

19 June 2017 at 7.00 pm

Conference Room, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks
Despatched: 09.06.17



Legal & Democratic Services Advisory Committee

Membership:

Cllrs. Barnes, Bosley, Dr. Canet, Dyball, Eyre, Firth, Halford, Mrs. Hunter, Lake, McGarvey, Pett and Raikes

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 the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2017, as a correct record.	(Pages 1 - 4)	
4. Declarations of Interest Any interests not already registered.		
5. Actions from Previous Meeting	(Pages 5 - 6)	
6. Update from Portfolio Holder		Councillor Anna Firth
7. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee (if any)		
8. Shared Services Update	(Pages 7 - 12)	Adrian Rowbotham Tel: 01732 227153
9. Equalities Action Plan	(Pages 13 - 30)	Lee Banks Tel: 01732 227161
10. Work Plan	(Pages 31 - 32)	

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.

LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2017 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Firth (Chairman)

Cllr. Pett (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Barnes, Bosley, Dyball, Eyre, Halford, Mrs. Hunter, Lake, McGarvey, Pearsall and Pett

Cllr. Dr. Canet was also present.

12. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 October 2016 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

13. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

14. Actions from Previous Meeting

There were none.

15. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder, and Chairman, tabled her [update](#) and gave Members reading time and opportunity to ask questions.

16. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

17. Electoral Registration and Elections

The Chief Officer Corporate Services, presented the report which set out the current legislative position for electoral registration and elections and presented the current situation for digital elections, including the use of digital in elections internationally, and electoral pilots in the UK.

For information it set out the range of service improvements which the Council would seek to make to its own electoral registration and election processes within the scope of the current legislative framework in which it was required to operate. The improvements would enable the Council to deliver efficiencies, enhance and automate processes and further improve the service delivered to customers.

Agenda Item 3 Legal & Democratic Services Advisory Committee - 24 January 2017

In response to questions the Acting Electoral Services Manager advised that with the exception of three documents there was more scope to send information electronically. However it was only optional for electors to provide email addresses. It was not possible to change the prescribed forms, but it might be possible to change covering letters to encourage the channel shift to electronic delivery where allowed. A flyer was also suggested. Members also thought that an FAQ would be helpful, and more publicity in InShape.

Action 1: Investigate and report back on options and costs for encouraging email address information such as amending covering letters, use of flyers and a frequently asked questions leaflet (FAQ).

With regards to electoral pilots there were to be more in May 2018 in response to the report by Sir Eric Pickles into tackling electoral fraud. Local authorities had been invited to apply to trial different types of identification, including forms of photo ID such as driving licences and passports, or formal correspondence such as a utilities bill to prove their address, backed by a signature check. As there were no scheduled elections in the Sevenoaks District Council in 2018 the Council had not applied to be a pilot but would consider any future opportunities.

Action 2: A written update on the progress of the electoral services review be presented to the Committee at the October meeting.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

18. Quercus 7 Limited - Shareholder's Agreement

The Head of Legal & Democratic Services presented the report for information. Members had the opportunity to ask questions and clarify their understanding. He confirmed that advice was being sought on whether a subsidiary company could be created to provide a service. It was also noted that there was the ability to appoint 'observers' to Board meetings and that the minutes of such meetings could be made available to Councillors on demand but were not public documents.

Action 3: Investigate and report back on the advantages and disadvantages of appointing member "observers" for Board meetings.

Resolved: That the report and appendix be noted.

19. Work Plan

The work plan was noted and the following additions agreed:

21 March 2017

- Update on Corporate Health & Safety
- Equalities Action plan

6 June 2017

- Licensing Update
- Electoral Services (see Action 1 Minute 17 above)

17 October 2017

- Update on Electoral Services
- Quercus 7 update

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.29 PM

CHAIRMAN

ACTIONS FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 24/01/17			
Action	Description	Status and last updated 28/2/17	Contact Officer
ACTION 1	Investigate and report back on options and costs for encouraging email address information such as amending covering letters, use of flyers and a frequently asked questions leaflet (FAQ).	Added to the work plan	Nicola Fletcher
ACTION 2	A written update on the progress of the electoral services review be presented to the Committee at the October meeting	Added to the work plan	Jim Carrington-West/Nicola Fletcher
ACTION 3	Investigate and report back on the advantages and disadvantages of appointing member “observers” for Board meetings.	Added to the work plan	Martin Goodman

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SHARED SERVICES UPDATE

Legal and Democratic Services Committee - 19 June 2017

Report of Chief Finance Officer

Status For Information

Key Decision No

This report supports the Key Aim of effective management of Council resources.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Firth

Contact Officer Adrian Rowbotham Ext. 7153

Recommendation to Legal and Democratic Services Advisory Committee: That the report be noted.

