

07 July 2022 at 7.00 pm

Council Chamber, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks

Published: 29.06.22



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## Cabinet

### Membership:

Chairman, Cllr. Fleming; Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Dickins  
Cllrs. McArthur, Dyball, Maskell and Thornton

### 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. <b>Minutes</b>	(Pages 1 - 2)	
To agree the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26 May 2022, as a correct record		
2. <b>Declarations of interest</b>		
Any interests not already registered		
3. <b>Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)</b>		
4. <b>Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee, CIL Spending Board or Cabinet Advisory Committees (if any)</b>		
5. <b>Changes to Advisory Committee Memberships and other Organisations</b>	(Pages 3 - 4)	Charlotte Sinclair Tel: 01732 227165
6. <b>Financial Results Report 2021/22 Draft Outturn</b>	(Pages 5 - 30)	Alan Mitchell Tel: 01732227483
7. <b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan</b>	(Pages 31 - 42)	Chris Burchell Tel: 01732227136



8. **Annual Review of Parking Management 2022-23 Public Consultation** (Pages 43 - 62) Trevor Kennett  
Tel: 01732 227407



REPORTS ALSO CONSIDERED BY THE CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEES

9. **Net Zero 2030 - Ebikes and Social Value** (Pages 63 - 74) Helen French  
Tel: 01732 227357

10. **Contaminated Land Strategy 2022 - 27** (Pages 75 - 102) Nick Chapman  
Tel: 01322 227167



11. **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Spending Board - Review of Governance** (Pages 103 - 126) Claire Pamperi  
Tel: 01732227221

12. **Local Plan timetable (LDS)** (Pages 127 - 134) Hannah Gooden  
Tel: 01732 227178



13. **Welcome Back Fund** (Pages 135 - 170) Emily Haswell  
Tel: 01732227261

14. **Sevenoaks District Draft Economic Development Strategy** (Pages 171 - 212) Chris Burchell  
Tel: +441732227136



15. **Community Grant Scheme Review** (Pages 213 - 232) Kathryn Bone  
Tel: 01732 227176



16. **Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2021 - 22** (Pages 233 - 260) Kelly Webb  
Tel: 01732227474

17. **Sevenoaks District Community Plan Annual Review** (Pages 261 - 290) Kelly Webb  
Tel: 01732227474

18. **Sevenoaks District Community Plan 2022-2032** (Pages 291 - 312) Kelly Webb  
Tel: 01732227474



19. **Draft Housing Strategy 2022- 2027** (Pages 313 - 350) Sharon Donald  
Tel: 01732 227000



20. **Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocation Scheme 2022- 27** (Pages 351 - 406) Sharon Donald  
Tel: 01732 227000



21. **Out of Area Placement Policy** (Pages 407 - 436) Sharon Donald  
Tel: 01732 227000



22. **Homelessness Out of Hours Service Update** (Pages 437 - 448) Sarah Robson  
Tel: 01732227129

23. **Quercus Housing - Increasing Delivery of affordable housing in the district**

(Pages 449 - 458)

Sarah Robson  
Tel: 01732227129



Indicates a Key Decision



indicates a matter to be referred to Council

#### EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

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

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

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CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2022 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Dickins (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. McArthur, Dyball, Maskell and Thornton

Cllr. Grint was present via a virtual media platform, which does not constitute attendance as recognised by the Local Government Act 1972.

5. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2022 and 10 May 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest made.

7. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)

There were none.

8. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee, CIL Spending Board or Cabinet Advisory Committees (if any)

There were none.

9. Provisional Outturn 2021/22

Due to unforeseen circumstances the provisional outturn was not complete to provide to Members.

Resolved: That the report was deferred to the next meeting on 7 July 2022.

10. Financial Monitoring 2022/23 - Early Indications

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Trading presented the report which set out the areas of significant potential financial impact on the Council's finances. He advised that the Finance & Investment Advisory Committee had considered the same report. Despite the pressures of the pandemic and other global events, the financial strength and flexibility afforded by the Council's 10-year budget meant that the Council was able to take sound financial decisions to minimise the impact as much as possible.

The Head of Finance advised that paragraphs 4 - 13 of the report set out what was currently understood to be the principal anticipated areas of financial risk to the authority for the year and would be reviewed and addressed as necessary as the year progressed.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance and Trading provided further details on the Direct Services areas in the report regarding agency staff costs, commercial income and vehicle costs.

Resolved: That report be noted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.16 PM

CHAIRMAN

## CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIPS OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND APPOINTMENTS TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Cabinet - 7 July 2022

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer Customer & Resources

**Status:** For Decision

**Key Decision:** No

**Contact Officer:** Charlie Sinclair, Ext. 7165

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** That the changes in memberships, be agreed as set out in the Appendix to the report.

### Introduction and Background

- 1 The Cabinet is asked to agree the changes to the membership of certain Cabinet Advisory Committees, as set out in the attached Appendix and if agreed will form part of Appendix H of the Council's Constitution.

### Key Implications

#### Financial

There are some financial and staff resource implications in terms of support and administration of the Advisory Committees which are covered within the on-going work of the Democratic Services and other teams.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

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

#### 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.

## Agenda Item 5

### **Appendices**

Memberships (To follow)

### **Background Papers**

[Council's Constitution](#)

**Jim Carrington-West**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer Customer & Resources**

**PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2021/22**

**Cabinet - 7 July 2022**

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance & Trading

**Status:** For Consideration

**Also considered by:** Circulated to members of the Finance and Investment Advisory Committee

**Key Decision:** No

**This report supports the Key Aim of: Effective Management of Council Resources**

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Matthew Dickins

**Contact Officers:** Alan Mitchell, Ext. 7483

Adrian Rowbotham, Ext. 7153

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

Cabinet notes the report.

**Reason for recommendation:** Sound financial governance of the Council.

**Introduction and Background**

- 1 This has been another exceptional year where the reverberations of the COVID-19 pandemic are still being felt and the current world events continue the unprecedented pressure on the authority not only financially but operationally.
- 2 Therefore, I believe it is a real achievement that the Provisional Financial Outturn figures for 2021/22 (Appendix B) only show an unfavourable variance of £45,000 (2020/21 unfavourable variance £321,000).
- 3 In addition to the unfavourable variance above, a provisional figure of £285,000 for additional business rates was retained due to being a beneficiary of the Kent & Medway Business Rates Pool. There was a cost of £14,000 to identify new business rates growth which has been funded by the additional business rates.

## Agenda Item 6

- 4 In line with the financial strategy, the balance of £271,000 of additional business rates will be transferred to the Budget Stabilisation Reserve and the New Homes Bonus received transferred to the Financial Plan Reserve.
- 5 During the year we received a general COVID-19 Grant of £533,000 and the final instalment of the Fees & Charges Compensation £380,000 which has been used to offset the financial impact of COVID-19.

### Areas of Note

- 6 The 2021/22 pay award was approved at 1.75%, which is 0.25% lower than budgeted therefore a saving of £42,000 has been realised.
- 7 Investment Returns - the return on treasury management investments held by the Council is lower than budget with interest received totalling £75,000 compared to a budget of £188,000. This is due to a number of factors. Firstly, the current interest rate on investments remains very low, secondly the available cash which we can invest is greatly reduced from previous years due to the funding of the capital programme, Quercus 7 acquisitions and also COVID-19. In addition to the interest received from investments, the interest from Quercus 7 is £275,000 this year. In order to increase future investment returns the Council has invested £5m for 5 years in Multi-Asset Investment Funds.
- 8 Council Tax - collection levels are below budgeted levels due to the impacts of COVID-19. Due to the way in which the Collection Fund is accounted for, this does not impact the Council until later years.
- 9 Retained Business Rates - Income expectation of £2.182m forms part of the 2021/22 budget; any receipts over and above this amount, including those that result from being a beneficiary of the Kent Business Rates Pool, will be transferred to the Budget Stabilisation Reserve. The current projection is that £285,000 of additional receipts will be received, £271,000 of which will be transferred to the reserve.

### Net Service Expenditure - Favourable Variances

- 10 Within Miscellaneous Finance the favourable variance is £1.0m. This is made up of the receipt of a number of grants, including the COVID-19 Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation Scheme and the balance of Government COVID-19 grant which are offsetting additional COVID-19 costs or losses in income incurred in other areas.
- 11 CIL administration. The Council receives an administration fee for managing the scheme and is a percentage of the payments received.
- 12 Parking Enforcement is reporting a favourable variance of £61,000 due to a new contract with Tandridge District Council.
- 13 Corporate Management is reporting a favourable variance of £110,000 which is a result of reduced expenditure on brought-in external services.

- 14 Members allowances are forecasting a favourable variance of £50,000 due to changes in roles as only one Special Responsibility Allowance is payable. Also reduced expenditure on travel and training.
- 15 Economic Development and Property is reporting a favourable variance of £76,000 due to the allocation of staff costs to capital schemes.

#### **Net Service Expenditure - Unfavourable Variances**

- 16 Homeless is reporting an adverse variance of £275,000 which is the additional cost being incurred relating to an increased number of people being put in temporary accommodation and the cost of that accommodation versus the recovery from Government . The budget for homelessness funding has been increased in 2022/23 and will continue to be reviewed.
- 17 Land charges fees were revised for 2019/20 but the number of searches has remained down compared to previous years. Due to COVID-19 the level of searches has dropped even lower leading to a £52,000 unfavourable variance.
- 18 Direct Services are reporting an unfavourable variance of £994,000 due to the additional cost of agency staff due to COVID-19 and now to cover delayed staff leave. Also, an underachievement of income against the new higher budget previously approved and on trade waste as businesses recover from COVID-19. Other cost increases include the requirement to hire vehicles where existing vehicles are being repaired and the cost of repairing vehicles as wear and tear levels have dramatically risen due to the increased refuse loads.

#### **Other Variances**

- 19 Investment Property Income - The majority of properties held within the Property Investment Strategy continue to achieve the income levels predicted but there is an unfavourable variance of £49,000 due to loss of income offset by additional loan interest from Quercus 7.

#### **Future Issues and Risk Areas**

- 20 An early indications report has been presented to both Finance and Investment Advisory Committee and Cabinet which sets out the financial risks that may impact the council in 2022/23 and future years. Additional reports will be coming to future committees.

#### **Key Implications**

##### Financial

The financial implications are set out elsewhere in this report.

## Agenda Item 6

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Section 151 officer has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the authority.

Detailed budget monitoring is completed on a monthly basis where all variances are explained. Future risk items are also 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 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 - March 2022 Budget Monitoring Commentary (to follow)

Appendix B - Provisional Outturn - March 2022 Financial Information

#### **Background Papers**

None

**Adrian Rowbotham**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance & Trading**

Position as at the end of March 22	Draft Outturn £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Annual Variance £'000	Annual Variance %
People and Places	567	595	(29)	(4.8)
Development and Conservation	1,072	923	149	16.2
Finance and Investments	2,099	3,093	(994)	(32.1)
Cleaner and Greener	6,503	5,665	838	14.8
Housing and Health	1,264	997	268	26.9
Improvement and Innovation	5,406	5,742	(335)	(5.8)
<b>Services Total</b>	<b>16,911</b>	<b>17,015</b>	<b>(104)</b>	<b>(0.6)</b>
Adjustments to Reconcile to amount to be met from reserves: Capital Charges outside the General Fund	(60)	(60)	0	0.0
Adjustments to Reconcile to amount to be met from reserves: Support Services outside the General Fund	(172)	(172)	0	0.0
Redundancy Costs	0	0		-
<b>NET SERVICE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>16,678</b>	<b>16,783</b>	<b>(104)</b>	<b>(0.6)</b>
New Homes Bonus	(1,155)	(1,155)	0	0.0
Retained Business Rates	(2,467)	(2,182)	(285)	(13.1)
Council Tax	(11,443)	(11,443)	0	(0.0)
Contribution from Collection Fund	17	17	0	0.0
Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)	(245)	(245)	0	
Lower Tier Services Grant	(98)	(98)		
<b>Summary excluding Investment Income</b>	<b>1,287</b>	<b>1,677</b>	<b>(389)</b>	<b>(23.2)</b>
Investment Property Income	(1,322)	(1,371)	49	3.5
Interest Receipts	(75)	(188)	113	(60.2)
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>(109)</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>(226)</b>	<b>(192.6)</b>
Planned Appropriation to/(from) Reserves	(1,615)	(1,615)	0	
Other Reserve Movements	1,769	1,498	271	
Supplementary Estimates	0	0	0	
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>	

## Appendix B : Summary by Service

Position as at the end of March 22	Draft Outturn £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Annual Variance £'000
<b>People &amp; Places SDC Funded</b>	£'000	£'000	£'000
All Weather Pitch	(5)	(5)	(0)
Community Safety	158	162	(4)
Community Development Service Provisions	(6)	(6)	-
The Community Plan	16	21	(5)
Grants to Organisations	182	185	(3)
Leisure Contract	96	113	(17)
Leisure Development	21	21	-
Admin Expenses - People & Places Communities	36	22	14
Tourism	19	30	(11)
West Kent Partnership	1	0	0
Youth	47	50	(3)
<b>Total People &amp; Places SDC Funded</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>(28)</b>
<b>People &amp; Places Externally Funded</b>	£'000	£'000	£'000
Practical Support Self-Isolating COVID 19	-	-	-
Compliance & Enforcement	(0)	-	(0)
Contain Outbreak Management Fund 2021/22	1	1	0
Local Strategic Partnership	-	-	-
Partnership - Home Office	(0)	-	(0)
Police & Crime Commissioners (PCCs)	-	-	-
Community Sports Activation Fund	-	-	-
Sportivate Inclusive Archery Project	0	-	0
West Kent Business Rates Retention	(0)	-	(0)
West Kent Enterprise Advisor Network	(0)	0	(0)
West Kent Kick Start	0	-	0
West Kent Partnership Business Support	1	-	1

Position as at the end of March 22	Draft Outturn £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Annual Variance £'000
People & Places Externally Funded	1	1	(0)
Total People & Places	567	595	(29)

Position as at the end of March 22	Draft Outturn £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Annual Variance £'000
<b>Development and Conservation</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Building Control Partnership Members	0	-	0
Building Control Partnership Hub (SDC Costs)	(0)	-	(0)
Building Control	(124)	(127)	3
Conservation	155	120	35
Dangerous Structures	-	3	(3)
Planning Policy	509	509	-
LDF Expenditure	-	-	-
Planning - Appeals	221	203	18
Planning - CIL Administration	(99)	(66)	(33)
Planning - Counter	(1)	(6)	5
Planning - Development Management	(65)	(65)	0
Planning - Enforcement	358	291	67
Planning Performance Agreement	-	-	-
Planning - Development Management - Software Project	-	-	-
Administrative Expenses - Building Control	2	12	(11)
Administrative Expenses - Planning Services	116	49	67
<b>Total Development and Conservation</b>	<b>1,072</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>Finance and Investments</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Asset Maintenance CCTV	9	18	(9)
Asset Maintenance Countryside	2	9	(7)
Asset Maintenance Direct Services	95	42	54
Asset Maintenance Playgrounds	4	16	(11)
Asset Maintenance Public Toilets	0	16	(16)
Benefits Admin	142	142	-
Benefits Grants	(29)	(25)	(4)
Corporate Management	1	-	1

Position as at the end of March 22	Draft Outturn £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Annual Variance £'000
Dartford Rev&Ben Partnership Hub (SDC costs)	(0)	4	(4)
Dartford Audit Partnership Hub (SDC Costs)	(0)	-	(0)
Housing Advances	-	1	(1)
Local Tax	(114)	(78)	(36)
Misc. Finance	555	1,580	(1,025)
Administrative Expenses - Chief Executive	9	20	(10)
Administrative Expenses - Finance	60	26	34
Administrative Expenses - Revenues and Benefits	1	-	1
Administrative Expenses - Strategic Property	13	-	13
Support - Rev & Ben Control	217	226	(9)
Support - Counter Fraud	41	53	(12)
Support - Audit Function	201	187	14
Support - Exchequer and Procurement	188	159	29
Support - Finance Function	247	257	(10)
Support - Legal Function	261	260	1
Support - Procurement	7	7	0
Support - Property Function	57	52	5
Treasury Management	131	124	8
<b>Total Finance and Investments</b>	<b>2,099</b>	<b>3,093</b>	<b>(994)</b>
Cleaner and Greener	£'000	£'000	£'000
Asset Maintenance Argyle Road	24	79	(54)
Asset Maintenance Other Corporate Properties	91	35	56
Asset Maintenance Hever Road	49	40	9
Asset Maintenance Leisure	255	190	65
Asset Maintenance Support & Salaries	114	138	(24)
Asset Maintenance Sewage Treatment Plants	6	9	(3)
Bus Station	15	8	8
Car Parks	(1,200)	(1,197)	(2)

Position as at the end of March 22	Draft Outturn £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Annual Variance £'000
CCTV	256	263	(7)
Civil Protection	38	50	(11)
Dartford Environmental Hub (SDC Costs)	-	-	-
Car Parking - On Street	(253)	(243)	(11)
EH Commercial	284	305	(21)
EH Animal Control	24	22	2
EH Environmental Protection	349	347	2
Emergency	67	81	(14)
Parking Enforcement - Tandridge DC	(100)	(39)	(61)
Estates Management - Buildings	(64)	(16)	(48)
Estates Management - Grounds	149	125	24
Housing Other Income	(15)	(14)	(1)
Housing Premises	(5)	16	(22)
Kent Resource Partnership	5	-	5
Licensing Partnership Hub (Trading)	2	2	0
Licensing Partnership Members	-	-	-
Licensing Regime	2	44	(42)
Asset Maintenance Operatives	(0)	6	(6)
Markets	(235)	(217)	(18)
Decarbonisation Fund Net ZERO 2030	-	-	-
Parks - Greensand Commons Project	-	-	-
Parks and Recreation Grounds	148	132	17
Parks - Rural	178	166	13
Public Transport Support	-	0	(0)
Refuse Collection	2,856	2,913	(57)
Administrative Expenses - Direct Services	15	0	15
Administrative Expenses - Health	17	5	12
Administrative Expenses - Licensing	1	7	(6)
Administrative Expenses - Property	9	3	6
Administrative Expenses - Transport	6	7	(1)

Position as at the end of March 22	Draft Outturn £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Annual Variance £'000
Street Cleansing	1,555	1,539	15
Support - Central Offices	493	483	10
Support - Central Offices - Facilities	235	279	(44)
Support - General Admin	-	5	(5)
Support - General Admin (Post/Scanning)	231	219	12
Support - Health and Safety	0	8	(7)
Support - Direct Services	84	50	34
Direct Services Trading account	750	(244)	994
Taxis	14	12	3
Public Conveniences	50	47	3
Total Cleaner and Greener	6,503	5,665	838
Housing and Health	£'000	£'000	£'000
Contain Outbreak Management Fund 2021/22	(0)	-	(0)
Domestic Abuse Duty	2	0	2
Gypsy Sites	(5)	(10)	5
Health Improvements	47	48	(1)
Homeless	706	431	275
Housing Clinically Extremely Vulnerable 21/22	(0)	-	(0)
Housing Register	34	37	(3)
Kent Housing Group Grant	(0)	-	(0)
Disabled Facilities Grant Administration	(50)	(50)	(0)
Housing	176	188	(12)
Housing Initiatives	57	56	1
Next Steps Accommodation Programme	(0)	-	(0)
Housing Pathway Co-ordinator	0	-	0
Homelessness Prevention	0	-	0
Needs and Stock Surveys	1	-	1
Housing Energy Retraining Options (HERO)	131	131	(0)

Position as at the end of March 22	Draft Outturn £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Annual Variance £'000
KCC- Household Support Fund	-	-	-
KCC Helping Hands	-	-	-
Private Sector Housing	270	287	(17)
Rough Sleepers Initiative (4)	(0)	-	(0)
Admin Expenses - People & Places Housing	16	-	16
One You - Your Home Project	0	-	0
One You KPH	0	0	(0)
One You Health Checks	0	-	0
Homelessness Funding	(121)	(121)	0
PCT Initiatives	-	-	-
KCC Specialist Weight Management	0	-	0
<b>Total Housing and Health</b>	<b>1,264</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>268</b>
<b>Improvement and Innovation</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Action and Development	4	8	(4)
Asset Maintenance IT	296	296	-
Civic Expenses	16	17	(2)
Consultation and Surveys	10	4	6
Corporate Management	1,024	1,134	(110)
Corporate Projects	45	72	(27)
Corporate - Other	-	71	(71)
Democratic Services	143	168	(25)
Economic Development	41	38	3
Economic Development Property	369	446	(76)
Elections	153	126	27
External Communications	192	224	(32)
Land Charges	(87)	(117)	30
Members	423	473	(50)
Performance Improvement	(0)	(0)	(0)

Position as at the end of March 22	Draft Outturn £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Annual Variance £'000
Register of Electors	205	205	0
Administrative Expenses - Corporate Services	32	23	9
Administrative Expenses - Legal and Democratic	69	72	(2)
Administrative Expenses - Transformation and Strategy	8	5	3
Administrative Expenses - Human Resources	31	9	22
Street Naming	2	2	0
Support - Contact Centre	816	863	(46)
Support - General Admin	174	178	(4)
Support - General Admin (Print Shop)	(34)	(49)	15
Support - IT	1,056	1,076	(19)
Support - Local Offices	0	-	0
Support - Nursery	1	-	1
Support - Human Resources	416	400	16
Total Improvement and Innovation	5,406	5,742	(335)
Total SDC	16,911	17,015	(104)

Appendix B : Salaries

Position as at the end of March 22	Y-T-D Actual £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Annual Forecast £'000	Annual Variance £'000	Annual Variance %
<b>Development and Conservation</b>					
Building Control	354	381	381	0	0%
Planning Services	2,027	1,916	1,916	0	0%
	<b>2,382</b>	<b>2,298</b>	<b>2,298</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Finance and Investments</b>					
Chief Executive	219	216	216	0	0%
Finance	933	937	937	0	0%
Revenues and Benefits	1,602	1,653	1,653	0	0%
Strategic Property	643	607	607	0	0%
	<b>3,397</b>	<b>3,413</b>	<b>3,413</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Cleaner and Greener</b>					
Direct Services	4,121	4,339	4,339	0	0%
Health	593	681	681	0	0%
Licensing	461	481	481	0	0%
Property	465	481	446	(35)	-7%
Transport	599	500	500	0	0%
	<b>6,239</b>	<b>6,482</b>	<b>6,447</b>	<b>(35)</b>	<b>-1%</b>
<b>Housing and Health</b>					
Places Housing	848	865	865	0	0%
	<b>848</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Improvement and Innovation</b>					
Corporate Services	1,796	1,861	1,769	(92)	-5%
Legal and Democratic	601	628	591	(37)	-6%
Transformation and Strategy	611	660	619	(41)	-6%
Human Resources	410	387	387	0	0%
	<b>3,418</b>	<b>3,536</b>	<b>3,366</b>	<b>(170)</b>	<b>-5%</b>
<b>People and Places</b>					
Places Communities	298	295	295	0	0%
	<b>298</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>16,581</b>	<b>16,888</b>	<b>16,683</b>	<b>(205)</b>	<b>-1%</b>
Council Wide - Vacant Posts	0	31	31	0	0%
Staff Recruitment and Retention	48	49	49	0	0%
<b>TOTAL SDC Funded Salary Costs</b>	<b>16,629</b>	<b>16,969</b>	<b>16,764</b>	<b>(205)</b>	<b>-1%</b>
Places Communities*	437	264	264	0	0%
Direct Services*	20	126	126	0	0%
Places Housing*	289	149	149	0	0%
<b>Externally Funded Total</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL Salary Costs</b>	<b>17,376</b>	<b>17,508</b>	<b>17,303</b>	<b>(205)</b>	<b>-1%</b>

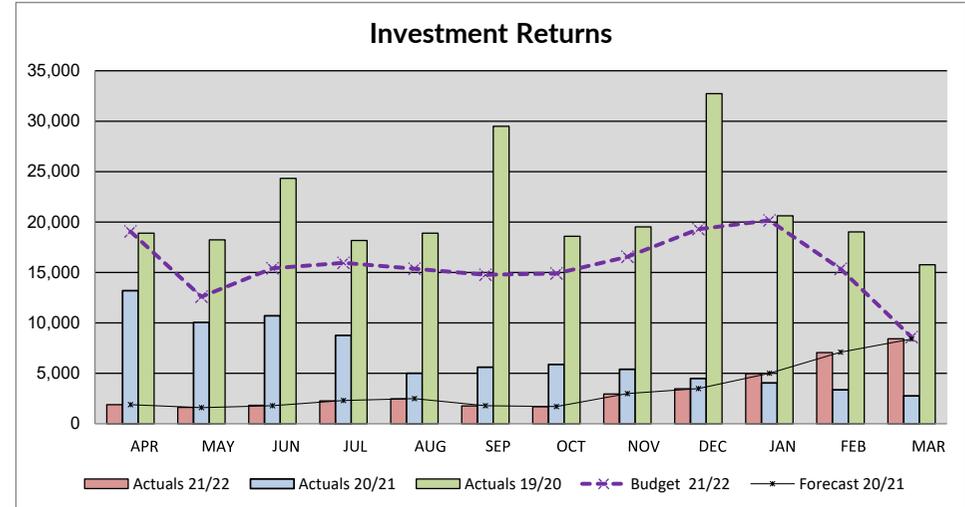
\*Externally Funded & Funded from other sources (gross figures). Overspendings here are matched by external funding and represent additional resources secured for the Council since the budget was set.

## Agenda Item 6

Appendix B : Staffing Stats - Position as at the end of March 22	Budget FTE*	Staff FTE	Agency FTE	Casual FTE	March 2022 Total	February 2022 Total
<b>Development and Conservation</b>						
Building Control	8.00	6.00			6.00	6.00
Planning Services	41.47	38.47			38.47	38.47
<b>Finance and Investments</b>						
Chief Executive	1.00	1.00			1.00	1.00
Finance	16.08	17.81			17.81	16.81
Revenues and Benefits	43.33	40.84		0.41	41.25	40.93
Strategic Property	10.00	13.89	1.00		14.89	14.89
<b>Cleaner and Greener</b>						
Direct Services	125.97	117.28	15.73	0.08	133.09	137.48
Health	12.57	9.99			9.99	9.99
Licensing	10.59	10.80			10.80	10.80
Property	6.65	4.00			4.00	4.65
Transport	14.00	17.59			17.59	17.59
<b>Housing and Health</b>						
Housing	15.20	16.70	1.00		17.70	17.70
<b>Improvement and Innovation</b>						
Corporate Services	50.75	49.59	1.00		50.59	49.84
Legal and Democratic	7.50	7.68			7.68	7.00
Transformation and Strategy	20.35	18.16			18.16	18.16
Human Resources	8.00	8.76			8.76	8.76
<b>People and Places</b>						
Communities & Business	5.00	5.35			5.35	5.35
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>396.46</b>	<b>383.91</b>	<b>18.73</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>403.13</b>	<b>405.42</b>
<b>Externally Funded</b>						
People & Places	6.08	6.11		0.15	6.26	7.11
People & Places - Housing	4.00	5.78	4.00		9.78	7.27
KRP	2.00				0.00	0.00
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>12.08</b>	<b>11.89</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>16.04</b>	<b>14.38</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>408.54</b>	<b>395.80</b>	<b>22.73</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>419.17</b>	<b>419.80</b>
Number of staff paid in March 22: 429 permanent, 4 casuals						

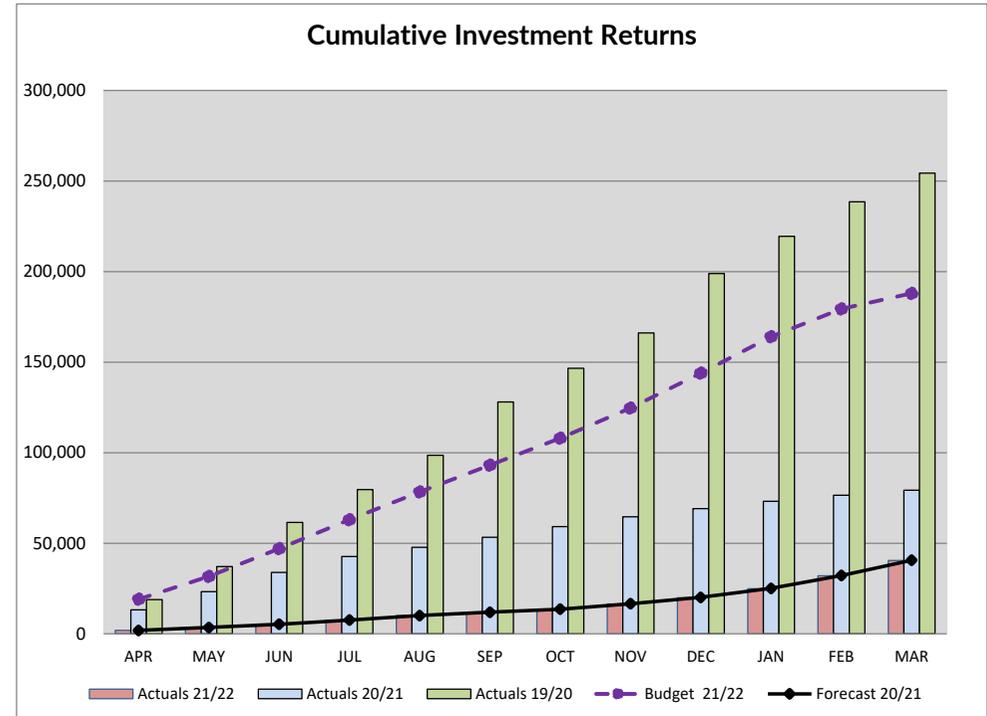
## 6 Investment Returns

	Actuals 19/20	Actuals 20/21	Actuals 21/22	Budget 21/22	Variance	Forecast 20/21
APR	18,908	13,190	1,900	19,058	-17,158	1,900
MAY	18,243	10,041	1,620	12,595	-10,975	1,600
JUN	24,341	10,719	1,829	15,424	-13,595	1,800
JUL	18,166	8,761	2,261	15,947	-13,686	2,300
AUG	18,891	5,010	2,471	15,365	-12,894	2,500
SEP	29,495	5,612	1,774	14,773	-12,999	1,800
OCT	18,586	5,867	1,696	14,889	-13,193	1,700
NOV	19,520	5,397	2,963	16,555	-13,592	3,000
DEC	32,723	4,484	3,467	19,286	-15,819	3,500
JAN	20,620	4,060	4,958	20,166	-15,208	5,000
FEB	19,034	3,367	7,065	15,345	-8,280	7,100
MAR	15,768	2,769	8,424	8,597	-173	8,400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>254,295</b>	<b>79,277</b>	<b>40,428</b>	<b>188,000</b>	<b>-147,572</b>	<b>40,600</b>



