

23 June 2022 at 7.00 pm

Council Chamber, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks

Published: 15.06.22



This meeting will be livestreamed to YouTube here:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIT1f_F50fvTzxjZk6Zqn6g.

Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee

Membership:

Chairman and Vice Chair: TBD

Cllrs. Abraham, Andrews, Bayley, Bonin, Clayton, Eyre, Fleming, Hogarth, McGregor, Nelson, Pett and Waterton

Agenda

There are no fire drills planned. If the fire alarm is activated, which is a continuous siren with a flashing red light, please leave the building immediately, following the fire exit signs.

	Pages	Contact
Apologies for Absence		
1. Appointment of Chairman		
2. Appointment of Vice Chairman		
3. Minutes To agree minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Committee held on 24 February 2022, as a correct record.	(Pages 1 - 4)	
4. Declarations of interest Any declarations not already registered.		
5. Actions from previous meeting (if any)		
6. Update from Portfolio Holder		
7. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit Committee (if any)		
8. Cyber Security	(Pages 5 - 8)	Amy Wilton Tel: 01732 227280
9. Welcome Back Fund Project Review	(Pages 9 - 40)	Detlev Munster Tel: 01732227099

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 10. | Sevenoaks District Draft Economic Development Strategy | (Pages 41 - 78) | Chris Burchell
Tel: 01732227136 |
| 11. | Work plan | (Pages 79 - 80) | |

EXEMPT INFORMATION

At the time of preparing this agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public.

If you wish to obtain further factual information on any of the agenda items listed above, please contact the named officer prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you need this agenda or any of the reports in a different format, or have any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact Democratic Services on 01732 227000 or democratic.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

IMPROVEMENT & INNOVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2022 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Bayley (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Bayley, Bonin, Eyre, McGregor, Nelson, Pett and Waterton

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Andrews and Hogarth

Cllr. Osborne-Jackson was also present.

32. Minutes

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting on 25 November 2021 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

33. Declarations of interest

There were none.

34. Actions form previous meeting

The Assistant Chief Executive gave an update to the committee on the Mental Health Strategy which was now available on the [Council's website](#).

35. Update from Portfolio Holder

Funding had been approved for various projects at Council (Budget) on 22 February 2022.

The Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Results had been made available and were to be presented to the Committee as Item 6 in the agenda.

The Council's Place Strategy was coming forward once more and would likely be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

36. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There are none

37. LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report

Agenda Item 3 Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee - 24 February 2022

The Assistant Chief Executive presented the report which outlined a summary of the LGA Peer Challenge findings.

The Peer Challenge took place between 29 November and 1 December 2021 and was conducted by a team of seven elected member and officer peers, drawn from across the Local Government sector. The report concluded with nine recommendations as set out below:

Recommendation 1: Build on recent place leadership work - consider developing a renewed, partnership-led, long-term vision for the district, residents and businesses

Recommendation 2: Complement the council's existing project-based community engagement work with more open, bottom-up, conversational approaches

Recommendation 3: Use service data and community networks to enhance the council's understanding of its diverse and emerging communities

Recommendation 4: Consider the optimum balance between the council's scale of ambition and availability of resources

Recommendation 5: Explore the scope for a managed increase in Quercus Housing's affordable housing delivery outputs

Recommendation 6: Consider the full range of options for additional modest-scale market value and affordable housing activity - 'massive small'

Recommendation 7: Review the external specialist skills to challenge viability appraisals and negotiate S106 agreements with developers

Recommendation 8: Use the council's influence to optimise the outcomes from the district's strategic development sites

Recommendation 9: Consider developing a proposition for inward investment and development as part of the emerging economic development strategy.

Once the final report had been received the Council would have six weeks to publish it. It was hoped that this would be taken to the Cabinet meeting in March 2022. After publication of the report the Council had a further eight weeks to publish their action plan. After a further six-month period, the LGA Team would return to review progress with the action plan and discuss any further support that the Council may welcome.

The Committee discussed the report.

In response to questions the Chairman established that the Council were looking into smaller parcels of land that the Council owned across the District which could be used for development. The Council were also working with West Kent Housing to improve the housing type imbalance in the district. The Chairman also confirmed that the Town Centre Strategy Meetings Consultation which formed part of the emerging local plan had been broadened to look at the future of the Districts High-Streets and New Ash Green.

Resolved: that Members

- (a) Give their thanks to the LGA Peer Challenge Team for giving their time and expertise in undertaking the peer review of the Council, and
- (b) the findings of the Peer Challenge and the nine recommendations as set out in this report be noted

38. Data analysis on Customer Interactions

The Head of Information and Customer Solutions and the Chief Officer Customer and Resources gave a presentation (see published tabled document) which updated the Committee on the results of data analysis of the Council's customer interactions.

Over the previous two years, the Council had seen a sustained increase in customer contact across a range of customer facing services. Whilst the pandemic had had a direct impact on the amount of customers contacting the Council, it was evident that growth in customer demand for Council services began before the pandemic took effect.

Through better use of data, IT and other technology capabilities the Council could continue to seek to meet residents' needs and expectations. Being more effective and more efficient, would allow the Council to create more capacity to meet current and future challenges.

The report presented a service restructure, which would bring together a number of key skills, such as data analytics, customer service expertise and web development in to a new team.

Members discussed the report.

In response to questions, it was noted that frontline staff required the right skills and tools to manage complex customer issues and enquiries. Data analytics would contribute towards this, to ensure the right skills and resources were allocated in the right places. Officers confirmed that there was a requirement to delve into the data and work with services to provide more innovative solutions. The Head of Information and Customer Solutions would bring a progress update to a future meeting of the committee.

Resolved: that the report be noted

Agenda Item 3
Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee - 24 February 2022

39. Work plan

The Work plan was noted with the following additions:

June 2022

- Capital Programme Update
- Cyber Security Update
- Asset Review
- Data Analytics on Customer Interactions Progress update

October 2022

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.42 PM

CHAIRMAN

CYBER SECURITY

Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee - 23 June 2022

Report of: Jim Carrington-West Chief Officer Customer & Resources

Status: For information

Key Decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Peter Fleming

Contact Officer: Amy Wilton, Ext. 7280

Recommendation to Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee: That the report be noted.

Reason for recommendation: the report is for information only.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Cyber Security is the protection of information systems (hardware, software and associated infrastructure), the data on them, and the services they provide, from unauthorised access, harm or misuse. This includes harm caused intentionally by the operator of the system, or accidentally, as a result of failing to follow security procedures.
- 2 Cyber security is important because smartphones, computers and the internet are now such a fundamental part of modern life, that it is difficult to imagine how we would function without them. From online banking and shopping, to email and social media, it is more important than ever to take steps that can prevent cyber criminals getting hold of our accounts, data, and devices.
- 3 The key thing to understand about cyber security defences is that they need to be layered and include a range of measures, from technology solutions to user education to effective policies.

Measures in place

- 4 The Council, through the IT Services team has membership through a number of organisations, enabling access to a wider set of resources to strengthen our defence against cyber attacks.
- 5 A number of cyber security services are utilised through a range of organisations and internally.
- 6 The Council has been successful in applying for cyber security funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This

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funding has enabled us to identify a number of areas for investment, which will strengthen our defences and reduce our risk.

- 7 Training has been rolled out across the organisation, with mandatory e-learning developed by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) provided for all Council staff. In addition, key personnel have undertaken more in depth training tailored to specific roles within the organisation, to enhance the management of the Council's cyber security approach.
- 8 Independent external audits have been completed in the last 12 months, specifically looking at the Council's cyber security planning. The outcomes of these audits have provided valuable advice to focus resources internally.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications to this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal or risk implications related to this report.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.]

Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment

Conclusions

The report is for information only and Members are requested to note the report.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

Jim Carrington-West

Chief Officer Customer & Resources

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WELCOME BACK FUND PROJECT REVIEW

Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee - 23 June 2022

Report of: Detlev Munster, Strategic Head of Commercial and Property

Status: For Consideration

Also considered by:

- People & Places Advisory Committee - 14 June 2022

Key Decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Lesley Dyball

Contact Officer: Emily Haswell, Ext. 7261

Recommendation to People and Places Committee and Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee

The Committee is asked to note the successful delivery of the Reopening High Streets Safely/Welcome Back fund and the positive impact the interventions have had across the District.

Recommendation to Cabinet

To note the successful delivery of the Reopening High Streets Safely/Welcome Back fund and the positive impact the interventions have had across the District.

Reason for recommendation:

The Reopening High Streets Safely/Welcome Back fund has concluded with £212,383 of funding providing direct support to the Town and Village centres across the District during the Covid pandemic. 99% of the allocated funding was used with 100% of the claims paid in full, the project has therefore successfully contributed to the mitigation of negative impacts of the pandemic by supporting businesses, residents and visitors in Town and Village centres across the District.

Introduction and Background

- 1 In June 2020, the government announced the Reopening High Streets Safely fund (RHSSF) allocation for Local Authorities. The initial allocation for Sevenoaks District was £107,106. As this was part of European funding (ERDF), it was subject to strict delivery guidance and restricted expenditure

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eligibility. Eligible disbursements were financed by the Council in advance of claiming back finance from Central Government.

- 2 In order to access funding, the Council had to produce an action plan demonstrating key activities and this was agreed as part of the Grant Funding Agreement. This had to be completed at pace to get projects up and running due to the nature of the pandemic and the negative effects on the High Streets and Town Centres.
- 3 A cross-departmental working group was formed and met regularly to produce and deliver an agreed action plan. Initially the focus was on supporting safety in the High Streets. Key interventions included: purchase of hand sanitiser stations, production and delivery of a business pack for traders as well as communication activity to reinforce safety messaging.
- 4 The programme of activity had to be responsive to the fast changing environment (due to constantly changing restrictions) with the key aim of supporting high street safety and recovery. The key activity themes throughout were communication with businesses and traders, communication with the public and temporary public realm changes and support.

