

# Core Strategy

Adopted February 2011



**Local  
Development  
Framework**

  
**Sevenoaks**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

### 4.1 The General Distribution of Development

**4.1.1** The District must evolve to accommodate the new development required to meet the changing housing needs of the population, support the local economy and develop services and facilities needed to support the local community.

**4.1.2** The distribution of development is consistent with national planning policy and in general conformity with regional policy. It concentrates development on the District's main towns, which have the greatest range of services and facilities to support the population an approach that is consistent with the urban focus of the South East Plan policy SP3.

**4.1.3** The Green Belt which covers the rural areas of the District aims to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas, to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns and assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. These objectives are particularly important in view of the extensive area covered by Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The prime consideration in such areas is the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape.

**4.1.4** The Green Belt is also aimed at assisting urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. This is particularly important at Swanley town centre and to realise the potential within Sevenoaks town centre and adjoining areas.

**4.1.5** It also remains the Government's priority to locate development on previously developed land and for the reasons set out above it is particularly important to meet this challenge in the District where there are significant constraints on the development of greenfield land.

**4.1.6** Development within the built up areas must be achieved in the most sustainable towns and villages where employment, key services and facilities and a range of transport options are available. The distribution of development takes account of the Settlement Hierarchy,<sup>(10)</sup> which is based on a systematic assessment of such factors for settlements in the District. In summary this is as follows:

Principal town	Sevenoaks
Secondary town	Swanley
Rural Service Centre	Edenbridge
Local Service Centres	New Ash Green, Otford and Westerham
Service Villages	Villages listed in Policy LO7

**4.1.7** The District has in the past been able to meet development requirements without the loss of Green Belt and the challenge is to establish a distribution of development that can be satisfactorily accommodated within the most sustainable settlements without undermining the Green Belt. The distribution strategy therefore takes account of the findings of the technical studies, particularly their findings regarding the ability to accommodate future development requirements in existing settlements.

**4.1.8** The distribution of development also needs to avoid areas liable to flood. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment shows that flooding from rivers is not a significant factor in most of the main settlements, except for part of Edenbridge. The housing land availability assessment has treated flooding as a constraint in accordance with Government guidance.

<sup>10</sup> Available at the evidence base pages of the planning policy and local development framework section of the Sevenoaks District Council website ([Sevenoaks.gov.uk](http://Sevenoaks.gov.uk))

## Housing Land Supply

**4.1.9** The Council has carried out a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) that has been updated to 1 April 2009. The updated assessment shows that the housing provision figure of 3,300 dwellings (2006-2026) for the District can be met from within existing built up areas, enabling the Green Belt to continue to be protected. The main categories of supply are as follows:

Completions (since 2006)	692
Outstanding Permissions (1)	1,366
Potential Allocations (2)	978
Small Site Allowance (after first ten years only) (3)	525
Total	3,561
Core Strategy Housing Provision (20 years @ 165 per annum)	3,300

### Notes

1. After a deduction has been made to allow for a non implementation rate based on past trends. Outline planning permissions are included in this total following assessment in the SHLAA
2. Based on sites assessed in the SHLAA
3. 75 dwellings per annum based on past trends. Small sites are less than 0.2 ha.

**4.1.10** The figures show a surplus of 261 dwellings in relation to the District's housing provision. This is a comparatively robust supply because a high proportion (62% of the requirement) is made up of development already built or with planning permission. Assuming these elements are built, and a discount has already been applied to the outstanding planning permissions total, then the remaining elements of the supply (potential allocations and small site allowance) exceed the total needed to meet the District's housing provision by 21%.

**4.1.11** The Housing Trajectory based on the figures is presented at Appendix 1. The trajectory shows that the identified supply exceeds the requirement by the greatest extent over the first ten years. In this period, where the supply is made up of identified deliverable and developable sites, the District provision, based on the annual figure is exceeded by 891 units (or 40%).

**4.1.12** There are other sources of supply that the Council will take into account in monitoring and managing the housing supply over the Core Strategy period. Development from these sources will be monitored as part of the Annual Monitoring Report and added to the housing land supply. These are:

1. Small sites in the first ten years. In accordance with Government guidance the supply does not include a figure for small sites in this period beyond outstanding permissions. However, past trends suggest that small site windfalls are a significant contributor to housing completions and the SHLAA concludes that this will continue in the future. Actual completions from small site windfalls will count towards meeting the housing target once development is completed.
2. Affordable housing "exception sites" developed under Policy SP4, which cannot be counted as contributing to the housing land supply until after completion.
3. Redevelopment of business sites in urban areas for mixed use which may be permitted under Policy SP8.

