

14 March 2024 at 7.00 pm

Council Chamber, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks

Published: 06.03.24



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https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIT1f_F5OfvTzjZk6Zqn6g

Cabinet

Membership:

Chairman, Cllr. Thornton; Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Perry Cole
Cllrs. Dyball, Maskell, McArthur and Reay

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. Minutes To agree the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 February 2024, as a correct record	(Pages 1 - 10)	
2. Declarations of interest Any interests not already registered/		
3. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)		
4. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee, CIL Spending Board or Cabinet Advisory Committees (if any)		
5. Changes to Committee Appointments	(Pages 11 - 12)	Charlotte Sinclair Tel: 01732 227165
6. Consultation Results - Annual Review of Parking Fees & charges 2024/25	(Pages 13 - 26)	Trevor Kennett Tel: 01732 227407

REPORTS ALSO CONSIDERED BY THE CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEES


7. Food Safety Plan 2023 - 24	(Pages 27 - 60)	Glenys Shorrick Tel: 0132234161
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|-----|--|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 8. | Communications Strategy 2024-25 | (Pages 61 - 78) | Daniel Whitmarsh
Tel: 01732 227414 |
| 9. | Climate Change Strategy 2024 | (Pages 79 - 96) | Emma Henshall
Tel: 01732 227358 |
| |  | | |
| 10. | Community Grants 2024/25 | (Pages 97 - 124) | Kathryn Bone
Tel: 01732 227176 |
| |  | | |
| 11. | PSPO Consultation Results: London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road | (Pages 125 - 170) | Kelly Webb
Tel: 01732 227474 |
| |  | | |
| 12. | Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership 2024-25 Strategy & Action Plan | (Pages 171 - 210) | Kelly Webb
Tel: 01732 227474 |
| |  | | |
| 13. | Leisure Operator Options Report | (Pages 211 - 244) | Sarah Robson
Tel: 01732227129 |



 Indicates a Key Decision

 indicates a matter to be referred to Council

EXEMPT INFORMATION

Recommendation: That, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting when considering agenda item 13 (report and Appendices A and B) on the grounds that likely disclosure of exempt information is involved as defined by Schedule 12A, paragraph 3 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

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.

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2024 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Thornton (Chairman)

Cllr. Perry Cole (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dyball, Maskell, McArthur and Reay

Cllrs. Baker, Bulford, Granville, Gustard, Harrison, Horwood, Leaman, James Morgan, Purves, Robinson, Shea, Skinner, Varley, White and Williams were also present.

77. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 January 2024, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

78. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

79. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)

A number of questions were asked regarding the proposed cuts to the Citizen's Advice service, and they focused on whether the Citizen's Advice had been consulted with, before the cuts were agreed, and what the changes were to the agreements. The Portfolio Holder for People & Places advised that Officers were in dialogue with the Citizen's Advice back in October when the Service Level agreement (SLA) was being signed and there was a clause that included that subject to a period of Notice the grant funding could be altered. Conversations had taken place with the Citizens Advice branches and they were made aware in October, of the budget pressure the Council would continue to face and it was made clear that further changes made be needed to be made in the future. The SLA with the Citizen's Advice was being reviewed for a further three years from April 2024 to March 2027, and that funding was being reduced, not withdrawn. The current agreement outlined the Council's funding arrangements to Citizens Advice to provide general and housing advice service. The grant represented around 5% of their overall annual income received. The SLA allows the Council to adjust the funding by giving a 3 months' notice in writing and this was provided in January 2024. Officers had met with both branches to discuss the reduction in funding and productive conversations in regards to their wider grant revenue, service priorities and the potential for joint funding bids had taken place. She further advised that although the general support grant would be reduced, the housing grant remained unchanged. Working with officers, the Citizen's

Advice were looking at other funding opportunities and they were committed to not only working with the Council but other partners and local councils. The Chairman, in response to a comment made regarding members not having had the opportunity to comment on the proposed reduction to the Citizens Advice funding, reminded the meeting that the report had been on the agenda of the previous Cabinet meeting. No non-Cabinet member had raised a question about it then, despite there being spare minutes of question time to the Cabinet available in which to do so.

In response to a question regarding the Community Mobilisation programme, the Portfolio Holder for People and Places advised that over the past 15 months work had been undertaken with some of the Care for Our Community Volunteers, Voluntary Sector Forum, LGA and the Council and launched Better Together. This provided practical support, skills development, networking and capacity building to individuals and new and existing community groups to enable new initiatives and groups. The Community Mobilisation grants were launched and have helped to encourage more volunteers to develop and deliver projects that were important to them and their communities. Projects included gardening and food growing projects, community cooking and food sharing events, training courses for mums and setting up their businesses, and peer support. The Better Together Hub provided a directory of information for groups and support networks which can be accessed across the district. The Portfolio Holder was pleased to announce that the Better Together had been selected as a finalist in the 'Working Together' category of the iESE public sector transformation awards.

In response to a question regarding the National Planning Policy Framework, and information being circulated to Councillors and the MP, the Portfolio Holder confirmed an email with the information requested would be shared.

In response to a question regarding agenda item 6 and 7 on the agenda, Members were advised by the Strategic Head – Commercial and Property that ward Members were usually informed prior to the documents being published. He would look into the details regarding the notification to ward Councillors for the Otford Road Development.

80. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee, CIL Spending Board or Cabinet Advisory Committees

- a) Referral from Scrutiny Committee held on 9 January 2024

Members considered the referral from Scrutiny Committee regarding Homelessness, following the report of the In-depth Scrutiny Working Group. The Chairman of the working group presented the report highlighting key elements of the report which included, high temporary accommodation net costs, impact of out of district placements, key performance indicators and customer satisfaction.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health detailed each of the recommendation (a-j) advising that some of the recommendations were already adopted, or could be

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investigated further. He highlighted that mandatory training for staff on Domestic Abuse and safeguarding were in place. Members discussed the referral, noting that since the pandemic the number of landlords had decreased following rising costs and that training opportunities could be explored for Members. It was also highlighted in discussion that the Local Plan played an important part in ensuring there was affordable housing in the District. The Chairman used her discretion and allowed a guest member to address the Cabinet. In response to the Head of Housing advised that in Domestic Abuse situations those at risk needed to be placed in an area that was far enough away from where the abuse had taken place to ensure safety.

Resolved: That Portfolio Holder be delegated to undertake in discussions with the Head of Housing and report back, to a future meeting of the Cabinet, on the recommendations put forward from the Scrutiny Working Group.

81. Animal Welfare - Review of Fees & Charges

The Portfolio Holder for Cleaner & Greener presented the report which detailed the Council's responsibility for the licensing and regulation of various animal related activities, and proposed changes to the fees and charges to allow for full cost recovery. The updated time and cost analysis indicated that there had been significant increases, as a result of the staff pay award, rises in the cost of administration, and the professional qualification of the Animal Welfare Officer.

Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee had considered the same report and were in support of the recommendations.

Members considered the report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the new fees (as set out in paragraph 21 of the report) for the licensing of activities under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018, the dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 and the Zoo licensing Act 1981, be agreed.

82. Cost Pressures and Cost management of Capital Projects

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Investment presented the report, which outlined the cost pressures that the Council's capital projects had encountered, and the management measures enacted, as Members had expressed concern regarding capital project overspends. He emphasised that much of this had come from unprecedented external factors that could not have been anticipated. The report gave an account why certain capital projects had experienced budget increases and the change control processes in place to approve them. He was encouraged by the pragmatic approach taken by the Council to effectively manage the cost pressures and there were appropriate measures in place to manage these capital projects and their associated risks. The report was thoroughly explored by

the Finance & Investment Advisory Committee and were reassured by the report and supported the recommendations.

The Construction Project Manager outlined the report and corrected a typographical error in the fifth bullet point of Paragraph 3 - the total project cost for White Oak Leisure Centre was £22.27m. He set out some of the unrepresented external factors that had impacted projects. These included the pandemic, Brexit, the Russo-Ukrainian War, high inflation and rising labour and supply costs. Construction materials had a significant inflation increase of up to 30% and interest rates from the Public Works Loan Board had increased from 1.5% in November 2021 to 5% in October 2023.

Members were advised that the report demonstrated that the Council was effectively managing its portfolio of capital projects and had robust project, cost and risk management control measures in place. Despite certain projects having experienced significant challenges caused by external factors, capital projects were being delivered with appropriate levels of diligence and control. Regular monitoring would continue to take place to ensure that projects deliver positive results and value for money.

Members considered the report, noting the good work undertaken by the Team. It was noted that Members were supportive and recognised the professionalism that was used.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) the cost pressures SDC's capital projects have and can encounter as detailed in the report, be noted;
- b) the cost management measures SDC have in place as detailed in the report, be noted;
- c) the continued use of the capital project cost management measures SDC employs, be endorsed; and
- d) an information session for Members to help better understand project management protocols and approaches that the Council uses for its capital projects, be offered.

83. 12 Otford Road, Sevenoaks - Business Park Development Project

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Improvement & Innovation presented the report which set out the development opportunity to enliven an underutilised Council site in one of the main commercial areas in the district for the benefit of businesses, residents and visitors. The main purpose was regeneration and to

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support economic development which was a key policy objective for the Council. The funding proposal was to use Public Works Loan Board linked to the schemes viability to meet the terms of the loan.

She further advised that the proposal was to build and hold in the long term, rather than to sell on completion. However, the exit strategy could change depending on the needs of the Council and market conditions which could be decided nearer to completion of the development. The development proposal was subject to planning and continued financial viability as the scheme was developed through the usual design stages, pre and post planning application stage. She also noted that Members had separately highlighted that the proposed development site was partially located in a flood risk area, and that appropriate risk mitigation strategies would be considered as part of the detailed design process.

The Finance and Investment Advisory Committee had thoroughly considered the report and it was well debated before supporting the recommendation to Cabinet. It was also brought to Members attention that Officers were aware of the LCWIP and it would be considered in the planning stage of the project. Other comments were made regarding pathways and the proposed site had been earmarked for economic development and an employment site.

The Property Investment & Development Surveyor further advised that the proposed project was for a mixed use scheme consisting of industrial units and a drive-through. Subject to receiving the necessary approval, a project team to prepare detailed designs and submit a planning application would be appointed. The current programme envisaged a planning submission in September 2024 with a determination in December 2024 and a start on site in spring 2025 with completion in summer 2026.

Detailed design work would allow further derisking of the project and once a final design was achieved, and would address the cycle highway, further financial appraisals would be undertaken to ensure the scheme remains viable.

Members considered the report and expressed support for a site which was waiting to be developed. The Chairman used her discretion and allowed the local Member to address the meeting, who raised concern regarding the residents who lived in close proximity. The Property Investment & Development Surveyor advised that residents would be consulted before submission of the planning application, and consultation of hours of use would take place with the planning authority.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- (a) it be recommended to Council that the capital funding of the Otford Road development scheme as outlined at Appendix B (Project Costs & Funding) be approved; and

- (b) the scheme would only progress subject to financial viability and planning consent being received, be noted.
- (c) subject to approval of the recommendation by Council at (a) above, provision of the project cost estimated at £3,635,004 is made within the Capital Programme; and
- (d) subject to approval of the recommendation (a) by Council, the Strategic Head of Property and Commercial, following consultation with the Head of Legal & Democratic Services and the Chief Officer Finance and Trading, be delegated authority to enter into necessary professional appointments/contracts to deliver the scheme.

84. Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Investment presented the report which set out the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25, as required by the Local Government Act 2003. The Strategy set out the Council's policy for borrowing and managing its investments. The Finance & Investment Advisory Committee had considered the same report and training received from Link the Treasury advisors, in advance of the meeting had assisted in the discussions. Comments made by the Committee requested further clarification regarding the Council's exposure to unrated organisations, and for it to be noted that the Council would be borrowing significantly more than it had in the past, and this could require diligent handling. As a result of the discussions there had been an update to the table at paragraph 79 to clarify the information relating to counterparties.

The Senior Principal Accountant outlined that in making borrowing and investment decisions the Council must have regard to the Prudential Code and the prudential indicators that it sets. The first part of the treasury management report proposes various prudential indicators and a minimum revenue provision policy to ensure that any capital expenditure plans were affordable. The report also detailed the borrowing and repayment strategy, and the investment strategy for 2024/25. There were no major changes to the investment strategy.

Members considered the report.

Resolved: That

- a) that the comments of the Finance & Investment Advisory Committee be noted; and
- b) it be recommended to Council that the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 be approved.

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85. Budget and Council Tax Setting 2024/25

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Investment presented the report which set out the proposed budget for 2024/25. This was the final stage of the budget process which had given members an event greater opportunity to be involved in the processes than in previous years.

If approved, the net expenditure budget for 2024/25 would be £19.4m with the District's Council Tax increasing by 2.97% resulting in Band D Council Tax being £243.72, an increase of £7.02. He stressed again, the importance of recognising that the budget process had been the toughest for many years, and the list of savings reflected some of the difficult decisions that have had to be made.

He was pleased to say that those decisions and the approach adopted once again left the Council with a fully funded budget over the next 10 years that other councils would aspire to.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance & Trading further detailed to Members that it had been an extremely challenging budget process with a number of changes made at each stage, and these were listed in Appendix E.

He went on to advise that the Financial Prospects report presented in September reported an annual budget gap of £1.3m. Members were fully involved during the Advisory Committee stage of the process where discussions on savings and growth proposals were put forward and produced further suggestions. Meanwhile, managers were continuing to search for possible savings recognising the challenges they may cause for their services.

This resulted in the gap being reported to Cabinet in December reducing to £656,000. Chief Officers then liaised with Portfolio Holders to come up with further ideas and managers searched once again. Also, greater risks were included in the assumptions particularly regarding Business Rates. These changes resulted in Cabinet being able to support a balanced annual budget position at their meeting in January. He reiterated again, that difficult decisions have had to be taken to enable the balanced budget.

The Final Local Government Finance Settlement was announced earlier this week and the council would receive an additional £165,000 for 2024/25 only. Cabinet would therefore have to make an additional recommendation as to how they proposed to use that funding.

An additional part of the budget process this year had been a thorough review of fees and charges, as listed in Appendix J and Cabinet were requested to approve the fees and charges for 2024/25. Members were advised that appendices P to S were not included within the Cabinet papers but would be included in the Council version of the report after the other preceptors had set their Council Tax.

The report included his opinion, as the Statutory Finance Officer, on the robustness of the budget estimates and adequacy of reserves.

Members discussed the report, noting the budget process had started earlier this year, with additional training and consultation with the Advisory Committees and Portfolio Holders.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members note that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty

Resolved: That

(a) it be recommended to Council that:

i. the Summary of Council Expenditure and Council Tax for 2024/25 set out in Appendix F, be approved.

ii. the 10-year budget 2024/25 to 2033/34 which was the guiding framework for the detailed approval of future years' budgets set out in Appendix C(i) to the report, including the budget changes set out in Appendix E to the report, and that where possible any variations during and between years be met from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve, be agreed;

iii. the Capital Programme 2024/27 and funding method set out in Appendix K(i) and Capital Strategy 2024/25 set out in Appendix K(iii), be approved;

iv. the changes to reserves and provisions set out in Appendix L, be approved;

v. the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023/24, be rolled forward to 2024/25, with effect from 1 April 2024 (Appendix N), be approved;

vi. the agreement made at Council on 21 February 2023 to shorten the Council Tax premium on long term empty dwellings from the current 2 years (empty) to 1 year from 1 April 2024, be confirmed; and

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- vii. the agreement made at Council on 21 February 2023 to implement the 100% Council Tax premium on all second homes from 1 April 2025, be confirmed.

- (b) the fees and charges for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix J, be approved; and

- (c) the additional one-off funding of £165,000 in 2024/25 be placed into the Budget Stabilisation Reserve to reduce the savings required to offset the expected 2023/24 overspend when setting the 2025/26 budget.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 12 February 2024. The decisions contained in Minute 80, 81, and 82 take effect immediately. The decisions contained in Minute 83 (c and d) take effect on 19 February 2024. The decisions contained in Minutes 83 (a and b), 84 and 85 are references to Council.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.15 PM

CHAIRMAN

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CHANGES TO COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS 2023/24

Cabinet – 14 March 2024

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer Corporate Services

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

Contact Officer: Charlotte Sinclair Ext. 7165

Recommendation to Cabinet: That

- a) Cllr. Lindop be removed from the Finance & Investment and Housing & Health Advisory Committees, and Cllr. Manston be appointed to the Committees;
- b) Cllr. Barker be removed from the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee, and Cllr. Manston be appointed to the Committee.

Introduction and Background

- 1 On 23 May 2023, Council appointed the Membership of Council Committees.
- 2 Since this date, the Leader of the Green Party has requested Membership changes to their appointed Committees.
- 3 Political Proportionality has not changed as the proposed changes have been agreed within each of the political groups.
- 4 If agreed this will form part of Appendix H of the Council's Constitution.

Key Implications

Financial

Attendance at Committee meetings which an Elected Member has been appointed to by the Council constitutes an approved duty and there are costs involved.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications for the recommendations being suggested for approval.

Agenda Item 5

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 2030

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

Members are requested to consider and approve the attached appointments.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

Jim Carrington – West

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer – Customer & Resources

**CONSULTATION RESULTS - ANNUAL REVIEW OF PARKING FEES & CHARGES
2024/25**

Cabinet – 14 March 2024

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer, Finance & Trading

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: This report updates members of the statutory public consultation on parking fees and charges for 2024/25.

This report supports the Key Aim: pledge to reach net zero carbon emissions produced by the Council and our assets by 2030, providing value for money, and supporting and developing the local economy.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Margot McArthur

Contact Officer: Trevor Kennett, Ext. 7407

Adrian Rowbotham, Ext. 7153

Recommendation to Cabinet: That the statutory consultation results be considered and the preferred option be approved.

Reason for recommendation: To help regulate and manage the use of on and off street parking facilities in the District; to ensure car parking charges are set to support a sustainable local economy; and, to support services for residents as set out in the approved 10-year budget.

Agenda Item 6

Introduction

- 1.0 This report considers the statutory consultation results on the proposed changes to parking fees and charges for 2024/25.

Background

- 2.0 The Council operates a number of public car parks and on-street pay and display facilities in towns and villages across the District. It is important to regulate these finite resources in order to balance the needs of parking users, including commuters, local businesses, residents, shoppers and other visitors including tourists. It is also important to ensure all parking fees and charges are set consistently across the district.
- 3.0 The Council's approach has been to ensure our parking charges are set to encourage people to use parking spaces responsibly while at the same time promoting a good turnover of parking spaces for the benefit of businesses and visitors. Parking charges are one aspect of effective parking management; however, others – such as hours and days of operation and maximum stay periods – kept under review.
- 4.0 In addition to rising operational costs such as non-domestic rates, insurance, general maintenance, utilities, enforcement and security, it is important to re-invest in the Council's car parks to ensure these assets remain welcoming, safe and fit for purpose. Improvements have included the installation of contactless payment facility on all of the district's payment machines, new safety barriers, increasing capacity, resurfacing, renewing drainage and upgrading lighting.
- 5.0 The assumption for parking income increases in the 10-year budget approved by Council on 9 February 2023 for 2024/25 is as follows:

Inflationary Increase	Covid: Assumed 25% reduction in 2021/22, improving by 5% per year	Adjustment for exceeding budget performance for 2022/23	Total
£94,000	£206,000	(£160,000)	£140,000

Preferred Option

- 6.0 Zero percentage increase on all parking fees and charges, but an end to free parking and an expansion of operating hours/days across the district.
- 7.0 This option appreciates that fees and charges were raised to our customers in 2022/23, and that the large majority of the deferred income inflation increase since 2021/22 has been recovered. This could contribute to the raising of £140,000.
- 8.0 This option supports the Council's Net Zero ambitions, by ending free parking, expanding the operating times for on and off street parking, and actively discouraging town centre driving.

Statutory Consultation Results

- 9.0 Statutory public consultation ran from the 4th December 2023 until the 5th January 2024. This consisted of advertised public notices in the press, communication with the town & parishes councils, partner agencies, including Kent County Council, social media and an on line consultation survey on the councils website.
- 10.0 Sixty-two (62) consultation responses were received, of these, 58 were in the negative and four (4) neutral or positive. The 58 negative responses are broken down as follows:

Concern	Number of responses
Concerns for the effect of businesses/shops on the high street and town centres.	30
Generally not in favour of the proposal.	21
Multiple reasons stated against the proposal	4
Concerns for Churchgoers on Sundays.	3
Total responses against the proposal	58

Agenda Item 6

Key Implications

Financial

All options that contain financial implications have been detailed within this report.

Parking income in 2023/24 currently forecasted to exceed the budget but the 5% annual increase in the budget to reinstate to pre Covid budget levels is required to continue up to and including 2026/27. Therefore, it is important to continue to make changes each year that deliver additional income.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

All parking fees and charges are subject to statutory public consultation and a notice of variation in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Parking Places (Variation of Charges) Act 2017.

Equality Assessment

There is a low risk that the proposals in this report would have any implications under the Equality Act 2010.

Sevenoaks District Council supports the Blue Badge Scheme allowing free parking in all of its off-street car parks and in on-street pay and display bays.

Net Zero Implications

Achieving Net Zero carbon emissions is a top priority for the Council as outlined in our Net Zero 2023 action plan and Movement Strategy. It encompasses all aspects of the Council. It incorporates actions on sustainable transport, active travel and air quality. One of the Council's commitments is to encourage, and support our residents and visitors to our District to reduce carbon emissions.

Members are reminded of the Council's stated ambition to be Net Zero concerning carbon emissions by 2030. The decisions recommended in this paper directly impact on this ambition. The impact reviewed and there could be a noteworthy decrease on carbon emissions produced in the district because of this decision.

Increasing parking fees and charges, and eliminating free parking, could encourage car park users to find alternative travel and transport options, such as public transport, walking and cycling.

Appendices – Appendix 1 – Consultation Responses

Background Papers – Cabinet, 12th October 2023, item 37.
<https://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=120&MId=3081&Ver=4&J=2>

**Adrian Rowbotham,
Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance & Trading**

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Appendix 1 - Consultation Responses.	
Comments	Area
I have an artists studio in Sevenoaks High Street. I struggle to pay the parking costs and have had to consider giving it up - which would have a disastrous effect on my practice. All day free Sunday parking has been my saviour. I often meet people at the Pay Point saying how expensive it is. I live in Farningham and my friends rarely shop in Sevenoaks. Otford for girls lunches and Bluewater for a full days shopping and coffee - no massive parking fees. It would put me off stating a gallery in Sevenoaks.	Dartford
I don't agree with charging on a Sunday the parking charges in Sevenoaks are extortionate already.	Dartford
I don't use Sevenoaks because of your disgusting charges,	Dunton Green
Personally I would have supported a small increase in parking charges as a means for the Council to increase income so as to protect other services	Halstead
Sunday charges will greatly affect our high street. We are losing businesses without the council exacerbating the situation. On Sundays the car parks are full which reflects the publics' opinion.	Kemsing
Definitely NO to charging on Sundays!! This will deter people even more to visit the shops and restaurants on Sundays.	Kemsing
Reduce current charges and continue free Sunday parking Also make evenings free	Kemsing
If you start charging on Sundays, you will kill off the town completely	Kemsing
Yes, freeze charges. No don't introduce Sunday charges. The fees are already more than high enough to maintain the car parks and you know it. Introducing Sunday fees will directly affect both the hospitality industry in the town as well as the taxi businesses.	Kemsing
No to Sunday charges. Sevenoaks high street has so little to offer and you're charging for the privilege to shop in 'privilege' shops!	Kemsing
I dont support this proposal. The highest Reeth is struggling already, this would add more pressure to struggling businesses	Kemsing
I am totally AGAINST Sunday parking charges . Traders will suffer in what is a hard trading environment	Kemsing
Stop sun charging and keep free parking	Kemsing
Freeze all and no to Sunday People will go elsewhere	Kemsing
Do not start charging on a Sunday for goodness sake!	Kemsing
Presumably, to police parking offences on a Sunday, the wardens will be paid an out-of-social wage.	Kemsing
In favour of freezing charges. I am not in favour of introducing parking charges on Sundays. It is important to keep this free to support the local economy.	Orpington
Sunday should always remain free to park in Sevenoaks. The charges on other days need to be reduced to attract more shoppers to the town. I pay a fortune in Council Tax to the council, why should I pay more to shop in Sevenoaks? I don't even get street lighting where I live. And the bus service is useless.	Otford
Sevenoaks is very quiet on a Sunday. It would be great if more shops would open on a Sunday to make it a place people can go for all their shopping needs.	Otford

Agenda Item 6

Introducing Sunday parking charges will deter people from shopping in Sevenoaks on a Sunday rather than attract them	
I disagree with the introduction of Sunday charges. You have killed the town centre.	Otford
Please do not bring in Sunday charges. My family and I save visits to Sevenoaks for a Sunday as 1. We can't afford the parking rates the rest of the week. 2. I have mobility issues but are not eligible for disabled badge. I cannot walk much distance as from the Council Offices. 3. We don't have public transport that can allow us to visit Sevenoaks and shop. 4. What affect will this have on local businesses and shops? SDC were so supportive of them during the pandemic, this proposal is really a shame... sell your offices if you are in need of the cash!	Otford
Please do not introduce charges on a Sunday. Daily parking costs are a massively huge burden for low income self employed workers like myself. This will add to our weekly costs. Access to the workplace is currently easier on a Sunday for loading and unloading without time restrictions and costs. This proposal is not welcome. It will impact negatively on visitors to the town, and workers in the town on a Sunday.	Otford
sundays should be free.	Riverhead
The high street is a hub for local residents, but those needing to drive are now avoiding visiting due to the charges. They think it is easier/cheaper to drive to Bluewater so the charges are causing problems. I do understand that you need income to maintain them, but people are now driving further out to park on residents roads. I live on Lea Road, TN13 1QP and the anti-social parking on this road is devastating the neighbours but it is easy and free parking for access to the high street and knole park. What I would suggest is that you put resident parking in these roads and then you can do penalty charges for any anti-social parking. We have had to report the cars on numerous times to the police when it would be better to have restricted parking which would also mean the council would get an income if it were abused.	Sevenoaks
I find the parking charges introduced last year to £2 extortionate. I now avoid town. It makes me rush my shopping when I would prefer to spend more time in town or have a coffee. I don't agree with Sunday charging - it really will make me stay at home more or go elsewhere.	Sevenoaks
I am certain that sunday trading in Sevenoaks will suffer as a result.	Sevenoaks
Shocking, another way to tax local people who are trying to support local businesses. There is no need to charge on Sunday's, as a council you should be ashamed of yourselves. If this is implemented then we will stop shopping in Sevenoaks and happily travel to outside free shopping centres.	Sevenoaks
Don't make it harder for traders. No charges on Sunday should not change	Sevenoaks
I do not agree with this, it is already expensive to park for any length of time in Sevenoaks and introducing parking charges on a Sunday would prohibit people from parking. Sevenoaks is already dying and I feel this would be the nail in the coffin for the town centre.	Sevenoaks
The parking in Sevenoaks has increased over the past couple of years . Increasing the charge will I believe make the retail shops that are open suffer	Sevenoaks

<p>I appreciate costs are rising, but this is happening with everything and if you introduce Sunday charges it will kill the High Street even more than it I'd affected already. People would sooner use petrol to travel to Bkuewater, for example, than pay for parking. Its the principal of the thing..this will definately stop people coming to the High Street The High Street is already quieter on a Sunday with quiet a few shops closed Please don't do it If anything please reduce the coats during the week and Saturday</p>	<p>Sevenoaks</p>
<p>I am against these Sunday charges as it adversely affects those within the faith communities who use the car parks to attend church services in the town.</p>	<p>Sevenoaks</p>
<p>I wish to object to the introduction of Sunday charges alongside the Vine in Hollybush Lane. Parking from here will be displaced to the Drive preventing elderly members of the congregation at the Drive Methodist Church from parking anywhere near the church. This already happens if there is a major event at the Rugby Club. Other churches in the District may be affected in a similar way as few have large car parks</p>	<p>Sevenoaks</p>
<p>Parking costs are already so high in Sevenoaks, making Sunday chargeable will mean fewer visits into town, which is a huge shame. Do freeze the charges but also keep Sundays free.</p>	<p>Sevenoaks</p>
<p>This is a terrible idea. I live in Sevenoaks and find the steep walk from St John's tough going so Sunday in the one day I look forward to spending just a hour or so in town. Perhaps a minimum stay period instead to stop people using it for anything more than the town centre? Please think about our mental well-being. I live alone I, paying higher rent and cannot afford to pay charges on weekdays. Thank you.</p>	<p>Sevenoaks</p>
<p>I believe parking charges should be frozen and also that there should be no Sunday charges and there should absolutely be a facility to pay by cash. Not everybody has a credit card. Huge numbers do not. Not everybody understands parking machines believe it or not. People with disabilities may encounter problems. Not everybody in the area is lucky enough to have spare monies to keep paying for parking. There are hardly any buses let alone on a Sunday which is dire . We have a cost of living crisis and even though Sevenoaks has pretty high rates and many houses will be in higher tax band, there should still be sufficient monies to enable free Sunday parking to bring people into the town to spend and keep the town alive. I have friends that come into Sevenoaks by car who are unable to walk far especially with shopping so obviously cannot use the Council free carpark. Some are pensioners who again are on limited income and popping into town is something that helps their mental health. Paying more is not helpful. Also this is not about clean air. It is about the Sevenoaks Corporation trying to raise more money from residents. I already pay about £4k a year for my property and paying for Sunday parking should not be on the Council's agenda in my opinion. I personally have health issues sometimes very difficult and although I live in the town and can get help I am very mindful of other people's problems</p>	<p>Sevenoaks</p>
<p>Sorry to see Stag Car Park move to Sunday charging, as this puts up the cost to people involved in concerts/shows at the Stag Theatre, and may reduce audience sizes as well. I can understand the need to limit time for shoppers to increase turnover, but if one is parking for a rehearsal and performance, moving the car and hoping to find another space after 4 hours (no return within 2 hours) is not practical.</p>	<p>Sevenoaks</p>
<p>Absolutely not</p>	<p>Sevenoaks</p>
<p>It is an absolute cheek to consider this proposal. The council should be encouraging people to come into town, not charging them.</p>	<p>Shoreham</p>

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Laudable to freeze parking charges, but to introduce parking charges on Sunday is just another nail in the coffin of a town that is dying in front of our very eyes.	Shoreham
I understand why you feel the need to do this but for someone like myself who has no off street parking available and you do not provide a permit for the carpark I have to use as a resident everyday I find this unfair, it already costs me £25 a week to park. If you do bring this new Sunday charge in the maybe you should consider making permits available for the park road carpark in swanley.	Swanley
As a worker in Sevenoaks town centre, I'm paying £22 a week (average) to park to go to work, working out at over £1000 a year. I believe there should be some kind of cheaper permit that allows workers in the town centre to park at a greatly discounted rate, after all, without the shops and shop workers there would be no town centre. With weekends there are sometimes no spaces left in the free council office parking, meaning having to pay for parking in the multi storey, adding further to costs. The guaranteed free parking on a Sunday with the multi-storey is at least a day with no parking charge. I know there is the season parking tickets, but that is a huge pay out for a minimum paid retail working to pay out, and I feel we're being penalised for working in an affluent area. Perhaps better use of traffic wardens, such as not having 3 in the same car park at the same time (which I've witnessed on multiple occasions) would mean more car parks covered and therefore more charges issued to raise funds. I'd also like to highlight with the previous council/council leader, who was there for many years, was able to run the car parks without the Sunday payments, so what's changed?	Tonbridge
I have to work on Sundays and it is the only time I do not have to pay for parking. As it is a charity I work for the pay is not very high and an extra days parking may mean I need to find another job. It is already discouraging customers from coming into Sevenoaks so it would seem you do not wish anyone outside of Sevenoaks to come into the town.	Tonbridge
Although you say you are freezing the charges it now costs a minimum of £2 to park whether I wish to only park for 30 mins or 2 hrs. Please bring back the one hour charge or I will continue to drive on to the out of town shops rather than support local high street.	Unknown
The high street is dying out because councils keep increasing cost of parking across the nation. Sevenoaks is already a dying town. To introduce Sunday parking charges when the cost of parking is already astronomical will be the final nail in the coffin. The parking charges should be frozen and no Sunday charges should be added. This will spell the end for more businesses. It is greedy and targets consumers and businesses and soon the high street will be just places to eat, charity shops, coffee shops, hairdressers and estate agents. Please do not introduce any more charges or hike them, you have already charged too much and extended until 8.30pm!	Unknown
You've killed Sevenoaks high street with the highest parking charges in the area, unless you're looking for an estate agent, charity shop or optician. So all I can say is well done mission accomplished	Unknown
It's blatant revenue raising. I will never pay to park in Sevenoaks.	Unknown
I think free parking is great on Sundays lots of Sunday shoppers	Unknown
No	Unknown
This is an excellent idea from the council and will help local shops across the district.	Unknown
none	Unknown

<p>Westerham Town Council is strongly opposed to the introduction of parking charges on Sundays. Whilst we welcome the freeze on other parking charges our town has already suffered by the loss of the free parking period in the Darent Car Park and we believe the introduction of Sunday charges at a time when businesses are still recovering from the effects of Covid will: Have a negative impact on businesses for whom Sunday is an important trading day. Imposing parking charges is likely to mean people will choose to shop or visit restaurants, pubs and eateries in other areas where there are no charges. We note that the neighbouring town of Oxted has no charges. Deter visitors from stopping and social groups from meeting in Westerham hence further impacting businesses. Impact on vulnerable members of our society who rely on their cars for social activities. Impact on parents / guardians taking children for sporting activities which occur on Sundays. We ask that SDC reconsiders this course of action.</p>	<p>Westerham</p>
<p>I believe that you are doing all you can to drive footfall away from the town and close even more businesses. You can only be suggesting a freeze as you are embarrassed by the massive hike within the last year. The parking restrictions are encouraging people to shop in retail parks outside of towns where the parking is free. The parking is too restricted and if you follow Bromley and Brighton's stance of getting rid of cash you are further preventing older people from enjoying a day out</p>	<p>Westerham</p>
<p>I think it's a tragedy what you're doing to our high st. Our businesses are already struggling and a few more in westerham are about to close down. I don't know how you think introducing Sunday parking fees will help anyone.</p>	<p>Westerham</p>
<p>Totally against this stealth tax it is killing the high street</p>	<p>Westerham</p>
<p>The town businesses are struggling enough - ridiculous idea.</p>	<p>Westerham</p>

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<p>Proposal to charge or Sunday Parking Further to the proposal by SDC to introduce parking charges in Westerham on Sundays, the Westerham Town Partnership (WTP) would like to make the following comments. This proposal has received a resoundingly negative response from businesses, residents and visitors to Westerham. WTP has studied the minutes of the SDC Cabinet meeting of 12th Oct 2023 and press releases that were published online and the Parking Accounts for the last four years. It is evident that income from parking charges and fines together not only covers the cost of providing parking but regularly generates an income that is three times the cost. In the year before Covid it was nearly 5 times. In the last financial year (2022/23) the report shows the overall cost of providing parking in the Sevenoaks District was £776,064 and the income was £2,333,405, thus generating a surplus of £1,557,341. We are therefore puzzled to read in the KM website (our comments are interleaved in red): Cllr Margot McArthur said: “Despite significant increases in our costs, we have taken a decision to freeze all parking charges from April because supporting residents, businesses and visitors is a top priority for the Council”. “At the same time, as part of setting a balanced budget, we will introduce our standard charges on Sundays at all our parking locations. With a growing Sunday economy, it’s only right that customers who use our parking facilities contribute towards their upkeep”. We would love to see some evidence that there is a growing Sunday economy in Westerham - we certainly wish it were so. “Ending most free parking also supports our efforts to tackle climate change by encouraging more people to visit our towns using sustainable forms of transport.” With all respect, invoking climate change is stretching the credibility of your argument. That apart, there is virtually no viable Sunday public transport for visitors to Westerham. “However, we will still offer free weekend parking in our staff car park a short walk from Sevenoaks town centre.” We assume this is Gordon Rd which has 146 spaces. Well, we would like to see a similar concession made for visitors to Westerham.</p> <p>WESTERHAM DARENT CAR PARK We propose that Darent Car Park should have free all-day parking, like SDC offers at the Gordon Rd Car Park in Sevenoaks. All Westerham townsfolk we spoke to felt that SDC had treated us badly when it withdrew the established practice of the first 3 hours being free Monday to Saturday. WTP wrote an extensive report on Parking Amenities in 2013 which is still on the Visitwesterham website. Free parking for first 3 hours creates a strong incentive to stay longer. Promoting the use of the Darent car park also helps generate more short term parking in the town centre and encourages first-time visitors. The short walk through the churchyard helps visitors to consider how they might like to spend their time. SUNDAY IS DIFFERENT Sunday must surely be the day to stop hurrying and worrying and relax. Sunday should be the day for a family walk and a day to try a new path and risk getting lost, leaving enough time to stop for a tea on the way back - without worrying about overrunning the parking you paid for. Getting back and finding you’ve got a ticket is likely to ruin the whole day. And please don’t forget Sunday morning football in King George’s Field. Improving the amenities in the field has been a major project for Westerham and we hope it will bring lots of visitors who might like to walk into town for lunch. THE WESTERHAM ECONOMY and FOOTFALL Footfall is the key to making our economy viable. We often hear of people who discover Westerham and say “let’s try to stop if we can find a parking place” and then drive on through. How can we ensure that they try to come back another day? It is generally agreed that Westerham’s main assets are the countryside, our shops and restaurants, our heritage and our warm and friendly community. We will never</p>	Westerham
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<p>have a train station and there is little likelihood of a decent bus service, especially as commuting patterns have changed so dramatically now that everyone wants to work from home, for at least part of the week. Decisions about parking charges, like so many other things, should never be made in isolation, without regard to the question “How does the local (Westerham) economy work?” This was the subject of the KCC Healthcheck back in 2008. It was an audit of Westerham taking in the economy, transport, social life and the environment. It’s still out there at www.visitwesterham.org.uk/community/town-council-partnership/the-healthcheck Fifteen years on, there is a strong case for re-running the exercise. WTP looks forward to working with SDC and WTC to address all these issues and will continue to lobby to ensure that Sunday parking remains free in Westerham.</p> <p>5 January 2024 It seems this portal won't accept any text colour or other mark-up. We've emailed the original Word document to SDC Stuart Merrylees, Director Westerham Town Partnership. info@visitwesterham.org.uk</p>	
<p>Sevenoaks Town Council wishes to record the following concerns with the proposals: - The term "freeze" is misleading, as the charges will be increasing by a seventh due to charges being introduced for Sundays, - The Town Council has been approached by various High Street retailers who are concerned that the introduction of Sunday parking charges will cause significant losses to local businesses, as Sundays form a significant portion of their trade. - Community activities will be negatively impacted by the Sunday charges, for instance church visitors, those attending care-homes or family visits. - Car parking charges are a deterrent to shoppers, especially as Bluewater has free car parking and more choice. Exacerbating this by introducing car parking charges on the one day that shoppers could previously visit the high street for free will have a significant impact on retailers and market holders. Sevenoaks Town Council emphasised that local businesses and market holders should be supported. This could be achieved by introducing differential parking charges during market opening hours, or by providing one free hour of parking. It was also noted that Westerham's on street parking, which is run by the District Council, is significantly cheaper than in Sevenoaks. The Town Councillors wished to know why Sevenoaks residents appear to be supplementing a higher portion of parking charges.</p>	<p>Westerham</p>

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<p>I am a trustee of our local church- St Mary, The Virgin, Westerham. Many elderly and frail worshippers visit the church on Sunday. I am appalled at that idea that they may in future have to pay to come to our church. The church provides much excellent work to many charities- the Westerham Food Bank, The Children's Society, The Royal British Legion, Porchlight, Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees, to name but a few. Our community relies on such support please do not charge us to park on Sundays - this will not help our church and numerous other organisations/businesses in Westerham</p>	<p>Westerham</p>
<p>I object to Sunday charges being incurred on car parking in Westerham.</p>	<p>Westerham</p>
<p>The council have already increased car parking charges in Westerham town and now want to charge for parking on Sundays. This is completely the wrong thing to do during this current economic climate where prices are already so high. It just looks greedy in my opinion</p>	<p>Westerham</p>
<p>I work in town as a minimum wage retail worker who pays £5.60 a day what is £140 a month to park in the multistorey carpark. I think its wrong to penalise the retail workers with higher monthly outgoings who live outside of sevenoaks and have little to no way to get into town to be able to work. I understand to charge people who do not work in sevenoaks but then I think It would be nicer for there to be an alternative like a town workers permit that would be cheaper for us and more workers will use. While do a residential parking for those who don't work and charge them for the weekends/ higher prices.</p>	<p>Westerham</p>

Item 07 – Food safety Plan 2023 - 24

The attached report was considered by the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee on 22 February 2024. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of these papers and will follow when available.

