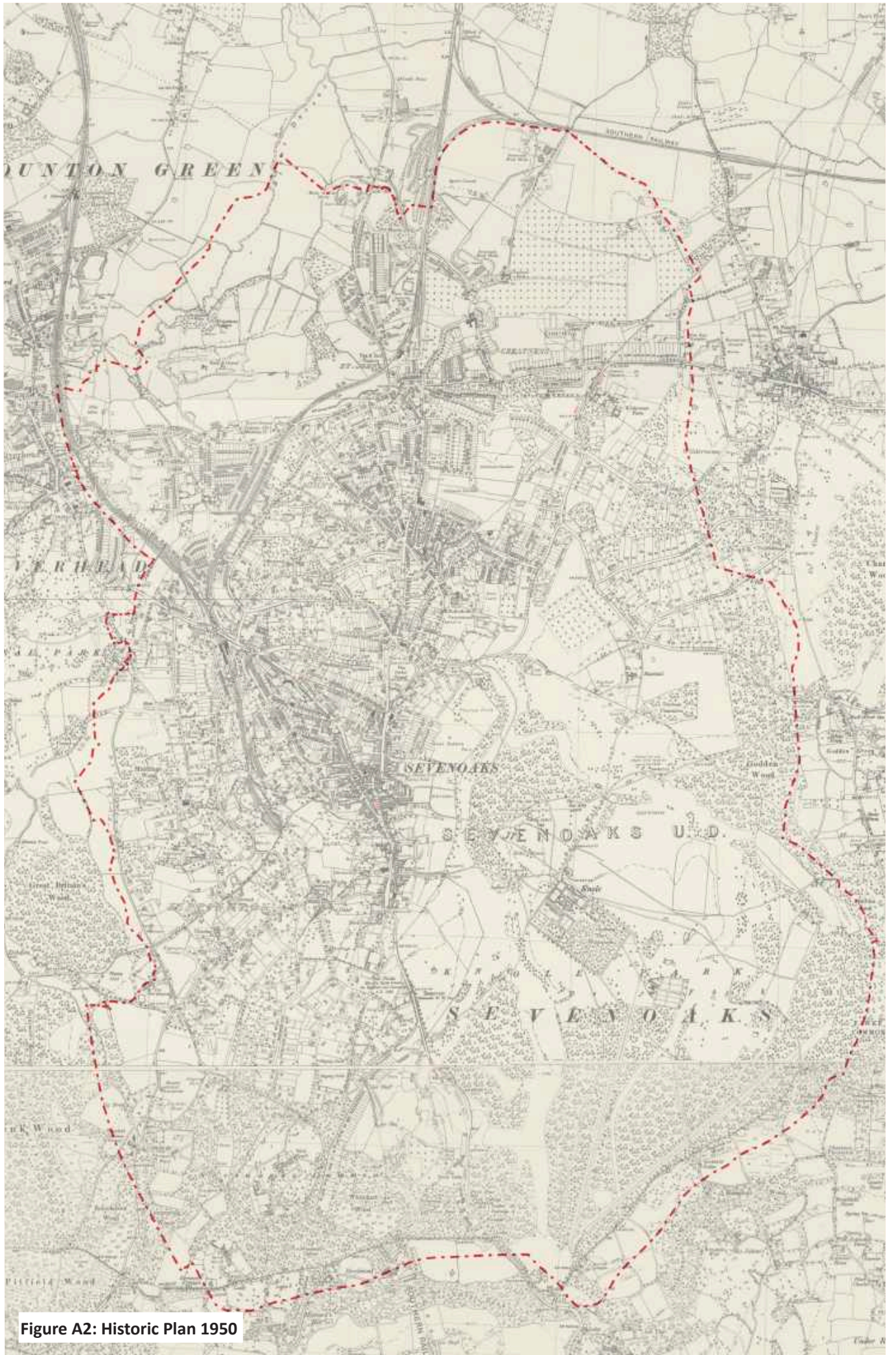


Figure A2: Historic Plan 1950

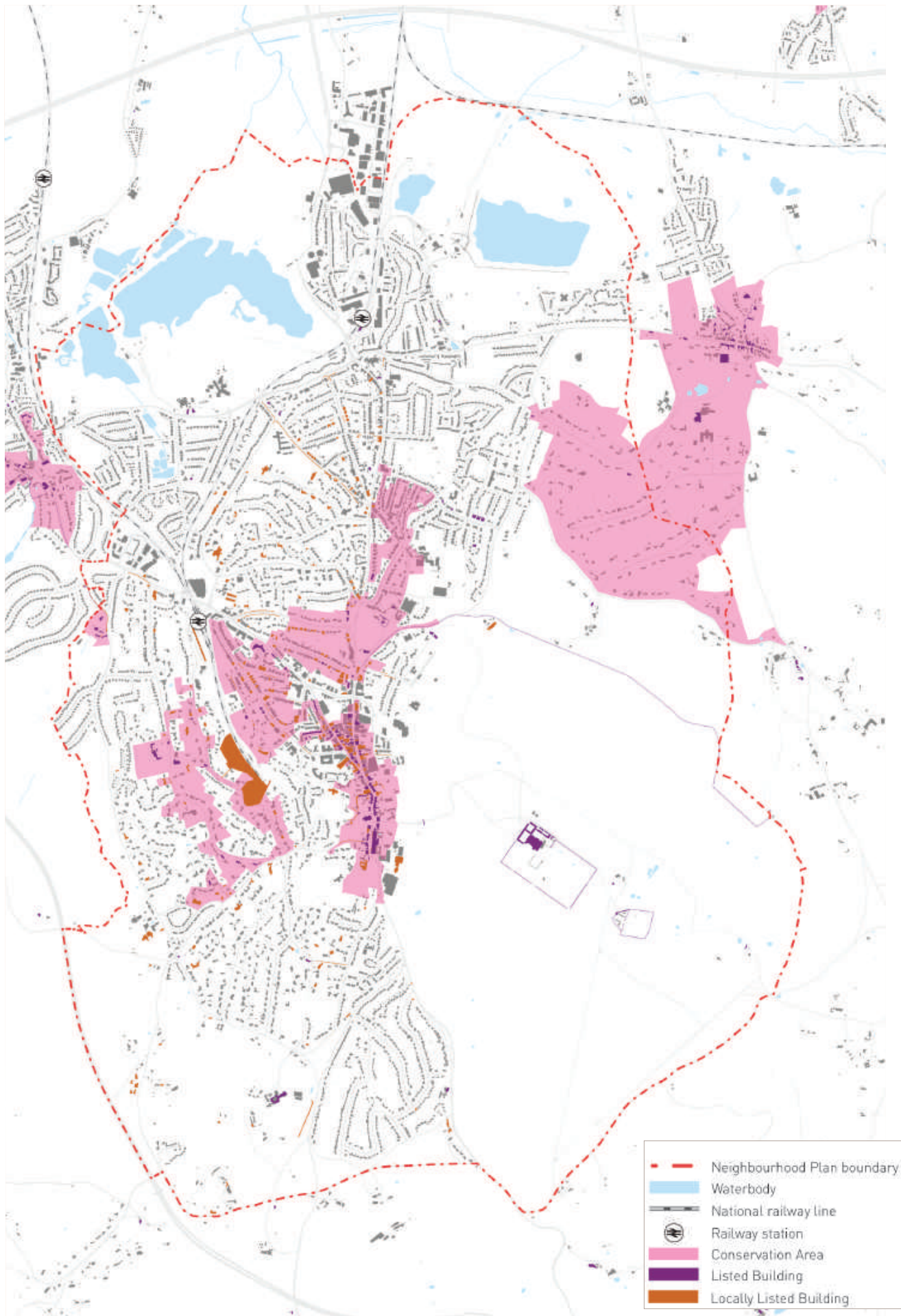


Figure A3: Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

## A3 HERITAGE

Much of Sevenoaks' historic character has been preserved to this day and this forms an important part of the town's identity. This is recognised by the District Council with the designation of eight Conservation Areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area. These are:

- High Street;
- The Vine;
- Vine Court;
- Hartslands;
- Granville and Eardley Roads;
- Kippington and Oakhill Roads;
- Wildernesse; and
- Brittain's Farm.

There are also numerous listed and locally listed buildings within the Neighbourhood Plan area, many of which are located within the Conservation Areas.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:  
The Vine; Old Market House; The  
Old House, Upper High Street;  
historic buildings on Upper High  
Street

## A4 CHARACTER

The District Council's emerging Local Plan Policy EN1 states that states that: *'Proposals must exhibit high quality design and respond to the distinctive local character of the area.'*

**(Sevenoaks Local Plan, Submission Version Policy EN1)**

The character of Conservation Areas and their sensitivities to change are set out in Conservation Area Appraisals prepared and adopted by the District Council. In addition, the District Council prepared and adopted a Residential Character Area Assessment in 2012. This identifies the locally distinctive character and provides design guidance for residential areas within Sevenoaks in order to assist the Council in making decisions about the appropriateness of development proposals. The Character Area Assessment identifies 15 residential character types and design guidance for each is provided.

Significantly, neither the Residential Character Area Assessment nor Conservation Area appraisals document the character of some parts of Sevenoaks town centre and other predominantly non-residential areas within the town. For these areas there is, therefore, no site-specific design guidance to inform new development.

The Neighbourhood Plan aims to ensure that all parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area are protected from insensitive development that would impact on the town's character.

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to provide further detail on the character of the town centre. It sub-divides the centre into a series of character areas and provides high-level guidance on the uses and the form of development that would be appropriate in each of these areas. (Refer to Section A7 of the Town Portrait.)