Introduction and Background

- 1 This is an annual report that was last presented to this committee on 14 April 2016. Shared services is within the terms of reference of this Advisory Committee.
- 2 As financial pressures continue to grow for all local authorities, shared services are often a method to be investigated to help deliver efficiency savings. The external auditors, Grant Thornton review the council's arrangements for Value for Money each year, and in their last review confirmed that there are strong arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Therefore, this council should be an attractive partner for other local authorities looking to take this route.
- 3 Experience has shown that it is beneficial to have back office services operating as a shared service first as there are then fewer barriers to front line services being shared with the same partner. This is because back office differences, e.g. not having the same IT systems, can significantly increase implementation costs and time, which can make any change less viable.
- 4 Economies of scale are also an important factor where the costs of some services can have stepped increases, such as having to purchase an additional piece of equipment when work volumes increase above a certain level. The size of some teams can also be a factor in deciding whether it is practical or beneficial to share.

Agenda Item 8

- 5 The following principles are required to ensure that becoming a shared service is the right option:
- Willing partners;
 - Quality of service is not adversely affected;
 - Increased resilience;
 - Savings or additional income;
 - Pay-back period for any implementation costs.

Current Partnerships in Place

- 6 Appendix A lists all of the shared services arrangements currently in place and also those that have ended.

Changes since the last report

- 7 The major council tax preceptors: Kent CC, Kent Police and Kent Fire & Rescue now provide £93,000 funding per annum to the Counter Fraud Team (SDC share is 50%) as they recognise the benefit they receive by additional council tax being collected due to the work of the team. The Sevenoaks/Dartford Counter Fraud Team was the first in Kent to reach this agreement with the major preceptors.
- 8 In September 2016 the Licensing Partnership Manager assumed responsibility for the line management of the Licensing staff of LB Bexley and Bexley became the 4th member of the Licensing Partnership on 31 October 2016. The Licensing Partnership now consists of four teams at four locations with the central Administration Team being based at Sevenoaks. This change has resulted in savings of £15,000 per annum for each of the three original partners. The total savings from the Licensing Partnership for Sevenoaks DC are now £53,000 per annum.
- 9 The contractual arrangements for public convenience cleaning for Tandridge DC and tree advice for Dartford BC have both ended.
- 10 Tunbridge Wells BC, as the host employer, has chosen to end the agreement with Sevenoaks DC and Tonbridge & Malling BC to provide the services of the West Kent Equalities Officer with effect from 31 March 2017.

Future Partnerships and the Strategy going forward

- 11 Since the last report, discussions have also taken place with other authorities on CCTV, Environmental Health, Health, Licensing, Parking Enforcement and Revenues & Benefits.
- 12 Opportunities will continue to be investigated for expanding current shared services and other services that may be possible to share in the future are HR, Housing Services and Planning Policy.

- 13 Managers are actively looking for opportunities within the surrounding areas and because of this council's reputation are therefore also more likely to be approached. Many managers are in regional or national groups and so are able to promote our services and appetite for partnership working, they are therefore also likely to be aware when other councils are considering taking the shared services route.
- 14 When opportunities arise we must remain mindful of the following issues when considering sharing a service:
- It may cost more to pursue a partnership than the benefits derived.
 - This council has a balanced 10-year budget with very tight costings so we have to be careful that we do not lose economies of scale.
 - A number of other councils are faced with severe financial pressures and may at short notice need to scale down their services, which could have an impact on partnerships.
 - Although there could be opportunities available, SDC is recognised as a high performing council and therefore must ensure that we are careful not to create deterioration in service for a small benefit.
- 15 With many councils looking for further efficiencies it is possible that more opportunities for shared services will arise in the coming years however, due to the uncertain impacts of local government devolution, some councils will be reluctant to engage in long term commitments.

Key Implications

Financial

This report is for information only and there are, therefore, no financial implications arising from this report. The listed partnership arrangements have been entered into by the Council in order to achieve financial savings, deliver increased efficiencies and to improve resilience of service delivery.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications.

