

Sevenoaks District

Financial Strategy

2010-21



Our vision

To lead the whole community in meeting its needs; and to work in partnership to improve the quality of life within the District

Strategic priorities

Balanced communities Tackling the need for a range of housing within the District and building community cohesion.

The Sustainable Community Plan Allowing the community priorities to be at the heart of the District Council.

The Local Development Framework The Sustainable Community Plan objectives in a spatial form.

A Sustainable budget Understanding the burden of Council Tax and providing top quality services that the public want at a price they can afford.

We are always interested in ways to improve our Strategy, and the way we present our financial information, and would welcome your suggestions

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Publication details

Purpose of the Strategy

To inform Sevenoaks District residents and stakeholders of the Council's financial performance and plans for 2010-21

Publication date

December 2010

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Cllr Brian Ramsay
**Cabinet Member and
Portfolio holder for Value
for Money**

Welcome to Sevenoaks District Council's Financial Strategy 2010-21 which sets out the key financial policies, risks and assumptions which are shaping our approach for the medium and long term. The Council has traditionally been supported by a four year Financial Strategy but in recognition of the changing economic environment and the need to have longer and more sustainable plans, it is now putting in place a ten year Strategy.

The Coalition Government is faced with a significant financial and economic challenge and is now starting to put in place strategies to address this, with implications for all areas of the public sector. A combination of national and local factors means that District local government in general, and Sevenoaks District Council in particular, face a completely unprecedented challenge, which will require unprecedented solutions.

In the last few years, the Council has reduced its expenditure by £5m but has been able to maintain the range of services and during this period has improved performance, productivity and quality of services across the board. The Council is nationally recognised for its financial management, value for money and performance, however the sheer size of the savings required means we face some very difficult decisions, especially as we have already made substantial savings in previous years.

The aim of this Strategy is to ensure that the Council's limited financial resources are used wisely and in a sustainable way, to best support residents' priorities. In order to effectively manage the very difficult financial position a number of key innovations have been introduced, and these have been incorporated into the Strategy:

- A 10-year budget;
- Flexibility between years through the use of a Budget Stabilisation Reserve;
- More effective use of earmarked reserves and capital receipts;
- The review and tighter management of inflationary pressures; and
- An earlier and streamlined service and financial planning process.

Purpose

This Strategy aims to:

- support our vision and priorities
- set out the Council's future financial prospects, with a new ten-year Financial Plan as an integral part
- ensure a strategic approach is taken to the management of the Council's finances, Council Tax, and budget setting
- assist the Council's strategic planning and policy making
- demonstrate stewardship of community resources and
- provide details of our key financial policies

Key financial objectives

The Council will:

- implement an earlier and streamlined service and financial planning process, allowing early action to reduce net expenditure
- agree a 10-year budget plan with flexibility between years, which makes more effective use of remaining earmarked reserves and capital receipts, in order to secure a sound financial base for the District
- ensure a minimum General Fund Reserve level of 10% of net service expenditure is maintained
- review and more tightly manage inflationary pressures
- continually review services to deliver them in a "value-for-money" way

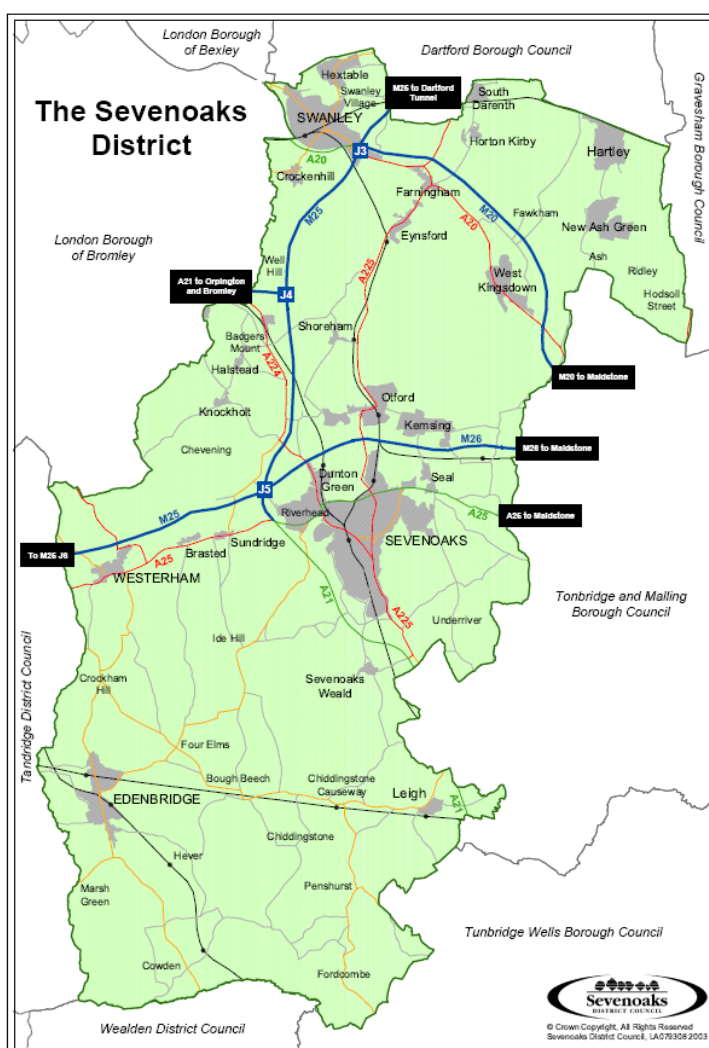
Contribution to delivering the Council's objectives

As a result of its Financial Strategy, the Council has been successful over the past five years in increasing financial

sustainability and in releasing resources for high priority services through:

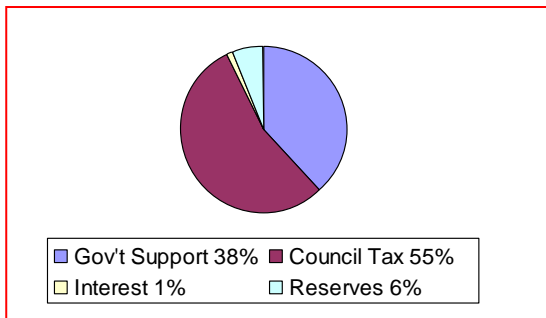
- improved value for money; and
- the movement of resources away from low priority services.