Achievements

- 5 A list of project achievements can be found in Appendix A, along with two communication campaign reviews. Interventions included safety signage, a temporary road closure as well as the production and delivery of business packs providing reopening and safety information for Town centre businesses. In December 2020, a High Street project officer was recruited to oversee delivery of the scheme.
- 6 In March 2021, the RHSSF timeframe was extended and became known as the Welcome Back Fund, with an additional allocation. This provided an opportunity to extend activities to encompass a much wider geographical area and also increased eligible activities to focus more on beautification and encouraging visitors back to Town Centres.
- 7 The key to success in delivering the Welcome Back fund has been the need to work collaboratively with Town and Parish Councils to ensure that the Fund supported all areas in the District. Responsibility for project delivery and financial claims remained with the District Council; this was important as the project was funded 'at risk' so all expenditure was made and then reclaimed. All Town and Parish Councils were consulted and invited to submit a list of interventions for their area. The key criteria remained in place such as proving additionality, the need to ensure all interventions were temporary and interventions occurred in the key activity areas.

All four Town Councils received support along with 23 Parish Councils ensuring that the reach of the funding was maximised. 4 Parish Council's declined to be involved (Cowden, Weald, Hextable, Kemsing).

- 8 This was a complex project to be delivered at pace, within a period of fast changing Government restrictions meaning it had to remain agile. The successful delivery of not only the activities but the administration of complicated financial claims is testament to the Council's team approach to delivery. In particular, cross departmental engagement ensured most efficient use of funds and expertise. Early partner engagement also contributed to the scheme's successful implementation.
- 9 Each of the seven financial claims submitted were paid in full meaning that there was no negative financial impact on the Council. This is a significant achievement given the scheme's complex eligibility and procurement criteria, as well as the financial evidence requirements. There was also very stringent programme and contract monitoring by the funders which increased the Council's management burden.. At the end of the project period in March 2022, 99% of the finance allocated to Sevenoaks District was spent, a total of £212,383.68.

Next Steps

- 10 The success of the Welcome Back fund has demonstrated the advantages of delivering Town Centre Management and interventions at a District level. Research funded by the Welcome Back Fund added to the recent 'Town Centre Strategy' report, which forms part of the emerging Local Plan evidence base. The report outlines potential interventions to support Town Centres providing a framework for future activities, which will also link to the actions in the emerging Economic Development strategy (2022-2027). The UK Shared Prosperity Fund, recently announced by the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities, has a focus on developing places through supporting business, communities and skills. Proposed investments around Town Centres and place will benefit from the learning that delivery of RHSSF and the Welcome Back fund has provided.

Other options Considered and/or rejected

The offer of finance to spend on Town Centres could have been declined by the Council if felt it was too resource intensive, but that approach would not have supported the Town Centres through the difficult times of the pandemic, so was not considered to be an appropriate course of action.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications to note as the project has been delivered with the external finance provided and all claims have been met in full meaning no risk to Council finances. Additional staffing was funded from the allocation via temporary contract meaning no onward financial implication. There is an ongoing requirement for document retention for audit purposes, which will be managed

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from within existing economic development team resource so no financial implication.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications to note.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment

In addition items recommended to the Parishes were all recycled items adhering to the District Net Zero commitments.

Conclusions

The Committee is asked to note the successful delivery of this programme, the achievements made and how this has informed future Town Centre Management for the District.

Appendices

Appendix A - RHSSF and WBF list of achievements

Appendix B - Sevenoaks RHSSF End of campaign report - Spring 2021

Appendix C - Sevenoaks RHSSF End of campaign report - Winter 2021/22

Detlev Munster

Strategic Head of Commercial and Property

RHSSF and WBF- list of Achievements

Activity	Number
Town centre Project officer (Dec 20- March22)	1 post created initially FT then PT
Hand sanitizer stations purchased situated in the four town centres	6 + 6 replacements and at additional pinch points
Safety signage in place in Town Centres initially in Sevenoaks, Westerham, Edenbridge & Swanley, then offered to all Parish councils – taken up by New Ash Green, Hollybush & St Johns areas Sevenoaks, Otford, Brasted, Chiddingstone, Shoreham, Riverhead, Chevening, Shoreham, Eynsford, Hartley, Knockholt, Horton Kirby, Dunton Green, Crockenhill.	600 x lamppost signs 4 Town Centres & 15 parishes 40 x bollard covers Edenbridge (first lockdown) 50 x pavement adhesive signs Edenbridge (first lockdown)
Road closure to provide capacity for outside dining Bank St, Sevenoaks - supporting 6 food & beverage businesses which had little if any other outside space	1 temporary closure
Business packs produced and delivered to all town centre traders	2 x 200 packs, also online
Public information campaigns completed <i>Reopening the High Streets Safely</i> Apr 2021 <i>Hospitality</i> May 21 <i>Live Eat Breathe</i> Sevenoaks Nov 21 <i>Show Local Some Love</i> Christmas 21 and rolled over to Jan-February 2022 due to Omicron restrictions	4 (see separate analysis in end of campaign reports)
Business facing campaigns completed On line support page on SDC website Town Centre newsletters Briefings for Town centre ambassadors Sevenoaks Town Loyalty scheme	4
Benches and Seating provided Edenbridge, Westerham, Otford, Dunton Green, Crockenhill, Eynsford, Fawkham, Hartley, Hever, Halstead, Dunton Green, Ash cum Ridley, West Kingsdown, Seal, Brasted, Riverhead	15 Town/ Parish centres
Buildings decorated with graphics (seasonal safety messaging and supporting Town Trail to encourage visitors) SDC offices, Tesco's building x2	1 x shop once 1x shop twice 1 x small window graphics
Events supported Farmers Markets plume flags, Farningham, Ide Hill & Sundridge	4
Additional cleaning / beautification / graffiti removal Swanley, Edenbridge	2
Business training delivered Westerham to all interested businesses	2 programmes delivered
Additional bins provided Swanley, Sundridge, Shoreham, Westerham, Edenbridge	17
Signage and maps Eynsford, West Kingsdown, Sevenoaks	3
Planters Badgers Mount, Swanley, Chiddingstone & Leigh, Chevening, Sevenoaks, Penshurst, Riverhead	Approx. 20 across 6 areas
Photography to support communication campaigns	4 occasions

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APENDIX A

Research / surveys completed Sevenoaks x 2	2
Pilot projects supported Sevenoaks	1

Reopening High Street Safely Fund

End of campaign report
July 2021

Background on the project

From the outset, the main objective of the RHSS team were to reassure the public that the town centres and other shopping areas of the Sevenoaks district were safe and open for business. It was also important to remind shoppers and visitors of the need for continued safe behaviour, and to bring visitors back to the four main shopping centres of Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Swanley and Westerham.

We were able to deliver a comprehensive marketing plan to support high street businesses by promoting town centres and shopping areas as welcoming and safe places to spend money, while responding to government guidance at all times.

The project team devised a virtual festival for the district to showcase the different businesses in each of the four high streets. Traders would either be filmed or film themselves showcasing their business and introducing the products, services and people to potential shoppers. The videos would be shared on YouTube from 12th April through to June and supported by a comprehensive social media, press and advertising strategy to encourage shares, engagement and incremental participation from further businesses.

Activity was split into two phases to coincide with the easing of lockdown restrictions and to benefit different local businesses.



Phase one

To tie into the reopening of retail and outdoor hospitality on 12th April, we launched the first phase of the Reopening High Street Safely campaign in Sevenoaks. This involved the creation of business videos which we rolled out on YouTube and social media, as well as graphics and messaging to support safety in the town centres.

Summary of activity

- Outreach to businesses across the district's four high streets to register interest in RHSS activity
- Creation of a filming and promotional guide circulated
- Creation and procurement of 11 videos, and creation of a new YouTube channel featuring the promotional videos
- 1 x master edit of videos to cover all retail businesses in the district
- Advertorial content to support the videos for two weeks across the local media, with supporting blog content for the council website and press releases for editorial opportunities
- Creation of an e-newsletter to key stakeholders, businesses and residents to promote the return to the high street and profile the participating businesses
- Weekly catch up meetings to review stats, uptake and direction of the content in line with Government guidelines.

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Phase two

As hospitality businesses reopened on 17th May, we chose to capitalise on the growing confidence and interest in visiting town centres and created a fresh batch of video, social media and press content featuring local hospitality businesses.

Summary of activity

- 16 new videos featuring Sevenoaks' hospitality businesses and interview with key team members, as well as teaser videos
- Suite of graphics and assets for social media/web/print media to promote 'Book Your Table' message
- Advertorial features in the local media
- Press release summarising key quotes and messages to the public
- Resharing of phase one content to build momentum and interest

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Business involvement in the RHSS campaign

22 retail and hospitality businesses across the district signed up to participate in the RHSS campaign.

Hospitality businesses:

- The Anchor, Sevenoaks
- Malabar Coffee House, Sevenoaks
- Brisket & Barrel, Sevenoaks
- The Olive Tree, Otford
- The Old Eden, Edenbridge
- The Courtyard, Westerham
- Piccalilly's Café, Swanley
- Dulce's Patisserie, Sevenoaks
- The Restoration, Sevenoaks
- Napoli é, Westerham
- The Minstrel, Edenbridge
- King & Queen, Edenbridge

Retail businesses:

- Knobbly Knees Deli & Eco Shop, Sevenoaks
- Schmidt Sevenoaks
- The Springbank Clinic, Sevenoaks
- Entre Nous Lingerie, Westerham
- Flowerworks of Swanley
- County Clothes, Sevenoaks
- Lennox Cato Antiques & Works of Art, Edenbridge
- The Vintage Home Company, Westerham
- Swanley Pet Centre
- Manuka Shoes, Westerham



Feedback from businesses and the public

While we were out filming, we received lots of positive feedback from the businesses about Sevenoaks District Council and the support it has given to the high streets through this campaign. Positive comments included Pat at Manuka Shoes, Maria at The Vintage Home Company and Jane at Entre Nous Lingerie.