There are no new risks associated with this report. Each partnership proposal would include a risk assessment.

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.

Agenda Item 8

Community Impact and Outcomes

The partnership working arrangements in Appendix A have delivered financial savings usually through reducing the cost of management or back office services, thus delivering a financial benefit to local residents whilst maintaining customer-facing services.

Appendices

Appendix A - Register of shared working arrangements.

Background Papers

None

Adrian Rowbotham
Chief Finance Officer

Sevenoaks District Council

Register of Shared Working Arrangements (in chronological order)

Description	Type	Start Date	Partner Organisation(s)	Implementation Costs £000	Annual Savings £000
Financial Management System	Contractual	Nov-01	Tandridge	Nil	6
Licensing Partnership	Shared Service	May-06	Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone	50	38
Bottle Bank Emptying	Contractual	Dec-08	Dartford	Nil	3
Out of Hours Service	Contractual	Sep-09	Tonbridge & Malling	Nil	12
Print Services	Contractual	Jan-10	Dartford	Nil	10
Police co-location	Shared Service	Jun-10	Kent Police	Nil	4
Revenues, Benefits, Audit & Anti-Fraud	Shared Service	Dec-10	Dartford	417	250
Procurement & Risk Management	Shared Service	Apr-11	Dartford	Nil	Cost Neutral
Shared CCTV Manager	Shared Management	Apr-11	Tunbridge Wells	Nil	25
Moat Housing co-location	Shared Service	Nov-11	Moat	30	9
Environmental Health	Shared Service	Apr-12	Dartford	243	150
Police Reception	Shared Service	Oct-12	Kent Police	180	18
Kent CC co-location	Shared Service	Dec-12	Kent CC	Nil	5
Product Support (Shared Fin Mgt System)	Contractual	Apr-13	Tandridge	Nil	3
Building Control Service	Shared Service	Oct-14	Tonbridge & Malling	10	41
West Kent Leader Programme	Contractual	Apr-15	Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge & Malling, DEFRA	Nil	Cost Neutral
Housing, Energy & Retraining Options (HERO) Service	Contractual	Sep-15	Dartford	Nil	7
Counter Fraud	Contractual	Apr-16	Kent CC, Fire, Police	Nil	46
Licensing Partnership	Shared Service	Oct-16	Bexley	Nil	15
TOTAL					642

Register of Ended Shared Working Arrangements (in chronological order)

Description	Type	Start and End Dates	Partner Organisation(s)	Implementation Costs £000	Annual Savings £000
Internal Audit (replaced by Shared Service)	Shared Management	Oct-08 to Oct-10	Dartford	n/a	n/a
Benefit Fraud (replaced by Shared Service)	Shared Management	Apr-09 to Oct-10	Dartford	n/a	n/a
Shared Env. Health Manager (replaced by Shared Service)	Shared Management	Sep-08 to Mar-11	Dartford	n/a	n/a
Legal Services	Shared Management	Apr-09 to Mar-11	Tonbridge & Malling	Nil	25
Democratic Services	Shared Management	Nov-10 to Jan-12	Dartford	Nil	20
GIS Service	Contractual	Oct-09 to Mar-12	Dartford	Nil	15
Shared Head of Development Services	Shared Management	Oct-08 to May-12	Tunbridge Wells	Nil	20
Shared Building Control Manager	Shared Management	Oct-11 to Sep-13	Tonbridge & Malling	Nil	26
STAG maintenance	Contractual	Jan-09 to Jun-14	Sevenoaks TC	Nil	14
Shared Senior Parking Engineer	Shared Officer	Apr-11 to Apr-15	Tonbridge & Malling	Nil	24
Property Services - Asset Management	Contractual	Apr-11 to Apr-15	Tandridge	Nil	13

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EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

Legal and Democratic Advisory Committee - 19 June 2017

Report of	Chief Executive
Status:	For Consideration
Key Decision:	No

Executive Summary: Public authorities are required to prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years. The Council's current equality policy statement and objectives for 2016-2020, which reflects priorities identified from a Members' Equality Action Plan workshop, was adopted by Cabinet in April 2016. This report provides a summary of progress against the actions set out in the policy over the last year and seeks Members views on priorities for the coming year.