### INVESTMENT RETURNS (CUMULATIVE)

	Actuals 19/20	Actuals 20/21	Actuals 21/22	Budget 21/22	Variance	Forecast 20/21
APR	18,908	13,190	1,900	19,058	-17,158	1,900
MAY	37,151	23,231	3,520	31,653	-28,133	3,500
JUN	61,492	33,950	5,349	47,077	-41,728	5,300
JUL	79,658	42,711	7,610	63,024	-55,414	7,600
AUG	98,549	47,721	10,081	78,389	-68,308	10,100
SEP	128,044	53,333	11,855	93,162	-81,307	11,900
OCT	146,630	59,200	13,551	108,051	-94,500	13,600
NOV	166,150	64,597	16,514	124,606	-108,092	16,600
DEC	198,873	69,081	19,981	143,892	-123,911	20,100
JAN	219,493	73,141	24,939	164,058	-139,119	25,100
FEB	238,527	76,508	32,004	179,403	-147,399	32,200
MAR	254,295	79,277	40,428	188,000	-147,572	40,600



**BUDGET FOR 20/21** 188,000  
**FORECAST OUTTURN** 40,600

**CODE:- YHAA 96900**

#### N.B.

These are the gross interest receipts rather than the interest remaining in the General Fund

**Fund Average** 0.1486%  
**7 Day LIBID** 0.0325%  
**3 Month LIBID** 0.0267%

<b>Position as at the end of March 2022 (Period 202212)</b>	<b>21/22 Opening Balance</b>	<b>Position as at the end of March 2022 (Period 202212)</b>	<b>21/22 Cumulative Movement to Date</b>
E Earmarked Reserve - Budget Stabilisation	(9,820)	(8,641)	1,178
E Earmarked Reserve - NNDR Safety Net Deficit Reserve	(8,071)	(8,071)	-
E Earmarked Reserve - Financial Plan	(2,653)	(2,328)	325
E Earmarked Reserve - Carry Forward Items (DAC)	(1,218)	(1,777)	(559)
E Earmarked Reserve - IT Asset Maintenance	(779)	(440)	339
E Earmarked Reserve - Vehicle Renewal (DAA)	(696)	(746)	(50)
E Earmarked Reserve - Housing & Commercial Growth Fund	(566)	(566)	-
E Earmarked Reserve - DWP Hsg Benefit Subsidy	(550)	(497)	53
E Earmarked Reserve - Capital Expenditure Reserve	(500)	(500)	-
E Earmarked Reserve - Pension Fund Valuation Adj.	(441)	(395)	46
E Earmarked Reserve - New Homes Bonus Reserve	(406)	(406)	-
E Earmarked Reserve - Local Plan/LDF	(318)	(355)	(37)
E Earmarked Reserve - Action and Development	(296)	(296)	-
E Earmarked Reserve - Vehicle Insurance (DAZ)	(258)	(258)	-
E Earmarked Reserve - Property Investment Strategy Maintenance Reserve	(233)	(333)	(100)
E Earmarked Reserve - Capital Financing	(221)	(369)	(148)
E Earmarked Reserve - Corporate Project Support Reserve	(212)	(100)	113
E Earmarked Reserve - Community Development Reserve	(204)	(156)	48
E Earmarked Reserve - Community Infrastructure Levy Administration (CIL)	(185)	(185)	-
E Earmarked Reserve - Development Services Reserve	(113)	(52)	61
Total	(27,742)	(26,472)	1,270
Other Earmarked Reserves (balances <£100k)	(647)	(1,154)	(507)
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>(28,388)</b>	<b>(27,625)</b>	<b>763</b>
General Fund	(1,700)	(1,700)	-
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>(30,089)</b>	<b>(29,325)</b>	<b>763</b>

Capital Monitoring Dashboard - March 2022

Description Of Scheme	Funding Source	Approved Gross Cost of Scheme £	Total Expenditure from date of adoption to 31 March 2021 £	Budget £	Spend YTD £	Forecast Outturn £	Forecast Variance 2021/2022 £	Spend Forecast for Later Years 2022/2023 £	2023/2024 £	2024/2025 and future years £	Total Project Expenditure £	Total Project Variance £
White Oak Leisure Centre	External Borrowing & Capital Receipts	19,870,000	8,411,533	10,352,000	11,248,707	12,906,467	2,554,467	1,452,000	100,000	0	22,870,000	3,000,000
White Oak Leisure centre - Orchards Academv	Capital Receipts	130,000	0	100,000		130,000	30,000	0	0	0	130,000	
Burlington Mews	Capital Receipts	95,000	0	79,000	72,139	79,000	0	8,000	8,000	0	95,000	
27-37 Swanley High street (meeting Point)	Capital Receipts & External funding	5,624,000	142,070	3,000,000	1,760,088	3,657,930	657,930	1,824,000	0	0	5,624,000	
White Oak Residential	Capital Receipts	100,000	0	50,000	0	100,000	50,000	0	0	0	100,000	
Bevan Place	Mixed	750,000	3,140	730,000	628,436	746,860	16,860	0	0	0	750,000	
Edenbridge	Mixed	20,000	0	0	0	20,000	20,000	0	0	0	20,000	
Sevenoaks Town Centre Regeneration	Mixed	330,000	0	300,000		330,000	30,000	0	0	0	330,000	0
Hollybush	Mixed	350,000	0	0		0	0	350,000	0	0	350,000	0
Spitalcross	Mixed	50,000	0	0		0	0	50,000	0	0	50,000	0
Otford Park & Ride	Mixed	200,000	0	0		0	0	200,000	0	0	200,000	0
Westerham	Mixed	50,000	0	0		0	0	50,000	0	0	50,000	0
Kemsing	Mixed	350,000	0	0		0	0	0	350,000	0	350,000	0
Lulingsstone	Mixed	50,000	0	20,000		20,000	0	30,000	0	0	50,000	0
Other Feasibility & Due Diligence costs	Mixed	200,000	0	50,000	41,170	50,000	0	150,000	0	0	200,000	0
<b>Total for People &amp; Places</b>		<b>28,169,000</b>	<b>8,411,533</b>	<b>14,681,000</b>	<b>13,750,540</b>	<b>18,040,257</b>	<b>3,359,257</b>	<b>4,114,000</b>	<b>458,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>31,169,000</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>
Commercial vehicle replacements	Vehicle Renewal Res.	2,238,000	0	563,000	446,954	563,000	0	563,000	563,000	549,000	563,000	0
Disabled Facilities Grants (gross)	Better Care Fund	4,400,000	0	1,100,000	358,966	1,100,000	0	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000	4,400,000	0
Property Investment Strategy	Prop. Inv. Reserve	34,505,000	29,505,000	5,000,000	0	0	(5,000,000)	0	0	0	29,505,000	(5,000,000)
<b>Total for Finance &amp; Trading</b>		<b>41,143,000</b>	<b>29,505,000</b>	<b>6,663,000</b>	<b>805,920</b>	<b>1,663,000</b>	<b>(5,000,000)</b>	<b>1,663,000</b>	<b>1,663,000</b>	<b>1,649,000</b>	<b>34,468,000</b>	<b>(5,000,000)</b>
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>69,312,000</b>	<b>37,916,533</b>	<b>21,344,000</b>	<b>14,556,460</b>	<b>19,703,257</b>	<b>(1,640,743)</b>	<b>5,777,000</b>	<b>2,121,000</b>	<b>1,649,000</b>	<b>65,637,000</b>	<b>(2,000,000)</b>
Memo												
Quercus 7	SDC Debt (60%) / Equity (40%)		4,061,164	5,629,982	0	5,629,982	0	0	0	0	9,691,146	0
Croft Road			536,444									
Plot 2 Canterbury Business Park			2,292,120									
10 -14 Gladedale House			1,232,600									
Loampit Vale, Lewisham			1,829,982									
3 - 4 Hilton Road, Ashford			3,800,000									

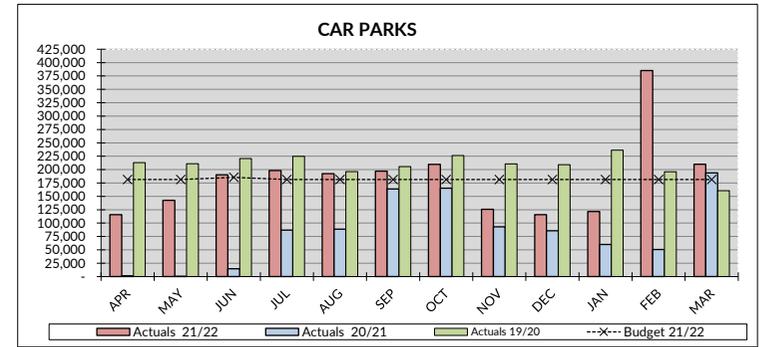
Agenda Item 6

2022

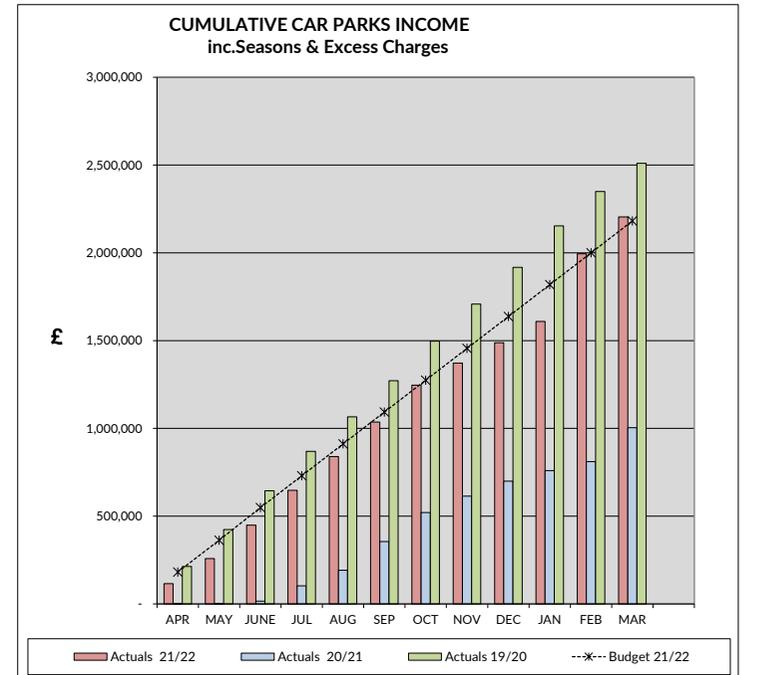
**Appendix B : Income Graphs Summary**

	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>Previous Year comparatives</b>	<b>Budget YTD</b>	<b>Variance YTD - brackets show underachievement</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>
Car Parks	2,204,288	1,004,200	2,181,677	22,611	2,181,677
Car Parking - On Street	1,002,782	463,670	832,621	170,161	832,621
Licensing Regime	121,848	103,589	99,148	22,700	99,148
Taxis	123,162	107,479	145,377	(22,215)	145,377
Land Charges	154,253	181,639	220,773	(66,520)	220,773
Planning - Development Management	1,191,404	1,043,816	988,220	203,184	988,220
Building Control	556,924	525,231	503,168	53,756	503,168
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,354,661</b>	<b>3,429,624</b>	<b>4,970,984</b>	<b>383,677</b>	<b>4,970,984</b>

Appendix B: CAR PARKS (HWCARPK)	Actuals 19/20	Actuals 20/21	Actuals 21/22	Increase / (decrease) from 20/21 to 21/22	Budget 21/22	Variance (Budget-Actuals)	Manager's Forecast
APR	213,119	1,513	115,730	114,217	181,473	(65,743)	-
MAY	210,813	158	142,691	142,533	181,473	(38,782)	-
JUN	220,637	14,588	190,284	175,696	185,473	4,811	-
JUL	224,678	86,759	198,274	111,516	181,473	16,801	-
AUG	196,164	88,754	192,326	103,572	181,473	10,852	-
SEP	205,737	163,789	196,998	33,209	181,473	15,525	-
OCT	226,210	165,320	209,840	44,519	181,473	28,367	-
NOV	210,651	93,081	125,825	32,743	181,473	(55,649)	-
DEC	209,265	85,779	115,877	30,099	181,473	(65,596)	-
JAN	236,228	59,945	121,754	61,809	181,473	(59,719)	-
FEB	195,940	50,624	385,058	334,434	181,473	203,585	-
MAR	160,439	193,889	210,091	16,202	181,473	28,618	-
Total	2,509,881	1,004,200	2,204,749	1,200,549	2,181,677	23,072	-

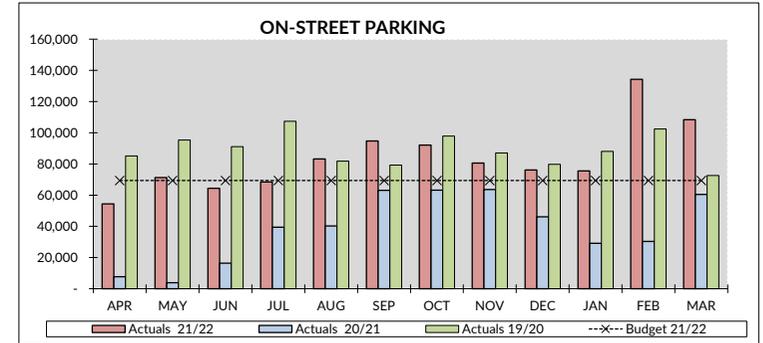


CAR PARKS (CUMULATIVE)	Actuals 19/20	Actuals 20/21	Actuals 21/22	Increase / (decrease) from 20/21 to 21/22	Budget 21/22	Variance (Budget-Actuals)	Manager's Forecast
APR	213,119	1,513	115,730	114,217	181,473	(65,743)	-
MAY	423,932	1,671	258,422	256,750	362,946	(104,525)	-
JUNE	644,570	16,260	448,706	432,446	548,419	(99,713)	-
JUL	869,247	103,018	646,980	543,962	729,892	(82,912)	-
AUG	1,065,411	191,772	839,306	647,534	911,365	(72,060)	-
SEP	1,271,148	355,561	1,036,304	680,743	1,092,838	(56,534)	-
OCT	1,497,358	520,882	1,246,144	725,262	1,274,312	(28,168)	-
NOV	1,708,009	613,963	1,371,968	758,006	1,455,785	(83,816)	-
DEC	1,917,274	699,741	1,487,846	788,104	1,637,258	(149,412)	-
JAN	2,153,502	759,687	1,609,600	849,913	1,818,731	(209,131)	-
FEB	2,349,442	810,311	1,994,658	1,184,347	2,000,204	(5,546)	-
MAR	2,509,881	1,004,200	2,204,749	1,200,549	2,181,677	23,072	-

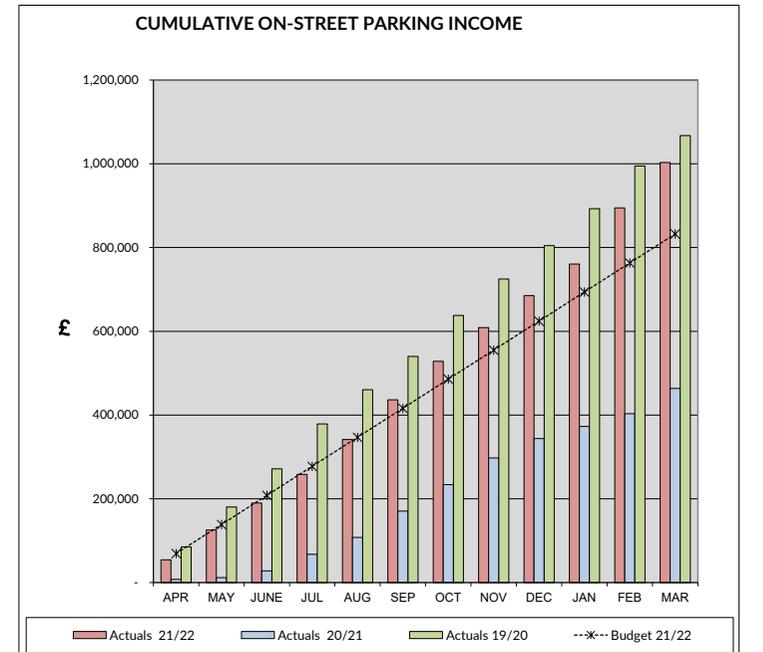


CUMULATIVE BREAKDOWN - HWCARPK	Code	Actual (Cumulative)	Budget (Monthly)	(Monthly)
DAY TICKETS	3300	1,975,844	1,881,084	191,128
EXCESS / PENALTY CHARGES	***1/***3			
SEASON TICKETS	3310 ***2	210,590	274,863	17,440
SEASON TICKET CAR PARK	3310			
OTHER	9999, 34**	490	6,730	273
WAIVERS	3404			-
RENT	86**	17,825	19,000	1,250
Business Permits	3406 /3408			
Total		2,204,749	2,181,677	210,091

Appendix B: ON-STREET PARKING (HWDCRIM / HWENFORC)	Actuals 19/20	Actuals 20/21	Actuals 21/22	Increase / (decrease) from 20/21 to 21/22	Budget 21/22	Variance (Budget-Actuals)	Manager's Forecast
APR	85,115	7,676	54,350	46,674	69,385	(15,035)	-
MAY	95,338	3,884	71,258	67,374	69,385	1,873	-
JUN	91,102	16,355	64,364	48,009	69,385	(5,022)	-
JUL	107,391	39,461	68,471	29,010	69,385	(914)	-
AUG	81,797	40,276	83,237	42,961	69,385	13,852	-
SEP	79,308	63,135	94,718	31,583	69,385	25,333	-
OCT	97,818	63,193	92,091	28,898	69,385	22,706	-
NOV	87,032	63,639	80,534	16,895	69,385	11,149	-
DEC	79,729	46,090	76,142	30,052	69,385	6,757	-
JAN	88,036	29,146	75,481	46,335	69,385	6,096	-
FEB	102,372	30,326	134,205	103,879	69,385	64,820	-
MAR	72,578	60,489	108,390	47,901	69,385	39,005	-
Total	1,067,616	463,670	1,003,242	539,572	832,621	170,621	-

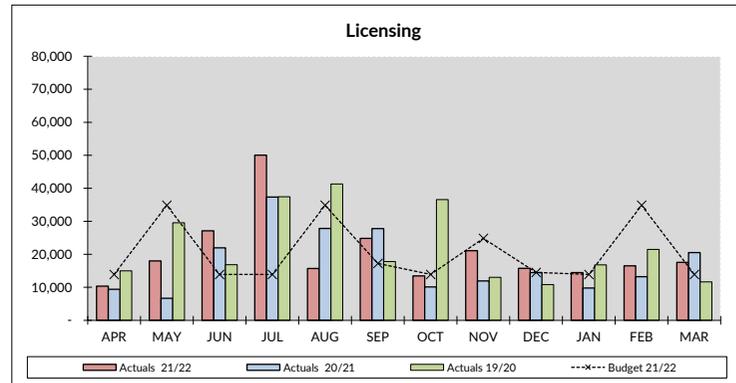


ON-STREET PARKING (CUMULATIVE)	Actuals 19/20	Actuals 20/21	Actuals 21/22	Increase / (decrease) from 20/21 to 21/22	Budget 21/22	Variance (Budget-Actuals)	Manager's Forecast
APR	85,115	7,676	54,350	46,674	69,385	(15,035)	-
MAY	180,453	11,560	125,609	114,049	138,770	(13,161)	-
JUNE	271,555	27,915	189,972	162,057	208,155	(18,183)	-
JUL	378,946	67,376	258,443	191,067	277,540	(19,097)	-
AUG	460,743	107,652	341,680	234,028	346,925	(5,245)	-
SEP	540,051	170,787	436,399	265,612	416,310	20,088	-
OCT	637,869	233,980	528,490	294,510	485,696	42,794	-
NOV	724,901	297,619	609,024	311,405	555,081	53,943	-
DEC	804,630	343,709	685,166	341,457	624,466	60,700	-
JAN	892,666	372,855	760,646	387,791	693,851	66,796	-
FEB	995,038	403,181	894,852	491,671	763,236	131,616	-
MAR	1,067,616	463,670	1,003,242	539,572	832,621	170,621	-

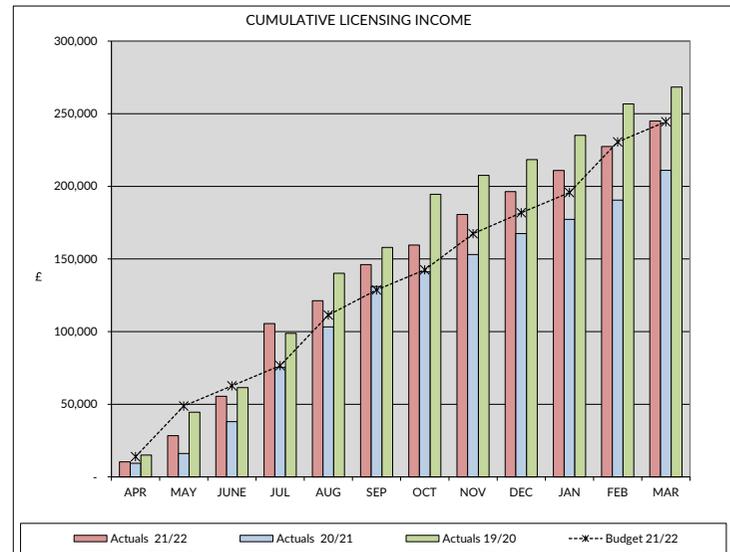


CUMULATIVE BREAKDOWN - HWDCRIM / HWENFORC	Code	Actual (Cumulative)	Budget	(Monthly)
ON STREET PARKING	3300	422,085	429,996	43,553
PENALTY NOTICES	3403	431,756	274,843	51,159
WAIVERS	3404	33,946	11,314	2,754
Driveway Access Protection Lines	3405	1,343	-	-
RESIDENTS PERMITS	3406	81,845	54,308	6,904
BUSINESS PERMITS	3408	3,563	62,160	10
OTHER	9999	28,705	-	4,011
Total		1,003,242	832,621	108,390

Appendix B: Licensing (EHLICREG & DSTAXIL)	Actuals 19/20	Actuals 20/21	Actuals 21/22	Increase / (decrease) from 20/21 to 21/22	Budget 21/22	Variance (Budget-Actuals)	Manager's Forecast
APR	14,991	9,404	10,356	952	13,909	(3,553)	-
MAY	29,570	6,655	18,021	11,366	34,839	(16,818)	-
JUN	16,865	21,969	27,128	5,159	13,909	13,219	-
JUL	37,419	37,346	50,067	12,721	13,909	36,157	-
AUG	41,305	27,847	15,709	(12,138)	34,839	(19,130)	-
SEP	17,814	27,783	24,814	(2,969)	17,221	7,592	-
OCT	36,559	10,099	13,479	3,380	13,909	(431)	-
NOV	13,047	11,939	21,101	9,162	24,839	(3,738)	(8,525)
DEC	10,833	14,460	15,776	1,316	14,489	1,286	-
JAN	16,790	9,782	14,483	4,701	13,909	574	-
FEB	21,506	13,232	16,499	3,267	34,839	(18,340)	(8,324)
MAR	11,638	20,550	17,577	(2,973)	13,909	3,668	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>268,337</b>	<b>211,066</b>	<b>245,010</b>	<b>33,944</b>	<b>244,525</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>(16,849)</b>

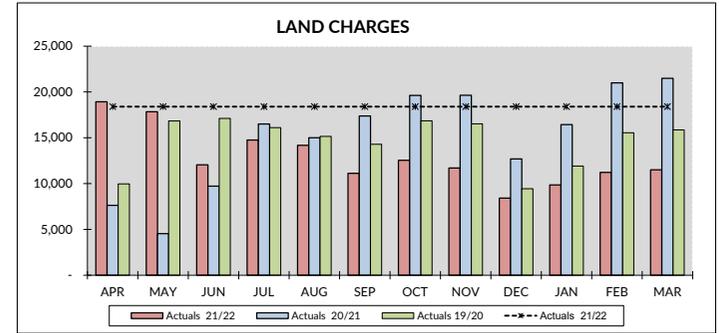


Licensing (CUMULATIVE)	Actuals 19/20	Actuals 20/21	Actuals 21/22	Increase / (decrease) from 20/21 to 21/22	Budget 21/22	Variance (Budget-Actuals)	Manager's Forecast
APR	14,991	9,404	10,356	952	13,909	(3,553)	-
MAY	44,561	16,059	28,377	12,318	48,749	(20,372)	-
JUNE	61,426	38,028	55,505	17,477	62,658	(7,153)	-
JUL	98,845	75,374	105,572	30,198	76,568	29,004	-
AUG	140,150	103,221	121,281	18,060	111,407	9,874	-
SEP	157,964	131,004	146,095	15,091	128,629	17,466	-
OCT	194,523	141,103	159,573	18,470	142,538	17,035	-
NOV	207,570	153,042	180,675	27,633	167,377	13,297	(8,525)
DEC	218,403	167,502	196,450	28,948	181,867	14,584	-
JAN	235,193	177,284	210,933	33,649	195,776	15,157	-
FEB	256,699	190,516	227,433	36,917	230,616	(3,183)	-
MAR	268,337	211,066	245,010	33,944	244,525	485	-

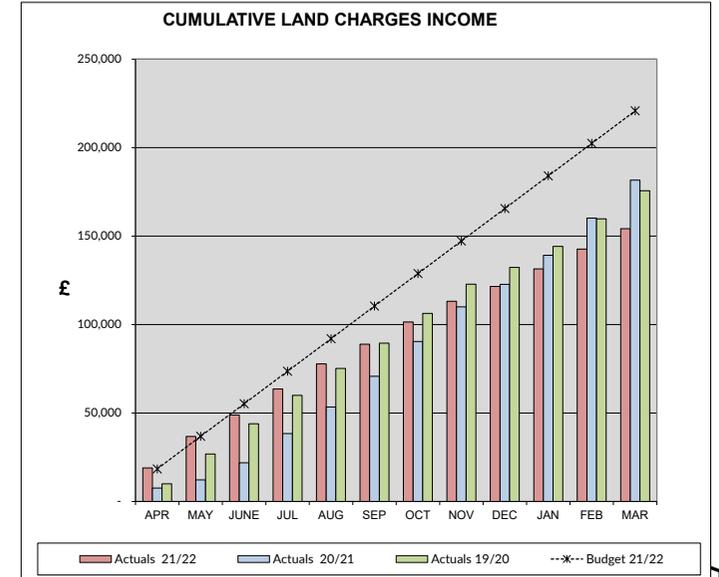


CUMULATIVE BREAKDOWN - EHLICREG/DSTAXIL	Code	Actual (Cumulative)	Budget	(Monthly)
Pre-application advice	EHLICREG/2189	-243	-	-
Personal Licences	EHLICREG/2190	2,799	2,220	370
Premises Licence Annual Fee/Premises New/Premises Variation	EHLICREG/2192/21	103,572	84,720	3,000
Temporary Event Notice	EHLICREG/2193	6,363	4,211	756
Gambling Act Permits/Lottery	EHLICREG/2196/7/	7,004	7,417	909
Other	9999	-364	-	-
Pavement Licence	EHLICREG/2222	1,800	-	200
Scrap Metal Dealers	EHLICREG/2241	917	580	-
Taxi Licensing	94300/DSTAXIL	106,129	145,377	10,575
Other	94300/DSTAXIL/99	17,033	-	1,768
<b>Total</b>		<b>245,010</b>	<b>244,525</b>	<b>17,578</b>

Appendix B: LAND CHARGES (LPLNDCH)				Increase / (decrease)	Variance (Budget- Manager's		
	Actuals 19/20	Actuals 20/21	Actuals 21/22	from 20/21 to 21/22	Budget 21/22	Actuals	Forecast
APR	9,967	7,630	18,930	11,300	18,398	532	-
MAY	16,828	4,532	17,846	13,314	18,398	(551)	-
JUN	17,112	9,717	12,054	2,337	18,398	(6,344)	-
JUL	16,113	16,500	14,749	(1,751)	18,398	(3,648)	-
AUG	15,149	14,999	14,184	(815)	18,398	(4,213)	-
SEP	14,286	17,377	11,125	(6,252)	18,398	(7,273)	-
OCT	16,854	19,628	12,546	(7,082)	18,398	(5,851)	-
NOV	16,519	19,636	11,699	(7,937)	18,398	(6,699)	-
DEC	9,444	12,692	8,422	(4,270)	18,398	(9,976)	-
JAN	11,917	16,441	9,857	(6,584)	18,398	(8,541)	-
FEB	15,554	20,998	11,230	(9,768)	18,398	(7,168)	-
MAR	15,857	21,489	11,502	(9,987)	18,398	(6,896)	(62,642)
<b>Total</b>	<b>175,600</b>	<b>181,639</b>	<b>154,144</b>	<b>(27,495)</b>	<b>220,773</b>	<b>(66,629)</b>	<b>(62,642)</b>

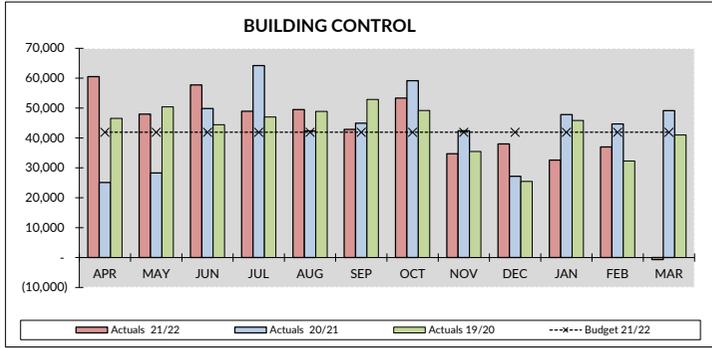


LAND CHARGES (CUMULATIVE)				Increase / (decrease)	Variance (Budget- Manager's		
	Actuals 19/20	Actuals 20/21	Actuals 21/22	from 20/21 to 21/22	Budget 21/22	Actuals	Forecast
APR	9,967	7,630	18,930	11,300	18,398	532	-
MAY	26,795	12,162	36,776	24,614	36,796	(20)	-
JUNE	43,907	21,879	48,830	26,951	55,193	(6,364)	-
JUL	60,020	38,379	63,579	25,200	73,591	(10,012)	-
AUG	75,169	53,378	77,763	24,385	91,989	(14,225)	-
SEP	89,455	70,755	88,888	18,133	110,387	(21,498)	-
OCT	106,309	90,383	101,435	11,052	128,784	(27,350)	-
NOV	122,828	110,019	113,133	3,114	147,182	(34,049)	-
DEC	132,272	122,711	121,555	(1,156)	165,580	(44,024)	-
JAN	144,188	139,152	131,412	(7,740)	183,978	(52,565)	-
FEB	159,742	160,150	142,642	(17,508)	202,375	(59,733)	-
MAR	175,599	181,639	154,144	(27,495)	220,773	(66,629)	(62,642)