Businesses have also shared their thanks for letting them be involved and praised the quality of the videos that have been produced. Positive comments included Barry at The Anchor, Julia at Malabar Coffee, Rebecca at Piccalilly's Café and Debbie at Napoli é.

The YouTube videos and social media posts have also received some extremely positive engagement, with people sharing their support for the businesses and saying it has made them want to visit the businesses.

“Thank you so much for including us in this project!”

“Thank you Jane and all of the ambassador team for the amazing work you do. The Community Cupboard absolutely could not have managed to support the hundreds of families throughout the pandemic without you. Your dedication to your jobs is outstanding and always with a smiling face. Sevenoaks District Council Official you are amazing!”

“What a lovely place – definitely going to pop in there!”

“Thank you for this initiative SDC. It helps increase the profile of small independents like us ”

“Oooo my favourite shop in town. Amy is lovely and so helpful and friendly. You really need to go in and see her and all the lovely local products she stocks”

“I went in there for the first time last week. Lovely selection of high quality items and yummy treats!”

“Great video well done to all involved.”

Impact of the RHSS campaign

The RHSS Fund enabled the council to engage with businesses and obtain quality digital content that conveyed stakeholders' unique services, stories and characters in a format that was easily accessible – and recognisable – to the public. The activity not only allowed us to share safety messages to the public in a variety of formats, but also re-introduced the district's high street businesses to them in a positive light.

Businesses felt supported and engaged with the council, and could see provision was being made to boost their marketing and profile both locally and further afield. Consumers were also given clear, positive information and reassurance about being able to return to the high streets safely. As the videos featured contained messages from real people they could see and hear from virtually, consumers could better identify and empathise with the need to support local.



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YouTube video performance

As a platform for our campaign, we set up a dedicated YouTube channel - Shop Eat Drink Breathe Local, from which to share our videos.

6,100 video views since channel launch.

Over **11,000** video impressions with a **5%** click through rate.

20th May was the best day for video views, with a total of **470 views** on that day.

Facebook is the top performing traffic source, it contributes to **88%** of your total external traffic.

15 channel subscribers.

The Anchor video has received the most views with a total of **821 views** to date.



Summary

With 6,100 video views so far to date, aided by supportive social media content and advertising campaigns, the campaign to promote Reopening High Streets Safely successfully reached a very large audience and engaged with residents about the benefits and ease of supporting the district's town centres.

The campaign's creative outputs encouraged people to spend time and money within the town centres of Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Swanley and Westerham, and reassured the public that the necessary safety measures were in place, as businesses were also shown support from Sevenoaks District Council.

Our RHSS activity took place from the end of March until June 2021, across key reopening dates including non-essential retail and indoor hospitality and was a great collaborative effort with the Sevenoaks District Council teams. This was not only a successful campaign, but a great example of creative collaborative campaign work for a district and it has potential to be held up as a leading example of the RHSS scheme.

Looking ahead, the Welcome Back Fund provides Sevenoaks District Council with the opportunity to push the successes achieved with the business videos further in a new campaign.



Thank you

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Sevenoaks Welcome Back Fund

End of campaign report



Background on the project

Ahead of Christmas 2021, Sevenoaks District Council was looking to deliver a campaign to encourage local residents and out-of-area visitors to support retail, leisure and hospitality businesses within the district and in particular those in our town centres.

The campaign was implemented across multiple channels, but will focus on digital advertising, with communications produced and delivered to appropriate audiences.

The activity was funded by the Welcome Back Fund and built on the work conducted under the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (RHSSF). The main aim of the campaign was to offset the turbulence experienced by the retail, leisure and hospitality sector throughout COVID-19 restrictions.

Our activity

Our campaign took place in December 2021 and February 2022, encouraging people to support local particularly around Christmas and Valentine's Day. We ensured our campaign reflected government guidance at all times.

Summary of activity:

- Outreach to businesses across the direct to register interest in WBF activity.
- Creation of two videos – 1 x young professionals / 1 x families.
- Creation of 24 social media graphics sized for each platform (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram).
- Strategy and deployment of paid social and PPC campaigns.
- Procurement of digital advertising across KentOnline & partner sites, including MailOnline, Evening Standard and METRO, and creation of ads.
- Advertorial content for InShape magazine.
- Design and installation of window vinyls in Sevenoaks town centre.
- Weekly catch up meetings to review progress and performance, as well as ensuring our messaging reflected the latest government advice.

Videos

To showcase the varied appeal of the Sevenoaks district, we created two videos to support our social media campaign.

- One targeting young professionals – 146 views on YouTube / 225 views on Instagram.
- One targeting families – 134 views on YouTube / 105 views on Instagram.

These videos included key destinations from across the district including retail businesses, restaurants, pubs and heritage attractions.



Social media graphics

To support both our paid and organic social media campaigns, we also created a selection of creative assets to showcase the wonderful businesses across the district.

These graphics were centred around the tagline of 'Show Local Some Love'. We adopted a more festive approach ahead of Christmas and also refreshed the graphics to tie into Valentine's Day in February.



Social media | Facebook

Facebook	Dec-21		Feb-22		Increase Feb compared to Dec	
	Organic	Paid	Organic	Paid	Organic	Paid
Reach	7,138	50,948	9,898	61,662	+ 39%	+21%
Link Clicks	4	49	14	456	+ 250%	+ 831%
Likes	63	10	127	23	+ 102%	+ 130%
Comments	16	0	13	2	- 19%	-
Shares	20	0	13	4	- 35%	-
Total Engagements	244	59	376	485	+ 54%	+722%
Engagement Rate	3.42%	0.12%	3.80%	0.79%	+ 11%	+ 579%

We have compiled data for the months of December and February when the social media paid adverts were live and when we were posting organically on the Sevenoaks District Council page.

You can see from the results above that paid had a significant impact in awareness due to the high number of profiles reached. Overall engagements were very good, on both organic and paid social posts. Organic posts tend to do better with engagements as the audience you're reaching out to is a group that follows your page, whereas paid reaches brand new people.

The engagement rate for organic posts is considerably higher than the industry average of 0.13% for the platform.

Top engaged post organically – 11th February – which reached a total of 2,430 accounts, received 90 reactions, 6 shares and 14 clicks on the website.

Social media | Instagram

Instagram	Dec-21		Feb-22		Increase Feb compared to Dec	
	Organic	Paid	Organic	Paid	Organic	Paid
Reached	1,116	39,861	2,537	34,270	+ 127%	- 14%
Link Clicks	0	21	0	129	-	+ 514%
Likes	76	17	96	23	+ 26%	+35%
Comments	1	0	3	1	+ 200%	-
Shares	0	3	8	3	-	0%
Total Engagements	77	41	107	156	+ 39%	+ 280%
Engagement Rate	6.90%	0.10%	4.22%	0.46%	- 38.84%	+ 360%

Similar to Facebook, the paid adverts saw a very high number of profiles reached, which is fantastic for awareness of the Sevenoaks district. Reached accounts on organic posts saw a 127% increase in February, compared to December. Overall engagements also saw a very healthy increase in February compared to December on both organic and paid adverts which is great to see.

Engagement rate was high for organic posts in both December and February. The engagement rate was lower for the paid campaign, but we saw a 360% increase in February compared to December.

Top engaged post organically – 9th February which reached a total of 301 accounts, received 18 reactions, 1 comment and 2 shares.

Social media | Twitter

Instagram	Dec-21	Feb-22	Increase Feb compared to Dec
	Organic	Organic	Organic
Impressions	4,118	5,841	+41.84%
Likes	30	38	+ 26.67%
Retweets	13	23	+ 76.92%
Replies	0	2	-
Link clicks	10	2	- 80%
Total Engagements	110	109	- 0.91%
Engagement Rate	2.67%	1.87%	- 29.96%

We didn't run any paid campaigns on Twitter, but did share organic content, which performed well for the duration of the campaign. Impressions, likes and retweets all saw healthy increases in February, compared with December.

While the engagement rate decreased in February, compared with December, across both months the engagement rate is significantly higher than the industry average of 0.6%, which is extremely positive. Link clicks also dipped in February, but that was largely because we were no longer directing people to the landing page.

Top engaged post organically – 14th December generated 1,148 impressions, 8 likes and 2 retweets.

Pay per click (PPC) performance

We have broken the campaign out into targeted audiences, the table on the left are those who live in London and Kent (excluding Sevenoaks District) and the table on the right hand side are those who live in the Sevenoaks district only.

As you can see the Kent/London audience campaign performed better in terms of impression, clicks and cost per click.

A healthy cost per click is under £0.30 and as you can see ads shown to people in the area of Sevenoaks were quite expensive, where as those living in Kent and London saw cheaper cost per click.

CTR was healthy across both audience groups, the average CTR on these types of ads is 2%, which means all months apart from December for Kent/London audience were above the industry average.

PPC - Kent/London	Dec-21	Feb-22
Impressions	15,300	12,500
Clicks	260	507
CPC	£0.27	£0.17
CTR	1.70%	4.07%

PPC - Sevenoaks	Dec-21	Feb-22
Impressions	1,840	2,350
Clicks	77	202
CPC	£1.00	£0.40
CTR	4.19%	8.61%

Digital advertising

Standard digital format advertising across KentOnline & partner sites, including MailOnline, Evening Standard and METRO.

We booked 440,000 page impressions across two ad sets – one for a local audience and one for wider Kent/London audience.