## 4 . Location Policies

4. Large windfall sites beyond the first ten years. The SHLAA seeks to identify large sites for development during the Core Strategy period. However, identifying in advance sites for development more than ten years into the future is difficult, particularly redevelopment sites in urban areas. It is noteworthy that all the urban sites put forward in response to the SHLAA "call for sites" were identified by their promoters for development in the first ten years. In the longer term the SHLAA will be updated to identify the emergence of potential new urban housing land.
5. Reserve Land. Land at Edenbridge, formerly safeguarded to meet long term development needs, is re-designated as Reserve Land in Policy LO6 so that it is available to be brought forward for development during the Core Strategy period if required.
6. Development of areas of opportunity in Sevenoaks town centre under Policy LO3 which may include scope for some housing as part of mixed use development.
7. Any additional contribution from safeguarded land at Westerham.

**4.1.13** The distribution of housing based on the identified supply is shown in Table 2. The greatest capacity for housing development is identified in Sevenoaks urban area, followed by Swanley, Edenbridge and a range of smaller settlements, which is consistent with focusing development primarily on settlements with the widest range of facilities. Most of the housing total for the smaller settlements consists of either completions or commitments in the form of planning permissions.

**4.1.14** The distribution is weighted slightly more towards the Rest of Kent than the London Fringe sub region when compared with the distribution based on the South East Plan (98/80 dwellings per annum in favour of the Rest of Kent compared to 80/85 dwellings per annum in the South East Plan, see para 3.2.2 for further information on the sub regions). Most of the District lies outside the London Fringe area, including some parts adjoining London. Some flexibility in the distribution is considered justified for the following reasons:

1. The District's overall requirement is exceeded;
2. The distribution is based on the South East Plan strategy of an urban focus and only one of the District's three main towns (Sevenoaks) is in the London Fringe;
3. The defined boundary of the London Fringe only just excludes the other two main towns Swanley and Edenbridge. Swanley in particular is a location that is consistent with the characteristics of the London Fringe adjoining London and the M25. It has significant urban land available for housing; and
4. The small London Fringe shortfall (5 dwellings per annum over the Core Strategy period) is likely to be made up from the first four sources of supply identified above.

### Employment Land and Retail Development

**4.1.15** The Employment Land Review shows that future employment land needs can be met largely within existing employment sites provided the great majority of these sites are retained in employment use. The distribution of employment land is based on existing development and is therefore principally at Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge, including a previously undeveloped site at Swanley. Other significant contributions come from the Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt. The distribution is shown in Table 2.

**4.1.16** The Retail Study update shows that, based on forecast future expenditure, there is limited capacity for further development in Sevenoaks, primarily later in the plan period. In Swanley there will be little capacity based on expenditure growth but scope for new development to claw back some

of the trade currently lost to other locations. In other centres the emphasis will be on maintaining provision to meet local needs. In accordance with Government policy retail development will continue to be focused on existing town centres.

### **Green Belt**

**4.1.17** The Core Strategy establishes there is no need to amend the Green Belt to meet development needs. The case for any small scale adjustments to cater for situations where land no longer contributes to the Green Belt can be considered through the Allocations and Development Management DPD.

Table 2: Summary of Broad Housing and Employment Land Provision (2006-2026)

<b>Location</b>	<b>Housing (units)</b>	<b>Employment Land (ha) (1)</b>
Sevenoaks (2)	1,331	27.2
Swanley	660	30.8
Edenbridge (3)	411	22.1
Other Settlements	1,159	6.0
Total	3,561	86.1
Core Strategy Housing	3,300	N/A
Provision (20 years at 165 dwgs per annum)		

### Note

1. Employment land figures exclude Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt.
2. The Sevenoaks urban area includes Sevenoaks town, Riverhead, Dunton Green, Chipstead and Bessels Green.
3. The Edenbridge housing figure excludes any contribution from the Reserve Land

### **Policy LO 1**

#### **Distribution of Development**

**Development will be focused within the built confines of existing settlements.**

**The Sevenoaks urban area, which includes Sevenoaks town, Riverhead, Dunton Green, Chipstead and Bessels Green, will be the principal focus for development in the District in accordance with Policies LO2 and LO3.**

**Swanley will be the secondary focus for development with the emphasis on maintaining and enhancing its role and promoting regeneration to meet the needs of the local community in accordance with Policies LO4 and LO5.**

**Edenbridge will be a location for development of a scale and nature consistent with the needs of the town and the surrounding rural area it serves in accordance with Policy LO6.**