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Food Safety Service Plan 2023/24

Cabinet - 14 March 2024

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Planning and Regulatory Services

Status: For decision

Also considered by:

Council – 23 April 2024

Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee – 22 February 2024

Key Decision: No

This report supports the Key Aim of: Meeting a statutory duty of the council.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. McArthur

Contact Officer: Glenys Shorrick, Ext. 7158

Recommendation to Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee:

That it be recommended to Cabinet, that it be recommended to Council to note the contents of the 'SDC Food Safety Plan 2023/24' and support the adoption of this document.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

That it be recommended to Council to note the contents of the 'SDC Food Safety Plan 2023/24' and support the adoption of this document.

Recommendation to Council:

To note the contents of the 'SDC Food Safety Plan 2023/24' and agree the adoption of this document.

Reason for recommendation:

This food safety plan details how the Environmental Health Team intend to meet and discharge its statutory obligations in respect of Food Safety. This document is a requirement of the Food Standards Agency and if approved will be shared with

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Introduction and Background

- 1 The Council recognises the importance that the provision of an effective Food and Safety team plays in ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of those who live, work and visit our district. This Service Plan sets out how Sevenoaks District Council intends to provide an effective food safety service that meets the requirements of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement. It covers the functions carried out by authorised officers of the Food and Safety Team and provides a clear strategy to ensure that resources are targeted towards front line services and high risk food activities.
- 2 The objective of this plan is to ensure that a program of food enforcement activity is carried out providing public confidence that food is produced and sold under safe and hygienic conditions in the Sevenoaks district. The layout of the plan is dictated by the Framework Agreement between the Food Standards Agency and Local Authorities.
- 3 The Plan sets out our priorities and what they will be going forward ensuring that resources are targeted where they add greatest value in providing safeguards for public health and consumer protection in relation to food.
- 4 We have worked hard as a team to ensure that all of our higher risk establishments (A and B rated) have received an inspection by the due date and all of our non-compliant establishments (awarded a 2 hygiene rating or less) have received a revisit to check compliance.
- 5 We are a busy team and have been carrying a part-time Food Safety Officer vacancy since April 2023. To ensure we meet and exceed our performance target for inspecting medium risk premises due within the inspection programme we have occasionally used an experienced contractor to help us manage variances in demand and fluctuations in the programme.
- 6 The team aims to successfully balance service delivery between education, encouragement and enforcement.
- 7 To ensure that the food safety service operates as efficiently as possible we continue to invest in technology and systems to assist us and we have re-configured processes and procedures. We have developed a more effective strategy which has enabled us to focus more closely on our lower risk food businesses which were not a priority as we were emerging from the pandemic eg home bakers, childminders and pharmacies. Officers continue to undertake electronic food hygiene inspections utilising iPads and custom built iAuditor forms and we have developed additional templates and other food safety documents improving the accuracy and transparency of our service.
- 8 Wherever possible, administration tasks have been moved from qualified Food officers to our technical administrators generating additional capacity. We are working to increase the knowledge and experience of these officers so that

they are able to respond to basic enquiries and requests improving the speed of our responses to customers. We work with our Customer Solutions colleagues to ensure that 'Frequently asked questions' are accurate and informative and with our Communications team to ensure that the content of our website is accurate and a good source of information for residents and businesses. We encourage customers to provide feedback on the service they have received via an emailed customer feedback survey.

- 9 The service remains on track to deliver this year's food programme in accordance with the Food Standards Agency Plans.
- 10 We will carry out a review of our Food Safety service annually and this will be based on performance and resources available over the previous 12 months, feedback from local businesses and the community, observations from Members and the team and guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency.

Key Implications

Financial

Minimal cost as undertaken within existing resources.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The Food Safety Plan is a document required by the Food Standards Agency and its format is dictated by the Framework Agreement between the FSA and local authorities.

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Food Safety Plan

Background Papers

None.

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Richard Morris

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Planning and Regulatory Services



Service Delivery- Environmental Health Food Safety Service Plan 2023-2024

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Introduction

This Service Plan sets out how Sevenoaks District Council intends to provide an effective food safety service that meets the requirements of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement. The Food Standards Agency regards this as important to ensure national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally, The FSA also encourages local authorities to include locally defined objectives in their Plans which we have done.

It covers the functions carried out by authorised officers of the Food and Safety Team under the provisions of the Food Safety Act 1990, the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 and relevant regulations made under the European Communities Act 1992. To set it in context with other Environmental Health responsibilities, it should be read in conjunction with current versions of:

- The Council Plan
- The Environmental Health Enforcement Policy
- The Environmental Health Service Plan

1. Service aims and objectives

1.1 Aims and objectives

FSA Recovery Plan arrangements which set out guidance during the period of recovery from the impact of the pandemic came to an end on 31st March 2023.

From 1st April the service has reverted back to the intervention arrangements outlined in the Food Law Code of Practice.

We aim to ensure that all food and drink intended for sale for human consumption that is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed in the Sevenoaks District is safe, hygienic and compliant with food hygiene legislation and that all food premises and food handlers comply with the Food Hygiene Regulations. We will encourage good practice

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amongst those responsible for preparing, handling and cooking food and to ensure they comply with their statutory obligations.

This will be achieved through:

- Programmed and intelligence led food hygiene interventions and revisits
- Local delivery of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
- Investigation of complaints regarding food sold or prepared in the district
- Investigation of complaints regarding hygiene standards or practices
- Investigation and control of infectious diseases including food poisoning and food borne disease
- Responding to food alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency
- Sampling initiatives in accordance with the Local Government guidance and National programme
- The provision of advice and information on food safety issues
- Promotional work
- Statutory consultation on relevant licensing and planning applications
- Use of questionnaires for lower risk premises
- Developing and utilising partnerships, both professional and commercial, to enhance quality and effectiveness of the service
- Ensuring that food safety guidance is provided to individuals and organisations that are starting new food businesses in the area.
- Monitoring of existing Approved premises as well as granting new approval applications
- Imported food control

1.2 Links to corporate objectives and plans

This Food Service Plan is delivered by the Food and Safety Team (within Environmental Health) whose broad spectrum of work is linked to the Council Plan with particular reference to the health and wellbeing of those who live, work and visit the area. Environmental Health also has a significant role in supporting economic growth.

2. Background

2.1. District Profile

Sevenoaks District Council is located in north-west Kent, is situated to the southeast of London, and administers an area which forms a major part of what is now “commuter belt country”. The population is approximately 121,400 people. The district covers an area of approximately 378km², and comprises a mostly rural land-uses, with the three major centres of population concentration, which occur in and around the towns of Swanley in the North, Sevenoaks and Westerham in the centre, and Edenbridge in the South of the district.

Our Food Safety service is delivered from:

Sevenoaks District Council

Council Offices

Argyle Road

Sevenoaks

Kent

TN13 1HG

Telephone number 01732 227000. Our offices are open between 09:00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday. environmental.health@sevenoaks.gov.uk

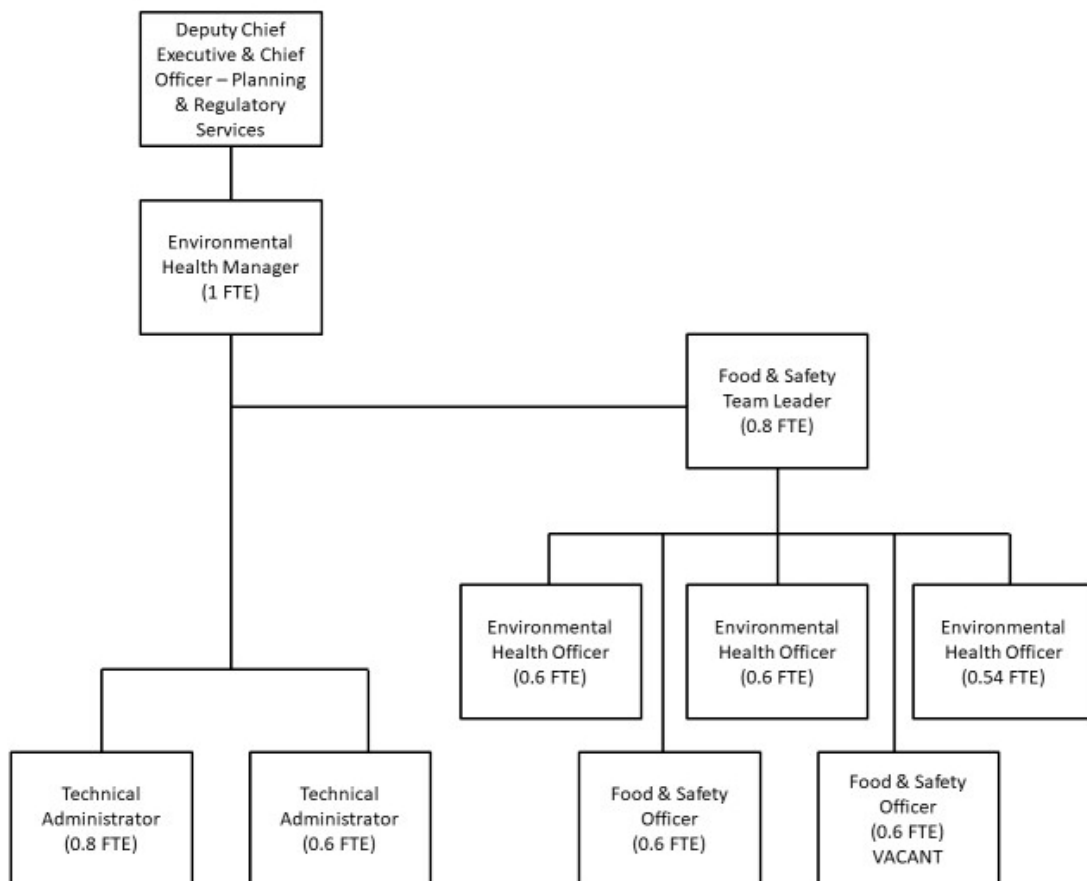
Outside of office hours, an emergency out of office service is provided via CCTV who will operate a cascade system to contact a suitably qualified and experienced Environmental Health Officer.

2.2. Organisational Structure

The Food Service Plan is delivered by officers in the Food and Safety team which reports to the Environmental Health Manager (EHM). The EHM reports to the Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer Planning and Regulatory Services. A structure chart for the service is provided below.

The team is also tasked with delivery of the Council's statutory health & safety enforcement function and appropriately qualified, experienced and authorised staff carry out these day to day health & safety functions alongside their food hygiene responsibilities.

2.2.1. Organisational diagram showing the Food and Safety Team



2.3. Scope of the Food Service

The Food and Safety team is responsible for:

- Implementing programmed and intelligence led food hygiene interventions and revisits for non-compliant premises
- Investigating reported cases of food poisonings and potential outbreaks in accordance with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance
- Investigating requests for service regarding the hygiene of food premises, or food safety issues relating to foods purchased or produced in Sevenoaks
- Developing and delivering a programme of appropriate interventions for lower risk premises
- Registration of food premises
- Monitoring of existing approved premises as well as granting new approval applications
- Responding to food alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency
- Delivering a food sampling programme in line with local and national programmes
- Provision of advice and support to existing and prospective food business operators and users of the service
- Consideration of planning and licensing applications relating to food premises.
- Implementing projects and campaigns that promote good food hygiene
- Development and maintenance of partnerships and liaisons to the benefit of the Food Service
- Delivering the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
- Ensuring that food business operators providing non-prepacked food and food that is 'pre-packed for direct sale' (PPDS) are given appropriate advice on allergens.
- Issuing export certificates to local businesses that export food products
- Imported food control

(Note: All food standards and feeding stuffs enforcement is undertaken by Kent County Council Trading Standards Department and so no reference to these will be made in this document. There is a Memorandum of Understanding between Kent County Council

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Trading Standards and the twelve local authorities which provides Environmental Health with some legal powers under the Food Information Regulations 2014).

All food services are delivered by in house staff, except where analytical services are used. Contractors may occasionally be used to carry out inspections of medium risk premises to support our work and help us manage variances in demand and fluctuations in the inspection programme but this will depend on money available in the service budget. Work carried out by a contractor will be closely monitored by the Food and Safety Team Leader.

2.4. Demands on the Food Service

2.4.1. Food Hygiene Interventions

There are approximately 1,071 registered food premises and ten approved premises as of 30th September 2023. Approved premises fall outside of the scope of registration and therefore are not recorded in the table below.

Premises type	Number
Primary Producer	11
Manufacturers & Packers	11
Importer/Exporter	11
Distributor/Transporter	4
Retailer	176
Caterer	858
Total	1,071

Of these premises, approx. 500 are due for inspection each year. We receive approx. 10 new food registrations per month which need to be prioritised for inspection and then included in the inspection programme. Prior to the pandemic we received on average 6/7 new food business registrations. The increase is mainly the result of more home

caterers and mobile caterers registering. This reflects the fact that the general public are diversifying into different means of employment to support their income.

Between 1st April and 30th September 2023 we closed the records of 90 food businesses which had ceased trading, although some may have registered and never traded.

Businesses that have closed rarely advise us and it can be a time consuming exercise chasing food business operators for information about the status of their business.

Since 1st April to end December 2023 we have received 6 requests for a food hygiene re-rating inspections. Food businesses are able to request a re-rating after they have made improvements. We charge £205 for this service, as it requires a full additional inspection to be carried out. This is half the number of requests received the previous year.

However, we are currently finding poorer standards in many businesses inspected and consequently we are having to carry out more revisits to non- broadly compliant businesses to check that they have made the improvements required. Lack of staff and increased costs are likely to be contributory factors.

The full range of food safety interventions also includes advisory visits and food sampling visits.

Local businesses are also expanding their markets and are increasingly exporting products. As the United Kingdom is no longer in the European Union all countries are now classed as being 'third countries' and these food products require to be accompanied by an export certificate from the inspecting officer certifying that the produce has been made in accordance with the requirements of current Food Legislation. This creates additional work as consignments being exported to third countries require additional checks at point of production so that the certificates can be issued.

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2.4.2. Approved Premises

We have 11 Approved premises which are inspected in accordance with our risk rating programme. Approval may be required where products of animal origin are produced/processed. The standards required and levels of product monitoring at an Approved Premises are far more stringent than for 'Registered Establishments'. As a result the inspection and monitoring programs as well as the frequency of product sampling is far more onerous than for routine food hygiene inspections.

We currently have:

- 3x milk pasteurising,
- 2x cheese makers,
- 1x kefir (dairy),
- 1x meat processing
- 4x egg packers

We also have 2 farms selling raw milk which are inspected by the Dairy Hygiene Inspector from the Food Standards Agency, however the bottling process comes under our remit.

A number of private estates have developed their commercial operations as a means of bringing in more income. This includes wedding and conference venues, music festivals and weekend events involving mass catering. The expanded use of rural land has seen a huge increase in the number of Event Notifications being received by Environmental Health. The Food and Safety team reviews and comments on event plans including the catering provision and an officer attends the Council's Safety Advisory Group (SAG) meetings.

2.5. Enforcement Policy

The Environmental Health service adopts the principles laid down in the Regulators Code (which states that enforcement must be fair, consistent and equitable) and the Enforcement Concordat for all appropriate services. The Environmental Health Enforcement Policy has been approved by Council.

The Council also has a formal complaints procedure available to any customer aggrieved by our processes or decisions, except where an appeal mechanism is available eg the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme safeguarding procedure.

3. Service Delivery

3.1. Food Premises Interventions

100% of our higher risk establishments (A and B rated) have received a programmed inspection within the month of their due date to ensure that the PI set for the department is met. Any establishment awarded a 2 hygiene rating or less is non-compliant with required food safety standards and is re-visited within an appropriate time frame. We currently have approx. 18 businesses with a 2 hygiene rating.

All new businesses are triaged and prioritised for inspection. They are then inspected and provided with a food hygiene rating as soon as possible. Inspection of unrated premises as well as inspection of high-risk establishments is a priority.

Where an unregistered food business is found trading in the area, then an inspection will be undertaken as soon as it is practical to do so and the business will be required to complete a registration form at the time of the inspection.

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Lower risk premises (categories D and E) may be monitored by means of alternative interventions (normally via a questionnaire) following an initial inspection eg home bakers and pharmacies.

Category D premises that only handle low risk foods and pre-packed goods can be assessed by questionnaire however, a business that sits in this category but handles “high risk” foods must have a full inspection at every programmed intervention.

The information available to businesses on the Council’s website has been reviewed and re-written over the last few years. We have invested time in making these changes for several reasons:

- to give new and existing businesses on-line access to all of the information that they need to ensure that they are compliant with current legislation
- to reduce the amount of time that officers spend talking to new food business operators and repeatedly providing verbal answers to the same, or similar questions
- to reduce the amount of time taken to undertake “first inspections” as the operator has had access to all of the information they need in order to be at least ‘Broadly compliant’ (equivalent to a 3 hygiene rating).

3.2. Inspection Frequencies

The table below summarises the frequency of inspections for different risk categories where A is the highest risk. The category is defined by scoring premises around potential hazard associated with the business and food safety compliance, this then relates to the interval between inspections

As a rough guide, on average, around 50% of all registered food business will need to be inspected each year. This equates to around 500 inspections/interventions per year. The figure does not include inspection of new business or the inspection of Approved premises.

Category	Inspection Rating	Minimum inspection frequency
A (High Risk)	92 or higher	At least every 6 months
B	72 to 91	At least every 12 months
C	52 to 71	At least every 18 months
D	31 to 51	At least every 2 years. An alternative enforcement strategy (AES) can be used when and where it is deemed to be appropriate for every alternate inspection.
E (Lowest Risk)	0 to 30	At least every 3 years. An AES can be used when and where it is deemed to be appropriate due to the low risk nature of the business. For business not considered as a food business by the public AES can be used for every scheduled inspection.

Between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024 the following inspections/interventions are due:

- A rated-2
- B rated-42
- C rated-152
- D rated-181
- E rated-75
- New businesses receiving an inspection approx. 10/month

3.2.1. Performance Indicators

The following performance indicators apply to the food service:

- 100% completion of higher priority graded inspections (Category A and B)

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- 75% completion of lower priority graded inspections (Category C, D and E)

The team has met the target for higher risk inspections each month.

Progress against the planned inspection programme is monitored by the Food and Safety Team Leader and statutory activity returns and quarterly 'temperature check' surveys are provided to the Food Standards Agency.

As the team has been carrying a part time Food Safety Officer vacancy since 1st April 2023 a contractor is employed when necessary to carry out inspections. This is to ensure that we are able to inspect the majority of our due C and D category inspections (exceeding the 75% PI), avoiding inspections being carried forward into next year's inspection programme.

3.3. Food and Food Premises Complaints

Food complaints received and investigated by the service fall into one of two broad categories -food contamination or complaints about food businesses (hygiene and practices).

Investigations are carried out in accordance with guidelines issued by the FSA. In 2023 we received 46 complaints regarding the hygiene of premises. We receive very few complaints about food contamination.

All service requests are managed in accordance with the Local Performance Indicator. Where the complaint relates to premises which are outside of the district we will work with the relevant authority to investigate the complaint. Where appropriate we will pass the matter to another authority and inform the customer why the complaint has been referred on, along with contact information for the other local authority.

Requests for service regarding food standards will be dealt with in accordance with the agreement between Kent County Council Trading Standards and the local authority. Where appropriate, complainants will be re-directed to the County Council. Trading Standards will not accept complaints made by Environmental Health on behalf of a member of the public who has initially contacted the wrong authority.

The majority of service requests received are 'For Information and Advice'. They account for around half of all service requests received.

All service requests are allocated as soon as possible after receipt and prioritised for appropriate action.

The Environmental Health have a performance indicator for service requests as follows:

- Average time taken (days) to provide a meaningful response to service requests. Target is less than 5 days (average).

3.4. Primary Authority Principle

We acknowledge the Primary Authority Principle and will act in accordance with LGR guidance.

The Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008, regulated by Regulatory Delivery (RD), introduced measures to secure coordination and consistency of regulatory enforcement by local authorities by establishing a Primary Authority scheme.

Businesses operating in more than one local authority area that choose to have a Primary Authority Partnership will benefit from improved consistency of advice and enforcement across local authority trading standards, environmental health, licensing and fire and rescue services. We will comply with the legislation and guidance issued by RD. We will take direction from inspection plans produced by Primary Authorities for multi-outlet businesses and we will notify relevant PAs where formal enforcement action is proposed.

3.5. Advice to Businesses

We are proactive in providing advice to businesses to help them comply with the law and we encourage the use of best practice. This approach aims to help standards of food hygiene to improve and for positive relationships to be built with food business operators. We achieve this through:

- advice given during inspections and other visits
- the provision of advisory leaflets
- responding to enquiries
- advice regarding the implementation of the Safer Food Better Business(SFBB) pack
- availability of food safety information on the Council's website
- advising proposed businesses at the planning stage

Advice and support for businesses is also provided via our link with "Team Around Your Business" which is a single point of contact for businesses.

A new 'Gain or Retain a 5 scheme' has been agreed with the intention to implement the scheme from April 2024. This would be a new chargeable scheme for the delivery of comprehensive advice to food business operators (fbo). The proposal is to offer a set amount of advice and information within one chargeable fee that provides a fbo with the best chance of obtaining a 5 rating at the time of inspection. It is anticipated that the scheme will generate a small income for Environmental Health. Some elements of the scheme still need to be resolved before implementation eg the content of the service-level agreement.

3.6. Food Inspection and Sampling

The microbiological and physical examination and analysis of food is undertaken on the basis of:

- businesses identified for sampling as part of a nationwide, regional or local schemes
- businesses subject to consumer complaints or outbreak investigations
- during a programmed inspection where the officer deems a sample is necessary.

We support all relevant nationally co-ordinated food sampling programmes organised by the FSA and the UK Health Security Agency UKHSA (formally known as PHE) Laboratory Services as well as any relevant cross regional surveys co-ordinated by the Food and Water Laboratory. Samples requiring microbiological examination are collected by a courier service and taken to the Colindale laboratory in London.

Since 1st April to end November 2023, 53 samples were taken for microbiological analysis. We have supported a local/cross regional studies on Ready to eat salads from catering and retail premises, Cooked meats and Swabbing in catering premises.

There is a separate food sampling plan for businesses within the district that are Approved Premises. The Food Standards Agency requires that microbiological testing of locally produced food from 'Approved' premises is undertaken annually.

3.7. Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Diseases (Food Poisoning)

Investigation of outbreaks will be in accordance with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Communicable Disease Outbreak Management Plan. The number of notifications received almost always relates to single cases rather than outbreaks. Single cases are investigated in accordance with the Single Case Plan made under a Framework Agreement for the control of communicable disease between UKHSA and Kent and Medway Environmental Health teams.

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All infectious disease notifications are followed up by a standard letter, advisory leaflet and questionnaire (where appropriate) to identify possible sources of infection and recommend practices to prevent its spread.

3.8. Food Safety Incidents

The Council complies with the Food Safety Act Code of Practice in relation to handling food alerts. Food alerts are issued by the FSA to communicate information on national food issues, the majority being for information only. Food alerts for action require officers to undertake a wide variety of courses of action dependant on the issue.

3.9. Liaison with Other Organisations

The Food and Safety Team is committed to sharing data where permissible, learning from the experience of others and endeavouring to secure consistency. This is aided considerably by participating in countywide or national professional networks.

- Kent Food Technical Group
- Kent Food Sampling Sub Group
- Liaison meetings with the CCDC/ UKHSA
- Kent Infection Control Committee (KICC)
- Kent Environmental Health Managers Group

The importance of partnerships and joint working extends also to contacts within the Council, which includes Building Control, Development Control, Licensing, Legal Services, Economic Development, Community Safety Unit, CCTV and the Environmental Protection Team within Environment Health. The team also works in partnership with a number of external organisations including; Food Standards Agency, UKHSA, DEFRA, Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue, HSE, Border Force and DWP

3.10. Food Safety Promotion

We participate in the Food Standards Agency National Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme. The scheme is designed to provide information about business hygiene standards to members of the public but it is also a useful tool to drive up performance standards of food businesses.

We are promoting businesses that have achieved a 5 hygiene rating at a recent inspection via social media-‘Five Star Friday’.

We will look to develop our food safety education role and seek to identify new opportunities to deliver information on food safety and food allergen awareness.

Natasha’s Law came into effect on 1st October 2021. This requires food businesses to include full ingredients labelling (with the 14 major allergens emphasised in the list) on pre-packed for direct sale foods on the same premises from which they are sold. For example, a packaged sandwich or salad made by staff earlier in the day and placed on a shelf for purchase.

Kent Trading Standards are authorised to undertake enforcement of these legal requirements so we will proactively report matters to them and support their investigations in order to drive up compliance.

Allergen awareness interventions are included within our routine food safety inspections.

Wherever practicable we will participate in national campaigns to improve food safety standards and awareness of good practice. Where we decide to take part in campaigns we will ensure that they are focused to make best value usage of our resources.

4. Resources

4.1. Financial Allocation

The Environmental Health Function operates within an annual budget of approximately £780,000 per annum. Of this total, approximately £347,000 is allocated to the Food & Safety Team. Food safety accounts for approximately 77% of the work undertaken by the Food & Safety Team (£267,000).

The majority of the budget is allocated to staffing costs (salary plus on costs including training, professional membership etc.). The remainder is used to fund equipment, sampling and other necessary support services.

The Food & Safety Team budget covers all of the functions of the team and resources are allocated according to the needs of the service. The Food and Safety Team Leader is responsible for the day to day management of the budget. Financial allocations are currently considered sufficient to meet the equipment and training needs of the team.

If and when necessary, the Environmental Health Manager has the flexibility to supplement the Food & Safety resources from elsewhere within the Environmental Health Team budget.

4.2. Staffing Allocation

The Environmental Health Team currently allocate 3.21 FTE to discharging the food safety functions. This FTE is allocated by role as follows:

Role	FTE
Environmental Health Manager	0.20
Food & Safety Team Leader	0.41
Environmental Health Officer- 1	0.42

Role	FTE
Environmental Health Officer- 2	0.43
Environmental Health Officer- 3	0.51
Food & Safety Officer- 1	0.43 Vacant
Food & Safety Officer -2	0.51
Technical Administrator-1	0.20
Technical Administrator-2	0.10
TOTAL	3.21

If necessary (i.e. in the event of an outbreak or major incident) additional resources are available from within the Environmental Protection Team (5.6 FTE) and/ or neighbouring authorities within Kent as part of an informal support network.

An external contractor has been employed to carry out a certain number of food safety inspections while we have a vacant post.

4.2.1. Allocation of staff resources by task

By Task	FTE
Food hygiene inspection	1.86
Food complaints	0.05
Primary & Home authority principle	0.025
Advice to business	0.4
Food Sampling	0.2
FP and ID investigations	0.05
Food Safety incidents	0.05
Liaison with other authorities	0.05
Food Safety Promotion	0.025
Training and Education delivery	0.05
Administration	0.2
Monitoring and review of service	0.1
National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme	0.1
CPD and team consistency training	0.05
Total	3.21

4.2.2. Use of Specialist Contractors

We do not routinely use contractors and do not have an allocated budget for their employment.

However, if and when necessary we may employ suitably qualified and experienced specialist contractors on an ad hoc basis to assist with the delivery of food safety inspections. Contractors are required to demonstrate compliance with the competency framework in advance of their employment.

4.2.3. Operational Efficiency and Accuracy

We recognise the importance of ensuring that our service offers best value to the residents of Sevenoaks and work hard to ensure that the food safety service operates as efficiently as possible.

We have invested in technology and systems to assist us with the delivery of food safety, re-configured processes and procedures to ensure that they utilise the available resources effectively and minimised waste.

4.2.4. Electronic Inspections

Our officers continue to undertake electronic food hygiene inspections, utilising iPads and custom built iAuditor (specialist auditing software) forms.

These electronic inspections ensure that officer notes, comments, recommendations and legal requirements are communicated clearly to Food Business Operators in Portable Document Format (PDF). Photographs and other evidence can be attached to the inspection ensuring that officer reasoning is made more transparent and easily explainable to those not present at time of inspection. As a result, we are receiving fewer appeals against Food Hygiene Ratings.

We have, and continue to develop inspection templates (eg specific templates for assessing home bakers, childminders and pharmacies) and other food safety documents

improving the accuracy, transparency and efficiency of our service. These include standard letters, Voluntary closure documents, Voluntary surrender of food and Certificate of examination of unsaleable food.

4.2.5. Enterprise for Uniform

Introducing Enterprise for Uniform helps us keep track of, prioritise, record and monitor food hygiene inspections. This system has enabled us to undertake a full review of our existing food premises and make sure that databases we hold are accurately updated and cleansed of duplicate entries, unnecessary records and historic input errors.

4.2.6. Process Re-design

We have ensured that whenever possible, administration tasks have been moved from qualified food hygiene inspectors to our technical administrators generating additional capacity. We are working to increase the knowledge and experience of these officers so that, with the support of qualified food safety officers, they are able to respond to basic enquires and requests improving the speed of our responses to customers.

We have worked with our colleagues in Customer Solutions to ensure that the 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQ) (accessed during a customer's initial contact with the Council) are accurate and informative. This has helped to ensure that customers are where necessary signposted to other organisations (such as UKHSA or Kent County Council Trading Standards) and resolve some common enquiries at point of 1st contact without the need for officer involvement.

4.2.7. Website Updates

We continue to utilise our website as a source of information for residents and businesses. We work with our Communications Team to ensure that the content we produce is accurate and user friendly and that it assists our customers and their needs.

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We have developed with IT colleagues a more efficient process for Food Hygiene Rating rescore inspection applications. We now have an on-line revisit form which ensures that the food business operator has to provide information at the time of payment regarding improvements that have been made since the programmed inspection rather than this being a separate process.

We do not recreate resources available elsewhere and link to authoritative sources whenever possible such as the FSA website.

4.3. Staff Development

The Council places significant importance on the development and training of staff to ensure that quality services are delivered to our customers.

The Food Standards Agency requires that all persons undertaking any food hygiene and/or food standards functions must undertake a minimum of 10 hours work specific CPD each year. The CIEH requires a minimum of 20 hours work specific CPD each year.

All Officers are required to prove competence via the Competency Framework introduced by the Food Standards Agency. Training will be undertaken through in-house training, formal courses and vocational visits as appropriate. The team undertakes regular training as part of team meetings to ensure that knowledge and interpretation of legislation and guidance is maintained. The team also completes consistency exercises to ensure that food hygiene ratings awarded to businesses are consistent across the team.

Training needs are considered as part of the appraisal process and staff maintain a training and development file containing evidence of formal qualifications and CPD certificates from external and internal course attended, together with details of agreed, planned training for the forthcoming year.

Officers may have access to an online training platform which provides training modules and webinars. The service provider was for a number of years the sole contracted

provider of FSA training to local authorities as well as acting in a consultancy capacity to the FSA on the development of Guidance.

5. Quality Assessment

The work of the Food & Safety Team is subject to scrutiny by Members, internal auditors and the Food Standards Agency

All officers delivering food law interventions are required to meet a rigid qualification criterion and demonstrate knowledge and competency across a number of skill sets. The competency framework drives personal and team training and development. It is also used to highlight gaps in the team's knowledge and skills.

All officers participate in annual national consistency exercises developed by the Food Standards Agency to review various scenarios and then to determine the hygiene rating awarded. The team also participates in Kent wide and in-house scenario set exercises.

The following monitoring arrangements are in place to assist in quality assessment:

- inspection audits including associated paperwork
- performance and development reviews
- customer satisfaction questionnaires
- performance monitoring of target response time
- 1:1 meetings with team members
- Team and department meetings
- use of Enterprise in the IDOX Uniform database to improve monitoring of the inspection programme and service requests

In our work programme, we will continue to review and improve our documented food procedures required within the Food Standards Agency's Framework Agreement.

6. Review against the Service Plan

We will carry out a review of our Food Safety service each year. This will be based on performance and resources available over the previous 12 months, feedback from local businesses and the community, observations from Members and the Food and Safety team and advice and guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency.

The FSA are in the process of developing a new performance monitoring system and have removed the use of the Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS). It is likely that new benchmarking categories will be set and we may need to adapt our key performance indicators to reflect these changes once the detail is known.

7. Areas of Improvement

Every effort is being made to maintain a high quality service to the public and to meet and exceed performance targets. We aim to:

- improve the accuracy of the Uniform database
- reduce the number of non-compliant premises
- respond to requests for advice within max 5 working days
- triage all new food business registrations received so that they can be prioritised for inspection as soon as practicable
- be more alert to issues around mislabelling (Trading Standards)
- and food fraud
- continue to raise awareness and provide advice in relation to food allergies and intolerances within the catering industry
- to give renewed emphasis in promoting the healthy eating message
- encourage customers to provide feedback on the service they have received via an emailed customer feedback survey.

8. Contact Officer

Glenys Shorrick

Food & Safety Team Leader

Sevenoaks District Council

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Sevenoaks

Kent

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Environmental.health@sevenoaks.gov.uk

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Item 08 – Communications Strategy 2024-25

The attached report was considered by the Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee on 29 February 2024. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of these papers and will follow when available.

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COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2024 - 27

Cabinet 14 March 2024

Report of: Chief Executive

Status: For consideration

Also considered by: Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee – 29 February 2024

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: This report sets out the Council's approach to communication activities by proposing a Strategy and clear principles to guide engagement with our audiences.

This report supports the Key Aim of: Promoting the five Council Plan themes of Communities, Economy, Environment, Housing and Our Council.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Julia Thornton

Contact Officers: Lee Banks, Ext. 7161 and Daniel Whitmarsh, Ext. 7414

Recommendations to Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee:

- (a) Members comments on the Communications Strategy are noted; and
- (b) Cabinet are recommended to approve the Communications Strategy 2024 to 2027.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

The Communications Strategy 2024 to 2027 is approved.

Reason for recommendation: To ensure that Members are able to discuss and inform the Council's approach to communicating with its communities through the Communications Strategy.

Introduction and background

- 1 This report sets out the Council's approach to its communication activities. It proposes a strategic approach and clear principles to guide engagement with our communities, staff, Members and the media to promote our services and achievements, to build trust with our communities and safeguard the Council's reputation.

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Communications priorities

- 2 The overarching priorities of our Communications Strategy (Appendix 1) is to provide consistently excellent, innovative, value for money and effective communications...

“to increase awareness of the Council’s services and its achievements, build trust and improve the reputation of the Council.”
- 3 The Communication Strategy is based on six overarching principles to support the delivery of the Council’s priorities. These are to:
 - i. Promote and uphold the Council’s reputation as a trusted, effective, efficient, innovative organisation that is focused on the public and their needs.
 - ii. Ensure that all communication and engagement activities are consistent and co-ordinated across all channels to maximise resources, ensure value for money and give maximum support to the Council’s strategic priorities.
 - iii. Promote the Sevenoaks District as a great place for doing business, to live, work and visit.
 - iv. Increase opportunities for people to engage with us on issues and services that affect them by developing existing and new channels of communication.
 - v. Coordinate internal communications with:
 - a. Staff – to ensure they feel valued and are engaged on the priorities, activities and messages of the Council, to inspire them to deliver the Council’s objectives
 - b. Elected Members – to support them in their role as community leaders, by providing communication skills and up-to-date information.
 - vi. Ensure our digital communications develop in line with advancing technology, social changes and customer needs, to allow us to engage with our communities in an effective and efficient way.
- 4 The Communication Strategy is supported by an annual communications action plan (which is approved by the Portfolio Holder for Communications), ‘publicity and media relations guidelines’ and the ‘paid-for advertising policy’.

Delivering the Communications Strategy

- 5 The day-to-day delivery of the Communications Strategy will be led by the Council’s Communications Team, with the support of the Strategic Management Team, the Council Leader and Cabinet, Elected Members, service/department leads, all staff and our partners.

- 6 The Communications Team consists of two full time members of staff - the Communications Manager and the Communications Officer. The Team is managed and supported by the Assistant Chief Executive.
- 7 The Communications Team's responsibilities include:
 - Managing and upholding the Council's Brand Guide
 - Devising and running external and internal campaigns (using the OASIS methodology) to support the work of the Council
 - Media relations (issuing news releases, fielding media enquiries and organising media briefings)
 - Producing In Shape and helping colleagues with publications, posters and other collateral
 - Updating and managing the Council's main website. Advising teams about adding accessible content and documents to Council websites
 - Running corporate surveys and supporting colleagues with their survey needs
 - Managing the Council's core social media accounts (Facebook, X, LinkedIn and Instagram – currently 18,000 followers across all four platforms). Producing short social media videos
 - Email marketing and newsletters
 - Developing and managing the Council's intranet
 - Producing 'grapeVine', a monthly staff newsletter
 - Placing the Council's public notice adverts.