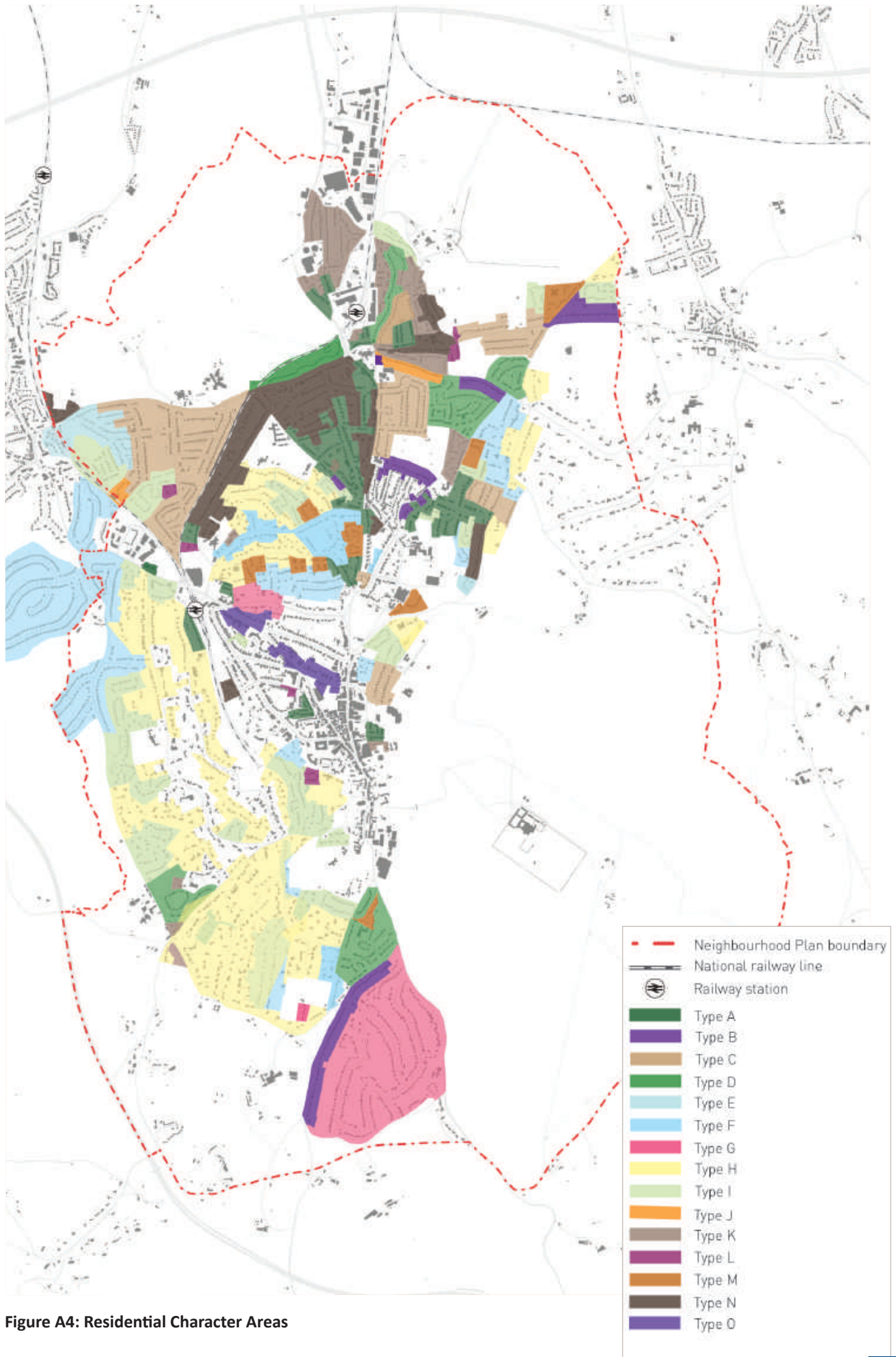


Figure A4: Residential Character Areas

# A5 LANDSCAPE AND TOPOGRAPHY

## OVERVIEW

Sevenoaks is surrounded by the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the town's relationship with the countryside is an important part of its character. The undulating nature of the topography, with the town centre located on elevated land, means that views to the surrounding Downs are experienced from numerous locations, enhancing the sense of connection with the landscape.

Knole Park abuts the town centre to the south-east and this 400 hectare deer park is a huge asset for the town.

To the north of the town the landscape has been exploited to extract gravel and this provides a legacy of waterbodies and waterside habitats at the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve.

Both Knole Park and the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Tarmac Ltd. is currently extracting gravel at a further site at Greatness and when this extraction is completed in 2030 / 2032 this site will offer a significant future opportunity for the town.

Land around the town is designated as Green Belt and this has both protected the countryside setting from development and restricted opportunity for growth.

## OPEN SPACES AND OTHER LANDSCAPE ASSETS

In addition to the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve and Knole Park there are several open spaces and parks including The Vine, Greatness Recreation Ground, Bradbourne Lakes and Hollybush Recreation Ground.

There are also approximately 240 allotment plots towards the north of the town accessed from Allotment Lane off Quaker's hall Lane. There is also a smaller allotment site off Bradbourne Vale Road of around 32 plots.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:  
**Bradbourne Lakes; Sevenoaks  
Wildlife Reserve; Greatness  
Recreation Ground**



Figure A5: Protected landscape



Figure A6: Green Belt designation

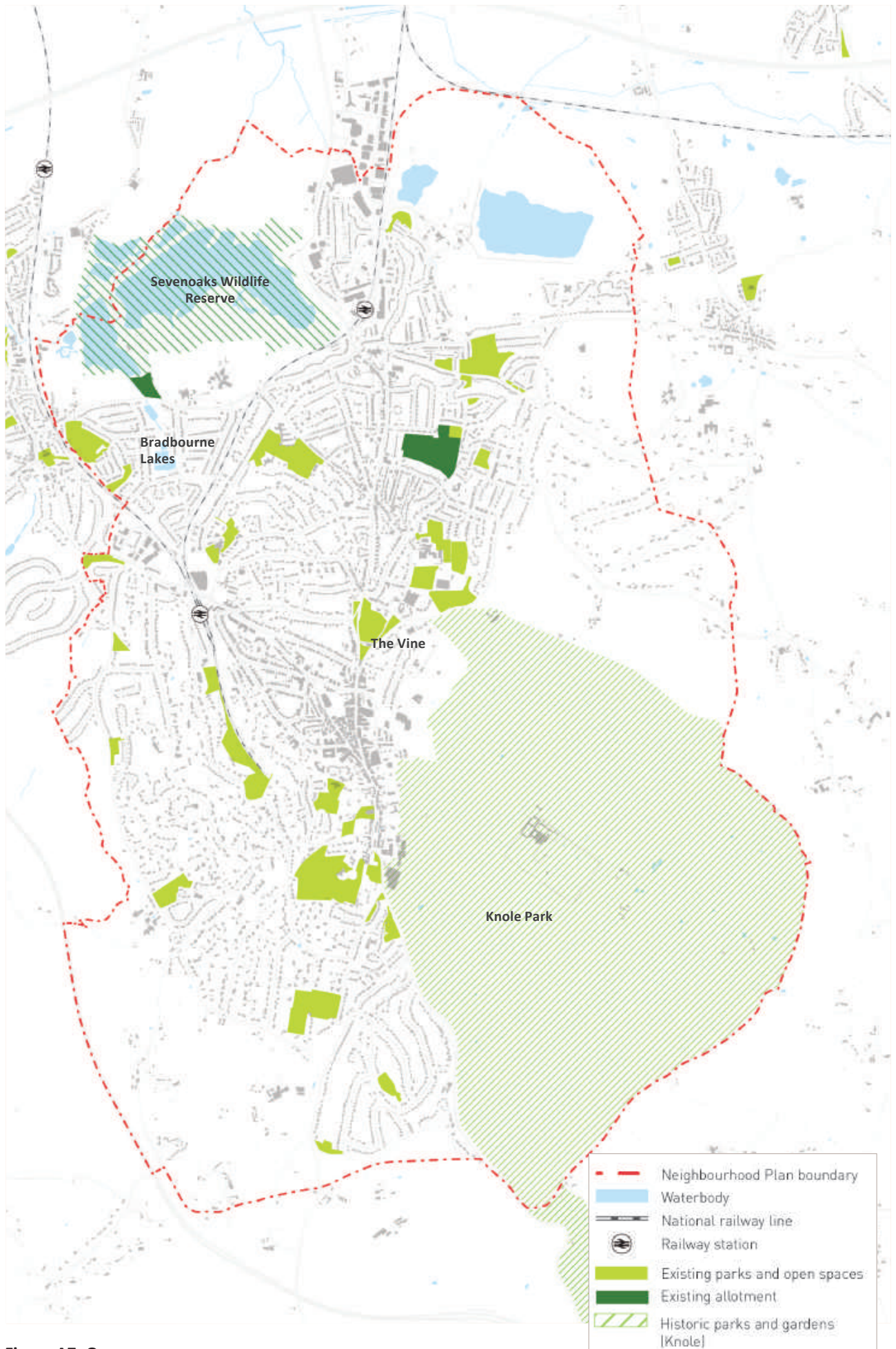


Figure A7: Open spaces

## TREES

A particular feature of Sevenoaks are trees. Sevenoaks is famed for its oaks but there are many other species and individual trees that are important to the character of the town. The Sevenoaks Society has been locating, recording and celebrating some of the most important trees under a project known as 'The Remarkable Trees of Sevenoaks'. Trees are identified as remarkable by virtue of their age, size, location, vulnerability and cultural or historical significance, ecological value or sheer beauty.

The involvement of the wider community, with suggestions of trees made by members of the public and schools, is an important part of the project.

The 'The Remarkable Trees of Sevenoaks' project categorises trees as:

- **Champion Trees** – trees that are remarkable nationally or locally because of their height or girth. Champion trees are validated and recorded by The Tree Register. There are 28 champions in Sevenoaks.
- **Heritage Trees** – trees that contribute to, or are connected with, the history and culture of Sevenoaks and are irreplaceable. They include commemorative trees and those associated with significant events or famous people. Trees may also be given heritage status for their rarity, architectural or landscape setting, aesthetic appearance or botanical interest. Some of Sevenoaks' heritage trees are of national importance.

- **Ancient Trees** – trees that are not just very old but that have passed beyond maturity and are old in comparison with other trees of the same species.

Some trees, therefore, will be very old for their type, but youngsters in comparison with other trees. A 100-year old willow or birch is ancient for its species, but a beech of that age is barely out of its nursery and, if coppiced, could expect to live for another 900 years or so.

- **Unusual Trees** – trees that are just fun to look at, such as the "dancing" hornbeam and stag's head hawthorn in Knole Park, and which therefore, contribute to the town's identity and character.

The project also recognises and remembers trees that have been lost either at the hands of man through neglect or development, or through natural events such as pests, disease or storms.

Many, but not all of The Remarkable Trees, are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Beyond the built-up parts of Sevenoaks there are numerous areas of Ancient Woodland, (i.e. woodland that has existed continuously since 1600 or before) notably within Knole Park.

Paragraph 175 (part c) of the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF (February 2019) states that: *'development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists'*.



