



## SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL (SDC) LOCAL PLAN – WHERE ARE WE AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

On 7<sup>th</sup> July, Sevenoaks District Council's Cabinet unanimously voted to move the Regulation 19 version of its Local Plan forward. Residents are asking us what this means, what happens next and how they can continue to make their views known.

### What are Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 in Plain English?

Regulation 18 is the early consultation stage in local plan production, where the council publishes draft ideas or options and asks residents, businesses, and other stakeholders for feedback on what the plan should contain. Regulation 19 is the later, more formal stage, where the council publishes the draft plan it intends to submit for examination, and comments are limited to whether the plan is legally compliant and "sound".

- **Regulation 18** = "What should the plan include?" A broad, open consultation used to shape the plan.
- **Regulation 19** = "This is the draft plan we are proposing." It is a formal consultation on the near-final version before it goes to the Planning Inspectorate.

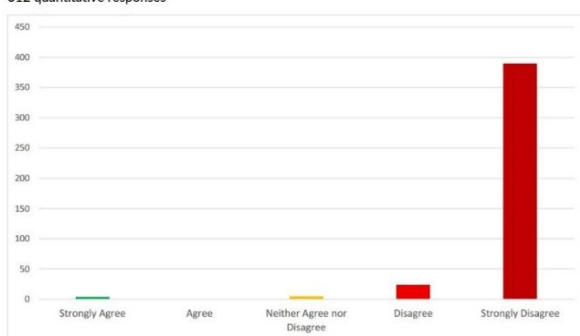
### Where Are We Now?

SDC's Regulation 18 consultation ran from 23/10/25 to 11/12/25. The Regulation 19 Plan was then released for consideration in June, approved for publication by the DIAC (Planning) Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> June and then by SDC Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> July. A formal consultation process will now take place between 23/7/26 and 17/9/26.

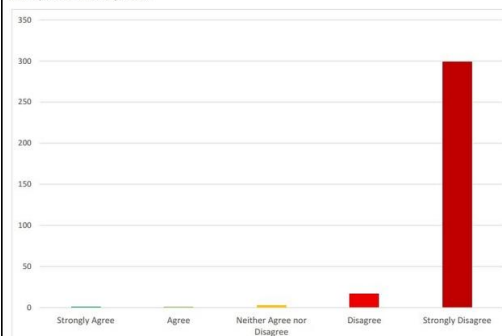
### What Happened During Regulation 18 Consultation?

At the Regulation 18 Consultation Stage 71% of respondents from across the whole district were against the Regulation 18 Plan. The feedback with reference to the two largest developments in or near Otford showed overwhelming opposition:

SEV24 – Land north of Sevenoaks, west of Otford Road  
312 quantitative responses



OT2 – Land west of Hale Lane, Otford  
298 quantitative responses



Despite the strength of local feeling about these sites, the number of houses proposed at the OT2 site (near Hale Lane) actually INCREASED from 150 to 203 in the Regulation 19 Plan.

### So Why Did SDC Push the Plan Forward Given the Views of Their Electors?

The Government has dramatically increased the number of houses that SDC's Local Plan needs to deliver. SDC cannot question this number and is obliged to produce a Local Plan that delivers it. If Sevenoaks District Council misses the government's housing target, the Secretary of State can intervene and SDC can lose control of the Local Plan. That makes it harder for the council to say "no" to housing schemes, especially on sites the council would rather keep protected.



## Why Does The Otford Protection Committee Disagree with this Approach?

### 1. A LOCAL PLAN ALONE DOES NOT PROTECT AGAINST SPECULATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Even when a District Council has a Local Plan in place, our District is **not** protected from speculative development. This is because the NPPF (National Planning) rules include a “Housing Delivery Test” referring to the percentage of homes delivered over the previous 3 year period. Three thresholds are listed, below 95%, below 85% and below 75%. Below the 75% level there is “**presumption in favour of sustainable development**”. Sevenoaks District Council’s delivery of housing over the last 3 years has been below 75% and hence even when a Local Plan is in place we are not protected.

### 2. DEMOCRACY IS BEING IGNORED

Residents have been very clear that they do not agree with the Local Plan, especially the huge developments on Green Belt. Rather than adjust the plan in line with feedback at Regulation 18, SDC has INCREASED the housing numbers proposed for local Green Belt Sites.

### 3. INFRASTRUCTURE CANNOT COPE

There are currently around 1,400 houses in Otford. The Local Plan proposes nearly 5,000 new houses within a few miles of the village. Our roads are already congested, we have failing water supplies and the pressure on local services is already extreme.

### 4. COULD IT BE WORSE?

It is hard to imagine a worse alternative for our historic village than the large scale destruction of Green Belt and infrastructure chaos than that proposed in the Local Plan. However, we do need to consider this and balance whether we want to endorse a disastrous plan at the risk of something worse happening. Approving the plan is likely to accelerate any large developments rather than delay them.

### 5. THE NATIONAL POLITICAL PICTURE

We have a new Prime Minister coming into office who is faced with huge opposition to the deeply unpopular policy of large scale building on Green Belt. He has also expressed a preference for increased council house building. The advantage of this is that it is more likely to take place on brownfield sites. In general private housing developers do not want to build on these sites as the cost of restoring brown field erodes the potential profitability. Most other political parties are opposed to the current proposals and hence delaying the plan gives a chance for policy changes at a Government level before large scale development moves forward.

## What Can You Do?

1. Respond to SDC’s Regulation 19 Formal Consultation which is due to start on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. It is very important to have a strong community response to the plan – encourage your family and neighbours.
2. Write to your Elected Representatives and tell them your views:  
Laura Trott – Local MP –  
Marc Logen – Kent County Councillor  
Irene Roy – Sevenoaks District Councillor  
Otford Parish Council – [clerk@otfordpc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@otfordpc.co.uk)
3. Respond to Otford Parish Council’s Survey, when this is available to make your views clear.
4. Donate to the Village Protection Fund to help with the cost of fighting the local developments:  
<https://otfordsociety.org.uk/donate>