Residents' views on Council communications

- 10 The most recent Residents' Survey (September 2021) asked residents where they heard about the work of the Council, satisfaction with In Shape magazine and satisfaction with the Council as a whole.
- 11 The data tables on the following page set out residents views for Members' information to provide context to the Strategy that is proposed.

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Sources of information where residents find out about what the Council is doing:	
In Shape - the Council's magazine	68%
Speaking with friends, neighbours and relations	43%
Council website www.sevenoaks.gov.uk	32%
Speaking with Council staff by telephone	22%
Local newspapers	18%
Printed information / leaflets	16%
The Council's social media feeds	5%
Councillors	5%
Speaking with Council staff face-to-face	4%
Radio	3%
Public meetings	2%
Other	5%
Don't know	2%
None of these	8%

Time spent reading In Shape	
Up to 10 minutes	56%
More than 10 minutes	30%
Don't read it	15%

Views on In Shape	% satisfied
Easy to read	94%
Informs me of Council news / activities I have not previously heard about	88%
Is colourful and well produced	88%
Tells me about the Council's future plans	90%
It keeps me informed about the Council's work and local services	90%

Overall satisfaction	% satisfied
Satisfaction with the way the Council keeps residents informed	82%
Trust in the Council	86%
Satisfaction with the way in which the Council runs things	81%

Conclusions

The Communications Strategy has been drafted for collaboration and input from Members of the Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee and then Cabinet.

Providing the draft Strategy ensures that Members input can be incorporated fully in the approach they wish the Council to take to its communication with residents, local businesses and other stakeholders.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

There are no legal or risk implications arising from 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.

Appendices

Appendix A – Communications Strategy 2024 to 2027

Dr Pav Ramewal

Chief Executive

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Communications Strategy 2024 to 2027

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Communications Strategy

Our communications strategy sets out how we will communicate to:

- Help the Council achieve its objectives
- Engage effectively with audiences
- Demonstrate the work we do for our communities
- Ensure people understand what we do, and
- Work to change behaviour and perceptions where necessary.

Communication Strategy & Priorities

By providing consistently excellent, innovative, value for money and effective communications our strategy is:

“to increase awareness of the Council’s services and its achievements, build trust and improve the reputation of the Council.”

Our priorities:

1. Promote and uphold the Council’s reputation as a trusted, effective, efficient, innovative organisation that is focused on the public and their needs.
2. Ensure that all communication and engagement activities are consistent and co-ordinated across all channels to maximise the effective use of resources, ensure value for money and give maximum support to the Council’s strategic priorities.
3. Promote the Sevenoaks District as a great place for doing business, to live, work and visit.
4. Increase opportunities for people to engage with the Council on issues and services that affect them by developing existing and new channels of communication.
5. Coordinate internal communications with:
 - Staff – to ensure they feel valued and are engaged on the priorities, activities and messages of the Council, to inspire them to deliver the Council’s objectives.
 - Elected Members – to support them in their role as community leaders, by providing Members with communication skills and up to date information.
6. Ensure our digital communications develop in line with advancing technology, social changes and customer needs, to allow us to engage with our communities in an effective and efficient way.

Delivering our strategy

The day-to-day delivery of the Communications Strategy will be led by the Council's Communications Team, with the support of the Assistant Chief Executive, the Chief Executive and Strategic Management Team, Council Leader and Cabinet, Elected Members, service/department leads, all staff and our partners.

The overall responsibility for the successful implementation must rest with every member of staff and Elected Members, as they are our ambassadors and play a crucial role in delivering information to our communities in accordance with the Council's narrative.

Our approach to delivering effective communications will:

- Focus on delivering successful, proactive, high quality communications plans led by a programme of campaigns
- Ensure we are using the full range of communications tools and channels
- Focus on outcomes not outputs using OASIS campaign methodology
- Put insight, measurement and evaluation first to measure the impact of communications activity
- Target our communications effectively
- Be social on social media and not broadcast messages
- Aim to ensure that 80% of our communications work is proactive and planned.

The Annual Communications Action Plan will be agreed with the Council's Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Communications.

How we communicate

We use a number of communication channels including:

Externally

- In Shape - our quarterly magazine for residents and businesses
- The Council website
- Local, regional, national and trade/industry media
- Our Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts
- Marketing materials
- Public notices
- Advertising – social media, newspapers, magazines, out of home and radio
- Signage and posters
- Events, roadshows and displays
- Door drops
- Reports and policy documents
- Council meetings and minutes
- Email marketing
- Vehicle livery
- Environments (internal and external)
- Via partner organisations channels and sites.

Internally

- Intranet
- grapeVine monthly email newsletter
- Emails
- Staff briefings
- Senior management meetings and Council staff meetings
- Members' updates

Brand Guidelines

Poor branding distances our services, confuses customers and can undermine trust in the Council and affect its reputation.

We aim to ensure that all Council communications are in accordance with the Brand Guidelines.

We aim to always present a strong brand identity, on all communication materials and channels, to clearly and consistently identify the organisation and its key messages to stakeholders.

We will do this by ensuring all parts of the organisation are aware of the brand guidelines and have processes in place to ensure that all materials are designed and written to the agreed brand identity.

Accessibility

We are committed to making our communications accessible to everyone within our communities.

Our Brand Guidelines provide guidance on the use of plain English to help us communicate simply and clearly. This is especially important for people who are neurodivergent and people with learning disabilities or mental impairments, such as dementia.

We will produce our publications in large print on request for people with visual impairments.

We utilise a telephone interpretation service to allow us to communicate with people whose first language is not English.

We follow best practice for accessible digital communications, including our website content and checking documents for accessibility.

Monitoring and evaluating

To ensure that we are achieving our communication priorities, we will monitor and evaluate them through various methods, including:

- Campaign evaluation (using the OASIS methodology)
- Social media metrics
- Residents' surveys
- Members survey on communication
- Staff survey on communication
- Service satisfaction surveys with customers

Appendix 1 – Our Council narrative

Our narrative and key messages, support the Council's ambitions and objectives as set out in **Delivering together, our Council Plan**.

The narrative below is a sample of the top-line messages that can be used for each objective and activity. Further messages will be developed within individual campaign plans.

These ambitions, objectives and narrative are further supported by our Council Brand.

We know Sevenoaks District Council is a great place to work. We're ambitious. We strive for better. We're not satisfied with the status quo, happy to maintain the mediocre and do things the way they've always been done.

Our aim is to provide **excellent services, great value for money and to continually innovate** so we can find even better ways of getting things done.

Unlike other councils, we make sure the **wellbeing** of the community runs through everything we do. Our five priorities set out our focus areas. Each priority has a series of promises to improve the things that are most important to the people we serve. Our priorities are:

- Our Communities
- The Economy
- The Environment
- Housing
- Our Council

Within our diverse organisation, there is one thing we all have in common – our customer focus. Without the people we serve, we wouldn't be here. It's our job to serve those individuals and businesses as best we can, because they help to make the District the great place it is today.

We want everyone who comes into contact with us to have the same, consistently great experience. To do that we need to ensure we're pulling together in the same direction.

Our jobs and services may differ, but we all have the same vision to make the Sevenoaks District a great place to live and work for everyone.

That means empowering our staff to do the best job they possibly can. Just as our community is made up of many individuals, so too is the Council.

It's the individual members of staff who make things happen and we want to do whatever we can to empower our teams to make decisions, solve problems, innovate and improve services.

With this in mind, we can each step up and fulfil our promises to serve those living and working in the Sevenoaks District.

If you have any questions about our Communications Strategy, please email communications@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

www.sevenoaks.gov.uk

Updated 9 February 2024

01732 227000

This publication is available in large print or can be explained in other languages by calling 01732 227000.

Item 09 – Climate Change Strategy 2024

The attached report was considered by the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee on 22 February 2024. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of these papers and will follow when available.

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CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

Cabinet - 14 March 2024

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Planning and Regulatory Services

Status: For decision

Also considered by: Cabinet – 14 March 2024

Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee – 22 February 2024

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary: This report presents a Climate Change Strategy for Sevenoaks District to members for approval.

This report supports the Key Aim of: The Council's commitment to tackling climate change.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. McArthur

Contact Officer(s): Emma Henshall, Ext. 7358; Margaret Carr, Ext. 7341

Recommendation to Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee:

To consider the Climate Change Strategy and recommend to Cabinet that it be approved, subject to final design and any associated amendments.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

To approve the Climate Change Strategy for Sevenoaks District; subject to final design and any associated amendments.

Recommendation to Council:

That Council notes the previous aspiration to reach net zero by 2030 for the Council and its assets will not be achieved, for the reasons set out in paragraphs 1-4 of the report.

Reason for recommendation: To ensure that the District Council continues to play its part in tackling the challenge of climate change.

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Introduction and Background

- 1 The Council's commitment to tackling climate change dates back to 2019. Over the last five years we have successfully delivered a wide range of projects that have contributed towards a reduction in the Council's carbon emissions.
- 2 However, cumulatively these efficiencies are not enough to get us to net zero by 2030 and we still face a significant challenge. Decarbonising the Council's buildings and fleet and offsetting the emissions we cannot remove has been estimated to cost in the region of £7 million. Whilst we have a plan in place to replace our fleet with more efficient and less polluting vehicles, it is not currently possible to make this operation net zero as the electric waste vehicles available do not have the range required to complete our waste rounds. We therefore need to be realistic about what we can achieve given the resources available.
- 3 Additionally, the most recent data from the Department of Energy and Net Zero (DENZ) tells us that our own carbon emissions account for less than 0.5% of those across the District.¹ Furthermore, the Council has very little scope to directly and substantially influence the two major sources of these emissions, namely those from transport and domestic use of gas and electricity. These sources account for 61% and 26% of the District's emissions respectively.
- 4 The evidence therefore suggests that the Council's aspiration to reach net zero by 2030 is no longer realistic, and we should use our limited resources where they will make the most impact. While we will continue to work towards reducing our own emissions where resources allow and where practicable, we are more likely and better placed to make a difference through focusing more on community leadership, partnership and engagement to take a broader, inclusive approach to the challenge of climate change.
- 5 The Climate Change Strategy has been developed to this end, shifting the focus to prioritise working with our residents, businesses, partners, visitors and community groups to raise climate awareness and unlock potential.
- 6 Whilst there is currently no legal requirement for local authorities to act, the Council is well placed to respond both as an organisation in its own right as well as having the potential to influence and to demonstrate leadership within our communities.

¹ (*source: www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics)

What the Climate Change Strategy does

- 7 The Climate Change Strategy brings our work to reduce carbon emissions in line with national and regional climate change policy, strengthening our opportunities for partnership working to unlock funding and initiatives, and ensures we are all working towards the same goal.
- 8 It aligns with the Council Plan and directly links with other Council strategies, policies and projects, ensuring a robust and inclusive approach that puts climate change consistently at the forefront of all Council decisions and across all service areas.
- 9 It identifies the opportunities and challenges that exist within the District, including our strategic road network, the Green Belt, how our population is expected to change, and our sphere of influence. Analysis of these key considerations clearly identifies easy wins and where we should focus our efforts.
- 10 It then sets out six climate change priorities covering: movement, travel and transport; energy and buildings; the Council's built assets and fleet; resources, consumption and waste; the natural environment; and awareness and engagement. Specific high level aims are set out for each priority.
- 11 The Strategy itself is deliberately high level, recognising that we need to aim high, but also retain flexibility to cope with and adapt to change. It is envisaged that, subject to the Strategy being approved by Members, a new Action Plan will be developed to deliver the priorities, and monitor progress against them. Each service area across the Council will be responsible for delivering their actions.

The Council's 2030 commitment

- 12 The previous aspiration to reach net zero by 2030 for the Council and its assets is no longer realistic and will not be achieved, for the reasons set out earlier in this report. It has been recorded on the Council's Strategic Risk Register since 2019, which identifies the following risk factors and mitigation (internal controls).

Risk factors:

- Technology does not sufficiently advance to allow the Council to replace fleet;
- Technology is too expensive to allow the Council to replace fleet;
- Cost of work to Council assets (prohibitive);
- Retrofitting of assets not technically feasible;
- Delay in delivering actions and projects beyond 2030;

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- Lack of adequate funding; and
- Slippage on net zero pathway.

Mitigation (internal controls):

- Officer working group;
- Monitoring and political oversight;
- Training and skills development through best practice groups;
- Net zero fund;
- Net Zero Action Plan has been agreed by members;
- Progress against actions is monitored by Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee quarterly;
- Kent & Medway Environment Group (KMEG) and county alignment;
- Continual pathway analysis; and
- Procurement of a carbon reduction plan.

- 13 As a result, with the adoption of the Climate Change Strategy it is considered timely to revisit the previous aspiration to align with what is practicably possible.

Other options Considered and/or rejected

The Council has made a commitment to tackle the challenge of climate change. We could continue with the current Action Plan dating back to 2019, however this is not recommended. Our knowledge and understanding of climate change and carbon emissions for the Council and the District has changed and improved, including our awareness of what we can and cannot influence. This new Strategy provides a reset, and takes account of where the Council should be allocating resources to have the most impact on reducing carbon emissions.

Key Implications

Financial

Funding will be required to deliver the priorities and aims set out the Strategy, however much of this can be met through existing budgets and we will seek to maximise external funding wherever possible. Any additional funding will be considered and identified at a project level in the forthcoming Action Plan.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

No legal implications have been identified.

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 in this paper directly impact on the Council's commitment to tackle the challenge of climate change. The impact has been reviewed and there will be a decrease in carbon emissions produced in the District as a result of this decision.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Sevenoaks District Climate Change Strategy

Background Papers

None.

Richard Morris

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Planning and Regulatory Services

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Sevenoaks District Climate Change Strategy 2024

Our Vision and Purpose

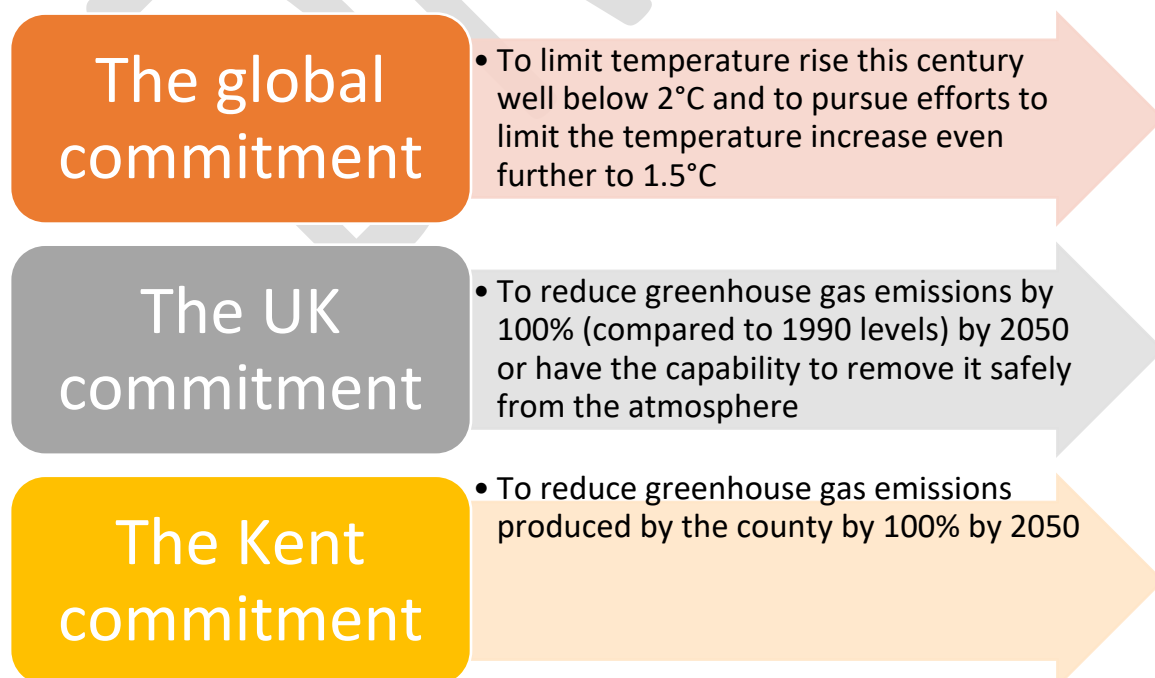
Our Climate Change Strategy marks the Council’s commitment to tackling the challenge of climate change across the District. It provides a framework for our actions aimed at reducing carbon emissions (mitigation) and adapting to the effects of climate change that are already happening (adaptation), **to provide a better environment for future generations.**

We recognise that we cannot take on this challenge alone and win – the Council’s emissions (from our built assets and fleet) account for less than 0.5% of those from the District as a whole, so in addition to our continuing work on reducing our own emissions, we therefore need to look at how we can help and enable residents, businesses, visitors and community groups to embrace local climate action and behaviour change in order to reduce emissions across the district. **We all have a part to play.** The Council has a key role in terms of leadership, community engagement and enablement, partnership working, unlocking funding wherever possible and sharing ideas and information.

Collectively, we will take responsibility for leaving the District in a better place than how we found it.

Why do we need a Climate Change Strategy?

Globally, nationally and locally our partners are responding to the challenge of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Our strategy will help to place the District within this context, and will build on what we have learned from our own climate change activity over the past five years.

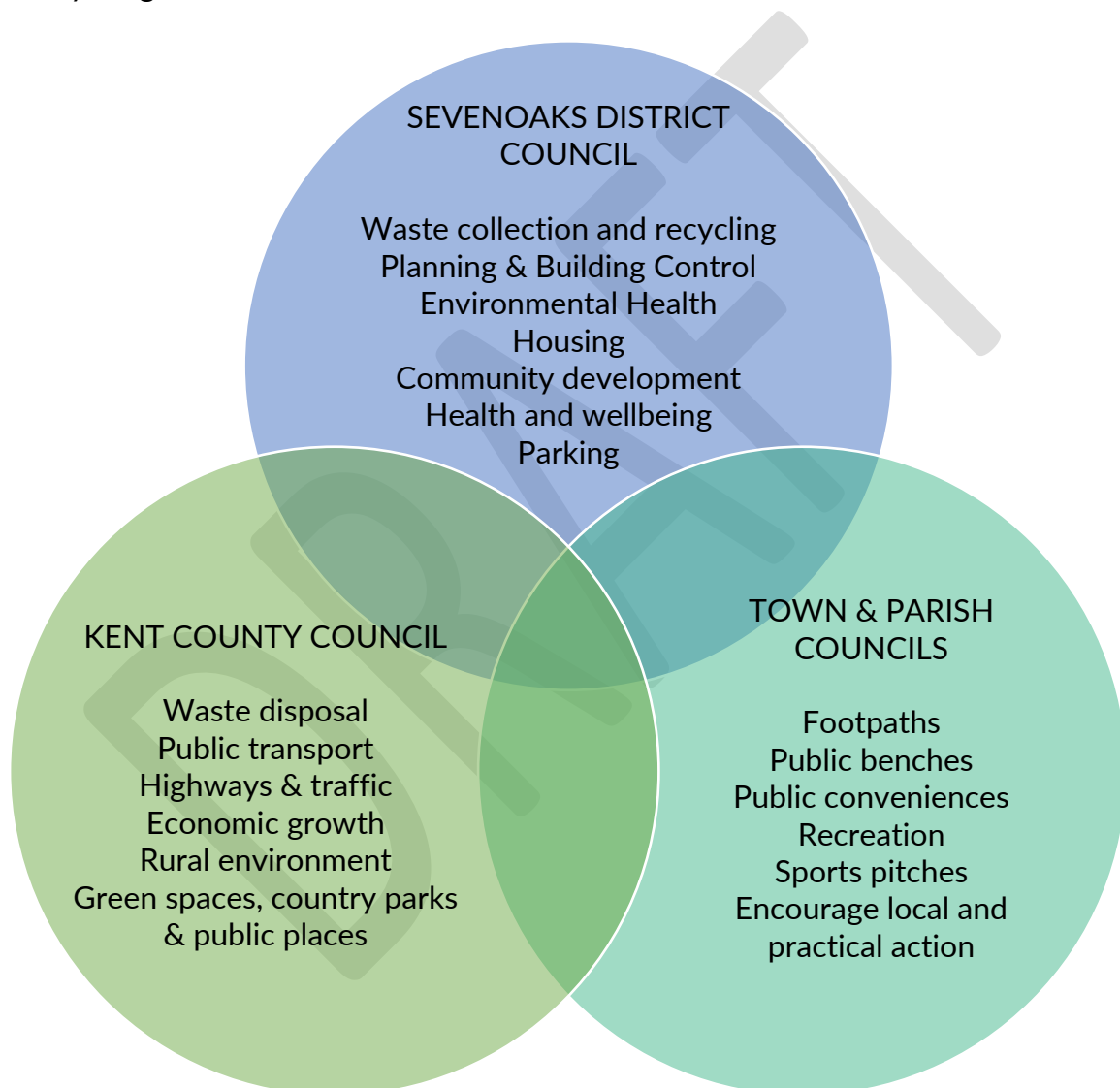


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Whilst there is currently no legal requirement for local authorities to act, the Council is well placed to respond both as an organisation in its own right as well as having the potential to influence and to demonstrate leadership within our communities.

What is the Council responsible for?

The Council has specific services it is responsible for, which differ from those provided by Kent County Council and by our town and parish councils. We can achieve more by working together and through integrating climate action into everything we do.



What have we done so far?

Climate change has been a key priority for the Council since 2019, and over the last five years we have successfully delivered a wide range of projects in support of this.

<p>Moved more of our fleet to electric. More than 100,000 miles have been travelled in electric vehicles</p> 	<p>Installed electric charging points in our car parks, at our offices and on street for taxis</p> 	<p>Working with experts to roll out electric vehicle charging points across more locations</p> 
<p>Purchased new, more efficient and less polluting waste trucks</p> 	<p>New waste rounds are reducing fuel consumption & carbon emissions by 5%</p> 	<p>Installed motion sensitive lighting in our decked car parks</p> 
<p>Produced our first cycling & walking plan and secured funding for a safe walking and cycling route</p> 	<p>Hybrid working and virtual meetings have cut staff and councillor travel to work by a third, reducing emissions</p> 	<p>Air quality has improved over the past nine years</p> 
<p>Printing In Shape on carbon neutral paper</p> 	<p>Built a new energy efficient leisure centre, reducing energy and running costs</p> 	<p>Net Zero implications included in all major Council decisions</p> 
<p>Working with specialists to reduce energy consumption in our buildings</p> 	<p>Planted trees across the District to support biodiversity and offset CO₂ emissions</p> 	<p>Led Kent's most successful household solar scheme with 264 residents signing up for solar panels</p> 

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How will we continue to tackle the challenge of climate change?

Our Climate Change Strategy re-sets the Council's approach. It places community leadership and engagement at the forefront, and recognises that through working with our residents, businesses, partners, visitors and community groups to raise climate awareness and unlock potential, we can make more of a difference.

Through taking action locally we can help create a healthier, greener, more resilient and sustainable District.

The Council will lead by example in influencing others to make sure that we are all doing what we can to protect the environment around us. Reducing carbon emissions across the District is a team effort.

Our Climate Change Strategy aligns with the promises our Members set out in the Council Plan priorities: communities, environment, economy, housing and finance and investment.



It also influences many of the Council's services and directly relates to other Council strategies, policies and projects, all working towards the common goal of tackling the challenge of climate change.



This robust and inclusive approach ensures that climate change is consistently at the forefront of all Council decisions, across all service areas, innovating and working together to instil positive behaviour change.

Our District

Sevenoaks District is located in West Kent in the South East of England, covers 143 square miles and has a population of 120,500 (2021 Census)

In 2021 the District emitted over 700ktCO₂e, approximately 7% of Kent's overall carbon emissions *

Transport and domestic use account for the largest proportion of carbon emissions (61% and 26% respectively) in the District *

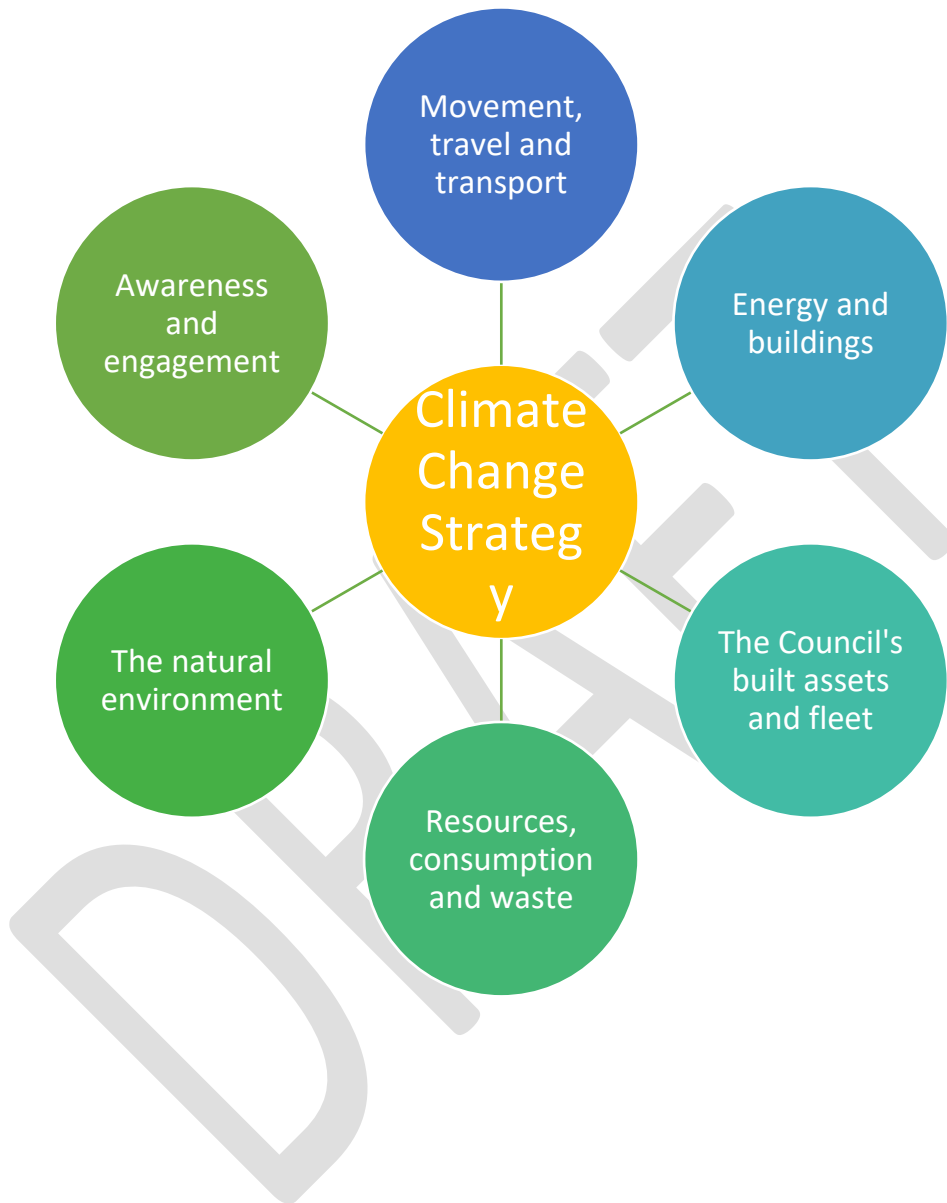
(*source: www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics)

Our opportunities and challenges:



	Opportunities	Challenges
Strategic road network – the M20, M25, M26, A21 and A25 all run through Sevenoaks District	Provides an opportunity to promote and facilitate sustainable movement including walking, wheeling and cycling for local journeys, and use of electric vehicles, car clubs and public transport.	Many road users are passing through as part of a longer journey and so our ability to have a direct influence on these types of emissions is a significant challenge.
Green Belt – 93% of Sevenoaks District is designated as Green Belt	Land in the Green Belt may provide opportunities for offsetting carbon emissions and carbon capture.	The Green Belt has limited potential for development and it is unlikely that large scale renewable energy schemes would be considered suitable in this location.
Demographics – the population of Sevenoaks District is projected to grow and is ageing	There is an opportunity through the Local Plan to ensure that all new development mitigates and adapts to the impacts of climate change, helping to reduce carbon emissions.	Our ability to influence behaviour change across all age groups is a key challenge, recognising that a one size fits all approach is not likely to be successful.
The Council's sphere of influence	As overall knowledge and understanding of “what	The Council has very limited influence on the



	<p>works” in reducing emissions also increases, partnership provides increased opportunity to work more effectively in this area. We can help to share “what works” with partners across the district, and continue to engage with our partners such as government, KCC, residents and businesses, as well as working effectively across all our teams, in support of our aims.</p>	<p>major sources of the District’s emissions (transport and domestic use of gas). Even if we reduced/offset all the Council’s emissions, this would only account for 0.5% of those of the District.</p>
<p>Funding and resources</p>	<p>Partnership working provides opportunities for collaboration and can increase the range and impact of available funding.</p>	<p>The cost of living and inflation have impacted our resources; our stated commitment to providing best value to our residents and businesses means we need to prioritise our actions carefully to produce the most effective outcomes.</p>

Our Climate Change Priorities


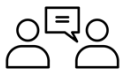


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Movement, travel and transport 	Energy and buildings 
<p>We want to change the way we use transport by creating a sustainable movement network across our District, making it easier to walk, wheel, cycle and use public transport. We will embrace new technology and ensure we have the right infrastructure in the right place at the right time. Promoting active travel and reducing carbon emissions from transport will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities.</p>	<p>We want to ensure that all existing and future homes, businesses and other buildings are as efficient as they can be, saving costs for the consumer, and helping to reduce demand for energy and water. We will work with partners and infrastructure providers to share the latest information about schemes and grants available to our communities and businesses.</p>
<p>Our aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the need for travel and discourage unnecessary travel • Increase walking, wheeling and cycling • Increase use of public transport • Change the way we move goods • Shift to electric vehicles 	<p>Our aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase energy efficiency of homes and businesses • Reduce water consumption in homes and businesses • Embrace new technology including carbon capture / storage
<p>How are we going to get there?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Movement Strategy and annual Parking Management Review • Use the results from our EV Infrastructure Study to boost the charging infrastructure across the District • Continue to deliver our Air Quality Action Plan 	<p>How are we going to get there?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support for home energy retrofit improvements e.g. Solar Together and share ways to save water • Deliver energy and water efficient development, including embracing the use of new technology, through the Local Plan
<p>Key measure of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a new walking, wheeling and cycling route in Sevenoaks urban area and develop detailed designs for two further routes 	<p>Key measure of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to be one of the top Kent authorities for Solar Together registrations

<p>The Council's built assets and fleet</p> 	<p>Resources, consumption and waste</p> 
<p>We want to lead by example, and to demonstrate that we are doing all we can to continue to reduce the emissions from our own estate and to make sure that our buildings are sustainable well into the future.</p>	<p>We want to improve our rates of recycling and reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste that we collect. We also want our communities to have accessible information as consumers to make choices that support the environment.</p>
<p>Our aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings • Reduce carbon emissions from our fleet 	<p>Our aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significantly increase recycling • Reduce non-recyclable waste • Provide the right information to enable our communities to make climate friendly choices
<p>How are we going to get there?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the current sustainability of our assets, and where resources allow, implement heat decarbonisation plans for our buildings • Continue with our plans to replace the fleet with electric vehicles 	<p>How are we going to get there?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review our waste and recycling services and make recommendations for optimising our rates of recycling across the District • Work with partners to encourage positive behaviour change around consumer choices
<p>Key measure of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve a year on year reduction in the Council's carbon emissions 	<p>Key measure of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver annual improvement in recycling rates

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<p>The natural environment</p> 	<p>Awareness and engagement</p> 
<p>We want to preserve and strengthen the protection and climate benefits provided by the natural environment, and demonstrate that we are adapting in a timely and appropriate way to the changing climate.</p>	<p>We want to harness the skills and enthusiasm of our communities in support of the climate change challenge and send the message that local action at any scale plays a hugely important role in reducing the District's emissions.</p>
<p>Our aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recover nature and strengthen natural resilience • Improve biodiversity • Increase natural carbon capture / storage 	<p>Our aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise climate awareness • Engage residents, businesses and community groups with local action • Develop support and partnership working
<p>How are we going to get there?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners including Kent Wildlife Trust and KCC to deliver enhanced biodiversity and carbon capture / storage • Plant more trees to help offset carbon emissions 	<p>How are we going to get there?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote our Better Together online platform to enable communities to deliver local "green" projects • Share local case studies and best practice to inspire community action
<p>Key measure of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with our partners to explore and implement a natural capital and biodiversity net gain project 	<p>Key measure of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver climate change specific engagement with town and parish councils

Item 10 – Community Grants 2024/25

The attached report was considered by the People & Places Advisory Committee on 5 March 2024. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of these papers and will follow when available.

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COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME DRAFT ALLOCATIONS 2024/25

Cabinet – 14 March 2024

Report of: Sarah Robson, Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Officer People & Places

Status: For Decision

Also considered by:

People & Places Advisory Committee - 5 March 2024

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary This report sets out information about the Community Grant Scheme and summarises applications received by the Council from voluntary organisations for funding during 2024/25.

This report supports the Key Aim of: the Council's Community Plan.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Lesley Dyball

Contact Officer(s): Kathryn Bone, Ext. 7176; Abbi Caine, Ext. 7259

Recommendation to People and Places Advisory Committee:

- (a) That Members note this report.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

- (a) Grants, as set out in Appendix C of this report, be approved subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 14.

Reason for recommendation: Applications received have been appraised according to the Council's Guidelines and those recommended for funding support the aims of the scheme and represent value for money.

Introduction and Background

1. The Council's Community Grant Scheme supports local charities and voluntary sector organisations that, through their work, contribute to the priorities set out in the Community Plan 2022-25.
2. The Council's Corporate Code of Practice for making grants was reviewed in 2022 and a revised Code of Practice was agreed at Cabinet on 7 July 2022. This is attached at Appendix A.

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3. The grant guidelines were reviewed in 2022 and revised guidelines were agreed by Cabinet on 7 July 2022. These guideline documents can be found at Appendix B. The Scheme Guidelines provide applicants with information about the purpose of the scheme, its priorities and what cannot be funded. They also outline that funding is available for specific project core running costs in particular new community projects and initiatives.
4. In 2023/24, the grants awarded through the Community Grant Scheme enabled voluntary organisations to support 26,272 volunteer hours in the Sevenoaks District, which represented a net present value of £336k (as calculated by the Social Value Engine).

Details of the Community Grant Scheme for 2024/25

5. The grant scheme was publicised widely across the District within the voluntary sector, through the virtual Voluntary Sector Forum, Town and Parish Councils, In Shape Magazine, Social Media and local press in September 2023. The closing date was 2 November 2023.
6. Whilst the application questions remained the same as previous years, the online system capturing the completed applications was new this year. This was thoroughly tested prior to release. In addition, applicants were provided with a template Microsoft Word application form to enable them to have an insight into the questions and have all of the required information to hand prior to completing the online form.
7. As per the Grants Code of Practice, all applicants were required to provide details of their projected outcomes of their project. This is in the form of specific performance indicators. This year, the list of suggested performance indicators was designed around the Social Value Engine (SVE) which is now being used to accurately and transparently measure the social value provided by the scheme. The Council will use the SVE to calculate the net present value of the Community Grant Scheme as part of its monitoring and evaluation.
8. The total budget available for distribution to voluntary sector organisations in 2024/25 is £97,388, including £63,540 for Citizens' Advice in the District, £2,500 for the Sevenoaks District Arts Council (SDAC) and £2,500 for the Sevenoaks District Sports Council (SDSC). Funding for Citizens' Advice, SDAC and SDSC is subject to Service Level Agreements. The amount available for the Community Grants Scheme is £28,848.
9. A total of 40 grant applications were received which was significantly more than the 30 to 32 applications usually received. The 40 applications represent a total grant request of £151,162. However, it should be noted that many applicants have sought and received alternative funding advice from our Community Projects and Funding Officers, or successfully applied to alternative routes of Council funding, including the Better Together community mobilisation grant scheme or the Community Safety Grants.

10. A full schedule of applications is attached at Appendix C. The Portfolio Holder and Deputy Portfolio Holder for People & Places has access to copies of all of the applications and a full set is available via One Drive (access instructions can be provided separately on request). Officers would be pleased to deal with any detailed queries in advance of the meeting.

Appraisal Process

11. Members will appreciate that the recommended grants in Appendix C have been put forward following an appraisal by Officers trained in grant appraisal and a detailed consultation with the Portfolio Holder for People & Places, Cllr Dyball and the Deputy Portfolio Holder for People & Places, Cllr Bulford. Recommendations have been made in accordance with the Scheme Guidelines and the Council's Corporate Code of Practice for grants and take into account various factors, including:
 - The applicant's eligibility to apply;
 - The extent to which the application supports the schemes priorities;
 - The number of people that will benefit from the project and its value for money;
 - The level of benefit and the outcomes to those living, working and volunteering in the Sevenoaks District;
 - The level of need for the project, service or activity;
 - Any funding the applicant has received or is due to receive from the Council (including from other departments) and the outcome from any monitoring of these grants.
 - The sustainability of the project, service or activity beyond the length of the funding.

Recommended Level of Grant

12. A full list of grants recommended to voluntary organisations is attached at Appendix C.
13. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed of the reason for this decision, and encouraged to contact the District Council's Funding Officers and visit Funding For All's online free, comprehensive grant search database for advice and support in seeking funding elsewhere if appropriate.

Recommended Conditions

14. It is recommended that grants be made to voluntary organisations subject to the following conditions:

That performance indicators as set out in the application forms are adhered to and monitored;

That appropriate safeguarding policies and arrangements are in place, where necessary;

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That appropriate recognition of this Council's funding contribution is made in all their publicity; and

Where services are provided over a wider area than the District boundaries, organisations will be required to hold grant aid from this Council in a restricted fund for the benefit of Sevenoaks District residents;

Key Implications

Financial

15. The level of funding is in accordance with the draft 2024/25 budget of £97,388.

Resources (Non Financial)

16. The work connected with the Community Grant Scheme administration and monitoring is being undertaken through existing resources.

Legal implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

17. There are no legal issues relating to this report. All organisations applying for funding are required to have an equalities policy (or have signed to say they will adhere to the District Council's policy) and where appropriate child protection and/or adult protection policies.
18. The following risks have been identified along with the resulting mitigation:
 - The grant allocated is lower than requested -This is mitigated by the application form asking whether a project could continue if the funding were reduced and what impact this would have on the performance indicators. The appraisal ensures value for money despite any reduced grant being offered.
 - Ensuring appropriate police checks and safeguarding procedures are in place for organisations that allocate onward funding as a result of the community grant that they receive – This is mitigated by grants being issued with a condition that checks are carried out and monitoring processes to confirm an effective process is in place.
 - That grant allocations are not approved in March – A timetable is in place to ensure grants are considered by Cabinet in March and processes are in place to ensure grant payments are made in early April.