This has enabled the Council to focus on delivering high quality services based on Members' priorities and consultation with residents and stakeholders through the Community Plan. In financial terms it has allowed the Council to move away from its reliance on general fund reserves to the tune of around £2 million a year, which has ensured that the general fund reserves have remained largely unchanged.



This section explains how Sevenoaks District Council raises its income and where we spend money.

Where the money comes from



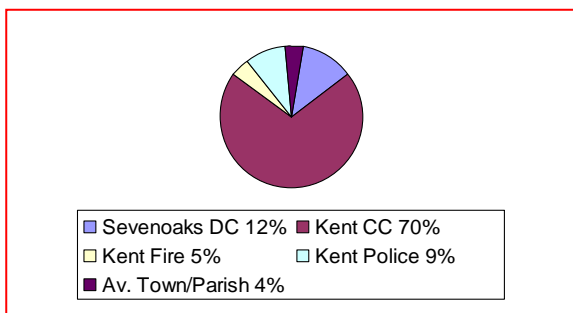
Council Tax collection

Sevenoaks District Council collects the Council Tax charge, on behalf of Government, not only for itself but also for Kent County Council, Kent Fire & Rescue Service, Kent Police and all the local town and parish councils.

Each authority sets its own charge that contributes to the total. In 2010-11 the total average charge, at band D, for all these authorities is £1,501.21.

Sevenoaks District Council's part of the charge is £181.89, 12% of the total. Sevenoaks' Council Tax has increased by 2.9% in 2010-11.

Council Tax raises about £9.2million for the Council.



Government funding

Of all the 12 district councils in Kent, Sevenoaks District Council receives the lowest grant from Government per head of population.

For 2010-11 Sevenoaks District Council gets £55.95 per head of population. The Kent average is £78.96 and the highest grant is £100.19.

Government support provides about £6.3million to Sevenoaks District Council.

Government grant has increased by 0.5%, but the funding level in future years is expected to reduce.

Reserves

The Council currently has about £21million in the bank and has been debt-free for many years. However, only £3.7million of this (the General Fund) could be used to help balance the budget, which would be quickly used up unless the Council's element of Council Tax is increased or spending is reduced.

Most of the reserves are earmarked, or set-aside, for particular purposes. £4.7million is set aside to maintain the Council's buildings, and computer systems (the Asset Maintenance Reserve) – this is not sustainable in the longer term (10 years plus). A further £3.5million is allocated for a shortfall in the Council's part of the pension fund and this Pension Deficit Reserve will be fully used by 2013 requiring an extra £1.2m to be drawn from revenue after that date. £2.5million is for specific provisions and £0.5million is money from asset sales which cannot be spent on the running cost of services.

Reserves as at 31 March 2010:

Pension	£3.5m
Asset maintenance	£4.7m
General fund	£3.7m
Other earmarked	£5.8m
Provisions	£2.5m
Capital receipts	£0.5m
Total	£20.7m

How the money is spent

In 2010-11 the Council will spend about £17.3million on services for local people.

Service	2010-11
Community and housing	£2.5m
Refuse collection and recycling	£2.2m
Environmental services and licensing	£1.4m
Housing benefits	£0.7m
Leisure services	£0.8m
Street cleaning	£1.4m
Parking and transport services	- £0.6m
Planning services	£3.0m
Other services*	£4.6m
Asset maintenance	£0.7m
Total	£16.7m

* Other services includes Local Tax collection (£0.3m), Members' Allowances (£0.3m), Pension Deficit Contribution (£1.6m) and Corporate Management (£0.9m)

Looking back

The Council's financial strategy over the past five years has been successful in increasing financial sustainability and in releasing resources for high priority areas through:

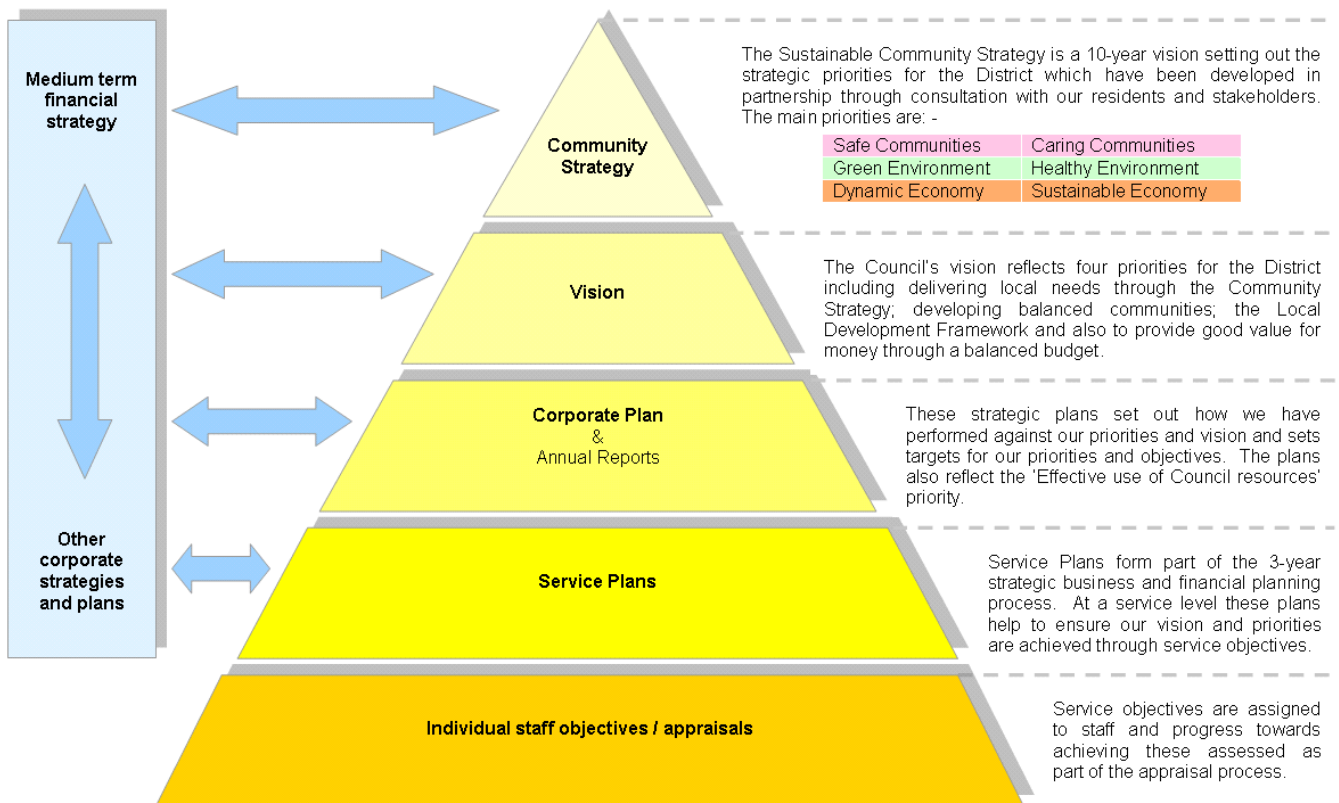
- improved value for money; and
- the movement of resources away from low priority services.

This has enabled the Council to focus on delivering high quality services based on Members' priorities and consultation with residents and stakeholders through the Community Plan. In financial terms it has allowed the Council to move away from its reliance on general fund reserves to the tune of around £2 million a year, which has ensured that the general fund reserves have remained largely unchanged.

As part of the strategic business and budget planning process for 2009/13, the Council reviewed its financial position including prospects for the future, and agreed a four-year savings plan starting in April 2009. The Plan will deliver £1.5 million of savings over this period, with the majority of savings to be delivered in the first year.

More information is available from our website at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk, including our Statement of Accounts and summary.

How our plans work together



The medium to long term **financial strategy 2010-21** enables the Council to deliver its corporate objectives by setting out the financial framework within which the Council's vision is delivered. Its key financial objectives provide the Council with the financial stability required to develop long term plans with its partners.

The **Financial Plan** within this Strategy takes into account the financial implications of actions agreed by the Council to deliver its vision. It informs and is informed by the Service and Performance Plans, which set out, for each service, how the Council's priorities will be delivered, including the financial and performance implications.

The Council's **IT Strategy** sets out how we will use information technology to support the achievement of the Council's priorities. The financial implications included in that Strategy are reflected in the Financial Plan.

Similarly, the **Workforce Development Plan** sets out how the Council makes sure it has the best workforce to deliver its priorities. The financial implications of that Plan, such as employee terms and conditions and the Recruitment & Retention Policy, are also taken into account in the Financial Plan.

Our Strategy

Sevenoaks District Council developed its first medium term Financial Strategy in 2005. The Strategy is reviewed, updated and rolled forward each year. Our Financial Plan coincides with this Strategy and is managed in the same way.

The Strategy for 2010-21 has been updated to include the 2010-11 budget and sets out the key financial policies, risks and assumptions for the next ten years.

Although Council finance can be complex, Sevenoaks District Council is keen to help keep stakeholders informed about how we manage money.

Purpose

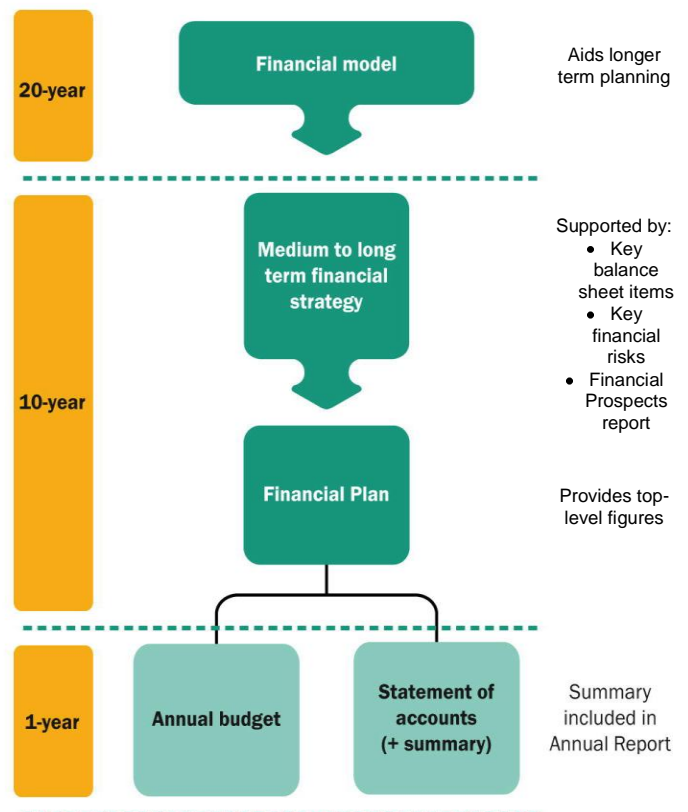
The Strategy aims to:

- support our vision, aims and priorities
- set out the Council’s future financial prospects, with the 10-year Financial Plan as an integral part
- assist the Council’s strategic planning and policy making
- ensure a strategic approach is taken to the management of the Council’s finances, Council Tax, and budget setting
- demonstrate stewardship of community resources
- provide details of our key financial policies

Timing

The Strategy relates to current and future years. The Council has detailed budgets for revenue expenditure for 2010-11 and for capital investment for four years to 2013-14. It also has a summary level 10-year Financial Plan to 2020-21, together with a linked Key Balance Sheet Items Plan, again to 2021.

The 10-year Plan has been developed to aid longer term planning, through the identification of longer term trends and pressures. This allows for the financial strategy to be tested for sensitivity and for issues and developments with financial impacts to be managed. As with all prediction tools, the level of accuracy and precision reduces in years beyond 2010/11.



Managing the Strategy

The following processes are in place to manage the strategy:

- The Strategy will be produced for our stakeholders with their involvement. The Strategy aims to be clear and easily understood
- The Strategy will be reviewed annually as part of the budget and 10-year financial planning process, to update it and to assess the contribution it makes to the achievement of the Council's priorities
- Achievement of savings will be monitored in addition to normal financial monitoring
- Growth items and service pressures will be dealt with separately as part of the budget planning process
- Flexibility between budgets and between years is built in, through the Council's Finance Procedure Rules. This is key to the successful delivery of the Financial Plan.



Objectives, assumptions and risks

Financial objectives – key innovations this year

Given the difficult national financial position, the Council has revised its financial objectives, in order to ensure it is best placed to deliver a resilient, flexible and more long term Financial Strategy. The new objectives build on work in previous years and focus on key issues such as reduced ear-marked reserves, increased instability and uncertainty and reduced government funding.

The Council will:

- **Streamline its service and financial planning process** – the revised process is less bureaucratic with shorter timescales. This frees up Member and officer time and also allows the budget to be set earlier, reducing uncertainty for residents and staff and allowing the delivery of planned savings by the start of the financial year. A key component of the revised process is the recognition of the need to make a high proportion of savings in the first year, thus reducing the overall level of savings required.
- **Set a 10-year balanced budget** – using a longer timeframe enables the Council to manage peaks and troughs more effectively and also highlights longer term pressures that are masked by focussing on a shorter timeframe.
- **Make flexible use of the Budget Stabilisation Fund** – within a structured and balanced budget the ability to use underspends to absorb overspends in later years increases resilience at a time of increased uncertainty.
- **Make more effective use of earmarked reserves** – using a longer planning timeframe highlighted the consequences of current reserve

depletion. Instead the use of these reserves will be smoothed over the 10-year plan, allowing more time to find sustainable solutions to financial pressures.

- **Structure its use of capital receipts** – this will allow the capital programme to receive some level of realistic, predictable and long-term funding.
- **Review and more tightly manage its inflationary pressures** – the use of the 10-year planning timeframe highlighted the Council's structural inflationary gap and the pressure this placed on its budget. Inflationary pressures are being reviewed and managed to reduce this pressure, though this remains a key risk area for the Council.

In the context of these objectives, the Council will continue to:

- ensure a minimum General Fund Reserve level of 10% of net service expenditure is maintained
- aim to preserve priority services by diverting resources from non-priority services
- respond to new demands and pressures for services in the most cost-effective way
- apply project appraisal, business planning and affordability processes including whole life costings to any significant new developments
- consider alternative ways of delivering services, including partnership working, where appropriate
- look for efficiency improvements and to review charges for services
- bid for external funding, recognising that some service enhancements can only be achieved in this way
- ensure service priorities are included in its Capital Investment Strategy, and that this is fully funded

- looks for best value from developers in terms of Section 106 contributions for community interest

Key assumptions

Prior to setting the budget each year the Council considers its financial position through a review of its financial prospects, this Financial Strategy and the 10-year Financial Plan. The Plan is reviewed and rolled forward each year.

The Council's current assumptions are:

- continued Government constraints on the budget through reduced spending targets, cash releasing efficiency assumptions, reduced grant and limits on Council Tax increases
- capital expenditure to be based on the presently approved programme with no change in finance rules
- liabilities arising from future improvement/renovation of Council assets will be financed increasingly from revenue budgets rather than from revenue reserves set aside
- the effects of inflation each year on the Council's budget will be identified and managed, and any inflationary pressures offset by savings/income increases
- the Plan is in line with the Council's plan to reduce reliance on the use of reserves
- there is flexibility via the Budget Stabilisation Reserve to offset overspends in one year against underspends in other years

Looking at specific major items, key assumptions for 2011/12 are:

- pay cost inflation award 0%
- non-pay costs inflation of 2.5%
- Income increasing by 2.5%
- 1. 5% return on investments
- Council Tax increase of 0%
- Government Grant reduction of 10%

- An additional Government grant of 2.5% for four years as a reward for a Council Tax freeze in 2011/12

Key financial risks

The key financial risks identified by the Council are:

- Grant settlement worse than estimated
- pay cost inflation above assumption
- energy cost inflation above assumption
- variable income sources not hitting budget targets
- Pension Fund deficit funding
- Asset Maintenance funding
- delivery of the high number of planned savings over the next four years
- new Government requirements without adequate funding

These risks, their possible impact on the Council and the actions in place to mitigate them are set out in more detail in the budget reports and the Financial Prospects Report.