Trees at The Vine

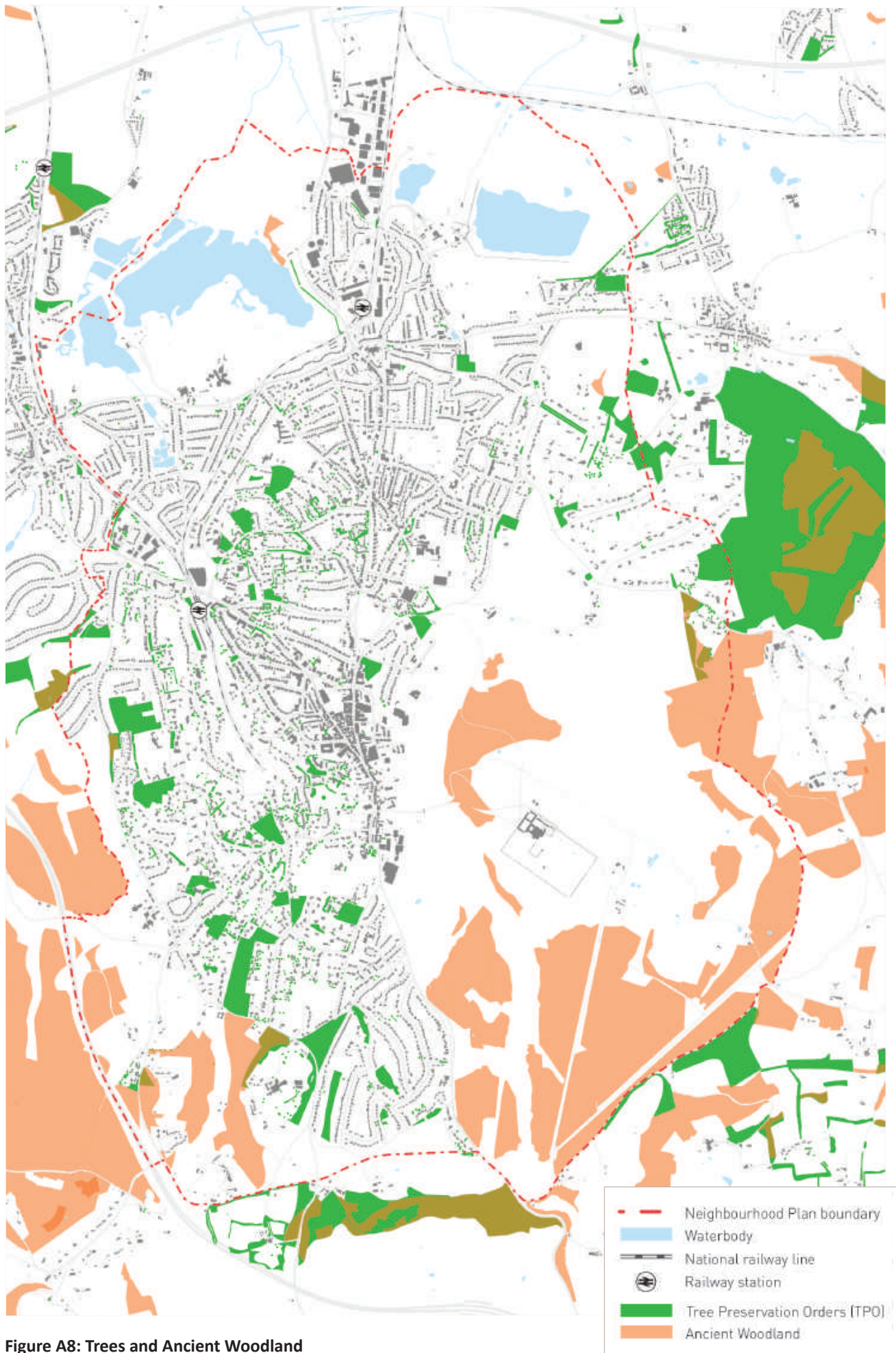


Figure A8: Trees and Ancient Woodland

# A6 TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

Sevenoaks is well connected to the strategic road network and benefits from frequent rail services to London, Kent and Sussex.

## ROAD NETWORK

The town is connected to the M25 and M26 by the A21 (the Sevenoaks Bypass) that runs in a north to south direction to the west of the town, and the A25 which runs in an east to west direction in the northern part of the town. The A225 is the main route running through Sevenoaks in a north to south direction and passes through the town centre as the High Street.

The town experiences traffic congestion in the peak hours with heavy congestion on all three of the main approach routes into the town centre, including London Road, Dartford Road to the north and Tonbridge Road to the south. This congestion is formed by commuters coming to work in the town and parents dropping off children to the various schools in the town. Congestion is further exacerbated by residents and longer-range commuters driving into Sevenoaks from the surrounding areas to use the regular and relatively rapid train services into London.

Traffic passing through the town centre uses the historic streets and this undermines the environmental quality, particularly on London Road and High Street.

The Sevenoaks District Strategy for Transport (SDST) sets out ambitions to reduce the traffic pressures on routes in the district.

The SDST states that the district will achieve this by providing and investing in alternative modes of transport to encourage and attract people out of their cars for journeys made at peak times of the day. In parallel, the SDST also sets out to create more capacity within the existing road network through better management of the existing road space using new technology.

There is also potential to re-route lorries so that they are encouraged to use the strategic road network rather than passing through the town. This could be achieved through changes in existing signage.

Future improvements that will benefit users of the private car will only be progressed if they are considered the most effective means of achieving the strategy's objectives, in particular reducing the harmful environmental effects of traffic on air quality.



FROM TOP:  
Poor streetscape outside Sevenoaks station; London Road; narrow footways on Upper High Street

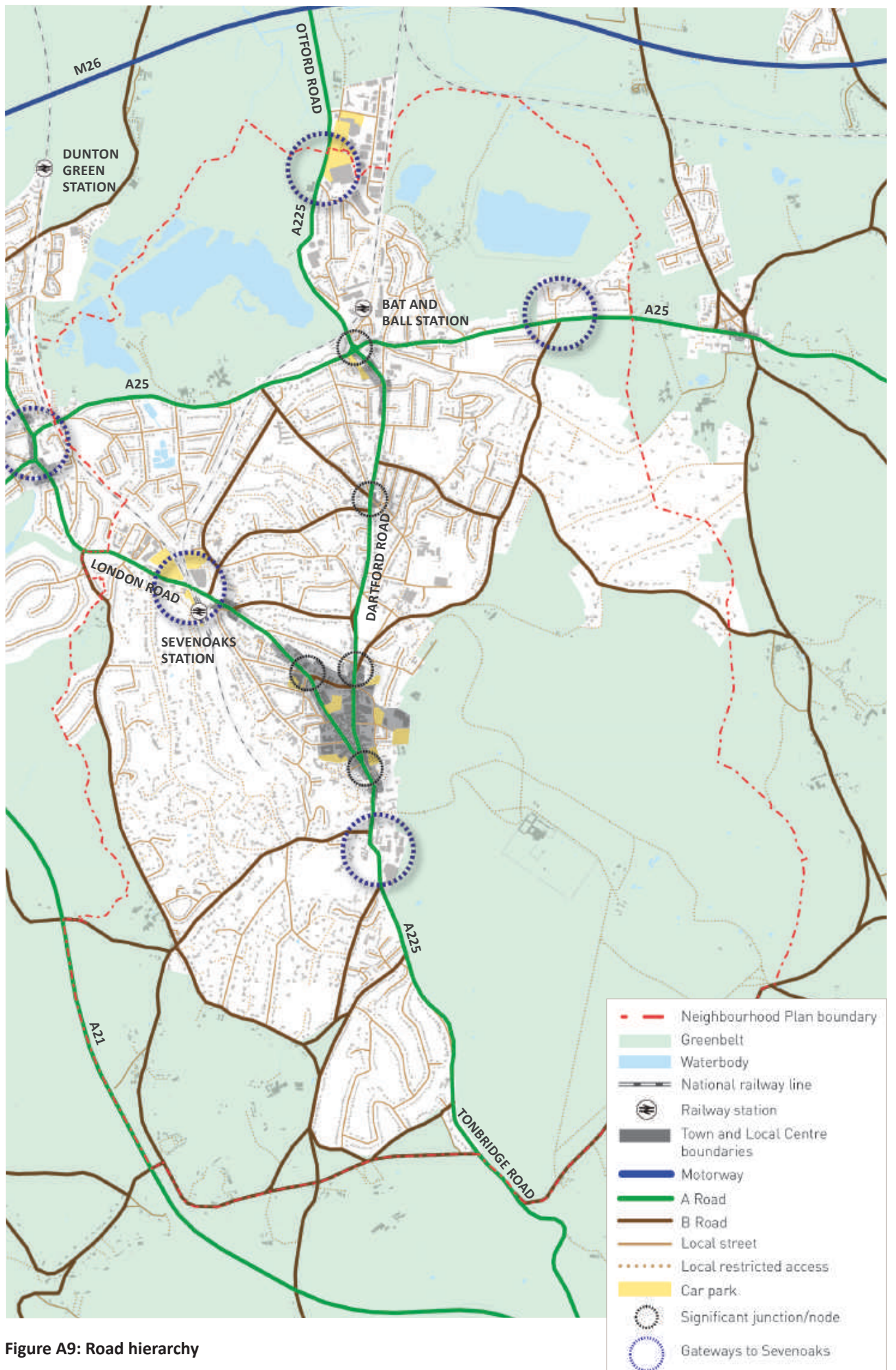


Figure A9: Road hierarchy

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

### Rail

The town is served by two railway lines. The principal station is on the Southeastern line and provides northbound services to London Charing Cross, Cannon Street, London Bridge and Waterloo East; and southbound to Ashford International, Ramsgate via Dover Priory or Tunbridge Wells and Hastings.

Bat and Ball station is located on a branch line and provides services to London Blackfriars, St Pancras and London Victoria via Otford and Swanley. Whilst the Sevenoaks mainline station building is in fairly good condition the quality of the environment and arrival experience at the station is poor. The station building at Bat and Ball has recently been sympathetically refurbished.

There is little scope to expand capacity of the direct services between Sevenoaks station and Charing Cross / London Bridge. The regular and fast service on this line is attractive to commuters and residents, but in the peak it is often operating at or above capacity. There is scope for additional capacity via Otford, with a planned service along the Darent Valley line fast to Swanley and London Bridge. This would make Bat and Ball station accessible to London Bridge within 44 minutes. Delivery of this service is important to support additional homes on the north side of Sevenoaks. Both stations are also important for access to a good range of schools.