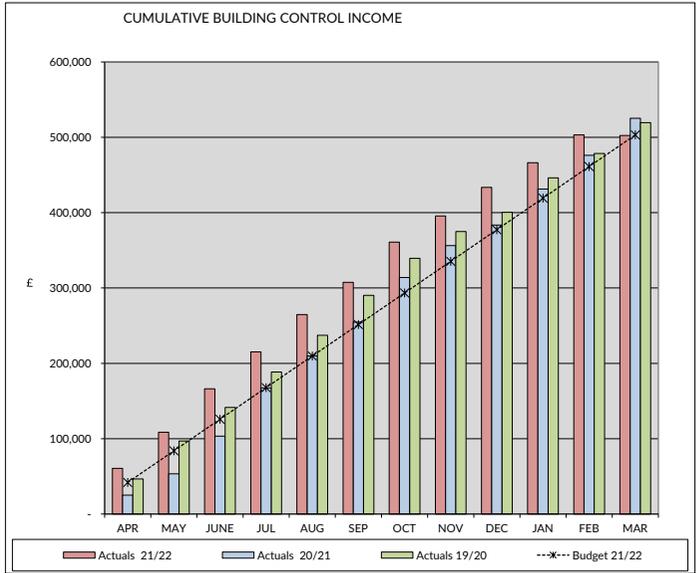


CUMULATIVE BREAKDOWN - LPLNDCH	Received (Month)	Percentage (Month)	Percentage (Month 20/21)	Percentage (Cumulative)
Searches Received - Paper	0	0%	0%	2
Searches Received - Electronic	102	100%	88%	1,204
Searches Received - Personal	0	0%	12%	155
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,361</b>

Appendix B: BUILDING CONTROL (DVBCFEE)				Increase / (decrease) from			Variance	Manager's
	Actuals 19/20	Actuals 20/21	Actuals 21/22	20/21 to 21/22	Budget 21/22	(Budget- Actuals)	Forecast	
APR	46,552	25,107	60,545	35,438	41,931	18,614	-	
MAY	50,427	28,305	47,988	19,683	41,931	6,057	-	
JUN	44,461	49,857	57,741	7,884	41,931	15,811	-	
JUL	47,025	64,205	48,928	(15,277)	41,931	6,997	-	
AUG	48,869	42,367	49,476	7,109	41,931	7,545	38,000	
SEP	52,900	44,930	42,851	(2,079)	41,931	920	-	
OCT	49,220	59,144	53,334	(5,810)	41,931	11,403	-	
NOV	35,500	42,429	34,743	(7,686)	41,931	(7,187)	-	
DEC	25,489	27,203	38,039	10,836	41,931	(3,891)	-	
JAN	45,849	47,838	32,591	(15,247)	41,931	(9,340)	-	
FEB	32,288	44,709	36,979	(7,730)	41,931	(4,951)	(803)	
MAR	40,975	49,136	(680)	(49,816)	41,931	(42,610)	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>519,555</b>	<b>525,230</b>	<b>502,536</b>	<b>(22,694)</b>	<b>503,168</b>	<b>(632)</b>	<b>37,197</b>	



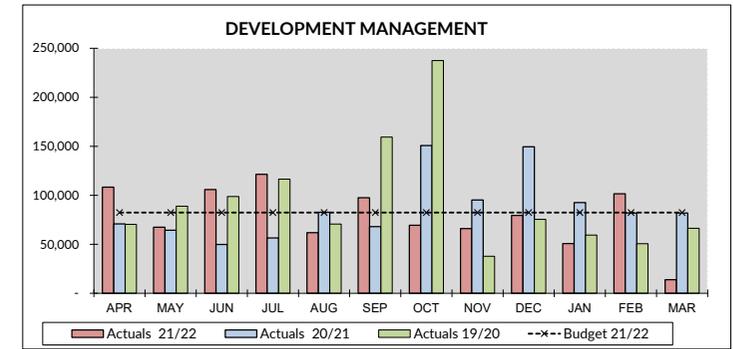
BUILDING CONTROL (CUMULATIVE)				Increase / (decrease) from			Variance	Manager's
	Actuals 19/20	Actuals 20/21	Actuals 21/22	20/21 to 21/22	Budget 21/22	(Budget- Actuals)	Forecast	
APR	46,552	25,107	60,545	35,438	41,931	18,614	-	
MAY	96,979	53,412	108,533	55,121	83,861	24,671	-	
JUNE	141,440	103,269	166,274	63,005	125,792	40,482	-	
JUL	188,465	167,474	215,202	47,728	167,723	47,479	-	
AUG	237,334	209,841	264,678	54,837	209,653	55,024	37,197	
SEP	290,234	254,771	307,529	52,758	251,584	55,945	-	
OCT	339,454	313,915	360,863	46,948	293,515	67,348	-	
NOV	374,954	356,344	395,606	39,262	335,445	60,161	-	
DEC	400,443	383,547	433,645	50,098	377,376	56,269	-	
JAN	446,292	431,385	466,236	34,851	419,307	46,930	-	
FEB	478,580	476,094	503,216	27,122	461,237	41,978	-	
MAR	519,555	525,230	502,536	(22,694)	503,168	(632)	-	



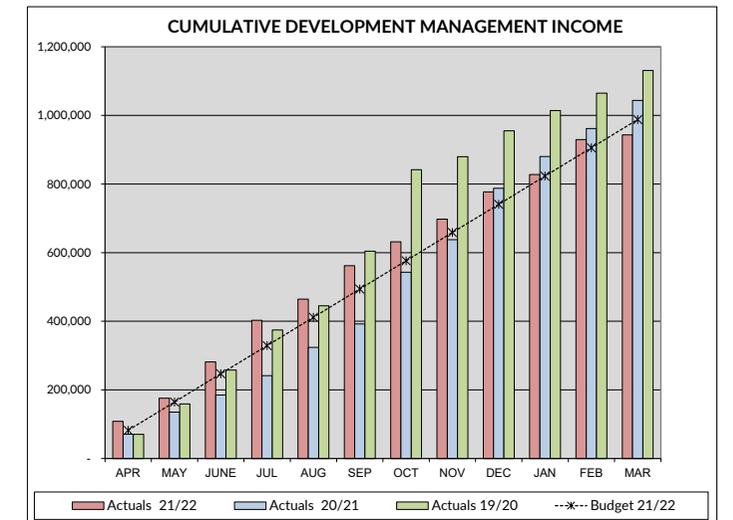
CUMULATIVE BREAKDOWN	Code	Actual (Cumulative)	Budget	(Monthly)
Plan Fee	3066	351,534	312,348	31,478
Inspection Fee	3067	199,658	190,820	19,728
Other	9999	-48,656	-	(51,886)
New Burdens Grant	3905	0	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>502,536</b>	<b>503,168</b>	<b>(680)</b>

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Appendix B: DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT (DVDEVCT/DVDEVRND)				Increase / (decrease) from	Variance	Manager's
	Actuals 19/20	Actuals 20/21	Actuals 21/22	20/21 to 21/22	(Budget-Actuals)	Forecast
APR	70,363	70,765	108,220	37,455	82,352	25,869
MAY	88,827	64,358	67,370	3,012	82,352	(14,982)
JUN	98,710	49,790	105,814	56,024	82,352	23,462
JUL	116,501	56,443	121,474	65,031	82,352	39,122
AUG	70,614	82,700	61,771	(20,930)	82,352	(20,581)
SEP	159,361	68,065	97,539	29,474	82,352	15,187
OCT	237,506	150,748	69,405	(81,343)	82,352	(12,947)
NOV	37,774	95,145	66,081	(29,064)	82,352	(16,270)
DEC	75,475	149,560	79,495	(70,065)	82,352	(2,857)
JAN	59,329	92,513	50,807	(41,706)	82,352	(31,545)
FEB	50,534	81,896	101,458	19,562	82,352	(7,935)
MAR	66,253	81,833	13,915	(67,918)	82,352	(68,437)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,131,247</b>	<b>1,043,816</b>	<b>943,348</b>	<b>(100,469)</b>	<b>988,220</b>	<b>(44,872)</b>



DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT (CUMULATIVE)				Increase / (decrease) from	Variance	Manager's
	Actuals 19/20	Actuals 20/21	Actuals 21/22	20/21 to 21/22	(Budget-Actuals)	Forecast
APR	70,363	70,765	108,220	37,455	82,352	25,869
MAY	159,190	135,123	175,590	40,467	164,703	10,887
JUNE	257,900	184,913	281,404	96,491	247,055	34,349
JUL	374,401	241,356	402,878	161,522	329,407	73,471
AUG	445,015	324,056	464,648	140,592	411,758	52,890
SEP	604,376	392,121	562,187	170,066	494,110	68,077
OCT	841,882	542,869	631,592	88,722	576,462	55,130
NOV	879,656	638,014	697,673	59,659	658,813	38,860
DEC	955,131	787,574	777,168	(10,407)	741,165	36,003
JAN	1,014,460	880,087	827,975	(52,113)	823,517	4,458
FEB	1,064,994	961,983	929,433	(32,551)	905,868	23,564
MAR	1,131,247	1,043,816	943,348	(100,469)	988,220	(44,873)



CUMULATIVE BREAKDOWN: DVDEVCT/DVDEVRND	Code	Actual	Budget	(Monthly)
		(Cumulative)		
Planning Application Fees	3009	923,238	874,129	6015
Other	9999	9,593	8851	(650)
Planning Performance Agreements	3012	50,000	0	-
Pre-application Fees	8329	2,483	0	-
Pre-application Fees	8330	78,734	93,271	8,550
Monitoring Fees	3106	3,300	11,969	-
RECH-Other A/C/S	98100			
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,067,348</b>	<b>988,220</b>	<b>13,915</b>

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## UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND INVESTMENT PLAN

Cabinet - 7 July 2022

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

**Status:** For Decision

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Lesley Dyball and Cllr Peter Fleming

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

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

- a) That the Cabinet notes the UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan.
- b) The Cabinet approves to delegate authority and authorises the Strategic Head of Property and Commercial following consultation with the Leader of the Council to take the necessary decisions and actions required to finalise the investment plan and accept the allocation of funds, as well as to implement and administer the scheme and all related plans in accordance with the requirements and priorities of the prospectus and the fund.

**Reason for recommendation:** The purpose of this report is to gain Cabinet approval of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund ('UKSPF') Investment plan. The Council has received a provisional allocation of £1million from the UKSPF covering the financial years 2022/23-2024/25.

The Council along with all other local authorities has to submit an investment plan to Central Government by the 1<sup>st</sup> August which has necessitated the need for an urgent decision. Extensive informal consultation has taken place to gain consensus from a range of key partners on the current challenges and opportunities in our District that UKSPF will support. The range of project interventions will ensure we deliver effective outcomes that will benefit our communities, our environment and the local economy.

### Introduction and Background

1. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund ('UKSPF') will support the UK government's wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK by delivering on each of the levelling up objectives:

## Agenda Item 7

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging
  - Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest
  - Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost
  - Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency
2. The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. This aligns with the Levelling Up White Paper missions, particularly: 'By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.' Alongside economic pull and push factors, people's lives are shaped by the social and physical fabric of their communities. The local mix of social and physical capital gives local areas their unique character and shapes where people choose to live, work and invest.
  3. Across the UK, £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment was provisionally allocated to lower tier and unitary authorities (lead authorities) for the period up to March 2025, with £400 million allocated in 2022-23, and reaching £1.5 billion by 2024/25.
  4. The South East was allocated a total of £74.7m, which is considerably less than other parts of the UK, reflecting the strong role the region plays economically. For example, in comparison the South West was allocated just over £188 million. Indeed, most local authority areas in Kent have been allocated the minimum amount of £1m for the period up to March 2025, with Canterbury receiving the largest allocation in Kent - £1.22 million. It should be noted that the allocation can be used as match funding.
  5. The fund has three main investment priorities:
    - Communities and Place (including visual improvements to town centres, litter and graffiti reduction, tackling anti-social behaviour and community projects)
    - Supporting Local Business (including support for increasing footfall in town centres, developing visitor and heritage assets, and business growth and innovation support) and,
    - People and Skills (qualifications in skills gaps, addressing barriers to employment, helping with life skills and work experience opportunities)

6. The funding for the first two priorities will commence in 2022/23, while the ‘People and Skills’ priority will commence in 2024/25. The prospectus encourages lead authorities to work across boundaries and with different levels of local government to agree and commission provision across a wider geography, especially for employment and skills provision.
7. Lead authorities have been given the responsibility of developing local investment plans, recognising the role of local government and places in increasing pride of place and improving life chances. Lead authorities are required to submit their investment plans to Central Government by 1st August 2022 in order to receive their allocation of the fund. Lead authorities will then have the responsibility for managing the fund, assessing and approving applications (if applicable), processing payments and day-to-day monitoring. In partnership with local stakeholders, they will determine the scale of intervention.
8. These plans comprise three aspects
  - Local context - setting out the challenges and opportunities using local evidence
  - Selection of outcomes and interventions - with lead authorities identifying the outcomes they want to achieve and the interventions they wish to prioritise using the evidence from the local context section
  - Delivery - setting out the approach to delivery and governance, expenditure and deliverables and capability and resource.
9. Sevenoaks District Council has been allocated £1million for the period 2022 - 2025. The allocation is released in line with a set funding profile and capital/revenue mix as outlined below:

Year 1 -2022/23	Year 2- 2023/24	Year 3- 2024/25
£90,189	£180,338	£729,473
10% capital minimum/90% revenue	13% capital minimum/87% revenue	20% capital minimum/80% revenue

10. An investment plan has to be submitted as part of Sevenoaks District Council’s proposal under the 3 investment priorities.
11. Our proposed projects to be delivered under the fund are shown in (appendix A). These projects have been developed through consultation in light of clear local themes, challenges and opportunities that we need to address/capitalise on. The four priority areas have been identified as:

## Agenda Item 7

- Supporting our rural economy and communities
- Town centre improvement
- Net Zero initiatives including - retrofit with a focus on education, skills and sustainable transport
- Supporting our local communities and businesses, especially in Swanley through initiatives for the economically inactive.

12. Some projects will be best delivered at the West Kent Level (such as business support and the green grants scheme) as this will provide both economies of scale and a greater catchment area. The UKSPF Prospectus highlights the importance of delivering programmes at scale where opportunities exist. Consultation on these projects took place with the West Kent Partnership on 10 June and were approved.

### Consultation

13. In order to access this allocation, the investment plan has to be developed in partnership with a local partnership group and approved by both the lead authority and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and endorsed by local MPs.

14. We have already undertaken a range of consultations with key local stakeholder groups to gain consensus on our priorities. The consultation meetings were as follows:

- Two business focus groups on 30 and 31 March
- A special meeting of the Business Board on 13 April
- The Parish and Town Council clerks on 28 April
- The Sevenoaks Voluntary Forum on the 5 May
- The Local Strategic Partnership on the 9 June
- We also had discussions with Visit Kent and some 1:1 meetings with local business owners

15. The results of the consultations were encouraging as they provided consensus on our chosen areas, for example:

- It was stressed by many that we need to build an inclusive economy by developing projects that help the unemployed or those facing significant barriers to employment
- There were opportunities to help with the rejuvenation of our key town centres through public realm and green infrastructure investment, but also through expanding our cultural offer and supporting the night time economy
- There was emphasis on appreciating and supporting the rural economy
- Net Zero was an important subject for all, with the need to boost biodiversity and help local businesses and residents to de-carbonise
- Our local businesses are still very much in recovery mode and facing mounting costs and labour shortages so they need our continued support

### Governance

16. We will need to outline our governance structure for managing the plan as part of our submission. We propose that we will utilise a reconstituted Sevenoaks Business Board, chaired by the Leader of the Council, to act as our official local partnership group who will have on-going role in providing strategic advice and guidance as we deliver the Investment Plan. Local authorities are requested to invite MPs to this group, but this may be difficult from a practical perspective. We are however, meeting our MPs to present our plan and get endorsement on the 4<sup>th</sup> July. We propose to have six monthly meetings with our MPS to advise them on progress of the Plan and capture additional strategic insights and feedback from them.

17. In addition within our governance structure we will incorporate the following to play key roles:

- The Economic Development team will have the overall responsibility with co-ordinating delivery of the plan including supporting the delivery of projects, monitoring and financial management. Regular updates on the progress of the investment plan including outputs, updates on the expenditure profile and risks shall be provided to the Improvement & Innovation and People & Places committees.
- SMT will provide Executive Management and decision making oversight (agenda item quarterly)
- The West Kent Partnership will be responsible for oversight of collaborative business support and skills projects. A six monthly update will be provided to the West Kent Partnership Board.

### Next Steps

## Agenda Item 7

18. Officers are currently in the process of drafting the investment plan to ensure that it is ready for final internal sign off. Key aspects of the investment plan that need to be highlighted include:
- That the plan needs to clearly articulate and evidence local challenges and opportunities being addressed under the investment priorities
  - The interventions proposed to address these
  - The outcomes and impacts expected over the period of the Investment Plan (and these are listed for each investment priority with some flexibility to add others)
  - The local authority's capacity and skills to manage the delivery of the investment plan
  - The governance structure to deliver the plan
  - That a reasonable assessment of risks has been undertaken
  - UKSPF funded activity needs to be branded in accordance with the prospectus' guidelines
  - We need to confirm that the plan is approved by the Chief Executive Officer of the Council, the Section 151 Officer and the Leader of the Council and endorsed by our local MPs

The full Investment Plan document is currently in the process of being drafted by officers. The final Investment Plan will be submitted as a supplementary document, with adequate time for review by Members, prior to the Cabinet on the 7<sup>th</sup> July and submitted to Government by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022

### **Other options Considered and/or rejected**

19. The rules and parameters for the UKSPF are clearly set out in the Prospectus and accompanying documents. As highlighted we are seeking to work with colleagues in the West Kent Partnership and possibly with programmes across Kent, and local authorities are actively encouraged to collaborate across borders and at scale. We could have limited delivery of the plan within the District only, but we are likely to have been questioned on this approach.

## Key Implications

### Financial

Funding for each financial year (as highlighted in 9 above) will be paid to the local authority in advance (in 2022/23, this will be once the Investment Plan has been signed off by DLUCH around October 2022. Prior to each year's allocation, a report needs to be submitted on progress against the outputs of the Investment Plan. Lead local authorities will be asked to return any underspends at the end of each financial year, therefore regular financial and performance monitoring will be required.

£20,000 has also been made available to the Council (separate from the allocation) to assist in the preparation and set up of the plan. Officers are currently reviewing a proposal from consultants to help with a review of the investment plan prior to it being submitted. In addition, 4% of the allocation can be used for administration of the plan including commissioning services and monitoring. More administration heavy projects have in-built resources included.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

Lead local authorities will receive a grant determination letter and Memorandum of Understanding setting out Fund requirements and obligations which will need to be checked for any liabilities or other undertakings required by the Council.

Risk Assessment - There are more risks associated in not approving the UK shared prosperity fund investment plan than approving it.

If the District Council does not proceed to approve the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan the following needs to be considered:

- (a) A missed opportunity, or at least potential delays, in utilising Government funds for supporting the Levelling up agenda strengthening 'pride in place' and 'improving life chances' in our District
- (b) To fund activities and projects that would not otherwise attract funding
- (c) Failing to support our local businesses, town centres and rural economy
- (d) Reputational risks with Government and local stakeholders where other boroughs and districts are seen to deliver successful investment plans, but Sevenoaks fails to do so.
- (e) It is recognised that the fund needs careful monitoring and financial management, but officers believe that the proposed governance structures proposed will mitigate against these risks.

## Agenda Item 7

### Equality Assessment

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through the report directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment plan, and the three investment priorities it supports, should have a positive impact on all our residents and businesses. Some initiatives, however, are targeted at specific groups that are in particular need in our community such as the unemployed or those experiencing barriers to employment. Such an approach means we are seeking to positively impact levelling up of opportunity across the District.

### Net Zero Implications

The decision recommended through this report have relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. Officers believe that the UKSPF Investment Plan will help in reducing carbon emissions. In summary:

- A number of projects notably the green grants scheme and the training of retrofit advisers should positively impact local businesses and potentially emissions from Council owned assets
- Through community mobilisation we will be seeking to raise awareness of Net Zero issues and solutions
- We are seeking to deliver green infrastructure in our key centres and boost biodiversity such as at Hollybush

### **Conclusions**

The Report sets out the background to the development of the UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan. The Plan addresses the most important current issues the District and West Kent partners are facing covering the UKSPF investment priorities of Communities & Place, Supporting Local Business and People & Skills. The Plan has been endorsed by key local stakeholders.

#### **Appendices**

Appendix A - UKSPF Draft investment Plan

Background Document - Net Zero Assessment

**Detlev Munster**  
**Strategic Head of Commercial and Property**

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## Appendix A

## UKSPF Investment Plan– Sevenoaks District Proposed Projects list

## Theme: Community and Place:-

Project	Description	Cost £
<b>Social Value Engine</b>	Tool for managing grants, showing social value outcomes which can help leverage further investment.	<b>9,000</b>
<b>Community Mobilisation officer</b>	0.5 FTE for 2 years to manage UKSPF Community mobilisation and community hub projects	<b>50,000</b>
<b>Digital Infrastructure</b>	Feasibility study around enhancing the infrastructure for digital connectivity in rural areas	<b>15,000</b>
<b>Improving Green Spaces</b>	Sensory garden project at Hollybush. Would seek 50% match – possibly DEFRA nature recovery grant. Serve as a pilot and ties in to Public Realm project to link all green spaces.	<b>15,000</b>
<b>Community Mobilisation Grants</b>	Grant funding for community mobilisation projects	<b>42,000</b>
<b>Rural Isolation</b>	Community Pop ups to bring people together and build community links	<b>10,000</b>
<b>Supporting Town Centres</b>	Capital project to covering alternative public realm and greening improvements	<b>181,000</b>
<b>Creative Sector Development</b>	Support Creative businesses by showcasing for residents and visitors the cultural and experiential offer, through seed funding and through effective partnership working	<b>12,500</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£334,500</b>

## Theme: Supporting Local Business:-

Project	Description	Cost £
<b>West Kent Green Business Grant Scheme</b>	A grant scheme to encourage local businesses to move towards zero carbon as per the aspirations of the District Climate Change Strategy. The scheme would include grant contributions of up to £5,000 towards interventions such as renewal energy sources, energy efficiency measures and business development support for green businesses.	<b>65,500 SDC contribution over the funding period</b>
<b>West Kent Business Support Programme including dedicated officer</b>	After many years of learning from providing business support across West Kent, this service will provide a co-ordinated programme of events and training, along with a start-up mentoring service that also offers seed funding grants (of up to £500) to support. A dedicated business support adviser will be recruited	<b>54,500 SDC contribution over the funding period</b>

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<b>Rural Business Development Programme</b>	Participate in the proposed programme being suggested by KCC and Kent Downs AONB. This includes dedicated business advice for rural businesses. This may depend on wider Kent take up and future DEFRA funding.	<b>28,000 Plus existing West Kent budgets</b>
<b>Town Centre activities</b>	Events and promotions to support town centres development and to grow cultural offer across all our town centres including part-time officer.	<b>60,000 + 60,000 town centre officer role (now part-time)</b>
<b>Alternative Accommodation</b>	Supporting the visitor economy by encouraging camping, champing, farm stays and other pop up accommodation across the District and increasing the number of overnight stays during the summer season. Feasibility study, bringing groups together, toolkit creation followed by campaign to target visitors	<b>14,000</b>
<b>Digital Heritage and Visitor Economy Project</b>	Feasibility study to utilise augmented and virtual reality to promote our heritage and visitor economy assets	<b>11,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£293,000</b>

### Theme: People and Skills:-

<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost £</b>
<b>Growth Gurus</b>	Establish a community hub pilot within Swanley providing a physical presence delivering support and access to services. Also a virtual dimension. Aimed at preventing worklessness via a triage service and a holistic approach across a range of partners. Delivering training, signposting and employability support. A dedicated support advisor for each young person via TEP and a dedicated growth guru. Year 1 of an envisaged 3 year programme.	<b>180,000</b>
<b>Support for economically inactive adults</b>	1:1 and group sessions for economically inactive adults who face multiple barriers to employment. Outreach in Swanley and Edenbridge and specialist support for those aged 50-64. Potential for delivery on a WK basis	<b>60,000</b>
<b>Green retrofit skills</b>	Covering 1} improved coverage of the Retrofit agenda 2) Retrofit Boot camp (training local retrofit advisers)	<b>72,500</b>
<b>Upskilling in digital skills</b>	Supporting business growth by delivering digital training to fill skills gaps. Voluntary sector to also access training to build capacity	20,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£332,500</b>

Indicative project cost

£. 960,000 + 4% administration allowance = £1,000,000

**ANNUAL REVIEW OF PARKING MANAGEMENT 2022-23 - PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**Cabinet - 7 July 2022**

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer - Finance & Trading

**Status:** For Decision

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Executive Summary** This report informs Members of the outcome of the public consultation on the proposed changes to the on-street and off-street (car park) parking fees and charges in the annual review of parking management 2022-23 approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 21 April 2022

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** supporting and developing the local economy, providing value for money, and working towards Sevenoaks District Councils Net Zero ambitions

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Margot McArthur

**Contact Officers:** Trevor Kennett, Ext. 7407  
Adrian Rowbotham, Ext. 7153

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** It is recommended that:

- a) the report be noted;
- b) following consideration of the responses to the public consultation, the revised parking management arrangements for 2022/23 be agreed by Cabinet.

**Reason for recommendation:** To help regulate and manage the use of parking facilities in the District; to ensure on-street and off-street (car park) parking fees and 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 8

### Background

- 1 At its meeting on 21 April 2022, Cabinet considered and agreed for public consultation on a proposal for changes to the on-street and off-street (car park) parking fees and charges in the annual review of parking management 2022-23.
- 2 The proposal (Appendix 3) for a flexible multi-year approach, to be continued to be employed, to allow the Council, as a local parking provider, to be responsive to economic cycles as well as the needs of its customers and communities.
- 3 The proposals have been developed to support the local economy, further advance the District Council's move to Net Zero 2030 and support the local economy, they embrace the most up-to-date thinking on parking management.
- 4 The traditional approach to parking sees price used as a means of maintaining a high turnover of short stay spaces, maximising the usage of each bay. However, shopping habits have evolved following the pandemic and high streets continue to move towards focussing increasingly on experiences in favour of solely traditional retail. These shifts see people seeking long stay parking, who, in turn, can then spend more time taking advantage of all our towns have to offer. Furthermore, it is recognised the encouragement of lots of short visits would promote vehicle movements, thus risking having an adverse impact on air quality. We are therefore eager to keep abreast of these changes and support our town centres by rebalancing parking charges in favour of longer stays, whilst also ensuring there remains something for everyone.
- 5 The existing and proposed changes to the on-street parking fees and charges are detailed in Appendix 2
- 6 Many of the parking places where rises to the parking fees and charges are proposed have previously been frozen for between six and eight years.
- 7 In accordance with legislation, a public consultation about the proposed changes was undertaken over a 3-week period.
- 8 This report informs Members of the outcome of the public consultation, before a final decision is made on whether to proceed with the implementation of the proposed changes in the annual review of parking management arrangements for 2022-23

### Consultation

- 9 For the public consultation, a public Notice of Variation was placed in each the streets and parking places affected and advertised in the local press on 19 May 2022, inviting comments on the proposed changes by noon on 10 June 2022.

- 10 The Notice of Variation and an online questionnaire was also placed on the parking consultations page Council’s website.
- 11 In the interests of added publicity, letters about the proposed changes were also sent to all current holders of resident and non-resident parking permits and season tickets affected by the proposed changes.
- 12 During the 3-week public consultation, a total of 261 responses were received; 66 of which related to the proposed changes to the on-street and 195 to the proposed off-street (car park) parking fees and charges.
- 13 Of the responses received, 4 supported and 62 objected to the proposed changes to the on-street parking fees and charges, and 4 supported and 191 objected to the off-street (car park) ones.
- 14 The main themes of the objections were:
  - Charges too expensive
  - Increases too high
  - Timing of the increases, especially in context of current economic climate
  - Detrimental effects of increases to the towns and the local economies, and migration to online shopping
  - Visitors and shoppers would be deterred from visiting the towns
  - Parking was cheaper or free elsewhere

<b>Breakdown of the responses, by postcode</b>	
<b>Postcode area</b>	<b>%</b>
BR8 - Swanley	4
TN8 - Edenbridge	2
TN13 - Sevenoaks	31
TN14 - Sevenoaks	30
TN15 - Sevenoaks	12
TN16 - Westerham	18
Postcode outside of district	3

## Key Implications

### Financial

The Council’s ten-year budget includes inflationary assumptions, which must be met, and Members remain committed to an exciting programme of investment in parking provision, which is a discretionary service.

The proposed changes to the fees and charges approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 21 April 2022 are estimated to satisfy these requirements.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

The proposed changes to parking fees and charges have been subject to statutory public consultation by means of a notice of variation issued pursuant to Sections

## Agenda Item 8

35C and 46A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and Regulation 25 of Part V of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 and in accordance with the Parking Places (Variation of Charges) Act 2017.

The main risks to implementing the proposed changes to parking fees and charges is the on-street and off-street (car park) parking places becoming uncompetitive, thereby resulting in a reduction in usage and income, as well as parking displacement to other un-restricted or cheaper/free parking locations.

### Equality Assessment

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

Allowing free parking for vehicles displaying a valid disabled persons' blue badge in the on-street and off-street (car park) parking places helps to increase social inclusion by removing barriers to access.

### Net Zero Implications

Members are reminded of the Council's stated ambition to be Net Zero with regards to carbon emissions by 2030. The decisions recommended in this paper directly impact on this ambition. The impact has been reviewed and there could be a slight decrease on carbon emissions produced in the District as a result of this decision.

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

### **Conclusions**

The proposed changes and the consultation feedback to the on-street and off-street (car park) parking fees and charges in the annual review of parking management 2022-23 approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 21 April 2022 are detailed within the Appendices 1 and 2 to this report.

**Appendices**

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Appendix 1 | Summary of Consultation feedback  |
| Appendix 2 | Existing and proposed changes to the off-street parking fees and charges in the annual review of parking management 2022-23 |
| Appendix 3 | Introduction to the Parking Proposal  |

**Background Papers**

[Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

[The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders \(Procedure\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

[Parking Places \(Variation of Charges\) Act 2017 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

[Cabinet Report - 21 April 2022 - Parking Management Review - Item 106](#)

Consultation responses to proposed on & off Street parking fees & charges

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

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## Appendix 1

### Consultation Feedback

- 1 A number of detailed written comments were submitted by respondents to the public consultation, which are summarised below:

#### Summary of Comments on Proposed On-Street Parking Fees and Charges

##### On-Street Pay-and-Display Charges in Halstead

- 2 No written feedback was received.