Budget strategy and process

The Strategic Service and Budget Planning Process is reviewed and updated each year, taking into account current best practice and lessons learnt from previous years.

Its key components are:

- Clear Vision – The Council's ambitions and aspirations for the District are set out under the theses of the Community Plan which in turn has helped to inform and develop a three to five year Council vision.
- This Financial Strategy and a review of future financial prospects.
- Forecast of Resources (ten-year plan for revenue, capital and reserves)
- Service Prioritisation – Although the Council has a clear focus in delivering its three to five year vision, it also has

a number of other balancing priorities which would need to be taken into consideration in service prioritisation, for example, the requirement to deliver statutory services. Therefore, a robust system for service prioritisation is an essential component.

- Budget Strategy – This sets out the key information, approach and ground rules for the budget setting process and refers to key elements of the medium term financial strategy, the financial plan, service prioritisation and service planning, including risk issues.
- Service Planning – Each service area produces a four-year costed service and performance plan (SAPP)
- Member involvement and challenge, through consideration of options at Scrutiny Committees, review of risks by the Finance Advisory Group and approval of the overall strategy by the Performance and Governance Committee.

Prioritisation and Allocation of Resources

The Council's strategic service prioritisation process ensures resource allocation is service-driven rather than finance-led in order to:

- maintain focus on priorities
- communicate and engage with the public and partners
- align resources to priorities
- support decision-making in a difficult financial climate

Budget monitoring

All budgets are the responsibility of Heads of Service, and are managed on that basis.

Comprehensive financial monitoring information is reported monthly to Heads of Service. Service level summary reports are made to Management Team,

Cabinet Members, and the Finance Advisory Group, and is available to all Members electronically. Strategic summary information is reviewed by the Performance & Governance Committee.

The Finance Advisory Group assists both Cabinet and the Performance & Governance Committee in monitoring financial performance by identifying areas of significant financial concern. Where variations are identified through the monitoring process, actions is taken within or across services to bring overall expenditure back in line with budget, to ensure the financial plan targets are met.

Other Key Financial Policies

Investment Strategy

The Council is required to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an annual investment strategy. That strategy sets out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. A similar requirement is contained in the Council's Finance Procedure Rules.

The strategy covers prospects for interest rates, Investment policy and strategy, current treasury position and suggested matrices and limits.

The full Strategy is approved by Council each year as part of the budget process. The decisions made by Members are then fed into the calculation of expected investment income included in the Financial Plan.

Control framework and Assurance

Section 151 Officer

Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires the Council to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and requires one officer to be nominated to take responsibility for the administration of those affairs. At Sevenoaks, Dr Pav Ramewal, Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Resources Director, is the Section 151 Officer.

The Section 151 Officer has a number of duties, these include:

- Ensuring lawfulness and financial prudence of decision-making
- Administration of financial affairs
- Contributing to corporate management
- Providing advice
- Giving financial information

As part of the annual budget process the Section 151 Officer makes a statutory statement on the robustness of the Council's budget, and the adequacy of the reserves.



Audit and inspection

The Audit Commission is an independent watchdog (sponsored by the Government) driving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local public services to deliver better outcomes for everyone.

The Audit Commission is charged with responsibility for conducting/arranging the external audit and inspection visits of local authorities; in order to assess their compliance with sound accounting principles including other regulatory

requirements and overall performance, and effectiveness.

From 2010-11 onwards the Audit Commission has arranged for its own auditors to conduct the necessary audits and inspections for Sevenoaks District Council.

The Council's statutory Statement of Accounts is prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom and audited an external audit company, under the auspices of the Audit Commission - the Government's watchdog organisation.

Finance Advisory Group

As well as reviewing the monthly monitoring reports, this cross-party Group feeds back comments and concerns to both Executive and Scrutiny functions. It is led by the VfM Portfolio Holder and investigates identified areas of financial concern. It also reviews the Council's overall financial health using a range of financial indicators.

Our performance

The Council's Organisational Assessment (December 2009) set out the outcome of the new, much broader Organisational Assessment for 2008/09. The Council achieved the top score of 4 for both Use of Resources and Managing Performance. These scores combined gave the Council an overall Organisational Assessment score of 4, 'Performs Excellently'.

Area of assessment	Score
Managing finances (including financial planning and reporting, and the achievement of efficiencies)	4 out of 4
Governing the business (including procurement, governance, information use, risk management and internal control)	3 out of 4
Managing resources (including workforce planning and management)	4 out of 4
Overall score for Use of Resources	4 out of 4
Managing performance	4 out of 4



Value for Money, savings and efficiencies

Sevenoaks District Council is committed to delivering value for money as an integral part of its corporate strategy. While it has a specific responsibility to achieve VfM from its use of public funds, this principle extends to all sources of funding. Similarly, the responsibility for pursuing VfM lies with all staff, and not just those with financial duties.