This report supports the Council's promise to provide value for money.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Anna Firth

Contact Officers Lee Banks, Ext 7161.

Recommendations to Legal and Democratic Advisory Committee:

- (a) Note the progress made in 2016-17 as set out from paragraph 10; and
 - (b) Advise officers on the priorities for action for 2017-18 based on the aims and objectives set out in the Council's Equality Policy Statement and Objectives.
-

Reason for recommendation: To comply with our obligations under the Equality Act (2010), based on Members' priorities.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Equality Act (2010) sets out a 'Public Sector Equality Duty' which requires public authorities to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their day to day work - in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees.
- 2 As part of the duty, public authorities are required to prepare and publish one or more objectives and review these at least every four years. Public authorities are also required to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the duty.

Agenda Item 9

- 3 The approval of an equality policy statement and objectives is within the Council's policy framework and is a matter for Cabinet. The Council has a strong record of ensuring its services are responsive to the needs of residents and customers, whilst taking a proportionate response to implementing equalities legislation. The Council's current equality policy statement and objectives for 2016-2020, which reflects priorities identified from a Members' Equality Action Plan workshop, was adopted by Cabinet in April 2016.

Equality Policy Statement and Objectives 2016-2020

- 4 The Council continues to take a proportionate approach to responding to its duties under the Equality Act (2010), reflecting the demographics of its communities and within current resource constraints.
- 5 Public authorities are required to consider what they can do to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. The Equality Act (2010) sets out the nine protected characteristics of age, disability¹, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.
- 6 There Council's Equality Policy Statement sets out five equality objectives relating to its roles as a community leader, service provider and employer. The objectives relate to the protected characteristics of disability, age and sex (gender) to reflect the priorities identified in a Member workshop and broadly focus on catering for the needs an ageing population.
- 7 Information gathered through the Community Plan consultation and Member workshop did not identify any specific measurable outcomes relating to the protected characteristics of gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation. However, the Community Plan includes an equality and inclusion statement in relation to all protected characteristics and we will continue to consider the impact of our decisions on all relevant protected characteristics.
- 8 In addition to the proposed objectives, the Council has continued to monitor the services it provides and keeps projects under review to determine if further equality objectives need to be set. During 2016/17 this was done through the Council's Equalities Monitoring Group and as part of annual progress reviews.
- 9 The Equality Policy Statement and Objectives 2016-2020 is attached at Appendix A for Members information.

¹ You're disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

Progress 2016-2017

- 10 In response to the Equality Policy Statement and Objectives 2016-2020 published in April last year the Council set out an action plan to deliver on its objectives. Examples of progress over the last year, are provided below.
- 11 As a community leader we have:
- Supported Dementia Friendly Communities, training more than 150 staff to be dementia friends; been recognised with a Dementia Friendly Business Award and hosted our first community running event to raise awareness and funds to support work towards a dementia friendly Sevenoaks District;
 - Made grant awards totalling £153k to support organisations that provide services across the District supporting activities including inclusion and access for vulnerable and elderly people, community transport, schemes to improve mental health, domestic abuse support services, sports (including disability, elderly and young people) and youth schemes;
 - Through the local plan process gathered an evidence base and reviewed policy to ensure appropriate accommodation for gypsy and traveller accommodation;
 - Completed a housing need study to form the evidence base for the Council's new Housing Strategy that will be delivered in mid 2017;
 - Progressed projects to complete a new and modern sheltered housing complex which will provide apartments for older people and a new housing facility for people with learning disabilities;
 - Continued to provide for health walks across from eight locations across the District; and
 - Provided family fun days in locations across the District with almost 2,000 attendances by young people.
- 12 As a service provider we have:
- Provided disabled facilities grants to the value of £500k, supporting people to adapt their homes and live more independently;
 - Begun a pilot scheme to extend our HERO and disabled facilities grant services to a local hospital to minimise the effects of bed-blocking and helping people to return to their homes more quickly;
 - Made adaptations in the reception area of the Argyle Road offices in accordance with the Council's commitment to be Dementia Friendly;
 - Taken measures within our taxi licensing policy to improve the proportion of licensed vehicles that are accessible to people with disabilities;

Agenda Item 9

- Made improvements to our polling stations for disabled people and for people who have visual impairments;
- Reviewed our local council tax support scheme, ensuring protections remain for those in most need and increased the level of support provided through discretionary housing payments; and
- Launched a new Council website which has ensured all online content has been reviewed, provided new online services and significantly reduced the use of PDF documents which are not accessible to all users.