**New Ash Green, Otford and Westerham will be locations for limited development in accordance with Policy LO7**

## 4 . Location Policies

**The Service Villages, listed in Policy LO7 will be locations for small scale development consistent with the requirements of Policy LO7.**

**In other locations priority will be given to protecting the rural character of the District. Development will only take place where it is compatible with policies for protecting the Green Belt and the High Weald and Kent Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where relevant. Development will be located to avoid areas at risk of flooding.**

### **Delivery Mechanisms:**

*Policies LO2 to LO7 set out development proposals consistent with the general distribution of development in Policy LO1.*

*The Annual Monitoring Report will monitor progress in delivering housing against the housing trajectory and ensure the maintenance of a five year rolling supply of deliverable housing sites in accordance with Government guidance in PPS3 (Housing).*

*The Allocations DPD will include identified housing sites, consistent with the Core Strategy, anticipated phasing and implementation requirements.*

### **Performance Indicators:**

Actual housing development compared to the housing trajectory

Actual distribution of housing development compared to the distribution in the Core Strategy

Housing development in areas liable to flood

### **Targets:**

An average completion rate of 165 dwellings per annum to be maintained over the Core Strategy period

From the date of adoption at least two thirds of new housing to be in Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge and at least half to be in Sevenoaks and Swanley.

No housing development to be permitted in areas liable to flood where contrary to Environment Agency recommendations.

### The Countryside

**4.5.24** Outside settlements priority will be given to protection of the countryside. The countryside will be conserved and the distinctive features that contribute to the special character of the landscape and its biodiversity will be protected and enhanced where possible.

**4.5.25** A Countryside Assessment has been completed identifying the distinctive features of the District's landscape. It defines and describes the different types and character areas of the landscape and then evaluates each area in terms of the condition of the landscape and its sensitivity. The Countryside Assessment was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance when it was produced in 2004. It will be updated to have the added status of a Supplementary Planning Document and will be applied in considering the landscape impact of development and in looking for enhancement opportunities.

**4.5.26** The biodiversity of the countryside will be protected through the safeguarding of nationally and locally designated sites and support for the Kent Biodiversity Plan. Opportunities for enhancement will be sought through support for countryside enhancement schemes and in connection with development proposals.

**4.5.27** The District has a well-developed network of footpaths and bridleways that enable access to the countryside. Recreational paths include the North Downs Way, the Greensand Way, the Wealdway, the Darent Valley Path and the Eden Valley Walk. There is a Country Park at Lullingstone and extensive areas of countryside with public access. The Council will continue to seek access improvements, including links between town and country, through the Green Infrastructure Network (see Policy SP10) and will also seek improvements in interpretation facilities to promote enjoyment and understanding of the countryside.

**4.5.28** Horse riding is a significant recreational activity in rural areas of the District which offers benefits to rural communities but horse-related activities (often referred to as "horsiculture"), including stables and paddocks, can have landscape impacts that require careful consideration. A Supplementary Planning Document will be produced giving more detailed guidance on the issue.

**4.5.29** The Council is a supporter of the North West Kent Countryside Partnership, which also includes Kent County Council, the Environment Agency and adjoining Districts. It will continue to support enhancement projects through the Countryside Partnership.

**4.5.30** Over 60% of the District lies within either the Kent Downs or High Weald AONB. Both AONBs have produced Management Plans that have recently been updated. These set out a range of measures to protect and enhance the distinctive features of each AONB and the Council will support their implementation.

**4.5.31** The countryside is also a place of work and recreation. The rural economy has traditionally been dependent on agriculture but has increasingly diversified as the agricultural industry has changed in response to modern requirements. The Council will support small scale development proposals that contribute to diversification of the rural economy where these are compatible with policies to protect the countryside. This includes proposals for tourism and recreational developments that contribute to the rural economy. The District benefits from a high percentage of woodland cover which is a vital component of its landscape character, biodiversity, amenity and green infrastructure. The Council will take a positive role in the conservation and enhancement of woodlands in the District and encourage their management for biodiversity, amenity and economic use, including their potential contribution to sustainable energy production.

**4.5.32** Particular encouragement will be given to business developments that re-use existing buildings and there will generally be a preference for commercial over residential development in considering proposals for change of use of rural buildings.