### Bus

The Local Plan Authority Monitoring Report 2016/7 states that Sevenoaks is served by 26 buses (including school buses) with varying frequency. These are focused on the main vehicular routes, the A25 and A225, and provide services to Sevenoaks town centre, Seal and Riverhead and more regional links to locations such as Bromley, Tunbridge Wells and Gravesend. Most services are low frequency.

In 2015, a new figure of eight bus route (No. 8) was introduced providing an hourly service from Monday to Saturday. This is funded through developer contributions (£106) but it is hoped that it will be used sufficiently to make it financially viable for future years. A vintage bus route (No. 7) also runs in the summer months.

Bus services in the town are limited by poor co-ordination, a lack of service information and an unattractive environment around the bus station.

Sevenoaks bus station is located within the town centre at Buckhurst Lane and many bus routes either stop or terminate at this location. Buckhurst Lane is a side street off High Street and also an important pedestrian connection between High Street and Sevenoaks Library and the leisure centre. The quality of environment at the bus station is unattractive, cluttered by street furniture and signage and at peak times overcrowded, making passage towards the leisure facilities uninviting.



FROM TOP:  
Sevenoaks station on London Road; bus station on Buckhurst Lane

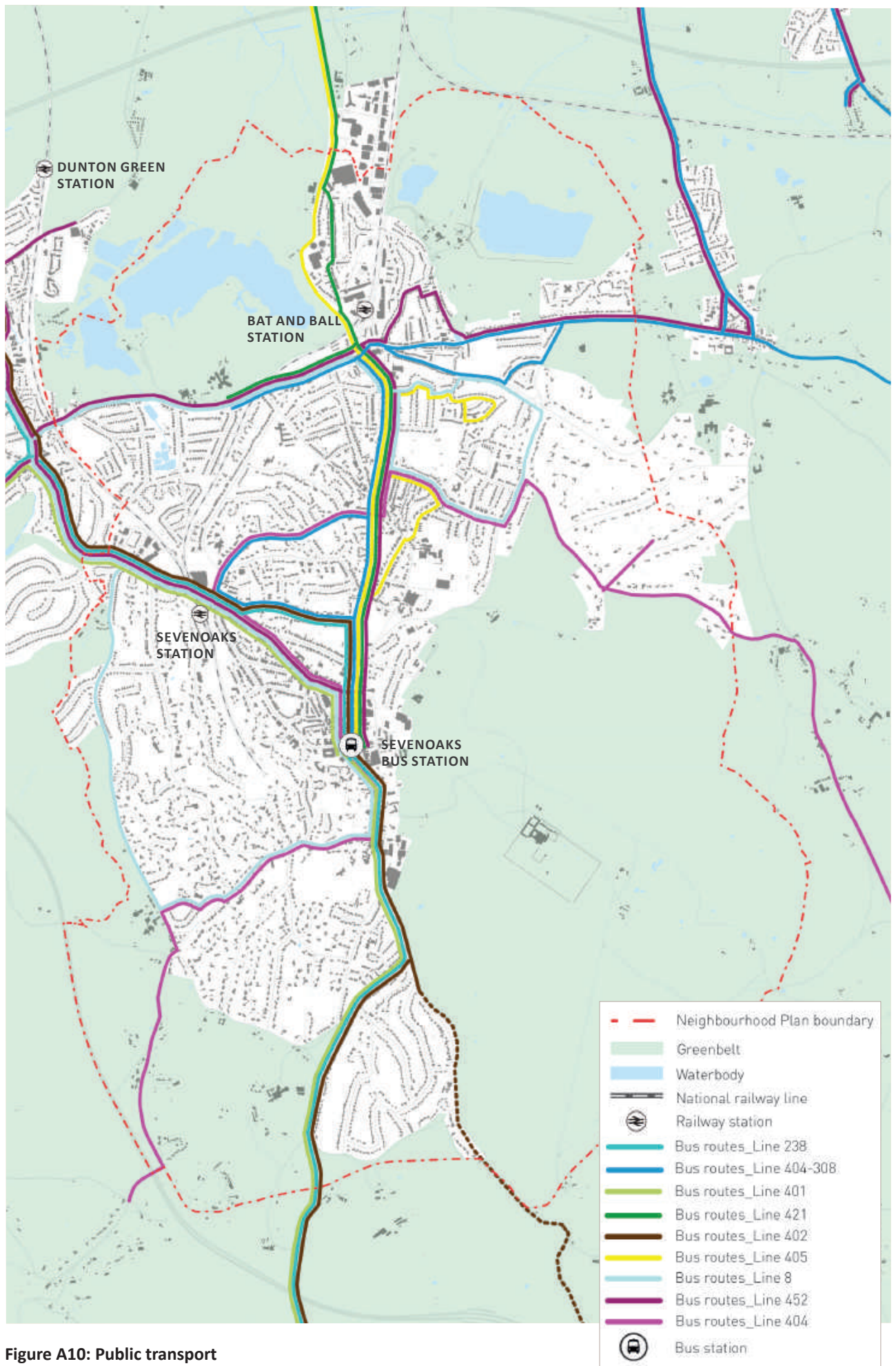


Figure A10: Public transport

## PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

There is a wide network of walking routes and public rights of way that link Sevenoaks to the countryside that surrounds it. Routes include the long distance Darent Valley Path that extends from Sevenoaks northwards to Dartford, and the Greensand Way that extends from Haslemere in the west to Hamstreet on the edge of Romney Marsh to the east, and which passes through Knole Park.

Further rights of way criss-cross through Knole Park to the south-east of the town and Mill Bank Wood to the west. There are fewer rights of way to the north of the town and some of these, notably the public footpath crossing the quarry at Greatness, are less attractive as they pass through the gravel works.

However, walking in the town can be challenging as a result of topography and areas with narrow or absent pavements. Areas where there are accessibility problems should be identified and addressed — especially where poor quality routes connect to schools or other important destinations.

The historic centre provides a permeable network of pedestrian routes and includes numerous alleyways. However, the condition of these, and the lack of over looking to provide passive surveillance, makes many of them unattractive to use.

Transport infrastructure impacts on the quality of the pedestrian experience in the town. Some road junctions are intimidating for pedestrians to use and provide sub-standard crossing facilities, and there are limited opportunities to cross the rail lines that extend north to south through the town, resulting in extended walking journeys.

Particular challenges for pedestrians occur at:

- The junction of Pembroke Road and London Road;
- Outside Sevenoaks station;
- To the north of Sevenoaks station where access under the elevated rail line has been blocked.
- Bat and Ball junction to the north of the town; and
- North of Bat and Ball station where there is only a simple pedestrian bridge over the rail line at the western end of Watercress Drive.

Of particular importance is the provision of safe and convenient routes to walk to school and many children currently have to use these junctions along their way. It will be important to address this issue if progress is to be made in increasing the number of children that walk to school.

The town centre walking experience is also impacted by the quality of the streetscape, the footway surfacing, the street furniture and signage – collectively the public realm. Footways are often narrow and cluttered, town centre roads are hard to cross and the surfacing is, in places, tired and dated.



FROM TOP:  
**Poor street environment at Sevenoaks station; access under the rail line blocked for pedestrians to the north of the station**

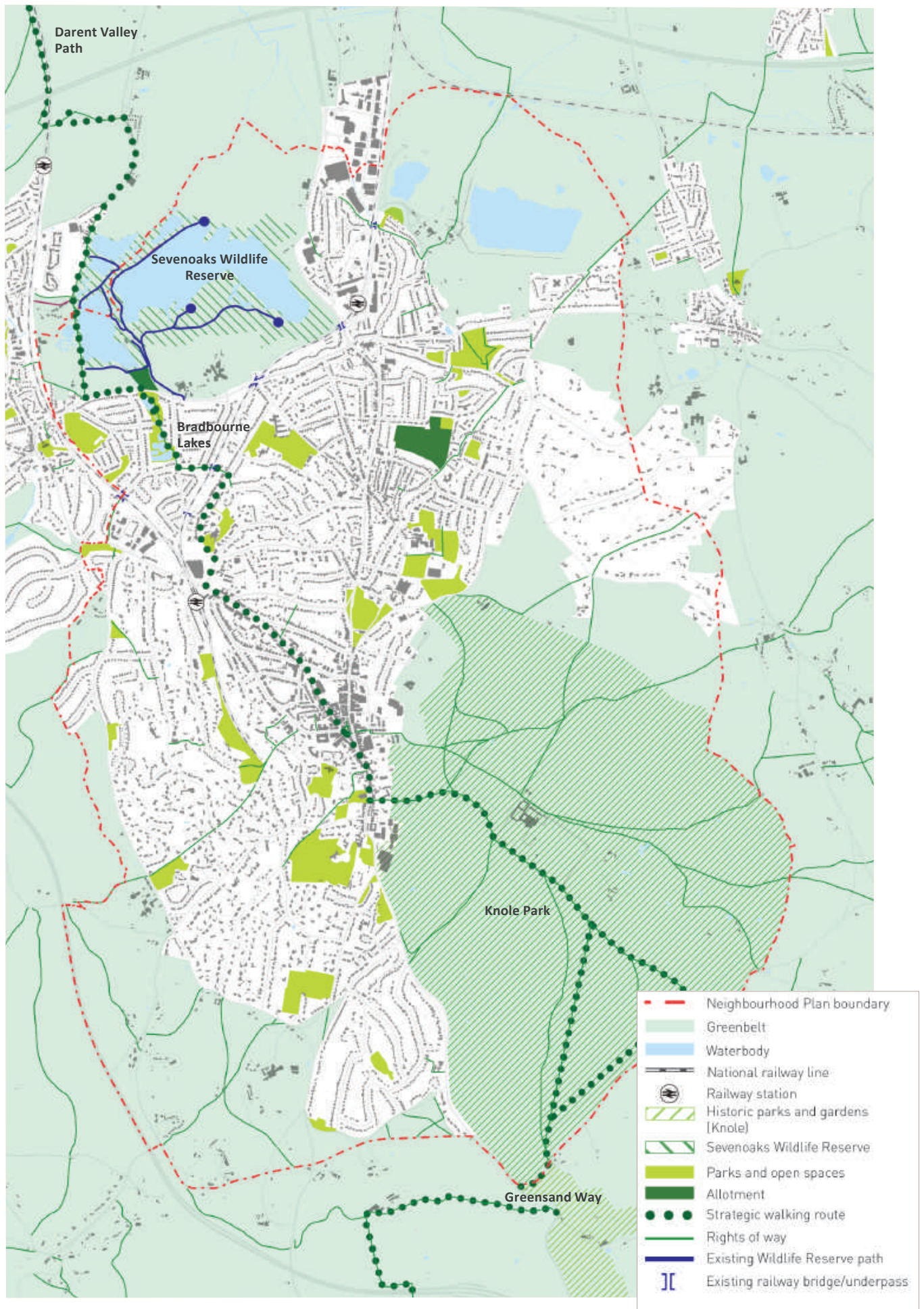


Figure A11: Walking routes

## **CYCLE PROVISION**

There is very little provision for cyclists within Sevenoaks either in terms of dedicated routes or cycle parking. Topography is a deterrent for cycling but with the nationwide resurgence in the popularity of cycling in recent years it can still be a valuable and attractive mode of transport in the town.

Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council, supported by Sevenoaks Town Council, prepared the Sevenoaks District Cycling Strategy in 2012, which advocates new cycle routes, safer cycling, cycle parking and promotion.

This includes both urban routes within the town and leisure routes extending into the wider countryside including along part of the Darent Valley Path. Further opportunity for leisure routes was identified in the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan, including a cycle route connecting Bat and Ball and Dunton Green across the Darent Valley, and is promoted within the Neighbourhood Plan.

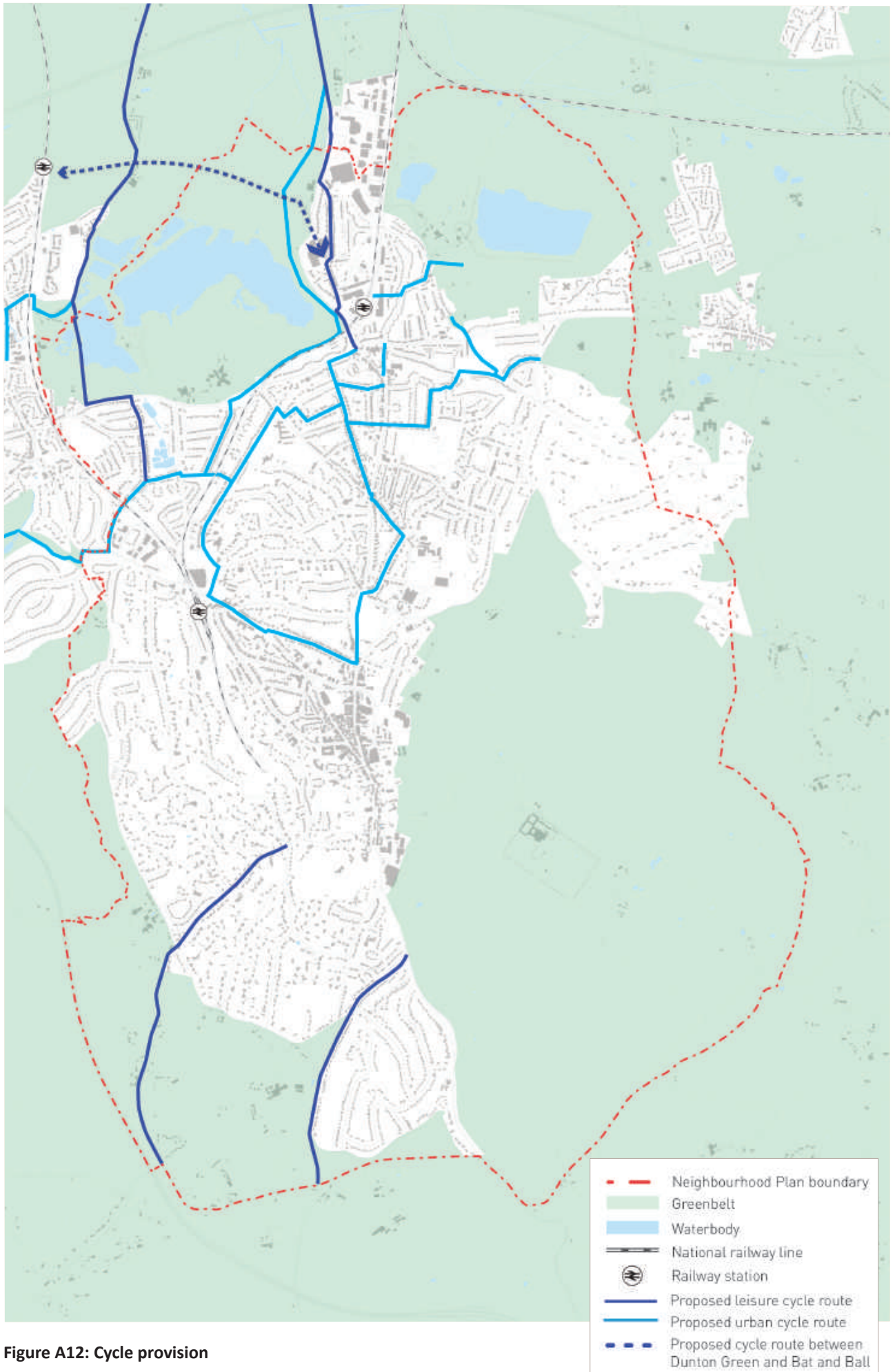


Figure A12: Cycle provision

## A7 THE TOWN CENTRE

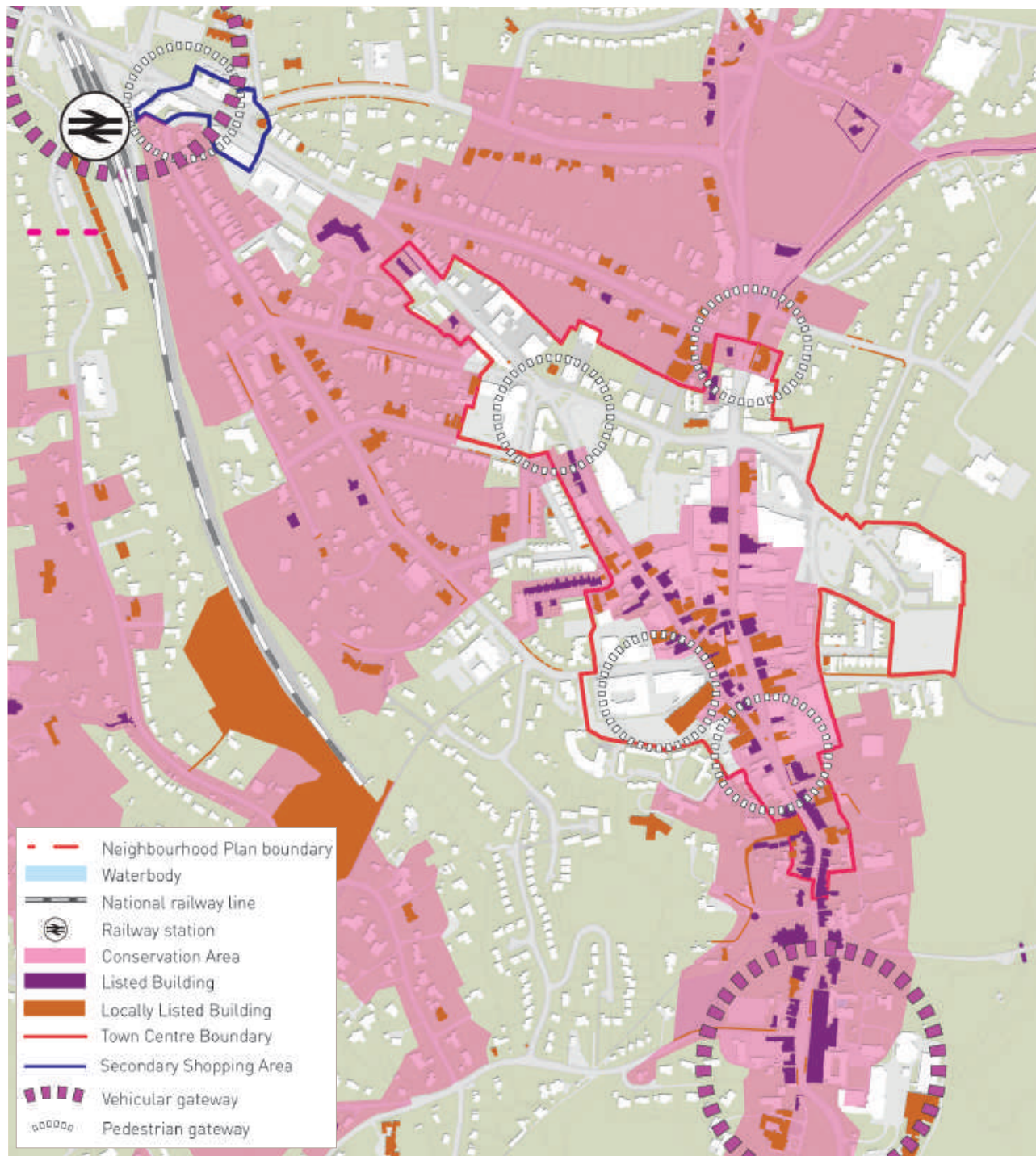


Figure A13: Town centre boundary and heritage designations

The town centre is the focal point for most of Sevenoaks' shops, leisure and commercial uses but it is not uniform in character. Much of the built fabric is historic but different parts of the centre are influenced by the activities and uses that take place within them. This is reflected in the scale and massing of buildings, the way buildings animate the streets, the streets and spaces themselves and the layout of development. Some parts of the centre are more attractive than others and in some areas there is opportunity for change and enhancement.

A significant part of the town centre is within the High Street Conservation Areas and a small portion is in The Vine and in the Granville and Eardley Road Conservation Areas. A more detailed description of these areas is provided within Conservation Area Appraisals prepared by the District Council.



**Figure A14: Town centre analysis diagram**

An analysis of the town centre is provided in Figure A14 above.

The town centre has been sub-divided into eight character areas and these are described on the pages that follow.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
**Approach to town centre on London Road; poor streetscape outside Sevenoaks station; new development at the station; narrow footways on London Road**

## CHARACTER AREA ONE: LONDON ROAD / STATION APPROACH

The London Road / Station Approach character area is a predominantly linear area that follows the London Road corridor between the town centre and Sevenoaks station. It is a mixed-use area that includes large office buildings (including those for the District Council, West Kent Housing Association and Sevenoaks Police), together with car showrooms, local shops and residential uses (both flats and houses). The area is changing and is home to much of the town's newer development, which is of a much greater scale and massing, and is focused around the station.