13 As an employer we have:

- Reviewed our policies, including disciplinary and flexible working, and assessed them to ensure and assessed they are implemented consistently and fairly;
- Implemented a Volunteering Policy for staff; and
- Begun the process of gathering data to ensure the Council is compliant with the Government's Gender Pay Gap Reporting regulations.

Actions for 2017-2018

14 The Council is determined to continue to meet the objectives it has set out in its Equality Policy and Objectives. To this end it is important that there is clarity about the actions we will take and information and data we will collect in the coming year. This may include reviewing, amending or adding objectives to reflect any change in local priorities since the Policy was adopted in April last year.

15 In 2017-18 the Council is seeking to:

- Complete a review of its polling places;
- Deliver a new Housing Strategy and West Kent Homelessness Strategy;
- Make substantial progress in preparing its local plan;
- Further review the local council tax support scheme;
- Continue to improve and develop new online services for its newly delivered website; and
- Continue to work with colleagues and the Accessibility Group to improve access to Council information and services.

16 Members views are sought on there priorities for the Council to address in its equality action plan in the coming year.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

- 17 All public authorities are required to comply with the Equality Act 2010. If we do not publish equality objectives we will not be able to demonstrate what steps we are taking to tackle the inequalities faced by our residents and action may be taken against the Council by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- 18 Adoption of a policy statement and objectives ensures we focus our resources on tackling inequalities within the context of our local priorities and demographics of our population. The Equality Policy Statement and Objectives document can be reviewed annually, in line with annual performance reporting, to amend or add any objectives as required and to reflect any changes in local priorities.

Key Implications

Financial

Understanding the needs of people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010) will assist the Council in allocating resources to areas or services where it is considered to be a greater priority.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

The Council is required to comply with the Equality Act 2010. Failure to do so may result in the Council not being able to demonstrate what steps it is taking to tackle inequalities and action being taken by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Equality Assessment

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. This report sets our objectives for addressing key areas of discrimination and disadvantage over the next four years.

Community Impact and Outcomes

The equality objectives are intended to have a positive impact on our communities and people who use our services. Outcomes will be reported on annually.

Conclusions

This report sets out the progress the Council has made in delivering actions against its Equality Policy and Objectives during 2016-17 and sets out some of the Council's priorities for addressing areas of discrimination and disadvantage over the year, to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Act (2010).

Agenda Item 9

Appendices

Appendix A - Equality Policy Statement and Objectives 2016-2020

Background Papers:

None

Dr. Pav Ramewal
Chief Executive

Closing the Gap

Working towards greater
equality for all



Public sector equality duty

The Council is subject to the public sector equality duty (the equality duty). The equality duty is made up of a general equality duty which is supported by specific duties. The general equality duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

Rights and responsibilities

- This policy statement is developed in partnership with Members and adopted by Cabinet.
- The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for implementing this policy statement.
- Senior managers will make sure their service areas comply with this document.
- Each member of staff has responsibility to read, understand and implement this policy statement and to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Each Councillor has responsibility to read, understand and make sure their behaviour has regard for this policy statement.
- Implementation of this policy statement will be monitored by the Corporate Equalities Monitoring Group and Senior Management Team and progress will be reported to Cabinet.

Policy statement

We want people to reach their potential and be able to use our services in a way that meets their needs. We aim to take an inclusive approach in our roles as a community leader, service provider and employer. The commitments in this document apply to Councillors and staff and set standards for others who deliver services on our behalf.

As a community leader we will:

- Seek to understand the needs of all our residents by listening and responding to the views of our communities;
- Seek to make good decisions by taking in to account a range of views and information and being accountable for them; and
- Seek to help people to take part in community life and exercise their democratic rights.

As a service provider we will:

- Seek to help everyone to use the services which are there for them;
- Seek to give information and advice in clear and suitable ways; and
- Review services to identify whether they are meeting people's needs.

As an employer we will:

- Select, appoint and promote individuals on the basis of merit;
- Encourage all staff to develop and reach their potential;
- Provide a safe and accessible workplace;
- Provide fair and open pay and reward systems; and
- Ensure people work in a place where everyone treats each other with dignity and respect.