The practical measures adopted by the Council to maintain this momentum include:

- having financial procedures and rules that encourage managers to manage their services responsibly
- having clearly defined responsible budget managers
- effective use of technology
- having financial reporting arrangements that are clear, transparent and timely, all of which promotes accountability to elected Members and the public
- ensuring that contractual terms deliver efficiency gains from contractors and Direct Services
- the role of the Value for Money Portfolio Holder
- considering alternative methods of service delivery, such as partnership working or the use of external contractors
- challenging the need to replace staff when posts become vacant
- streamlining back-office functions

- carrying out indepth scrutiny reviews of a number of services each year, led by Scrutiny Committee Members
- ensuring that Members and Managers are equipped and supported to make high quality financial decisions, through tailored training, effective and customer focussed financial reporting and analysis, and service specialisms within the Finance Team.
- comparing service costs with those at similar authorities, to check whether learning from other sites could lead to further efficiencies at Sevenoaks

Annual efficiency targets

The Government has set a target for the public sector to achieve cash releasing efficiency savings of 3% in 2008/09 and 2009/10, increasing to 4% in 2010/11. To meet the Government's expectations the Council would be required to make savings totalling £1.75m between 2008-11.

Between 2008 and 2011 the Council has made efficiency savings totalling £2.3m, exceeding its savings target by £0.5m.

In September 2010 the Government abolished the need for Councils to continue to provide information on efficiency savings. Sevenoaks District Council has a strong record in delivering efficiencies and will continue to monitor the delivery of savings through its savings plan.

Our Partners

The Council is committed to open and clear communication with all of our stakeholders. Transparency and accountability are key strands of our approach. We will seek to consult with and involve our stakeholders; and welcome views on how we shape our services.

The Council uses:

- its website
- In Shape (Council publication distributed to all households)
- press releases
- local forums and groups
- staff meetings and
- its own democratic processes

to promote the widest possible public financial accountability.

Summarised budget and outturn information is published along with an Annual Report to ensure the highest levels of stewardship reporting.

Its budget consultation process has been reviewed, in order to promote the maximum understanding and involvement in the Council's financial affairs.

Partnership working

Sevenoaks District Council works with many partner agencies, other local authorities, the voluntary and community, business and private sectors, the faith community and the 30 town and parish councils across the District.

These links are greatly valued by the Council and contribute significantly to the provision of services and community well-being.

The Council has developed a **Partnership Toolkit** which outlines the approaches to be applied when considering both introducing new partnerships and reviewing existing arrangements. It provides a basis for examining the key issues that require consideration, to ensure that any potential problems identified in relation to partnership working are confronted, assessed, overcome and avoided in the future.



Risk Management

Sevenoaks District Council recognises that it has a responsibility to manage hazards and risks and supports a structured and focused approach to managing them by approval of the **Risk Management Strategy and Plan**.

Sevenoaks District Council is aware that some risks will always exist and will not be eliminated. However, where appropriate, actions can be taken to mitigate these risks.

The Council works hard to identify positive risks (opportunities) that could enable it to enhance the service it provides to its residents.

Performance management

Our performance management arrangements, supported by a dedicated software system, allow us to look for trends over time, compare our performance with other authorities and produce meaningful reports which can be used as a guide for community, organisational, service and individual improvements. We are also able to monitor targets to ensure they are both achievable and challenging.

In order to ensure that we can trust our data we have introduced a Data Quality Policy and identified areas we need to improve and these are set out in our Data Quality Action Plan, which is monitored on a regular basis. These arrangements are scrutinised by the Audit Commission and scored to encourage continuous improvement.

For details of our latest performance visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/performance

Managing people

As a **major employer**, the District Council recognises that our staff are our main asset.

We recognise that both Members and Officers are integral to achieving our vision and priorities, through working together in an open, honest and co-operative way.

We set ourselves high standards and recognise that we can only achieve these through the skill and motivation of our staff and therefore seek to make working for the Council a rewarding experience where everyone's contribution is valued.

The **Workforce Development Plan** is about ensuring that the Council, within its financial framework, has a flexible, developed and motivated workforce,



capable of delivering its priorities over the coming years, and making Sevenoaks District Council a place where all staff:

- understand and feel committed to the aims of the Council
- achieve their full potential
- treat customers, colleagues and Members with respect
- feel enabled and rewarded for what they do

To achieve this, the Strategy focuses on:

- Leadership
- Continuous improvement and learning
- Communication and involvement
- Developing a competent and motivated workforce
- Excellence in customer service
- Developing a healthy organisation

Making IT happen together

Developments in technology continue to be as rapid as always. New technologies offering scope for new ways of working and improving service present great opportunities if adopted in the right places, at the right time, for the right reasons.

Effective partnering between technology and the rest of the Council is essential, as the only way SDC will reap the benefits is if those responsible for the delivery of services fully understand the opportunities that are available to them through the use of technology.

Any changes to systems need to be co-ordinated with the existing Council infrastructure so current SDC technology will be a key consideration in future developments. The consolidation of existing IT projects is just as important and the planning of future work.

The key objectives of this IT Strategy are:

- To support current, planned and future use of operational IT systems throughout the Council and to improve the technological environment provided for Members and Officers
- To align existing and future technical solutions with business requirements, SDC's key priorities and the Community Plan
- To ensure the most comprehensive and appropriate set of access channels to Council services are made available to all citizens
- To ensure that IT is delivering excellent services to all its customers

- To contribute directly towards the Council's Value for Money initiatives



Capital investment and Asset management

The Council is required to "have regard to" the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

The Council has agreed that any new provision for **capital schemes** must be subject to formal appraisal processes. The Council's base capital programme covers mandatory improvement grants, IT investment and commercial vehicle replacements.

Capital Programme 2010/11:	£000
Vehicle replacements	700
Housing improvement grants	377
Information technology	76
Blighs Phase 2	100
Playground improvements	3
Total	1,256

The Council's housing stock was transferred to West Kent Housing Association in 1989 and therefore the **housing investment funding** allocated by the Government is directed, with the Council's agreement, through local Registered Social Landlords.