Equality Assessment

19. 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 paper

directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed does not vary between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out immediately below.

20. This community grant scheme assists with the provision of services to support Sevenoaks District residents, particularly those in the greatest need. Therefore this decision being made or recommended through this paper does not have the potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community.
21. The grant scheme provides funding for specific groups, such as older people, families, young people and people with disabilities. The grants scheme is widely publicised to ensure that groups serving a wide range of needs are able to apply.

Net Zero Implications

22. 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

23. The work of the voluntary sector across the Sevenoaks District is highly valued. The Council's grants programme supports the dedication and commitment of the many volunteers who help the most vulnerable people in the District. Members are asked to agree the draft grant allocations as set out in Appendix C.

Appendices

Appendix A - Council's Corporate Code of Practice for making grants

Appendix B - Community Grant Scheme guidelines

Appendix C - Full Schedule of applications

Sarah Robson

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer – People & Places

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Appendix A

Sevenoaks District Council

Code of Practice for Grant-making 2022

1. Background

1.1. Sevenoaks District Council is committed to improving the quality of life for our residents. We recognize that the community, voluntary sector and the businesses community have a significant role to play in helping us do this for residents who are more vulnerable and in need of support. In line with this, the Council delivers grant schemes, where it is able, to provide additional activities and projects that complement and support our strategic and overall objectives.

1.2. This Code of Practice has been adopted by the Council and is intended for use across all teams and services who are running or considering running a grant scheme using Council Funds.

1.3. From time to time, the Council may manage other grants such as those to individuals and other sectors including businesses. Grant schemes being delivered by the Council as a conduit of an external body e.g. DWP, must adhere to the funders requirements. Other Council grant schemes being delivered using external funding must adhere to the funders' requirements whilst following the principals of this policy.

2. Definition

For this purpose, a grant is taken to mean:

'a cash award for a specified initiative, project or service not provided by the Council which benefits those who live, work and volunteer in the District'

3. Requirements of our grant schemes

3.1. As a minimum, each grant scheme should specify:

- Guidelines for completing the application form;
- The objectives of the grant scheme, in particular how it will help the Council meet its overall objectives and support the Council's strategic objectives and if appropriate the objectives of the external funding body;
- The required outcomes the Council or funding body is seeking from the funding;
- Who is eligible to apply (see example list in **Appendix 1**);
- The timescales for the funding, including the deadline for applications and when decisions will be made;
- How we will make our decisions and the criteria against which applications will be appraised;
- Minimum and maximum grant level (if appropriate);

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- Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating individual grant awards and the scheme as a whole.

4. Application Process:

4.1. The application form should be in plain English and targeted to the potential recipients. The degree of information required should be proportionate, reasonable and reflect the level of funding available.

4.2. The aim of the form is to give the applicant the opportunity to demonstrate how the application meets the scheme criteria, evidence of need, and the outcomes the applicant group expects to achieve. The suggested contents of the application form are found at **Appendix 2**.

4.2. There should be clear guidance on the application process given to applicants with the form. The suggested contents of this guidance is included at **Appendix 3**

4.4. A checklist or online equivalent should be provided for applicants to ensure that all information has been supplied and all relevant and necessary documents are provided with the application form.

4.5. Officers should keep a record of all requests for application forms and follow up, where appropriate, why these were not returned as part of the overall scheme evaluation.

5. Appraising applications and decision making

The Council supports the following principles regarding appraisals and decision-making:

- The process should be transparent and the method used made clear as part of the application guidelines;
- Grant appraisers should be trained and no decision should be made by an individual;
- Appraisal must take place against the given criteria and applicants must meet the set criteria in order to receive the grant;
- Appraisers must be clear that the scheme/proposal meets the main aim of the grant scheme and that the identified need is met;
- Appraisers need to ensure that they have a checklist for all the required documents, e.g. application form with all sections completed, accounts, safeguarding policies and procedures. If any document is missing, or is not considered adequate, the applicant should be given a limited period of time to provide them. If the information is not provided in this time period, then the application may not be considered. Timescales and ability to do this may be restricted due to funding body or other limitations;
- Appraisers must be satisfied that the applicant has confirmed they have an adequate safeguarding policy or policies in place to safeguard children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and the appropriate DBS checks have taken place. If appropriate, any organisation deemed not to have adequate

arrangements in place may have conditions attached to their funding agreement or not receive any funding;

- If appropriate to the grant scheme, audited or independently examined accounts should be considered when the application is appraised. Where the applicant has not been in existence long enough to have a set of audited accounts, they must provide financial records commensurate with the level of grant being applied. The review of the accounts should be proportionate, reasonable and reflect the level of funding.
- If appropriate to the grant scheme, appraisers should consider any other funding the applicant has received from the Council and any monitoring data from these grants.
- Appraisers should keep clear records of their decisions regardless of the outcome of the appraisal.

6. Approval

6.1 All grant applications should receive a response indicating that the grant has been approved, held over or refused;

6.2. Approval letters should indicate clearly whether there are any conditions attached to the grant and include: the timescale for payments, monitoring requirements, and the Council's requirements regarding promotion and publicity. The Council's logo will be provided for this purpose;

6.3. If the application has not been approved, clear reasons should be given and further feedback provided if requested.

7. Monitoring & Evaluation

7.1. Monitoring has to be relevant and targeted to the applicant group, with the degree of detail reflecting the size of grant. It should assess achievements against agreed outcomes/targets;

7.2. As a minimum, recipients of grants must keep a record of beneficiary numbers, who else has benefited from the grant and any feedback from users. This should reflect any of the Council's obligations under the Public Sector Equalities Act.

7.3. The applicant group should carry out an evaluation of the project with the beneficiaries, proportionate to the size of grant, such as a satisfaction survey and/or case studies.

7.4. The grant process itself must be evaluated and reviewed internally at regular intervals, at least every 3 years, to ensure the system is still effective. This includes review of application forms, criteria, reporting etc. with feedback from applicants.

8. General

8.1. Working in line with the Data Protection Act, there should be an SDC database which everyone can access that gives details of those groups who have applied for funding and the outcome.

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8.2. Details of all successful applications are now provided on the SDC website Transparency pages as required by law under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix 1 Eligibility for all Council funded grant schemes

All of the following should be included in the eligibility criteria for applicants.

- The project should be for the benefit of people **living, working or volunteering in the Sevenoaks District**. This includes applicants who are based outside of the area but whose proposed activity is of benefit to those within the District;
- Any funding given should be ring-fenced for those living, working or volunteering in the Sevenoaks District and appear as such in the applicant organisation's accounts;
- The applicant group must have a written constitution or a set of rules or be verified that it is genuine entity i.e. a companies house / charity commission check;
- The applicant group must have a bank account and in the case of voluntary or community groups have at least 2 signatories, who are not related to each other and who do not live at the same address. If they do not have a bank account, they must nominate a properly constituted voluntary organisation to take responsibility for the money on their behalf;
- The applicant must, if requested or required by the scheme, enclose with the application a set of audited or independently examined accounts for the latest year available. If they have not been in existence long enough to have a set of audited accounts available, they should be able to provide financial records commensurate with the level of grant and provide evidence that they have a bank account as detailed above;
- The applicant group must confirm that they have an adequate safeguarding policy or policies in place to safeguard children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and the appropriate DBS checks have taken place.

Appendix 2: Application Form Contents

The level of detail the Council will require will vary according to the scheme and the amount of funding.

For most schemes we will expect the form to capture the following information:

- A description of the project, who it is aimed at, how it meets the scheme's objectives and criteria, and what outcomes will be delivered;
- The applicant's capacity to deliver the project, based on previous experience;
- Details of how the funding will be spent and any other financial or in kind contributions to the project or scheme. The level of information required will be proportionate to the level of grant.
- Clear evidence of financial need, and how the scheme provides value for money;
- If relevant to the funding pot in question, confirmation as to whether the applicant has applied to the Council on previous occasions;
- A project plan and timetable;
- A section where the applicant will set out performance indicators, which are measurable and capture the outcomes of the project;
- Details of any accreditation the organization has or is working towards;
- Confirmation that the applicant has written policies on equal opportunities, health and safety and safeguarding, and that these have been included with the application and/or has confirmed that they will adhere to the Council's policies;
- Details of the applicant's bank account;
- An Equalities statement;
- A named individual with contact details who will be the lead contact for the grant;
- Signature and date box (or online equivalent).

Appendix 3 Guidance on the application process

The Council considers that the following information is included in any guidance on the application process:

- Who is eligible to apply;
- The scheme criteria including links to relevant Council documents such as the Community Plan;
- The types of outcomes the funding pot expects to see and at least one example of these;
- Timescales for the scheme and the dates by which we will notify applicants of receipt of applications (within 10 days of receipt) and decisions on awards;
- How we will consider value for money;
- A clear statement that no applications will be considered after the closing date;
- How we will make our decisions, who will do this, and how we will allocate funding if the scheme is over-subscribed;
- A clear reminder that failure to complete all the necessary questions may invalidate the application;
- A statement that the Council will require grants to be paid back if the project does not go ahead for any reason and that failure to notify the Council that a project is not proceeding may jeopardize future applications;.
- Notification regarding payment processes and at what stage the funding will be made available e.g. on receipt of invoices, 100% in advance, staged payment etc;
- A statement confirming that all Council grants payments will be by direct debit and will be accompanied by a remittance advice and a letter setting out the conditions of the grant and monitoring arrangements;
- The level and timing of monitoring, evaluation and annual reporting required (*see Section 7: Monitoring and Evaluation*);
- Signposting to where further support is available, e.g. on writing and adopting safeguarding policies;
- A statement regarding data protection and our obligations as required by law under the Localism Act 2011 for transparency;
- Grant managers should provide a form for the applicant to sign and date and return, to confirm they have received the money and that it will be used for the purpose for which it was approved;
- The evidence required from applicants to prove that the money has been spent on what it was intended for. (*The financial threshold needs to be considered*).

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Appendix B - Community Grant Scheme Guidelines 2024/25

Please read the following guidelines carefully before completing the application form. If you have any queries regarding the application process, please contact Kathryn Bone or Jenny Godfrey at:

Sevenoaks District Council, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1HG.

Tel: 01732 227000 Email: grants@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Included below are some explanations and tips for the questions in the application form. Please use these when completing the application form online.

Purpose of scheme

Our Community Grant scheme exists to help voluntary organisations and groups which provide projects, services or activities that benefit people living, working or volunteering in the Sevenoaks District, focusing on those in greatest need.

In particular, we want to support projects, services or activities that are delivered with the help of volunteers and that support the priorities of "Our Communities" within the Sevenoaks District Community Plan.

What are the scheme's priorities?

- Address and reduce anti-social behaviour within the community, focusing particularly on the most vulnerable.
- Projects, services and activities that encourage participation and empower young people in local community.
- Promote, support and improve access to volunteering opportunities as part of a project, service or activity.
- Encourage participation and improve opportunities for excluded or vulnerable groups.
- Improve the wellbeing of residents.
- Projects, services and activities that support and empower carers.
- Help address and deliver digital inclusion.
- Support communities to live happily together and provide information, advice, advocacy or counselling to those in need.
- Projects, services and activities that work in partnership to achieve the priorities listed above.

Who can apply?

You can apply if you deliver services to those that live, work or volunteer in the Sevenoaks District.

Applications for grants **over £1,000** must provide services or benefit residents in **two or more parishes** and applicants must be one of the following:

- “Not for profit” registered charity
- Youth organisation
- Voluntary organisation
- Community Interest Company.

Applications for **grants £1,000 or under** must provide services or benefit residents in **at least one parish** and applicants must be either one of the organisations listed above or a community group with a constitution or set of rules.

How much and what can I apply for?

The minimum you can apply for is **£100**.

You can apply either for a grant of up to and including £1,000 OR up to and including £5,000. There are two different application forms. Please make sure you use the correct one.

The grant can be spent on project, service or activity costs such as support for volunteers, equipment or premises hire. In addition, you can apply for core running costs that are commensurate with the project, service or activity applied for.

When can I apply?

There is one round of grant funding each financial year. This round is for projects, services and activities that will be completed between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.

The deadline for applications is **midday Thursday 2 November 2023**.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application by the end of March 2024.

Please bear these timescales in mind when requesting funding for your activity.

What are the terms and conditions?

By applying, you are confirming that you comply with the terms and conditions. The main conditions include:

- The project, service or activity being funded must be completed between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.
- Your organisation or group has a constitution or set of rules.

- Your organisation or group has (or for newly formed organisations or groups, confirm that you will have at the point of receiving this grant) a bank account with at least two authorised signatories.
- Your organisation or group has an equality policy in place (or for a newly formed organisation or group, agrees to implement one) and is prepared to sign our Equality Statement.
- All appropriate legal agreements, insurances and permissions needed to deliver the project are in place. Your organisation will comply with all relevant statutory requirements.
- Your organisation has all appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place. For newly formed organisations or groups, the award of a grant will be conditional upon the implementation of suitable safeguarding arrangements for children and vulnerable adults (including the completion of enhanced level Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks and appropriate training for all staff and volunteers).
- Any grant you are awarded will be used only for the project, services or activities set out in your application and will be ring-fenced for those living, working or volunteering in the Sevenoaks District. It must not be used for any other purpose. The Council will require the grant funding back should the project, services or activities not go ahead and/or the funding not be used strictly in accordance with the application and grant offer.
- The project, service or activity outlined in this application is not already the subject of a service level agreement or other agreement with another authority.
- You will be required to submit monitoring for your project, services or activities with supporting evidence including as a minimum one case study.
- All publicity materials and annual reports must acknowledge our support using the branding and logo provided.
- Your organisation or group can only submit one application in any financial year.

What we will not fund

We will not fund:

- Projects, services, activities that are not completed between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.
- For grants over £1,000, projects, services or activities that serve only one parish
- Projects, services or activities that are primarily the responsibility of another agency or funder, such as the Sevenoaks District Sports Council (email Edward Oatley at janandedward@btinternet.com for further information) and [Sevenoaks District Arts Council](#).
- Costs for projects, services or activities that your organisation or group is already delivering in the District as part of an existing contract or service level agreement with another funder.
- Costs for projects, services or activities that have already started or been delivered

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- Projects, services or activities where the beneficiaries are not those living, working or volunteering in the Sevenoaks District
- Private concerns operated as a business
- Organisations seeking to add capital to their reserves including those whose free reserves are higher than their annual expenditure
- Local organisations seeking funding for a central HQ
- Religious or political organisations
- Individuals
- Work that should be provided by statutory, educational, health organisations or social services
- Schools or parent/teacher organisations
- Large capital projects.

How will we assess your project?

The appraisal process will look at:

- Your eligibility to apply
- The extent to which your project meets the Scheme's priorities
- How many people will benefit from your project and the value for money
- The level of benefit and the outcomes to those living, working or volunteering in the Sevenoaks District
- The level of need for the project, service or activity
- The level of funding already received from the Council over the previous two years and the outcome from any monitoring from these grants
- The sustainability of the project, service or activity beyond the length of the funding.

Explanations and tips for completing the online application form

Can more than one person work on the application form?

No, only one person can access the online application form. However, we have provided a template application form for you to share with colleagues so that you can capture everyone's comments and draft your answers before entering them into the online form.

Do I have to complete the form in one go or can I save it and come back to it later?

You will need to complete the form in one go. There is no option to save it and come back later.

Questions 2.7 to 2.10: Safeguarding

If you are a newly formed organisation or group and do not yet have in place a Safeguarding Policy please tick “no”. Please then email grants@sevenoaks.gov.uk and state who your Safeguarding Lead is/will be; how your process works/will work; and what training has been completed/is outstanding to be undertaken. Also state what assistance you might need from the Council to implement the necessary Safeguarding Policy or Policies. The Council can offer a range of advice and support to new and existing groups in the development of their policies, however, please note that it is likely that any grants offered will be conditional upon a safeguarding policy being developed.

Section 4: Number of Volunteers (Q4.2) & Volunteer Hours (Q4.3)

Please state the number of volunteers and the total number of volunteer hours that will be used to deliver your project, service or activity through the funding you are requesting in this application only. Please note that this differs to the volunteer information captured in question 2.2 which is regarding your organisation as a whole rather than the specific project or activity for which you are applying for funding.

Section 4: Performance indicators

Applicants are required to provide outcomes of the grant, which will form the basis of their performance monitoring.

These specified outcomes will be used to assess the application and should therefore reflect how the application will meet the scheme’s priorities.

As part of this you need to select key performance indicator(s) from a drop down menu. If an appropriate key performance indicator is not available on the drop down menu and you select ‘other’ please ensure that your indicator reflects the key outcome(s) of your project, service or activity and is measurable, i.e. number of older people reporting feeling less isolated or number of young people demonstrating improved resilience and confidence.

Section 4: Measuring performance indicators

Examples of how to measure Key Performance Indicators include (but is not limited to): ask questions before and after; use a survey; and produce a case study including quotations from beneficiaries.

Questions 4.7 to 4.9: Impact on beneficiaries due to a reduced grant

Sometimes the Council is unable to award the full funding that applicants have requested. In this section please provide the number of beneficiaries of your project should you not receive the full grant and let us know how you would adapt your project to achieve this.

Section 7: Equality Policy – newly formed organisations and groups

Please note that for newly formed organisations and groups the Council can provide assistance with the implementation of a suitable Equality Policy. If you are in this position you can confirm it by answering ‘yes’ to the second part of question 7.1.

Error Messages & Character Count:

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If you find you cannot move onto the next page or submit your application please look out for any error messages next to the questions and follow the instruction. A common error message is “Please insert a valid integer”, if you see this message please ensure you have only input numbers in this box.

Please also be aware that text boxes have a limit to the number of characters that can be included. These will clearly be shown in the online form and will be counted down as you type.

Any other queries

For any queries that you cannot find the answer to here, please contact Jenny Godfrey or Kathryn Bone via email at grants@sevenoaks.gov.uk or call 01732 227000.

When will you know if your application is successful?

You will be advised of the outcome of your application by the end of March 2024 with successful projects receiving funding in early April 2024. Please bear these timescales in mind when requesting funding for your activity.

Organisation/g roup name	Title of project/activity you are seeking funding	What is the project, service or activity	2022/23 Previous Funding	2023/24 Previous Funding	2024/25 Grant Request	2024/25 Recommended Allocation	Reason for Refusal
Sadeh	Food bank and vegetable growing project	Sadeh Farm's project is a community-driven effort to grow fresh vegetables and fruits, with the market gardener and weekly volunteers working together. One-third of the harvest will be donated to the local food bank, prepared by onsite volunteers, and delivered weekly on Fridays. Food bank users are encouraged to join as volunteers to enhance physical and mental health through outdoor work and reduce isolation by fostering social cohesion in the community. Funding is for core costs associated with the project.	N/A	5000	£5,000.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
1st Horton Kirby Scout Group	Creating accessible kitchen and toilets at the Scout Hut	The current kitchen and toilet facilities are outdated but more importantly they are not accessible to all as there is no disabled toilet and the kitchen cannot accommodate wheelchair users.	N/A	N/A	£5,000.00	£0.00	Application is ineligible under the terms of the Community Grant Guidelines.
Stubbs Wood Volunteer Group	Stubbs Wood Volunteer Group	The volunteers provide all aspects of woodland management alongside professional contractors to improve 90 acres of ancient woodland as a permanent amenity for the local people. Stubbs Wood was bought from Sevenoaks District Council for £1 by the Parish Council. The wood requires considerable maintenance. The volunteers clear pathways, improve access, remove invasive species but lack power tools and training, etc. Volunteer activity would be enhanced by funding for electric power tools (strimmer, pole saw) and training including first aid and medical kit all of which are expensive and beyond the means of the volunteers.	N/A	N/A	£5,000.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
Home-Start North West Kent Ltd	Swanley Vulnerable Families Supported via trained home visiting volunteers	Home-Start NW Kent supports isolated parents with pre-school aged children via weekly home visiting. Families are isolated as a result of postnatal depression, domestic abuse, special needs, lack of parenting confidence and lack of extended family. Volunteers are fully trained and many local agencies refer into the scheme. Swanley has proved a challenging area to progress volunteer recruitment, however, a recent pilot project has proved successful with families - in particular those from the travelling community.	N/A (Home Start SWKent applied previously & received £875)	N/A	£5,000.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
Edenbridge Scout Group	Scout Group Camping and Outdoor Adventurous Activities	A group camping trip for all the Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts is being organised. This will be an activity weekend where they will be camping outside in tents and participating in a number of outdoor adventurous activities at an activity center. The grant will fund the purchase of four, 5 metre Bell Tents to accommodate the young people as well as to subsidize the cost of the activities. These tents are ideal for group camping as they are spacious and can sleep up to 8 people. They are also made from high-quality materials that are durable and weatherproof.	N/A	N/A	£3,436.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
Leigh Cricket Club	Junior Cricket & Associated Groundwork	The establishment of junior cricket training sessions and competing junior teams for children in and around Leigh and the local area. We are seeking to develop youth cricket and improve local community engagement. Linked to the intention to establish the junior cricket is the necessary groundwork and maintenance, and purchase of junior cricket equipment required. The village green has been significantly damaged by the very hot Summers and wet Winters seen in recent years, so in order to provide a safe, well-maintained cricket ground investment is required into its treatment and maintenance.	N/A	N/A	£4,000.00	£0.00	Application is ineligible under the terms of the Community Grant Guidelines.
Age UK Maidstone, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge	Information and Advice Service	Funding is being sought for the Information & Advice Service. This service provides information and advice for older people in Sevenoaks (and the surrounding areas) and helps them to apply for benefits such as Attendance Allowance and Pension Credit. As an alternative office of the DWP benefit applications can be made on the clients behalf. The grant would be ringfenced for helping those clients who live within the Sevenoaks district. The service is totally funded by reserves and does not generate any income other than the occasional donation from satisfied clients.	£5,000.00	£2,500	£5,000.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
Eden Christian Trust	ECT Youth Club (Friday Evening)	ECT work with young people aged 10-18 years old providing activities and opportunities that bring them together within a safe environment for friendship and fun and encourage community. ECT employ a full time Youth Worker, who runs 2 youth clubs, a mentoring group, clubs in 4 local Primary Schools, 2 summer camps, outings and work in local churches and community. The project for which funding is being sought is our ECT friday night Youth Club, which is full to capacity each session.	N/A	N/A	£5,000.00	£2,500.00	
Compaid Trust	Closing the digital divide within the community	Providing digital skills training to disadvantaged individuals to support them to feel confident to get online and access information, documents & employment opportunities. In addition ensuring they understand the risks and safety measures required when accessing online websites and collating information.	N/A	N/A	£4,900.00	£2,450.00	

Organisation/group name	Title of project/activity you are seeking funding	What is the project, service or activity	2022/23 Previous Funding	2023/24 Previous Funding	2024/25 Grant Request	2024/25 Recommended Allocation	Reason for Refusal
Imago Community	Imago Community Volunteer Development	Imago's accredited volunteering service will support local VCSE organisations to promote and fill their volunteering opportunities and will help to match local people in the Sevenoaks district with roles suitable for their interests and skills. Whether people are looking for volunteering as a way to get back into work, to give something back to their community or to learn and develop new skills, our service will promote, support, and improve access to a range of opportunities. Organisations will benefit through increased support from volunteers for their vital local services.	£3,500.00	£3,750	£5,000.00	£2,500.00	
Youth Resilience UK CIC	Mental health support among the community	The project will deliver a series of mental health training for young people in Sevenoaks so they better understand and manage their own emotions and build resilience strategies and techniques to allow them to remain mentally well. In addition, cognitive coaching courses will be delivered to young people at risk in local secondary schools to help them understand and make better decisions so they have improved wellbeing, behaviour and engagement with education. They will also learn skills to become mental health champions to support each other. A specific set of training for young people with autism and ADHD will also be provided.	N/A	£2,031.50	£4,900.00	£2,450.00	
Benefice of Penshurst, Fordcombe and the Chiddingstone s	Repairing and updating our audio facilities	The audio facilities in the two churches of the Chiddingstones are around 20 years old and need updating particularly with a view to community life events (weddings /christenings/ end of life) school use, but also with a view to greater accessibility (remote access to service content and an upgrading of our audio loop). The grant will fund an upgraded audio system to provide greater flexibility for school and community use.	N/A	N/A	£5,000.00	£0.00	Application is ineligible under the terms of the Community Grant Guidelines.
Sevenoaks Samaritans	Recruitment and Training of 12 new volunteers and expansion of Outreach to Construction Industry	Suicide rates in the Construction Industry are nearly 4 times the national average and rising steadily. This equates to approximately 2 deaths by suicide per day. It is a male dominated work environment (87% of workers in the industry are male) and as we know, men are 3 times more likely to take their own lives. This project is to engage with local Construction businesses to collaboratively support them to address these issues.	N/A	£4,203.50	£5,000.00	£2,500.00	
Baby Umbrella	Early parenting support	The transition to parenthood can be tough. For many, it is a time when peer and family relationships change, identities shift, and there is a dislocation from predictable work and social routines. On top of this, there is a tiny baby at the heart of it all, and a steep learning curve on how to feed and care for them. If there are challenges at this vulnerable time, they can feel completely overwhelming. At Baby Umbrella we aim to provide a safe harbour in those early weeks, a place where there is always a warm smile and a hot cup of tea, alongside compassionate and skilled support. The grant will fund core running costs.	£1,900.00	£0	£4,576.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
Kenward Trust	Youth Engagement within the Sevenoaks District	To provide more support through our new specialist provision of drug and alcohol education which helps young people affected make better choices. Outreach - to offer 1:1 mentor support and to train up a volunteer to join the team. Intervention - sessions to be offered to schools in the district to support identified at-risk students with this 3 hour workshop. Engaging with Schools - Our Education Executive in her new role to visit and explain our Think Differently project and the benefits, creating relationships with disengaged schools in the district.	£4,666.25	N/A	£4,179.40	£2,089.00	
Every Step Counts	Mature Mover Classes Swanley/Riverhead	The project encourages participation and improves opportunities for excluded vulnerable groups. A weekly class will be provided. The first two sessions will be digital workshops followed by sessions focusing on improving mobility and teaching participants the correct exercise techniques. The funding will go towards creating a new programme for people over 60 focusing on Swanley and Central Sevenoaks/Riverhead.	N/A	N/A	£4,570.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services	Supporting Sevenoaks residents experiencing domestic abuse	DAVSS provides vital volunteer support services for often traumatised victims of domestic abuse and their children, empowering them to break the cycle of abuse so they and their children can live safe and fulfilling lives again. The grant will contribute towards core costs.	£5,000.00	N/A	£5,000.00	£2,500.00	
West Kent Mind	Chat Room (mental health and wellbeing support group)	The Chat Room is a service delivered to combat loneliness and social isolation, providing mental wellbeing support to build up emotional resilience through a blended approach of online and in-person delivery, facilitated by volunteers and Wellbeing Workers providing opportunities for social interaction, activities, meaningful discussions, and conversations in a safe space.	£3,322.00	£2,031.50	£4,591.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.

Organisation/group name	Title of project/activity you are seeking funding	What is the project, service or activity	2022/23 Previous Funding	2023/24 Previous Funding	2024/25 Grant Request	2024/25 Recommended Allocation	Reason for Refusal
Swanley District Scouts	Adventurous Activities and Funday	A day of Adventure and fun activities for the whole of Swanley District	£2,916.25	N/A	£5,000.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
The Space DVCC	The Space - A warm, accessible community hub promoting wellbeing & inclusion with hot food.	This funding would come at a pivotal time to allow 'The Space' to continue to deliver through April 24 - March 25, alongside expanding the digital inclusion offering to further promote social inclusion for beneficiaries.	N/A	N/A	£5,000.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
Spurgeons	Targeted, Expert Support for Parents/Carers of Autistic Children & Young People	The purpose of this project is to engage with families to help them to understand life with Autism and how they can manage some of the parenting situations which come with complex needs whilst feeling less isolated, more equipped & resilient. This funding will support the delivery of programmes in the District.	£0.00	N/A	£5,000.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
Copper Beech Allotment Society (CBAS)	Creating a communal area at our allotments for members and visitors	CBAS would like to develop an area within the parish allotment site for communal purposes. This would include wildlife areas, ponds, biodiversity, pollinator-friendly plants, raised beds for vegetables, insect hotels, composting areas, rainwater harvesting systems, seating areas and storage. The aim is to develop this area to enable demonstrations to our community focusing on education, biodiversity and well-being. The area would also serve as a communal area for our members to meet and share ideas which would further enhance the community workshops.	N/A	N/A	£5,000.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
Sevenoaks District Scout Council	Leader adventurous activity training and team building equipment for young people and volunteers	The goal is to improve the quality of activities on offer for all Scouting in Sevenoaks as part of a "skills for life" programme - for ages 4-18. The funding will used to provide paddleboard training for scout leaders and volunteers in the paddleboarding team. The plan is to develop the skills of this team and in doing so run additional activities for young people. In addition, funding will support the team building opportunities through the purchase of laser tag equipment. This activity that was introduced in 2023 and is building momentum.	N/A	N/A	£5,000.00	£0.00	Application is ineligible under the terms of the Community Grant Guidelines. - SPORTS
Kent Wildlife Trust	Elemental Garden Refurbishment at Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve	The grant will fund the refurbishment of the Elemental Garden at Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve on Bradbourne Vale Rd. The garden is open to the local community and is frequently used by visiting schools, during forest skills sessions and by our Wilder Well-being Programme (for local adults facing mental ill health or isolation). The garden is managed by a group of dedicated and skilled local volunteers, under the support of our staff.	N/A	N/A	£5,000.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
Protection Against Stalking	Unmasking Stalkers - When Neighbour Disputes, Anti-Social Behaviour & Harassment is Stalking	Stalking behaviours, particularly those related to neighbour disputes, anti-social behaviour and harassment are not easily identified and vulnerable victims are often not provided with the support and protections that remove or reduce their risk. This project will raise awareness of stalking typologies to criminal justice, community safety, housing and education partners and provide complex-need vulnerable victims with ongoing advocacy support and early access (within 48 hours) to our bank of accredited mental health counsellors.	£4,680.00	£4,312.50	£4,800.00	£3,400.00	
Skiffle Express	Skiffle Express	This project provides weekly Skiffle sessions for people with a variety of mental health backgrounds, this includes those with an episodic or long term condition. The project promotes wellbeing and improved mental health management.	N/A	N/A	£5,000.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
West Kent Mediation	A free conflict resolution service available to all SDC residents	WKM has a clear objective to help neighbours, communities and families resolve their differences through mediation to restore peace, reduce anti-social behaviour and improve mental health. Conflict can have a devastating effect on the parties involved causing anxiety, depression and even homelessness. It frequently has a negative impact on the wider community. Skilled volunteer mediators can help when disputes escalate and communication breaks down, enabling the parties in dispute to understand and appreciate each others different perspectives in a supported environment.	£5,000.00	£5,000	£5,000.00	£3,750.00	
The Reanella Trust	The Resilience Recovery Relief Project	The project spans 6 weeks and focuses on empowering at-risk youth aged 13-18. It targets the root causes of violent and antisocial behaviour through structured interventions, including self-esteem building, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, mentorship, community engagement, and family support. The project fosters a stronger, more inclusive community while addressing health inequalities. By creating connections, providing targeted and familial support, the project aims to leave a lasting legacy of resilience for future generations in Sevenoaks.	N/A	N/A	£5,000.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.

Organisation/group name	Title of project/activity you are seeking funding	What is the project, service or activity	2022/23 Previous Funding	2023/24 Previous Funding	2024/25 Grant Request	2024/25 Recommended Allocation	Reason for Refusal
West Kent Debt Advice	Helping vulnerable Edenbridge and Sevenoaks residents with debt advice and support	WK Debt Advice provide advice, counselling, budgeting and money management skills training to adults of any age that are wrestling with financial crisis and unmanageable debt. They provide services in Sevenoaks and Edenbridge. The team are trained to work with sensitivity and in partnership with other specialist agencies.	N/A	£2,000	£5,000.00	£2,500.00	
BRIDGES	Forging new links!	This project will aim to expand BRIDGES potential as a hub for integrating new residents, sharing expertise via intergenerational & group activities by increasing the opening hours of the centre to include Saturdays and recruiting younger volunteers. Skilled therapists will deliver sessions and links will be made with a local digital training resource to create better digital access. In addition, the grant will fund the replacement of 4 worn out soap dispensers at hand washbasins.	£2,740.00	£2,050	£2,375.00	£1,209.00	
West Kingsdown Boxing Group	Parkinsons Boxing	To run sessions designed specifically for those with Parkinsons disease. The scheme links with England Boxing who advocate the physical & overall wellbeing benefits of boxing for those with Parkinsons. Sessions provide a safe, embarrassment free space. Many arrive as isolated, lonely, depressed people. It has been too difficult physically & mentally for them to leave their homes. They are embarrassed by their symptoms & the problems they can cause socially. This project allows them to join a group with others living with the same disease whilst not actually being identified as such.	N/A	£0	£1,425.00	£0.00	
2nd Swanley Scout Group	Replacement Emergency Doors	The Scout Hut was built in 1967 and the external emergency doors need to be replaced to improve the safety and security of the property. The Hut is used by the 2nd Swanley Scout Group (Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorers) along with the local Rainbows and Brownies groups. The Hut is also available to be hired by the local community.	N/A	N/A	£1,000.00	£0.00	Application is ineligible under the terms of the Community Grant Guidelines.
Crockenhill Petanque Club	Crockenhill Petanque Club	The club provides the opportunity for people to get together to play petanque enabling them to socialise and participate in an activity / sport and enjoy regular exercise to increase their well-being following Covid. This activity encourages the older generation to learn a very easy activity at no cost. Everyone and anyone can play including disabled and disadvantaged people. The grant will be spent on venue costs and purchase of equipment.	N/A	N/A	£600.00	£0.00	Application is ineligible under the terms of the Community Grant Guidelines.
Tunbridge Wells Counselling Centre	Assisted Places Scheme	The Tunbridge Wells Counselling Centre is a non-profit making Mental Health Charity in Tunbridge Wells who offers a BACP accredited counselling service. As a self-financing organisation, they do not receive funding through the NHS or other public funds. Alongside the regular counselling service, they provide a Assisted Places Scheme (APS) which provides subsidised counselling for those on low income. This grant will be used to fund APS for a number of residents in the District.	N/A	N/A	£1,000.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group	Provision of transport for elderly people to access health facilities	SVTG provides a coordinated transport scheme catering for elderly, infirm and disabled residents needing assistance with transport to attend medical appointments at clinics and hospitals and activities such as clubs for the disabled. A part-time paid Coordinator schedules the transport which is provided by volunteers using their private cars.	£500.00	N/A	£1,000.00	£500.00	
6th Sevenoaks (Kemsing) Scouts	Provision of quality Scouting in Kemsing	The goal is to improve the quality of Scouting in Kemsing by ensuring the leadership volunteers have access to the equipment that they need to run a quality programme. The leadership team has requested funding for a projector and a sound system to improve the quality of the training to young people. In addition, the proposal is to utilise grant funding for a set of walkie talkies for use during hikes and folding table and benches for use on camps.	N/A	N/A	£940.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.
Sevenoaks District Seniors Forum	Meetings with members, transport and equipment	The grant will help fund, 4 general meetings for all the members (who are 50+) to attend. This will provide an opportunity for the forum to support older people, raise awareness of issues & seek the members views, to give information on ways to make older life better, reduce discrimination, to promote health & wellbeing and to reduce isolation and loneliness. A small amount will be used to ensure that older people are able to get to meetings and are not disadvantaged. A remote microphone will also be purchased to ensure speakers can be heard in venues without a sound system.	N/A	N/A	£900.00	£0.00	The organisation's reserves are considered to be too high to enable a grant to be recommended.
Eden Twinning	Eden Twinning	To create and maintain cultural links between Edenbridge & its surrounding villages & communities in other countries. Eden Twinning will continue the work of Edenbridge & District Twinning Association (EDTA) which was established in 1973 & dissolved in 2023. Activities will include organised visits to twinned towns such as Mont Saint Aignan (MSA) in Normandy, France and reciprocal visits. In addition, cultural, social, sporting & educational activities for members will be organised.	N/A	N/A	£870.00	£0.00	The available level of funding is not sufficient for the Council to be able to prioritise this project.

Organisation/group name	Title of project/activity you are seeking funding	What is the project, service or activity	2022/23 Previous Funding	2023/24 Previous Funding	2024/25 Grant Request	2024/25 Recommended Allocation	Reason for Refusal
Squerryes Winery Park Run	Heavy Duty Mower	The park run wish to purchase a heavy duty mower to ensure that the park run course can be widened and subsequently maintained every year to enable the course to accommodate more participants which is good for their physical and mental health.	N/A	N/A	£599.99	£0.00	Application is ineligible under the terms of the Community Grant Guidelines.
PHAB	Sevenoaks PHAB	PHAB provides weekly meetings for those adults with either a learning disability and/or a physical disability. PHAB inspires and supports disabled adults to have fun, make new friendships and to enjoy a variety of activities together despite their disabilities. The meetings are held weekly.	N/A	£500	£500.00	£500.00	
TOTAL GRANT REQUEST BUDGET					£151,162.39	£28,848.00	
Difference						£28,848.00	£0.00

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Item 11 – PSPO Consultation Results

The attached report was considered by the People & Places Advisory Committee on 5 March 2024. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of these papers and will follow when available.

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PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER – LONDON ROAD, HALSTEAD

Cabinet – 14 March 2024

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer People & Places

Status: For Approval

Also considered by: People & Places Advisory Committee – 5 March 2024

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: On 14 December 2023, Cabinet agreed to consult the public on a proposal to introduce a new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). The creation of bespoke PSPOs provides officers and partners (Kent Police) with an additional tool on top of existing powers and legislation to tackle specific issues of antisocial behaviour. The consultation responses show there is public support for all measures, whilst providing an insight into the views of the public as well as Government's recommended position when implementing PSPOs. This report summarises the results of the statutory public consultation and seeks approval for the introduction of the PSPO measures and Order.

This report supports the Key Aim of: The Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Plan and Community Plan

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Lesley Dyball

Contact Officer(s): Kelly Webb, Ext. 7474

Recommendation to People and Places Advisory Committee

- a) To note the contents of the report and the outcome of the public consultation.
- b) To support the recommendation to Cabinet for the implementation of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) and its measures at London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road as shown in Map area, for a period of up to 3 years.

Recommendation to Cabinet

- c) To note the contents of the report and the outcome of the statutory 6-week public consultation.
- d) To approve the implementation of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) and its measures at London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road as shown in Map area, for a period of up to 3 years, with effect from 1 May 2024.