To deliver our commitments we will:

- Update our equality information and make progress against our equality objectives;
- Use equality impact assessments when we take important decisions or make changes to our services; and
- Not put up with inappropriate or offensive language or behaviour to Councillors, staff or customers.

Equality information

Under the Equality Act (2010) we must publish information to show how we comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This must include information about people, who share a protected characteristic, who are our employees and people affected by what we do.

Information about our population is provided below. We collect information about the protected characteristics of people that use our services and our employees, only where this is relevant to what we do and the decisions we take.

Our population

Sevenoaks District has a population of 117,800 living in 47,020 households. The Office for National Statistics says that the districts population will increase by 13,000 more people by 2026.

Disability

The 2011 Census recorded that 13,404 households (28.5 per cent) in the District include people with a long-term health problem or disability. Of these, 2,651 households (5.6 per cent) include two or more people with a long-term health problem or disability.

17,091 people (14.9 per cent) in the District have their day to day activities limited a little or a lot by a long-term illness or disability. This is lower than the Kent average of 17.6 per cent and lower than the national average of 17.9 per cent.

The percentage of people with a disability remains similar to that recorded in the 2001 Census.

Age

The average age of the District's population is 41.7. This is slightly higher than the Kent average of 40.7 years and the national average of 39.6 years.

20.6 per cent of the District's population was aged over 65. This has increased from 17.2% in 2001.

Population forecasts suggest that 28 per cent of the District's population will be aged over 65 by 2033. This is in line with population forecasts for the Kent area.

Sex (gender)

51.6 per cent of the population is female and 48.4 per cent is male. There has been little change in these proportions since the 2001 Census.

Race

The 2011 Census said that 4,864 people (4.2 per cent) in the District are from a Black and Minority Ethnic background. This is lower than the Kent average of 6.9 per cent and the national average of 14.6 per cent. The largest ethnic minority group is 'other white' representing 3.6% of the population in the District.

The percentage of people in the District from a Black and Minority Ethnic Background has increased by 2.8% (2,957 people) since 2001.

Religion or belief

The 2011 Census said that 65.4 per cent of the population is Christian. This has decreased by 10.7% since 2001 but is the highest amount of any district in Kent and higher than the national average of 59.4 per cent. 25.2 per cent of the population have no religion. Small proportions of the remainder of the population are Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh and Jewish.

Sexual orientation

Data from the Integrated Household Survey estimates that 1.6 per cent of adults in the UK identified their sexual identity as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Pregnancy or maternity

There are 64.3 births per 1,000 of the population. This is higher than the Kent average of 62.4 and the national average of 62.1. There has been an average of 1,271 births in the district, per year, over the past 34 years. In 2014, there were 1,298 births.

Marital or civil partnership status

The 2011 Census recorded that 54.5 per cent of the District's population are married. This is higher than the Kent average of 48.9 per cent and the national average of 46.6 per cent.

Gender reassignment

At present, there is no official estimate of the trans population. Gender reassignment data is not captured by the Census.

Equality objectives

Under the Equality Act (2010) we must prepare and publish one or more objectives to show how we will achieve any of the things mentioned in the aims of the general equality duty.

The Council's Community Plan sets out a long-term vision for Sevenoaks District and sets out the community's priorities for action. It was developed after consultation with Members, residents, town and parish councils, a wide range of voluntary and community organisations and partner agencies.

A workshop with Councillors was also held to determine our equality priorities as a community leader, service provider and employer.

The information gathered through these consultations has been used to determine our equality objectives for 2016-2020 which are set out below.

Equality objective one

As a community leader, we will advance equality of opportunity by seeking to remove barriers to people with disabilities, and their carers, to participate in community life.

Why we have chosen this objective:

Our Councillors said that these things need improving:

- Access in and around Sevenoaks District by walking, cycling and public transport;
- Transport links for rural communities;
- Enabling people with learning disabilities to participate in community life;
- Understanding the support needs of carers; and
- Physical accessibility for people with disabilities.

Councillors' priorities are reflected in the Sevenoaks District Community Plan which includes the following priorities for action:

- Review and promote voluntary and community transport and lobby to represent District transport concerns;
- Increase parking capacity in Sevenoaks Town;
- Use the community grant scheme to support groups who provide social opportunities and reduce social isolation of vulnerable people; and
- Increase the numbers of carers assessments and respite placements offered.