##### On-Street Pay-and-Display Charges in Sevenoaks

- 3 The feedback was that the proposals would make parking too expensive and would be “pricing people out of coming to Sevenoaks”, and that increasing charges puts more stress on local people’s finances.

##### On-Street Pay-and-Display Charges in Swanley

- 4 The feedback was that the proposed increases are excessive, way above inflation, unjustified and badly timed, given the current economic situation.

##### On-Street Pay-and-Display Charges in Westerham

- 5 The feedback was that the proposed increases are excessive, unjustified, badly timed, and will have a detrimental effect on the town and local economy.
- 6 Some respondents requested the 15 minute tariff be retained, to facilitate short “stop and shop” visits.
- 7 Others considered that the retention of free on-street parking on Sundays resulted in parking difficulties for local residents, including resident permit holders.
- 8 Some commented that some shoppers/visitors could migrate to nearby retail destinations, such as Oxted, where short stay parking is free.
- 9 The Town Council and Town Partnership objected to the proposals on similar grounds, and expressed concerns about the detrimental impact the changes would have on Westerham visitors, residents and businesses.

##### Annual Tariffs for Residents Parking Permits

- 10 The feedback was that the proposed increases are excessive, way above inflation, unjustified, badly timed, given the current economic situation, and are penalising residents.

##### Quarterly, 6-Monthly & Annual Tariffs for Non-Residents Parking Permits

- 11 The feedback from residents was that non-residents parking permits penalise residents, as they are often used by commuters, and that the

## Agenda Item 8

charges for this type of permit are low compared to station parking charges, and should be higher.

### **Tariff for a Book/Sheet of Daily Residents Visitors Vouchers**

- 12 The feedback was that the proposed increases are excessive, unjustified, badly timed, given the current economic situation, and will discourage residents' visitors.

### **Summary of Comments on Proposed Off-Street (Car Park) Parking Fees and Charges**

#### **Off-Street (Car Park) Pay-and-Display Charges, Season Ticket & Resident Permit Tariffs in Sevenoaks**

- 13 The feedback was that the proposed increases are excessive, unjustified, badly timed, and will have a detrimental effect on the town and local economy.
- 14 A number of respondents felt that the charges would cause some shoppers/visitors to migrate to other retail destinations, such as Bluewater, where parking is free.

#### **Weekly and Monthly Cashless Season Tickets in Bradbourne Car Park in Sevenoaks**

- 15 No written feedback was received.
- 16 **Off-Street (Car Park) Pay-and-Display Charges, Season Ticket & Resident Permit Tariffs in Swanley**
- 17 The feedback was that the proposed increases are excessive, unjustified, badly timed, and will have a detrimental effect on the town and local economy.
- 18 Similar concerns about the proposals were raised by some local District Councillors.

#### **Off-Street (Car Park) Pay-and-Display Charges, Season Ticket & Resident Permit Tariffs in Westerham**

- 19 The feedback was that the proposed increases are excessive, unjustified, badly timed, and will have a detrimental effect on the town and local economy.
- 20 Some respondents felt that the introduction of 1-3 hour charges in Darent car park would result in parking migration to uncontrolled residential streets locally, where parking is free, to the detriment of local residents.
- 21 The Town Council and Town Partnership objected to the proposals on similar grounds, pointing out that with no train station and a very limited bus service, Westerham's residents and visitors are very reliant on cars, and the town therefore cannot withstand blanket parking increases in the same way as more robust towns in the District.



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**APPENDIX 2**

Existing and proposed changes to the ON-STREET parking fees and charges  
in the annual review of parking management 2022-23

<b>High Street, London Road &amp; South Park, Sevenoaks</b>		
<b>Scale of Charges A1</b>		
	<b>Current Tariff</b>	<b>New Tariff</b>
<b>Charging Days</b>	<b>Monday to Saturday (unchanged)</b>	
<b>Charging Hours</b>	<b>8.30am to 8.30pm (unchanged)</b>	
Up to 30 minutes	£0.50	£1
Up to 1 hour	£1	£1.50
Up to 2 hours	£2	£3
Sunday	Free (unchanged)	

<b>The Green, The Grange &amp; Market Square, Westerham</b>		
<b>Scale of Charges A2</b>		
	<b>Current Tariff</b>	<b>New Tariff</b>
<b>Charging Days</b>	<b>Monday to Saturday (unchanged)</b>	
<b>Charging Hours</b>	<b>8.30am to 6.30pm (unchanged)</b>	
Up to 15 minutes	£0.10	Not available
Up to 30 minutes	£0.20	£0.50
Up to 1 hour	£0.60	£1
Up to 2 hours	£1.50	£2

<b>Azalea Road, Goldsel Road, Swanley (Swanley Station)</b>		
<b>Scale of Charges A4</b>		
	<b>Current Tariff</b>	<b>New Tariff</b>
<b>Charging Days</b>	<b>Monday to Friday (unchanged)</b>	
<b>Charging Hours</b>	<b>8.30am to 6.30pm (unchanged)</b>	
Up to 30 minutes	£0.20	£0.50
Up to 1 hour	£0.60	£1
Up to 2 hours	£1.30	£2
Up to 4 hours	£2.40	£3
Over 4 hours and all day	£3.50	£5

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### APPENDIX 2

Existing and proposed changes to the ON-STREET parking fees and charges  
in the annual review of parking management 2022-23

<b>Holly Bush Lane &amp; Plymouth Drive, Sevenoaks (Sevenoaks Town)</b>		
<b>Scale of Charges A5</b>		
	<b>Current Tariff</b>	<b>New Tariff</b>
<b>Charging Days</b>	<b>Monday to Saturday (unchanged)</b>	
<b>Charging Hours</b>	<b>8.30am to 6.30pm (unchanged)</b>	
Up to 30 minutes	£0.50	£1
Up to 1 hour	£1	£1.50
Up to 2 hours	£2	£2.50
All day	£5 (unchanged)	

<b>(Sevenoaks Station) Morewood Close - East (near Morewood Close Industrial Estate), St. Botolphs Road (between London Road (A224) &amp; Vine Avenue), Ashley Road, Ashley Close &amp; Chestnut Lane, Sevenoaks</b>		
<b>Scale of Charges A6</b>		
	<b>Current Tariff</b>	<b>New Tariff</b>
<b>Charging Days</b>	<b>Monday to Saturday (unchanged)</b>	
<b>Charging Hours</b>	<b>8.30am to 6.30pm (unchanged)</b>	
Up to 30 minutes	£0.50	£1
Up to 1 hour	£1	£2
Up to 2 hours	£2	£3
Up to 4 hours	£4	£5
All day	£7	£8

**APPENDIX 2**

Existing and proposed changes to the ON-STREET parking fees and charges  
in the annual review of parking management 2022-23

<b>Morewood Close – West (outside &amp; opposite Magistrates Court), Sevenoaks (Sevenoaks Station) Scale of Charges A7</b>		
	<b>Current Tariff</b>	<b>New Tariff</b>
<b>Charging Days</b>	<b>Monday to Saturday (unchanged)</b>	
<b>Charging Hours</b>	<b>8.30am to 6.30pm (unchanged)</b>	
Up to 30 minutes	£0.50 (unchanged)	
Up to 1 hour	£1 (unchanged)	
Up to 2 hours	£2 (unchanged)	
Up to 4 hours	£3	£4

<b>London Road &amp; Sevenoaks Road, Halstead Scale of Charges A8</b>		
	<b>Current Tariff</b>	<b>New Tariff</b>
<b>Charging Days</b>	<b>Monday to Friday (unchanged)</b>	
<b>Charging Hours</b>	<b>8.30am to 6.30pm (unchanged)</b>	
Up to 4 hours	£2.40	£3
All day	£3.50	£4

<b>Residents Visitor Vouchers Scale of Charges A9</b>		
	<b>Current Tariff</b>	<b>New Tariff</b>
<b>Charging Days</b>	<b>Monday to Saturday (unchanged)</b>	
<b>Charging Hours</b>	<b>8.30am to 6.30pm (unchanged)</b>	
Up to 15 minutes	£0.10	Not available
Up to 30 minutes	£0.20	£0.50
Up to 1 hour	£0.60	£1
Up to 2 hours	£1.50	£2
Up to 3 hours	£2.50	£3

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### APPENDIX 2

Existing and proposed changes to the ON-STREET parking fees and charges  
in the annual review of parking management 2022-23

<b>St Marys Road, Swanley (Swanley Town)</b>		
<b>Scale of Charges A11</b>		
<b>Charging Days</b>	<b>Current Tariff</b>	<b>New Tariff</b>
	<b>Charging Hours</b>	<b>Monday to Saturday (unchanged)</b>
	<b>8.30am to 6.30pm (unchanged)</b>	
Up to 1 hour	£0.50	£1
Up to 2 hours	£1	£1.50
Up to 3 hours	£2	£2.50

<b>Residents Parking Permit</b>				
<b>Scale of Charges B5</b>				
<b>Current Tariff - Annual</b>				
<b>No. of existing off-street parking spaces at address</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> permit at address</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> permit at address</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> permit at address</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> permit at address</b>
0	£35	£70	£125	£250
1	£70	£125	£250	£250
2	£125	£250	£250	£250
3 or more	£250	£250	£250	£250
<b>New Tariff - Annual</b>				
<b>No. of existing off-street parking spaces at address</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> permit at address</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> permit at address</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> permit at address</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> permit at address</b>
0	£50	£100	£175	£325
1	£100	£175	£325	£325
2	£175	£325	£325	£325
3 or more	£325	£325	£325	£325

<b>Non-Resident Parking Permit - Town (On-Street)</b>		
<b>Scale of Charges B7</b>		
	<b>Current Tariff</b>	<b>New Tariff</b>
Annual non-resident permit	£270	£350
6-month non-resident permit	£135	£175
3-month non-resident permit	£67.50	£90

**APPENDIX 2**

Existing and proposed changes to the ON-STREET parking fees and charges  
in the annual review of parking management 2022-23

<b>Non-Resident Parking Permit - Station East (On-Street)</b>		
<b>Scale of Charges B8</b>		
	<b>Current Tariff</b>	<b>New Tariff</b>
Annual non-resident permit	£650 (unchanged)	
6-month non-resident permit	£325 (unchanged)	
3-month non-resident permit	£162.50	£175

<b>Non-Resident Parking Permit - Station West (On-Street)</b>		
<b>Scale of Charges B9</b>		
	<b>Current Tariff</b>	<b>New Tariff</b>
Annual non-resident permit	£765	£780
6-month non-resident permit	£382.50	£400
3-month non-resident permit - Station west	£191.25	£200

<b>Residents Visitors Vouchers</b>		
<b>Scale of Charges C1</b>		
	<b>Current Tariff</b>	<b>New Tariff</b>
Book/sheet of 5 daily residents visitors vouchers	£6 (£1.20 per day)	£10 (£2 per day)

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Appendix 3 - Introduction to the Parking Proposal

**Covid-19 Pandemic**

- 1 In March 2020, at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council was the first in Kent to remove all parking charges across the District Council's Car Parks, encouraging the use of those local businesses, which remained open, and allowing Sevenoaks District Council staff to support the community with food deliveries and welfare visits. Sevenoaks District Council was one of the last Councils in Kent to reinstate Car Park charges across its car parks, supporting residents and the local economy to recover, with charging resuming in all car parks by 23 July 2020.
- 2 The cost of these supportive measures amounted to a reduction in income to the council of £946,000.
- 3 When conducting the Annual Review of Parking Management for 2021/22, the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee recommended a freeze on all parking charges, both on and off-street, across the District. This approach was endorsed by Cabinet and adopted by the Council.
- 4 People are now returning to our town centres and car park usage is in line with the expectations set out in the 2021/22 Budget.

**Environment**

- 5 The Council has committed to Net Zero 2030 and is dedicated to helping the community achieve this too. At its January meeting, the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee received a progress report on its work on Net Zero 2030 and considered the Council's Air Quality Action Plan. For consideration alongside this item are reports on the rollout of Electric Vehicle Charging Points and the Council's Movement Strategy.
- 6 Other recent work has included: free parking provided for two weekends leading up to Christmas in Sevenoaks town and Westerham in off-street car parks on Saturdays and Sundays, 11 & 12 and 18 & 19 December 2021. The £17,000 cost in terms of loss of income for free Christmas parking was met by the Council.
- 7 The contribution private cars make to carbon emissions and air quality in the district is recognised and the Council is keen to promote the use of more environmentally considerate alternatives where possible.

**Investment**

- 8 In addition to operational costs such as business 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 new safety barriers, increasing capacity, resurfacing, renewing drainage and upgrading lighting.

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- 9 The Council has complemented these works by investing in service improvements, for example improved enforcement following customer feedback, better cash collection services and improvements to cashless parking services.
- 10 And it is working on delivering electric vehicle charging hubs for residents without access to electric charging points, pay on exit, utilising barrierless automated number plate reader (ANPR) technology, improving on-street safety outside schools and improvements across its car parks including car park resurfacing, landscaping etc.

### **Financial**

- 11 Within the 2021/22 budget, there was a Service Change Impact Assessment (SCIA) for car park income inflation of £118,000 that was deferred by Members for one year. This will now need to be achieved in 2022/23.
- 12 For the financial year 2022/23, the car park income inflation figure will be a further £89,639.
- 13 This gives a total pressure of £207,639, which will need to be generated within the financial year 2022/23.
- 14 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.

### **Proposal**

- 15 The following proposals have been developed to support the local economy, further advance the District Council's move to Net Zero 2030 and support the local economy, they embrace the most up-to-date thinking on parking management.
- 16 The traditional approach to parking sees price used as a means of maintaining a high turnover of short stay spaces, maximising the usage of each bay. However, shopping habits have evolved following the pandemic and high streets continue to move towards focussing increasingly on experiences in favour of solely traditional retail. These shifts see people seeking long stay parking, who, in turn, can then spend more time taking advantage of all our towns have to offer. Furthermore, it is recognised the encouragement of lots of short visits would promote vehicle movements, thus risking having an adverse impact on air quality. We are therefore eager to keep abreast of these changes and support our town centres by rebalancing parking charges in favour of longer stays, whilst also ensuring there remains something for everyone.

- 17 It is important the services and our assets continue to receive investment as described earlier in the report. It is also important that the burden of changes to parking charges should not fall on one or two car parks.

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**Item 09 - Ebikes and Social Value**

The attached report was considered by the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee on 28 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of this agenda and will follow when available.

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**NET ZERO 2030 - E-BIKES AND SOCIAL VALUE**

Cabinet - 7 July 2022

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services

**Status:** For decision.

**Also considered by:**

- Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee - 28 June 2022

**Key Decision:** No.

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** Commitment to Net Zero 2030.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Margot McArthur

**Contact Officer(s):** Richard Morris, Ext, 7139; Helen French, Ext. 7357; Margaret Carr, Ext. 7341

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** That

- a. Cabinet authorises the engagement of a consultant to assess the overall feasibility of introducing an e-bike scheme in the District taking into account scheme demand, geographical coverage, economic case, fleet assumptions, cost and tariff plans, delivery and operating options and scheme risks; and
- b. Cabinet authorises the engagement of the same consultant to develop a business case for a feasible scheme if such a scheme is deemed achievable by the consultant;
- c. Cabinet agrees that these initial costs will be funded from the Net Zero Reserve;
- d. Cabinet endorses in principle the provision by spring 2023 of a partnership e-bike scheme within the District as a vehicle to address the issues of homelessness, under-employment and low skills in the workforce; and
- e. Cabinet requests a final report on this item, including any consultancy advice, prior to the 2023/24 budget being set.

**Reason for recommendation:**

Preparatory investigation is necessary in order to fully inform the Member decision-making process.

### Introduction and Background

- 1 The Council have committed to working towards net zero carbon emissions for the Council and its assets by 2030. We have also committed to work with communities and partners to reduce carbon emissions across the District.
- 2 Transport is the second largest emitter of carbon within the District accounting for 36% of emissions within the influence of the Local Authority in 2019.
- 3 The Net Zero 2030 ambition includes an action to “**Promote low carbon travel and sustainable movement**” and to work with Kent County Council, our community and partners to develop and encourage sustainable travel.
- 4 The Movement Strategy 2022 sets out the Council’s aims to promote sustainable movement. Including an aim to “**Support suitable innovative low emission alternatives for short and long distance travel**”.
- 5 The Air Quality Action Plan also identifies measures to help improve air quality including investigating “**Bike Rental Schemes**” and “**Promotion of active travel schemes**”.

### Electric Bikes in Sevenoaks

- 6 Electric bikes (e-bikes) are becoming a popular low carbon alternative to traditional transport particularly with commuters and leisure cyclists. An e-bike is a hybrid form of transport with part of the power coming from the rider and part from an electric motor.
- 7 E-bikes are particularly useful for journeys that are not short enough for walking or non-powered cycling but are not so long that a train or car may be necessary. In fact, 30-40% of e-bike trips are taken in conjunction with public transport.
- 8 E-bikes are capable of doing what a regular bike can do and have many benefits over regular bikes:
  - E-bike users tend to have a greater average speed which reduces journey time
  - E-bikes can be used for longer journeys as they require less physical effort and are particularly suited to journeys with challenging topography and hills
  - E-bike riders often say they feel safer in traffic due to the extra acceleration and speed up hills which means that the difference in speed of other passing vehicles is less than it otherwise would be
  - Users are able to carry heavier loads more easily than with a regular bike making them more suitable for shopping trips and other journeys

- E-bikes can be suitable for a wider range of age groups and abilities and still have great health benefits as a form of aerobic exercise.
- 9 There are also challenges with e-bikes:
- E-bikes are more expensive than regular bikes costing on average £1,500-£3,000
  - Most bikes will travel around 25-50 miles between charges and take around 2-6 hours to fully charge
  - E-bikes are around 10kg heavier and bulkier than regular bikes.
- 10 Large-scale cycle hire and public bike share schemes have become increasingly popular in towns and cities across the country. Such schemes have many benefits including helping to reduce carbon emissions, improving air quality and providing communities with convenient access to bikes, rather than requiring individuals to purchase an e-bike outright.
- 11 Given the nature of Sevenoaks Urban Area it is possible that an e-bike scheme would be more suitable than a regular bike hire scheme for the Town. Sevenoaks has challenging topography with many hills; for example the town centre cannot be accessed from either Sevenoaks railway station or Bat and Ball railway station without travelling uphill for some distance.
- 12 Sevenoaks station also attracts users from a wide area and serves many of the surrounding villages with commuters travelling many miles to reach the station. E-bikes could provide an alternative to the car, or walking, for these “first and last mile” journeys.
- 13 However, there is currently no definitive evidence as to how popular an e-bike hire scheme would be within Sevenoaks Urban Area. We are currently undertaking a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and early indications from stakeholder feedback indicate that some of the key barriers to cycling in Sevenoaks are the existing road network and infrastructure, topography of the town, and safety, particularly around key junctions and for schoolchildren.
- 14 The LCWIP, due to be completed in Autumn 2022, will also provide some information regarding the suitability of the town for e-bikes, taking account of the more affluent demographic of the town and the topography and safety issues that could be mitigated by the use of e-bike technology.
- 15 Although the LCWIP will provide some indication of the suitability of the town for e-bikes, this information is likely to be limited and further work on the market demand and delivery, including more direct stakeholder engagement, would need to be undertaken to provide assurances that a scheme would be viable, feasible and suitable for Sevenoaks.

### **Big Issue/ShareBike proposal**

- 16 In January 2021, initial discussions were held with representatives from Big Issue/ShareBike to showcase a proposal for an e-bike hire scheme aimed at

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providing support for long term unemployed people. The scheme would be primarily an employment support project with “green” benefits.

- 17 ShareBike, who are based in Norway, indicated that their previous projects in European cities are based around 400 bikes in order to work. The scheme is based on monthly subscriptions of around £20, which entitles the subscriber to unlimited 10-minute journeys each month with a charge of 20p per minute after, that, although bespoke subscription schemes can be developed. The bikes are £1,000 each and therefore there is a significant upfront cost to kick-start the scheme. It was initially indicated that ShareBike would raise a loan for the required upfront costs based on the assurance of adequate subscriptions but more recent discussions have indicated that the Council may have to raise this initial amount.
- 18 The scheme is designed for cities and some UK cities (Aberdeen, Bristol and Cambridge) are proceeding with schemes. However, ShareBike have since indicated that they may be interested in a reduced scheme for smaller towns, of which Sevenoaks could be the first. However, this would still only work with a minimum of 300 bikes, in order to guarantee availability of bikes throughout the day.
- 19 Initial figures indicate that the scheme would need to maintain an average of 2,000 subscriptions per year to meet the annual costs of around £500,000. Early sign ups to subscriptions are helpful to ShareBike in terms of leverage for bank loans in order to fund the up-front costs of the bikes, which are made in and imported from China.
- 20 It is not yet clear whether Sevenoaks could maintain a level of 2,000 annual subscriptions. This has not been tested and there is no definitive evidence that a scheme would be attractive to residents or businesses in and around Sevenoaks Urban Area to the level that would make it viable. There may be some businesses that would be interested in sponsoring the scheme, given the involvement of Big Issue and the commitment to working with or employing homeless people, but this has not been explored in detail.
- 21 At this stage, ShareBike have asked the Council to consider purchasing the e-bike stock required to kick-start the scheme and to lease the bikes back to them to manage. This is likely to be in the region of £250,000. This introduces a significant financial risk for the Council as well as practical considerations and challenges related to, long and short-term bike storage, and ongoing operations.
- 22 If this scheme were to progress, there would need to be high confidence that income streams such as subscriptions and sponsorship would be able to make the scheme viable and repay the council its initial outlay.
- 23 The council may also be able to assist through using some of its land and premises to provide bike storage and maintenance area.
- 24 ShareBike have partnered with the Big Issue in Bristol in a scheme marketed as of social value in supporting the recruitment and retention of the unemployed and homeless. This scheme is marketed as a unique brand soon being rolled out in communities other than Bristol.

### **Homelessness, under employment and low skills**

- 25 On the basis of the Bristol pilot, the Leader has suggested that Officers review the option of the ShareBike scheme being delivered as a social value project in the Sevenoaks District, in partnership with the Big Issue. It should be noted that the Sevenoaks context differs considerably from that in Bristol. For example, the majority of households placed in temporary and emergency accommodation by the Council, are working households and their homelessness has been caused as a result of rising rents in the private rented sector and the cost of living.
- 26 In view of this, the proposed scheme would not be aimed at addressing rough sleeping or full unemployment. Rather, the proposal would seek through partnership with the Big Issue to address under-employment, those who face barriers to employment, including those returning to work, and the incidence of low-skills within the District. Therefore, it is suggested that initial conversations are undertaken by the Council between the Big Issue and partner organisations including the West Kent Partnership and DWP, to understand the local demographics and needs to ascertain how the project could work successfully and provide support to local residents through a local employment and skills initiative.

### **Governance and Procurement**

- 27 There are no particular governance or procurement issues associated with engaging a consultant to provide the advice set out in this report. However, as relates to the introduction of an E-bike scheme, the following matters are relevant.
- 28 Having undertaken preliminary engagement, on 14 February 2021 the Portfolio Holder for Cleaner & Greener decided to sign an 'Agreement of Co-operation' with ShareBike. This decision simply allowed timely exploration of funding and operational models. The agreement itself made clear that ShareBike would need to work with Kent County Council as Highways Authority.
- 29 The Agreement obliged the Council to allow ShareBike to set up an e-bike system and establish suitable locations for parking, subject to all appropriate formal consents and approvals being sought and received. It contained no provision for payment or exchange of value and does not commit the Council to further contractual relations with ShareBike or to formal approval.
- 30 The full specification for a proposed e-bike scheme is not known at present. However, early engagement with ShareBike indicates a potential up-front Council outlay in the region of £250,000. There would need to be high confidence that income streams such as subscriptions and sponsorship would be able to make the scheme viable and repay the council its initial outlay.

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- 31 An executive decision to incur expenditure in excess of £50,000 is a ‘key decision’, which can only be taken by Cabinet. For that reason, any decision to pursue a scheme of e-bikes such as outlined by ShareBike in discussion would require a full Cabinet decision process. Any in-year adjustment to the budget needs to be approved by Full Council.
- 32 It is essential to recognise that the provision of funding and the decision to proceed with an e-bike project could not commit the Council to any one particular provider. For that reason, it would not be possible to confer upon ShareBike a ‘preferred bidder’ status.
- 33 The current Public Contract Regulations (PCR) threshold for supplies and services is £213,477. If the Council proposed to enter into a contract for supplies and services estimated to be of this value or above, the full PCR Rules would apply. This would entail a full competitive process following public advertisement in the Find a Tender Service. ShareBike would only be one of the providers able to bid for the contract. The contract would need to be advertised equally to all suppliers on the basis of a fully drawn and fair specification.
- 34 Were the contract to be estimated at below the sum of £213,477, the Council would be able to avail itself of a reduced process but would still need to seek at least three written tenders in advance following advertisement by public notice. These thresholds and limits are set out in the Council’s Constitution, Appendix E (the Contracts Procedure Rules).
- 35 The requirement for the Council to conduct a competitive purchasing process for contracts in excess of £10,000 may be waived in rare cases. However, this process is absolutely limited to exceptional circumstances, for example extensions to current contracts which are needed in order to maintain a service, or cases of contracts fundamental to business where there is known to be only one supplier.
- 36 In view of the social value inherent in supporting the homeless, under-employed, low-skilled and unemployed, consideration will need to be given as to whether a Big Issue scheme as introduced in Bristol would be unique and therefore suitable for procurement without competition.
- 37 The location of a starting hub at the station would require a licence or land purchase to enable infrastructure to be located on highway or railway land. The Council is not able to require that such a licence or conveyance be granted and it would be necessary for the provider to seek this from the relevant authority. This would need to be factored into the procurement specification and would form part of the overall cost, in the absence of a suitable Council-owned site.

### **Enforcement issues**

- 38 A key consideration with e-bike hire schemes is the regulation and management of cycle parking on the highway, notably as Sevenoaks District Council is not the highways authority. Successful schemes have been delivered when a unitary authority is the delivery body, for example,

Brighton & Hove. Feedback from other authorities, noted that e-bike schemes resulted in users leaving bikes in unsuitable locations and causing hazards and obstructions which were a safety concern for pedestrians. Many local authorities had to remove bikes from the highway as a consequence of this.

- 39 Any scheme would need input from Kent Highways to consider suitable parking areas close to local amenities such as stations, shops or other suitable locations and utilising existing cycle parking infrastructure wherever possible. It is recommended that robust engagement is undertaken over any proposed cycle parking areas or routes to be used.
- 40 Another concern raised is the occurrence of illegal cycling on footways. This is a hazard to pedestrians and relies upon police enforcement to deter this activity. The limited resource available to the police does mean that their ability to regulate this illegal activity is unfortunately limited. In respect of the use of e-bikes, there is concern that the faster speeds possible could compound this problem in areas where this illegal activity occurs.
- 41 Similar schemes have recommended that any illegal use of their bikes can be regulated and managed, in order to minimise reputational risks.

#### Consultancy

- 42 Through Officer engagement with other local authorities, it has been recommended to appoint a consultant to undertake a feasibility study, notably to assess need, as e-bike schemes can be costly and bring with them reputational risk. Consultancies, including Steer and Systra, have been recommended. Members are advised to authorise funding a consultant to develop a business case that would assess scheme demand, geographical coverage, economic case, fleet assumptions, cost and tariff plans, delivery and operating options and scheme risks.
- 43 At the present time, the Council has carried out no analysis of demand, operating costs (capital and revenue) or an assessment of the available options. While the ShareBike proposition was initially proposed to the Council as requiring nil outlay, it is clear that the available models would necessitate immediate expenditure. This may potentially be recouped by the Council over a period of years, although there is no known guaranteed rate of return or project lifespan.
- 44 Budgetary provision has not been made for the scheme. The recommendation in the report authorises the engagement of a consultant to assess the overall feasibility of a scheme. It further authorises the development of a business plan if the consultant deems a scheme achievable.

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- 45 The consultant would be modestly funded from the Net Zero Reserve at market rates.

### **Other options considered and/or rejected**

Members are advised to consider all options but are reminded that no budgetary provision has yet been made for the project.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

As set out above, early discussions with ShareBike suggested there would be no financial outlay or risk for the Council however, this has since changed with an initial outlay required by the Council and therefore a level of financial risk if the scheme was not successful.

Going out to tender may open up the market to different models which is likely to give different risk levels to the Council.

This report is only requesting authorisation for the feasibility of a scheme and the funding required for that work.

There is currently no budget for this scheme and any decision to proceed past the feasibility stage would need to include the risks to the Council (both financial and others), how much could be spent directly on the scheme and any associated costs (both initially and ongoing) and how it could be funded, which may include reducing expenditure on other services.

The ShareBike proposal is estimated to have an initial outlay to the council of £250,000 to purchase the bikes that may be in the form of a loan to be repaid over the length of the operating agreement.

If this scheme were to progress, there would need to be high confidence that income streams such as subscriptions and sponsorship would be able to make the scheme viable and repay the council its initial outlay.

It should be recognised that the council may also be able to assist through using some of its land and premises to provide bike storage and a maintenance area and therefore reduce the overall cost of the scheme to the operator.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

As set out in the report. Members are reminded of the risks inherent in investing in a project without a sound business case.

It should be noted that an e-bike hire provider will require the authority of the Kent Highways, to operate a cycle hire scheme on the highway.

Under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 it is an offence to obstruct the free passage along a highway without lawful authority or excuse. Any scheme proposed

will therefore need to operate on the basis that e-bikes are left only where or in circumstances where they do not cause an obstruction or where express authority has been given. Any person that wilfully obstructs the free passage along a highway could be guilty of an offence and could be prosecuted.

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

Please note that this report only seeks authorisation for the engagement of a consultant, without making any recommendation to implement a scheme. Accordingly, 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**

It is known that other authorities which successfully implemented a scheme first engaged consultants. With this in mind the recommendation to engage a consultant puts the Council in line with other organisations and represents a solid basis for later deciding on and approach.

**Appendices**

None.

**Background Papers**

None.

**Richard Morris**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services**

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**Item 10 - Contaminated Land Strategy 2022 - 2027**

The attached report was considered by the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee on 28 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of this agenda and will follow when available.

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**CONTAMINATED LAND STRATEGY 2022-2027**

**Cleaner & Greener Committee - 28 June 2022**

**Report of:** Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services

**Status:** For Comment

**Also considered by:**

- Cabinet 7 July 2022
- Council 19 July 2022

**Key Decision:** no

**Executive Summary:** This report is a draft revision of the 2001 strategy. It has been for consultation with internal council departments and externally with the Environment Agency.