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Introduction and Background

1. Officers from agencies such as Sevenoaks District Council, Kent Police, Met Police and Bromley Council have used evidence and professional judgement to develop this proposed PSPO and have considered all issues/areas against the stated test process. Over the past 18 months following other PSPOs introduced in areas such as Dartford and Southend car meets have unfortunately moved into the Sevenoaks District/Bromley Border of Hewitts Roundabout and London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road.
2. From 1 October 2022 to 12 October 2023 there have been 20 reports to Police regarding car meets and nuisance vehicles at London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road and the CSU have received over 15 reports including 6 in the last 2 months. The incidents occur sporadically and late at night into the early hours making the Policing of the location difficult.
3. From Met Police, especially Hewitts Roundabout they have supplied the following:-

With regards to reports this is a tricky one due to it being on the border of KENT and the way the 101/999 calls are routed and also the different locations given by everyone that calls in. Going back through emails and the What's app group we set up with the local residents I would take an educated guesstimate based on the following.

Despite the Met seemingly closing down the larger gatherings due to the operations our team has put together there is still a hard-core few who attend this location on a regular basis.

Based on our intel apart from a short period in the summer when they were completing the road works we have received a steady flow of calls and reports to the location mainly on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday evenings.

Met Police have had approx. 260 calls from multiple residents

Met Police have issued 172 - Section 59s and 232 CPWs to drivers and passengers all with restrictions not to return to the area. This is based on video footage sent in and also officers in attendance.

Met Police and Bromley Council have been trying to get a Camera installed for many months but seem to have hit a wall over ownership of the lampposts and weight of the cameras, plus power supply issues.

Both Kent and Met Police do routinely deploy units to visit the area on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings.

4. A multi-agency meeting was set up to address the concerns that was raised by residents reporting to Sevenoaks District Council, Kent Police, Met Police and Bromley Council.
5. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 placed a new duty on the Council to tackle Anti-social Behaviour (ASB), working co-operatively with the Police, social landlords and other agencies. The Act put victims at the heart of the response to ASB and was intended to give professionals the flexibility they needed to deal with any given situation.
6. Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) were one of a number of new tools contained within the Act and were intended to deal with a particular nuisance or problem in a particular area that was detrimental to the local community's quality of life, by imposing conditions on the use of that area which apply to everyone. They were designed to ensure the law-abiding majority could use and enjoy public spaces, safe from anti-social behaviour.
7. Councils are responsible for making the PSPO, although the Police also have enforcement powers. District Councils take the lead in England with county councils undertaking the role only where there is no district council. The power is not available to parish councils or town councils.
8. The PSPOs have replaced dog control orders, designated public place orders (also known as Alcohol Control Zones) and gating orders.

The requirements of a PSPO

9. The Council can make a PSPO on any public space in its own boundary area. The definition of a public space is wide and includes any place to which the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission, for example a shopping centre. It does not just apply to land owned by the District Council but to any open space anywhere in the district (even land owned by parish councils or Kent County Council).
10. Before making a PSPO the Council must consult with the local police. This is an opportunity for the Police and Council to share information about the area and the problems being caused as well as to discuss the practicalities of enforcement. In addition, the owner or occupier of the land should be consulted as well as community representatives as appropriate.

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11. PSPOs are not about stopping responsible people from using publicly accessible land and this PSPO is not to exclude young people attending The Vine, but to provide Local Authorities and other Local Government departments with the means to help deal with persistent issues, which can be damaging to local communities.
12. In addition to the specific statutory consultation requirements, the Council has to adhere to the publication requirements which form part of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (Publication of Public Spaces Protection Orders) Regulations 2014 ("The regulations"). These specify both advertising requirements and the need for notification to be placed on land affected.
13. The test for a PSPO is designed to be broad and focus on the impact anti-social behaviour is having on victims and communities. A PSPO can be made by the Council if they are satisfied on reasonable grounds that the activities carried out, or likely to be carried out, in a public space:
 - have had, or are likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality;
 - is, or is likely to be, persistent or continuing in nature;
 - is, or is likely to be unreasonable; and
 - justifies the restrictions imposed.
14. The Statutory Guidance for frontline professionals on the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 advises that

'the council should give due regard to issues of proportionality: is the restriction proposed proportionate to the specific harm or nuisance that is being caused? Councils should ensure that the restrictions being introduced are reasonable and will prevent or reduce the detrimental effect continuing, occurring or recurring. In addition, councils should ensure that the Order is appropriately worded so that it targets the specific behaviour or activity that is causing nuisance or harm and thereby having a detrimental impact on others' quality of life. Councils should also consider whether restrictions are required all year round or whether seasonal or time limited restrictions would meet the purpose.'
15. In relation to groups hanging around/ standing in groups/ playing games, the guidance advises as follows

'It is important that councils do not inadvertently restrict everyday sociability in public spaces. The Public Spaces Protection Order should target specifically the problem behaviour that is having a detrimental effect on the community's quality of life, rather than everyday sociability, such as standing in groups which is not in itself a problem behaviour.'

Where young people are concerned, councils should think carefully about restricting activities that they are most likely to engage in. Restrictions that are too broad or general in nature may force the young people into out-of-the-way spaces and put them at risk. In such circumstances, councils should consider whether there are alternative spaces that they can use.

People living in temporary accommodation may not be able to stay in their accommodation during the day and so may find themselves spending extended times in public spaces or seeking shelter in bad weather. It is important that public spaces are available for the use and enjoyment of a broad spectrum of the public, and that people of all ages are free to gather, talk and play games.'

16. A single PSPO can include multiple restrictions and requirements in one order. It can prohibit certain activities, such as the drinking of alcohol, as well as placing requirements on individuals carrying out certain activities, for instance making sure that people walking their dogs keep them on a lead.
17. Should the PSPO be implemented, the Council will work with the Police to ensure that front-line officers are aware of the power and how to use it, to maximise the impact of the PSPO.
18. A breach of the PSPO is a criminal offence, which can be dealt with, either by way of a fixed penalty notice (FPN) or prosecution. If prosecuted, an individual could be liable for a fine.
19. The maximum duration of a PSPO is three years but they can last for shorter periods where appropriate. At any point before expiry the council can extend a PSPO by up to three years if they consider that it is necessary to prevent the original behaviour from occurring or reoccurring. If a new issue arises in an area where a PSPO is in force the council can vary the terms of the order at any time. This can change the size of the restricted area or the specific requirements or restrictions. As well as varying the PSPO, a council can also seek to discharge it at any time.

Results of the Public Consultation for the proposed PSPO for London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road

20. In accordance with the statutory guidelines the Council consulted with the Chief Officer of the police as well as the local policing body for the affected areas, and they have confirmed their agreement to the introduction of the PSPO.
21. Following agreement by Cabinet on 14 December 2023 to carry out consultation on the introduction of new Public Spaces Protection Order the public consultation formally opened on Thursday 28 December 2023 and closed on midnight on Thursday 25 January 2024. The public were asked to

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provide views on the introduction of measures to address motor vehicle nuisance that can have a detrimental effect on the local community.

22. Public consultation was carried out in a number of ways to give the public as much opportunity to express their views and included:
 - Access to all documentation and an online questionnaire via the Council's website
 - Access to hard copies of documentation and downloadable paper copies of the questionnaire that could be posted to the Council (or emailed)
 - Consultation with key stakeholders such as Kent Police and Parish Councils
 - Communication via face book, twitter and the Council website
23. There were 113 responses received in total and all from the online questionnaire.
24. The PSPO consultation results are presented as a general overview with recommendations and individual tables of results provided in more detail under this. The outcome presented an overwhelming support for the PSPO. There is further information in Appendix 1.
25. Local Government Association (LGA) guidance for councils suggests that the consultation process should assess the appropriate balance for any proposed new measures ensuring they are supported and appropriate. The public consultation undertaken by the Council demonstrates that the public supported all measures. These are:
 - i. Action 1: 98.23% of the responses supported Engaging in, promoting, encouraging or assisting in the carrying out of any anti-social behaviour connected to the use of a mechanically propelled vehicle including but not limited to a car cruising event in or on London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road
 - ii. Action 2: 96.16% of the responses supported Sounding horns or playing loud music
 - iii. Action 3: 98.23% of the responses supported revving engines
 - iv. Action 4: 98.23% of the responses supported Causing danger to other road users (including pedestrians)
 - v. Action 5: 93.81% of the responses supported Causing damage or risk of damage to property
 - vi. Action 6: 98.23% of the responses supported Exceeding the permitted

speed limit or racing

- vii. Action 7: 96.46% of the responses supported performing stunts (including but not limited to performing doughnuts, skidding, handbrake turns, wheel spinning)
 - viii. Action 8: 96.46% of the responses supported Being verbally abusive, swearing or intimidating members of the public.
 - ix. Action 9: 98.23% of the responses supported Causing obstruction of a public highway or publicly accessible place (whether by moving or stationary vehicles or otherwise).
 - x. Action 10: 98.23% of the resources supported Engaging in, promoting, encouraging, or assisting in the use of mechanically propelled vehicle which causes or is likely to cause danger to the public in or on London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road
 - xi. Action 11: 98.23% of the resources supported Promoting, organising, or publicising the occurrence of Car Cruising to take place in or on London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road (including but not limited to the use of email, the internet, social media, or any publication or broadcast medium
 - xii. Action 12: 98.23% of the resources supported attending any meeting in or on a London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road either as a mechanically propelled vehicle owner, driver, passenger or spectator where a reasonable person would consider that Car Cruising was taking place or was likely to take place.
26. PSPOs are not the answer for everything – Councils and partners will still need to continually review issues, considering whether there are easier and more effective tools for dealing with motor nuisance, such as; Community Protection Warnings (CPWs), Community Protections Notices (CPNs), targeted responses to individuals with multi-agency support from the Community Safety Unit.
27. When introducing a PSPO, it should be noted that the most robust Orders directly address the detrimental behaviour, rather than activities which may not in themselves be detrimental or which target characteristics that might be shared by some of those responsible (or with the wider public). The Home Office’s statutory guidance reiterates that PSPOs should be used responsibly

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and proportionately, only in response to issues that cause anti-social behaviour, and only where necessary to protect the public.

Other options considered and recommendation

28. The Council could chose not to pursue a PSPO. However, based on the public consultation responses and given the length of time that the nuisance has been ongoing and the detrimental effect the behaviour is having on local residents and businesses, this is not a recommended option.
29. It is therefore recommended to bring the PSPO and its twelve measures into place for the area London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road as listed in the consultation document. However, it should be noted that appropriate interventions will be always be carried out in the first instance to address the issues concerned e.g. through education, prevention, accessing support services, carrying out proactive projects and Community Safety operations to address the issues and using the most appropriate tools, powers and legislation as appropriate when enforcement is required.
30. To strengthen the communications messages around the proposed measures and to set out in detail the protocols around the use and implementation of the PSPO, new signage will be installed along with ongoing media and communications.

Application of the PSPO

31. The LGA guidance on PSPOs states that used proportionately and in the right circumstances, PSPOs allow local areas to counter unreasonable and persistent behaviour that affects the quality of life of its residents. They can send a clear message that certain behaviours will not be tolerated, and help reassure residents that unreasonable conduct is being addressed. It would be the responsibility of the relevant authorised officer to decide the most appropriate and proportionate response to any antisocial behaviour encountered.
32. In conclusion, whilst PSPOs provide a useful tool for addressing ASB which includes motor nuisance there will be alternative ways of dealing with issues on a case by case basis and this will be the case for the measures in the PSPO as well as those excluded from it. The PSPO will act as another tool for authorised officers to use and will help with education messages and positive interventions. The next stage will be to work with the relevant Council departments, Bromley Council, Met Police and Kent Police to develop the relevant protocols as these will clearly define which agency (whether Council officers or the police) will help to educate, prevent and enforce elements of the PSPO and in what circumstances and how.

33. Examples of how alternative methods can be used for both the measures included and not included in the PSPO are described below:
34. The use of Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) and Community Protection Notices (CPNs) can be used to address the motor vehicle nuisance and Sect 59s issued by Police.
35. In terms of performance measures, as FPNs are the action of last resort, we will also collect data in terms of how the Council and other agencies (Kent Police, Met Police etc.) use proactive engagement, education, warnings or signposting to support services in support of the PSPO. Any evidence obtained by the Police must be provided to the Local Authority as the prosecuting authority where a decision will be made by Legal Services in partnership with CSU (as per the National Policing Guidelines on the prosecution for Breaches of CPNs and PSPOs).
36. Where concern has been expressed by the public on resourcing enforcement, clear protocols will be developed with relevant partners and where appropriate, authorised Council officers are trained and supported to promote education messages and prevention interventions, alongside enforcement.

Duration of a PSPO

37. The maximum duration of a PSPO is three years, however, they can last for shorter periods where appropriate. Whilst a PSPO is in place, the Local Authority can extend it by up to three years if deemed necessary to prevent the original behaviour from occurring or recurring. They should also consult with the local Police and any other relevant community representatives. If approved, this PSPO will be reviewed in two years to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Summary of timelines

38. The latest timeline for the process is set out below:
 - 5 March 2024 – People & Places Advisory Committee
 - 14 March 2024 – Cabinet decision to on whether the PSPO is granted and order signed off.
 - 11 May 2024 - New PSPO implemented in place and communications plan in place and new signage designed.
 - May 2026 - PSPO will be reviewed after 2 years, but can remain in place for up to 3 years

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Key Implications

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The power to make a PSPO is contained in section 59 of the 2014 Act. A local authority can only make a PSPO if it is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the conditions set out at paragraph 1.2.3 have been met.

In deciding whether to make/ extend/ vary or discharge a PSPO, the Council is required to have particular regard to the rights or freedom of expression and freedom of assembly set out in Articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Once the final PSPO measures are agreed the PSPO will need to be published in accordance with the regulations made by the Secretary of State.

The Council needs to ensure that the powers are used in a reasonable, consistent, appropriate and proportionate manner and must comply with the consultation requirements set out in this report.

The area that the PSPO covers must be considered as part of the consultation and data collection, as the Council must evidence that there is a significant nuisance or problem in a specific area that is detrimental to the local community's quality of life.

If we do pursue a new PSPO it will be important to ensure that its scope and the process for introduction is in accordance with the powers and requirements of the 2014 Act. Any challenge to a PSPO would have to be made by an interested person by way of an application in the High Court for permission to seek a Judicial Review. That application must be made within six weeks of the PSPO being made. An interested person is someone who lives in, regularly works in, or visits the restricted area.

A person who receives an FPN due to a breach of PSPO can also challenge the validity of the order. This means that only those who are directly affected by the restrictions have the power to challenge. This right to challenge also exists where an order is varied by a council. Interested persons can challenge the validity of a PSPO on two grounds. They could argue that the council did not have power to make the order, or to include particular prohibitions or requirements.

In addition, the interested person could argue that one of the requirements (for instance, consultation) had not been complied with. When the application is made, the High Court can decide to suspend the operation of the PSPO pending the verdict in part or in totality. The High Court can uphold the PSPO, quash it, or vary it.

The Council will have to take measures to mitigate against these risks by, for example, embarking on a full consultation process, publishing the proposed order and map and

putting in place measures to publicise the PSPO through street signage and an intention to publish the final Order on the Council website in accordance with the act.

The PSPO only significantly affects communities living or working in one ward of the Sevenoaks District. It is therefore not a key decision and is not subject to call in, which means that it can be implemented immediately.

Financial implications

There are limited capital or revenue implications associated with this report. The primary cost if we were to proceed with a PSPO would be installing new signage through the proposed PSPO zone and would be met from existing budgetary provision. This will cost approximately £500-£1000. There may be a staffing resource implication for the District Council for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices and the work associated with this.

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.

Wellbeing

If we were to work towards introducing a new PSPO this will enable the Council and its partners to utilise additional powers to motor vehicle nuisance within the selected area, helping to increase quality of life and wellbeing in the area affected.

Conclusion

The Council has a duty to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area and work towards delivering the objectives of the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Plan. The implementation of any PSPO has been supported by the public consultation and will assist with meeting these requirements of the Community Safety Plan by providing the Council and Police with additional powers to tackle the issues identified. This report seeks approval to implement a PSPO at London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Full Consultation Results

Sarah Robson

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer – People & Places



Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) - London Road, Halstead

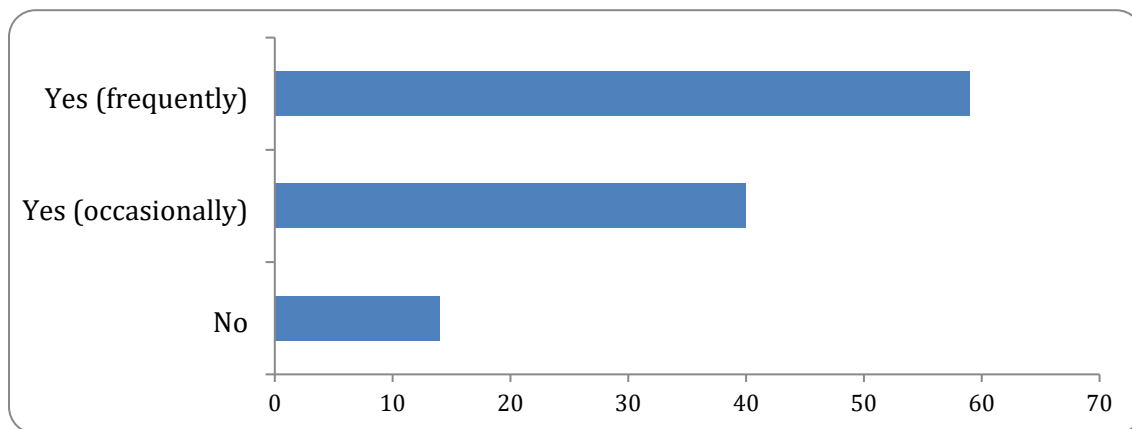
The activity ran from 28/12/2023 to 25/01/2024

Responses to this survey: **113**

1: Do any of the following activities caused by a motor vehicle create excessive noise, nuisance, annoyance, danger or risk of harm to you?

Activities of vehicle nuisance - Motor cycles, quadbikes and other mechanically propelled vehicles that are ridden off road on land other than a road (e.g. side verges, roundabouts))

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

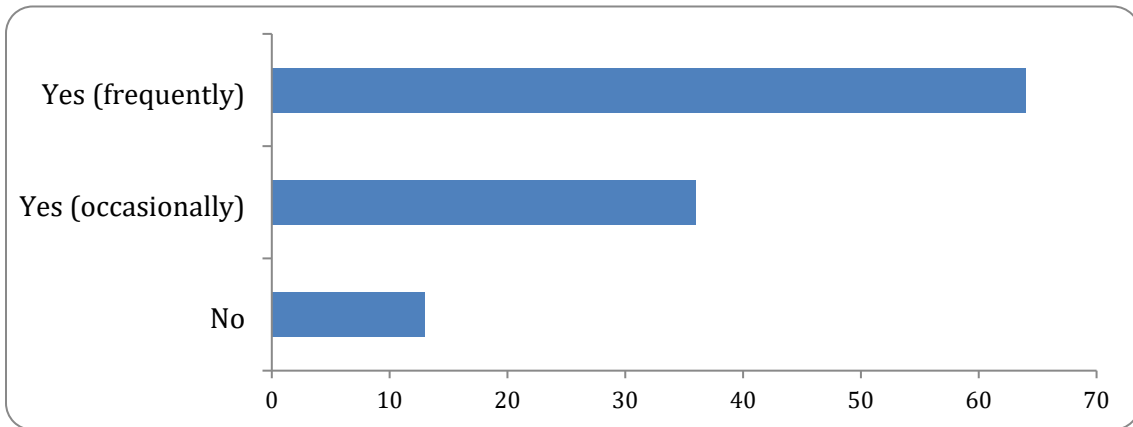


Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	59	52.21%
Yes (occasionally)	40	35.40%
No	14	12.39%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

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Activities of vehicle nuisance - Gathering and/or causing obstruction on a public highway or in a publicly accessible place or private land, whether moving or stationary for the purpose of displaying vehicles

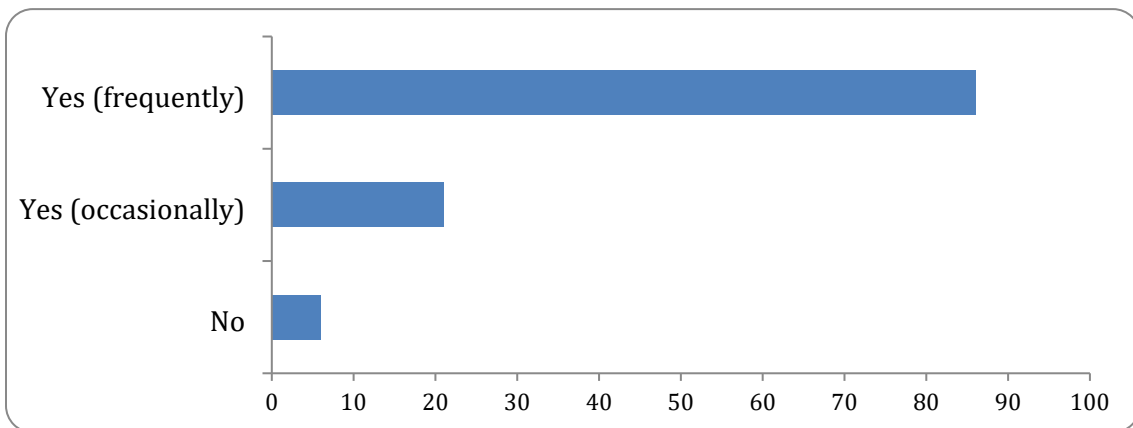
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	64	56.64%
Yes (occasionally)	36	31.86%
No	13	11.50%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Activities of vehicle nuisance - Speeding

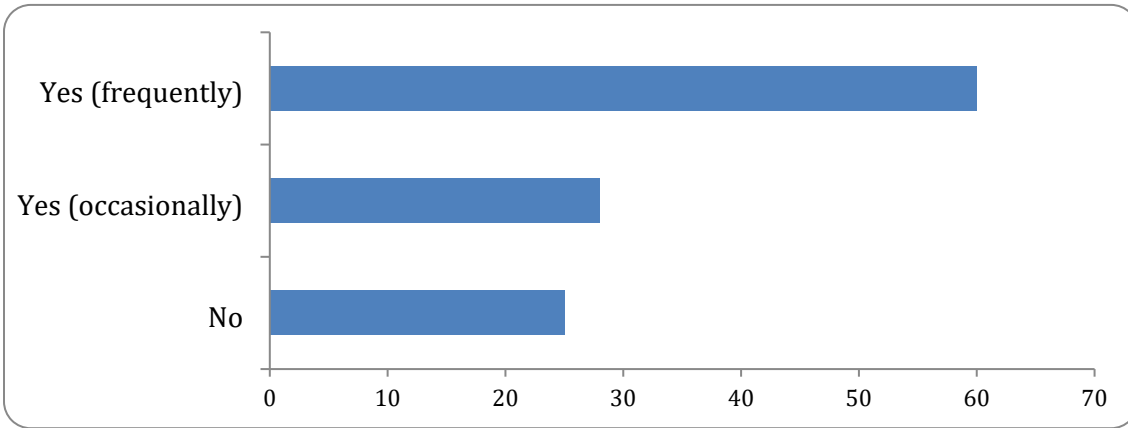
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	86	76.11%
Yes (occasionally)	21	18.58%
No	6	5.31%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Activities of vehicle nuisance - Driving in Convoy

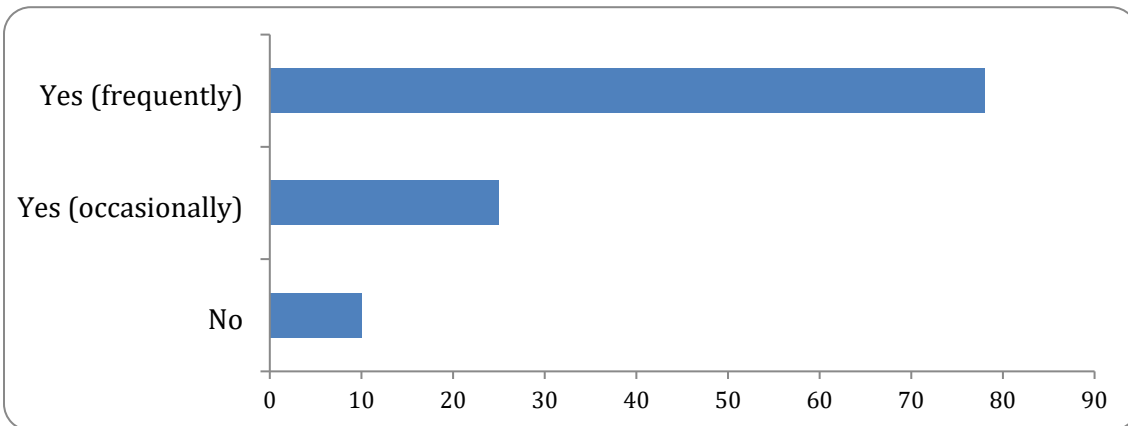
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	60	53.10%
Yes (occasionally)	28	24.78%
No	25	22.12%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Activities of vehicle nuisance - Racing

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

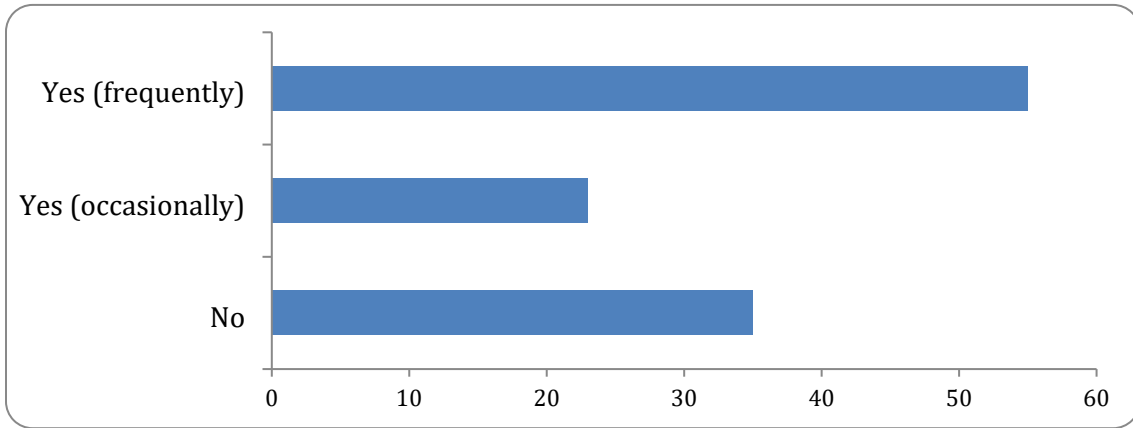


Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	78	69.03%
Yes (occasionally)	25	22.12%
No	10	8.85%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

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Activities of vehicle nuisance - Performing Stunts

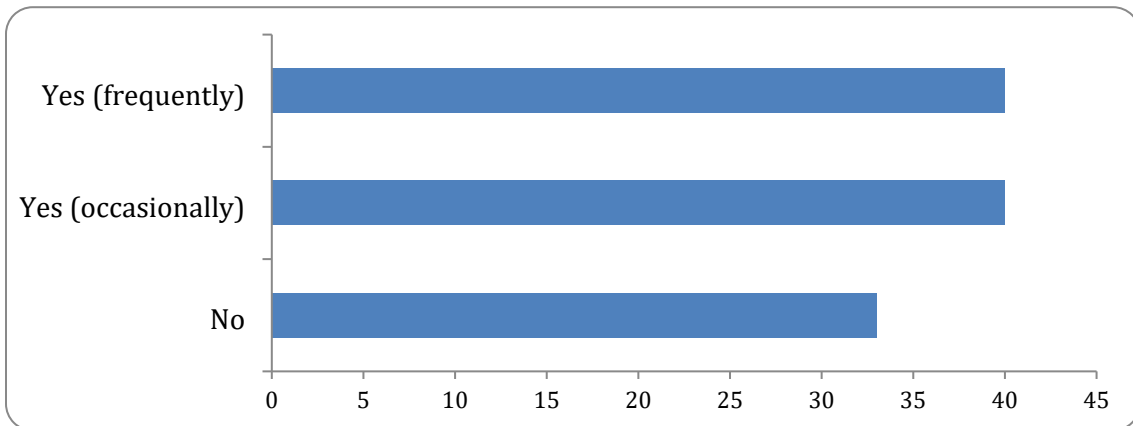
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	55	48.67%
Yes (occasionally)	23	20.35%
No	35	30.97%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Activities of vehicle nuisance - Sounding Car Horns

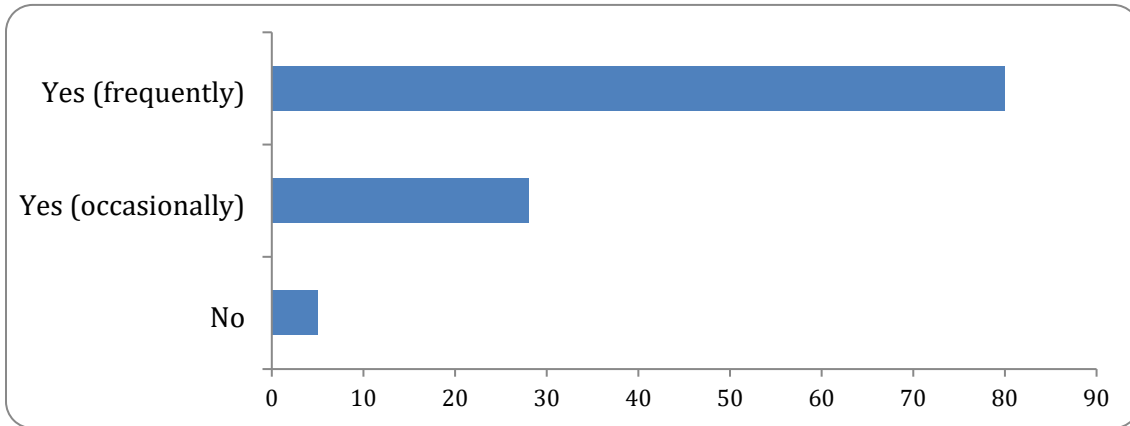
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	40	35.40%
Yes (occasionally)	40	35.40%
No	33	29.20%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Activities of vehicle nuisance - Revving Engines

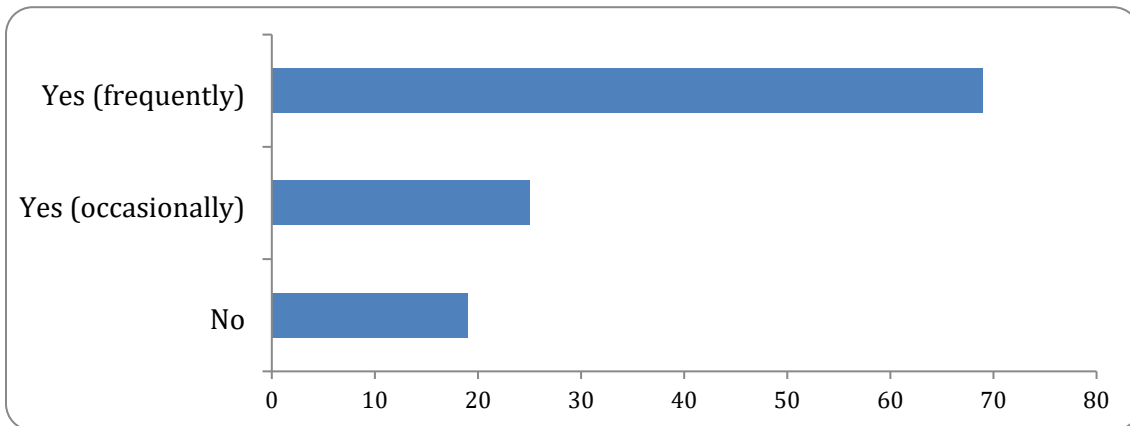
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	80	70.80%
Yes (occasionally)	28	24.78%
No	5	4.42%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Activities of vehicle nuisance - Wheel spins

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

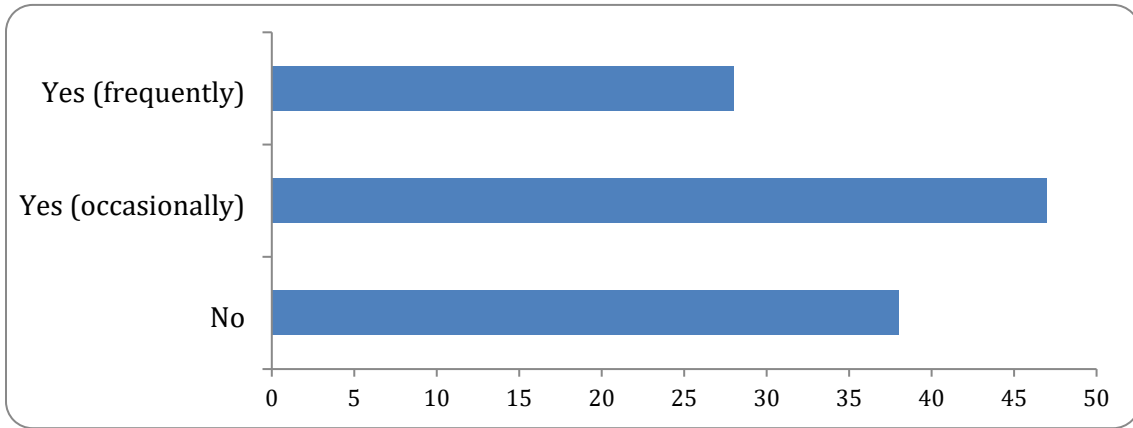


Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	69	61.06%
Yes (occasionally)	25	22.12%
No	19	16.81%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

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Activities of vehicle nuisance - Playing Music (public nuisance)

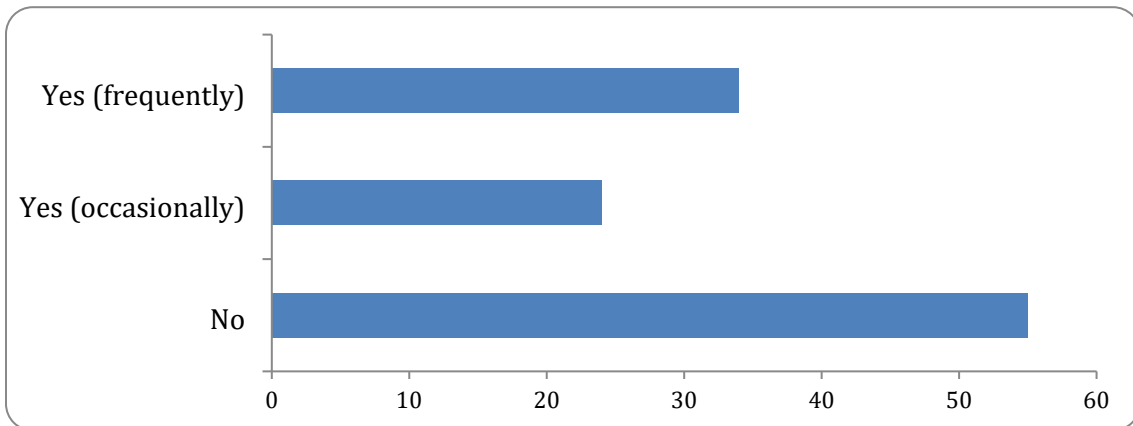
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	28	24.78%
Yes (occasionally)	47	41.59%
No	38	33.63%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Activities of vehicle nuisance - Recording any of the listed activities on any device

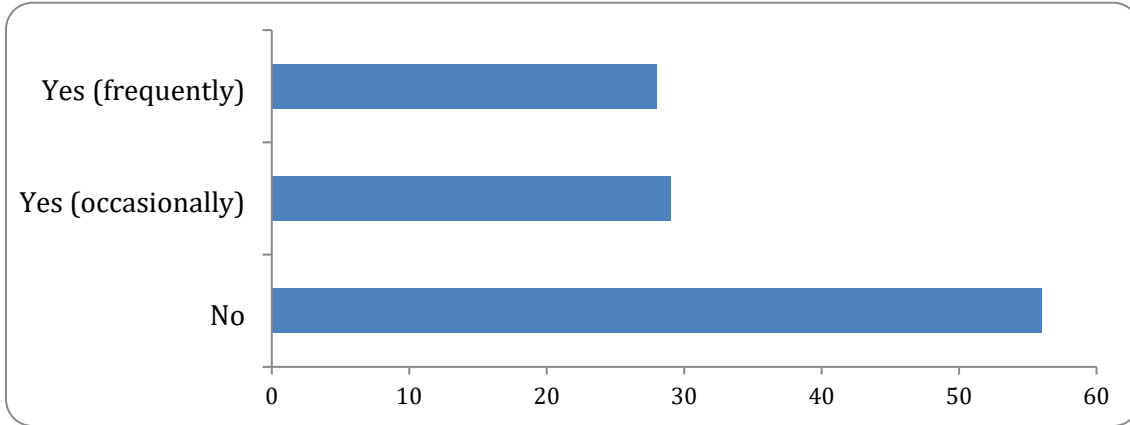
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	34	30.09%
Yes (occasionally)	24	21.24%
No	55	48.67%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Activities of vehicle nuisance - Using threatening, intimidating behaviour towards another person

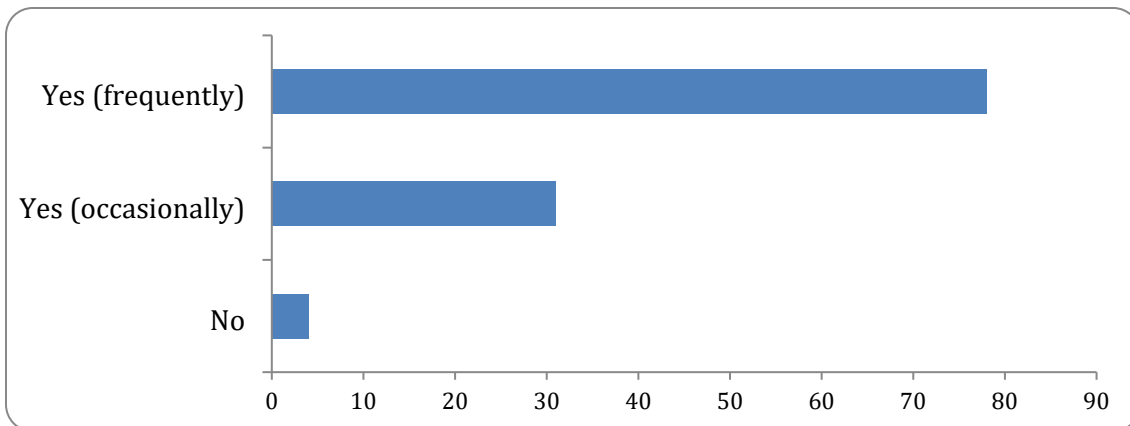
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	28	24.78%
Yes (occasionally)	29	25.66%
No	56	49.56%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Activities of vehicle nuisance - Creating excessive noise