- Page impressions served: 1,027,770 (more than double what we paid for)
- Total clicks: 586
- CTR: 0.057% (national average is 0.04%)

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Ads included Leaderboard, Mobile, MPU and Skyscraper formats.

InShape Magazine

We produced a full-page advertorial for the winter edition of InShape Magazine, which included content and design.

InShape magazine is Sevenoaks District Council's quarterly magazine which is delivered direct to homes and businesses.

Show Local Some Love This Christmas

Whether it's visiting Sevenoaks' lively pubs for a festive celebration, picking up a unique Christmas gift in Edenbridge's historic high street, getting all your essentials at Swanley's bustling market or dining in one of Westerham's independent eateries, the district is packed with things to do this December. Our town centres offer a festive experience like nowhere else.

We are lucky to have such an amazing selection of hard-working businesses across our district and our town centres are a vital part of our community.

It is important for residents and visitors to feel safe in our high streets this winter. We encourage everyone to help protect themselves and others by wearing face coverings in crowded places, washing or sanitising hands frequently and taking regular lateral flow tests.

What better gift than to show them some love this Christmas?

The campaign is part of activity delivered with the Welcome Back Fund.

Festive Inspiration



Stock up on Christmas dinner essentials at T. Allman's Butchers in Edenbridge



Choose from a selection of stylish ladieswear and accessories at Grace Sevenoaks



Enjoy craft beers and artisan gins on a winter evening at The Cotton Mill, Swanley



Treat yourself or a loved one to a festive wreath or bouquet from Posy and Wild, Westerham



@sevenoaksdc

@sevenoaksdistrictcouncil

@SDC_newsdesk

Window vinyls

We designed and installed winter-themed window vinyls for a building in the Sevenoaks town centre, to encourage people to support local.



Above you can see example visuals of the window vinyls.

Thank you



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SEVENOAKS DISTRICT DRAFT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee - 23 June 2022

Report of: Strategic Head Property & Commercial

Status: For Decision

Also considered by:

- Cabinet 7 July 2022
- People & Places Advisory Committee - 14 June 2022

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary: The following report presents a new refreshed draft Economic Development Strategy for Sevenoaks District covering the period 2022-2027. This is a key period for economic recovery and the new strategy incorporates a strong vision and action plan to ensure that the local economy grows in a dynamic, sustainable and inclusive way.

Whilst a number of the strategic priorities identified in the previous strategy remain relevant, the exceptional economic environment and the importance of transitioning to Net Zero means some new priorities and projects are included.

The Strategy will be very closely aligned and integrated with the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan once agreed.

Portfolio Holder: Cllrs. Peter Fleming & Lesley Dyball

Contact Officer: Chris Burchell, Economic Development & Programmes Manager Ext 7136

Recommendation to People and Places Advisory Committee: That it be recommended to Cabinet that Cabinet agrees to adopt the Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027 included in this Report in Appendix A.

Recommendation to Cabinet: That the Cabinet agrees to adopt the Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027 included in this Report in Appendix A.

Reason for recommendation: Officers believe that The Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027 presented in the Report provides the right delivery framework for sustainable economic growth in the future. This has been endorsed by Members and takes account of an extensive consultation process with local businesses and town and parish councils.

Introduction and Background

1. The Council's existing Economic Development Strategy covered the period 2018-2021. Members agreed that many of the key elements in that Strategy remained relevant, but with the considerable economic changes brought about by Covid-19, the opportunities emerging from the recently published Levelling Up White Paper and the need to plan for a transition to a green economy, a new refreshed and ambitious seven-year Strategy to meet these challenges is required.
2. In general, prior to the pandemic, the economy in Sevenoaks District has performed relatively well with high levels of productivity, good business survival rates, an increasing number of enterprises in the knowledge economy and a relatively resilient retail sector. However, Gross Value Added (GVA - which broadly measures the total value of goods and services in the economy) increased very little between 2018-2019. Future economic performance might be threatened by a limited supply of employment land, skills gaps and the availability of affordable housing.
3. The draft strategy is included in this report under Appendix A and provides a suggested framework to deliver sustainable economic growth for the future.

The Strategy includes the following overarching vision

'Our vision is for Sevenoaks District to have a dynamic and inclusive growing economy for our businesses, communities and visitors that is kind to the environment, and contributes to the health and well-being of all our residents and supports our commitment to achieving Net Zero carbon emissions by the Council by 2030'

4. In developing the Strategy, a number of key drivers were considered as providing the context for setting out our strategic priorities in 5 below and these include:
 - The challenges in recovering from the pandemic with economic uncertainty arising from high inflation, rising business costs, a tight labour market and the longer term impact of Brexit
 - The opportunities arising from new hybrid working practices and the potential to capture new spending patterns, new investment and business start-ups
 - The significant drivers transitioning to a Net Zero economy with opportunities to develop and harness new skills and technologies, create new jobs and enhance our natural environment
 - The challenges of operating in a highly competitive bidding environment, but also the opportunities emerging from the allocation to the District of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund ('UKSPF') and the importance of fully aligning the Strategy with the Investment Plan once agreed.

- Opportunities in a new fresh approach to the West Kent Partnership
5. The five Strategic priorities highlighted below were also informed by reference to the promises made in the Council's Plan and an updated SWOT analysis.
- **Environmental sustainability** - with key objectives covering: economic opportunities transitioning to a green economy; securing health and well-being for residents; enhancing the ecological health of our natural environment and embracing the 15-minute community concept
 - **Skills Resilience and job opportunities** - with objectives covering: the delivery of a skilled workforce meeting the key drivers of digitisation; decarbonisation, demographic change and new working practices; providing residents with lifelong learning opportunities; a skills landscape that meets the needs of employers and one that fosters equality of opportunity.
 - **Business Resilience and growth objectives** - with objectives covering: business start-up and scale up support, increased research & development investment, inward investment, international trade and a local procurement programme.
 - **Infrastructure first** - with objectives covering: the support and facilitation of enhanced full fibre broadband investment, 5G networks and modal shift through the adoption of our Movement Strategy.
 - **West Kent Partnership** - with objectives covering: working in partnership to increase the amount of external funding secured, the delivery of local skills projects, increasing the level of business communications and supporting the rural economy

Economic Development Delivery Plan

6. To ensure our strategic priorities are met, we have identified four key focus areas that provide the key actions within our delivery plan. This is likely to be adapted and modified as we finalise our UKSPF Investment Plan. Also included are our key performance indicators and the key partners who will be essential in helping us meet these objectives. The project delivery areas are:

Focus Area One - Business & Enterprise

7. We have a key aim in '***getting to know our businesses better and understanding their needs***'. Whilst Sevenoaks District has one of the highest GVA per Job indicators in Kent (a key measure of productivity in the economy), we hope to see more enterprises engage with business support, to celebrate their successes and provide an attractive environment for new company start-ups. The successful launch of the Swanley Business Hub in the autumn of 2022 will support a wider initiative to connect a number of private and public sector hubs across the West Kent region.

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8. There will also be a strong emphasis on inward investment promotion and export development and increasing the opportunities for local companies to bid for Council business as part of a local procurement programme.
9. Through the Strategy, we will support the wider ambitions for Net Zero within the Council with an emphasis on helping local businesses to access funding and advice to de-carbonise and therefore contributing to reducing those emissions caused by commercial operations.

Focus Area Two - Tourism and Rural

10. These remain key sectors for the District. We will focus on increasing the opportunities for rural diversification supported by more affordable housing, improved local infrastructure, better broadband and telephony coverage, and where possible supporting the conversion of rural buildings for alternative uses. We also hope to facilitate and encourage nature recovery and biodiversity enhancements through planning policy and in collaboration with our local network of landowners.
11. We will build on an already successful visitor economy through maximising the promotion and exposure of the District through our Place Campaign (which it must be stressed is not limited to this sector but will positively impact the whole Strategy). We will facilitate familiarisation trips for key influencers and support the delivery of niche visitor products to meet the needs of specific demographic groups. There is an excellent opportunity to work with the Visitor Economy Forum on increasing the accommodation offer and resilience of local tourism businesses.

Focus Area Three - Town Centres

12. There have been substantial shifts in the nature and functioning of high streets. We will consider the results of the recently published Town Centre Strategy and in combination with new planning rules, there is the opportunity to bring a more diverse range of uses in our key centres. The Council will seek to secure funding for a number of suggested public realm enhancements and a suitable model such as a town steering group to co-ordinate and help expand the cultural and arts offer for the District to build on the legacy of the Welcome Back Fund. As part of the Place Campaign, we will encourage local residents to buy local and explore the potential of a Sevenoaks Trade Mark for local provenance.

Focus Area Four - Skills & Employment

13. Improving local skills provision will be a key instrument for levelling up and improving equalities across the District. Priority will be given to working with colleagues in the Department for Work & Pensions on supporting events and initiatives to assist job seekers through careers fairs, apprenticeships and trainee programmes. We also have a number of outline proposals to deliver local innovative skills projects including the Growth Gurus Community Hub

initiative alongside lifelong learning, intergenerational knowledge sharing and retrofitting training.

The delivery of the Enterprise Adviser Network will transfer to The Education People ('TEP') from September, so schools' engagement work will continue, but we are also exploring opportunities to support enterprise for young people such as through the Children's Business Fair organisation.

Partnerships

14. Sevenoaks District does not work in isolation so in order to deliver the Strategy, we will harness the strong relationships we have in our partner network and develop new ones to:
 - Collaborate on bids and funding opportunities through sharing expertise and best practice
 - Providing referrals to business support partners
 - Joint events to maximise opportunities and to make them viable
 - To co-ordinate promotional activities
15. The Strategy provides a range of partners that can contribute to our ambition, and include the following organisations:
 - Kent County Council
 - The Parish and Town councils
 - Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce
 - The West Kent Partnership
 - Kent & Medway Economic Partnership/South East LEP
 - Locate in Kent
 - Invicta Chamber of Commerce
 - Kent & Medway Growth Hub
 - Federation of Small Businesses
 - Visit Kent
 - Produced In Kent

Measuring and Monitoring

16. The Strategy includes a dashboard of measures that will help us to monitor on-going trends in the economy and our performance against the Delivery Plan. Some of these measures are only available yearly, so we will produce an annual Sevenoaks economic report that will report on these measures and other developments in the local economy. We will also ensure we meet the reporting needs of the UKSPF Investment Plan.