**4.5.33** The District, as part of the West Kent Partnership, has been successful in obtaining "Leader" funding to support rural businesses and communities. The Leader programme aims to promote sustainable business growth within the land based and rural economies in the area. Key objectives are:

- Improve competitiveness and financial sustainability of West Kent's farming and forestry
- Encourage innovation and diversification in West Kent's land based sector
- Promote entrepreneurship in rural West Kent
- Encourage the development of rural tourism-related businesses
- Address pockets of deprivation and encourage vibrant rural communities
- Ensure best practice in land management and promote sustainable development

#### Policy LO8

##### The Countryside and the Rural Economy.

###### The extent of the Green Belt will be maintained.

**The countryside will be conserved and the distinctive features that contribute to the special character of its landscape and its biodiversity will be protected and enhanced where possible. The distinctive character of the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and their settings, will be conserved and enhanced.**

## 4 . Location Policies

**Particular regard will be given to the condition and sensitivity of the landscape character and securing the recommended landscape actions in the proposed SPD to ensure that all development conserves and enhances local landscape character and that appropriate mitigation is provided where damage to local character cannot be avoided.**

**Development that supports the maintenance and diversification of the rural economy, including development for agriculture, forestry, small scale business development and rural tourism projects, and the vitality of local communities will be supported provided it is compatible with policies for protecting the Green Belt, the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty conserves and enhances the value and character of the District's woodland and the landscape character of other rural parts of the District and that it takes account of infrastructure requirements.**

### **Delivery Mechanisms:**

*The provisions of the Countryside Assessment will be applied in evaluating developments affecting the countryside and in developing countryside projects. It will be updated to have the status of a Supplementary Planning Document*

*Working with partners the Management Plan proposals for the Kent Downs and HighWeald AONBs will be implemented*

*Projects to conserve and enhance the landscape, the biodiversity of the countryside, access to the countryside and countryside interpretation will be promoted through the North West Kent Countryside Project working with local communities*

*A Supplementary Planning Document will be produced covering horse related development*

*Leader funding will be used to support the diversification of the rural economy*

*The Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook will be used where relevant in advising developers and considering enhancement projects.*

### **Performance Indicators:**

Development permitted contrary to Green Belt policy

Progress in implementing countryside projects in the District, including AONB

Management Plan projects affecting the District.

## 5.4 Economic Development and Employment Land

**5.4.1** The economy of the District is relatively broad based and has a higher than average level of employment in small firms and a lower than average level in large firms compared to the South East average. It is dominated by the service sector with the highest level of employment in wholesale and retail trade followed by business services. No sector is substantially over-represented in comparison with the regional average.

**5.4.2** Sevenoaks is the largest employment centre and is primarily a centre for service industries. Swanley and Edenbridge also have significant concentrations of employment. Away from existing settlements the Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt at Fort Halstead and Glaxo Smith Kline in Leigh are centres for defence-related and pharmaceutical industries respectively. Further development to support these sectors will be supported where it is consistent with planning policy guidance on Major Developed Sites.

**5.4.3** The District as a whole remains relatively prosperous despite the impact of the recession although unemployment has risen and deprivation and lack of skills is an issue in some areas.

**5.4.4** The Council is preparing an Economic Development Action Plan, which sets out a range of initiatives to support the District's economy. Key themes include improved liaison with local businesses, support for newly forming and expanding local firms, maintaining the supply of employment land, supporting initiatives to improve skills, increasing the provision of affordable housing, improving transport through the Transport Strategy and supporting the rural economy and tourism.

**5.4.5** The LDF Core Strategy has a significant role in implementing the Action Plan in the provision it makes for development. Other sections of this document cover economic development in the main towns, rural areas, transport and affordable housing. With regard to employment land, the Employment Land Review examines the District's existing stock of employment land for business use. It shows that there is a significant supply on a wide range of sites and that the great majority is acceptably located, although some sites are in need of modernisation to meet current business needs. The review estimates future additional land requirements at 0.3ha to 1.5ha after allowance is made for the loss of unsuitable sites to other uses.

**5.4.6** The limited deficit in employment land supply can be made up through intensification and use of vacant land so the review does not see a need to release additional Greenfield land for employment use, beyond the development of a site at Swanley that has previously been identified.

**5.4.7** Taking account of these findings the emphasis of the policy is on retaining and making effective use of existing employment land. Support is given to the principle of intensification and regeneration of existing sites where necessary to better meet modern business needs. The District's employment sites are seen as a flexible resource that can be adapted, through redevelopment or change of use if necessary, for a range of different types of business use, including new and expanding sectors of the regional economy.

## 5 . Strategic Policies

**5.4.8** The policy allows for mixed use development on employment sites in urban areas where such development will assist in securing the regeneration of sites to meet business needs, where the employment capacity is maintained (recognising that the primary role of the site is in contributing to the supply of employment land), and where there is scope for such a development to take place in an environmentally acceptable way.