The proposed strategy reflects on the action taken with respect to the previous strategy and incorporates our current methods of addressing this statutory duty.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. McArthur

**Contact Officers:** Colin Alden, Ext. 7186, Nick Chapman, Ext. 7167

**Recommendation to Cleaner & Greener Committee:**

That it be recommended to Cabinet to be recommended to Council to approve adoption of the Contaminated Land Strategy 2022-2027.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

That it be recommended to Council to approve adoption of the Contaminated Land Strategy 2022-2027.

**Recommendation to Council:**

That Council approve adoption of the Contaminated Land Strategy 2022-2027

**Reason for recommendation:**

This will align the strategy with current working practices in order to discharge the Council's statutory duty.

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### Introduction and Background

- 1 The Contaminated Land Strategy is a key document required by Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (inserted by Section 57 of the Environment Act 1995), which introduced a new statutory regime for the identification and control of contaminated land and which came into force in England on the 1 April 2000.
- 2 The original strategy was relevant at the time and for several years but as those sites identified as requiring assessment have been either screen and any necessary action taken or sites were remediated as part of the planning process the needs of the strategy have changed.
- 3 The revised strategy identifies that the Development Control Process has been instrumental in the remediation of many sites and with any identified site screen as posing no significant risk or remediated or are currently being remediated through the planning process. This strategy proposes this method of discharging the statutory duty primarily by the Development Control Processes.

### Other options Considered and/or rejected

- 4 As this strategy reflects current practice it incurs no additional or minimal cost.
- 5 The original strategy required significant officer input and significant costs in the active screening, sampling and determination by external consultants.

### Key Implications

#### Resource (non-financial)

Activities are undertaken by existing staff.

#### Financial

Minimal cost as undertaken within existing resources.

#### Legal Implications

The proposals will align the strategy with current working practices in order to discharge the Council's statutory duty.

#### Equality Assessment

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

Net Zero Implications

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

**Conclusions**

The Contaminated Land Strategy 2022-2027 should be approved as part of a statutory duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

**Appendices**

Appendix A - Contaminated Land Strategy 2022-2027

**Richard Morris**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services**

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# Sevenoaks District Council

## Contaminated Land Strategy 2022-2027

**Consultation**

This document is a draft revision of the Sevenoaks District Council Contaminated Land Strategy<sup>1</sup> intended for consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> Original document titled Strategy for the Identification and Inspection of Contaminated Land.

APPENDIX A

**Contents:**

1. SDC's Objectives for dealing with land contamination
2. Introduction
3. The Contaminated Land Regime
  - 3.1 Legislative context
  - 3.2 Significant Pollutant Linkage
  - 3.3 Liability
  - 3.4 DEFRA Grant
  - 3.5 Strategic inspection and detailed inspection
  - 3.6 Urgent site inspection
4. The Water Resources Act 1991
5. Radioactive contamination of land
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7. Development Management
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10. The Environmental Information Regulations 2004
11. Sevenoaks District
  - 11.1 Geographical setting
    - 11.1.1 Geological and hydrogeological features
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  - 11.5 Historical and industrial development
12. Responding to requests for information
13. Risk communication
14. Strategy review

Annex 1

Previously identified and screened sites.

### 1. Sevenoaks District Council objectives for dealing with land contamination:

Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) seeks to implement the Part 2A regime and make judgements pursuant of its duties therein within the context and framework of the statutory guidance (Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Contaminated Land Statutory Guidance (April 2012)). Furthermore in dealing with land contamination the council's aims are:

- to identify and remove unacceptable risks to human health and the environment,
- to seek land remediation through the development management system,
- not to carry out the detailed inspection of sites unless there is significant possibility of significant harm occurring or the likelihood thereof,
- seek to ensure that contaminated sites are made suitable for their current use and
- to ensure that the burdens faced by individuals, companies and the community as a whole are proportionate, manageable and compatible with the principles of sustainable development.

The following objectives are pursuant of the aims above. Sevenoaks District Council;

- considers that land is not contaminated land unless there is reason to consider otherwise,
- considers the Development Management system as the predominant way in which land affected by contamination will be remediated,
- will encourage voluntary remediation of sites where appropriate,
- will only use Part 2A where no appropriate alternative solution exists,
- will not undertake a strategic or detailed inspection of any site where a planning permission exists or is understood to be imminent unless there is significant evidence that the land is contaminated land,
- will continue the process of strategic inspection across Sevenoaks District,
- will consult landowners before carrying out detailed inspection of their land,
- will refer any issues or allegations relating to radioactivity on land to the Department of Energy and Climate Change,
- will only use its powers of entry under Section 108 of the Environment Act 1995 when it is satisfied that there is a reasonable possibility that a significant pollutant linkage exists,
- where remediation is carried out by SDC then, where liable parties are identified, SDC will pursue the appropriate persons for the apportioned share<sup>2</sup> of the liability,
- will seek to communicate in language that is appropriate for the persons with whom we are communicating and where appropriate in non-technical language,

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<sup>2</sup> Which could be 100% of the cost.

## APPENDIX A

- seeks to communicate in language sensitive to the fact that land contamination issues have potential to cause property blight and psychological stress,
- will make available its Contaminated Land Public Register on its webpage,
- will, where relevant, consult other statutory and non-statutory bodies so as to seek advice and share knowledge,
- will request in writing that, on behalf of SDC, the Environment Agency (EA) carries out the detailed inspection of any Special Site of which SDC becomes aware,
- will, where necessary, authorise an officer of the EA to exercise the powers of entry conferred on it by section 108 (Environment Act 1995),
- will continue to train officers within Environmental Health so as to ensure an effective service with regard to its duties under the regime and
- has a policy of openness with regard to disclosing information held about land contamination issues.

Our objectives under this Strategy are congruent with SDC's Corporate Plan 20XX - 20XX and its priority to 'manage our built and natural environments, to promote and maintain a positive sense of place' and the objective to; maintain clean, pleasant and safe public places. Likewise our objectives are congruent with the policies expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework.

## 2. Introduction

SDC adopted its first Contaminated Land Strategy<sup>1</sup> in 2001 and since that date it has undergone no changes. The document has therefore undergone significant review to bring it up to date with current practice.

Development on brownfield land means that many development sites may have a legacy of pollution from a previous use. Ensuring that land is made suitable for use through the Development Management system is vital to protecting public health, water resources and value of property. This involves a process of informing the Development Management process and subsequently agreeing the developer's work to ensure that sites are made suitable for their proposed use for their design life.

Despite the government removing the grant which facilitated detailed inspection of sites, the duty on councils to inspect their districts remains. For SDC, when dealing with sites through the Development Management process, should a site be identified as potentially contaminated then the legislation is a 'safety net' enabling effective intervention for urgent detailed inspection.

Much has been achieved since we adopted our first strategy. This places SDC in a strong position to continue to ensure a robust approach to this important public health issue.

We have endeavoured to make this document as strategic as possible, to provide context for our work and to provide clarity where the Statutory Guidance allows

for some local discretion. As such it must be read in conjunction with the Statutory Guidance<sup>3</sup> and, where relevant, other pieces of legislation and guidance.

We have endeavoured to make the terminology used in this strategy consistent with the statutory guidance and the glossary of terms will provide readers with greater understanding in that regard. In any case for the avoidance of doubt about definitions or meanings then the statutory guidance<sup>4</sup> must be considered to override the content of this strategy.

### 3. The contaminated land regime

#### 3.1. Legislative context

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 Part 2A introduced new duties to Local Authorities. It required that they publish an inspection strategy for their District (this document), keep a register of 'Contaminated Land' and inspect their area in a rational and ordered fashion for the purpose of identifying 'Contaminated Land'. The term 'Contaminated Land' is defined in statute as is the process for formally determining land as Contaminated Land.

**Contaminated Land definition:**

Is any land which appears to the local authority in whose area it is situated to be in such a condition, by reason of substances in on or under the land that (a) significant harm is being caused or there is significant possibility of such harm being caused; or (b) significant pollution of controlled waters is being caused, or there is significant possibility of such pollution being caused.

The supporting guidance<sup>5</sup> for Part 2A details the inspection process including determining liability amongst specific groups or 'appropriate persons' previously associated with the land. Appropriate persons include previous land owners or occupiers and any person carrying out activities on the land, including current occupiers.

In reality, the production of a contaminated land strategy has meant that authorities collated data on previous land-uses that may have given rise to contamination in, on or under the land. These are stored as a digital map based database and have all been risk prioritised.

The statutory guidance was updated in April 2012 and suggests that local authority strategies should be updated to reflect the changes to the guidance. There have been no significant updates to the guidance since that date.

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<sup>3</sup> Environmental Protection Act 1990 Part 2A, Contaminated Land Statutory Guidance, DEFRA, April 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Which is legally binding on authorities.

<sup>5</sup> Environmental Protection Act 1990: Part 2A, Contaminated Land Statutory Guidance, April 2012.

<sup>6</sup>These might be at different parts of the site, be by separate pathways (potentially by air, land and/or water) and affecting different receptors.

### 3.2. Significant Pollutant Linkage

For land to be determined as contaminated land there must be a significant 'pollutant linkage' (SPL) present. A pollutant linkage is where a source of pollution is connected to a receptor by a pathway so as to give rise to harm. There may be multiple pollutant linkages on a site<sup>6</sup>.

### 3.3. Liability

Part 2A identifies two types of 'appropriate persons' in relation to liability for remediation of the land (that the enforcing authority needs to consider). These are only relevant once one or more significant pollutant linkages have been confirmed and are:

- Class A liability group<sup>7</sup>: that is persons who knowingly permitted a significant pollutant linkage to be in, on or under the land.
- Class B liability group: owners or occupiers of the land.

Only where no Class A persons can be found will any Class B appropriate persons bear any liability for contamination. Once Class A appropriate persons are identified, then liability for each significant pollutant linkage is identified. If the Class A person no longer exists in relation to a significant pollutant linkage then the liability will fall to Class B person (current owner or occupier).

There are six sequential tests to apply to each member of the Class A liability group:

- Test 1 Excluded activities.
- Test 2 Payments made for remediation.
- Test 3 Sold with information.
- Test 4 Changes to substances.
- Test 5 Escaped substances.
- Test 6 Introduction of pathways or receptors.

Once exclusions have been made, SDC will 'follow the general principal that liability should be apportioned to reflect the relative responsibility of each of those members for creating or continuing the risk now being caused by the significant linkage in question.' 'If appropriate information is not available to enable the enforcing authority to make such an assessment of relative responsibility then liability is apportioned equally amongst the liability group.'

Where no appropriate persons can be found, or after the six sequential tests there are no remaining liable persons, then the linkage is known as an 'orphan linkage' and the local authority should bear the cost of any remediation that is carried out.

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<sup>7</sup> Or person.

Where SDC carries out remediation and an appropriate person can be found then, within the guidance offered at Section 8 of the Statutory Guidance, SDC will seek to recover the costs of the remediation from the appropriate person.

### **3.4. DEFRA Grant**

Until 2012, Central Government offered financial support to local authorities in regard of their duties under Part 2A. However, the grant was effectively stopped other than for ‘absolute emergency cases’ by Lord De Mauley’s letter (DEFRA December 2013) and ceased to exist in any form after 2017. Local authorities’ statutory duties remain, but central government financial support has been removed.

### **3.5. Strategic inspection and detailed inspection**

Part 2A requires that local authorities cause their areas to be inspected with a view to identifying contaminated land and to do this in accordance with the statutory guidance. Two types of inspection are used, they are:

- Strategic inspection; collecting information about previous land-uses and prioritising them for further detailed inspection and
- Detailed inspection; taking soil samples and carrying out risk assessments in order to make determinations about the site<sup>8</sup> in relation to contaminated land.

As an in-house task the detailed inspection of sites through intrusive investigation, analysis of samples (soil, water and gas), risk assessment and remediation is beyond the technical capability of Sevenoaks District Council officers<sup>9</sup>. Such work has previously been contracted out to consultants, is expensive and might commonly cost multiples of £10K with upper bound cost estimates for site remediation of several £100K not being uncommon.

Although DEFRA removed the supporting grant for new cases, the statutory duty for local authorities to inspect land for land contamination remains. Furthermore, DEFRA suggests that the authority seeks to minimise unnecessary burdens on the taxpayer.

Given the above situation, SDC is not currently pursuing strategic site inspections beyond the desktop (Phase 1A Stage<sup>10</sup>). That is to say, that SDC will not undertake intrusive sampling (soil, water or gas), risk assessments or remediation exercises unless they are funded by a third party or until such time as SDC has allocated the appropriate funds to allow the process to proceed. SDC is also not publishing any

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<sup>8</sup> or any part of a site.

<sup>9</sup> Or any council of which we are aware.

<sup>10</sup> Comprising a desk study, site walkover, conceptual model and initial risk assessment.

## APPENDIX A

timescales for detailed site inspection at this time. The exception to this is if an urgent site inspection was to arise which follows as below.

### 3.6. Urgent site inspection

The need for urgent detailed inspection might arise in a situation where SDC becomes aware that a previously developed site is likely to be causing significant harm. Such circumstances are extremely rare, nevertheless SDC has a duty under the legislation to inspect any such site. This duty needs to be balanced against other calls on SDC's resources. As such under those circumstances, SDC would:

- seek to establish who the liable persons for the site are and whether they still exist,
- apply the six sequential tests from the guidance to establish which liable parties might drop-out of the liability group,
- apportion the liability between the remaining liability groups,
- establish whether any linkage is an orphan linkage,
- seek voluntary inspection by the site owner and/or occupier,
- enter into discussions with DEFRA about the availability of any available grants or funds,
- seek to finance any essential related work through monies held in reserves expressly for this purpose or, where these monies are insufficient, from reserves mandated by Cabinet and
- seek to recover any costs from liable persons.

## 4. The Water resources Act 1991

Section 161-161D of the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Anti-Pollution Works Regulations 1999 as amended 2009 empower the Environment Agency (EA) to serve a "works notice" on any responsible person who has "caused or knowingly permitted "a pollutant to enter controlled waters, including from contamination in or on land, requiring them to take action to prevent pollution or hydro morphological harm in controlled waters or to clean up/restore the effects of a pollution incident or hydro morphological harm.

The Environment Agency can take action themselves under section 161 and 161ZA of the Water Resources Act 1991 to prevent pollution or hydro morphological harm and to clean up or rectify an incident where it is an emergency situation or the likely or responsible person cannot be identified.

Guidance from the EA (Policy and Guidance on the use of Anti-Pollution Works Notices) suggests that in most cases of actual or potential pollution of controlled waters as a result of contamination with an ongoing source site, the problem will usually be dealt with under the contaminated land Part 2A provisions of the EPA 1990.

## 5. Radioactive contamination of land

The revised Statutory Guidance does not apply to radioactive contamination of land. The responsibility lies with the Department of Energy and Climate Change. SDC will refer any such issues to DECC.

## 6. Progress to date

A significant spatial dataset was captured by officers and is held in a digital mapping database (ArcGIS<sup>11</sup>) and on SDC's database platform 'Uniform'. The sites captured were identified from a variety of sources including; historic maps, officer knowledge, EA 'national historic landfill dataset', petroleum licensing records, pollution incident reports and other verified anecdotal information.

A good proportion of the legacy sites' datasets have been added to by virtue of site walkovers, consultant's reports and other local knowledge (strategic inspection) as the process for refining our knowledge<sup>12</sup>.

The dataset described above forms the basis of a planning constraint layer. This is used to trigger a planning consultation request for Environmental Health and the Environment Agency to comment on planning applications which overlay or abut potentially contaminated sites. For some sites, such as landfill sites, we have added 'buffers<sup>13</sup>' as the impact of any pollution might extend beyond the site boundary.

Since the 1990s, planning conditions relating to land contamination are appended to planning permissions. Environmental Health then audit the work that is undertaken by consultants to make the site suitable for its proposed use and agree the signoff of the related planning condition. This process involves agreeing the site investigation strategy, reviewing the reports and risk assessment and remediation strategy. It might also involve a site visit and/or meeting with the developer and their consultant.

The legislation also intends that authorities inspect previously developed land where the development was on land with a previously potentially contaminative use. This approach was facilitated by authorities ranking their database sites for inspection such that the perceived highest risk sites would be inspected first.

Prior to the current contaminated land regime, SDC had identified a number of sites where a risk was posed to those on the land and undertook works in conjunction with Kent County Council to eliminate any significant risks. These sites were further evaluated under the current regime with one site in Leigh requiring further remediation.

A further 12 sites were identified and evaluated for any potential risk they may pose. The majority have been remediated as part of the Development Management

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<sup>11</sup> Proprietary digital mapping software produced by ESRI.

<sup>12</sup> And adding them to the database and planning constraint layers.

<sup>13</sup> Buffers are effectively indicative zones around the site boundary indicating where the influence of pollution might extend to.

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System or as in the case of Fort Halstead, have been partially remediated by the Ministry of Defence with any remaining remediation being undertaken through Development Management Systems. All identified sites have therefore been screened and determined not to pose a significant risk or have been or are in the process of being remediated.

## 7. Development Management

Most land affected by contamination is dealt with through the Development Management system.

Contamination in, on or under land can present risks to human health and the wider environment. This can adversely affect or restrict the beneficial use of land and often development presents the best opportunity to successfully deal with these risks. The planning system therefore has a key role to play in facilitating the development of land affected by contamination.

The broad approach, concepts and principles behind land contamination management adopted by the Part 2A regime should be applied to the determination of planning applications. Planners, developers, statutory bodies and Environmental Health should work together at every stage in the Development Management process to ensure that land contamination issues are properly addressed.

After remediating through the Development Management process, as a minimum standard, land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

In dealing with land contamination via the Development Management system SDC will:

- Use the ArcGIS based planning constraint layers to trigger a consultation request to the Environmental Health Team from the Planning Officer,
- review and update the ArcGIS planning constraint layers as necessary and, as a minimum, annually,
- expect developers and their agents to voluntarily deal with land contamination issues in pre-planning application discussions and before determination of any relevant planning application,
- respond to planning consultations within SDC's internal agreed response times,
- where land contamination issues might prejudice the economic viability of any given permission reserve the right to object to a planning application,
- object to a planning application where it is likely that the implementation of any given permission would be technically unfeasible,
- reserve the right to object to a planning application where insufficient evidence is submitted with the application to determine whether the site can be remediated as a result of the permission,
- recommend, where the Environmental Health Team considers appropriate, that any consent be conditional of relevant standard planning conditions,

- make a record of planning comments in Uniform,
- where appropriate, the Environmental Health Team will liaise with the Development Management officer at the EA,
- audit all reports relating to land contamination and provide written commentary to the relevant parties including; the developer, the environmental consultant and the Development Management case officer,
- require ongoing reports beyond the time of the delivery of the site where monitoring and/or remediation is ongoing,
- require that reports submitted for consideration by the Environmental Health Team will be prepared by competent persons<sup>14</sup>,
- agree the sign-off/dischARGE of relevant planning conditions when the work is completed and documented to a satisfactory standard,
- work within the CL Statutory Guidance, related documents and the NPPF,
- seek to achieve the highest standard for the protection of public health whilst not incurring excessive cost for the developer or public funds and
- keep the planning related contaminated land SDC web-pages up to date.

In considering risks from land contamination in relation to any future use or development, SDC assumes that the development will be carried out in accordance with any existing planning permissions. In particular SDC assumes that:

- a) That any remediation which is the subject of a condition attached to that planning permission, or is the subject of any planning obligation, will be carried out in accordance with that permission or obligation.

### **7.1. The Developer's Role**

Where a development site is affected by contamination responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner<sup>15</sup>.

The right information is crucial to good decision making and SDC recommends that developers discuss what is required with SDC planners, the Environmental Health Team and statutory consultees at the pre-planning application stage<sup>16, 17</sup>. Failure to provide the right information can lead to delays and/or refusal of planning permission.

In order to satisfy the planning authority that risks from contamination will be appropriately addressed through remediation; developers should ensure that they carry out adequate site investigations and risk assessments to inform their remediation strategies. These should all be prepared by competent persons<sup>18</sup>. Further guidance on good practice in the management of land contamination can

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<sup>14</sup> NPPF

<sup>15</sup> NPPF para 184.

<sup>16</sup> NPPF para 39, 41 & 43.

<sup>17</sup> Often referred to as the 'pre-app stage'.

<sup>18</sup> NPPF Annex 2 defines 'competent persons'.

be found in the related documents. After remediation has been carried out, developers are responsible for showing the LPA that they have been successful. This could involve ongoing monitoring and the submission of verification reports.

## 8. The Environment Agency's Role

The Environment Agency (EA) is a statutory consultee for local plans, certain types of planning applications, and developments requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (DMPO) sets out the developments for which the Environment Agency is a statutory consultee. The EA is also a statutory consultee for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (applications determined by the Secretary of State rather than LPAs).

The EA has developed guidance for local planning authorities that sets out the types of planning consultations it should be consulted on.

As a statutory consultee the Environment Agency is expected to take a proactive approach, providing advice in a timely manner at all stages in the development process (see NPPF (2019) paragraphs 16 and 40, and the Planning Practice Guidance 'Consultation and pre-decision matters'). The EA has developed guidance for local planning authorities that sets out the types of planning consultations it should be consulted on. These include situations where land contamination may pose a significant risk to the environment.

The EA's stated main concern when land contamination is being managed under Planning, is to protect the water environment - local authorities deal with human health issues. By ensuring that developers reduce or remove the risk or consequences of pollution of surface and groundwater, the planning regime helps achievement of Water Framework Directive objectives.

CL:AIRE has issued guidance to help developers and land owners understand the concerns and requirements of the EA and other authorities. These 'Guiding Principles for Land Contamination' (GPLC<sup>19</sup>) describe the approaches that developers and land owners are expected to take, what needs to be included in reports for review and the key guidance that can be referred to.

In responding to consultations from LPAs the EA provides recommendations and technical advice on:

- the likely impacts that development on land affected by contamination may have on the immediate and wider water environment;
- the impacts that contaminated water may have on the development;
- proposals for, and the outcome of, investigations and remediation;

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<sup>19</sup> The guidance can be found here -

[https://www.claire.co.uk/home/news/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=192&catid=41&Itemid=256](https://www.claire.co.uk/home/news/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=192&catid=41&Itemid=256)

- implications of the development for Part 2A contaminated land for which cases where the EA is the enforcing authority (special sites).

The EA will make assessments of the appropriateness and effectiveness of any measures put forward by developers to remediate contamination or any pollution caused from the perspective of protecting the water environment. Where there are technical solutions to resolve issues that would otherwise prevent a grant of planning permission the EA should, where possible, take a ‘yes if’ approach and explain the steps required to overcome the problems. Developers/land owners are able to obtain pre-application advice (for a charge) under the EA’s cost recovery service. Developers/land owners should be directed to contact the EA should they wish to utilise this service.

An Environmental Permit may be needed to undertake certain required remediation activities. Where this occurs the EA should clearly explain to Local Planning Authorities the issues that, as the regulator, they can control and not duplicate these in the details or conditions in a planning permission unless it is appropriate to do so.

#### **9. Council owned property portfolio**

SDC is a property owner of occupied, leased and open-access land, some of which has been subjected to potentially contaminative former uses. SDC has undertaken a review of its former and current land holdings and considers that no detailed inspection of any site is required at the current time.

There is land for which, if identified as contaminated land, SDC may have direct responsibilities by virtue of its current or former ownership or occupation. The principal category is likely to be Council-owned land which has had former industrial use and for which the “original polluter” (Class A person as defined in the statutory guidance) may no longer be identifiable. Such land, if contaminated land, may fall to the Council to address. The Council may also be the current or former owner of closed landfill sites and may have responsibilities in this regard.

In the case of “Orphan sites”, where the owner of such land cannot be traced, and that are identified as “contaminated”, Sevenoaks District Council shall take upon it the responsibility to investigate and remediate the land. Also, the Council will take upon it the responsibility for investigation and remediation where, for reasons laid out in the legislation, the exempt nature of the situation dictates that no appropriate person can be found.

In proven cases of “Hardship”, SDC are to bear responsibility for the remediation of the identified Significant Pollution Linkage.

This liability will not be accepted lightly by SDC, and in cases of alleged “Hardship”, the means for payment of identified liable persons will be extremely rigorously assessed.

The Council is committed to applying to contaminated land in its current or former ownership or stewardship (e.g. orphan sites), the same principles that will be applied to other contaminated land.

## **10. The Environmental Information Regulations 2004**

The Environmental Information Regulations facilitate the public's access to environmental information held by SDC. Under the regulations there is a presumption in favour of disclosure subject to the regulations defined reasons for refusing a request for information.

Requests for environmental information are commonly made by persons transacting properties and by persons evaluating property portfolios.

SDC has a policy of transparency and openness with regards to information that it holds in regard to land contamination. Likewise it seeks to be helpful with regards to assisting persons in gathering and understanding the information and data and associated risk. This is particularly so where persons requesting the information may be very unfamiliar with land contamination as a subject. Nevertheless, SDC will only help to provide the context for understanding risk, ultimately it is for the individual to make their own decisions in relation to risk as they perceive it.

SDC charges a fee for the provision of information under the regulations. The price is updated annually and published on SDC's website and fees and charges register.

## **11. Sevenoaks District**

### **11.1. Geographical setting**

Sevenoaks District Council is located in north-west Kent, is situated to the south-east 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 378km<sup>2</sup>, 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. There are also thirty villages and a large number of hamlets.

The Sevenoaks area lies entirely within the Green Belt surrounding London. The Green Belt is intended to preserve the open countryside between the edge of Greater London and the urban areas of the Medway towns, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, and Maidstone; and in the West Kent in the areas within the influence of London, to preserve the identity of separate communities and curb urban pressures and restrain the growth of towns and other settlements.

Further protection measures have been instituted to ensure that land can remain undeveloped, such as the very large areas that are designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), as well as smaller areas which have been designated Sites

of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNClS).

#### **11.1.1. Geological and hydrogeological features**

The Sevenoaks area is situated on Down Land, and the outstanding physical features of the surface and underlying geology are the prominent escarpments of the Chalk and the Lower Greensand. Both Greensand and Chalk are classified as major aquifers and provide / afford volumes of abstraction for drinking water supplies. Also, important drinking water abstractions are sourced from various surface and near surface water supplies throughout the area.

At the most northerly end, within the Thames basin, of the Sevenoaks district, around the river valley of the River Shuttle and River Cray, there are significant outcrops of Thanet sand, which overlie the Upper Chalk. Slightly further south, the topographical nature of the land is shaped by the River Darent, which has grown in size significantly from its source further south. Closer to the chalk downs, drift deposits of Clay with Flints, which overlies the Upper and Middle Chalk sequences, increasingly dominate the surface geology. The Chalk escarpment forms part of the North Downs, and it maintains a fairly constant level along its crest of between 213 and 230 m AOD, and it is breached by the gap of the River Darent at Otford, where the elevation is about 61m OD. From the top of the Down Land, stretching southward, the geology becomes rather striking, as outcrops of alternating high and low permeability strata occur in bands from approximately east to west, across the district area.

The Lower Greensand escarpment is of rather lower elevation than the Chalk escarpment, and is a more uniform feature across this area due to its continuations to the west and east. Once the top of the Down Lands are passed, the River Darent escarpment is encountered, and the source of the river is also located in this sector of the valley. The surface geology of the valley sides are dominated by rapidly changing chalk strata (upper, middle, and lower), until at the valley floor, a large linear outcrop of Gault clay is encountered. This is followed by the underlying Lower Greensand (comprising Folkestone, Sandgate and Hythe Beds), which emerges and dominates much of the southern side of the river valley. In places the Lower Greensand is overlain by small patches of head material. Sevenoaks town is built on the lower greensand, as is much of the developed area to the east and west of the town.

Toward the southern boundary, and watershed of the river Darent valley, a snaking outcrop of Atherfield clay stretches across the district from East to West. At the crest of the ridge / watershed, the Atherfield clay is overlain by small outliers of Hythe Beds, with some drift head deposits overlying these.

South of the ridge, the Medway river valley is the dominant topographical and geographical feature. A wide band of Wealden clay dominates from areas as far north as Toys Hill (situated on top of the ridge formation), just beyond the river valley water shed point, to areas as far south as southern Edenbridge. There are

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some identifiable small outcrops of drift head, river terrace gravels and alluvium deposits.

The Wealden clay formation ceases further south, and outcrops of upper and lower Tunbridge Wells sand occur, in between which are layers of Grinstead Clay and Ardingly Sandstone. These are mixed with intermittently outcrops of Wadhurst and Ashdown clay beds. This mixed geology carries on to the southern edge of Sevenoaks district boundary.

The nature of the geology is such that there are large areas where groundwater resources would be vulnerable to pollution should releases of various contaminants occur in certain areas, particularly areas of unconfined Chalk beds and Greensand beds, which contain large underground water reserves, and are the subject of large extractions for potable as well as industrial and other private uses.

There are 14 licensed groundwater abstractions within the Sevenoaks District. Source Protection Zones have been created around certain sources to protect the quality of the groundwater abstracted for potable, industrial and private supply. These have been computer modelled by the Environment Agency in line with their document "Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater".

Most of the northern half of the district, from Swanley to Otford, falls within catchment Source Protection Zones (Zone III) for groundwater abstraction boreholes, with smaller but significant areas falling within the more sensitive Zones II and I. Eight of the total fourteen licensed abstractions within the Sevenoaks District fall in this area, with other major abstractions just north of the district in Dartford, Gravesham, and the London Borough of Bexley, whose catchments lie partly within the Sevenoaks District. These water abstractions are made from the Chalk / Limestone formations, a major aquifer (rock which is 'water bearing'), which, as previously described, characterises much of the geology of the London Basin and the North Downs.

The band of Lower Greensand which runs across the centre of the district, through towns such as Westerham, Brasted, Sundridge and Sevenoaks, is made up of the Folkestone, Sandgate and Hythe beds. The Folkestone and Hythe beds are both major aquifers of regional importance. In the Sevenoaks district, these formations support 5 abstractions, with others which are just to the east and west of the district, but whose buffering Source Protection Zones extend into the Sevenoaks area. The SPZs catchments extend through the entirety of the exposed beds, with significant areas of the sensitive zones I and II covering land which is developed and support several potentially contaminative activities.

At the south and south-western edge of the district, two abstractions are made from the Ashdown sandbeds of the Wealden Series, which are of minor aquifer status. One abstraction is located within the district, just north of Fordcombe. At the point of abstraction, the Ashdown sandbeds are overlain by Wadhurst Clay, also of the Wealden Series, and therefore the aquifer is 'confined', so only part of the total catchment influence extends to the surface. The other abstraction is located just outside of the district at Hayesden. The associated SPZ catchment extends into the district, as does the sensitive SPZ II.