Consultation

17. It was agreed with the Leader of the Council and Lead Member for People & Places, that we would consult on the Strategy with the local business community via a series of focus groups prior to the Strategy going through the

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Committee cycle (these meetings also provided an opportunity to discuss potential UKSPF projects). Three successful focus groups took place on March 30 and 31st March and a special Sevenoaks Business Board meeting on the 13th April. A further focus group took place with the Town and Parish Councils on Thursday 28th April. In addition, individual meetings took place with the CEO of Heaver Castle and General Manager of Peshurst Place to gain their views.

18. The focus groups included a very broad range of businesses across a spectrum of sectors that ensured that a number of different views and perspectives were captured. Officers were encouraged that in general businesses were very supportive and in agreement with the vision in the Strategy, our strategic objectives and our key areas of focus. A number commented that they saw Sevenoaks District Council as being pro-business, having provided valuable support and signposting, but felt that we needed to 'shout about' this more so that more businesses benefit (the Place Campaign was highlighted as a good opportunity to do this)
19. In summary the key points raised by the groups were as follows and although officers are confident that a number of these are already addressed in the Strategy, some changes or increased emphasis resulting from these points is now included:
 - a. Economic growth must be inclusive so that all our residents benefit and there was particular emphasis on the importance of health & well-being of employees within businesses and within the wider community that they are a part of. Sporting activity and local sports organisations were highlighted as a real asset to the District, but one that is not fully appreciated.
 - b. Although inward investment activity was encouraged, priority should be given to supporting existing businesses to grow and scale up particularly as they are in a process of recovery with increasing challenges in the costs of doing business. Comments were made on the importance of the right kind of employment space (and protecting that space) to meet their current and future needs.
 - c. We need to celebrate the diversity and achievements of our local businesses more regularly and more widely.
 - d. For a number of sectors present recruitment and skills shortages are acute, so helping to match local people with jobs and to support up-skilling initiatives needs to be a priority
 - e. The future of our town centres was discussed and it was important that the Strategy did not appear 'Sevenoaks' centric. Projects to increase footfall and maximise dwell time were encouraged and it was recognised that there was an opportunity to develop more non-traditional uses for retail units through the planning system. Importance was also given to the role of culture and creative industries in our key centres and an opportunity was identified to capitalise on the relocation of a number of London artists locally and raising the profile of cultural activities significantly.
 - f. The Rural Economy needed to be clearly defined and understood. A number of representatives from the sector stressed how vital affordable housing and adequate rural transport infrastructure is to the future resilience and

vibrancy of rural communities and to support new revenue streams for landowners.

- g. All recognised the huge advantages the district has in its natural environment and this needs to be capitalised on for well-being, boosting biodiversity and place promotion
- h. The Strategy needs to be clear 'why we are doing what we are doing'.

Other options Considered and/or rejected

- 20. Consideration was given to refreshing and re-framing the existing strategy, but given reasons outlined in paragraph 1, it was considered necessary to undertake a “deeper” refresh.
- 21. A further option considered was to delay the preparation of the Strategy once the UKSPF Investment Plan is completed, but this would cause significant delays. It was decided to run these in parallel but to ensure they are fully connected and in alignment.

Key Implications

Financial

22. The expectation is that the delivery of the Strategy will be funded predominately as part of the UKSPF Investment Plan once agreed (supplemented by existing Economic Development budgets including those from The West Kent Partnership budgets). Each local authority in the UK has been allocated UKSPF funding covering the period 2022/23-2024/25 to support the Government's twelve missions contained within the Levelling up White Paper. Sevenoaks has been funded a £1million allocation over the three years plus an additional £20,000 to cover costs associated with developing the Investment Plan and 4% of the allocation can be used for associated administration costs. The funding covers both revenue and capital, but there is a set formula on the split between the two over the funding period.
23. The funding has been provided to support an overarching objective to 'Build Pride in Place and Increasing Life Chances' and to fund projects and initiatives around three pillars: COMMUNITY & PLACE, SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS and PEOPLE & SKILLS. Work is underway to develop the Investment Plan that needs to be submitted to the Government for approval over the summer (submission window 30th June - 1st August). Our current suggested priorities for the plan are 1) Supporting the rural economy; 2) improving employment opportunities for young people (via the Growth Gurus Community Hub project); 3) Skills and community opportunities from Net Zero; 4) Supporting the recovery of our town centres and 5) Business support and skills projects across the West Kent Partnership.

A link to the UKSPF Prospectus is included here:

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/ukspfprospectus.pdf)

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

24. There are no legal implications in relation to the Report
25. RISK ASSESSMENT. THERE ARE MORE RISKS ASSOCIATED IN NOT ADOPTING THE NEW ECONOMIC STRATEGY THAN IT BEING ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL
- If the District Council does not proceed to adopt the Economic Development Strategy, this could result in:-
- (a) A missed opportunity to provide vital leadership and action in ensuring that the District's economy recovers and delivers inclusive growth that benefits all our residents
 - (b) A failure to deliver skills and employment projects that support those in our community who are either unemployed or underemployed.

- (c) A failure to support our local businesses as they continue to recover from the pandemic and deal with the rising costs of doing business. The Strategy will be largely funded from our UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation including supporting local businesses and this provides the framework for 1:1 advice, coaching and mentoring and networking opportunities to help companies build resilience and boost their productivity
- (d) Failure to help the recovery and rejuvenation of our high streets and other key centres and to support the rural and visitor economy as it goes through a time of change

Equality Assessment

- 26. Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this report directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people. The summary results of this analysis are set out immediately below.
- 27. The vision for the Economic Strategy emphasises the importance of a growing, inclusive economy. A number of initiatives are targeted at specific groups in particular need in our community such as the unemployed or those experiencing barriers to employment, and the Strategy more widely has been put together to ensure all our businesses and residents benefit. Therefore, the decision being made and recommended through this paper does not have the potential to discriminate against different groups in Sevenoaks District.

Net Zero Implications

- 28. Members are reminded of the Council's stated ambition to be Net Zero with regards to carbon emissions by 2030. The decisions recommended in this paper directly impact on this ambition. An impact assessment has been carried out and a summary of the results is given below
- 29. The Strategy does not focus primarily on the Council's own emissions, however in supporting local infrastructure investment and the Council's recently published Movement Strategy this could provide more sustainable travel opportunities for staff. The Strategy also plans a local procurement project to increase the number and range of suppliers supplying the Council with goods and services. As well as helping to grow the local economy, this will directly support a reduction of the carbon footprint in our supply chain.

30. The Economic Strategy has a vision to grow the economy in a sustainable way and gives due regard to the Councils commitment to Net Zero. With any economic growth comes the risk of increased emissions, however, there are a range of initiatives in the delivery plan that focus on helping to offset the harmful aspects of climate change
- We will help local businesses access advice and share best practice on how to de-carbonise and become more energy efficient
 - We will promote Sevenoaks District as a centre for the adoption of new green technologies
 - We will seek to maximise the opportunities for new job creation in the green economy particularly upskilling for retrofit
 - We will work with our attractions in the Visitor Economy on making Sevenoaks a centre for sustainable tourism
 - We will encourage nature recovery and improvements in biodiversity in both rural and urban areas through sharing best practice in our Rural Economic Forum and helping organisations to access grants such as the Nature Recovery Grant.

Conclusions

31. This Report presents the draft refreshed Economic Development Strategy for eventual agreement and adoption by Cabinet. Sevenoaks District has the potential to continue to build an economy that is sustainable, inclusive and dynamic, but importantly one that benefits all our residents.

Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Economic Development Strategy

Background Papers

None included



Sevenoaks District DRAFT **Economic Development Strategy** 2022-2027

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Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027



Foreword

With the slow recovery and continued uncertainty arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges to local authority funding and the Post Brexit environment, re-building the economy in a way that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient has never been more important.

The challenges of 2020/21 have set the scene for new ways of thinking, a new approach to working patterns and the growing imperative of climate change amelioration. We have a chance to reappraise the economic priorities for Sevenoaks District and refresh our Economic Strategy. This is an opportunity for the District to 'stand out' and to set the tone for the rest of Kent and the wider South East, whilst continuing to emphasise the three promises made in the Council's Plan.

1. We will build on the District's thriving economy through the regeneration of our market towns, and by enhancing both the visitor and rural economies.
2. We will protect the economy of the District by preserving and making better use of existing employment sites and by redeveloping previously used land.
3. We will support new and existing businesses through our "Team around the Business" approach, combining excellent customer service and supporting local employers to promote mental and physical well-being at work.

Our vision

Our vision is for Sevenoaks District to have a dynamic growing and inclusive economy for our businesses, communities and visitors that is kind to the environment, contributes to the health and well-being of all our residents and supports our commitment to achieving Net Zero carbon emissions by the Council by 2030.