**5.4.9** The development of "start up" units to support the establishment and early development of small businesses will be supported in suitable locations. Improvements in information and communications technology that enables more flexible working practices will be supported. A flexible approach will be adopted to home-based businesses and the development of "live work" units where these can take place in an environmentally acceptable way.

**5.4.10** There is scope for further tourist-related development in the District and the location policies give support to hotel development in Sevenoaks and Swanley and improved facilities for visitors in Edenbridge, together with small scale initiatives to support tourism in rural areas.

**5.4.11** Further information on specific provision for employment development in the District's main towns and in the rural areas is contained in the Location Policies section of this document.

### Policy SP 8

#### Economic Development and Land for Business

**The sustainable development of the District's economy will be supported by:**

- a. the retention, intensification and regeneration of existing business areas primarily at Sevenoaks, Swanley, and Edenbridge and Major Developed Sites in rural areas, subject to Green Belt policy.
- b. through new provision for business as follows
  - i. office development in Sevenoaks and Swanley town centres
  - ii. business development through allocation of greenfield land at Swanley outside the Green Belt
- c. giving priority to business uses, or tourist facilities, in the conversion of buildings in the rural area
- d. promoting hotel development in suitable locations in Sevenoaks and Swanley
- e. working with partners to develop initiatives to improve skills in the workforce
- f. supporting the development of start up units for small businesses in suitable locations and improvements in information and communications technology to facilitate more flexible working practices

Sites used for business purposes will be retained in business use unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of their take up or continued use for business purposes during the Core Strategy period. Redevelopment for mixed use of business sites in urban areas may exceptionally be permitted where such development would facilitate the regeneration of the site to more effectively meet the needs of modern business, where the employment capacity of the site, represented by the commercial floorspace, is maintained and where a mixed use development would represent a sustainable approach consistent with the general distribution of development.

**Delivery Mechanisms:**

*The Allocations and Development Management DPD will define the detailed boundary of employment sites to be retained under the policy.*

**Performance Indicators:**

Net change in employment floorspace

Unemployment rate in total and relative to Kent and the South East

Proportion of the workforce with no qualifications

**Target:**

The overall stock of employment land to be maintained.

# Allocations and Development Management Plan

Adopted February 2015



Local Plan

## 2. The Environment

### 2. The Environment

**2.1** A distinctive feature of the District is the high quality of the natural and built environment which contains a wealth of nationally and locally important designated environmental areas such as the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 42 Conservation Areas. All these features contribute to the special quality and character of many parts of the District. The District's towns and villages include other areas of distinctive character as illustrated in Character Area Assessments. Outside the built up areas, the distinctive landscape character is illustrated in the Sevenoaks Countryside Assessment SPD. A key responsibility of the plan is to ensure their continued protection, conservation and enhancement through sensitive design which is well suited to its context.

#### General Design Principles

**2.2** The National Planning Policy Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Sustainable development involves achieving positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including replacing poor design with better design. One of the Government's core planning principles is to always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Improving design quality and conservation is a key Core Strategy theme. The Spatial Vision of the Core Strategy envisages that all development should demonstrate high quality and compatibility with the area, whilst also emphasising the need to incorporate sustainability principles.

**2.3** Core Strategy Policy SP1 specifically addresses Design of New Development and Conservation and specifies that all new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated. It goes on to make it clear that account should be taken of guidance adopted by the Council in the form of Kent Design, local Character Area Assessments, Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, Village Design Statements and Parish Plans. In rural areas account should be taken of guidance in the Sevenoaks Countryside Assessment SPD and AONB Management Plans and other AONB supporting guidance. Account should also be taken of any adopted Neighbourhood Plans, prepared by local communities.

**2.4** Policy EN1 provides a detailed framework for assessing planning applications against Core Strategy Policy SP1. It gives criteria against which proposals can be assessed so as to deliver high quality design that responds to local character. Dependent on the context of the proposal, the local character may be formed by the built up area or the landscape character of the extensive countryside. Issues of key importance to design such as the scale, height, site coverage and the layout are to be assessed when considering the detailed design of a proposal, along with other considerations such as parking and the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. Development should ensure that the need to create and maintain a safe environment is addressed, including minimising opportunities for crime, fear of crime, disorder or anti- social behaviour. These criteria included in Policy EN1 will be the delivery mechanism for the strategic Core Strategy design policy.

## 2. The Environment

**2.5** In addition Core Strategy Policy SP7 sets out the approach to density of new development in differing locations and stresses the importance in ensuring that within urban areas, sites are used to their full potential subject to environmental considerations.