Overall, the geology of the Sevenoaks District comprises many major and minor aquifers, which are of both local and regional importance. Therefore, the protection of groundwater resources will be one of the primary concerns when investigations are commenced.

### **11.2. Hydrology & Water Resources**

The hydrology of the Sevenoaks District covers several natural water catchments, which dictate the flow of surface water, and to a lesser extent, the flow of ground water. This will have significant consequences for the assessment of risks relating to contamination to both surface and groundwater receptors.

Accordingly, the effects of contamination on surface waters will be examined with reference to the effects of potential contamination “down-stream” of the source. Correspondingly, should the source of a contaminant be considered to be affecting, or having the potential to affect a receptor outside the district boundaries, but within the same catchment, both Councils should liaise with the Environment Agency when investigating the issue.

The main river catchments within the Sevenoaks District consist of the Thames, the Darent, and the Medway. Tributaries join the main watercourses at various points throughout the district, with the confluence of the River Eden and the River Medway at Penshurst being one of the major features of the district.

There are various ponds and other still surface waters which are sometimes isolated from the groundwater, but often are in direct hydrological continuity with the groundwater, as is the case in several of the former extraction pits which, since cessation of commercial activities have formed significant surface water bodies. An example of these can be seen with the sand, gravel, and clay extraction pits around Dunton Green, which have now formed a series of small lakes, known as Chipstead, Bradbourne, and Redland Lakes, the latter have been designated a wildlife protection area. It is a fact that many of the significant still surface water bodies were formed by the extraction of pits for mineral extraction.

Most of the significant surface water bodies occur in the south of the district, in the Medway and Darent river valleys. The largest still surface water to occur in the northern half of the district are a series of small lakes located just to the north of Horton Kirby. These again have been created as a result of minerals extraction processes, within the River Darent floodplain.

### **11.3. Areas of Special Interest and Ecology**

The district contains an exceptional range of natural habitats and natural areas which includes sites that are of national and international importance for nature conservation.

Ecological value will be taken into consideration when sites are investigated, developed and remediated.

#### **11.4. Built environment and protected properties**

Where contamination leads to significant harm to a property, particularly a scheduled Ancient Monument, then an assessment should be carried out to establish if a significant pollutant linkage has resulted (as detailed in Table 2 of the Statutory Guidance).

Where land contamination investigations are to be undertaken at historic sites, including sites that have previously been used for an industrial activity, then the Council will be mindful of the potential archaeological sensitivity, seek appropriate advice and be mindful of the Historic England Guidance; Good Practice Guidance on Land Contamination and Archaeology (2017)<sup>20</sup>.

#### **11.5. Historical and industrial development**

Over the past one hundred years, the Sevenoaks District Council area has changed dramatically in response to increasing demand for housing in this region and the continuing expanse of the influence of London, on whose borders the Council's administrative boundaries lie. This increasing demand has put pressure on land within the towns, which are not covered by such strict green belt planning laws. This pressure includes that for the redevelopment of land that has formerly been used for contaminative processes, or land which may be affected by migrating contamination from such land.

Over 700 sites have been identified as historically having a potentially contaminative use. Despite this, there has not historically been a high concentration of heavy industry in the Sevenoaks and Weald area. Industrial processes have largely taken the form of quarrying and extraction industries, which were situated in the area because of the availability of such raw materials as sand, chalk, gravel and clay. More generic forms of manufacturing processes, such as town gas production, tannery operations, scrap yards and chemicals manufacturing were also present, and were mostly concentrated in the main areas of settlement. Some of these are still present. More recently, the main element of industry has congregated in areas to the north west of the district, particularly areas around Swanley, where the highest concentrations of industry occur, particularly within a three-mile radius of the station in the town.

The rural areas of the district, though primarily supporting arable and livestock related activities, also presently support activities of a more traditionally contaminative nature, such as the operations of scrap yards, pharmaceutical and chemical production facilities. Historically, industries such as town gas production have existed, but have closed and been dismantled some time ago.

Railways run throughout the Sevenoaks district, many of which were built during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and have remained in operation ever since. Supporting engineering works have often been, and still are operated at station sidings, as have various fuel storage and fuel commercial sales activities. Some of the former

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<sup>20</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/land-contaminationandarchaeology/>

branch lines and accompanying stations were closed during and prior to the 1960s, with several of these areas having been redeveloped for housing.

## **12. Responding to requests for information**

SDC acts in accordance with the requirements of the following statutes and regulations in making environmental information available to the public:

- Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 2000
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018

We operate with a presumption in favour of disclosure subject to the relevant tests and exclusions of the above legislation.

SDC holds a public register for land remediated under the Part 2A regime which is available on-line.

We charge for our responses made under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Our charges are published on the SDC website and updated annually.

## **13. Risk Communication**

SDC is mindful of the technical nature and legal complexity of the subject of 'land contamination'. As such the council will seek to communicate in language that reflects the knowledge set of the audience.

Likewise land contamination issues can relate to the potential for serious harm to humans and other receptors. It can also potentially cause blight on property values. As such SDC seeks to be sensitive in its communications using language that, whilst accurately conveying the detail of any relevant situation, will be sensitive to the recipients and does not cause property blight.

## **14. Strategy Review**

It is intended this Strategy will be reviewed in 2025<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Or earlier if circumstances dictate.

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ANNEX 1

Previously screened and or remediated sites as part of the original strategy.

- Croiselles, High St. Seal.
- Edenbridge Gas Works.
- EP Hocking Breakers.
- Eynsford Paper Mill.
- Fort Halstead.
- Hartley Car Breakers.
- Horton Kirby Paper Mills.
- Mill Pond - Boating & Swimming Pond.
- Powder Mills.
- Sevenoaks Gas Works.
- Transport Depot - Priory Fields.
- Westerham Gas Works.

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**Item 11 - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Spending Board - Review of Governance**

The attached report was considered by the Development & Conservation Advisory Committee on 5 July 2022. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of this agenda and will follow when available.

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**COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) SPENDING BOARD - REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE**

**Cabinet - 7 JULY 2022**

**Report of:** Chief Planning Officer

**Status:** For recommendation to Cabinet

**Also considered by:**

- Development & Conservation Advisory Committee - 5 July 2022

**Key Decision:** No

**Executive Summary:** This report follows on from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Governance Report that was discussed at the Development and Conservation Advisory Committee in September 2021. When the initial Governance arrangements were set up for CIL, it was expected that the Governance of CIL would be reviewed at least once a year. This report provides this yearly review.

The report looks at what has been implemented since the last CIL Governance Review, it also lays out the proposed changes introduced through the new Levelling up and Regeneration Bill and how this will affect Sevenoaks District Council. This report also considers changing our approach to CIL Spending, in order to work better with our key infrastructure providers. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Spending Board have been a part of this review.

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** ensuring that Sevenoaks District remains a great place to live, work and visit and that development is supported by the relevant infrastructure.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Julia Thornton

**Contact Officers:** Claire Pamberi, Ext. 7221 and Carlyn Kan, Ext. 7264

**Recommendation to Development and Conservation Advisory Committee:**

That the recommendations to Cabinet are supported.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** That

- a) Paragraphs 5 - 10 are noted.
- b) Changes recommended in paragraphs 19 are agreed.

**Reason for recommendation:**

To ensure that the Council is able to make decisions on how the CIL process is governed in an open, transparent, appropriate, fair manner and to ensure consistency.

**Introduction and Background**

- 1 As you are aware, Sevenoaks District Council has been charging the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) since August 2014. From this date, until May 30<sup>th</sup> 2022, the Council has collected just over £12.5 million of CIL contributions, with just under £4 million passed to relevant town and parish councils to help fund local infrastructure improvements and assist them in their role. This has meant that there has been just over £6.5 allocated to local and strategic infrastructure projects, through the CIL Spending Board, with 4.5 million of this amount is already spent. We now have just over £1.4 million available for the next CIL Spending Board.
- 2 As part of the current CIL Governance arrangements, it has been agreed the governance of the CIL Spending Board and also the process of allocating CIL money would be reviewed on an annual basis. This is to ensure that the Council's processes and procedures remain relevant, transparent and fit for purpose. This report is therefore part of this process.
- 3 This report will consider the following:
  - Changes in Legislation
  - Changes put in place since the last review
  - Amendments to the Spending of CIL
- 4 It will therefore address each topic in turn, below:

**Changes in Legislation**

- 5 As you may be aware the Government (Govt) have introduced a major change to CIL through their Levelling up and Regeneration Bill introduced in May 2022. The Government's main objective of the Bill is to reverse geographical disparities between different parts of the United Kingdom by spreading opportunities more equally. The main priorities for doing this are:
  - I. Providing a legal basis for setting and reporting against levelling up missions.
  - II. Devolving powers to all areas in England that want them.

III. Empowering local leaders to regenerate towns and cities and restore local pride.

IV. Improving the planning process. This will include:

- delivering high quality design and beautiful places and protecting our heritage
- enabling the right infrastructure to come forward where it is needed
- enhancing local democracy and engagement
- fostering better environmental outcomes
- allowing neighbourhoods to shape their surroundings.

6 In regards to the Community Infrastructure Levy specifically, I thought that it would be helpful to summarise some of the specific proposals introduced in the Bill:

- The Bill seeks to replace the current system of securing developer contributions (section 106 Agreements and CIL) with a new Infrastructure Levy. This will be a non negotiable and locally set.
- The government wants to make sure that more of the money accrued by landowners and developers goes towards funding the local infrastructure e.g. affordable housing, schools, GP surgeries, and roads - that new development creates the need for.
- The Levy will be charged on the value of property when it is sold and applied above a minimum threshold.
- To strengthen infrastructure delivery further, the Bill will require local authorities to prepare infrastructure delivery strategies.
- The Bill will also enable local authorities to require the assistance of infrastructure providers and other bodies in devising these strategies, and their development plans.
- The Govt intend to bring forward legislation to enable the piloting of Community Land Auctions.

7 Alongside the Bill, the Govt have indicated that much of the detail of different elements of the new Infrastructure Levy will need to be set in regulations, following a consultation.

8 Specifically, the Govt intend to:

- Introduce a new 'right to require' to remove the role of negotiation in determining levels of onsite affordable housing. This rebalances the inequality between developers and local authorities by allowing local

## Agenda Item 11

authorities to determine the portion of the levy they receive as onsite affordable homes.

- Require developers to deliver infrastructure integral to the operation and physical design of a site - such as an internal play area or flood risk mitigation. Planning conditions and narrowly targeted section 106 agreements will be used to make sure this type of infrastructure is delivered.
  - There is a retained role for section 106 agreements to support delivery of the largest sites. In these instances, infrastructure will be able to be provided in-kind and negotiated, but with the guarantee that the value of what is agreed will be no less than will be paid through the Levy.
  - They aim to retain the neighbourhood share and administrative portion as currently occurs under the Community Infrastructure Levy.
  - Introduce the Levy through a ‘test and learn’ approach. This means it will be rolled out nationally over several years, allowing for careful monitoring and evaluation, in order to design the most effective system possible.
  - Sites permitted before the introduction of the new Levy will continue to be subject to their CIL and section 106 requirements.
- 9 The Government have also indicated that technical consultations will take place on the detail of the new infrastructure levy.

### Changes put in place since the last review

- 10 Since the last Government review, we have implemented the following:
- Since November 2021, money has been set aside for officers to spend outside of the CIL Spending Board process. However, we have not currently allocated any of these funds as no projects have been submitted or have met the criteria.
  - CIL Governance has been changed to clarify the format of the CIL Spending Board and how the Board’s decisions are ratified.
  - The assessment criteria for assessing bids to ensure that the Council’s priorities in regard to Net Zero have now been included.

## Amendments to the Spending of CIL

- 11 It is clear that we have a robust Governance system in place, that is well managed and is understood through all levels of the Council. It is however necessary to consider how we can continue improve our CIL Governance and our spending to ensure that CIL is spent where it is needed the most and supports our infrastructure providers and most importantly our communities.
- 12 As you are aware, we already lay our priorities for the spending of CIL and for Section 106 monies through the Infrastructure Funding Statement. Whilst this is a good way to highlight the priorities for our spending, some of our key infrastructure providers have informed us that this is not sufficient to provide enough security for them to ensure that some of their specific and necessary infrastructure projects will be funded through CIL.
- 13 It has become clear that the need and requirements for CIL monies has changed. The need to fund specific infrastructure projects to support specific developments has increased as infrastructure providers are now realising the impact of CIL and funding on their schemes. This is also due to viability issues as developers have to provide for a number of requirements through the Local Plan and also pay the full amount of CIL for their developments. There is no discretion in this. Currently, as it is laid out in legislation and also the CIL charging schedule, it is expected that the CIL monies should be used to pay towards the infrastructure projects required by the growth proposed. If we ask developers to pay for infrastructure through a Section 106 agreement and also require them to pay the full CIL amount, we are expecting developers to pay twice, which is not reasonable. So we need to re-consider our approach to this issue.
- 14 An example of this would be if an infrastructure provider requires a major piece of infrastructure on site. The need for this is generated by the development itself and they have provided sufficient evidence to show this. If we cannot provide more assurance that CIL money will fund this piece of infrastructure, the infrastructure provider will request that it is covered by a Section 106 agreement to secure the funding. If this occurs, the developers will then look at the viability of the scheme and this may mean that the quality of the design, landscaping or materials used in the scheme are reduced or most likely that the amount of affordable housing is reduced or not provided at all. In other cases this has also meant that the much needed infrastructure has not been provided on the site and we have had difficulty in securing the infrastructure appropriately elsewhere to support the development. This does not seem an acceptable solution and means that our communities are missing out on much needed infrastructure.
- 15 Currently, as described above, there is currently £1.4 million available for the CIL Spending Board to spend. Whilst we aware this will not currently cover all of the infrastructure which is likely to be required, for all our sites, it must be noted that some of our larger developments have not yet come forward and therefore the CIL has not yet been paid for these. If some

## Agenda Item 11

of our larger sites where to commence, this would lead to a large amount of CIL being paid that would be able to fund the infrastructure required on these sites. There is therefore clearly a need to look at how we approach this.

- 16 Looking at what we have done already, through the Infrastructure Funding Statement last year, we did amend the priorities for CIL Spending and removed community projects as over 69% of all our CIL allocated to and through the CIL Board was spent on these. Whilst a number of these projects enabled replacement village halls and an improved environment with better recreational facilities, they failed to provide essential infrastructure to support specific growth in our District. So this approach needs to follow through to our spending.
- 17 Whilst it is understood that there is also a concern that Parish Council's may miss out due to funding being prioritised elsewhere, it is important to note that they have already receive at least 25% of the total CIL income for their area. In line with legislation, if there is no neighbourhood plan in place they should only be receiving 15%. In addition, we have already awarded £1.6 million pounds through the CIL Spending Board towards their projects, which means that they have also received an additional 25% of the total of CIL monies awarded. So even if we change the priorities for CIL spending it is unlikely that they would be negatively impacted. We are keen however to ensure that we still support their projects and the infrastructure required to support their work, so it is recommended that some money is still set aside for them to be able to continue to do this.
- 18 It is clear, at the current time, that we need to provide some security to developers and our key infrastructure providers, that some of our CIL income will be set aside to support specific projects that are required to support specific development and growth in our District. It would also give more security to key infrastructure providers that their necessary projects will be funded and ensures that as a District we direct our spending to ensure our growth is appropriately supported and that the right infrastructure is provided in the right place, at the right time. It also ensures that other benefits to a scheme such as landscaping affordable housing and materials could still be provided as well as infrastructure through CIL.
- 19 The following changes are therefore proposed to the Governance of CIL:
  - We will be providing guidance to developers to indicate that some infrastructure can be provided through Sec 106 but this will be subject to need, evidence and viability and will be determined on a case by case basis. This will be better defined through the Section 106 Supplementary Planning Document and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which will accompany the new Local Plan. This will be more of a long term aim.
  - We will continue to ensure that Parish and Town Councils are able to improve/replace their infrastructure to support them in serving their

communities. It is therefore recommended that 40% of the full CIL income will go to Parish and Town Councils. This includes 25% already granted and an additional 15% through the CIL Spending Board.

- 15% of the money available to the CIL Spending Board will still be set aside for officers to spend as laid out in the last CIL governance report.
- It is proposed that the remainder of the money available to the CIL Spending Board will be prioritised (ring fenced) to be spent on infrastructure projects that are proposed by our key infrastructure providers. I consider this could include:
  - Clinical commissioning groups (NHS)
  - Kent County Council
  - Highways England
  - Emergency Services
  - Environment Agency
  - Utility Companies
  - Sevenoaks District Council
- The need for these projects will have to be evidenced to show that the infrastructure is essential to support and enable a specific development/s in the District. They would need to provide clear costs. Every organisation will be required to sign up to a legal agreement to ensure that the money is spent on the project they have bid for and where they say.
- We will also streamline the application process for key infrastructure providers. Making the forms more simple and changing the criteria as these organisations cannot always seek to work in partnership or are able to maximise funding. We would still ask them to provide evidence as to how their project supports specific developments and how much the project would cost. The aim is to make it easier for them to have access to CIL for much needed infrastructure projects. Please see Appendix A and B as an example of how we would do this.
- We will also be looking to hold training sessions for Members in July for Members of the Board to update them.

### **Other options Considered and/or rejected**

- 20 Members could decide not to agree the proposed changes to the current governance arrangements. However, the proposed changes seek to build on the existing arrangements to make the process more robust to ensure that future funding allocated by the CIL Spending Board is appropriately spent and monitored, whilst working with our key providers.
- 21 In addition, any further identified weaknesses in the system can be addressed through the annual review process.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

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There are no financial implications regarding this report.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

There are no legal implications regarding this report.

### Equality Assessment

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

### Net Zero Implications

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

### **Conclusions**

The CIL Spending Board provides the Council's oversight of allocating CIL funding to local and strategic infrastructure projects across Sevenoaks District. The current CIL governance arrangements were agreed by Members of the Development and Conservation Advisory Committee in Sept 2021 and are reviewed annually to ensure that they are still fit for purpose. This report sets out some suggested changes to the CIL Governance following feedback received from infrastructure providers, officers and the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the CIL Spending Board. It is therefore asked that Members grant the Chief Planning Officer and Legal Team delegated authority to implement these changes.

**Appendices**

Appendix A - Shows suggested amended criteria to assess the bids by

Appendix B - Shows suggested amendments to the pro forma

**Background Papers**

[Governance of the Community Infrastructure Levy \(CIL\) \(Planning Advisory Committee - Sept 21\)](#)

[Governance of the Community Infrastructure Levy \(CIL\) \(Cabinet - Oct 2021\)](#)

[Council's Constitution - Appendix X1.](#)

**Richard Morris**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning and Regulatory Services**

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Criteria Number	Criteria Description	Detail
1	The need for the scheme	<p>Here we would expect the applicant to explain the need for and the benefits of the scheme. We have asked for the applicant to respond specifically in regard to the Economic, Social and Environmental needs of the District and its residents. We will therefore award points under each section:—Here we would expect the infrastructure provider evidence for the need for the scheme, what development or growth area would the infrastructure project support. Why the amount requested.</p> <p>Economic— are there benefits to the economy?</p> <p>Social— what is the benefit to the local community or wider community.</p> <p>Environmental— Are there clear benefits to the environment by implementing this scheme. Whilst we are aware that new projects would improve the immediate environment, bids would be looked upon more favorably if they included a wider environment benefit. For example landscaping improvements to a wider area, enhancements to wildlife, enhancements to the appearance of the site etc.</p>
2	Net Zero Ambitions	<p>How does the scheme contribute towards the Council's net zero ambitions? A scheme that does not contribute at all will receive a lower score. Those which clearly help and provide evidence to show that the project put forward will help produce less or no green house emissions will receive a higher score</p>
3	Does the scheme proposed support local or strategic infrastructure	<p>Schemes that will provide for key infrastructure projects are likely to have a greater impact i.e. medical, schools, highways, flooding will receive higher scores. Those identified in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan or Infrastructure Funding Statement (or any document superseding these) will receive a higher score. Evidence should also be provided to demonstrate a strong link between new development and the bid project. Projects which also can be shown to support the local community with a clear community benefit will also looked upon favourably.</p>
4	Working in partnership	<p>Has the applicant provided evidence that they are working in partnership with one or more organisation. We will look at the type of partners involved, how formal the Partnership is and the amount of involvement from all partners. Please note; we will take into account those infrastructure/statutory providers that do not need to work in partnership.</p>
5	Is the Bid scheme part of an existing Strategy/Plan	<p>We would expect the scheme to be put forward as part of an existing Strategy or Plan. This could include Neighbourhood or Parish plans. It could also include regional strategies, economic strategies, Work Programmes by statutory bodies or if it has been identified as a key or much needed project.</p>
6	Public Benefit	<p>It is likely that bids are looking to provide the greatest public benefit will be looked upon more favourably than those that do not bring a greater benefit to the wider community. Definition: We are therefore looking for schemes that will provide something that is advantageous or good; that will relate to, or affecting a population or a community as a whole. In particular, we would support schemes that improve health inequality in our District</p>
7	Does the scheme show that funding has been maximised from other sources	<p>The majority of the money to fund a project should not come from CIL. It should not be used to fund entire projects. Please note; schemes that will be relying totally on CIL will not be considered favorably. Schemes that already have a large amount/majority funding in place will receive a higher score. The security of the funding should also be considered. The majority of funding should be sought from other sources. Here whilst we will ask Infrastructure providers to look for other sources of funding, this will not be expected to carry as much weight if they have not got much funding. We would however like to evidence that they have tried.</p>
8	Deliverability	<p>Through their bid we would expect the applicant to show evidence that the project is well managed. Have they provided for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- clear dates for start and finish of the project.</li> <li>-details of the management of the project and timescales</li> <li>-details of when they will provide updates to SDC</li> </ul> <p>whether planning permission or other consents is required or sought? Bids that have planning permission in place will be looked upon favourably. This assessment should also include considering whether the works require PP or whether the proposal is permitted development. This assessment should also ensure that the applicant has checked this issue. It is considered that large scale projects which are supported by a number of neighbourhood, local and business plans are unlikely to have all their paperwork and funding in place. Therefore this part of the assessment should also consider the benefits of a larger scheme against the fact that they do not have all their permissions in place.</p>

9	Does the Bid have local support?	In particular, does the Bid have the support of a local member, a local organisation or business and/or the Parish and Town Council? Bids that have local support are more likely to be looked upon favourably.
10	Has the project already had CIL funding?	A lower score will be given for those projects which have already received CIL funding via the CIL Spending Board or have benefited from CIL exemption. Unless a strong justification can be provided as to why further funding is required.
11	Evaluation of the overall benefits of the scheme and the benefit it provides to the community	Higher scores will be given to those projects which show that they have sought the majority of funding from other sources and overall provide clear evidence of a community benefit or need. Projects where the CIL money would complete the scheme will also be scored highly. Higher scores will be given to projects that relate to a specific development/s and evidence has been provided to show that this project supports growth. Clear project management should also be provided to show costs of the project and how CIL would contribute to this project.

**SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) SPENDING BOARD**  
**BID FOR FUNDING PRO-FORMA (INFRASTRUCTURE ONLY)**

<b>Scheme Name</b>

<b>Description of Scheme</b>

Page 1 of 1	<b>Working in Partnership</b>	
	Is this scheme promoted by your organisation in partnership with another organisation(s)?	<b>Yes / No</b> (please delete as appropriate)
	Organisation Name(s):	
	Responsible individuals(s):	
	Signature(s) on behalf of other supporting organisations(s):	
	Please provide details of the Agreements you have in place with your partners. Including the % of money guaranteed for the scheme from each organisation.	

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<b>2</b>	<b>Planning Permission Details</b>	
	Is planning permission required for the scheme?	<b>Yes / No</b> (please delete as appropriate)
	If yes, has it been applied for?	
	If no, please explain why?	
	If planning permission has been granted – please provide details and a reference number.	
	Details of any other consent required (if appropriate (e.g. conservation, Listed Buildings, other Government bodies)	
	Date applied for / granted	

**Need for the Scheme**

<b>3</b>	List of projects or development that result in the need for this scheme: Can you please provide details of how your project supports a specific development scheme/s. Please provide evidence of how your project address this growth in our District and needs to be of the size proposed.

<b>4</b>	How is the scheme related to these developments (additional information, such as usage forecasts and existing and alternative capacity assessments, can be attached as an appendix):

Please provide an explanation of the 'public benefit' of the scheme proposed for residents in Sevenoaks District:

8	Is the need for the scheme identified in any adopted strategy/plan? E.g. Neighbourhood Plan, Work programme of a Statutory Body, Infrastructure Plan. If so, which?

9	How does the scheme identify with the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and its priorities?

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Funding

11	<b>Total Project Cost</b>
	£

12	<b>Funding from CIL Details</b>
	Funding required from CIL £
	Please identify other funding sources for this project, what contribution they are making and why these cannot be used to fund the scheme in its entirety. Please provide the status of each source of funding for example whether it has been formally agreed, whether it has already been paid, whether it has been agreed in principle, if you are waiting for a decision in regard to the funding, or whether you are investigating the source of funding etc.
	1) 2) 3)

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<b>12</b>	<b>Funding from CIL Details</b>
	4)
	5)
	6)

<b>13</b>	<b>Staged Payment Details</b>	
	Is this bid for staged payments?	<b>Yes / No</b> (please delete as appropriate)
	Will staged payments be accepted?	<b>Yes / No</b> (please delete as appropriate)
	Please provide details of anticipated funding requirements and timetable	

<b>14</b> Page 120	<b>Town &amp; Parish Councils CIL Funding</b>	
	Has a bid(s) for CIL funding been made to relevant town and parish councils?	<b>Yes / No</b> (please delete as appropriate)
	Details of bid	
	Decision made	
	Details of decision	

<b>15</b>	Would the scheme be fully funded if the CIL contribution is agreed?
	<b>Yes / No</b> (please delete as appropriate)

<b>16</b>	Has this scheme already benefited from CIL funding through the CIL Spending Board?
	<b>Yes / No</b> (please delete as appropriate)
	If yes, please provide further justification as to why further CIL funding is required for this project.

<b>17</b>	Has this scheme/land/building already benefited from funding from Sevenoaks District Council?
	Note- this can include grants, section 106s, a Community Fund etc.
	<b>Yes / No</b> (please delete as appropriate)
	If Yes, please provide further details of amount and the project involved.

<b>18</b>	Has the project, at any stage benefited from any CIL Exemptions as laid out in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended)?
	<b>Yes / No</b> (please delete as appropriate)
	If yes, please explain why CIL is still required following an exemption.

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**Deliverability**

<b>19</b>	Does your organisation have the legal right to carry out the proposed scheme?
	If not, you must attach documentation showing that the statutory provider of this service supports this scheme.
	<b>Yes / No</b> (please delete as appropriate)

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<b>20</b>	Anticipated start date for delivery of the scheme

21	Anticipated finish date for the delivery of the scheme

22	Anticipated date when CIL funding will need to be made available

23	Does land need to be purchased to facilitate the scheme?
Yes / No (please delete as appropriate)	
If no, please provide details:	

24	Please provide a consultation plan to let SDC know when they can expect progress reports on the project.

25	Please provide details of the management and timescales of the project.

26	Has consultation been carried out on the scheme or is any planned?
Carried out / Planned / No consultation planned (please delete as appropriate)	
Please provide details (Note: Results can be attached separately if necessary.)	

27	

28	

29	

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Maintenance

30	Which organisation will be responsible for ongoing maintenance?

31	Are funding arrangements in place for maintenance?
	<b>Yes / No</b> (please delete as appropriate)
	Please provide details

32	Please provide any further comments here. This could include if there are any other infrastructure projects that are related to this bid or any that rely on this bid.

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**Declaration**

I am authorised to submit this bid for funding on behalf of the organisation that I represent. At the time of writing, the information contained in this submission (including appendices) is correct and true to the best of my knowledge. If CIL funding is committed and circumstances change prior to the completion of the scheme, the organisation that I represent will notify Sevenoaks District Council. The Council will reserve the right to reconsider the allocation of funding. If CIL funding is committed to the above project then the organisation that I represent commits to providing Sevenoaks District Council with sufficient information to enable it to undertake its reporting requirements under the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended), or any subsequent relevant regulations.

**Signature**

.....

Name

.....

Position

.....

**Further Information**

<b>CIL Bid Contact Details</b>	
Name, role and contact details of the person that will be the contact for this bid:	
Name, role and contact details of the person that will be attending SDC's CIL Spending Board to support this bid:	

<b>CIL Bid Contact Details</b>	
Name, role and contact details of the person that will be the point of contact and responsible for the Legal Contract:	
Name, role and contact details of the person that will be legally responsible for receiving the CIL fund:	
Full company/charity name:	
Registered No:	

Privacy Notice

The personal data which is collected within this form is reasonably necessary for its public task of processing your application for CIL grant funding. This includes considering whether to grant the application and to ensure the effective management of CIL grant funding if approved.

If your application is unsuccessful then personal information will be retained for a period of 10 years after the application is refused. The personal data shall then be deleted except for any information made public under the Council's other legal obligations (including the Access to Information provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 or the Freedom of Information Act). If your application is successful then your data will be retained for the duration of the project applied for and for the full period in which the contract under which the monies are transferred is enforceable. The personal information will then be deleted, except for any information made public under the Council's other legal obligations. Any information relating to this application which is deleted will be deleted in accordance with the Council's standard record retention practice.

Unless otherwise stated we will generally handle personal information in accordance with the Council's Privacy Policy, which can be found through our website at [Council's Privacy Policy](#).

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**Item 12 - Local Plan Timetable (LDS)**

The attached report was considered by the Development & Conservation Advisory Committee on 5 July 2022. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of this agenda and will follow when available.

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## LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE

Cabinet - 7 July 2022

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services

**Status:** For Consideration, Development & Conservation Advisory Committee / For Decision, Cabinet

**Also considered by:**

- Development & Conservation Advisory Committee, 5 July 2022

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Julia Thornton

**Contact Officer:** Hannah Gooden, Ext. 7178

**Recommendation to DCAC:**

To consider the proposed Local Plan timetable and recommend its approval to Cabinet.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

To approve the Local Plan timetable.

**Reason for recommendation:** To update the Local Plan work programme to reflect the current timetable for the production of the Local Plan.

### Introduction and Background

- 1 This report outlines the proposed timetable for the Local Plan. This is known as the Local Development Scheme (LDS).
- 2 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is the document that sets out the Council's proposals and timetable for the production of the Local Plan. The LDS no longer has to be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval, but has to be made available and published on the Council's website. This is so that local communities and interested parties can keep track of progress.
- 3 The Council's current LDS was approved by Cabinet last year. However, it is an iterative, rolling project programme which needs to be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the current proposed timetable for

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evidence base production and consultation. This revision (please see the chart below) has been prepared to bring the timetable up to date.