Our planning service will be considering rural isolation and transport as well as access to the town by cycling and walking as part of the emerging evidence base for the new Local Plan.

Our housing service will be carrying out a detailed analysis of the needs of older people and people with physical disabilities to inform a new Housing Strategy for the District.

The Council's Grant Scheme will continue to be used to support organisations that support the aims of the Community Plan, including supporting access to community services.



Equality objective two

As a community leader, we will foster good relations by promoting understanding of issues affecting people with disabilities and older people.

Why we have chosen this objective:

Our Councillors said that understanding the whole community is a priority and that our work to deliver dementia friendly communities was working well. Councillors also said that improving disability awareness is a priority.

Councillors' priorities are reflected in the Sevenoaks District Community Plan which includes the following priorities for action:

- Work with residents and business partners to deliver dementia friendly communities and provide support for carer's families;
- Support people and vulnerable groups with mental health and raise awareness of mental health issues; and
- Implement a multi-agency service signposting scheme for older and vulnerable people.

In terms of disability awareness, our Health Inequalities Action Plan places a focus on raising awareness of mental health issues.



Equality objective three

As a service provider, we will advance equality of opportunity by improving access to leisure facilities, health activities and other services for people with disabilities, younger and older age groups and men and women.

Why we have chosen this objective:

Our Councillors said that we could do more to promote health activities that are already available. Councillors also said that access to parks, open spaces and leisure facilities could be improved.

Councillors' priorities are reflected in the Sevenoaks District Community Plan which includes the following priorities for action:

- Improve access to leisure, parks and open spaces.
- Complete an Open Space, Sports and Leisure study and deliver a Leisure Strategy.
- Encourage people with disabilities to take part in sport and volunteering.

Our communities and business team have funding in place to provide sports activities for people with disabilities and are looking at doing more. They are also looking to increase the number of health walks and other healthy activities on offer.

Our planning service will be considering 'access for all' to leisure facilities as part of the emerging evidence base for the new Local Plan.

Our elections team will carry out a further review our polling places to ensure that wherever possible they continue to be suitable for the communities needs.

Equality objective four

As a service provider, we will advance equality of opportunity by investigating whether we can improve access to information about our services for people with disabilities and across different age groups.

Why we have chosen this objective:

Our Councillors said that our services are not digital enough but also that we need to consider the needs of people who do not use technology and provide information in different formats.

The Sevenoaks District Access Group have told us that they would like the Council to do more to help people get the information they need in the format that is right for them.

Councillors' priorities are reflected in the Sevenoaks District Community Plan which includes the following priorities for action:

- Produce and implement a digital inclusion strategy focusing on the needs of vulnerable groups.
- Improve broadband connectivity and promote digital inclusion.

The Council will deliver a new website in 2016 and Council services are committed to providing more transactions on line. As the website is developed an option for people to register online to receive the information they need will be considered.

The Council will seek to put in place a policy in the coming year to set out the standards of service that customers can expect.



Equality objective five

As an employer, we will advance equality of opportunity by encouraging a broader range of people to apply for Council vacancies including apprenticeships and increase transparency around pay, including the living wage and gender pay gap.

Why we have chosen this objective:

Our Councillors said that proactive and open recruitment policies are a priority and that we need to continue to make sure that we demonstrate that discrimination does not take place.

They also said that gender pay gap reporting is working well and that we need to continue to show our good practice as an employer which should also include demonstrating our compliance with the Government's Living Wage requirements.

Councillors' priorities are reflected in the council's human resources policies and the commitments the council makes as an Investors in People employer accredited at gold level.

To deliver on our objectives we will:

- Monitor and publish information on the Council's recruitment practices, including information about older people and those with caring responsibilities;
- Review our approach to apprenticeships including how and where opportunities are advertised;
- Enhance the Council's equal pay reporting, demonstrating how lowest and average hourly rates compare to the national living wage.

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Legal & Democratic Advisory Committee Work Plan 2016/17 (as at 8/6/17)

19 June 2017	17 October 2017	23 January 2018	20 March 2018
<p>Shared Services Update</p> <p>Equalities Action Plan</p>	<p>Budget: Review of Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)</p> <p>Electoral Registration and Elections ()to include Action 1 and 2 Minutes 24/1/17)</p> <p>Quercus 7 Update (to include Action 3, Minutes 24/1/17)</p> <p>Licensing Update</p>		

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