**2.6** In assessing opportunities for retaining and enhancing green infrastructure features, the District Council will consider both green infrastructure and the water environment and where possible will seek enhancement opportunities to restore, recreate and extend biodiversity potential. Further guidance can be found in the biodiversity technical appendix of the Kent Design Guide and Planning for a Healthy Environment - good practice guidance for green infrastructure and biodiversity, (Town & Country Planning Association/ The Wildlife Trusts, 2012).

**2.7** Ensuring new development meets the test of time is an important consideration in delivering sustainable development. Consequently criteria set out in "Building for Life" and other post-occupation assessments will be used as an additional tool for assessing design quality, both at planning application and building completion stages, and the Council will encourage developers to use it in developing proposals.

**2.8** Matters of amenity protection have been separated from the basic design principles, which is a departure from the previous approach adopted by Saved Local Plan Policy EN1. The basis for doing this is to ensure greater and more focussed decision making. For example applications that should be refused solely on amenity grounds, but are fully acceptable in design aspects, will be underpinned by a single clear policy (See Policy EN2).

### Policy EN1 - Design Principles

Proposals which would create high quality design and meet the following criteria will be permitted:

- a) the form of the proposed development would respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area;
- b) the layout of the proposed development would respect the topography and character of the site and the surrounding area and sensitively incorporate natural features such as trees, hedges and ponds within the site;
- c) the proposal would not result in the loss of buildings, open spaces or green infrastructure that would have an unacceptable impact on the character of the area;
- d) the proposal would ensure satisfactory means of access for vehicles and pedestrians and provide adequate parking and refuse facilities;
- e) the proposal would incorporate, within the design opportunities for increasing biodiversity potential, where possible, and retaining and enhancing Green Infrastructure features including sustainable drainage systems. Proposals that affect a site's existing biodiversity and Green Infrastructure should be designed in a way that avoids or mitigates any potential harm;
- f) the design of new buildings and the layout of spaces, including footways, car and cycle parking areas, would be permeable and provide connectivity with neighbouring areas;

## 2. The Environment

g) new development would be inclusive and where appropriate make satisfactory provision for the safe and easy access of those with disabilities; and

h) the design of new developments would result in the creation of a safe and secure environment and incorporate adequate security measures and features to deter crime, fear of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.

Where appropriate, new developments should include infrastructure that meets modern communication and technology needs and restricts the need for future retrofitting. Such infrastructure should include Broadband, high speed internet cabling, digital TV cabling and provision of a power supply that would support green technology initiatives such as in home electric car charging points.

Subject to the above considerations development should make efficient use of the land on which it is proposed.

Where appropriate, proposals should include details and strategies for the effective management and maintenance of sites following their completion.

### Delivery Mechanisms:

The Kent Design Guide, Residential Extensions, the Residential Character Area Assessment and the Sevenoaks Countryside Assessment SPDs provide detailed design guidance for development. The Kent Downs and High Weald AONB Management Plans will be used where relevant.

### Landscape

**2.32** The extensive area of landscape outside the towns and villages contributes significantly to the character of the District. The NPPF outlines the importance of protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and Policy L08 of the Core Strategy ensures that the distinctive features that contribute to the special character of the landscape will be protected and, where possible, enhanced.

**2.33** 61% of the District is located within the Kent Downs or High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The NPPF gives great weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and their setting, giving them the highest status of protection. The distinctive character of the AONBs plays an important part in defining the overall character of Sevenoaks District. Proposals in AONBs will be assessed against Core Strategy Policy L08, ADMP Policy EN5 and other relevant policies. The AONB Management Plans and associated guidance set out a range of measures to conserve and enhance the distinctive features of each AONB. Any proposal within the AONB must take into account the guidance set out in the appropriate AONB Management Plan and any relevant more specific AONB guidance for example the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook (2006), Kent Downs AONB Farmstead Guidance (2012) and Managing Land for Horses (2011).

**2.34** The character of the AONBs and the remainder of the countryside within the District is defined in the adopted Sevenoaks Countryside Assessment SPD. The SPD identifies a number of different character areas and will be used to assess the impact of proposals

## 2. The Environment

on landscape character. Tranquillity forms part of the character of certain parts of the landscape within the District as identified by the SPD. Proposals should respect the local landscape character and the specific features identified in the SPD. In addition, proposals should also enhance the character of the countryside by helping secure the landscape actions within the SPD where this would be feasible in relation to the proposal.

### Policy EN5 - Landscape

The Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and their settings will be given the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Proposals within the AONB will be permitted where the form, scale, materials and design would conserve and enhance the character of the landscape and have regard to the relevant Management Plan and associated guidance.