The strategic context

A number of key strategic considerations are provided to inform our priorities and are material considerations since the last Economic Strategy. These include:

- The challenges in recovering from the pandemic with current economic uncertainty arising from high inflation, the cost of doing business, tight labour markets, disruption of supply chains, the conflict in Ukraine and the longer term impacts and opportunities arising out of Brexit
- The need to align this Strategy very closely with the re-positioning of the West Kent Partnership and its refreshed priorities, the Kent and Medway Economic Renewal and Resilience Plan and our UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan to maximise their impact.
- The recent Case for West Kent refresh identified that whilst the area is the largest contributor to total Gross Value Added ('GVA') and GVA per job within the Kent context, there is potential for further economic growth to improve the District's ranking against comparator locations equidistant to London.
- A public sector bidding environment that remains very competitive particularly for a District like Sevenoaks which is perceived as affluent and has had to self-finance past projects.. Working closely with the West Kent Partnership, The District needs to strengthen its pipeline of projects and collaborate with partners with complementary bidding skills and experience to provide a greater probability of future success.
- The opportunities arising from new hybrid working practices and the potential to capture changing spending patterns, new investment and business start ups
- Continuing to support the recovery of all our high streets and those sectors particularly badly hit because of the pandemic
- Transitioning to a Net Zero carbon economy with opportunities to develop and harness new skills and technologies and enhance our natural environment
- The need to support our rural economy as it goes through a period of change, in particular with the switch away from the Direct Payment System of subsidies, changes in the labour market and the need to remain relevant and competitive in a global market.
- Adopting a hyperlocal approach to the Strategy to ensure that support is targeted to meet the specific needs of our communities given the increasing challenges of inflation and the cost of living particularly through employment and skills initiatives.

Gross Value Added ('GVA') measures the contribution made to the economy by an individual producer, industry, sector or region. The figure is used in the calculation of Gross Domestic Product ('GDP'). The figure is a quantitative assessment of the value of goods and services minus the costs of inputs and materials in the production process. GVA per job is a measure of productivity in the economy (GVA/Number of economically active individuals)

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Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027

Economic strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats

The strategy is also informed through assessing key opportunities and challenges as outlined in the table below.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Strong geographical location – proximity to London and to international market gateways	Limited availability of employment use land and buildings for attracting inward investment and retaining growing businesses and the loss of existing provision to Permitted Development Rights
Highly attractive natural environment	Rural communities have limited public transport links. There are also poor public transport links between centres of education and visitor attractions to support employment
Highly skilled population and labour force. High GVA and GVA per job in the economy	Variable broadband/full fibre coverage and mobile telephony, particularly in rural areas. .
Strong business community with historically good survival rates and a high proportion of enterprises in the knowledge economy	Lack of HE provision in the District
An ambitious and financially resilient local authority	House price affordability

Opportunities	Threats
Post COVID working patterns have accelerated new ways of working. This enhances opportunities for flexible working hubs in both urban and rural areas and in capturing new spending patterns in our town centres	Retention of young workers and provision of adequate local job opportunities and the right 'soft' and technical skills that employers need
Interventions to grow those sectors, such as construction, land based industries and creative industries that through further analysis provide the greatest impact on local job creation and economic growth	Although the District has fared better than other locations, a decline in the retail sector through further migration to on line channels or consolidation of national brands
To improve productivity in SMEs through increased take up of available business support and access to finance	Access to Government and grant funding in a highly competitive environment
To gain a reputation as a leading local authority for sustainable best practice and adoption of (new) green technologies	Changes in rural employment brought about by technology, new funding regimes and skills shortages including seasonal workers
To support the development of resilient town centres through our Town Centre Strategy with more diverse uses and an experiential offer including the night time economy	Continued pressure on supply chains and the full impact of Brexit and changing regulatory environment

<p>To capitalise on our published Movement Strategy to encourage modal shift including extending cycling infrastructure and walking routes</p>	<p>Community complacency or a preservationist approach seeking to maintain status quo.</p>
<p>To strengthen strategic partnerships and secure new ones such as with HE institutions</p>	<p>Slower than expected recovery and continued uncertainty created by the pandemic</p>
<p>Sevenoaks District has a vibrant mix of sports clubs, training facilities and high profile sports professionals. This sector has very strong potential to create new jobs, develop a diverse set of skills and health and well being</p>	<p>Continued high inflation and escalating costs of doing business leading to more insolvencies and reduced investment and growth</p>



Strategic priorities

The refreshed Economic Development Strategy has five key strategic priorities

Priorities	Objectives
Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To compete in a changing global economy seizing on the opportunities through technological change and the transition to Net Zero and the green economy ■ Secure health and well-being for residents ■ Enhance the ecological health of our natural environment ■ Support the Council's Net Zero Delivery Plan ■ Embrace the 15-minute community concept
Skills resilience and job opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To deliver a skilled workforce that drives productivity gains and considers the key drivers identified in the Kent and Medway Workforce Skills Evidence Base: digitisation, decarbonisation, demographic change and changes in working practices. ■ To provide residents with lifetime learning opportunities ■ To help resolve a tight labour market by ensuring we help promote vacancies across the District ■ To build a vibrant labour market with the right technical and soft skills that employers need ■ To support equality of opportunity and a levelling up of economic prosperity right across the District
Business Resilience and Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To prioritise business support including innovation, scale up support, export development and improved access to finance with a particular focus on the rural economy ■ Prioritise inward investment and promotion of the District as a great location to start a business ■ Retain and expand employment land where possible in alignment with the emerging Local Plan and Economic Needs Study and promote commercial spaces that meet the needs of local business.
Infrastructure First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To transform local infrastructure including full fibre investment and improved 4G coverage and 5G roll out ■ Create modal shift through our Movement Strategy and facilitate new ways of working ■ To improve infrastructure links in rural areas
West Kent Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To reposition the partnership with a focus on increasing the amount of external funding secured, sectoral development and local skills projects ■ To develop the West Kent brand through increased business communications, sharing success stories, participating in business awards and an annual business summit ■ Supporting diversification and resilience in the rural economy through a new Rural Economy Forum

Footnote – A 15 minute neighbourhood involves a menu of policy actions that provides residents access to most if not all their needs within a short walk or bike ride from the home

To deliver the strategic priorities, we have developed four areas of focus that will frame the Strategy’s delivery and there will be an overarching framework of promotion relevant to all focus areas through the launch of the Sevenoaks District Place Campaign.

The Place Campaign has four key pillars focussed on ‘Live, Work, Invest and Visit’. The campaign proposals have been underpinned by a resident survey that resulted in the development of brand values focussed on the themes ‘Historic, Entrepreneurial, Connected, Vibrant and Beautiful’. We will use the Place Campaign resources including the creation of a Place Portal and the Visit Sevenoaks website and we will use social media to promote our visitor economy, our key centres and as a key asset in our inward investment proposition. We want to reach not only our local and sub-regional audience but also London and international markets.



Focus area 1: Business and Enterprise Key Facts

Supporting and promoting business

- GVA in Sevenoaks District was £4066 million in 2019 which is 3rd highest in Kent
- GVA per job (is £68.183 which is the highest in Kent
- A total of 6610 VAT registered businesses, of which over 90% are micro-businesses
- 45% of enterprises are within the professional, scientific and technical, Construction and Information and Communications sectors.
- Other important growth sectors include creative industries, green construction and land based sectors
- Sevenoaks District has a diverse business community and has traditionally been a good location to start a business.
- Higher than Kent average business start-up and survival rates, although most recent data (2019) reveals a slowing of the birth of new enterprises
- The District has one of the highest proportion of businesses in the knowledge economy and those defined as being ‘high growth’

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Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027

Maintaining Sevenoaks District position relative to other areas and extending opportunities is a key to future economic prosperity.

- The Case for West Kent (2022) suggests that local enterprises are not connecting with business support organisations or funding opportunities at the same level as other local authority areas.
- To deliver economic growth it is key to establish a much more comprehensive understanding of the diversity of our local business base . It is essential that we provide the right level of business support and networking opportunities through working with key partners with a focus on building a network of business hubs across the West Kent area with integral business support

We will improve communication with businesses through regular, updates and signposting with a particular focus on and celebrating business successes to raise the profile of Sevenoaks District as a first class business investment location.

Inward investment

The Council will continue to work closely with Locate in Kent and with our neighbouring Districts / Boroughs on inward investment enquiries and new expansions and will seek to help facilitate the delivery of new commercial and industrial floor space in line with the emerging Local plan. We will also seek to facilitate a soft landing team to provide targeted commercial property, business start-up and HR advice for those businesses looking to locate here.



Net Zero and the Green economy

Mitigation for climate change and the growing importance of the transition to a Net Zero circular economy could provide the District with significant opportunities, such as

- The Council sees itself in a leadership role for this agenda by installing electric charging points in its car parks, installing solar power compacting bins and encouraging local communities to engage with nature and appreciate the importance of biodiversity.

- We also have an important role through our skills networks to provide pathways to provide upskilling and employment opportunities in areas like retrofitting, land based industries and ecological and other environmental services.
- We are keen that local businesses benefit from the sharing of best practice and advice available from the Low Carbon Kent Network, the Governments SME Climate Hub and the Low Carbon Across the South East Scheme (LoCase) and the newly emerging Sevenoaks Sustainability Forum. An important focus will be on helping businesses to play their part in reducing emissions from commercial operations and partnering with them as part of our Movement Strategy as they develop travel plans for their employees that emphasizes modal shift.

We are also keen to explore the use of public and privately owned business assets and land to support renewable energy initiatives such as solar and work with partners such as NFU Energy providing energy audits and an opportunity to use rural infrastructure for micro power generation.

Digital Connectivity

Another important priority will be to facilitate investment in full fibre broadband and mobile telephony both in urban and rural locations. We will continue to work with colleagues at Kent County Council, the private sector and communities to identify areas that need more investment or an upgrade in broadband to future proof and enable economic activity.