“Strategic Asset Management is the activity that seeks to align the asset base with the organisation’s corporate goals and objectives. It ensures that the land and buildings asset base of an organisation is optimately structured in the best corporate interest on the organisation concerned”

RICS Public Sector Asset Management Guidelines 2008

The Council reviews all its property holdings continuously, with a view to reducing the amount of surplus property, and promotes the transfer of local amenity land to the local town and parish councils if it is considered that that would provide more effective local management.

The Council works with social housing providers to, wherever possible, provide land to enable all ranges of social housing to be constructed especially in rural areas.

Earmarked funding has been set aside for future **asset maintenance** costs in the medium term. Also a sustainable renewal fund is in place for the Council’s commercial vehicle fleet.

The Asset Maintenance Action Plan and the 10-year asset maintenance assessments ensure that asset use and capital investment decisions are in line with key priorities and achieve value for money.

Asset Management is a major area of expenditure on the Council’s assets. The largest part of this expenditure is made in conjunction with partners, particularly Sencio Leisure, and is used in a way that gives service improvements alongside essential maintenance.

No assumptions are made in the current Financial Plan about the finances of the Blighs Phase 2 development, which is currently under discussion.

Our environmental footprint



We are committed to improving our environmental performance and reducing the environmental impact of our work.

The Council, along with its partners and the local community, made a commitment to tackle **climate change** by signing up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change (NDCC) in October 2007. Working with all sectors and industries in the local community the Council will aim to reduce energy use and congestion, improving the local environment and tackling fuel poverty.

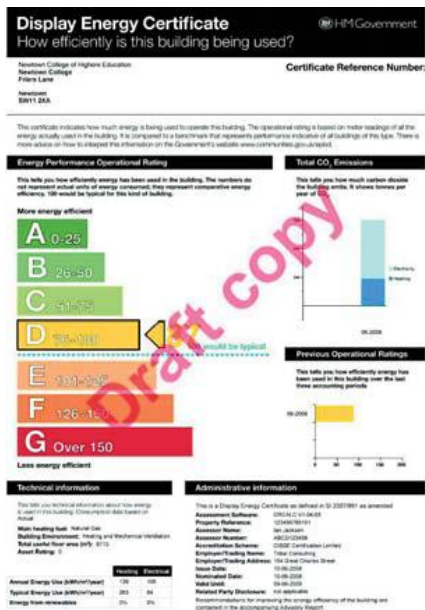
The Council aims to reduce its **carbon emissions** in line with Government targets.

Reductions in carbon use will be achieved by reducing travel, increasing the energy efficiency of our buildings and plant, reducing waste and increasing sustainable procurement. The focus will be on direct reductions in carbon emissions, as soon as possible, rather than a reliance on indirect carbon offsetting to achieve carbon neutrality.

Display Energy Certificate (DEC)

The Council, as public sector occupiers of buildings over 1,000m², are required to display Display Energy Certificates (DECs) in prominent places, clearly visible to the public - as part of the Energy Performance of Buildings (EPBD) (Certificates and Inspections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007.

A Display Energy Certificate shows the energy performance of a building based on the actual energy consumption as recorded annually.



Energy and water

We measure our energy and water consumption – more information is available from our Annual Report.

Our vehicle fleet uses sulphur-free diesel and new vehicles purchased comply with the latest European standards for engine efficiency and reductions in pollution. Fuel use per vehicle is monitored, to identify potential for further efficiencies.

Waste

Currently, we do not measure the amount of waste we generate at our office and depot. However we do recycle a significant proportion of our waste paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, cans and printer cartridges.

Draft Financial Plan 2010-11 to 2020-21

	Budget 2010/11	Plan 2011/12	Plan 2012/13	Plan 2013/14	Plan 2014/15	Plan 2015/16	Plan 2016/17	Plan 2017/18	Plan 2018/19	Plan 2019/20	Plan 2020/21
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure											
Net Service Expenditure c/f	16,711	16,711	14,700	14,361	14,292	14,749	15,338	15,928	16,520	17,114	17,707
Inflation		442	507	547	611	589	590	592	594	593	593
Pension Fund deficit: actuarial increase		300									
Net savings (approved in previous years)		-71	34	-25	-75						
Net savings (NEW)		-2,682	-880	-591	-79						
Net Service Expenditure b/f	16,711	14,700	14,361	14,292	14,749	15,338	15,928	16,520	17,114	17,707	18,300
Financing Sources											
Government Support	-6,348	-5,713	-5,078	-4,602	-4,126	-4,250	-4,378	-4,509	-4,644	-4,783	-4,926
Govt Support to offset C Tax freeze	0	-229	-229	-229	-229	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax	-9,172	-9,172	-9,172	-9,447	-9,730	-10,217	-10,728	-11,264	-11,827	-12,418	-13,039
Interest Receipts	-192	-167	-308	-335	-292	-259	-259	-259	-259	-259	-259
Contributions to Reserves	716	380	380	380	380	380	380	380	380	380	380
Contributions from Reserves	-1,715	-14	-645	-645	-645	-645	-645	-645	-645	-645	-645
Total Financing	-16,711	-14,915	-15,052	-14,878	-14,642	-14,991	-15,630	-16,297	-16,995	-17,725	-18,489
Budget Gap	0	-215	-691	-586	107	347	298	223	119	-18	-189