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

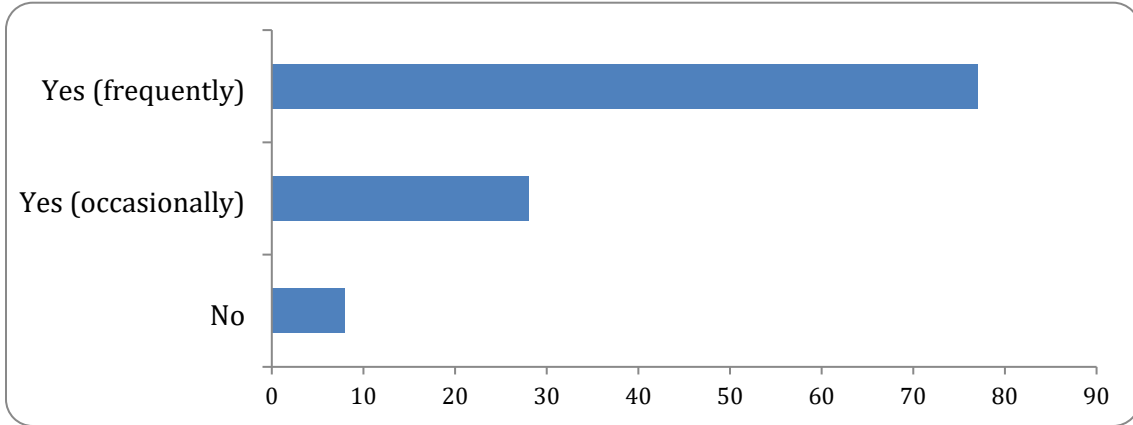


Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	78	69.03%
Yes (occasionally)	31	27.43%
No	4	3.54%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

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Activities of vehicle nuisance - Creating a danger or risk of injury to road users including pedestrian

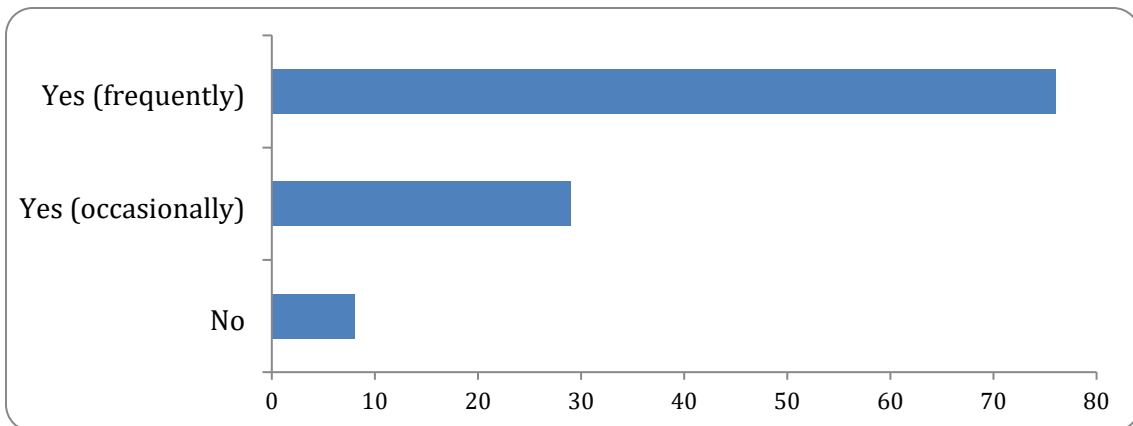
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	77	68.14%
Yes (occasionally)	28	24.78%
No	8	7.08%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Activities of vehicle nuisance - Creating significant public nuisance

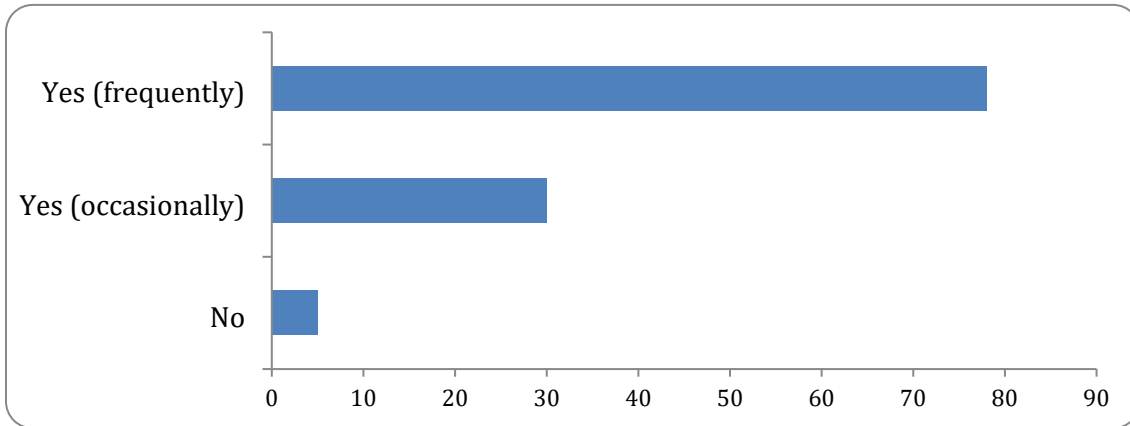
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	76	67.26%
Yes (occasionally)	29	25.66%
No	8	7.08%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Activities of vehicle nuisance - Creating significant annoyance to the public

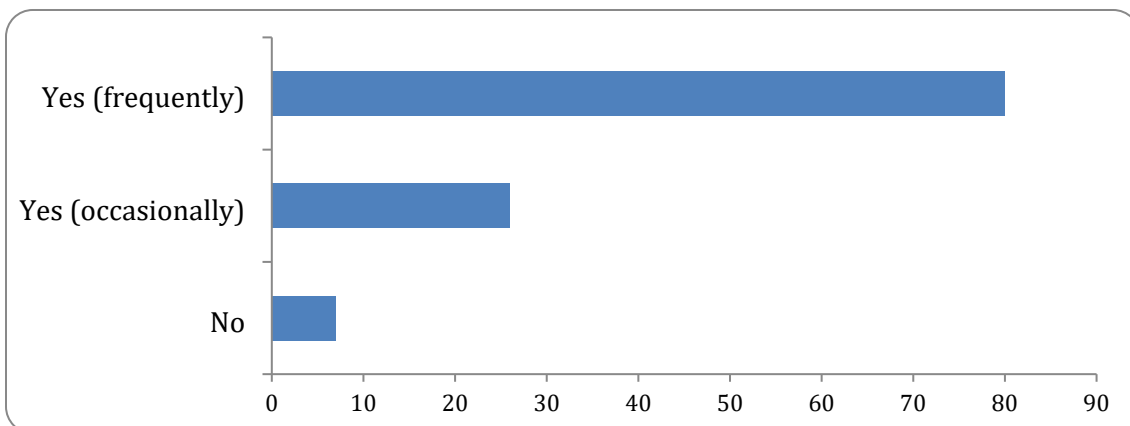
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	78	69.03%
Yes (occasionally)	30	26.55%
No	5	4.42%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Activities of vehicle nuisance - Committing any traffic offence covered by legislation

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

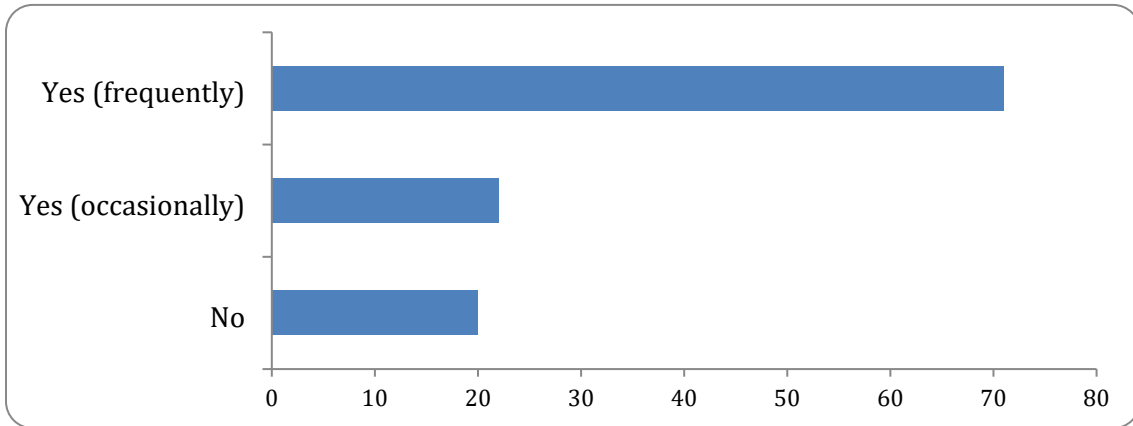


Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	80	70.80%
Yes (occasionally)	26	23.01%
No	7	6.19%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

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Activities of vehicle nuisance - Congregating to spectate the above activities

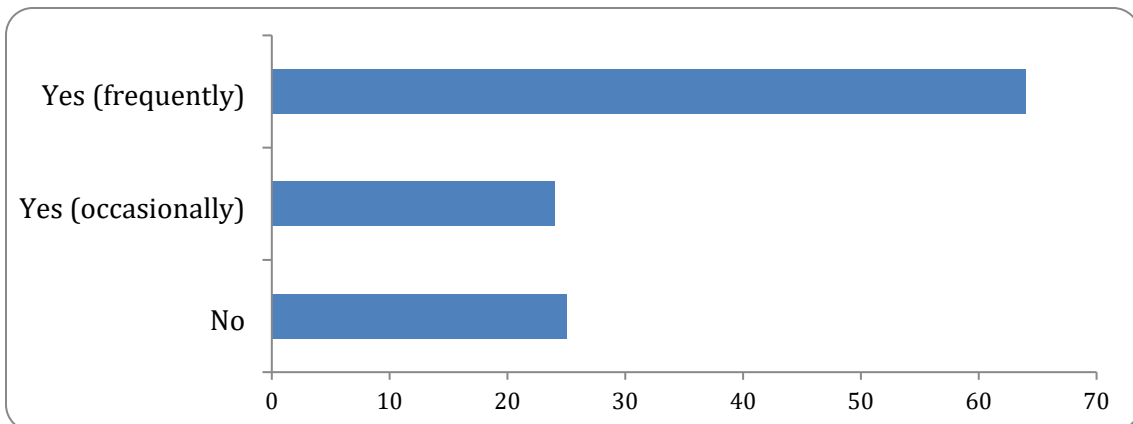
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	71	62.83%
Yes (occasionally)	22	19.47%
No	20	17.70%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Activities of vehicle nuisance - Engaging in any other activity that a reasonable person would consider to be “car cruising”

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes (frequently)	64	56.64%
Yes (occasionally)	24	21.24%
No	25	22.12%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

2: If there are other activities related to noise, nuisance, annoyance, danger or risk of harm caused by a motor vehicle, please specify them below

Other nuisance raised

There were 48 responses to this part of the question.

- Spectators in road and M25 spur hard shoulder. Approaches to roundabout and junctions by cars waiting 3-4 abreast. Over and undertaking of cars not involved in event
- Leaving litter fast driving cause other road users to brake harshly
- Yes, Mainly cars congregating on the roundabout known as Hewitts farm and feeder roads
- Drifting turns and antisocial parking
- I think you've covered them all
- Na
- They also race down upper London Road and have hit and damaged parked vehicles
- Frequent smells of marijuana and drug paraphernalia.
- Littering
- Quad bikes on the main road
- Constant speeding on Orpington By-Pass
- Stopping other road users from using the roads by blocking access. Physical threatening behaviour
- Items all covered by the above
- Speeding along narrow country lanes and littering
- Blocking and restricting access to Hewitts roundabout and littering. Occasionally prior to races individuals practice circuits during the day.
- Illegally organised gatherings for the purpose of racing and spectating on the public highway
- n/a
- Drifting around roundabouts, Pollhill Roundabout
- I suffer from asthma and have noticed my breathing has worsened. I also notice my garden ornaments and rockery stones are now black which I think is due to pollution. My house backs on to the Orpington By Pass and the general speed of all vehicles has got steadily worse.
- None
- Just general on going nuisance
- Handbrake turns round keep left bollards and the end of the central reservation on the A21 as it enters Pratts Bottom
- Parking dangerously in side roads close to M25 Spur. Parking on the hard shoulder of M25 Spur. Walking on the M25 Spur.

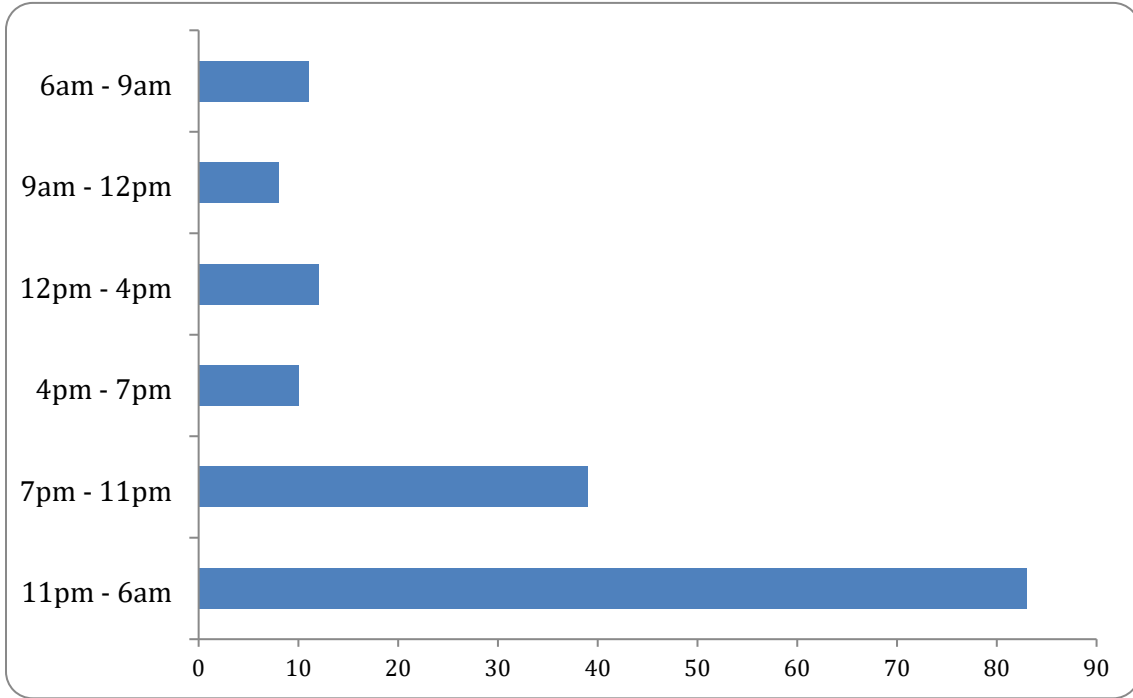
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- No
- Na
- The noise I after 23:00 during early hours of the morning
- Blocking roundabouts and getting aggressive towards drivers wanting to use them
- Car racing
- No
- Using badgers mount roundabout as a skid pan
- DRIVING THROUGH THE VILLAGE AT HIGH SPEED
- Speeding vehicles on London road and old London road Halstead have nearly been hit turning into my drive
- driving too fast lots more heavy traffic on main road since turn off for Halstead coming from Bromley closed off
- Speeding on Knockholt Road, Halstead.
- Huge amounts of litter dropped in the area, particularly along the A21
- No
- No
- Attendees usually block the roundabouts by parking race vehicles in the lanes prior to starting a race. Other road users are intimidated to challenge the drivers when large groups attend.
- We feel the quads are often driven by under age.
- Spectators standing in the road to watch the racing cars obstructing traffic.
- 'wheelies' hand brake turns at roundabout
- Parking on double yellow lines and blocking drive ways.
- Dangerous driving attitudes on m25 slip road and Dangerous driving on hewitts roundabout also lots of small empty laughing glass canisters left where the cars have been parked up the following day
- Leaving litter all down Wheatsheaf Hill after their car meets.
- Not aware of anything apart from some vehicles frequently exceeding the speed limit along London Road |Halstead
- Off road driving on fields, woodland, local recreation ground and private land
- illegal use of electric scooters on public roads

3: If you have answered, yes to question 1, then please indicate below the day and time of day when excessive noise, nuisance, annoyance, danger or risk of harm from motor vehicles is an issue

Times of the day - Monday - Thursday

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

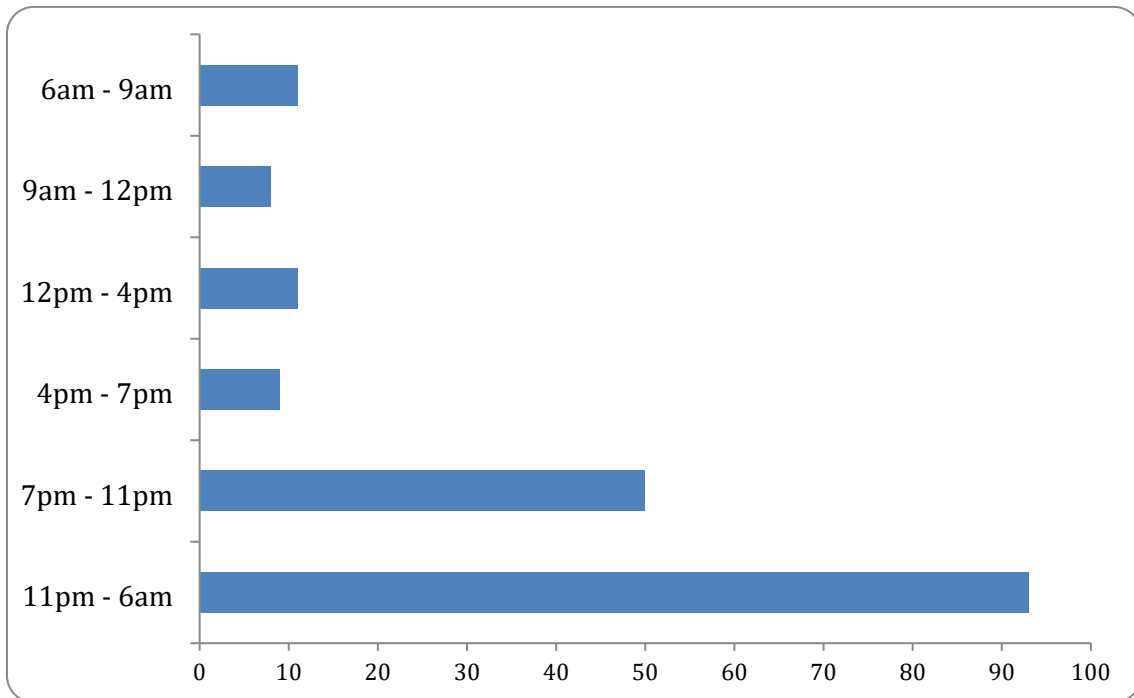


Option	Total	Percent
6am - 9am	11	9.73%
9am - 12pm	8	7.08%
12pm - 4pm	12	10.62%
4pm - 7pm	10	8.85%
7pm - 11pm	39	34.51%
11pm - 6am	83	73.45%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

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Times of the day - Friday

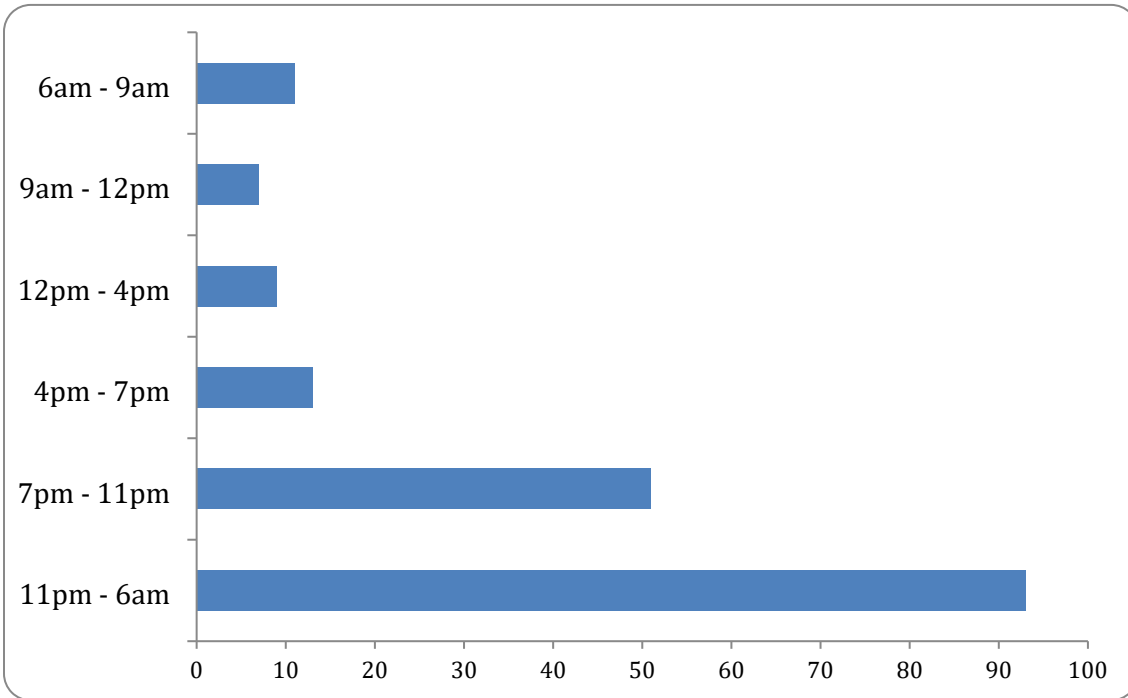
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
6am - 9am	11	9.73%
9am - 12pm	8	7.08%
12pm - 4pm	11	9.73%
4pm - 7pm	9	7.96%
7pm - 11pm	50	44.25%
11pm - 6am	93	82.30%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Times of the day - Saturday

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

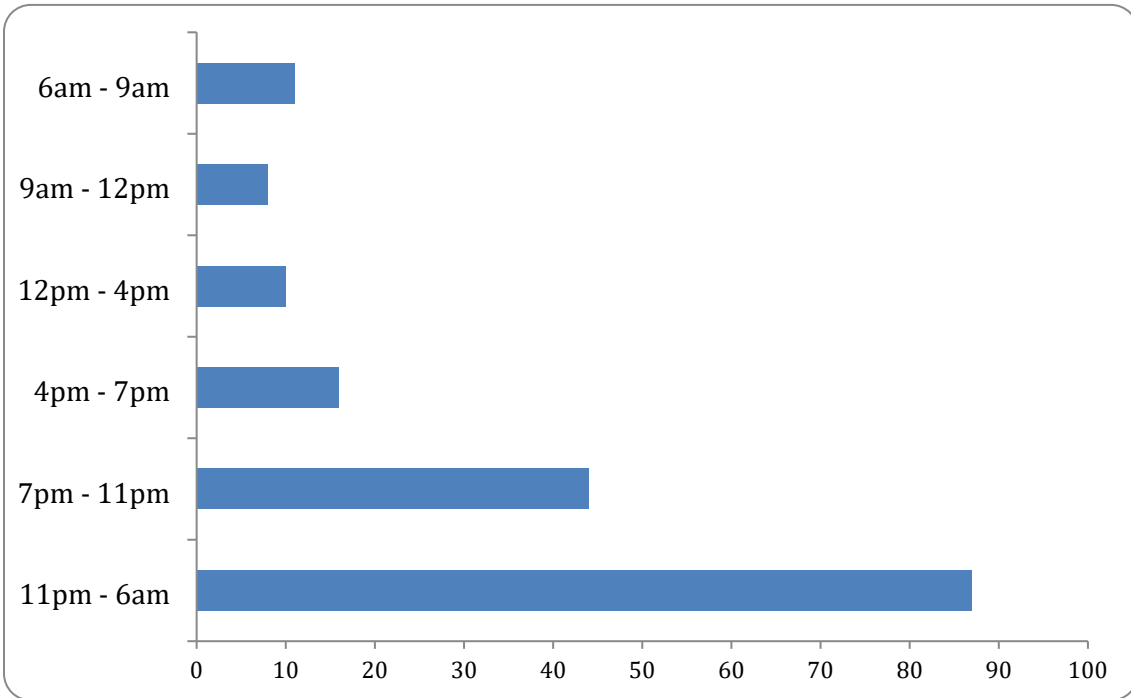


Option	Total	Percent
6am - 9am	11	9.73%
9am - 12pm	7	6.19%
12pm - 4pm	9	7.96%
4pm - 7pm	13	11.50%
7pm - 11pm	51	45.13%
11pm - 6am	93	82.30%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

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Times of the day - Sunday

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

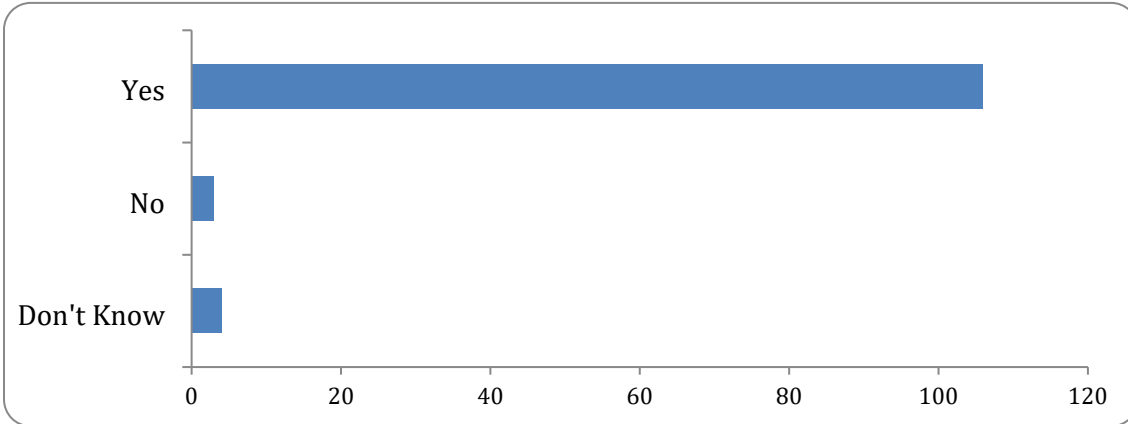


Option	Total	Percent
6am - 9am	11	9.73%
9am - 12pm	8	7.08%
12pm - 4pm	10	8.85%
4pm - 7pm	16	14.16%
7pm - 11pm	44	38.94%
11pm - 6am	87	76.99%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

4: Do you think there is a need for the Council to control excessive noise, nuisance, annoyance, danger or risk of harm caused by motor vehicles by using a Public Spaces Protection Order?

Do you think the Council should put in a PSPO?

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

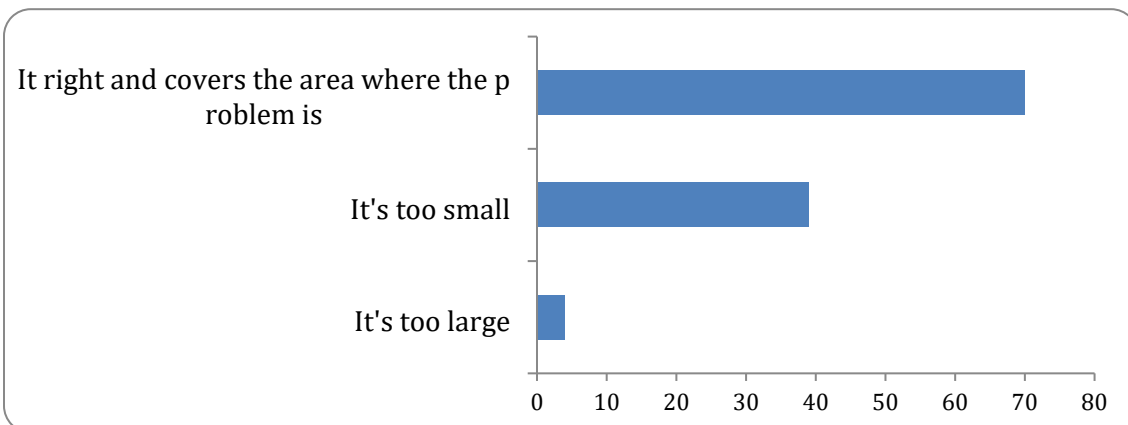


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	106	93.81%
No	3	2.65%
Don't Know	4	3.54%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

5: Looking at the map attached as a document. The proposed control zone will cover London Road, Halstead, Orpington by Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road: what is your view on the size of the proposed control zone?

Answer on size of the proposed PSPO

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



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Option	Total	Percent
It right and covers the area where the problem is	70	61.95%
It's too small	39	34.51%
It's too large	4	3.54%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

6: If you have any other comments about the restricted area please state them below

Add further restrictions

There were 54 responses to this part of the question.

- The area should extend to south of the large lay-by at the top of Polhill as cars also gather in the lay-by and race up and down Polhill, London Road south of the Badgers Mount roundabout and Crow Drive. If this extended area is not included, the issue will centre there instead of Hewitts roundabout
- Does not cover Hewetts farm roundabout. Probably because it is in London
- The adjoining areas covered by TFL/ metropolitan police should be included or covered by a separate PSPO as the offences cover the whole of Hewitts roundabout and the slip round to the M25
- There needs to be a collaboration with LB Bromley to cover the roundabout and A224 court road
- Needs to include pollhill including the layby on that road, or the problem will shift to the stretch of road between the layby and the roundabout with starhill road
- None
- Posts need putting on the edge of the verge to keep vehicles from driving on verge and pavement. It's so risky to walk this stretch of road due to the mud and vehicles driving on the verge. I often run or walk to my mother's in Orpington and this stretch is dangerous.
- Area should continue down London road to Tesco's on Aisher Way - where vehicles go after driving down Polhill. Then then hang around in the car park in Tesco's. This has been reported to the police numerous times.
- Extend areas to dunton green
- They come over polhill down to the roundabout at Morants as a circuit too
- Needs to extend to A224 to Chelsfield Village

- This all good if the police actually enforce it, they have the powers now to do something about it but choose not to.
- Most if not all of these cars are modified in some way and knowing its nearly impossible to get insurance on a modified vehicle.
- Cars could be stop by the police checked and if found to not have cover for the modifications the vehicle would be uninsured and be seized.
- This NOT just anti social behaviour they are breaking the law in speeding, dangerous driving, driving without insurance, using fretting behaviour and many more offences.
- Although I welcome this PSPO, it is just moving it on to another area. They need to stopped from breaking the law and not get away with using and public highway as the own personal race track.
- Should include the A21 coming off of Hewitt Farm roundabout towards Bromley
- LBB Areas are also affected
- The area should extend down to Pratts Bottom Roundabout on the A21 as they use that section as well.
- Badgers Mount Roundabout is a problem with cars doing donuts round it the sounds is deafening
- It needs to be extended to on the A21 to Pratts Bottom and Green Street Green, Orpington BR6.
- The area needs to include the roads that lead from the Hewitts Roundabout towards Bromley and towards Orpington. But I note this is boundary of London and Kent
- The PSPO should cover Badgers Mount, Poll Hill, Fort Halstead.
- Current speed limit is set too high for these ever increasingly built up areas
- Frankly I am shattered by the complexity involved to bring these antisocial activities to be stopped: surely the existing laws are adequate if applied.
- You can hear towards pratts bottom (old golf course)
- There is an URGENT need for a pedestrian crossing (or as a minimum traffic islands) where a public footpath crosses the A224 on OBP
- Should include the M25 access roundabout at the end of the bypass
- It's a great idea
- The cars sometimes use the end of Stonehouse lane where it joins the A21 as a 'pit stop' I would prefer that the zone covered the end of the Lane as well but I realise this is Bromley council land.
- As this is Sevenoaks council the area works, however, Bromley need to do the same as far as Court road and the A21 up from Rushmore Hill
- The main problem areas are Hewetts roundabout, Wheatsheaf Hill and Sevenoaks Road.
- Needs to include Hewetts farm roundabout

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- It should include Hewitts roundabout
- Most of the behaviour you are objecting is within the law as the police stated very clearly at the public meeting in Halstead several months ago. You need to consider whether this initiative is actually stoking resentment and weakening public tolerance. Encouraging older people to demonise younger people.
- Include Otford lane
- I nights travelling up to the area approximately 03:00 vehicles normally not in the area. It is my wife who is a light sleeper and her sleep is interrupted
- The Car's often park on all verges from Chelsfield lakes up to Hewitt roundabout. This area should also be included
- Should be extended down polhill
- The speeding cars are out of control and an accident kid waiting to happen and feel a resident could be killed , also concerned a crash could be fatal as the speeds are terrifying
- to my knowledge this is where the major noise comes from, other places outside my living area may apply
- Please include Knockholt Road to eliminate people speeding on this road.
- I'm speaking specifically about a certain individual that lives at 5 the Meadows in Halstead.
- A21 should also be covered
- Nuisance exists across the District boundary. A21 towards Bromley, roundabout and A224 also have problems
- The area needs to include the A224 North of Hewitts roundabout
- No needed
- I would add the A21 and Court Road between Church Road and Hewitt Roundabout as well
- The issue may extend to other local areas within Sevenoaks and usually the racing is along the A21 to Farnborough village roundabout (Bromley)
- London Road should have Old London Road and Sevenoaks Road added to make the order legal and enforceable (it is all the same contiguous road). Additionally the A21 from the junction with Sevenoaks Road up to and including Hewitts Roundabout must be added and is one of the most dangerous sections. If it is not listed because it is in the LBB area then the two Councils really must work together to resolve the problems.
- Survey doesn't work. Forces you to select a time even when there isn't one. Needs a none option.
- The car cruise often goes up the entirety of the A224 towards Sevenoaks, sometimes even further in to Dunton Green. The cruise members have been using Otford Lane to wheel spin and racing side by side on Crow drive. The lay by just past the London road furniture company is also used

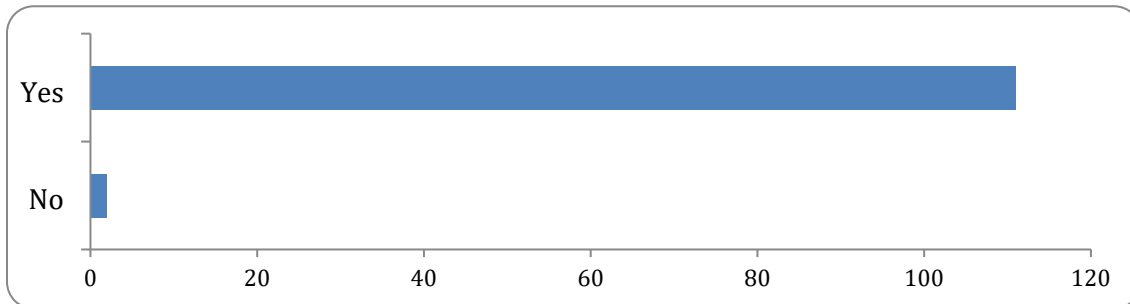
for wheel spins. This has been detrimental to my families wellbeing, especially since we had an accident on this road in 2021. We have been suffered PTSD since and have been awoken in a state reliving it every week due to the sounds from this cruise. We cannot have the windows open and our children are often distraught. It needs to stop and the area needs to be much larger.