Proposals that affect the landscape throughout the District will be permitted where they would:

- a) conserve the character of the landscape, including areas of tranquillity; and
- b) where feasible help secure enhancements in accordance with landscape actions in accordance with the Sevenoaks Countryside Assessment SPD.

### Delivery Mechanisms:

The Kent Downs and High Weald Management Plans

The Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook (2006), Kent Downs AONB Farmstead Guidance (2012) and Managing Land for Horses (2011) and associated guidance

The Sevenoaks Countryside Assessment SPD

Parish Plans

The Residential Extensions SPD

## 7. The Green Belt

### **Extension and Replacement of Non-residential Buildings in the Green Belt**

**7.45** Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that the extension or alteration of a building in the Green Belt is not inappropriate development, as long as the extension does not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

**7.46** Paragraph 89 also goes on to state that the replacement of an existing building in the Green Belt is not inappropriate development if it is within the same use and not materially larger than the building it replaces.

**7.47** Since this approach applies to a much wider range of uses and scale of proposals, from the extension or replacement of a small workshop to that of a very large scale warehouse, the Council do not feel that it would be appropriate to include a floor space figure to guide what is acceptable.

**7.48** Proposals for extensions and replacements to non-residential buildings in the Green Belt will therefore be considered against Policy GB8 below.

#### **Policy GB8 - Limited Extension to Non-residential Buildings in the Green Belt**

Proposals to extend an existing non-residential building within the Green Belt which would meet the following criteria will be permitted:

- a) the existing building is lawful and permanent in nature; and
- b) the design and volume of the proposed extension, taking into consideration the cumulative impact of any previous extensions, would be proportional and subservient to the 'original' building and would not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale, bulk or visual intrusion.

#### **Policy GB9 - Replacement of a Non-residential Building in the Green Belt**

Proposals to replace an existing non-residential building within the Green Belt which would meet the following criteria will be permitted:

- a) the existing building is lawful and permanent in nature;
- b) the design and volume of the proposed replacement building would not be materially larger than the 'original' building and would not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale, bulk or visual intrusion; and
- c) the replacement building would be within the same use as the building to be demolished

#### **Delivery Mechanisms:**

The Green Belt SPD provides further guidance on development in the Green Belt

### Delivery Mechanism:

See Employment Allocation Maps in Appendix 4

### **Non-allocated Employment Sites**

**4.33** Redevelopment for mixed use of business sites in urban areas may exceptionally be permitted where such development would facilitate the regeneration of the site to more effectively meet the needs of modern business, where the employment capacity of the site, represented by the commercial floorspace, is maintained and where a mixed use development would represent a sustainable approach consistent with the general distribution of development.

**4.34** Policy EMP5 below relates to Core Strategy Policy SP8 and acts as a supplementary development management policy to cover non-allocated employment sites. These sites will usually be below 0.2 ha, as sites above this threshold will have been assessed through the Council's Employment Land Review and either be allocated for employment purposes or recommended for release.

**4.35** Policy EMP5 requires non-allocated lawful business premises and sites to have been unsuccessfully marketed for employment use for a period of at least 6 months before alternatives have been considered. The Council will expect marketing to have been undertaken proactively, for appropriate business uses of the site (including through both re-use and redevelopment) and at the appropriate rental or purchase price for the type of business land and/or buildings.

#### Policy EMP5 - Non-allocated Employment Sites

When considering proposals for the creation or loss of business uses on unallocated sites, the Council will assess the impact of the proposals on the environment, local economy and the local community.

For new proposals the Council will also consider the impact on the transport network and ensure there is no harm to surrounding uses, including nature conservation areas.

Proposals for mixed use redevelopment on existing unallocated business sites will be permitted providing the proposal includes a significant element of business use and the proposal complies with all other relevant planning policies.

## 4. The Economy and Employment

The Council will permit the loss of non-allocated lawful business premises and sites to other uses provided it can be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Council, that the site has been unsuccessfully marketed for re-use in employment for a period of at least 6 months and that there is no reasonable prospect of their take up or continued use for business use at the site/premises in the longer term.

### Performance Indicators for The Economy and Employment:

Maintenance of Employment Allocations and Major Developed Employment Sites in the Green Belt; (*No loss of Employment Allocations and Major Developed Employment Sites in the Green Belt*)

Progress on Broom Hill development; (*Development completed within the Plan period*)

Change in Employment floor space in non allocated sites; (*No annual net loss of employment floor space across the District*).

# Supplementary Planning Document:

# Development in the Green Belt

Adopted February 2015



Local Plan

# 6. Non Residential Extensions, Replacement Buildings and Redevelopments

## 6. Non Residential Extensions, Replacement Buildings and Redevelopments

**6.1** Commercial buildings vary widely in form, size and function and a general floorspace increase allowance would not be appropriate or workable for the extension or replacement of non residential buildings.