London Road is a busy road and the quality of the streetscape and pedestrian environment is poor, with an inconsistent approach to both the building styles and form and to the surfacing, street furniture and materials. The cluttered and intimidating environment outside the station and at the London Road / Pembroke Road junction are particularly unattractive and, unlike most parts of the town, this character area lacks trees.

There is opportunity for change in this character area to create a more attractive point of arrival into both the town, outside the station, and to the town centre, on the approach up hill on London Road.

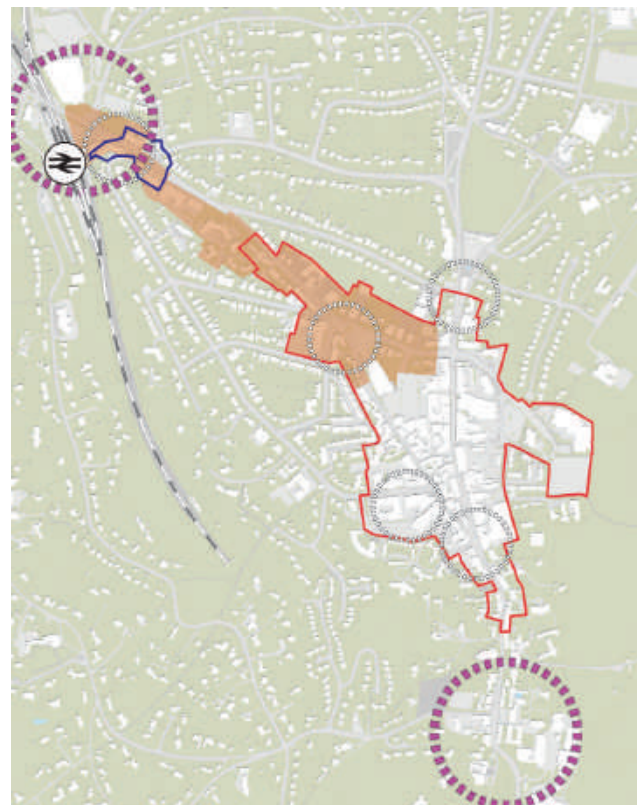


Figure A15: London Road / Station Approach character area



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
**Offices on South Park; BT Exchange on South Park; poor quality streetscape; Post Office on London Road / South Park junction**



**Figure A16: South Park character area**

## CHARACTER AREA TWO: **SOUTH PARK**

The South Park character area is located on the south-western edge of the town centre and is focused around the meeting point of South Park and London Road. It is a small, but distinctive, area characterised by post-war commercial buildings. The scale and massing of these structures is notably different from the traditional fine grain townscape that characterises most of the town centre. Buildings are taller (three to four storeys), with much larger floor plates, and provide a poor interface with the street. The streetscape here lacks animation and is in a poor state of repair.

The area is important as it is at the highest point in the town and is visible from the North Downs. It is also located at the western entry point to the town centre.

Part of the area, including the Post Office and BT Exchange building, are designated as a mixed-use development site in the District Council Local Plan. Redevelopment could transform this area and enhance the approach into the town centre, provided that it responds sensitively to the setting.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
**High Street / London Road junction at southern end of town centre;**  
**High Street;**  
**narrow footways on High Street;**  
**attractive historic buildings**

### CHARACTER AREA THREE: LONDON ROAD AND HIGH STREET

The London Road and High Street character area is located within the Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area. Development follows a traditional high street pattern with a fine grain of continuous frontages and active uses at ground floor. Buildings are two or three storeys and their design is varied, reflecting the local vernacular and the period in which they are built – most are historic and many are listed.

The London Road and High Street character area is the focal point for the town’s retail and leisure uses and is also home to The Stag Theatre and to the charter market. Buildings on High Street are typically larger and are home to national and some independent retailers; London Road has a higher concentration of independent shops and businesses. For further detail on the built character, refer to the Conservation Area Appraisal.

Both High Street and London Road form important connections through the town and carry a significant volume of traffic. Pavements are narrow and, in places, cluttered with signage and trader’s merchandise. Crossing the road can be a challenge for pedestrians. This undermines the quality of the visitor experience.



Figure A17: London Road and High Street character area



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
New shops at Bligh's Meadow;  
Marks & Spencer store; traditional  
style shops; pedestrian lanes  
through Bligh's Meadow



Figure A18: Bligh's Meadow character area

#### CHARACTER AREA FOUR: BLIGH'S MEADOW

Bligh's Meadow is a modern shopping development located between London Road and High Street in the northern part of the town centre. It is mainly occupied by national retailers and chain restaurants. The development fronts onto a surface level car park located towards, and interfacing with, London Road. This creates a large area of blank frontage along the street edge.

The High Street side of the development takes a more contextual approach to the historic environment of the town centre and makes connection through a network of pedestrian lanes – mirroring the traditional pattern of the town.

The quality of the public realm in Bligh's Meadow is high and it is a pleasant location for pedestrians to wander around the shops.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
Narrow alley; small square; outdoor seating on Dorset Street, historic lane off Dorset Street; picturesque lane through the area

## CHARACTER AREA FIVE: THE SHAMBLES

The Shambles character area is located to the south of Bligh's Meadow and between London Road and High Street. The Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area Appraisal describes The Shambles as an:

*'...important area within the commercial part of the town and includes picturesque streets and paths with some interesting details and the type of specialist retail outlets, arts and craft shops, galleries and restaurants that encourage shoppers to linger.'*

The area is historic, and is composed mainly of two storey buildings, that front onto, and enclose, a series of pedestrian streets, lanes and small squares. These include the Old Market House. The area provides a tranquil environment away from the main streets and an opportunity to sit outside. The pedestrian environment is generally good but in need of more active management, to address and co-ordinate street furniture and refresh older paving.

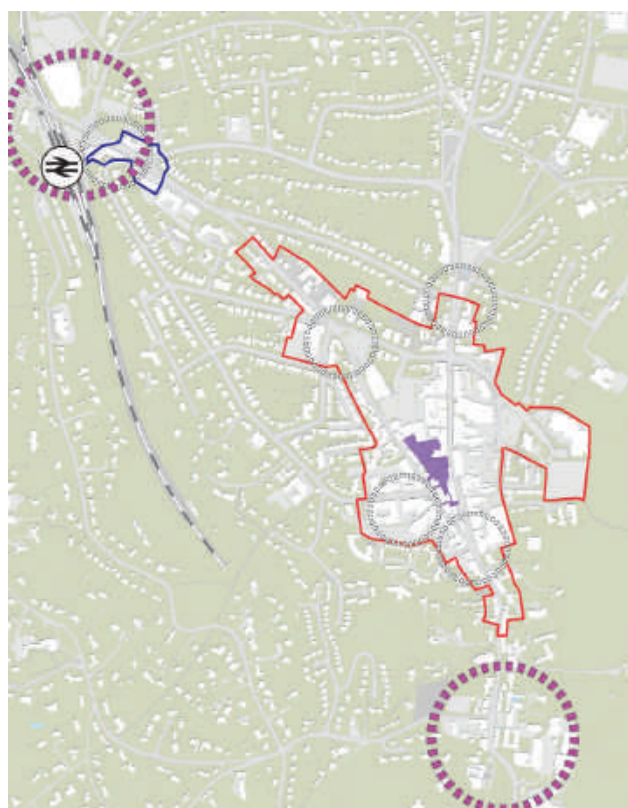


Figure A19: The Shambles character area



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
**Upper High Street garden; historic property on the High Street; St Nicholas Church; Sevenoaks Place almshouses**



**Figure A20: Upper High Street character area**

## CHARACTER AREA SIX: **UPPER HIGH STREET**

The Upper High Street character area provides an attractive approach into the town from the south and includes the Royal Oak Hotel, Sevenoaks School and St Nicholas Church, one of the town's most important landmarks. Knole House is accessed from the area and this causes local congestion.

Upper High Street is part of the Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area and the Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the area as having a more 'cohesive feel', it being less varied in style than the areas further to the north. The street frontages are, in places, broken up with small open spaces, including the churchyard of St Nicholas, and there are more detached buildings, including the Old Vicarage. High Street widens out in this area and it is believed that the original Sevenoaks market took place within this space.

The High Street Conservation Area Appraisal states that there are three distinctive styles of buildings in this area repeated at intervals: the red brick buildings with white painted cornices such as the Red House, Chantry House and the Old House; solid and imposing ragstone buildings such as the School, the Royal Oak and Manor House; and smaller timber-framed buildings, now generally residential or offices.

The priority for this character area is to preserve its special qualities and reduce traffic impact.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
 Poorly maintained lane leading to the Buckhurst Lane car park; bus station on Buckhurst Lane; Buckhurst Lane car park — site of the town's general market

## CHARACTER AREA SEVEN: SUFFOLK WAY / HIGH STREET BACKLANDS

The Suffolk Way / High Street Backlands character area is a fragmented and unattractive part of town, located between the High Street and Buckhurst Avenue. It is largely composed of a series of service yards, car parks and vacant plots. One of these car parks is used for the town's general market every Wednesday. The town's bus station is located within the area on Buckhurst Lane. This street is narrow and can feel intimidating when filled with buses. The bus station building itself is dated and suffers from a lack of investment.

One of the key characteristics of this area is the presence of small secondary routes that connect through the Suffolk Way / Backlands area to the High Street. These links are an essential part of the town's pedestrian movement network, connecting the main retail area with the town centre car parks and civic buildings on the other side of Buckhurst Avenue. Most of these routes are, however, unattractive to use, with no active frontages, poor surfacing and lack of lighting.

This area feels unloved and neglected and the potential for development to enhance the area should be explored.