- Area doesn't show Hewitts round about as that is the main area of concern
- Perhaps cover the other side of the m25 roundabout, they congregate on the side occasionally
- Court Road and Hewitts roundabout need to be covered. It's a shame that the authorities always have trouble at this border location - from policing to litter and road maintenance it never goes smoothly.
- No comments
- Surrounding area north west of Hewitts roundabout. Poll Hill layby and Fort Halstead.
- It extends to Pratts Bottom on A21 and to Polhill on A224

7: Do you agree with the below proposed restrictions for the PSPO

Proposed Restrictions - Engaging in, promoting, encouraging or assisting in the carrying out of any anti-social behaviour connected to the use of a mechanically propelled vehicle including but not limited to a car cruising event in or on London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

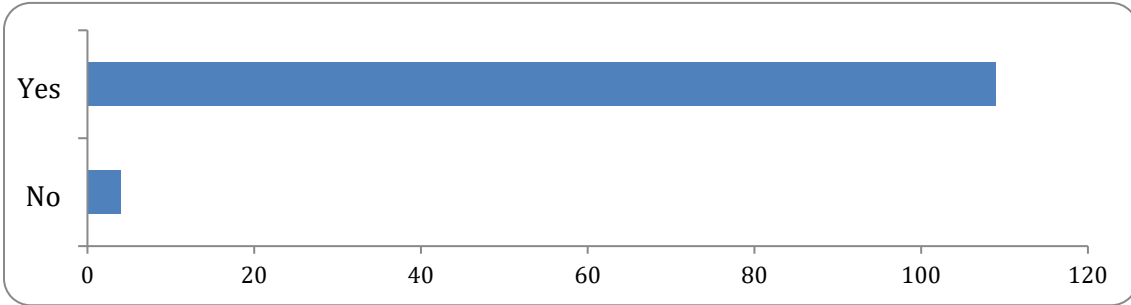


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	111	98.23%
No	2	1.77%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

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Proposed Restrictions - Sounding horns or playing loud music

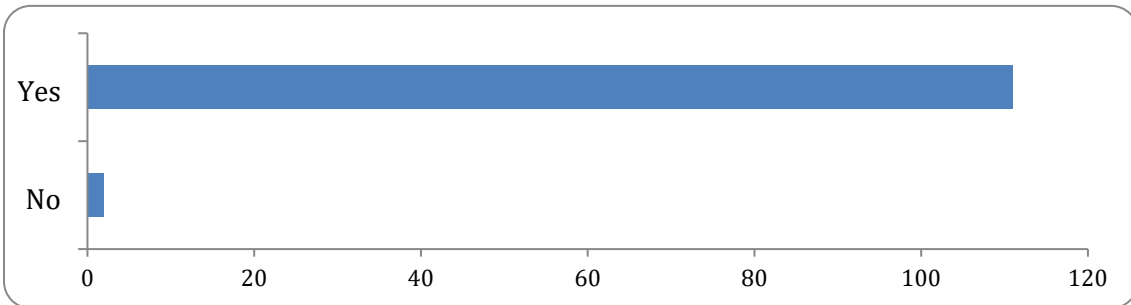
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	109	96.46%
No	4	3.54%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Proposed Restrictions - Revving Engines

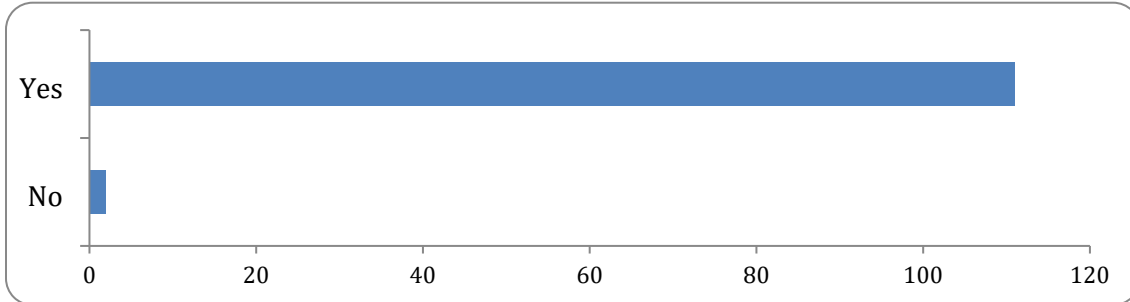
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	111	98.23%
No	2	1.77%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Proposed Restrictions - Causing danger to other road users (including pedestrians)

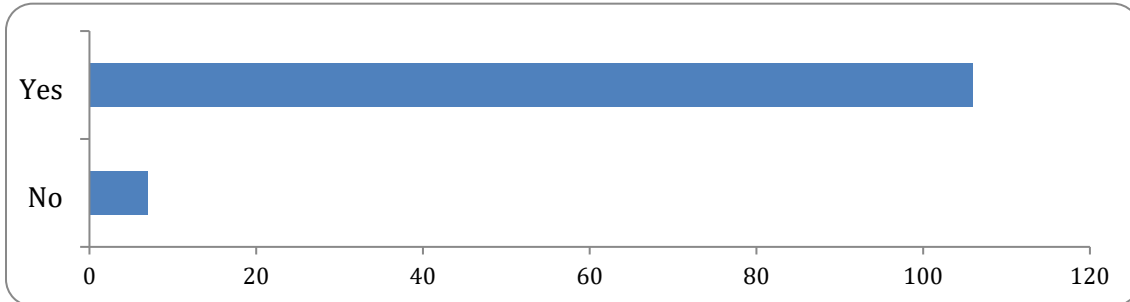
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	111	98.23%
No	2	1.77%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Proposed Restrictions - Causing damage or risk of damage to property

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

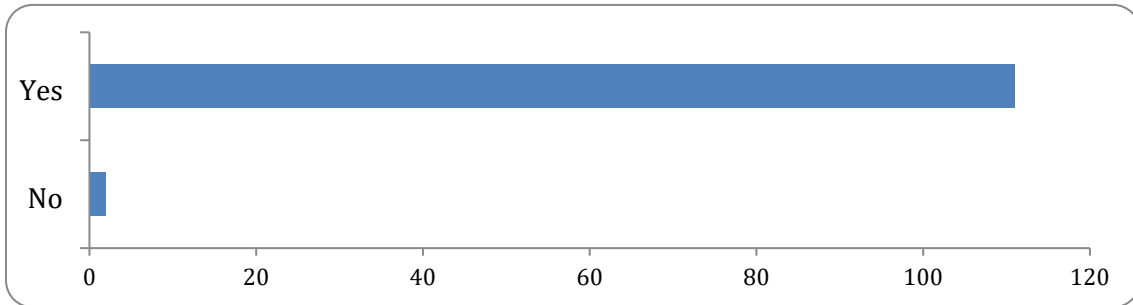


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	106	93.81%
No	7	6.19%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

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Proposed Restrictions - Exceeding the permitted speed limit or racing

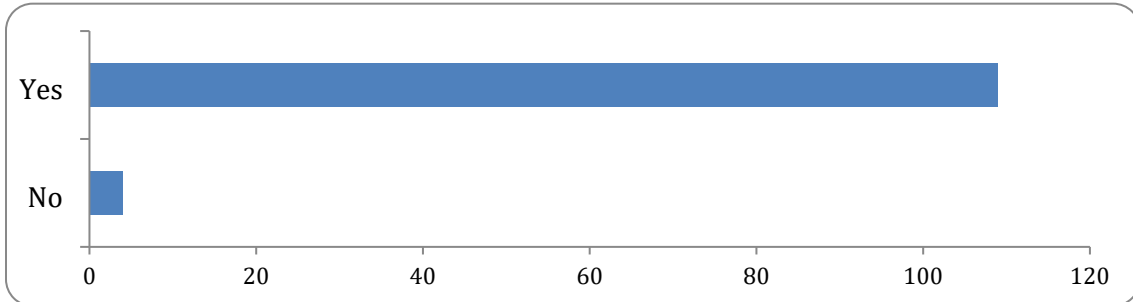
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	111	98.23%
No	2	1.77%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Proposed Restrictions - performing stunts (including but not limited to performing doughnuts, skidding, handbrake turns, wheel spinning)

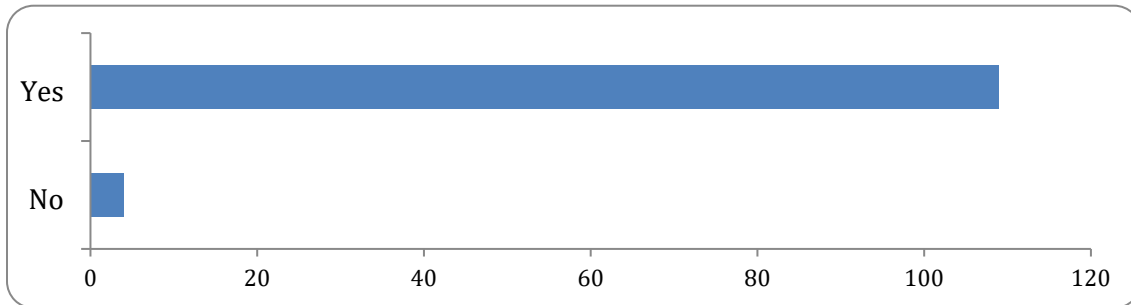
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	109	96.46%
No	4	3.54%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Proposed Restrictions - Being verbally abusive, swearing or intimidating members of the public.

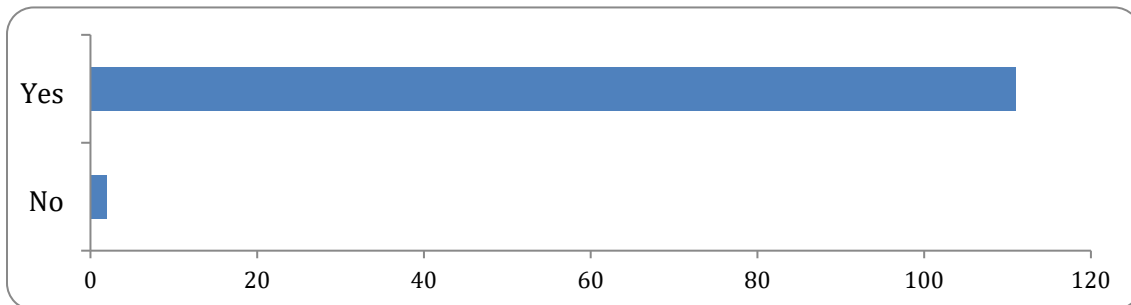
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	109	96.46%
No	4	3.54%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Proposed Restrictions - Causing obstruction of a public highway or publicly accessible place (whether by moving or stationary vehicles or otherwise)

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

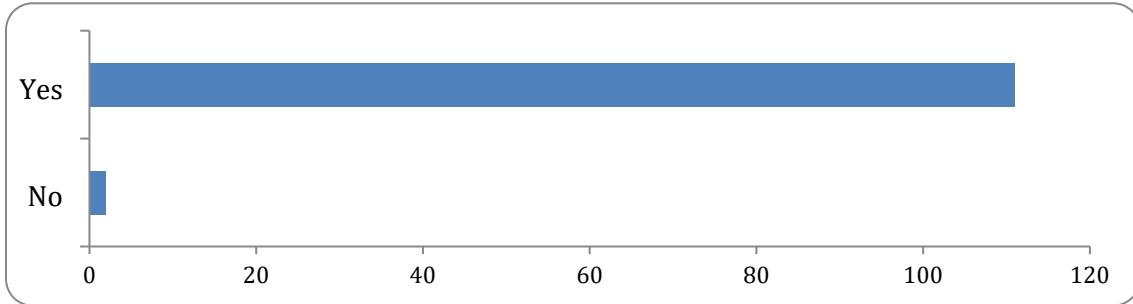


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	111	98.23%
No	2	1.77%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

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Proposed Restrictions - Engaging in, promoting, encouraging, or assisting in the use of mechanically propelled vehicle which causes or is likely to cause danger to the public in or on London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road

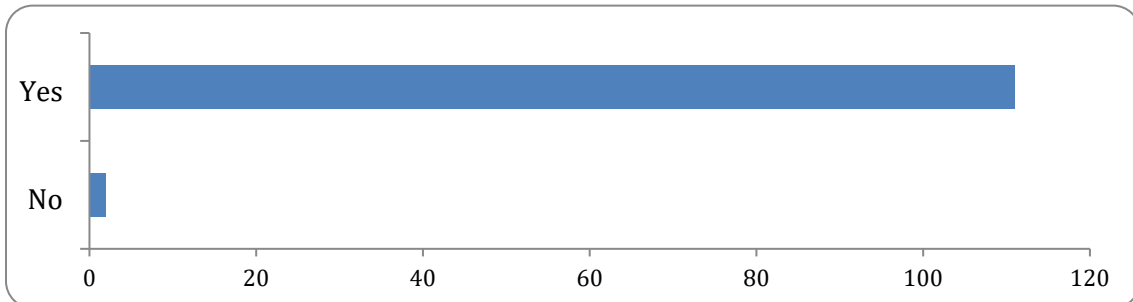
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	111	98.23%
No	2	1.77%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Proposed Restrictions - Promoting, organising, or publicising the occurrence of Car Cruising* to take place in or on London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road (including but not limited to the use of email, the internet, social media, or any publication or broadcast medium)

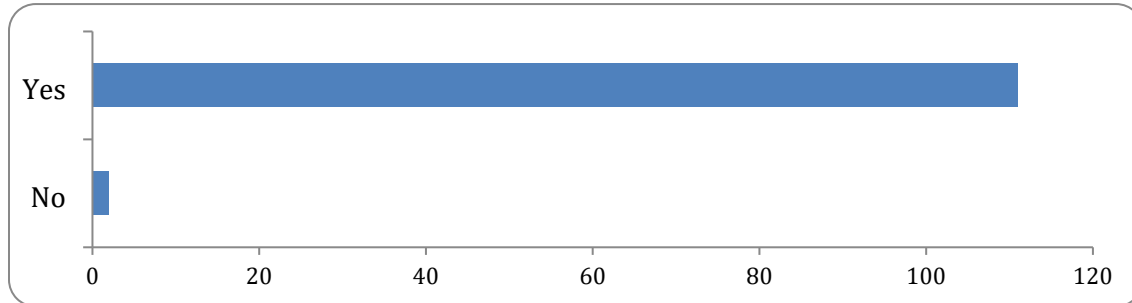
There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	111	98.23%
No	2	1.77%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Proposed Restrictions - attending any meeting in or on a London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road either as a mechanically propelled vehicle owner, driver, passenger or spectator where a reasonable person would consider that Car Cruising was taking place or was likely to take place.

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	111	98.23%
No	2	1.77%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

8: If you have any further comments regarding noise and nuisance caused by a motor vehicle then please state them below

Please add any further comments

There were 113 responses to this part of the question. We have taken out the N/A, no's and no further comments

- Cars disperse immediately on arrival of police patrol cars and so car registrations and participant details not obtained. Therefore ANPR equipment that is effective at night is essential.
- Currently police rely on non-participating public to capture and provide evidence and car registrations before the police arrive. This causes risk to general public, who have to deliberately drive or walk to the events to gather information
- Kent cc /police need to work with TFL and the met to have a joined up approach
- The Met and Kent police need to have a common strategy for dealing with this issue as it borders both areas

Agenda Item 11

- This needs to be stopped before someone is killed and more enforcement action needed
- These activities seem to be limited to a local car cruise held at night.
- The council need to deal with this issue. I feel unsafe leaving the house at night because of this and it can keep me awake
- Controlling speed in these roads will deter speeding
- More police present
- We have passed them numerous times when coming off the M25 and it's dangerous
- Roundabout at pollhill needs monitoring
- As previously mentioned, posts to protect pedestrians
- Speed cameras would be useful
- This extends down into Dunton Green too
- It's very intimidating and I'm concerned someone will die from an awful accident.
- It's terrifying when suddenly finding that you are driving in the middle of a mass of racing, stunt performing cars.
- LB of Bromley also need to be involved as spans both areas
- No further comments
- Car cruising in this area is intimidating and dangerous for all road users, it cause excessive noise disturbance to residents and is a risk to life.
- Kent Police and Met Police need to work better together on this problem.
- I think this would be a step in the right direction to deter organised meetings of cars and bikes. But there also needs to be a bigger push on controlling the general speed that individuals and small groups do on the surrounding roads. During daylight hours people use these roads as Drag Strips and you can hear loud cars and bikes driving at excessive speeds.
- While the evening organised events are the worst issue that must be stopped. A general clamp down on speeding and dangerous driving in the area needs to be addressed
- Road markings on roundabout frequently not observed.
- It has been a problem in the area since I moved in to my house in 2009, so it would be really good to finally get it sorted.
- I find it both dangerous and intimidating
- The noise late at night can make it difficult to sleep or to open windows
- It's horrendous and needs to be stopped
- The ASB occurs anytime of the day with small numbers practicing circuits from Knockholt down Rushmore Hill to Pratts Bottom.
- Speeding and riding of unlicensed motorcycles down the surrounding village lanes
- It seems stupid isolating this area as they will simply move elsewhere

- Being a car enthusiast I do believe, meets should be allowed at the carvery as long as it is for static displays -- excessive noise due to showing off should be forbidden -- but general driving and touring as part of a car club should be permitted.
- We live at opposite end of village so it's mainly noise nuisance late at night or middle of the night which is main issue for us.
- We live in the village of Halstead just outside the problem zone so the problem only occasionally directly affects us but many neighbours and friends are badly affected by the noise, nuisance and danger caused by this antisocial behaviour.
- Driving at excessive speed such that slower vehicles are passed at speed which often necessitates driving on the wrong side of the keep left bollards on OBP. This includes police vehicles with sirens blaring for no apparent reason other than perhaps going to Chevening with or without a minister!!!
- Loss of sleep from the noise.
- Surely all these activities are already illegal. If a specific order is necessary, then I support this, but am at a loss to understand why this behaviour has been allowed to continue for so long
- This action is required
- I have had to rearrange my house so that I only use the back of the house. The noise from Thursday night to Sunday night has kept me awake for several years now and affected my quality of life. My only solution was to not use the rooms that front the A21.
- Have had an encounter when two cars were racing down slip road from M25 to Hewits roundabout
- Hopefully something will come of this as previous measures have not had any impact. The volume of additional rubbish created on the roadside from these "gatherings" is also making the area look worse.
- I am really surprised that no one has been killed as a result of the very high speeds reached on the Spur Road. Three times I have been caught up in these 'festivities' whilst returning home late at night.
- We can hear the noise in our lounge and garden from the car and motorbike racers, although we are some way away from the main road.
- no further comment. you seem to have everything covered
- It's both dangerous and anti social. I'd like the Police to take action including impounding the vehicles involved and prosecuting the people involved
- Let's end this unsocial behaviour once and for all. It's damaging my health
- There are motor bikes Erving engines
- The speeds in which drivers use the Orpington Bypass is disgraceful and needs reviewing also for a reduced speed limit

Agenda Item 11

- The activities by these vehicles prevents windows being open at night due to noise disturbing sleep
- CARS SPEEDING THROUGH HALSTEAD
- Speed camera or reduced speed limit to Old London road would be a possible solution or speed humps or road narrowing to stop speeding could this road be reduced to 30mph
- a very good survey which needs the thoughts to be acknowledged and a reaction to take place in stopping this
- Too much traffic and high speeds now
- Ban dirt/noise motor bikes on any street
- I have not witnessed this in December as was mostly away.
- This is very dangerous to human life and something should be done quickly
- Just that I am unfortunate enough to have one of these clowns live down my road, who annoys everyone with his loud exhausts and cars left lying around everywhere.
- Implementing the proposals will be the problem,
- The noise levels occurred late at night into the early hours, possibly on the M25 approach road and heard from the Orpington By-Pass in Badgers Mount.
- Essential to co-ordinate with London Borough of Bromley as nuisance is cross-border
- Rather than having several PSPO's covering selected local areas can the council not just have one that covers the whole district?
- I must stress the importance of getting all the road names listed correctly and part of the A21 including Hewitts Roundabout added, as detailed above.
- The increased speed , traffic and noise has increased over the last 9 months which is causing living here an utter nightmare
- I've had no direct experience of this behaviour other than the sound of cars racing occasionally
- The road areas outlined in this document see constant speeding from car , bike and HGV
- This has been going on for quite some time now, it initially started in lockdown and has been growing in numbers weekly. It has been a nightmare for all, but especially my young family as we had a serious RTC on this stretch. The sounds of this car cruise often awakes us reliving this accident. This is really affecting our mental well-being as well as our sleep. This is a very large open area so the noise travels quite some distance. We are unable to have our windows open due to the noise. The participants are also using our quiet private road to race side by side which isn't only a concern for pedestrians/road users, but also to the wildlife that roams each

night, in particular deer. Locals will not venture out past a certain time in the evening out of fear of being caught up in this. It's a very frightening experience and have they have complete disregard for others safety. I'm astonished no one has been seriously injured so far. Please put a stop to this!

- We frequently hear the racing, see the cars, quads and bikes. It's obscene how long this has been going on.
- I will also note that the noise (engines in general, engine revving, tyre scratches from wheelies and other stunts) causes considerable distress to my dog and given the semi-rural nature of the area there are many animals similarly affected.
- Speeding is a problem at all times on Sevenoaks Road
- Have reported this for over a year now I live in Halstead village in Otford Lane and can clearly hear the cars most nights it sounds like brands hatch most nights with excessive car noise
- They're a huge nuisance for me driving home from work in the evenings, especially fridays, and have caused me to have to stop on the spur road on occasion due to pedestrians walking across from congregations of cars.
- Since March 2023 I have been in regular email correspondence since March 2023 with Police Sergeant Mark Wells, Operations Sergeant (car meets), Met Police Roads and Transport Policing Command, Safer Roads Scheme, so I am aware of the proposal by SDC to make a Public Spaces Protection Order to address the current anti-social problems in our area.
- Excessive speed, driver aggression, undertaking and driving too close to the vehicle in front.
- I can hear noise from my home but it is mainly when travelling in the specified area when anti-social activities are taking place that it is noticeable.
- Speeding on A21 and A224

9: What is your postcode

Add your postcode

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

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Item 12 – Sevenoaks District CSP 2024-25 Strategy & Action plan

The attached report was considered by the People & Places Advisory Committee on 5 March 2024. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of these papers and will follow when available.

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**SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY &
ACTION PLAN 2024-25
Cabinet – 14 March 2024**

Report of: Sarah Robson, Chief Officer People & Places & Deputy Chief Executive

Status: For Decision

Also considered by:

- People & Places Advisory Committee – 5 March 2024
- Council – 23 April 2024

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: The 2024-25 Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan is set out in the report and appendices. The plan responds to the community safety priorities identified for the District in the most recent Strategic Assessment.

This report supports the Key Aim of Council Plan and Community Plan.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Lesley Dyball

Contact Officer(s): Kelly Webb, Ext. 7474

Recommendation to People & Places Advisory Committee

To make recommendation to Cabinet to approve for the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Strategy and Action Plan 2024-25.

Recommendation to Cabinet

That Cabinet approves the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Strategy and Action Plan 2024-25 and agrees for it to be presented to Full Council for sign-off in April 2024.

Recommendation to Council

To approve the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Strategy and Action Plan 2024-25.

Reason for recommendation: The Council has a statutory duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to produce a strategic assessment and annually refreshed community safety plan.

Agenda Item 12

Introduction and Background

1. The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory responsibility on Sevenoaks District Council, Kent County Council, Kent Fire & Rescue Service, Health, Probation and Kent Police, together with other key partners, to undertake an audit of crime and disorder in the District and co-operate in the development and implementation of a strategy and action plan for tackling local crime and disorder. The audit is known as the Strategic Assessment and provides an analysis of data and trends in relation to community safety.
2. The Strategic Assessment for Sevenoaks District was undertaken in December 2023. As a result, the seven priorities, as ranked in the Strategic Assessment, are:
 1. Serious and Acquisitive Crime including Crime Trends and Serious Violence Duty
 2. Anti-Social Behaviour including Environmental Crime
 3. Domestic Abuse including Stalking and Harassment
 4. Business Crime
 5. Safeguarding (including Mental Health, Prevent, Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery, CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation), Adults at Risk and Protecting Children
 6. Violence against Women and Girls
 7. Drugs and County Lines
3. The draft 2024-25 Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan is attached as Appendix A. It sets out the Community Safety Partnership's activity aimed at addressing the above priorities, how each priority will be measured and progress monitored.
4. Working with our statutory and voluntary and community sector partners as well as residents, communities, local businesses and all our stakeholders will be instrumental in keeping the people of Sevenoaks District safe from crime and repeat victimisation and help us achieve our outcomes.
5. The Action Plan is a multi-agency document and is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Community Safety Partnership, to ensure that actions are on target and are helping to meet the identified success measures.

Serious Violence Duty

6. In addition to this year's action plan the Council has a duty to include the Serious Violence Duty. Specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, robbery and gun crime, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as domestic abuse, sexual offences, gangs, county lines and drug supply.

7. The Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) convened a partnership board meeting with relevant strategic authorities (Kent Police, K&M Violence Reduction Unit, Public Health (Kent & Medway), NHS, KCC and District/Borough Councils) in June 2023. The Board will co-ordinate a multi-agency response in developing a Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy for Kent & Medway by 31 January 2024. Work will be implemented through a Serious Violence Network meeting.
8. The Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) will provide evidence-based analysis of information relating to the violent crime types, the drivers of crime and the cohorts most vulnerable through the gathering and analysis of data from specified and relevant authorities. The SNA may also draw on qualitative data gathered by the partnership and should identify any gaps in data or intelligence.
9. The SNA findings should be used to define serious violence issues and prioritise bespoke actions that the partnership will take forward.
10. The partnership must collectively develop a strategy outlining the multi-agency response that will take to prevent and reduce serious violence in Kent and Medway.
11. The strategy should comprise of a range of new and existing actions that the partnership will take forward to prevent and reduce the issues and drivers identified in the SNA.
12. Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership (CSP) will meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty through its Community Safety Plan, Action Plan and Assessment, working alongside partner agencies.

Other options Considered and/or rejected

To not have a plan – rejected as the Council would be failing to comply with its statutory duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no direct financial implications of developing a Community Safety Plan but there are a number of budgets within the Council that are directly and indirectly attributed to aspects of the delivery of this plan and ensuring that our District is a safe place to live, work and play. The plan is also one which requires a multi partnership approach and in doing so may require using partners budgets, flexibly in order to maximise the potential outcomes and efficiencies that can be delivered. Police & Crime Commissioner funding plays a critical part in the delivery of the plan. The Council's core costs for staff enable the delivery and monitoring of this action plan.

Agenda Item 12

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

The Community Safety Plan is to meet the duties under Sections 5 and 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places obligations on Community Safety Partnerships to formulate a Strategic Assessment to ascertain the levels and patterns of crime, disorder, antisocial behaviour and substance misuse in their area; in order to identify the priorities for a Community Safety Plan. Following the completion of the Strategic Assessment, the Community Safety Plan is then developed to address the priorities identified by the Strategic Assessment.

The following key risks should be taken into account when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

Risk description	Mitigation
The Community Safety Strategy fails to deliver its priorities.	<p>The actions in the strategy were identified and formulated through consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder and relevant stakeholders, together with the production of a strategic assessment.</p> <p>Delivery against the Community Safety Strategy is routinely reviewed, and progress reported quarterly to the Community Safety Partnership and to elected members via the People and Places Advisory Committee and Cabinet, enabling adjustments or remedial action to be taken.</p>
Failing to meet the legal requirement of producing a Community Safety Strategy	Producing a Community Safety Strategy is a legal requirement under The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 for all Community Safety Partnerships. This risk can be mitigated by approving the strategy, as per the above recommendation.

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.

Safeguarding

This strategy supports our Safeguarding Policy and includes a priority focusing on safeguarding adults and children at risk.

Community Impact and Outcomes

This document helps reduce the community impact and improve outcomes, by

tackling and reducing certain crime types. The plan ensures a partnership approach to provided targeted initiatives to increase feelings of safety and reassurance.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is at the heart of the strategy. Experience of crime impacts on the mental and physical health of victims, families and those witnessing or participating in criminal and anti-social behaviour. By developing a partnership approach to crime and disorder, this strategy tackles issues impacting wellbeing including substance misuse, domestic abuse and other criminal and anti-social behaviour.

Conclusions

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are statutory bodies which exist in all local authorities. The Council has a statutory duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to produce a strategic assessment and annually refreshed community safety plan. CSPs are expected have a Plan to direct their delivery with an annual strategic needs assessment to ensure that the priorities remain relevant and appropriate and an annual performance report to monitor milestones and impact.

This strategy is aligned to national crime and disorder plans, and to other local plans in key areas such as safeguarding, to ensure we are all working towards the same goals; that we properly understand the issues; are able to address the risk factors that increase the likelihood of somebody becoming an offender or a victim of crime and work together effectively to reduce this risk. As such, prevention is central to our approach.

It is recommended that the report Community Safety Partnership Strategy & Action Plan 2024-25 is approved.

Appendices

Appendix A – Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Strategy and Action Plan 2024-25

Background Papers

Strategic Assessment for the Sevenoaks District

Sarah Robson
Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer – People & Places

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Sevenoaks District

Community Safety Partnership Annual Action Plan 2024-25 DRAFT



Action Plan 2024-25
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Please contact us on 01732 227000 stating your language and telephone number

Introduction

The Community Safety Plan is to meet the duties under Sections 5 and 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places obligations on Community Safety Partnerships to formulate a Strategic Assessment to ascertain the levels and patterns of crime, disorder, antisocial behaviour and substance misuse in their area; in order to identify the priorities for a Community Safety Plan. Following the completion of the Strategic Assessment, the Community Safety Plan is then developed to address the priorities identified by the Strategic Assessment.

The Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership brings together all of the agencies in the District who can have an impact on crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime. A list of partners is set out on page 25. The Partnership has three overarching aims. They are to:

- Reduce and detect crime
- Reduce anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime
- Strengthen community involvement

Each year the Partnership, in common with all of the Community Safety Partnerships in Kent, undertakes an assessment of crime and disorder in the District, using data provided by partners and feedback from residents. The assessment identifies the priority issues for the next year using the following rationale for each community safety type:

- Whether there is significant community concern
- Whether there is an increasing trend
- Whether it contributes to a high volume of crime
- The level of harm it causes
- How well it is performing compared with other parts of Kent
- Whether the Partnership can add value to the work

This Action Plan identifies where we can best work together to achieve results.

Priority Issues for Sevenoaks District in 2024-25

Sevenoaks District continues to be one of the safest places to live in Kent.

The Strategic Assessment was undertaken during the winter of 2023 and identified seven priorities for the Partnership to tackle during 2024-25. The data referred to in this Action Plan is based on the Strategic Assessment, and uses data between 1 October 2022 – 30 September 2023, unless otherwise stated. Trends in the identified priorities continue to be monitored on a quarterly basis and the first monitoring will be available in July 2024.

The seven priorities, as ranked in the Strategic Assessment, are:

- Safeguarding (including Mental Health, Prevent, Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery, CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation), Vulnerable Adults and Protecting Children
- Serious and Acquisitive Crime incl crime trends & Serious Violence Duty
- Drug and County Lines¹
- Business Crime
- Violence against Women & Girls
- Domestic Abuse incl Stalking & Harassment
- Anti-Social Behaviour incl Environmental Crime

Although the Partnership’s main focus will be the seven priorities, it will continue to monitor and plan for trends in crime and other community safety issues and address them through the Community Safety Unit’s daily briefings and other tasking arrangements in order to reduce recorded crime.

Strategic Drivers

Serious Violence Duty: The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 22 received Royal Assent in April 2022, with statutory guidance issued in December 22. Part 2 of the Act creates a requirement for specified authorities to collaborate and plan to reduce or prevent serious violence. Changes have also been made to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to

¹ County Lines refer to organised ways of dealing drugs

ensure that preventing and reducing serious violence is a priority for CSPs. Within Kent, new Partnership arrangements are being developed to ensure that agencies can comply with this new duty.

Budgets: Many partner agencies are faced with depleting budgets and savings needing to be made, both as a result of covid, worsening national finances and cost of living. This will impact upon community safety delivery both in terms of resources available for delivery, staff and grants available. This has been considered in the formation of this Community Safety Plan and how those resources available can be best used to ensure the delivery of the identified priorities.

Kent Police Neighbourhood Policing Model: The new Neighbourhood Policing Model was implemented in Summer 2023 and has seen changes in the way they respond to neighbourhood-based issues. The Partnership will need to integrate these changes into our existing delivery models.

Cost of Living: The Cost of Living Crisis continues to impact on residents as well as individual agencies. These impacts need to continue to be monitored by partners and the impact on delivery against our priorities.

The Action Plan

The Action Plan sets out the overall targets for the Community Safety Partnership. It does not include details of the numerous activities already undertaken by partners, town and parish councils, the voluntary sector and others as part of their day-to-day work, but highlights activities in addition to core work, which partners will undertake throughout the forthcoming year. All priorities include actions around public perception and reducing repeat offenders/victims.

Funding and monitoring

Funding for the actions included within the Action Plan is available from a number of sources, including partners' own budgets, Police & Crime Commissioner's (PCC) funding which is allocated to district Community Safety Partnerships, and other small amounts of funding from a variety of sources.

Regular monitoring will take place to ensure that individual projects continue to deliver positive results as well as value for money and that this Action Plan is on target.

Equalities

In preparing the action plan, issues such as equality and diversity were considered to ensure that everybody feels safe in the District.

The Community Safety Partnership recognises that everyone has a contribution to make to our society and a right to access services without being discriminated against or disadvantaged because of their:

- Race, colour, nationality, ethnicity.
- Gender, marital status or caring responsibility.
- Sexual orientation.
- Age.
- Physical or mental disability or mental health.
- Religion or belief.
- Health status.
- Employment status.

ACTION PLAN 2024-2025: SUCCESS MEASURES

All recorded crime

All Victim Based Crime – Maintain position in the lowest 3 District/Borough in the County.

Serious & Acquisitive Crime incl Crime Trends and Serious Violence Duty

Improve the position of Vehicle Crime and Burglary within the County.

Working with partners reduce the numbers of serious violence with injury in the District.

Safeguarding (including Prevent, Mental Health, Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery, CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation), Vulnerable Adults and Protecting Children)

Deliver training on all types of Safeguarding.

Maintain position in the lowest 3 District/Borough in the County for Human Trafficking/Modern Slavery and CSE.

Drugs and County Lines

Reduce the number of County Lines across the District.

Number of young people engaged with around drug misuse.

Business Crime

Maintain position in the lowest 3 District/Borough in the County for shoplifting.

Increase number of convictions for Business Crime.

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Increase VAWG Walks compared to previous year and work with the community on feelings of safety.

Implement a West Kent Action Plan on VAWG.

Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment

Reduce the number of repeat victims of stalking & harassment and domestic abuse.

Increase training for partners and communities on Domestic Abuse and Stalking and Harassment.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) incl Environmental Crime

Maintain position in the lowest 3 District/Borough in the County.

Serious & Acquisitive Crime incl Crime Trends and Serious Violence

Acquisitive crime consists of Burglary (Residential and Commercial and Business) and Vehicle Crime (Theft of and Theft from – TOMV and TFMV). Although there have been rises and falls throughout the time period, the number of reported crimes are relatively low, but they do sit high in county comparisons. These types of crime have a high impact on the local community. We would also look at crime trends for example we know that catalytic convertors, keyless car thefts, high value car types such as Range Rovers and cable thefts do have trends over time across the District.

Criminals behind serious and tactical crime often intimidate and create fear, which is intended to prevent the local community reporting what they see. Often the criminals behind this don't even have to try hard to do this – instead relying on word of mouth and reputation. Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) have been tackled using a more targeted approach by partners, including cross-border partners. Trends are monitored at the monthly Serious Crime & Tactical Meeting. The most common crime types associated with these groups is commonly organised theft.

Specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, robbery and gun crime, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as domestic abuse, sexual offences, gangs, county lines and drug supply.

Crime Type	Recorded Offences/Incidents					County Position	
	This Year	Last Year	% Change	No. change	Direction	21/22	22/23
Robbery	34	36	-5.6%	-2	▼	2	2
VAP	2806	3214	-12.7%	-408	▼	1	1
Sexual	213	247	-13.8%	-34	▼	1	1
Possession of weapons	65	69	-5.8%	-4	▼	3	2
Public Order	405	538	-24.7%	-133	▼	1	1

Serious Violence Duty

The Serious Violence Duty requires specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence. The Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) convened a partnership board meeting with relevant strategic authorities (Kent Police, K&M Violence Reduction Unit, Public Health (Kent & Medway), NHS, KCC and District/Borough Councils) in 2023. The Board is co-ordinating a

multi-agency response in developing a Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy for Kent & Medway by early 2024. Work will be implemented through a Serious Violence Network meeting. The assessment findings will be used to define serious violence issues and prioritise bespoke actions that the partnership will take forward. The partnership will collectively develop an action plan outlining the multi-agency response that to help prevent and reduce serious violence in Kent and Medway. This should comprise of a range of new and existing actions that support local Community Safety Partnerships take forward this priority to prevent and reduce issues.

The cost of living crisis

The cost of living has become an issue of major political concern in the UK. The subsequent war in Ukraine and consequential energy challenges, followed by rising inflation and interest rates, have added to the mounting concern and resulted in large scale government interventions. The cost of living crisis is putting more people at risk of crime. Acquisitive crime often increases in periods of economic downturn.

Serious and Acquisitive Crime including Crime Trends and Serious Violence				
	Priority Action	Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
1.1	Monthly Serious Crime & Tactical Group to address crime trends for the District and to deliver partnership actions/initiatives. Identifying Organised Crime Groups (OCG)	Serious Crime & Tactical Group (SCTG)	Kent Police All Partners	Ongoing
1.2	Number of My Community Voice/Twitter & Facebook posts updating residents on crime trends and where positive arrests have been made in relation to acquisitive crime, crime trends and serious violence	Kent Police SDC	All Partners	Ongoing
1.3	Work with Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) on reducing the number of serious violence and including joint projects to address certain crime types such as knife crime	VRU	CSU All	Ongoing
1.4	CSU to offer reassurance and follow up visits following burglary and vehicle crime, including free giveaways to protect cars, out buildings. Greater use of Community Warden resource in follow up visits in communities where CWs are based	CSU KCC Wardens	PCSOs	Ongoing

1.5	Serious Violence Duty to be added to the Serious Crime & Tactical Group (SCTG) to discuss specific crime types such as Specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, robbery and gun crime, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as domestic abuse, sexual offences, gangs, county lines and drug supply and take forward actions including an Needs Assessment	Kent Police	All	Monthly
1.6	Analytical data to be provided by Kent Police on acquisitive crime and violent crime to look at crime trends/offenders for the partnership and SCTG to take forward	Kent Police SCTG	All	Monthly
1.7	Child Centred Policing Team to develop and promote a schools programme on Serious & Violent Crime	Kent Police VRU	CSU	Sept 2024

Anti-Social Behaviour including Environmental Crime

ASB accounts for the second largest recorded issue when compared to individual crime types in the District. Figures show 1,221 recorded incidents of ASB occurring within the District were reported to Kent Police. The District had the lowest number of ASB reports in Kent even though there was an increase of 11.6% (127 reports).

The CSU Daily tasking's meetings dealt with 420 ASB/Community Safety calls from October 2021 - September 2022. This is a decrease of 8 calls (1.9%) compared to same period last year. All actions were followed up and residents were kept updated in all actions unless they had been reported anonymously. SDC, Police, and West Kent Housing attend the CSU daily tasking on a daily basis. The CSU has continued meeting daily even though Police implemented changes to the CSU from 1 June 2023.

Recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour were higher in the period from October 2022 until September 2023. The total number of ASB reports received by the Council during October 2022 and September 2023 equals 88 calls. This is 2 less calls than the same period last year, when 90 calls were received, which equates to a 2.2% decrease in calls received. Sevenoaks Town & St Johns had the highest number of reports of anti-social behaviour to the District Council with 10. Dunton Green & Riverhead and Swanley Whiteoak was 2nd highest with 9.

The highest type of anti-social behaviour reported is Nuisance Behaviour with 31 reports. This is followed by Vehicle related nuisance. Calls by type are always higher than reports received as residents can report more than one type at a time.

During the period of October 2022 and September 2023, 39 Anti-Social Behaviour warning letters and 46 Acceptable Behaviour Agreement contracts were issued to named individuals. 6 Acceptable Behaviour Agreement Breach letters were also served.

There have been 10 Community Protection Warnings served and 6 Community Protection Notices served.

A PSPO (Public Spaces Protection Order) public consultation was undertaken for The Vine, Sevenoaks in regards to consistent ASB. As a result, the public consultation response was overwhelmingly positive in terms of supporting the introduction of the PSPO and the order will be brought into force in early 2024. At the time of writing this there is a current PSPO consultation out for vehicle nuisance in Halstead and if approved will be implemented in May 2024.

SDC CCTV

From 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023 the CCTV Control Room at Sevenoaks District Council assisted the police with 91 arrests for this period. They also dealt with 2,889 Emergency Out of Hour calls, 8 unauthorised encampments, 1 mental health safeguarding case and 139 Missing people and vulnerable persons.

West Kent Housing

From 1 October 2022 – 30 September 2023 WKHA received 1091 complaints of antisocial behaviour and other community safety related matters. This is an increase of 10% over the same period for the previous year.

SDC Environmental Health

Between 1st October 2022 and 30th September 2023, the Environmental Protection Team received 1,086 service requests relating to issues within Sevenoaks District, this is 13 less than the same period last year, a 1% decrease. Of the 1,086 Service Requests received by Sevenoaks, 470 relate to matters associated with noise and 616 relate to non-noise related service requests such as dog fouling, accumulations and other anti-social activities.

SDC Direct Services

SDC received 357 reports of abandoned vehicles for the period October 2022 – September 2023. This is a 60.18% increase compared to the same period in the previous year. Of the 357 reported vehicles only 2.2% (8 vehicles) were genuinely abandoned and required removal. Last year's percentage of vehicles removed against number reported was 6.5%.

Graffiti

Graffiti reports to the Council have decreased by 17 reports this year with 40 recorded incidents (incl offensive). There were 6 offensive graffiti reports between October 2022 and September 2023 all of which were removed within the 48 hour deadline set by Sevenoaks District Council.