Focus area 2: Tourism and Rural

Rural Economy

- Sevenoaks District is a predominantly rural district with 93% green belt and 60% Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) being part of both High Weald, and Kent Downs AONB.
- The rural economy is a significant contributor to the local economy, but has been adversely affected by recent events. DEFRA reports a 10% decline in national farm incomes between 2019 and 2020 and this is expected to be even greater in 2020/21.
- The value of crop output in the West Kent area decreased from £90.4m (2019) to £88.8m (2020), with a similar decrease in output from livestock

Rural enterprises have also faced significant disruption from the pandemic and from leaving the EU, including rising input costs, ongoing labour challenges as well as logistics and transport difficulties. There is also uncertainty over the transition from the Direct Payment System of subsidies to the new Environmental Land Management Scheme. Farmers also have to manage the volatility faced year on year due to climate unpredictability. Supporting the development of farming clusters, encouraging best use of funding available for rural areas and working in partnership to support farmers will be an important priority for us.

Diversification of rural activities with new revenue streams will be key to the success of rural areas, supported by improved transport infrastructure and the availability of affordable housing. We will support this sector directly through our interventions in the visitor economy, the promotion of local producers working with key partners such as Produced in Kent, and through our Place Campaign, the Visit Sevenoaks website and through local markets.

Visitor Economy

- The visitor economy supports 5500 jobs in the District (2020)
- The sector is valued at £138 million per annum with a total of 465 active enterprises
- The District has a number of major attractions including historic houses, castles and gardens, together with the variety of unique smaller independent attractions and experiential opportunities which provide a strong basis for future growth in visitor numbers.

Success in the future will depend on developing a more diverse and niche tourism offer in response to the growth of the Staycation market and making the most of the District's natural environment and 'telling stories' that engage our audience. The added benefits to health and wellbeing through the rural nature of the District will be particularly important in a post pandemic world.

Our priorities will be delivered collaboratively through our Visitor Economy Forum with a focus on a number of key areas such as improving 'first' and 'last' mile infrastructure encouraging sustainable travel including cycling and improved wayfinding and capitalise on wider initiatives such as the Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership ('DVCRP'), Visit Kent's Interreg Experience Programme and the Gateway Gatwick Network.

We will work with the sector locally to improve the quality of visitor information, building a reputation as a leading centre for a sustainable and accessible tourism where increasing visitor numbers do not have a detrimental impact on the environment or emissions and to increase the accommodation provision. We will also deliver itineraries and visitor products including eco-tourism, heritage, cultural and food and drink trails and walking holidays including 'pilgrimage tourism' will be an important focus. An influencer's familiarisation programme to highlight Sevenoaks District to include travel agents, journalists and trade bodies with a better integration and promotion of lesser-known attractions/events with our 'national/international' assets..

Cultural development will also be a key objective through the creation of an arts and cultural forum in collaboration with existing groups to encourage better planning and co-ordination of events and activities raising the profile of the District. The District also has very strong assets

in the sports sector, whether local clubs, training facilities or the presence of high profile sports professionals that should be further capitalized on.



Focus area 3: Town Centres

- The Council has a number of key centres in particular the mains ones of Sevenoaks, Swanley, Edenbridge, Westerham and New Ash Green

The Council has published a new Town Centre Strategy to look at the key centres and identify bespoke public realm and wider regeneration initiatives. This will provide resilience and capitalise on new trends in the current make-up of high streets and neighbourhood shopping centres and improve connectivity with local communities.

There have been significant changes to the shopping habits within the UK that have been confounded by the pandemic. In 2010, internet sales were £58bn and have now climbed to £84bn, an increase of 45%. The total share of internet sales is now 27% of total retail sales. Another important development is that major retailers are reviewing the format of their real estate requirements, with many national brands looking to rationalise in larger regional centres and out-of-town locations.

A combination of new planning rules concerning Permitted Development Rights and the new Use Class 'E' Order, will provide new opportunities (but in some cases also threats) to the future high street. To thrive, centres will need to combine retail with hospitality, leisure, healthcare and other experiential uses through cultural anchors (15% of businesses in the District's high streets are in creative sectors)

We will work closely with Planning colleagues on supporting positive investment into key centres and to agree a model of how such centres are managed in a collaborative way with town and parish councils, maximising the use of public spaces and promoting a diverse events programme to drive footfall and dwell time, building on projects implemented as part of the Welcome Back Fund.

Focus area 4: Skills and Employment

Recent events have highlighted how quickly the landscape around skills can change. At the beginning of 2020, Sevenoaks District and the West Kent area in general had high levels of employment and relied heavily on migrant labour in many sectors. Contrast this now with a chronic shortage of labour and skills in hospitality, retail, care and other sectors, but equally there are significant opportunities in the emerging green economy such as in retrofitting.

There are a number of national, regional and county initiatives ongoing to deliver on the Skills Agenda. In particular, the Government's Plan for Jobs and the Local Skills Improvement Plan trailblazer in Kent and Medway should provide more employer led and integrated skills provision. The Kent and Medway Employment Taskforce is proactive and responsive to skills needs.

The challenge in Sevenoaks District, and across West Kent, is to ensure that our local population and businesses benefit from these initiatives and that we tailor support to fit local need. The West Kent Skills group provides this local focus and will be one mechanism through which West Kent and Sevenoaks can ensure that challenges and opportunities are identified and actioned. Building on existing strong partnerships with local organisations such as the Jobcentre and West Kent Extra and creating new partnerships will be a key element of delivering on our skills ambitions for the District.

There is also the challenge to build on past successes and identify future projects to improve skills levels locally particularly for young people and to focus this development on business needs. Two West Kent Skills programmes – The West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network and Kickstart West Kent - are coming to the end of their life, both of which have been managed and run through Sevenoaks District Council. Ensuring that legacy projects as highlighted in the Delivery Plan are delivered particularly in respect of supporting young people into meaningful work is a top priority moving forward. The District also has strong ambitions to enhance local education provision by supporting the location of a Further or Higher Education Campus.

Working in partnership

We cannot deliver this Strategy alone. Much of this will be delivered in collaboration with partners and stakeholders and the importance of the West Kent Partnership as highlighted earlier is a strategic priority. Key partners that will support us meet the need of the local economy are wide ranging and include:

- Public bodies such as Kent County Council, neighbouring local authorities and town and parish councils have the ability to work together with Government agencies to unlock national and local funding support to deliver and facilitate positive change for local communities and the local economy
- Business partnerships and business support groups include Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses ('FSB'), the Institute of Directors ('IOD'), the Growth Hub network, Locate in Kent and Visit Kent
- Other important groups including a number of social enterprises and community hubs that provide an important central point of contact into grass root networks



Delivery Plan

Focus area 1: Business and Enterprise

Aim	Activity	KPI/measures	Partners for all aims
<p>Improve awareness and visibility of businesses through business communications strategy at West Kent level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Development of a business database/directory ■ Annual West Kent Business Summit ■ Business awards at West Kent level ■ Annual Economic Report ■ Place Campaign web portal. ■ Establish a Sevenoaks District brand/trademark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Successful business summit ■ Publication of the annual Economic Report ■ Participation in annual business awards event ■ Business success stories case studies ■ Analytics on SDC business webpages ■ Develop an online portal ■ Develop and publish a Brandbook for the District 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ West Kent Partnership ■ Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce ■ Growth Hub ■ Department of International Trade/Locate in Kent ■ FSB ■ Kent CC Digital Team ■ Kent Film Office ■ Low Carbon Kent

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<p>Encourage businesses to locate within the District and West Kent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop Inward investment proposition collateral ■ Launch West Kent Inward Investment Strategy including attendance at trade and investment events, meeting inward delegations and promotion in the business press ■ Create 'soft landing team' for new companies locating in the District/ West Kent ■ Identify opportunities on the place portal as part of the Place Campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New jobs created and retained ■ Number of promotional events attended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Locate in Kent ■ Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce
<p>Sectoral development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Undertake further research on sectors including assessing results of the Economic Need ■ Study to identify growth sectors ■ Sectors action plan to establish series of interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase in sector location quotient (a measure of the significance of a local cluster against a national average) ■ New business start-ups ■ Jobs created/ retained ■ Increase in research and development in businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kent and Medway Economic Partnership ■ HE Partnerships ■ FE Partnerships ■ Sector based trade associations

<p>Facilitate new ways of working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop a hub strategy covering the West Kent Partnership area for both public and private sector facilities including feasibility studies for additional sites ■ Successful launch and management of the new business hub at Swanley ■ Support Digital/broadband investment in collaboration with Kent County Council and commercial operators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Swanley hub operational within agreed timescales with approved operating model ■ New business starts and scale up of growth businesses ■ West Kent Business Hub Network Group created ■ Extending Superfast/Full Fibre coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce ■ Kent County Council Digital Team ■ Department of Culture Media and Sport
<p>Ensure businesses are able to access suitable business support to develop and grow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Research the specific present and future business needs of SMEs particularly for rural businesses ■ Team around your business including new 'welcome pack' providing information on all relevant services in the Council ■ Feasibility of launching a training app for businesses ■ Effective sign-posting to external organisations including business start-up advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Business starts ■ Business survival rates ■ Number of businesses in the knowledge economy ■ Growth of rural enterprises ■ Number of companies on business support programmes ■ Number of businesses benefiting from Team Around The Business and ED team interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce ■ Federation of Small Businesses ■ Kent International Business ■ Department of International Trade ■ DEFRA

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<p>Local Procurement Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the Council's geographical spend profile for goods and services - Develop an action plan to improve visibility of procurement pipeline and building capacity for local businesses 		
<p>Net Zero Economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Connect business community with existing advice on energy efficiency and emissions reduction including Low Carbon Kent and the LoCASE programme ■ Work with landowners in the public and private sector to identify assets that could be utilised for local renewables and power generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduced District emissions from commercial activities ■ Number of local businesses taking up decarbonisation advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Low Carbon Kent ■ Carbon Trust ■ Innovate UK



Focus area 2: Tourism and Rural

To engage with and support the Visitor Economy and rural sectors, local food producers and the cultural community to ensure Sevenoaks District continues to grow as a leading visitor location with a growing number of jobs and enterprises in the sector.