**6.2** Instead, the Council will adopt a design based approach to assess proposals against the impact that they would have on Green Belt openness, as detailed within this chapter.

### Approach to considering non residential extensions and single replacement buildings

**6.3** Policy GB8 of the ADMP sets out how the Council will consider extensions to non residential buildings in the Green Belt. It states that:

#### POLICY GB8 - LIMITED EXTENSION TO NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN THE GREEN BELT

Proposals to extend an existing non-residential building within the Green Belt which would meet the following criteria will be permitted:

- a) the existing building is lawful and permanent in nature; and
- b) the design and volume of the proposed extension, taking into consideration the cumulative impact of any previous extensions, would be proportional and subservient to the 'original' building and would not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale, bulk or visual intrusion.

**6.4** Policy GB9 of the ADMP sets out how the Council will consider non residential replacement buildings in the Green Belt. It states that:

#### POLICY GB9 - REPLACEMENT OF A NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING IN THE GREEN BELT

Proposals to replace an existing non-residential building within the Green Belt which would meet the following criteria will be permitted:

- a) the existing building is lawful and permanent in nature;
- b) the design and volume of the proposed replacement building would not be materially larger than the 'original' building and would not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale, bulk or visual intrusion; and
- c) the replacement building would be within the same use as the building to be demolished.

## 6. Non Residential Extensions, Replacement Buildings and Redevelopments

### Lawfulness and permanence

**6.5** Criterion a) for both policies requires that the existing dwelling is lawful and permanent in nature.

**6.6** The term lawful means that planning permission was granted for the original construction of the building, that the building was constructed prior to the introduction of planning controls or that the building was constructed unlawfully but a certificate of lawfulness has since been granted.

**6.7** Criterion a) also requires the building to be permanent in nature. For the purpose of these policies, permanent in nature means it must be built on permanent solid foundations. Portacabins, caravans and mobile homes are not considered to be permanent buildings and are not considered to be entitled to rights to extend or be replaced under Policies GB8 or GB9.

### Consideration of volume, scale and bulk

**6.8** The volume, scale and bulk of an extension or replacement building should not result in a large, bulky or intrusive building which would adversely impact on the character of the countryside or the openness of the Green Belt.

**6.9** The impact of the development on the countryside is clearly greater if located in a highly visible location. However, the test of impact still applies even if there are limited or no public views of it as, if allowed, the argument could be repeated, with a potentially more serious cumulative impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the urbanisation of the countryside and for these reasons would be unacceptable. In some locations any extension or replacement building may be inappropriate.

**6.10** Where a development is acceptable in principle, its form should be well proportioned and present a satisfactory composition with the building. Rural buildings often have a simple form or may possess a visual symmetry which should not be significantly altered.

### Future use of a replacement building

**6.11** In order to comply with National Planning Guidance, criterion c) of Policy GB9 requires that the replacement building would be within the same use as the building to be demolished.

## 7. Previously Developed Brownfield Site Redevelopment

### 7. Previously Developed Brownfield Site Redevelopment

**7.1** Sevenoaks District has a number of historic previously developed brownfield sites within the Green Belt, including sites identified as Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt in the Core Strategy.

**7.2** Paragraph 89 (Bullet 6) of the NPPF considers exemptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, including:

*'limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development'.*

**7.3** In line with the NPPF the Council will consider redevelopment proposals of brownfield sites based on whether they would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The Council will consider the impact of proposals on a case by case basis and the unique circumstances of the site but in order to maintain the same impact on the openness of the Green Belt and fulfil its purpose, the Council would generally expect redevelopment proposals to:

- a. have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible have less;
- b. not exceed the height of the existing buildings; and
- c. not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings.

**7.4** The most relevant area for the purpose of (c) is the aggregate ground floor area of the existing buildings (the "footprint"), excluding temporary buildings, open spaces with direct external access between wings of a building, and areas of hardstanding. However the Council will consider alternative approaches to determining impact where there is justification to do so.

**7.5** The character and dispersal of proposed redevelopment will need to be considered as well as its footprint. For example many buildings may together have a much smaller footprint than a few large buildings, but may be unacceptable because the dispersal of the buildings and their curtilages over a large part of the site may have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt and its purposes.

**7.6** Proposals for protected employment sites and designated Major Developed Employment Sites in the Green Belt will also be subject to relevant policies contained in the ADMP and the Core Strategy, including Policy SP8 that seeks to protect existing employment sites.