KCC Community Wardens

A valued element of the Community Warden role remains the uniformed presence which helps build community confidence and reassurance by reducing crime, the fear of crime, deterring ASB, improving access to local authorities and fostering social inclusion. The warden's overriding objective remains '*to create safer and stronger communities*'. They work closely with/on behalf of other operational units within KCC and Community Safety Partners to address a wide range of issues. However, following approval from KCC's Cabinet in February 2024, the budget for the wardens service will be reduced by 50% over the next two years, which will see the warden service move to a more geographically targeted service based on local needs in both rural and urban communities.

ASB incl Environmental Crime				
	Priority Action	Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
2.1	Increase number of enforcement interventions and prosecutions for fly tipping using all actionable evidence. Increase the number of partnership, cross border and community working actions in repeat locations.	SDC Direct Services CSU	KCC Wardens PCSOs Housing Assoc	March 2025
2.2	Increase the number of referrals from partners to the District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting (DCSM) for young people and Community MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference). This will include talking and working with partner agencies on how to refer	KCC Youth Services Kent Police	KCC Youth Offending Services Probation Services Mental Health Schools All Partners	March 2025
2.3	Reduce the number of young people entering the Criminal Justice System for the first time	All Partners		March 2025
2.4	Continue to set up Task and Finish Groups to deliver a focused approach to reducing repeat ASB and use ASB Powers through the 2014 ASB Act where appropriate such as Closure Orders, Community Protection Notices and Criminal Behaviour Orders. Invite Community Wardens to Task & Finish Groups where issues pertain to their home communities. Team members have a great breadth of knowledge (issues, useful local stakeholders etc) that would enhance the partnership approach and ensuing actions.	CSU	All	March 2025
2.5	Partnership Activities in line with National & International events for example ASB Awareness Week 1-7 July 2024 National Hate Crime Awareness Week 14-21 October 2024 Euros June 2024	Police WKHA/Moat Housing SDC	All Partners	March 2025

2.6	Number of community safety events either attending on behalf of another organisation or arranged by CSU	CSU	Police KCC Community Wardens Housing Assoc	March 2025
2.7	Number of site visits and task and finished groups attended to address ASB	CSU		March 2025

Domestic Abuse incl Stalking & Harassment

Please note: Domestic Abuse incidents are not reported as violence against the person. If there has been no violence recorded. For example, if there was a verbal altercation, this would be recorded as a Domestic Abuse Incident and not Violence against the Person and that is why the numbers are different.

It is important to remember that these figures are only representative of domestic abuse that was reported to the Police and it is widely recognised that there is a figure of domestic abuse, which remains unreported. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has given more powers and increased responsibility to the Police, Courts and local authorities for the protection of victims of domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse incidents in the Sevenoaks District have decreased by 419 crimes (16.8%). The District has the lowest number of Domestic Abuse incidents in the county (071)², Please note: Domestic Abuse incidents are not always reported as violence against the person, if there has been no violence recorded.

Sevenoaks District Council and the CSP fund a number of projects to address domestic abuse, including:

- 12-week Freedom Programme runs 6 x a year including 2 evening sessions and 3 x 12 week Recovery Tool Kit, which is a follow on from the Freedom programme. On average 8-10 women attend these programmes.
- Community Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Programme runs weekly on a Wednesday evening. For this time period the programme is run online with an average of 8 men attending weekly. The programme is a rolling programme that runs for 27 weeks.
- DAVSS (Domestic Abuse Voluntary Support Services) provides a support service for low and medium risk victims. In the period 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023, they supported the following number of people in the Sevenoaks District – previous assessments have shown statistics at a West Kent level.

² Apparent inconsistency in annual figures arises from the classification of ‘incident’. Domestic abuse ‘incidents’ are not necessarily violent and can refer to verbal disputes which have been reported to Kent Police; as such, not all incidents make it into statistics for violence against the person.

Oct 21-Sept 23	Oct 2022 - Dec 2022	Jan 2023 - March 2023	April 2023- June 2023	July 2023 - Sept 2023	Total
Referrals (Total, including Men)	75	65	59	58	127
Referrals (Men)	2	2	2	2	8
Children supported	113	119	79	80	391
Repeat cases	4	7	7	6	24
Total of volunteer case work hours	1099	1153	831	Not recorded	3083

Look Ahead belongs to a consortium of organisations called Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS). Between 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023, they received the following referrals:

Oct 22-Sept 23	
IDVA referrals	334
Refuge referrals	31

Look Ahead continue to work in partnership with Police and the Vit Pro team. This service supports victims who were repeat or hard to reach and non-engagers. Look Ahead currently run two support programmes currently Own My Life and Phoenix. There were over 90 participants in these programmes during the reporting period.

There were 904 reports to Police for stalking and harassment for the Sevenoaks District. This is a decrease of 275 compared to the same period last year (Oct 2021- Sept 2022. Protection Against Stalking (PAS) provided the following update for use of their full advocacy and short-term support services:

	Jan - Mar 23			Apr - Jun 23			Jul - Sep 23		
	Full Advocacy Support	Short Term (Initial Support & Safety Advice)	TOTAL	Full Advocacy Support	Short Term (Initial Support & Safety Advice)	TOTAL	Full Advocacy Support	Short Term (Initial Support & Safety Advice)	TOTAL
Tunbridge Wells	12	32	44	13	27	40	12	21	33
Sevenoaks	12	21	33	8	17	25	11	19	30
Tonbridge and Malling	7	12	19	20	29	49	9	30	39

Maidstone	18	55	73	10	40	50	20	62	82
Dartford	6	8	14	8	30	38	10	39	49
Gravesend	0	1	1	8	42	50	8	37	45
Sub total	55	129	184	67	185	252	70	208	278
Rest of Kent	14	31	45	17	40	57	5	43	48
Outside of Kent	5	100	105	10	71	81	6	69	75
Outside of UK	0	8	8	0	2	2	0	3	3
Total	74	268	342	94	298	392	81	323	404

Domestic Abuse incl Stalking & Harassment

	Priority Action	Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
3.1	Support national campaigns including: International Women's Day 16 Days of Action Deliver a Conference within the 16 Days of Action	DAVSS WK Domestic Abuse Forum KCC Commissioned Service	All Partners	On Going
3.2	Work with DAVSS & Look Ahead to ensure that all victims of domestic abuse can receive support	DAVSS	WK Domestic Abuse Forum	March 2025
3.3	Support the Kent DA Steering Group and its sub groups to develop and deliver work in support of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021	West Kent DA Forum KCC Commissioning Team	All Partners	On Going
3.4	Delivery of funded programmes including Freedom Programme, Community Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Programme, Recovery Tool Kit and DAY programme in schools.	CSP	DAVSS PAS Look Ahead	Ongoing
3.5	Take forward actions from the West Kent Domestic Abuse Conference held in December 2023 tackling services for young people and addressing the effects of abuse for young people	West Kent DA Forum LookAhead PAS DAVSS	Housing Associations Kent Police	Ongoing

Domestic Abuse incl Stalking & Harassment

	Priority Action	Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
3.6	Achieve DAHA accreditation for the Council in partnership with the CSP and other partners	SDC CSU SDC Housing	Housing Associations	June 2024
3.7	Deliver safe packages for PAS clients to include personal alarms, window lock, safety information	CSU	PAS	May 2024
3.8	Deliver awareness training on stalking and harassment to local community groups and practitioners	PAS	West Kent Domestic Abuse Forum	On Going
3.10	Work with Domestic Abuse Services, Kent Police and Protection against Stalking on tackling Forced Marriages, Female Genital Mutilation and Honour Based Violence and link with the Serious Crime Duty	DAVSS LookAhead Police PAS	West Kent Forum CSU	December 2024

Safeguarding including Young People, Adults at Risk, Child Sexual Exploitation, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking, Prevent, Care Act and Mental Health

Safeguarding includes Young People, Adults at Risk, CSE, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking, Prevent, Care Act, Missing Children and Mental Health.

Legislation places a statutory duty on local councils as well as some of the other partner agencies to protect the vulnerable under these crimes. It is also a major contributor to the Kent Police Strategy and is considered a community concern.

The cost of living, the subsequent war in Ukraine and consequential energy challenges, followed by rising inflation and interest rates, have added to the mounting concern and resulted in large scale government interventions. The cost of living crisis is putting more people at risk of crime. This includes those being exploited by criminals (for example young people being groomed to carry drugs, used to launder criminal money or sexually exploited).

Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery

For the period of 01/10/22 - 30/09/23, Kent Police recorded 4 Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking related investigations in the Sevenoaks District.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

There were 3 reports of CSE in the Sevenoaks District. The Community Safety Manager continues to be a CSE Champion for the CSP and District Council.

Prevent

There have been 4 referrals to the Kent Channel and Prevent Multi-Agency Panel, which have been progressed to ensure a multi-agency approach to identify and support individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism. The Channel Panel is an early intervention scheme that supports people who are at risk of radicalisation and provides practical support tailored to individual needs. It can help people to make positive choices about their lives.

Child Grooming: Model type

Within Kent, the predominant 'Model' type experienced is the 'Inappropriate Relationship', where child grooming involves an offender having an inappropriate amount of power or control over a young person, due to a large age gap, or a disparity in wealth or status. Similarly to the relationship model, the young person may believe that they are in a loving relationship, whereas they are actually being manipulated by the person they are with.

Child grooming isn't limited to any one medium, with child grooming online becoming more common. However, other types of 'Model' experienced also include, 'Gangs', 'Peer to Peer' and 'Trafficking', but to a much lesser extent. There have been occasions in Kent where females who have initially been highlighted as potential victims have later come to notice as facilitators and potential perpetrators of CSE.

Adults at Risk

When a person goes missing from their care home or home Kent Police will complete an At Risk of Going Missing Form which will be completed with the details of location found, any medical history and contact details for their GP and family contact with a recent photo. Should they go missing again this information can be sent to officers to assist in the fast locating of the person.

There were 1029 reports across the District to KCC Social Services of Adults at Risks/Concerns.

Vulnerable Young People

The DCSM (District Safeguarding Contextual Meeting) is held every month and from the period 1 October 22- 30 September 23 over 50 young people and locations have been discussed by partner agencies. The Police new structure has a child centered policing team and figures for them will be available in next year's assessment.

Mental Health

The CSU daily tasking's have seen an increase in mental health in ASB and Domestic Abuse cases. The number of people sectioned under 136 between 1 October 2022 – 30 September 2023 was 12, a decrease of 8 compared to same period in the previous year and lowest in the County.

Safeguarding including Young People, Adults at Risk, Child Sexual Exploitation, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking, Prevent, Care Act and Mental Health

	Priority Action	Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
4.1	Work with agencies from the Youth Mentoring Plus Programme. Investigate funding streams for this work to continue.	SDC	All Partners Town & Parish Councils	On Going
4.2	Support the Health & Wellbeing Action Team to deliver their actions to address Mental Health	CSU	All Partners	On Going
4.3	KCC Prevent Team to deliver training to partners and businesses on Counter Terrorism	KCC Prevent Team	CSU	March 2025
4.4	Police to provide an analytical product on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking every quarter so that the Partnership can help take action to address this. Work on action days through evidence provided	Police SCD	CSU All	March 2025
4.5	Attend Channel Panels where appropriate and provide support to individuals when required and Promote the Prevent Strategy within the community via Social Media etc.	CSU KCC Prevent Team		March 2025
4.6	Work with Adults at Risk and sign post to appropriate services including HERO, Social Services, Private Sector Housing, Kent Police, Community Wardens & Peabody.	PCSO Vulnerable Adults	CSU All Partners	On going
4.7	Work with partner on national campaigns such as National Safeguarding Week in December 2024	KCSMP KMSAM	CSU	December 2024

Violence against Women & Girls (VAWG)

Violence against women and girls is a national priority, and we share the national commitment to ensure women and girls are safe. The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner’s Police and Crime Plan entitled ‘Making Kent Safer 2022- 2025’ includes VAWG as a priority. In addition, the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) established a Violence Against Women (VAWG) inquiry report was published in the summer of 2022. The Victim’s Panel was set up to support the inquiry, and their work continues to inform strategy development. Key themes from the panel includes victims feeling as traumatised, if not more so, by the criminal justice process as the crime(s) themselves, a perception there was no consideration or flexibility to work around victim’s life, with the victim expected to work on the system’s terms and a common belief that there is unconscious bias at work.

VAWG is at the core of the Kent Police control strategy. This can broadly be broken down into four key areas: prioritising prevention, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and a stronger system. The CSP have an important part to play. Awareness of VAWG criminality, such as Stalking and Child Sexual Exploitation, should be raised within the CSP, electorate and the wider community. Access to victim support services should be explored and promoted. Schemes like Best Bar None should be reinforced in order to reduce VAWG offending in the night time economy.

Breakdown	Recorded Offences/Incidents					County Position	
	This Year	Last Year	% Change	No. change	Direction	21/22	22/23
Total VAWG	1636	1992	-17.9%	-356	▼	1	1
Domestic Abuse related	909	1162	-21.8%	-253	▼	2	1
Non-Domestic Abuse related	727	830	-12.4%	-103	▼	1	1

The CSU (Police & SDC) completed 3 VAWG walks in Swanley, New Ash Green and Edenbridge to talk to women about feelings of safety and any improvements that could be made. Most that were spoken to say they felt safe, but enquired about more lighting in some areas which were all passed to KCC Highways.

A West Kent VAWG Group for Public Spaces was set up in May 2023 and are now having regular meetings every quarter and have an action plan. A joint consultation was going out in December 2023 to address local concerns. This will be followed by a school consultation as well.

Violence against Women & Girls (VAWG)				
	Priority Action	Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
5.1	Following the public consultation for VAWG in Public Spaces, review the responses and deliver on the action plan for the West Kent VAWG Group to take forward	West Kent VAWG Group	All Partners	March 2025
5.2	Deliver a rolling programme of VAWG Walk and Talks across the District	Kent Police CSU	All Partners	March 2025
5.3	Work with agencies to deliver defence classes for women and girls across the District	CSU	All Partners	March 2025
5.4	Deliver an action plan for the 16 days of no violence and addressing Domestic Abuse and VAWG in November to include a white ribbon video	CSU	DAVSS PAS Look Ahead	November 2023
5.5	Consultation on VAWG to be done throughout the schools and delivered via the Child Centered Police Team	Kent Police CSU	All Partners	Sept 2024
5.6	Work within schools on healthy relationships	Kent Police DAVSS	CSU	Sept 2024
5.7	Deliver Training on VAWG for partners and keep website up to date	CSU	Kent Police	March 2025

Business Crime

Kent Police reported shoplifting for Sevenoaks District showed 579 offences of shoplifting. This is an increase compared to the same period last year (1 Oct 22- 30 Sept 23) of 106 crime (22.1).

The Safer Towns Business Crime Partnership also saw an increase of shoplifting offences from Sevenoaks retail high street stores. Using Kent Police own website crime figures, incidents recorded show an increase of 34 shop thefts (22%) compared to last year's reporting period.

By comparison, the Swanley shopping area of St Mary's has also seen an increase in shoplifting activity recording a figure of 21 additional reports (46%), while White Oak only increased by 6 (2%).

Burglary Business & Community also saw an increase of 15 crimes compared to same period as last year with 128 recorded crimes (13.3%)

A Business Crime meeting was set up by Kent Police in October 2023 and meets regularly with local businesses, retailers and other local partners.

Business Crime				
	Priority Action	Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
6.1	Business Crime meeting to be District wide to include all Towns a Parishes where retail/shoplifting is a crime	Kent Police Safer Town Partnership	CSU	March 2025
6.2	Use the Community MARAC to educate, support and use enforcement of perpetrators of Shoplifting through referrals from businesses and Safer Towns Partnership	Safer Towns Partnership Local Businesses	Kent Police CSU	March 2025
6.3	Increase number of prosecutions for repeat offenders to include Criminal Behaviour Orders	Kent Police	Local Businesses	March 2025
6.4	Increase number of members into the Safer Towns Partnership	Safer Towns Partnership	CSU	March 2025
6.5	Respond to ASB issues through the Daily Tasking where retailers have been affected	CSU	All Partners	March 2025

Drugs & County Lines

Drugs

Drug offences have increased from 151 to 201 an increase of 50 reports. The District remains the lowest in the County for Drug reports. There is a high number that is also under reported of drug offences.

There has been an increase of young people reported using drugs and especially the gas canisters and the CSU are working with agencies and schools that bring into line the new legislation and law around misuse of nos canisters.

Kenward Trust is funded by the CSP and continue to do outreach work across the District. The focus in 2024/2025 is to continue to support young people caught up in exploitation, grooming and gang culture. With the continued work of reducing ASB and Substance misuse the teams see over 350 young people each quarter and build up good relationships with hard to reach young people.

The team went to all locations that was identified by the CSU to support the young people.

CGL work closely with a range of partner agencies to improve outcomes for substance misusers. Greensands, a supported housing project in Sevenoaks, is assisted by CGL through the provision of group work and peer support to residents for their substance misuse. A joint working programme has also been developed with West Kent Mind to deliver CGL programmes on a weekly basis and a bi-weekly drop in and referral service for Mind service users. This will facilitate better access to drug and alcohol services for these clients.

Addaction are commissioned by Public Health to deliver services to young people.

County Lines

Over the past year there has been a number of County Lines identified in the District, which is naturally linked to gang and gang culture, which is seen by some young people as a “status”. The CSP has been working with the Violent Reduction Unit in working with young people in County Lines and support groups that can be referred to. In September 2022 the CSU received £18k to tackle County Lines and work with young people.

Drug Misuse and County Lines				
	Priority Action	Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
7.1	Deliver outreach work to designated areas to address substance misuse using CSU reports via the Daily Tasking	Kenward Trust	CSU Schools Youth Groups	March 2025
7.2	Provide training for front line workers on County Lines & Drug	Kenward Trust VRU Kent Police	CSU	Dec 2024
7.3	Through the VRU Funding deliver on activities to reduce county lines, drugs and violent crime that links in with the Serious Violence Duty	VRU CSU Kent Police	All Partners	March 2025
7.4	Work with the Child Centered Policing Team in joint initiatives in schools (primary and secondary)	Kent Police Kenward Trust VRU	CSU	March 2025
7.5	Police, Wardens and Housing Associations to continue to gather intelligence on local County Lines so that positive action can be achieved and reduce serious violence as per the Serious Violence Duty	Police Housing Associations KCC Wardens	CSU	Ongoing
7.6	Violent Reduction Unit (VRU) to use Community MARAC to make referrals for young people & DCSM	VRU KCC Youth Services	All Partners	On Going

Membership of the Community Safety Partnership and contact details

<p>Sevenoaks District Council Argyle Road Sevenoaks Kent TN13 1GP Tel: 01732 227000 www.sevenoaks.gov.uk</p>	<p>Kent Police 1 Pembury Road Tonbridge Kent TN9 2HS Tel: 01622 690690 www.kent.police.uk</p>	<p>Kent Fire & Rescue Service West Group HQ Sevenoaks Fire Station London Road, Sevenoaks Tel: 01622 692121 www.kent.fire-uk.org</p>	<p>Police & Crime Commissioner Kent Police Headquarters Sutton Road Maidstone ME15 9BZ Tel: 01622 677055 www.kentpa.kent.police.uk</p>
<p>West Kent Health and Care Partnership Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Health and Care Partnership https://www.kmhealthandcare.uk/about-us/our-system/health-and-care-partnerships</p>	<p>Kent Surrey and Sussex CRC Ltd Maidstone Corporate Centre 3rd Floor, Maidstone House King Street Maidstone Kent, ME15 6AW Tel: 01622 239147 www.ksscr.co.uk</p>	<p>KCC Social Services The Willows, Hilda May Ave, Swanley Kent BR8 7BT Tel: 0300 041 1400 www.kent.gov.uk</p>	<p>Imago 17-19 Monson Road Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 1LS Tel: 01892 530330 www.imago.org.uk</p>
<p>KCC Early Help & Preventative Service C/o Swanley Youth Centre St. Mary's Road Swanley Kent BR8 7BU Tel 01322 615275 www.kent.gov.uk</p>	<p>Protection Against Stalking Town Hall, Tunbridge Wells Referrals support@protectionagainststalking.org www.protectionagainststalking.org</p>	<p>KCC Community Safety Team Maidstone Fire Station Loose Road Maidstone Kent ME15 9QB www.kent.gov.uk</p>	<p>West Kent Housing Association / West Kent Extra 101 London Road Sevenoaks Kent TN13 1AX Tel: 01732 749400 www.westkent.org</p>
<p>Kenward Trust Kenward Road Yalding, Maidstone Kent ME18 6AH Tel: 01622 814187 www.kenwardtrust.org.uk</p>	<p>MOAT Homes Galleon Boulevard, Crossways Dartford Kent DA2 6QE Tel: 0300 323 0011 Web: www.moat.co.uk</p>	<p>Change Grow Live (Drug and Alcohol Services) 18 Mount Pleasant Road Tunbridge Wells TN1 1QU https://www.changegrowlive.org/westkent/help#contact</p>	<p>DAVSS PO Box 530 Tunbridge Wells Kent TN2 9TB Tel: 01892 570538 Web: www.davss.org.uk</p>

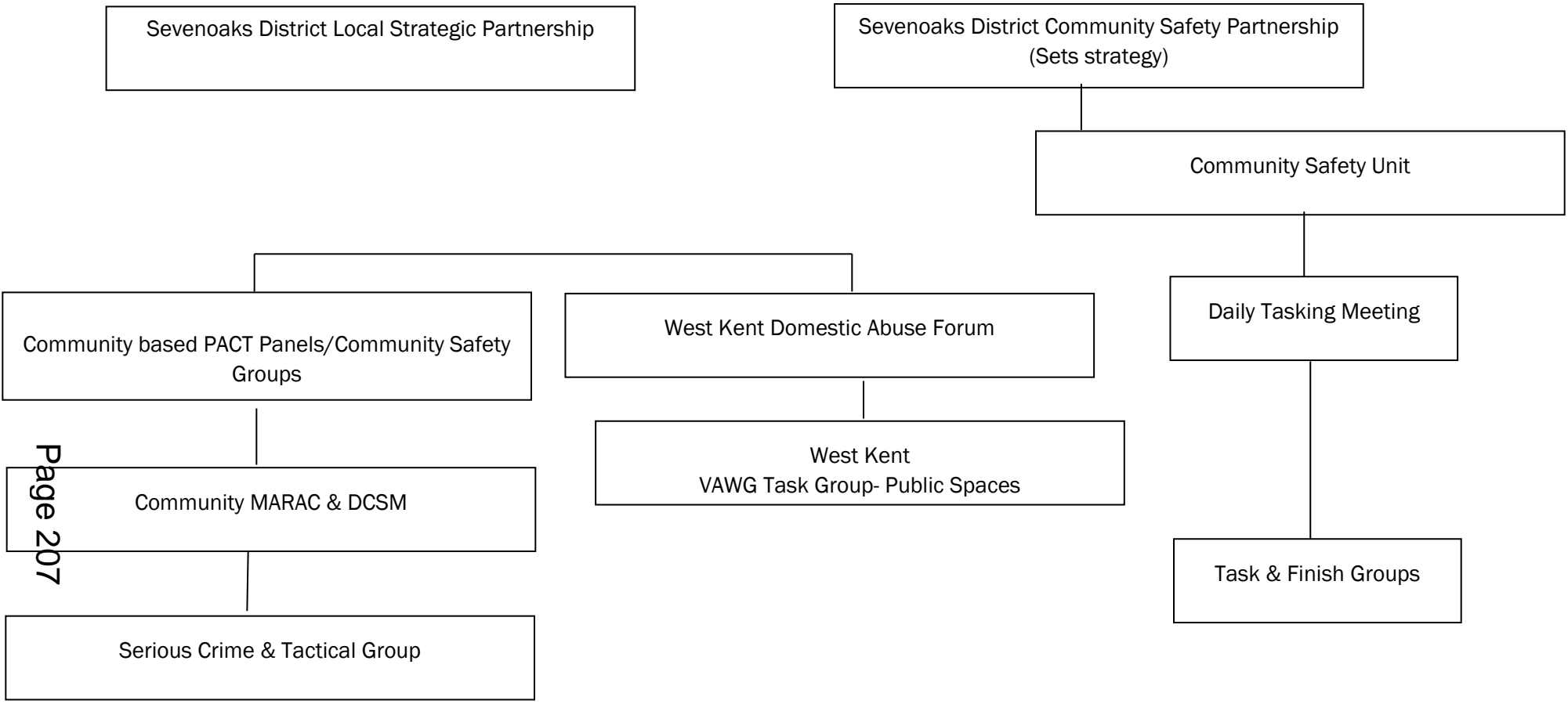
The Community Safety Partnership has direct links to Kent Public Health alongside the Kent Adults Safeguarding Board and the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership.

Terms of Reference

The Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership's terms of reference aim to:

- Undertake periodic reviews of community safety in the District and disseminate the findings to the public
- Develop a yearly strategy and action plan to tackle community safety in the Sevenoaks District
- Monitor and report progress in meeting the agreed targets and actions
- Secure resources and funding from parent organisations and others for projects to address agreed shared priorities in the Community Safety Action Plan
- Act as a forum for discussion of topical local community safety issues and agree follow up actions if appropriate
- Promote community safety in the District in conjunction with other local organisations and bodies
- Co-ordinate and maintain an overview of all activities relevant to community safety in the District.

Structure and Meetings Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Meetings

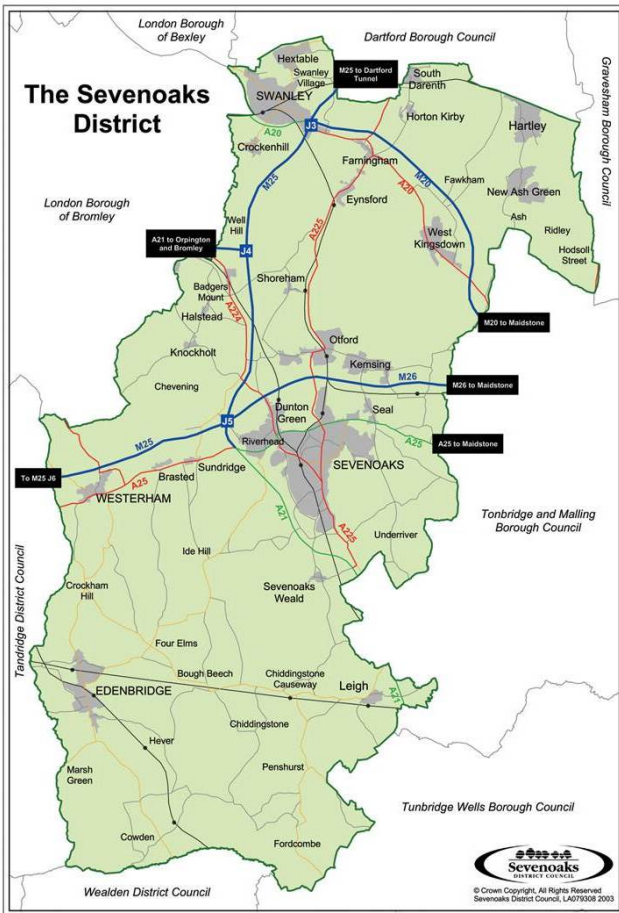


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What is the Sevenoaks District like?

Sevenoaks District continues to be one of the safest places to live in Kent. Sevenoaks is a large District lying to the south east of London with an overall area of just over 143 square miles (370 square km). It is long and relatively narrow measuring 20 miles north-south by about 7 miles east-west. The Thames Gateway lies to the north, Surrey and East Sussex to the west and south and the rest of Kent, including Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells to the east and south east. Despite adjoining the outer edge of London it is predominantly rural with 93% of the District designated as Green Belt.



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Train services to London take just under 30 minutes from Swanley and just under 30 minutes from Sevenoaks.

Sevenoaks District is perceived to be affluent but this masks local pockets of urban and rural deprivation. For example, Swanley St Mary's ward falls within the 10% most deprived wards in Kent and the South East (2015, Indices of Multiple Deprivation).

11.6% of children under 16 (2,465) live in low-income families in receipt of Child Tax Credit where rural deprivation is more isolating than poverty in the towns. The majority of children living in poverty (73.9%) live in lone parent families.

According to the Kent County Council housing led population forecast projections, the population of Sevenoaks District is forecast to grow by more than 13,500 by 2028.

The 2017 mid-year population estimates (Office for National Statistics) show that Sevenoaks District has a population of 119,400 residents and the third lowest population density in Kent measured at 3.1 persons per hectare.

According to Kent County Council the number of people over 65 is forecast to rise by 41.1% by 2036 (10,400 people) and the number of people over 85 is forecast to rise by 97.2% by 2036 (3,500 people).

Enquiries to:

CSU

Sevenoaks District Council
PO Box 183, Argyle Road
Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1GP
Telephone 01732 227000

E-mail community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk



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Item 13 – Leisure Operator Options Report

The attached report was considered by the People & Places Advisory Committee on 5 March 2024. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of these papers and will follow when available.

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Draft EqIA Template – for DECISIONS

This template should be completed alongside proposals that will be subject to decision by Councillors.

Summary of decision to be made:	To approve the preferred option to progress the procurement of a new leisure operator for Edenbridge and Sevenoaks Leisure Centres and Lullingstone Park Golf Course for 5 years (with an option to extend for a further two years).		
Lead Officer (job title):	Sarah Robson (Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Officer for People & Places)		
Date the final decision is due to be made:	14/03/2024	Date this assessment commenced:	02/01/2024
Is the decision relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty?			Yes
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation			Yes
Advance equality of opportunity			Yes
Foster good relations			Yes
If the answer is yes to any of the above, proceed with the assessment. If the answer is no, please say why and summarise any evidence:			
For each of the following characteristics, summarise any existing data, consultation activity, interpretation of the impacts and actions that can be taken to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts:			
Characteristic:	Data and consultation	Summary of impact	Actions
Disability	Sevenoaks District Community Plan; Sevenoaks Health & Wellbeing Strategy & Action Plan.	The procurement process being recommended will require the successful bidder to have an equality and diversity policy and a staff training programme in place.	WKEP Aim: Events and activities are open to all and raise awareness
	Local Plan 2040 – evidence assessment (supply, demand and need between now and 2040).	The successful bidder will work to promote opportunities for people with a disability to use the services provided at the council’s leisure facilities.	
		Demographic information will be collected by the leisure providers where people provide demographic and equalities information when they subscribe. This information is reported through the contract management process.	
		The new leisure contract will require the operator to take account of the different needs of users, existing and prospective, in structuring their leisure offer. This will relate both to customer service, in ensuring users receive a consistently appropriate and high standard of service regardless of background and needs, and ensuring that need-specific activities.	

Draft EqIA Template – for DECISIONS

Carers	As above	<p>The procurement process being recommended will require the successful bidder to have an equality and diversity policy and a staff training programme in place.</p> <p>The facilities and health and wellbeing interventions will be open to all and will continue to provide opportunities for carers to access services.</p> <p>The future contract will build upon existing initiatives to ensure that there is a programme of holiday activities that children of different ages can participate in, as well as ways to increase the participation of families in health and wellbeing activities.</p> <p>Concessionary memberships are included within the procurement specification.</p>	<p>WKEP Aim: Events and activities are open to all and raise awareness</p>
			<p>WKEP Aim: Events and activities are open to all and raise awareness</p>
Race	As above	<p>The procurement process being recommended will require the successful bidder to have an equality and diversity policy and a staff training programme in place.</p> <p>The facilities and health and wellbeing interventions will be open to all.</p> <p>Demographic information will be collected by the leisure providers where people provide demographic and equalities information when they subscribe. This information is reported through the contract management process.</p>	<p>WKEP Aim: Events and activities are open to all and raise awareness</p>
			<p>WKEP Aim: Events and activities are open to all and raise awareness</p>
Gender	As above	<p>The procurement process being recommended will require the successful bidder to have an equality and diversity policy and a staff training programme in place.</p>	<p>WKEP Aim: Events and activities are open to all and raise awareness</p>
			<p>WKEP Aim: Events and activities are open to all and raise awareness</p>

Draft EqIA Template – for DECISIONS

		<p>The facilities and health and wellbeing interventions will be open to all.</p> <p>Demographic information will be collected by the leisure providers where people provide demographic and equalities information when they subscribe. This information is reported through the contract management process.</p>	
Age	As above	<p>The procurement process being recommended will require the successful bidder to have an equality and diversity policy and a staff training programme in place.</p> <p>The facilities and health and wellbeing interventions will be open to all.</p> <p>Demographic information will be collected by the leisure providers where people provide demographic and equalities information when they subscribe. This information is reported through the contract management process.</p> <p>The operator contract will ensure that the leisure operator provides classes/activities that are tailored to the needs of different age groups, including sessions that are open only to a specified age range</p> <p>Concessionary memberships are included within the procurement specification.</p>	<p>WKEP Aim: Events and activities are open to all and raise awareness</p>
Religion / Belief	As above	<p>The procurement process being recommended will require the successful bidder to have an equality and diversity policy and a staff training programme in place.</p> <p>The facilities and health and wellbeing interventions will be open to all.</p>	<p>WKEP Aim: Events and activities are open to all and raise awareness</p>

Draft EqIA Template – for DECISIONS

		Demographic information will be collected by the leisure providers where people provide demographic and equalities information when they subscribe. This information is reported through the contract management process.	
Sexual Orientation	As above	<p>The procurement process being recommended will require the successful bidder to have an equality and diversity policy and a staff training programme in place.</p> <p>The facilities and health and wellbeing interventions will be open to all.</p> <p>Demographic information will be collected by the leisure providers where people provide demographic and equalities information when they subscribe. This information is reported through the contract management process.</p>	<p>WKEP Aim: Events and activities are open to all and raise awareness</p>
Pregnancy / Maternity	As above	<p>The procurement process being recommended will require the successful bidder to have an equality and diversity policy and a staff training programme in place.</p> <p>The facilities and health and wellbeing interventions will be open to all.</p> <p>Demographic information will be collected by the leisure providers where people provide demographic and equalities information when they subscribe. This information is reported through the contract management process.</p>	<p>WKEP Aim: Events and activities are open to all and raise awareness</p>
Marital or Civil Partnership Status	As above	<p>The procurement process being recommended will require the successful bidder to have an equality and diversity policy and a staff training programme in place.</p> <p>The facilities and health and wellbeing interventions will be open to all.</p>	<p>WKEP Aim: Events and activities are open to all and raise awareness</p>

Draft EqIA Template – for DECISIONS

		Demographic information will be collected by the leisure providers where people provide demographic and equalities information when they subscribe. This information is reported through the contract management process. There is no anticipated impact in respect of residents who are or are not married or in a civil partnership.	
Gender reassignment	As above	The procurement process being recommended will require the successful bidder to have an equality and diversity policy and a staff training programme in place. The facilities and health and wellbeing interventions will be open to all. Demographic information will be collected by the leisure providers where people provide demographic and equalities information when they subscribe. This information is reported through the contract management process.	WKEP Aim: Events and activities are open to all and raise awareness
Summary of impacts : (to be included in committee reports)	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 paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people.		
Please tick the outcome of this assessment:	No impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Adjust the policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Continue the policy <input type="checkbox"/>
Date assessment will be reviewed:	01/05/2031		

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Appendix D – Guidance to new HMRC VAT ruling

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) issued a Brief - Revenue & Customs Brief 3 (2023) - on changes to the VAT treatment of Leisure Services supplied by Local Authorities. This note explains the background, what has changed, and what Authorities need to consider now.

Background

HMRC have historically regarded the in-house provision of leisure services by Authorities to be a taxable business activity. Some Authorities have chosen to outsource leisure centres to Charitable Trusts, which were regarded by HMRC as eligible bodies for a VAT exemption on sport supplies, meaning that they don't need to charge VAT to users of the sports facilities covered. However, the Trusts are also unable to recover much of the VAT incurred on related expenditure.

In 2017, following litigation by the London Borough of Ealing, HMRC accepted that Authorities could also be treated as eligible bodies for the VAT exemption used by the Trusts. They didn't force Authorities to apply VAT exemption, and many chose not to due to the impact on their Partial Exemption calculations – which could have adversely affected VAT recovery on expenditure across the whole Authority.

More recently, Chelmsford City Council, Midlothian Council and Mid-Ulster Council all successfully contested that leisure services were provided under a special legal regime, which was applicable only to Authorities. Within England, this is Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (“the Act”). Charges under special legal regimes can only be treated as non-business if doing so would not significantly distort competition. However, HMRC issued their Brief conceding this aspect before the courts could consider it.

The advantage of non-business treatment under Chelmsford (or Midlothian in Scotland and Mid-Ulster in Northern Ireland), rather than VAT exemption under Ealing, is that income is still relieved from VAT - but without the same risk of affecting the recovery of VAT on expenditure.

What is covered by the Brief?

HMRC say that it covers Authorities' provision of in-house leisure services to members of the public. Our interpretation of the Brief is that non-business treatment applies to:

- Charges for the casual use of Authorities' sports facilities – within leisure centres, schools, or elsewhere.
- Bookings of such facilities, where the criteria for the existing series of lets or continuous let VAT exemptions aren't met.

Where the above supplies are made by a third party acting as the agent of an Authority, we consider that non-business treatment applies to charges made to the public. However, it would not apply to charges made by third parties acting as principal. Care should be taken to determine the structure in place.

The Brief also excludes:

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- Lettings of sports facilities which meet the criteria for a series of lets or a continuous let, or any non-sporting lets. These remain exempt from VAT unless the option to tax has been exercised by the Authority.
- Charges for classes/tuition provided by the Authority. These remain exempt from VAT.
- Catering/vending, and other supplies of goods. These remain business activities, mainly subject to VAT, although some charges for cold takeaway food may be eligible for zero rating.
- Car parking. Any charges for off-street parking remain subject to VAT.

HMRC published updated guidance on 15 November 2023 accepting non-business treatment applies to:

- memberships;
- facility visits;
- lettings of sports facilities;
- lettings of non-sports facilities for sports, such as a community centre in some cases;
- leases of local authority-run sports facilities;
- letting local authority recreation grounds for sports events; and
- sports tuition and education.

Action to be taken by Authorities

Authorities no longer need to charge VAT on supplies covered by the Brief. When they stop, there is no requirement to reduce the prices charged to customers.

The consequences of the revised VAT treatment should be considered as part of any future evaluation over whether to outsource or insource leisure services. In-house operation is now likely to be more VAT-efficient than outsourced, as Authorities' will largely be able to make the same supplies "VAT-free" as Trusts can, but with the benefit of VAT recovery on expenditure. However, HMRC's Brief still leaves income sources as VAT-exempt (so some impact on Partial Exemption calculations).

This note is intended to be a general guide to the changes and does not constitute VAT advice. Arrangements for the provision of leisure services can vary considerably.

Source: PS TAX