Aim	Activity	Measures	Partners for all aims
<p>Maximise promotion and exposure of the District</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regular Visitor Economy Forum meetings to share best practice and promotion of activities. ■ Collaborate with key partners including Visit Kent and Visit England on joint initiatives ■ Active member of the Gatwick Gateway Group ■ Continue to establish the Visit Sevenoaks website and social media coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Growth in visitor numbers and spend ■ Growth in enterprises and jobs in the sector ■ Website analytics and social media reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Visit Kent ■ DVCRP ■ Gatwick Gateway ■ Visit England ■ Town and Parish Councils ■ ELAG ■ Sevenoaks ■ Rural Landowners Group
<p>Encourage visitors to Sevenoaks District and attractions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop annual programme of campaigns including familiarisation visits for influencers group ■ Increase niche offerings for experiential and specific demographic requirements ■ Secure additional coach parking capacity ■ Develop the sports sector as a tool to drive promotion of the District, but also wellbeing. ■ Use innovative social media platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ See above- number of inbound visitors/ overnight stays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Visit Kent ■ Kent County Council ■ DVCRP ■ Gatwick Gateway ■ Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce (sports network)

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<p>Increase the accommodation offer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify Opportunity to develop 5 star/ luxury resort or ■ MICE facility ■ Work with key partners and planning colleagues to increase/ diversify the accommodation offer. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Visit Kent ■ Locate in Kent
<p>Support diversification of rural areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work through a new Rural Economy Forum to share best practice in rural land use, lobbying and securing access to funding via the West Kent Partnership ■ Where possible, support the provision of affordable housing in rural areas and last mile infrastructure projects ■ Promote the sustainable reuse of redundant farm buildings and facilities to support enterprise, economic activity and/or housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Growth in rural enterprises and jobs created and retained ■ Increased funding secured for rural areas ■ Increase in affordable housing in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sevenoaks Rural Landowners Group ■ Rural Local Action Group ■ Kent County Council ■ DEFRA
<p>Biodiversity and sustainable land management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with local landowners, nature conservation partners and Planning Policy colleagues on nature recovery and biodiversity initiatives 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme ■ Kent Wildlife Trust ■ North West Kent Countryside Partnership ■ Kent Downs AONB ■ High Weald AONB

<p>Sevenoaks Trademark</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Explore creation of a unique Sevenoaks District trademark for local producer and crafts in collaboration with Made In Kent ■ Develop and promote the place campaign brand strategy and book 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Made in Kent ■ Produced In Kent
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Focus area 3: Town Centres

Enabling our market towns to remain viable and vibrant to support local residents

Aim	Activity	KPI's	Partners for all aims
Encourage diversification of use in town centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with Planning Policy Team in retaining employment space and supporting mixed uses where possible ■ Introduce a new Town Centres Steering Group and arts/cultural forum sub-group to co-ordinate events, promotion and the Night Time economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Employment floor space retained or provided ■ Footfall and dwell time measures ■ Delivery of agreed events programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ SDC Planning Team ■ Town and Parish Councils ■ Town Centre Partnerships ■ SELEP/KMEP ■ KCC ■ Developers ■ Commercial Agents
Secure investment and regeneration in towns and large villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consider Town Centre Strategy ■ Agree a pipeline of projects from the final strategy to direct and support future funding bids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Successful funding bids secured ■ Project delivery of agreed interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Town and Parish Councils ■ KMEP
Improve public realm to support multiple uses and better facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Programme to support shop front improvements ■ Support provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points ■ Improve way finding and signage ■ Support the Public Realm Commissioner to improve the public realm and promote the ethos of the Place Campaign 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Town and Parish Councils ■ Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership
Encourage locals to shop locally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Movement Strategy ■ Use local campaigns ■ Redevelop 96 High Street Sevenoaks into a makers/artisan/artist/farmers market hall 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kent County Council ■ Produced In Kent ■ Made in Kent

Focus area 4: Skills and Employment

Ensuring residents and businesses can gain the skills they require including supporting young people into employment and lifelong learning and training.

Aim	Activity	Measures	Partners for all aims
Supporting events and initiatives to assist job seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Job and career Fairs ■ Promoting apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unemployment measures ■ Apprenticeship placements and vacancies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ DWP ■ West Kent Skills Group ■ North Kent College Network ■ Retrofit Academy ■ Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce (Local Skills Improvement Plans)
Supporting careers advice in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue to support the Enterprise Adviser Programme through the TEP team ■ Expand enterprise events for young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Achieving Gatsby benchmarks ■ Delivery of training/CPD programmes for schools ■ Children’s Business Fair or other enterprise event during the period of the Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Education People (TEP) ■ vChildren’s Business Fair
Provide local innovative skills programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lifelong and intergenerational skills activities ■ Delivering programmes to help disadvantaged groups or those with protected characteristics into employment ■ Digital inclusiveness programme in conjunction with community Wi-Fi pilot ■ Sector skills programmes including retrofit boot camp, and land based skills ‘Farming in Protected Landscapes (‘FIPL’) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Employment and job creation ■ Sector and economic growth ■ Digital inclusiveness data ■ Growth in the green economy ■ Deliver FIPL project engaging young people with farming and landscapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kent County Council ■ Kent and Medway Economic Partnership ■ Kent Downs and High Weald AONB ■ Hadlow College

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Improving the provision of HE/FE in the District	■ Establish an HE/FE offer in the District		
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References

Page 6 – Data from ONS, presented by Kent County Council in their Economic Dashboard

Page 6 – The Case for West Kent Refresh produced for the West Kent Partnership by Hardisty Jones published (with updates) in January 2022

Page 9: Quoted from Kent On line Newspaper 13/12/2021 per DEFRA Report).

Page 10: (Source ONS Presented by Kent County Council).

Page 11: Town Centres Paragraph 2: (Source –Avison Young Town Centre Strategy Baseline Report 2021

Page 11: Town Centres Paragraph 3 (Source SELEP Creative High Streets Report January 2022)

Page 11: Skills & Employment Paragraph 1 (Source: the Local Government Association Equity Consulting Report estimates the sector could deliver 30,000 jobs in Kent & Medway by 2050)

Annex A

Economic Development Strategy Dashboard

The following key measures will be used for monitoring the economy with an annual Economic Report bringing together a number of other measures to provide a comprehensive overview.

Focus area 1: Business and Enterprise

Measure	Latest data 2020	Source	Frequency of reporting/notes
Birth of new enterprises rate	Growth rate of 9.7% (Kent average 12.1%)	Business Demography 2019 (kent.gov.uk)	Annually
Death of new enterprises rate	10.1% (Kent average is 10.1%)	Business Demography 2019 (kent.gov.uk)	Annually
Ratio of enterprise births to deaths	0.93% (Kent average is 1.20)	Business Demography 2019 (kent.gov.uk)	Annually <i>Please note that a figure below 1.0 shows that the number of deaths exceeds that of births</i>
Stock of active enterprises	7370 currently	Business Demography 2019 (kent.gov.uk)	Annually <i>Between 2010-2020, 880 new enterprises were created equating a rate of 13.6% which is the lowest in Kent after Tunbridge Wells</i>
Enterprise survival rates – Three and five year	3 Year 61.7% (Kent average 58.9%) 5 Year 47.8% (Kent average 42.6%)	Business Demography 2019 (kent.gov.uk)	Annually <i>Will also monitor % of enterprises that are 'high growth' and in the knowledge economy</i>
Number of SDC significant business interventions including Team Around Your Business	Not currently measured	Quarterly SDC report	Quarterly
GVA	£4066 million 2019	ONS/KCC	Third highest in Kent
GVA per Job	£68,183	ONS/KCC	Highest in Kent
Broadband average speeds (download/upload speeds)		ThinkBroadband.com	
% of properties with superfast broadband speeds		ThinkBroadband.com	

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Loss of accommodation under permitted development rights		SDC Annual Monitoring Report	
% of available employment space in the district		SDC Annual Monitoring Report	

Focus area 2: Tourism and Rural

Measure	Latest data 2020	Source	Frequency of reporting/notes
Value of the Visitor Economy	5500 jobs £138 million value	KCC – per visit Kent	
The number of tourism enterprises	465 (6.9% growth rate)	KCC/ONS	2019 data
The number of jobs supported by the visitor economy	2426 (9.1% growth rate)	Cambridge data – per visit Kent	2019 data
Number of users on the Visit Sevenoaks website	295		
Number of visitors	4.3 million 2019 (2 million 2020)	Cambridge data – per visit Kent	
Growth in the provision of affordable housing in rural locations?			
Growth in the number of rural enterprises			

Focus area 3: Town Centres

Retail footfall		GOAD	
Vacancy rates in key centres (total floor space) November/ December 2021 figures			
Amount of employment space in town centres retained or provided (from agreed baseline)			
Number of retail, leisure and hospitality jobs			

Focus area 4: Skills and Employment

Unemployment	2.7% November 2021	DWP	Special focus onwards with above average unemployment
Youth unemployment 18-24 year olds	4.3% November 2021	DWP	
No of apprentices advertised	50	ESFA	
NVQ Level 4	49.1% Kent Average 39.9%	ONS	Annually
NVQ Level 3	60.5% Kent average 58.1%	ONS	Annually
NVQ Level 2	80.4% Kent average 78.2%		Annually

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Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee work plan (As at 13/06/2022)

23 June 2022

- Cyber Security Update
- Welcome back fund
- Economic Development Strategy

October 2022

- UKSPF Investment Plan
- Leader Project Closure report
- Asset Review (disposals)
- Capital Programme Update
- Data Analytics on Customer Interactions Progress update
- Complaints & Local Government Ombudsman letter
- In Shape tender

November 2022

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