- 4 The revised timetable strengthens our plan-making position, to ensure we have a robust, well-informed and consulted plan, which reinforces our previous strategy. It will ensure that we maximise the potential benefits to communities, including promoting resilient town centres and ensuring development is supported by suitable infrastructure and transport. The revised timetable also further strengthens protection for the Green Belt by ensuring that all non-Green Belt options, including the potential contribution from neighbouring land under the Duty to Co-operate, are optimised. These discussions with our neighbours need to take place before determining whether exceptional circumstances exist to justify Green Belt release.
- 5 Officers are acutely aware of the changes to the planning system proposed in the emerging Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and the resulting uncertainty that this creates for plan making. Notwithstanding any changes to national legislation and guidance, an up to date plan is and will continue to be the most effective mechanism for managing development in our District. A pause in the plan making process to wait for national guidelines to catch up is not recommended. Current circumstances do, however, reinforce the need for a degree of agility in the programme to incorporate change, whether this emerges at a national level or as a result of evidence base updates.

### Proposed Timetable

- 6 The LDS proposes the following timetable:

2022				2023				2024			
Spring	Sum	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Sum	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Sum	Autumn	Winter
Evidence Base / Call for Sites / Policy Prep	Informal Consultn (Reg. 18)	Reviewing Reps / Evidence Base / Policy Prep		Draft Local Plan Consultn (Reg. 18)		Review Reps/ Policy Prep	Pre- submissi on Publicati on (Reg. 19)	Submissi on (Reg. 22)	Examination		

- 7 Evidence base preparation and policy preparation (spring-summer 2022). This will include ongoing work on a number of evidence base studies, including:
  - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (due to complete June)
  - Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (due to complete July)
  - Economic Needs Study (due to complete July)
  - Green Belt Stage 2 Assessment (due to complete August)
  - Infrastructure Delivery Plan and District-wide Transport Study (due to complete September)

These evidence base documents, together with those which are already complete, will be used to inform policy preparation.

Discussions with neighbouring authorities and statutory providers are ongoing, in relation to the Duty to Co-operate, and will continue throughout the plan-making process. The Council also undertakes regular check-in meetings with the government department (DLUHC) to ensure our plan-making remains on track.

- 8 Informal consultation (Regulation 18) will take place in autumn 2022. This will consist of an initial 6-week consultation on the draft plan. This draft plan will focus on maximising opportunities within urban areas. This will be followed by a period of further policy preparation, reviewing the representations, undertaking Duty to Co-operate discussions, concluding evidence base work and refining the policies within the Local Plan.
- 9 A further (Regulation 18) consultation will take place in autumn 2023. This will build on the previous draft plan, and will, where necessary and where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, consider Green Belt sites.
- 10 Pre-submission publication (Regulation 19) will take place in spring 2024, for final representations, which are then provided to the examining Inspector. This stage of the plan making process asks for specific comments on legal compliance, soundness and whether the duty to co-operate has been met.
- 11 Representations received under Regulation 19 will be reviewed and the Plan documents prepared for submission. Given the focus on legal compliance and the duty to co-operate, it is important that officers have sufficient time to consider representations on these matters and if necessary, discuss the issues with relevant parties, including those who raised concerns.
- 12 The timetable assumes that no significant concerns are raised at this stage and the Council can proceed to submitting the plan for adoption. Officers will seek to meet this timescale by addressing as many issues as possible during the previous Regulation 18 stages. However, we cannot assume a predetermined outcome. In the event that significant issues are raised, it may be necessary to consider further rounds of consultation.
- 13 Submission (Regulation 22) is shown in summer 2024. The plan will be considered by Full Council for submission to the Secretary of State, for an examination which will be carried out by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). Examination will take place in 2024. The timetable for the examination and hearings is at the discretion of PINS.

### Conclusion

## Agenda Item 12

- 14 This report outlines the proposed update to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out the work programme for the production of the Local Plan.

### **Other options Considered and/or rejected**

The current LDS is out of date and it cannot remain unchanged. The reasons for the changes in its content and programme are explained above.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

No additional costs to the Council arise from the amendment of the LDS. Evidence base work is funded from the Council's Local Plan reserve.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

All local authorities are required to produce an LDS to set out their timetable for the production of planning policy documents.

Local authorities are required to have an up-to-date Local Plan in place by December 2023. The government may intervene where local authorities fail to meet this deadline in accordance with the existing statutory powers, considering appropriate action on a case-by-case basis. It is suggested that provided the Local Plan preparation has progressed as scheduled and Plan publication and submission is programmed for early 2024, the risk of intervention is minimal.

National changes in the plan-making system proposed through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will be kept under review.

#### 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.

Sevenoaks District Council aims to effectively involve the community in the development of all Local Plan documents, in line with the Statement of Community Involvement.

#### 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** - None

**Background papers** - [Previous Report to Advisory Committee](#)

**Richard Morris**  
**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services**

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**Item 13 - Welcome Back Fund**

The attached report was considered by the People & Places Advisory Committee on 14 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

**People & Places Advisory Committee (14 June 2022, Minute 11)**

Members considered the report presented by the Economic Development Officer which reviewed the Welcome Back Fund Project. She explained to the Committee that the funding of £214,212 (available as £107,106 per year between 2020 and 2022) was for temporary projects that supported the high street.

She explained how the project worked closely with Town and Parish Councils to ensure local needs were met. The Committee heard that the Council successfully spent 99% of the allocation, with 100% of the claims on the funding paid in full. The Committee then heard an outline of the projects successfully funded in this way. She further explained that the plans for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund would develop upon these projects.

Resolved: That the successful delivery of the Reopening High Street Safely/Welcome Back Fund and the positive impacts the interventions had across the district, be noted

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**Item 13 - Welcome back fund**

The attached report was considered by the Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee on 23 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of this agenda and will follow when available.

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## WELCOME BACK FUND PROJECT REVIEW

Cabinet - 7 July 2022

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

**Status:** For Consideration

**Also considered by:**

- People & Places Advisory Committee - 14 June 2022
- Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee - 23 June 2022

**Key Decision:** No

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Lesley Dyball

**Contact Officer:** Emily Haswell, Ext. 7261

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

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

**Recommendation to Cabinet**

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

**Reason for recommendation:**

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

### Introduction and Background

- 1 In June 2020, the government announced the Reopening High Streets Safely fund (RHSSF) allocation for Local Authorities. The initial allocation for

## Agenda Item 13

Sevenoaks District was £107,106. As this was part of European funding (ERDF), it was subject to strict delivery guidance and restricted expenditure eligibility. Eligible disbursements were financed by the Council in advance of claiming back finance from Central Government.

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

### Achievements

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

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

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

### **Next Steps**

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

### **Other options Considered and/or rejected**

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

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

There are no financial implications to note as the project has been delivered with the external finance provided and all claims have been met in full meaning no risk to Council finances. Additional staffing was funded from the allocation via

## Agenda Item 13

temporary contract meaning no onward financial implication. There is an ongoing requirement for document retention for audit purposes, which will be managed from within existing economic development team resource so no financial implication.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications to note.

### Equality Assessment

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

### Net Zero Implications

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

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

### **Conclusions**

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

#### **Appendices**

Appendix A - RHSSF and WBF list of achievements

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

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

**Detlev Munster**

**Strategic Head of Commercial and Property**

**RHSSF and WBF- list of Achievements**

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

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### APENDIX A

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

# Reopening High Street Safely Fund

End of campaign report  
July 2021

# Background on the project

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

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

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

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



# Phase one

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

## Summary of activity

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



## Phase two

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

### Summary of activity

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



# Business involvement in the RHSS campaign

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

## Hospitality businesses:

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

## Retail businesses:

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



## Feedback from businesses and the public

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**“Great video well done to all involved.”**

# Impact of the RHSS campaign

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

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



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## YouTube video performance

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

**6,100** video views since channel launch.

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

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

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

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**15** channel subscribers.

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



# Sevenoaks Chronicle ad campaign performance

Across the two phases, we ran advertising campaigns with Sevenoaks Chronicle to raise awareness of our campaign to a wider audience.

## April

**Online Article** - Reached 28,381 people.  
145 people clicked through to the site, and  
12 likes/comments/shares on social media.

## May

**Facebook Campaign** - 23,747 impressions & 937  
clicks to the site, from chosen target audience.

**Optimised Impressions** - 110,000 impressions  
& 363 clicks to the site. Optimised are extremely  
targeted and this will be people that fit within  
the campaign criteria.

**In your area** – 10,002 impressions and 83 clicks  
to the site - This is done by location so meaning  
83 people located within the area went to the  
site, which is great for brand awareness.



## Summary

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

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

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

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



**Thank you**

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# Sevenoaks Welcome Back Fund

End of campaign report



# Background on the project

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

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

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

# Our activity

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

## Summary of activity:

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

# Videos

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

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

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



# Social media graphics

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

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



# Social media | Facebook

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

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

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

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

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

# Social media | Instagram

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

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

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

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

# Social media | Twitter

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

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

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

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

# Pay per click (PPC) performance

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Digital advertising

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

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

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



*Ads included Leaderboard, Mobile, MPU and Skyscraper formats.*

# InShape Magazine

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

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

## Show Local Some Love This Christmas

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

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

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

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

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

### Festive Inspiration



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



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



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



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



@sevenoaksdc

@sevenoaksdistrictcouncil

@SDC\_newsdesk

# Window vinyls

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



*Above you can see example visuals of the window vinyls.*

**Thank you**



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## **Item 14 - Sevenoaks District Draft Economic Development Strategy**

The attached report was considered by the People & Places Advisory Committee on 14 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

### **People & Places Advisory Committee (14 June 2022, Minute 10)**

The Economic Development & Programme Manager presented the report which detailed the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) for the District for the period 2022 - 2027. He explained that the Strategy addressed the changes in supply and the labour market that resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic, and captured changes from new working and spending patterns.

He further explained the four focus areas of the Strategy, which were Business Engagement and Diversity, Tourism and Rural Enterprise, Town Centres, and Job Skills, and outlined the elements within these that the EDS specifically targets. He emphasised the importance of sustainability and Council's Net Zero plan within all these areas. The Committee raised the potential costs and difficulties associated with the transition to Net Zero, to which he outlined the resources of the Strategy for businesses to ease this process.

The Committee then heard about the importance of the District Council's partnerships in the Strategy, and the role of consultation with these groups in the creation of the Strategy's priorities. They also heard about how the Strategy includes an annual economic report to monitor its performance.

The Committee raised the issue of jargon within the report, which might present a barrier to public understanding of it. In response to concerns raised, Members were advised it would be addressed where possible. In response to further queries Members were informed that the Strategy was local in its focus, and that problems would be prioritised on an area-by-area basis.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that the Economic Development Strategy 2022 - 2027 be adopted.

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**Item 14 - Sevenoaks District Draft Economic Development Strategy**

The attached report was considered by the Improvement & Advisory Committee on 23 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of this agenda and will follow when available.

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**SEVENOAKS DISTRICT DRAFT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Cabinet - 7 July 2022

**Report of:** Strategic Head Property & Commercial

**Status:** For Decision

**Also considered by:**

- Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee - 23 June 2022
- People & Places Advisory Committee - 14 June 2022

**Key Decision:** Yes

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

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

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

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllrs. Peter Fleming & Lesley Dyball

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

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

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

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

## Introduction and Background

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

The Strategy includes the following overarching vision

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

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

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

### Economic Development Delivery Plan

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

### Focus Area One - Business & Enterprise

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

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

### **Focus Area Two - Tourism and Rural**

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

### **Focus Area Three - Town Centres**

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

### **Focus Area Four - Skills & Employment**

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

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

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

### **Partnerships**

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

### **Measuring and Monitoring**

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

### **Consultation**

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

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

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

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

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

**Other options Considered and/or rejected**

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

### Key Implications

#### Financial

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

A link to the UKSPF Prospectus is included here:

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/91222/ukspfprospectus.pdf)

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

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

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

#### Equality Assessment

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

#### Net Zero Implications

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

30. The Economic Strategy has a vision to grow the economy in a sustainable way and gives due regard to the Councils commitment to Net Zero. With any economic growth comes the risk of increased emissions, however, there are a range of initiatives in the delivery plan that focus on helping to offset the harmful aspects of climate change

- We will help local businesses access advice and share best practice on how to de-carbonise and become more energy efficient
- We will promote Sevenoaks District as a centre for the adoption of new green technologies
- We will seek to maximise the opportunities for new job creation in the green economy particularly upskilling for retrofit
- We will work with our attractions in the Visitor Economy on making Sevenoaks a centre for sustainable tourism
- We will encourage nature recovery and improvements in biodiversity in both rural and urban areas through sharing best practice in our Rural Economic Forum and helping organisations to access grants such as the Nature Recovery Grant.

### Conclusions

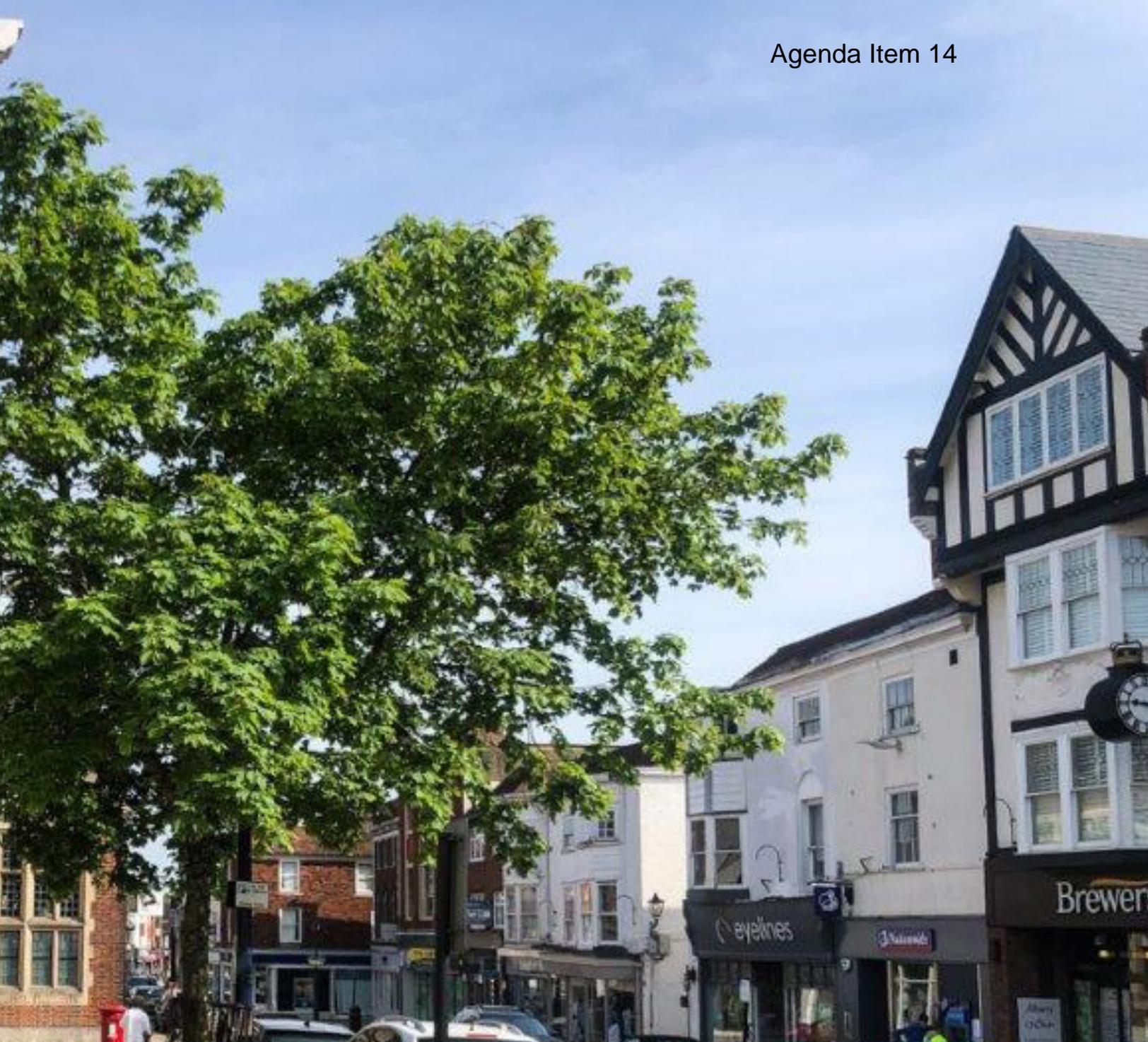
31. This Report presents the draft refreshed Economic Development Strategy for eventual agreement and adoption by Cabinet. Sevenoaks District has the potential to continue to build an economy that is sustainable, inclusive and dynamic, but importantly one that benefits all our residents.

#### Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Economic Development Strategy

#### Background Papers

None included



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

## Agenda Item 14

Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027



### Foreword

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

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

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

### Our vision

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

## The strategic context

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

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

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

## Economic strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats

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

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

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

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



## Strategic priorities

The refreshed Economic Development Strategy has five key strategic priorities

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

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

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

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



## Focus area 1: Business and Enterprise Key Facts

### Supporting and promoting business

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

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Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027

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

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

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

### Inward investment

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



### Net Zero and the Green economy

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

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

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

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

### Digital Connectivity

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



## Focus area 2: Tourism and Rural

### Rural Economy

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

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

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

### Visitor Economy

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

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

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

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

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

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



### Focus area 3: Town Centres

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

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

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

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

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

## Focus area 4: Skills and Employment

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

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

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

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

### Working in partnership

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

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



## Delivery Plan

### Focus area 1: Business and Enterprise

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

## Agenda Item 14

Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027

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

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

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



**Focus area 2: Tourism and Rural**

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

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

## Agenda Item 14

Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027

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

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

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

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

### Focus area 4: Skills and Employment

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

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

## Agenda Item 14

Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027

<b>Improving the provision of HE/FE in the District</b>	<span style="color: #008080;">■</span> Establish an HE/FE offer in the District		
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## References

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Annex A

### Economic Development Strategy Dashboard

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

#### Focus area 1: Business and Enterprise

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

## Agenda Item 14

Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027

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

### Focus area 2: Tourism and Rural

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

Focus area 3: Town Centres

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

Focus area 4: Skills and Employment

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



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## **Item 15 - Community Grant Scheme Guidelines Review**

The attached report was considered by the People & Places Advisory Committee on 14 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

### **People & Places Advisory Committee (14 June 2022, Minute 12)**

The Community Projects and Funding Officers presented the report which outlined the proposed changes to the Council's Code of Practice for Grant-making, which focused on speeding up and making the process of applying easier. They also explained there would be biannual meetings of officers involved to share best practice.

The proposed changes to the Community Grant Scheme Guidelines would better adhere to the new code of practice and be in line with current processes, with particular attention to how the lower grant limit of £500 was raised to £1000 to allow the scheme to provide meaningful grants in the current economic climate. The assessment criteria for applications were also updated.

They explained that further work would be undertaken with support from the Legal team to reduce the timescales of grant-making, and that this would be the subject of a future report.

The Committee discussed the limits on funding regarding the boundaries of the District, and it was clarified that grants were only given for work within the District.

Resolved: That

- a) the revisions to the Council's Code of Practice for Grant-making be noted;
- b) the recommended actions, as set out in paragraphs 8 - 14 of the report, be noted;
- c) the revisions to the Community Grant Scheme Guidelines, as detailed in Appendix B, be noted; and
- d) it be recommended to Cabinet that the above revisions and actions be approved.

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**COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME REVIEW**

**Cabinet - 7 July 2022**

**Report of:** Chief Officer for People & Places

**Status:** For Decision

**Also considered by:**

- People & Places Advisory Committee - 14 June 2022

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Executive Summary:** This report provides a review of the Community Grant Scheme with a focus on the speeding up of the process for applicants and possibility of more than one grant round in each year, as requested by the People and Places Advisory Committee on 1 March 2022.

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** Community Plan

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Lesley Dyball

**Contact Officer(s):** Kathryn Bone, Ext. 7176 and Jenny Godfrey, Ext. 7112

**Recommendation to People & Places Advisory Committee:**

- To note the revisions to the Council's Code of Practice for Grant-making as detailed in Appendix A.
- To note the recommended actions as set out in paragraphs 8 and 14.
- To note the revisions to the Community Grant Scheme Guidelines as detailed in Appendix B.
- To recommend to Cabinet (a) to (c) below

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

- To approve the revisions to the Council's Code of Practice for Grant-making as detailed in Appendix A.
- To approve the recommended actions as set out in paragraphs 8 and 14.
- To approve the revisions to the Community Grant Scheme Guidelines as detailed in Appendix B.

**Reason for recommendation:** The review undertaken by officers as requested by the People and Places Advisory Committee has revealed that the overarching code for all Council grant-making and the Community Grants Scheme guidelines and application form requires updating. It has also revealed the need for a further detailed piece of work in consultation with Legal Services and Members to address the speeding up of the Community Grants Scheme appraisal process.

### Introduction and Background

- 1 On 1 March 2022 the People and Places Advisory Committee requested officers review the Community Grant Scheme and focus on speeding up the process for applicants and consider the possibility of multiple grant rounds throughout the year. This report is the result of the work undertaken.
- 2 The Community Grant Scheme exists to help those voluntary and community organisations which provide projects, services and activities that benefit people living, working and volunteering in the Sevenoaks District, focusing on those with greatest need. This remains unchanged and did not form part of this review.
- 3 The Community Grant Scheme must adhere to the Council Code of Practice for Grant-making. Dated 2015, the Council Code of Practice for Grant-making was assessed against current practices and requirements as part of this review.
- 4 The Grant Guidelines for the Community Grant Scheme were last reviewed in 2013/14 and as they set out how the Scheme operates have been evaluated as part of this review.

### Review of Council Code of Practice for Grant-making

- 5 The Council Code of Practice for Grant-making dated 2015 is the overarching code of practice for grant making made by the Council. To canvas views from officers across the Council all teams with a grant-making function were contacted as part of the review.
- 6 A survey was conducted with all teams within the Council. The survey captured not only current practices with grant making but also highlighted areas where the Code of Practice needs updating to provide a fit for purpose overarching code.
- 7 A summary of the main findings are set out below:
  - Grants are made to a mixture of individuals, groups, organisations and businesses. Some are from external funding and others from Council budgets.
  - Where grants are made using external funding, a key element of managing these grant schemes is to ensure the funders' requirements are fully met.

- Grant application forms are now being made available online as well as hard copies (if required).
- As would be expected, all grant schemes involve officer time to undertake detailed analysis and appraisal. Some then involve Members in the final analysis/recommendation stages. All include for monitoring of the grants and share this information with Members.
- Some teams successfully run multiple rounds of funding in any one year enabling greater access to the grant schemes.

8 To address the findings of the survey, the following actions are proposed:

- The Council Code of Practice for Grant-making is amended as detailed in Appendix A to update it in line with current practices.
- The new version of the Code of Practice for Grant-making is re-distributed to all managers and services that offer grants.
- A meeting of all officers that deliver grant schemes is held twice yearly to share good practice and ensure consistency across Council teams.

#### **Review of Community Grant Scheme & Scheme Guidelines**

9 The scoring used for the Community Grant Scheme was reviewed and deemed still appropriate and adequate.

10 The Community Grant Scheme priorities need updating to align with the proposed new Community Plan.

11 The Scheme Guidelines require updating to reflect current practices regarding requirements of applicants and in particular ensuring that they are proportional to the level of grant being applied for.

12 The current Scheme offers the community and voluntary sector one opportunity to apply for a grant each financial year. The timescales of the current scheme means that applicants submitting their application between September and November do not hear the outcome until 4-6 months later in March, just one week before their project, service or activity is due to start:

- Community and voluntary organisations are invited to submit applications from September with a deadline circa 8 weeks later in November.
- Applications are then appraised by both officers and Members during December, with the report outlining recommendations being written by the first week in January.
- Due to the timings of the various Committees that are required to review, note and subsequently approve the report, the final decision is not made until mid-March.
- Officers then ensure that letters are sent to all applicants detailing the outcome of their application usually within one week of the decision but by the end of March at the latest.

## Agenda Item 15

- Grants are then paid within the first 10 days of April and must be used within 12 months.
- 13 The current timescales of the Scheme are a barrier to some community groups and voluntary sector organisations applying to the Scheme. During a survey of the Voluntary Sector Forum in December 2020, it was clear that the voluntary sector would like to see a simpler and more streamlined application process. Responses received as part of the consultation when asked if they would like to see any changes to the scheme include:
- “The move to digital applications was a good one and further streamlining could simplify the process further.”
- “A more streamlined application process would be welcomed”
- “A more streamlined application and reporting process would be very welcome.”
- “A shorter application process”
- 14 To address the findings of this review the following actions are proposed:
- To implement the amended Community Grant Scheme Guidelines attached as Appendix B.
  - To amend the online application form to reflect these proposed revised Community Grant Scheme Guidelines.
  - To share the revised Community Grant Scheme with the voluntary and community sector via the Voluntary Sector Forum.
  - To work with Legal Services and Members to understand if and how the appraisal process for the Community Grant Scheme can be migrated from Committee appraisal to another process, potentially a panel, to enable the approval process to be more streamlined with a quicker turnaround. This piece of work will include investigating the possibility of introducing two funding rounds per year for the Community Grant Scheme.

### Other options Considered and/or rejected

- 15 An option considered, but rejected, was to leave the Council Code of Practice for Grant-making and the Community Grant Scheme unchanged. This was rejected because:
- The Council Code of Practice for Grant-making dated 2015 is the overarching code for all Council grant-making and requires some updating to bring it in line with current practices and requirements.
  - The Community Grant Scheme requires updating to align the Scheme priorities with the new Community Plan.
  - The Community Grant Scheme Guidelines need revising to reflect current practices regarding requirements of applicants and in particular ensuring that they are proportional to the level of grant being applied for.

- 16 Consideration was given to the inclusion of a recommendation that the appraisal process for the Community Grant Scheme be migrated from the current Committee appraisal, potentially using a panel. This was rejected at this stage as further detailed work to understand the legal and other implications is required in consultation with Legal Services and Members.

### Key Implications

#### Financial

- 17 Funding for the Community Grant Scheme has already been allocated in existing budgets. There are no financial implications from the recommendations included in this report.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

- 18 There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations included in this report. As set out in this report the next recommended step of this review is, in conjunction with Legal Services and Members, understand if and how the appraisal process for the Community Grant Scheme can be migrated from Committee appraisal to another process, potentially a panel.

#### 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 report directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people. The summary results of this analysis are set out immediately below.
- 20 The Council Code of Practice for grant-making exists to ensure a consistent approach to grant making, made against set rules that promote equality in relation to access to grants.
- 21 The Community Grant Scheme assists with the provision of services to support Sevenoaks District residents, particularly those in the greatest need. It provides funding for specific groups, such as older people, young people and people with disabilities.
- 22 The decision being made or recommended through this paper does not have the potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community.
- 23 As no negative impacts have been identified, no further mitigating steps need to be taken.

## Agenda Item 15

### Net Zero Implications

- 24 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**

- 25 The review undertaken by officers as requested by the People and Places Advisory Committee has revealed that:
- the overarching code for all Council grant-making requires updating;
  - there are efficiency savings & further community benefits to be made by implementing some new processes for all Council teams involved in grant-making;
  - the Community Grant Scheme Guidelines and application form requires revision to align the Scheme priorities with the proposed new Community Plan, and, to reflect current practices regarding requirements of applicants and in particular ensuring that they are proportional to the level of grant being applied for; and
  - to speed up the Community Grant Scheme's appraisal process and consider the introduction of two funding rounds in each year a further detailed piece of work is required in conjunction with Legal Services and Members.

In order to address these findings the recommendations set out in this report have been made.

#### **Appendices**

Appendix A - Code of Practice for Grant-making

Appendix B - Community Grant Scheme Guidelines

#### **Background Papers**

None

**Sarah Robson**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - People and Places**

# Appendix A

## Sevenoaks District Council

### Code of Practice for Grant-making

#### 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;

## Agenda Item 15

- Minimum and maximum grant level (if appropriate);
- 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.

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 A1 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 A2: 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 A3 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 2023/24

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](mailto: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 Sevenoaks District, focusing on those in greatest need.

In particular, we wish 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? *[This section has been aligned to the current draft Community Plan and is subject to change if the final Community Plan is amended].***

- 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 local 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 particular 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 £1000 must have beneficiaries 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 £1000 or under must have beneficiaries 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**

The most we will award for any one application using this application form is **£5,000**.

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.

The deadline for applications is [XX] November [20XX] for funding in April [20XX]. You will be advised of the outcome of your application by the end of March [20XX]

### What are the main conditions?

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

- 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 processes needed to deliver the project are in place including appropriate safeguarding arrangements. 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 checks and appropriate training for all staff and volunteers) and an appropriate Equality Policy;

- 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 Sevenoaks District. It must not be used for any other purpose;
- You will be required to submit monitoring for your project, services or activities with supporting evidence;
- All publicity materials and annual reports must acknowledge our support;
- Your organisation or group can only submit one application in any financial year;
- Any grant unspent at the year end will be refunded to Sevenoaks District Council.

### What we will not fund

We will not fund:

- For grants over £1000, 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](#) & [Sevenoaks District Arts Council](#) respectively;
- 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;
- Projects, services or activities where the beneficiaries are not those living, working or volunteering in 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?

## Agenda Item 15

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

*This section will include hints and tips specific to the online form once it is created i.e. the number of people that can work on the application form at one time, how to save, how to upload a document, etc*

### When will you know if your application is successful?

You will be advised of the outcome of your application by the end of March [20XX] with successful projects receiving funding in early April [20XX]

If you require any assistance, please contact Kathryn Bone or Jenny Godfrey, Community Projects & Funding Officers, on **01732 227000** or by email at [grants@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:grants@sevenoaks.gov.uk).

**Item 16 - Sevenoaks District Community Safety Annual report 2021-2022**

The attached report was considered by the People & Places Advisory Committee on 14 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

People & Places Advisory Committee (14 June 2022, Minute 15)

The Chief Officer for People & Places presented the report which provided an overview of the work of the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership (CSP) from April 2021 - March 2022. They outlined the rates of victim-based crime in the District, including the 44% decrease in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the past year compared to the year before.

Members were advised of the achievements of the Community Safety Unit (CSU), which met daily and reviewed 626 daily taskings, all of which were actioned. It was reported that the CSU was commended by Kent Police as the most exceptional in Kent.

The CSP held violence against women and girls as a priority, and actions to further address this issue have been discussed held by the CSP. The Committee discussed the importance of co-ordinated work with outside organisations in addressing violence against women and girls, and the Chief Officer for People and Places informed the Committee that the CSP's plan for the future considered this.

Resolved: That the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Annual Report for 2021 - 2022 be noted.