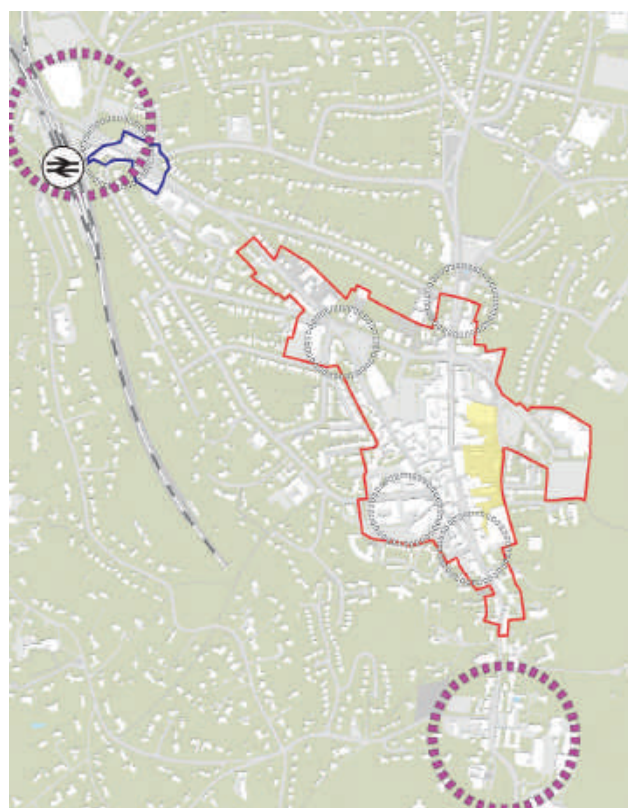


Figure A21: Suffolk Way / High Street Backlands character area



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
**Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope (the town's library and museum); walking route across the car park leads to the former Tesco Metro service yard; car parking obstructs the pedestrian 'desire line' to Kaleidoscope**



**Figure A22: Cultural Quarter character area**

### CHARACTER AREA EIGHT: **CULTURAL QUARTER**

The Cultural Quarter character area is located to the eastern edge of the town centre. It includes the town's leisure centre, library and museum as well as a number of office buildings. The civic and commercial functions are located within large, stand-alone buildings set within extensive areas of car parking, and the area lacks a coherent structure.

The Cultural Quarter is hidden from the town centre and way-finding and connections between the two are poor. Furthermore, routes across car parks to building entrances are confusing and difficult to navigate.

A new multi-storey car park has recently been constructed to the south of the leisure centre together with an amphitheatre in Knole Environmental Park. These will bring more people into the area.

## A8 ECONOMY

There are around 30,000 people living in the Neighbourhood Plan area, accounting for a quarter of the total Sevenoaks district population. The population grew by 4% from 2011-2016 in line with national averages. Approximately 61% of the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan area population is of working age. This is lower than that of the district, Kent County Council area and England as a whole reflecting the higher than average proportion of children within the population.

There are currently around 17,800 jobs in the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan area, accounting for around a third of all jobs in Sevenoaks district. This represents 3,600 more people employed in the area than five years ago, and the area has experienced over double the level of growth seen across the rest of Kent and England.

However, whilst there has been a significant increase in the number of jobs the growth in the number of businesses is below national average. Despite fewer start-ups, business survival data suggests that Sevenoaks district is a strong place to start a business, with 46% of businesses that started up in 2011 still trading in 2016; a greater degree than that seen across the rest of Kent and England.

Within the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan area a high proportion of jobs are in public administration, education and health (4,740 jobs), financial and professional services (3,065 jobs) and business support services (2,160 jobs), which include activities such as human resource provision, cleaning services and office administrative services.

The Neighbourhood Plan area is characterised by micro-sized businesses (up to nine employees), which represent 87% of the area's total business base. This proportion of micro businesses is larger than that seen across the rest of Sevenoaks district; however, it is smaller than the profile seen nationally. There are currently around 235 sole proprietor businesses in the Neighbourhood Plan area. This is low relative to Sevenoaks district and England.

The office market in Sevenoaks has been performing strongly in recent years, with vacancy levels falling by two-thirds over the last six years and rental values increasing by 32%. Loss of office space through permitted development rights (conversion of office to residential) has placed pressure on employment floorspace in some areas. Demand for space in the future is likely to be driven by micro and small businesses, which dominate the local economy and have grown in size in recent years.

The Sevenoaks district has higher median resident earnings than wider Kent and England. The median resident earns £33,600 per annum, while the median Kent resident earns £30,000 and the median England resident earns £29,000. Levels of unemployment and deprivation are low in the district.

The town centre is the focal point for most of the town's shops, leisure and commercial uses. The town hosts a variety of national chain shops, restaurants and independent retailers and businesses. The town is also home to two markets: a charter market on the High Street every Saturday and a general market on the car park on Buckhurst Lane every Wednesday.

As well as the town centre, there are three neighbourhood centres within the Plan area at St John's, Hollybush Lane and Tubs Hill. These are home to a variety of local (predominantly independent) shops and businesses. There is also a small row of shops on Greatness Lane / Seal Hollow Road. Although this is not designated as a local centre by the District Council it is an important resource for local people and should be protected.

In addition to the town centre there are allocated employment sites (in the District Council's Local Plan) located:

- On London Road and close to Sevenoaks station;
- At Sevenoaks Enterprise Centre opposite Bat and Ball station; and
- At the Vestry Industrial Estate to the north of Bat and Ball station. The northern part of this estate is within Otford Parish.

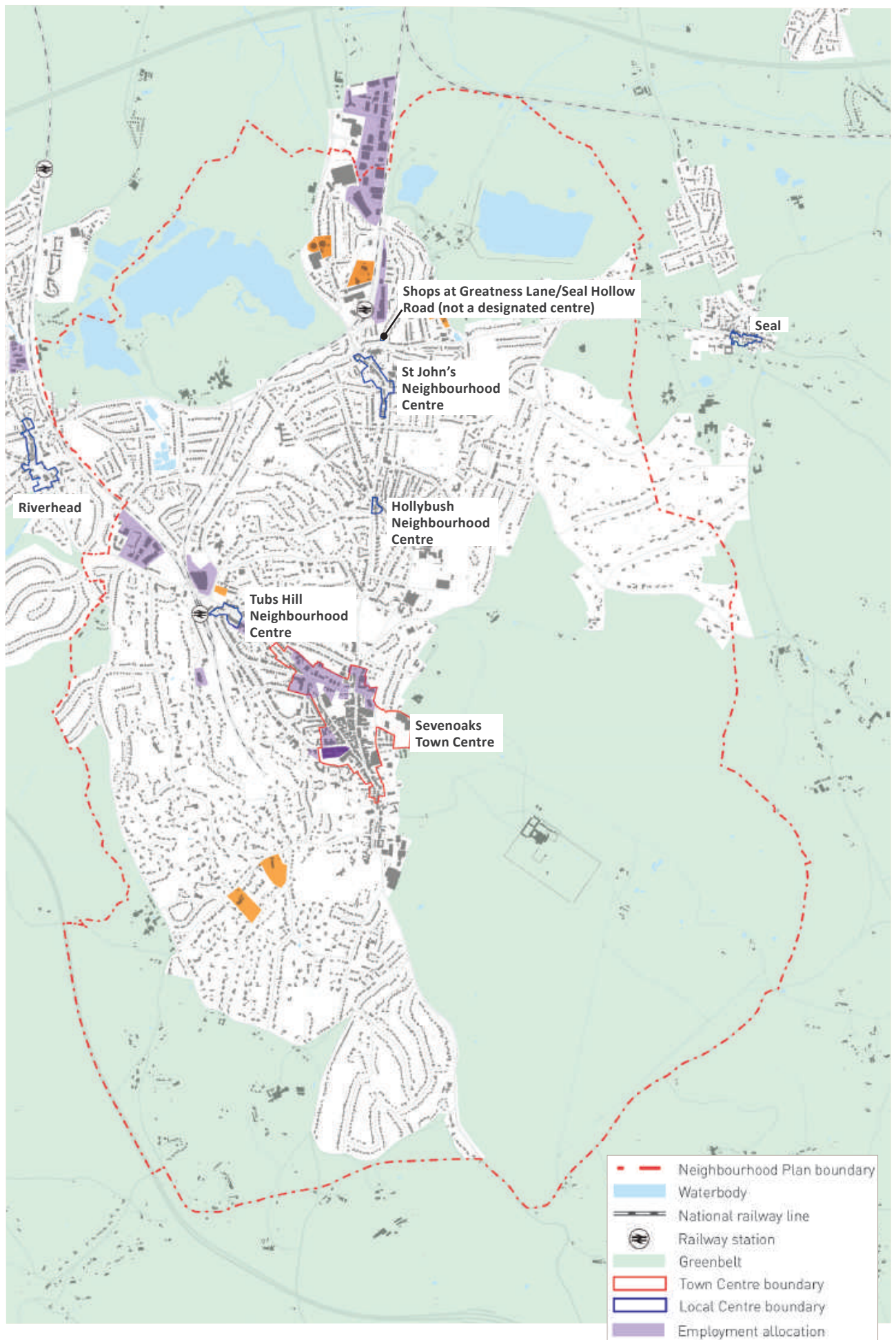


Figure A23: Employment areas

## A9 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Sevenoaks is well served by community infrastructure and arts and cultural facilities.

Most of the town's cultural attractions are located in the town centre. These include The Stag Theatre, the library and museum and several small private galleries.

Primary and secondary schools are spread throughout the town. These include a mix of private and state schools. A survey carried out as part of early engagement on the Neighbourhood Plan identified that 86% of families responding live within two miles of their primary school. Secondary provision in the town has recently been boosted with the addition of two new secondary schools to the north of the town, on the site of the former Wildernesse School on Seal Hollow Road.

Sevenoaks Hospital is located to the north of the town on Hospital Road, close to St John's neighbourhood centre and Bat and Ball station. Health centres and GP practices are spread relatively evenly across the Neighbourhood Plan area; however, there is no provision to the north of the A25.

The District Council's offices are located just outside the town centre on Argyle Road, off London Road, with the Town Council currently based at Bradbourne Vale Road in the northern part of the town. The Town Council is progressing plans to redevelop the existing Community Centre site adjacent Bat and Ball station, to provide a new community facility with the offices for the Town Council on the upper floor. The Town Council is also in the process of refurbishing the listed station building at Bat and Ball. When complete this will provide a café and community meeting spaces.