Cumulative 10 year position: -605

Assumptions

Government Support: -10% in 11/12 & 12/13, -7.5% in 13/14 & 14/15, 3% later years
 Council Tax: 0% in 11/12 & 12/13, 3% in 13/14 & 14/15, 5% later years
 Interest Receipts: 1.5% in 11/12, 3.1% in 12/13, 4% later years
 Pay award: 0% in 11/12 & 12/13, 1% in 13/14, 1.5% in 14/15, 2% later years

Increments: 1.5% in all years
 Other costs: 2.5% in 11/12 to 14/15, 1.75% later years
 Income: 2.5% in 11/12, 3% in 12/13, 3.5% in later years

Last updated 28 October 2010 – NOTE – to be updated for
 Cabinet 13 December 10

Balance Sheet	31/3/10	31/3/11	31/3/12	31/3/13	31/3/14	31/3/15	31/3/16	31/3/17	31/3/18	31/3/19	31/3/20
	Actual	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Long Term Assets											
Fixed Assets	20,989	20,793	20,205	17,909	17,713	17,517	17,321	17,125	16,929	16,733	16,537
Long-term Investments	739	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Long Term Debtors	403	364	325	286	248	223	198	173	148	142	142
	22,131	21,157	20,530	18,195	17,961	17,740	17,519	17,298	17,077	16,875	16,679
Current Assets											
Short-term Investments	18,667	15,104	15,481	15,982	15,794	14,932	13,770	12,717	11,739	10,846	10,024
Debtors	6,211	3,879	3,879	3,879	3,879	3,879	3,879	3,879	3,879	3,879	3,879
Other	241	241	241	241	241	241	241	241	241	241	241
	25,119	19,224	19,601	20,102	19,914	19,052	17,890	16,837	15,859	14,966	14,144
Current Liabilities	-5,224	-4,954	-4,955	-4,956	-4,957	-4,958	-4,959	-4,960	-4,961	-4,751	-4,752
Deferred Creditors	-371	-370	-369	-368	-367	-366	-365	-364	-363	-362	-361
Provisions	-2,469	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grants Deferred Account	-289	-132	-129	-126	-123	-120	-117	-114	-111	-108	-105
Pensions Liabilities	-58,904	-57,494	-56,084	-54,674	-53,264	-51,854	-50,444	-49,034	-47,624	-46,214	-44,804
TOTAL ASSETS LESS LIABILITIES	-20,007	-22,569	-21,406	-21,827	-20,836	-20,506	-20,476	-20,337	-20,123	-19,594	-19,199
Deferred Capital Receipts	55	41	27	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Adjustment Account	17,543	17,504	16,919	14,626	14,433	14,240	14,047	13,854	13,661	13,468	13,275
Revaluation Reserve	3,306	3,306	3,306	3,306	3,306	3,306	3,306	3,306	3,306	3,306	3,306
Financial Instruments Adj Account	-211	-211	-211	-211	-211	-211	-211	-211	-211	0	0
Collection Fund Adj Account	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Usable Capital Receipts Reserve	537	924	1,244	1,958	1,858	1,758	1,658	1,558	1,458	1,358	1,258
Earmarked Reserves	13,954	9,648	9,680	9,442	9,329	8,542	7,455	6,477	5,574	4,775	4,053
Pensions Reserve	-58,904	-57,494	-56,084	-54,674	-53,264	-51,854	-50,444	-49,034	-47,624	-46,214	-44,804
General Fund Reserve	3,713	3,713	3,713	3,713	3,713	3,713	3,713	3,713	3,713	3,713	3,713
TOTAL NET WORTH	-20,007	-22,569	-21,406	-21,827	-20,836	-20,506	-20,476	-20,337	-20,123	-19,594	-19,199

Glossary of terms

Budget	A statement of the Council's plans for net revenue and capital expenditure over a specified period of time.
Capital Expenditure	The acquisition, construction, enhancement or replacement of tangible fixed assets (i.e. land, buildings, structures etc), the acquisition of investments and the making of grants, advances or other financial assistance towards expenditure by other persons on tangible fixed assets or investments.
Capital Programme	The capital projects the Council proposes to undertake over a set period of time.
Capital Receipts	Money obtained on the sale of a capital asset.
Collection Fund	The fund into which council tax and non-domestic rates are paid, and from which we meet demands by preceptors and payments to the non-domestic rates pool.
Council Tax	A local tax set by Councils to help pay for local services. There is one bill per dwelling based on its relative value compared to others in the area. There are discounts, including where only one adult lives in the dwelling. Bills will also be reduced for properties with people on low incomes, some people with disabilities and some other special cases.
Creditors	People or organisations from whom we have received goods or services and as a consequence owe money.
Debtors	People or organisations owe money to the Council.
Deferred Capital Receipts	Capital Receipts which will accrue in the future, such as mortgage repayments.
General Fund	The main revenue fund of the Council from which payments are made to provide services and into which receipts are paid, including the District Council's share of council tax income.
Government Grants	Payments by government towards either the revenue or capital cost of local authority services. These may be either in respect of particular services called specific grants, e.g. housing benefits, or in aid of local services generally, e.g. revenue support grant.
Provisions	Funds to provide for liabilities or losses which are known obligations, but are uncertain as to amounts or dates.
Reserves	The general capital and revenue balances of the Council. There are two types of reserves which might be described as either available or not available to finance expenditure. Revenue reserves which result from monies being set aside, surpluses or delayed expenditure can be spent or earmarked at the discretion of the Council. The usable capital receipts reserve is also available to the extent allowed by statute. However, other capital reserves are not available to meet expenditure, e.g. the reserves brought about by the new capital accounting system.

Sevenoaks District

Financial Strategy 2010-21

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