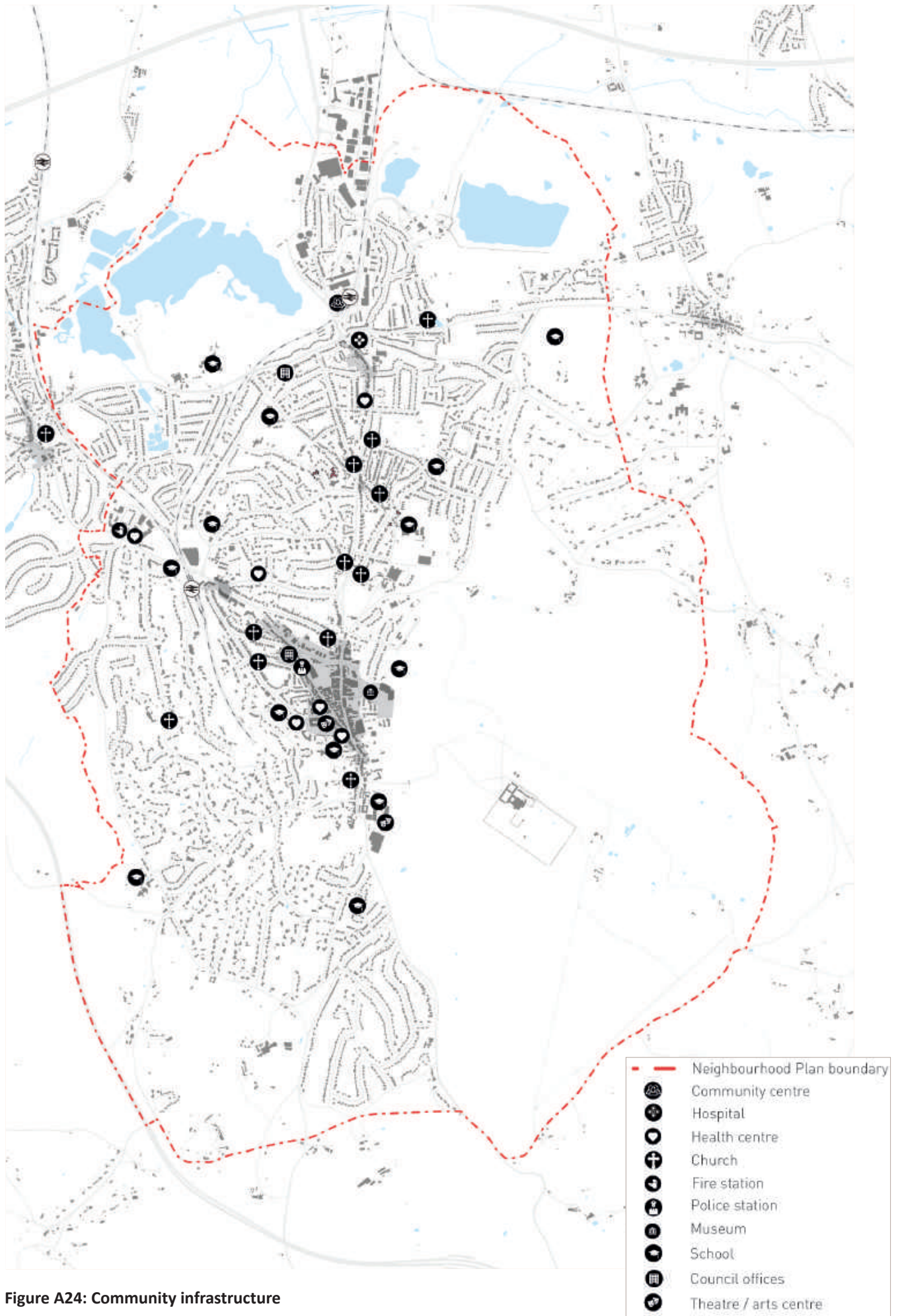


Figure A24: Community infrastructure

## A10 SPORT AND RECREATION

Sevenoaks is well served by sport and recreational facilities. There are two significant sports 'clusters' in the town:

- A cluster to the north-east of the town centre around The Vine / Hollybush Recreation Ground / Knole Paddock and the leisure centre; and
- A cluster to the north of Seal Road including Greatness Recreation Ground and the Community Centre adjacent to Bat and Ball station.

The town centre cluster is the more significant of the two. It includes facilities and pitches for:

- Cricket;
- Rugby;
- Hockey;
- Tennis;
- Indoor sports including swimming, gymnastics and other activities at the leisure centre;
- Bowling; and
- Running / jogging.

Proposals for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of facilities across the town at The Vine, Knole Paddock, Hollybush Recreation Ground and the leisure centre have also been identified by the Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy and are currently being rolled out.

The Greatness cluster is home to the Sevenoaks Town Football Club, a skatepark and an outdoor gym. The hall at the Community Centre at Bat and Ball is often used to host fitness classes and there is a tennis court adjacent to the building. There are significant plans to improve facilities in this area, as set out in the Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy and in the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan.

These include:

- The provision of a 3G pitch at Greatness (this was completed in 2017);
- The potential construction of a new sports pavilion / community building including a café and public toilets at Greatness;
- The construction of a new Bat and Ball centre to provide a new space for exercise classes on the current Community Centre site;
- The replacement of the tennis court at the Community Centre with a MUGA at Greatness. This will provide for a great number of sports; and
- The potential opening up of the Tarmac Ltd. site to the north of Greatness Recreation Ground to create a significant new area of publicly accessible open space and a water sports lake.

Throughout the town there are several smaller venues such as school halls that are currently available for public hire.

The town is well connected to the surrounding countryside by a network of public rights of way and strategic walking routes. The most significant of these are the Darent Valley Path that follows the Darent River northwards from the town and the Greensand Way which passes through Knole Park to the south.

Further recreational walking routes can be found within the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve. The Reserve is a significant recreational resource for the town. However, it is currently hidden from view and only has paths around part of its perimeter. There is significant potential to improve this situation. Further details of proposals are included in the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan.

The town is not currently served by any dedicated cycle routes. However, the District Council has prepared a cycle strategy to address this issue.



# A11 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The growth of Sevenoaks is constrained by the Green Belt and there are relatively few development sites in the town. However, the District Council's Submission Version Local Plan (Dec 2018) Policy ST1 states that development will be focused within the boundaries of existing settlements at:

- The Sevenoaks Urban Area;
- Swanley;
- Edenbridge; and
- Westerham.

The policy also states that the Council will encourage the re-use of previously developed brownfield land, including land in the Green Belt, where it is situated in sustainable locations.

The Neighbourhood Plan area is located within the confines of the Sevenoaks Urban Area. As such, it is a focal point for development in the district.

The Submission Version Local Plan identifies twelve housing or mixed-use site allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan area (Policy ST2). Five of these sites were allocations in the previous Core Strategy (2006-2026), the remainder are new sites. Together the sites are identified as having the potential to deliver 1,275 dwellings with residential densities increased from the previous plan in order to meet housing needs within a constrained environment and to make the most efficient use of land.

The most significant site in the Neighbourhood Plan area is Greatness Quarry, which was identified within the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan. This is a brownfield site set within the Green Belt to the north-east of Bat and Ball.

Whilst the District Council has identified how it may meet its housing needs it also values its distinctive places and communities and states in paragraph 1.3 that: *'We want to create healthy communities, not just houses, and these places need to be supported by services and infrastructure, so people and future generations will choose to live and work in these sustainable locations'*.

Local Plan Policy H1 states that: *'New housing development, including through conversion and change of use, will be expected to contribute to a variety of housing types to reflect and respond to the identified needs of different groups, and to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. This includes housing for Local Essential Workers and people wishing to build their own homes.'*

This policy also supports homes specifically designed for older people, including specialist retirement accommodation and registered care homes (particularly dementia-specialist).

The District Council recognises the role of the Neighbourhood Plan in adding further detail to the high-level strategic land use aims set in the Local Plan and states in paragraph 1.4 that: *'the Neighbourhood Plan can provide more detail in terms of design, infrastructure and local character and distinctiveness.'*

To support a vibrant and balanced economy, Policy EMP1 requires that: *'Non-residential use of land and/or buildings will be retained unless it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer feasible or viable.'*

There are a number of allocated employment sites within Sevenoaks, principally in the town centre but also in Northern Sevenoaks, and these are important for both the local economy and to create sustainable places.

Policy EMP1 states that: *Redevelopment of employment sites (allocated or non-allocated) for mixed use may be permitted where such development:*

- *would facilitate the regeneration of the site to more effectively meet the needs of modern business, and*
- *where the employment capacity of the site, represented by commercial floorspace, is maintained,*
- *and where a mixed-use development would represent a sustainable approach consistent with the general distribution of development.*

As described, Sevenoaks is a sensitive town with many historic assets and a highly valued landscape setting. The volume of development planned for the town within the life of the existing Local Plan must, therefore, be very carefully planned. It is essential that all new development is well considered and responds to the constraints in an appropriate manner.

# A12 ISSUES FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The public consultation and background and evidence-based review carried out to inform this Plan resulted in the identification of a number of issues that this Plan will address. These have been grouped under seven themes.

## **Character, Heritage and Identity**

- The need to preserve the town's historic character and assets;
- The need to improve areas with poor character – especially in and around the town centre and at arrival points into the town; and
- The need to improve the quality of the arrival experience into the town.

## **Landscape and Green Infrastructure**

- The need to support the retention of trees and encourage tree planting;
- The need to protect the Green Belt and other green / open spaces; and
- The need to retain views to the open countryside.

## **Movement and Public Realm**

- The need to promote an effective pedestrian, cycling and movement strategy;
- The consideration of a 20mph speed limit to slow traffic down;
- The need to reduce air pollution;
- The need to improve pedestrian routes and pathways across the town;
- The need to improve pedestrian and cycle access to schools;
- A desire for Sevenoaks to be included within TfL's Oyster charging zone;
- The need to ease traffic congestion across the town;
- The need to improve the environment at, in, and around, the town's two railway stations and the bus station;
- The need to progress the delivery of cycle routes in the town; and
- The need to improve pedestrian movement in the town centre and remove clutter from the streetscape.

## **Local Economy**

- The need to improve the town centre and neighbourhood centres;
- The need to protect and maintain existing employment in the town and encourage opportunities;
- The need to provide better connections between the town's cultural assets; and
- The need to support and encourage further tourism.

## **Community and Culture**

- The need to ensure that development delivers enhanced community assets and provides additional health and educational infrastructure to serve a growing population; and
- The need to better link and promote the cultural offer in the town.

## **Sports and Recreation**

- The need to continue to support existing and develop new sports facilities as set out in the Sevenoaks Town Sports Strategy.

## **Development and Housing**

- The need to provide additional housing including a range of housing types and tenures (including smaller units and affordable housing) with limited development sites available;
- The need to deliver high quality development that responds to the character of the town and to establish processes that can help to deliver this improved design quality;
- The need to identify locations for residential development in accessible locations within walkable distance of the town centre or railway stations; and
- The opportunity presented by the Tarmac Ltd. site at Greatness.

The above issues have helped to shape the vision, objectives and policies that are promoted within the Plan.