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**SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2021  
- 2022**

**Cabinet - 7 July 2022**

**Report of:** Chief Officer - People and Places

**Status:** For Information

**Also considered by:**

People & Places Advisory Committee - 14 June 2022

**Key Decision:** No

**Executive Summary:** This report looks at the work of Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership from April 2021 - March 2022.

**This reports support the Key Aim of:** the Council Plan.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Lesley Dyball

**Contact Officer(s):** Kelly Webb, x 7474

**Recommendation to People and Places Advisory Committee**

To consider the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Annual Report for 2021-22.

**Recommendation to Cabinet**

To consider the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Annual Report for 2021-22.

**Reason for recommendation:** To keep Members updated on the work of the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership.

### **Introduction and Background**

In 2006, a review of the partnership provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Police Reform Act 2002 led to a series of recommendations to strengthen and extend existing requirements through the experience gained from partnership working. This resulted in a new set of national minimum standards which came into force in August 2007.

The 1998 Crime & Disorder Act included the requirement to produce a detailed crime and disorder audit through consultation with key agencies and the wider community and to use the findings to identify strategic priorities and take action

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to address them. The new national standards placed a legal obligation on responsible authorities to comply with the specified requirements, one of which was the creation of an annual strategic assessment in place of the previous 3 yearly audit.

The Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy & Action Plan 2021-22 was put in place for the year ended March 2022 and the report attached at Appendix A is a summary of the work that has taken place over the year to deliver that action plan.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

The cost of the action plan itself is minimal. Funding to implement the plan is provided by all partner agencies through their core budgets with additional funding from the PCC (Police & Crime Commissioner) and other external funding streams.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

National Standards require Partnerships to produce an annual action plan which is reviewed and updated annually. The requirement to produce an action plan to take forward a multi-agency approach to community safety stems from the Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

#### Equality Assessment

- 1 Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this report directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out immediately below.
- 2 There are no negative impacts - the annual report applies to all. All victims of crime and anti-social behaviour are treated equally and fairly regardless of disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership, race, gender, carer status or religion and belief.

#### Net Zero

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. Where possible, the Local Strategic Partnership will seek to align with the Council's net zero ambitions or with their organisation's net zero ambitions.

Community Impact and Outcomes

The Community Safety Partnership is based upon the actions delivered by Sevenoaks District Council, partner agencies and other stakeholders. It also reflects community needs identified through local data.

**Conclusions**

- 2 The Community Safety Annual Report highlights the work of the Community Safety Partnership throughout 2021-22

**Appendices**

Appendix A - Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2021-22

Background Papers

None

**Sarah Robson**  
Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, People and Places

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**Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership**



Annual Report 2021-22

Produced by: Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership

April 2022

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## Introduction

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### Background

Community Safety Partnerships were set up under the 1998 Crime & Disorder Act. Their purpose is to bring together all of the agencies in an area who can have an impact on crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime. In Sevenoaks District, the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership undertakes this role. Co-ordinated by the Council, its membership includes the Police, Kent Fire & Rescue Service, Kent County Council, the Probation Service, Housing Associations and others. A full list of partners is given on page 18 of this report.

The Partnership has 3 key aims. They are to:

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

### 2021 Strategic Assessment

One of the Partnership's functions is to undertake an annual strategic assessment which identifies current and future community safety issues using evidence, consultation and analysis. It then puts in place a multi-agency action plan aimed at tackling the identified priority issues.

The 2021 Strategic Assessment includes a comprehensive analysis of crime and other data. This identifies local needs for 2022/23 to help the Partnership put in place its annual priorities and action plan. It was published early in April 2021 and our priorities for 2022-23 are:-

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

Young People is identified as a priority, as it reaches across all the above priorities. It is recommended that the 2022-23 Strategy & Action Plan resulting from this year's Strategic Assessment have actions dedicated to young people.

## Agenda Item 16

### Annual Report

This Annual Report looks at what the Partnership and the Community Safety Unit (CSU) have achieved over the last financial year (1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022).

The Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership **achieved 97% of actions** in the Community Safety Strategy Action Plan during 2021/22.

### **COVID-19 Impact**

The Pandemic is having a huge impact on the community and partner organisations and changed the way we worked over the past two years and will continue to do so.

The daily briefings continue via MS Teams. Reports continued to come into the Council, Housing Associations, Community Wardens and Police. We were still able to continue a co-ordinated approach in helping residents reporting crimes, anti-social behaviour and community safety concerns. Many of which were regarding neighbour and noise nuisance, breaches of Covid-19 guidelines and mental health concerns.

Police and SDC staff have continued to operate from the CSU albeit on a rota basis with less people in the office. All monthly meetings continued via MS Team platforms.

Visits to residents and site visits have continued throughout the last year, in a safe way for staff and residents.

Commissioned services were able to be delivered. DAVSS continued with all of their services apart from face to face during lockdown periods. Their extended telephone hour's service from 8am-1pm to 8am-4pm is still happening. All other funded projects were able to be delivered whether via a media platform such as MS Teams or Zoom.

All detached youth work was able to continue. Kenward Trust delivered throughout the year as well as West Kent Extra. KCC Youth Teams were able to do some street based work, but also did a lot of work online sessions and promoting mental health services via Facebook, Twitter & Insta Gram.

### **COMMUNITY SAFTY PRIORITIES FOR 2021/22 – PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY**

#### **Anti-Social Behaviour including environmental crime**

The Anti-Social Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2014 was implemented in 2014.

The Act replaced nineteen pre-existing measures with six new measures for tackling anti-social behaviour and providing protection for victims and communities.

**Between 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022** the legislation has been used as follows:

- 3 community triggers were raised and 1 taken forward - no further action
- 4 Criminal Behaviour Order served but 4 CBO applications are awaiting court dates.
- 63 Community Protection Warnings were served
- 11 Community Protection Notice was issued
- 0 Community Protection Notice Breach that has been heard at court and defendant was convicted
- 1 Closure Order
- 19 Warning Letters specifically for vehicle use were issued because of repeat calls generated by the Sevenoaks Town Car Park

The Police in the CSU also helped by attending visits and delivering letters on the Partnerships behalf. There were 50 reports of anti-social behaviour from residents. This is a reduction of 47 reports as compared to the same period last year. However, these calls are separate to those that come into the CSU daily briefing.

The highest number of calls were concerning nuisance reported about neighbour nuisance and parking.

The Community MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) is designed to address medium and high risk victims, offenders and problem locations. The areas of work covered are:

- ASB including Disputes & Environmental Crime

- Hate related incidents
- Mental Health concerns
- Persistent offenders of crime and Disorder
- Vulnerable victims and locations including Child Sexual Exploitation, human trafficking, modern slavery and gangs
- Vulnerable adults and young persons
- Substance Misuse
- Low to Medium Risk Domestic Abuse

The meetings are chaired by the CSU Police Sargent and Vice Chair is the Community Safety Officer. This group consists of KCC Adult and Children's Services, Youth Offending Team, Probation, Housing Associations, Mental Health Services, Schools and Health Groups. On average the group discusses around 15 cases per month, of which 90% are removed within 6 months due to changed behaviour. This change is due to support and education as well as enforcement action taken.

**The group have issued 31 ASB Warning Letters, 14 ABA's and 1 ABA Breach Letters**

**The number of incidents of ASB recorded by Kent Police in Sevenoaks District from 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022, was 1513.** This is the lowest level of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the county. Compared to previous year there has been a 44% decrease (1177 reports).

Op Liberty addressed ASB through Spring/Summer in line with the COVID ASB Action Plan set up in May 2020 and continued started again in May 2021. The group meets every 2 weeks and also works with land owners. We have designed a poster campaign and over 20 landowners took this up. Op Wallaby addressed the Euros to address ASB and licensing issues and concerns. This worked really well.

**PACT (Partners & Communities Together) Panel** meetings are held in Swanley, Edenbridge, and New Ash Green. The Panels consist of partner agencies including the District Council, Police, Housing Associations and local Town or Parish Councils, businesses and residents. Activities include youth projects, community litter picks and other actions to tackle local priorities. This can include Site Visits which are joint walkabouts with residents, police, local housing officers and community wardens to tackle environmental issues.

**Mobile CCTV** has been deployed to target ASB and criminal damage. The CSP has 7 cameras. They were deployed across the District.

### Safeguarding

**Prevent** - The Counter Terrorism and Security Act received Royal Assent on 12 February 2016, placing the Prevent Programme on a statutory footing. Part 5 of the Act (Chapter 1 s. 26-35) places a general duty on all specified authorities to, when exercising their functions, have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

The three specific objectives of Prevent still stand and focus on:

1. Challenging the ideology that supports terrorism and those who promote it;
2. Protecting vulnerable individuals to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support;
3. Supporting sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation.

The CSU received 4 Prevent Channel Panel referrals this year. These individuals were discussed at the appropriate county-based multi-agency panels, with no further outcome, but support was given. All referrals were of individuals aged under 18.

There were Prevent Graffiti Training Events held detailing how Far Right Groups are using COVID to promote protests. This was delivered by KCC Prevent Team to partnership agencies over MS Teams.

The Town Centre Ambassadors were tasked to find, report and remove the offensive stickers. All stickers found by the TCAs were photographed and logged by the KCC Prevent team in order that they could follow any trends.

**Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking** legislation confers a duty on Local Authorities who must ensure that we safeguard anyone reporting that they have suffered the above.

Enforcement and Police where they believe modern slavery is taking place in properties. We have made 3 multi-agency visits to locations in response to reported concerns and have dealt with any issues arising. The visits revealed no signs of modern slavery or human trafficking and all those concerned had passports. We did however give housing advice to them and serve prohibition orders on property owners, as they were house of multiple occupancy. There has been joint visits with SDC Private Sector Housings Team, Planning

**CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation).** The Community Safety Manager is the CSE Champion for the Community Safety Partnership and the District Council. Our partner agencies also have CSE Champions within their own organisations.

**Young People.** In 2021-22, the dedicated PCSO has been able to visit schools from April 2021. She is in regular contact with schools in order to assist with any concerns they have with individual pupils and has attended to do a number of assemblies.

Tuesday 8 February 2022, was National Internet Safety Day. Interactive sessions were put on during the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> where close to 300 pupils took part approximately 15 classes in total from all different schools. The pupils were very confident providing many good suggestions during the morning. The feedback from the teachers was that the pupils really enjoyed the morning.

All schools that took part were awarded an Amazon voucher to spend on their pupils.

**Vulnerable Adults** There have been a number of safeguarding referrals for older people and vulnerable adults. There is a dedicated PCSO for Vulnerable Adults working within the CSU.

There remit is to look at all concerns for vulnerable adults and repeat victims. One of the main safeguarding referrals is around self-neglect and victims of fraud (especially rogue trading).

There are a number of support services in place and referrals receive a multi-agency approach as they are referred through to the Community MARAC process, which is also comforting for the resident, as they know that the issues are being listened to.

**Mental Health** has been incorporated into the Community MARAC and a number of mental health cases have been raised and through partnership working specific services have been put in place.

Mental Health and especially through COVID-19 a lot of services were held on line. West Kent & North Kent Mind delivered a number of 1:1 and group sessions over Zoom. They also released a lot of information and a tool kit on how to address mental health over Social Media.

## Agenda Item 16

**Domestic Abuse**, Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 there were 2,264 reports of Domestic Abuse to the Police. This was an increase of 156 reports (6.9%) compared with the previous year. The increase is always looked as a positive that victims are phoning in and reporting Domestic Abuse and that services can be put in place. Sevenoaks District has the second lowest number of reports in the County.

**Domestic Abuse Training** was held in July and August 2021. This was DASH (Domestic Abuse Stalking & Harassment) Training delivered face to face basis to front line workers from Sevenoaks District Council and West Kent Housing's Housing Teams.

Cyberstalking was delivered by PAS on 29<sup>th</sup> June, 28<sup>th</sup> July and 19<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

**Domestic Abuse Voluntary Support Service (DAVSS)** supports any victim of Domestic Abuse who seeks help. Volunteers are trained to a high level to deal with all aspects of Domestic Abuse. They support victims including helping them through any court proceedings. The IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) service provided by DAVSS looks at high risk cases through the Domestic Abuse MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference). The Partnership works closely with DAVSS and helps to fund the service for low and medium risk cases. During the year, DAVSS supported 341 victims of domestic abuse in the Sevenoaks District, an increase of 46 (13.4%) compared with the previous year. There were 17 male victims, an increased in 4.

**The Community Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Programme (CDAP)** is a 29 rolling week programme covering 9 modules to help men tackle their abuse. The women and children of perpetrators are supported by a Woman's Support Worker. 2 men from Sevenoaks District attended the course in 2021-22. The sessions continue via over Zoom.

**The Freedom Programme** is designed to help women who have been a victim of or are affected by domestic abuse. It is a 12-week programme, which runs for two hours each week usually at various locations across Sevenoaks District, again this year they were all on Zoom. We delivered 4 day programmes and 2 evening programmes, attended by a total of 51 women.

**Recovery Tool Kit** sessions follow on from the Freedom Programme and we ran and 2 evening and 1 day session again by Zoom. 28 women attended the programme.

## Substance Misuse

The Kenward Trust provides sessions within schools and detached work to help young people understand the facts about substance misuse and help those misusing drink or drugs to change their behaviour. They run a number of initiatives using a mobile unit and interactive and visual tools to engage young people about the dangers of substance misuse, so that they will make informed and responsible choices. They are also tasked through the CSU daily briefings to attend “hot spot” locations to work with young people and identify and address substance misuse issues.

With PCC funding through the Partnership, Kenward Trust has worked with 1062 young people from 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022.

Kenward Trust saw large numbers of young people in the main areas of West Kingsdown, New Ash Green Westerham, Greatness, Sevenoaks and the Vine, Sevenoaks. . Main areas Chipstead Lake, Vine, Greatness and New Ash Green. The main substances that were discussed were alcohol, cannabis and high energy drinks.

The teams worked with young people to educate on carrying something they are unaware of and the issue of grooming that can lead to different issues from being caught in possession of drugs or dangerous items like knives; owing the person money as they may have had the drugs stolen from them or confiscated by the police and the person wanting their money back for it that then leads into debt and working to pay the debt off. They also try to explain where this behaviour can lead to and how easily this way of life can escalate into bigger issues. Mental health is another issues among young people and their families this is due to COVID, and this is leading to more Drinking or Substance misuse and risk taking behaviour. This is something that need possible looking at how we can support young people with signs of mental health issues. Kenward Trust are aiming to get an apprentice to learn the skills of intervention outreach and train them in current issues of county lines supporting young people with signs of mental health.

CGL (Change, Live, Grow), commissioned by the Kent Drugs and Alcohol Service, provide early intervention services. This includes breakfast clubs and specialist rehabilitation services. They also undertake home visits to those with children and mobility issues.

Addaction is commissioned by the Kent Drugs and Alcohol Service for young people’s services. This includes work around legal highs and preventative work.

### Acquisitive Crime incl Organised Crime Groups (OCGs), Emerging Trends and County Lines

**OCGs** are criminals behind organised crime often intimidate and create fear, which is intended to prevent the local community reporting what they see. Often the criminals don't even have to try hard to do this - instead relying on word of mouth and reputation. Over the past year, Organised Crime has seen a more targeted approach by Partnerships. There were no current OCGs within the Sevenoaks District. However there are 2 sites that are still monitored at the monthly Serious Crime & Tactical Group, which is a monthly multi-agency meeting to address OCGs and serious crime. The most common crime types associated with these groups is organised theft.

### Acquisitive Crime includes Burglary and Vehicle Crime

There were 356 reports of Burglary Residential an increase of 26 (7.9%) compared to the same period previous year. There was also an increase of Burglary Business and Community compared to the same period last year. There were 131 reports, 16 more reports (13.9%).

### Vehicle Crime

There was also decreases in Theft of Motor Vehicles of 27.9%, or 90 crimes (233 in total) during the year and Theft from Motor Vehicles of 25% or 147 crimes (423 in total).

### Doorstep Crime and Fraud incl Cyber Crime

Kent County Council is currently mapping out the process for each partner agency which is involved in or takes part in, tackling of Doorstep Crime and Financial Abuse or supporting the victims of these crimes.

As part of this, data on processes and procedures are being gathered and recorded.

98% of partners have been visited and a draft recommendation for the county is currently being produced. The draft recommendations will be completed and presented to the partners before the end of 2020.

The final report with recommendations will be produced and presented before the end of Q1 2021.

The KCC Community Wardens have been inspirational in leading the way forward in gathering information, making the relevant referrals and working with the banks to make sure that any victim of a scam is protected.

The CSU are working hard in reinforcing to residents about scams and are working with Action Fraud to tackle this.

## Agenda Item 16

### Police & Crime Commissioner Funding (PCC)

The PCC funded Sevenoaks District CSP £34,218, the same as the previous year towards CSP projects. The table below sets out what the Partnership agreed in March 2021 to spend the funding on.

Organisation	Project Name	Amount
DAVSS	Support for Medium & High Risk Victims - Domestic Abuse	£10,000
Kenward Trust	Youth Diversionary & Targeted Youth Project against substance misuse	£10,000
Kent Community Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Programme	Support males through the CDAP programme	£1,500
Sevenoaks CSU	CSU Crime Reduction initiatives	£312
Protection Against Stalking	Training sessions on Cyber crime and stalking	£1,000

### Community Safety Unit (CSU)

The CSU is located within the District Council's Communities & Business Team at Argyle Road, Sevenoaks. There are 3 Police Officers including a Sergeant, 3 dedicated PCSOs addressing Domestic Abuse, Vulnerable Adults and Vulnerable Young People. The Council's Health & Communities Manager, Anti-Social Behaviour Officer and Community Safety Officer as well as the KCC Community Warden Supervisor and the Business Crime Reduction Co-ordinator are also based within the CSU.

The CSU also has access to an additional Local Community Policing Team (CPT) which can be deployed to tackle local issues within the District. The CPT are based in Swanley but can be tasked by the CSU across the District.

The CSU works closely with other Council teams - People & Places, CCTV, Environmental Health, Licensing, Social Housing, Revenues and Benefits Planning Enforcement, Planning, Building Control and the Customer Solutions Centre.

The CSU meets every morning to go through the previous 24 hours' ASB reports, Concern Calls and community safety issues from Police, SDC, Wardens, Housing Associations and other partners. There have been **626** daily taskings from 1 April

2021 - 31 March 2022; this is a decrease of 259 compared to previous year. All actions have been taken forward and dealt with and all residents/customers have been updated on the action taken, apart from those who approached the CSU anonymously or have said that they do not want feedback.

A lot of the cases have been complex, requiring a partner agency response. Many have been repeat callers dealing with issues such as mental health, neighbour disputes, harassment in the community and nuisance bikes (motor and pedal).

There have been over **816** follow up visits and calls made by partner agencies (Police, SDC, Community Wardens and Housing Associations) to all the residents who have reported issues and concerns. The other actions have been followed up but have either been reported back to organisations, town and parish councils or they have been anonymous so have not expected feedback on actions taken.

**Task and Finish Groups** have been established to provide intensive intervention by partner agencies when a number of reports have come in through the CSU Daily Tasking meetings relating to specific areas or to vulnerable people. During 2021-22, there were 21 Task and Finish Groups set up this is the same number as last year.

There was also over **12** site visits conducted by the CSU to various locations across the District.

### Work of Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership 2021-22 by month

#### The Partnership month by month

In addition to the daily work of the Partnership and CSU, the following projects and successes took place.

#### April 2021

- Regular patrolling of hotspot areas including Knole Park and Sevenoaks Town Car Park.
- All meetings still being held on virtual platform MS Teams so that CSU can continue to deliver important actions
- We had skeleton staff in the office to be able to take calls. Whilst we were not going out and completing house visits during this quarter. We were still working with our partner agencies to address community concerns.
- This reporting period has seen the shopsafe scheme working closely with local police in assisting with Op Chalice by issuing 4 Exclusion Orders and 1 warning letter to offenders for shoplifting. Scheme has been successful in its funding bid application to KCC to replace its analogue radio system to an up to date digital system, which will improve radio communication resilience and reliability.

#### May 2021

- Community Wardens continue to deliver on safeguarding referrals which have increased for them, making home visits and working with banks to protect the most vulnerable.
- Op Mint was set up and weekly meetings were held with partners to address ASB and Nitrous Oxide
- Edenbridge and Swanley PACT and New Ash Green Focus Group meetings were held virtually via Zoom.

### June 2021

- The Community Safety Unit organised a Community Market Place Event in New Ash Green on 28th June. There were representatives there from Kent Police, KCC Community Wardens, Parish Council and Sevenoaks District Council.
- Face to face Pubwatch meetings re-established and held recently.
- Pubwatch member notified by radio town CCTV of an intoxicated driver who was later arrested by police for drunk driving and possible theft offence.
- The Spring/Summer Covid ASB Plan. There have been 6 different posters designed for ASB and litter. These were designed to discourage ASB and litter coming out of lockdown in order to try and avoid the incidents from the first lockdown easing in May 2020.
- KW said that 22 different landowners and Parish Councils have requested posters to display in their hot spot locations.

### July 2021

- A partnership litter pick and flytipping awareness event was held on 23rd July in Caxon Close, Hartley. This was arranged by West Kent Housing and members of the CSU attended along with local PCSOs, KCC Community Warden and the Parish Council.
- DASH face to face training took place.
- DHR39 Panel meeting took place discussing a Sevenoaks District resident the Community Safety Officer was the representative.
- Operation Wallaby is an operation specifically designed for demand over the Euro 2020 event, Sevenoaks District Officers will be covering licensed premises and ASB hot spots. There will be an addition resource of a duty Inspector who will also cover the evenings England are playing.

### August 2021

- Face to Face DASH Training took place on 4<sup>th</sup> August.
- The Community Safety Officers was invited to join the Extraordinary meeting to Incidents of violence in North Kent. In order that any individual that is known for violence offences in North Kent can be highlighted in case of them crossing borders into Sevenoaks District.

## Agenda Item 16

- CSU members attended an Emergency Safety Advisory Group to discuss concerns regarding activities in Eynsford Bank Holiday Monday.

### September 2021

- The Community Safety Officer attended a Chanel Panel meeting to discuss a young person who lives in the Sevenoaks District.
- The CSU were asked to visit a location in Halstead by Planning Enforcement had concerns about land being used illegally. More visits were arranged as well as Planning Enforcement serving notices to the landowner and occupant.
- The Community Safety Officer were part of an OSARA planning meeting to discuss increasing problems in Edenbridge regarding nuisance bikes.

### October 2021

- Moat Homes successful eviction of family causing ASB in Edenbridge. The family were associated with a large amount of ASB and criminality in Edenbridge Town and the surrounding area.
- The Community Safety Officer attending the Serious Violence Duty meeting - creating a shared needs assessment. This meeting discussed what data should be included within the needs assessment.

### November 2021

- Kent Police arranged an event to discuss their agenda for Violence Against Women and Girls. The event took place in Swanley on 11th November with over 60 attendees.
- Assistant Chief Constable Ayling visited the CSU on 11th November, in order to get an understanding of the CSUs. He was impressed with the way the Sevenoaks CSU was run. He was impressed with communications between Police and Partners.
- During Peer Review week members of the group attended the Daily Tasking meeting. They were really impressed that the CSU meet every day and that they were going to be taking back this as good practice.

## December 2021

- Safeguarding Training was given to Frontline Staff.
- The Community Safety Officer held a mediation Zoom meeting to try to combat an ongoing neighbour dispute.
- On 7th December 2021 the West Kent Community Safety Team along with the Tenancy Services Officers, the Community Safety Officer and members of Swanley Town Council had a flytipping event in Lullingstone Avenue. The team undertook a letter drop about the consequences of flytipping, completed a litter pick and arranged a bulky waste day for the removal of large items for free.
- West Kent obtained an injunction against a tenant in Swanley who had been involved in Anti-Social Behaviour. The order will remain in place for 1 year and carries a power of arrest if the tenant breaches the terms of the order
- Cobra Defence training courses took place.

## January 2022

- The Community Safety Officer and the Crime Prevention PCSO was requested to visit Swanley Park to give advice regarding lighting in the location.
- Successful Closure Notice served on plots in Hever Road Traveller site.

## February 2022

- Tuesday 8 February 2022, was National Internet Safety Day. Interactive sessions were put on during the morning of the 8th where close to 500 pupils took part approximately 15 classes in total from all different schools. The pupils were very confident providing many good suggestions during the morning. The feedback from the teachers was that the pupils really enjoyed the morning.
- All schools that took part were awarded an Amazon voucher to spend on their pupils suggested goods.
- The Community Safety Officer visited Northview, Swanley with the West Kent Housing Tenancy Support Officer to discuss flytipping reported at the location. Photos were taken and details of location were made and set to

## Agenda Item 16

the Environment Enforcement Officer and a request made for a multi agency litter pick event be held at the location.

### March 2022

- The Community Safety Officer was requested to attend the Freedom Programme as extra support to the facilitator.
- The Community Safety Officer carried out a joint visit with the West Kent Housing Safety Manager in order to serve a Community Protection Warning to one of their tenants causing ASB in the community.

Alongside all the above the CSU held their quarterly PACT meetings in Westerham, West Kingsdown, New Ash Green, Edenbridge and Swanley. There were also monthly Community MARACs, Serious Crime & Tactical Group, West Kent Domestic Abuse Working Groups and Daily Taskings.

The CSU also attend County meetings on Reducing Reoffending, Prevent, Kent Community Safety Managers, Safeguarding Leads, Threats Risks and Vulnerabilities, Online Safeguarding and Offender Management monthly meetings.

The CSU is very proactive on Social Media, our Twitter account has increased by 68 followers to 997 followers.

### Future Developments

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The Strategic Assessment was completed in January 2022 using data supplied by a variety of agencies. Based on this, our new 2022-23 Community & Safety Strategy & Action Plan will prioritise the following issues:

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

Young People is identified as a priority, as it reaches across all the above priorities. It is recommended that the 2022-23 Strategy & Action Plan resulting from this year's Strategic Assessment have actions dedicated to young people.

## Glossary

- **ASB** - Anti-Social Behaviour
- **BCRP** - Business Crime Reduction Partnerships
- **BOTD** - Burglary Other Than Dwelling
- **CSE** - Child Sexual Exploitation
- **CSP** - Community Safety Partnership
- **CSU** - Community Safety Unit
- **KFRS** - Kent Fire & Rescue Service
- **KCC** - Kent County Council
- **MARACs** - Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
- **OCGs** - Organised Crime Groups
- **PACT** - Police and Community Together
- **PCC** - Police & Crime Commissioner
- **PCSOs** - Police Community Support Officer
- **SDC** - Sevenoaks District Council
- **TFMV** - Theft from a Motor Vehicle
- **TOMV** - Theft of a Motor Vehicle
- **YOS** - Youth Offending Service

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**Item 17 - Community Plan Annual Report 2021-22**

The attached report was considered by the People & Places Advisory Committee on 14 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

People & Places Advisory Committee (14 June 2022, Minute 13)

The report was presented by the Chief Officer for People & Places, and provided an overview of the work of the Local Strategic Partnership Community Plan in its final year. The Committee heard that the Plan was 96% on target, with 4% relating to currently unavailable data on road safety from Kent County Council. She then outlined some of the successes of the plan within each of the six priorities of the Plan, which were Safer Communities, Caring Communities, Green Environment, Health, Sustainable Economy, and Dynamic Economy. These included more than 4000 enforcement actions against parked vehicles, the provision of 20 affordable houses, the awarding of 52 disabled facilities grants, a new Health and Wellbeing Action Plan, and the Kickstart West Kent project.

Resolved: The Sevenoaks District Community Plan's Annual Report for 2021 - 22 was considered.

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**SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COMMUNITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 2022**

**Cabinet - 7 July 2022**

**Report of:** Chief Officer - People and Places

**Status:** For Information

**Also considered by:**

People & Places Advisory Committee - 14 June 2022

**Key Decision:** No

**Executive Summary:** This report looks at the work of the Local Strategic Partnerships Community Plan from April 2021 - March 2022.

**This reports support the Key Aim of:** the Council Plan.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Lesley Dyball

**Contact Officer(s):** Kelly Webb, x 7474

**Recommendation to People and Places Advisory Committee**

To consider the Sevenoaks District Community Plans Annual Report for 2021-22.

**Recommendation to Cabinet**

To consider the Sevenoaks District Community Plans Annual Report for 2021-22.

**Introduction and Background**

Making it happen- *together* is the Community Plan for the Sevenoaks District. It sets out a vision that reflects what local people have told us is important to them in the District.

The vision is supported by a three-year plan, which sets out our priorities for action. The current three-year action plan covers the period 2019-22 and ends in March 2022.

This report summarises the work of the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) over the last financial year (2021/22).

The report attached at Appendix A is a summary of the work that has taken place over the year.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

Delivery of the Community Plan is through each agency's own resources. In some cases, work will be dependent upon external funding sources and appropriate funding bids will be made.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

#### Equality Assessment

- 1 Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this report directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out immediately below.
- 2 There are no negative impacts - the annual report applies to all.

#### Net Zero

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. Where possible, the Local Strategic Partnership will seek to align with the Council's net zero ambitions or with their organisation's net zero ambitions.

#### Community Impact and Outcomes

The Community Plan is based upon the actions delivered by Sevenoaks District Council, partner agencies and other stakeholders. It also reflects community needs identified through local data.

### **Conclusions**

- 2 The Local Strategic Partnership Community Plan Annual Report highlights the work throughout 2021-22

**Appendices**

Appendix A - Sevenoaks District Community Plan Annual Report 2021-22

**Background Papers**

None

**Sarah Robson**  
**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, People and Places**

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# Sevenoaks District Community Plan Annual Report April 2022

This Annual Report is produced by Sevenoaks District Council on behalf of the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) using data and information provided by partners



Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership

**making it happen**

*- together*



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## Introduction

Making it happen- *together* is the Community Plan for the Sevenoaks District. It sets out a 15-year vision that reflects what local people have told us is important to them in the District.

The vision is supported by a three-year plan, which sets out our priorities for action. The current three-year action plan covers the period 2019-22 and ends in March 2022.

This report summarises the work of the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) over the last financial year (2021/22).

### **Our 10-year vision:**

- **Safe Communities:** A safer place to live, work and travel
- **Caring Communities:** Children are enabled to have the best start and people can be supported to live independent lives
- **Green Environment:** People can enjoy high quality urban and rural environments
- **Healthy Environment:** People have health lifestyles, access to quality healthcare and health inequalities are reduced
- **Dynamic Economy:** A thriving local economy where businesses flourish, where people have skills for employment and tourism is supported
- **Sustainable Economy:** People can live, work and travel more easily and are empowered to share

## Our performance

In order to measure success, we have set out a number of key success measures for each of the priorities set out in this plan.

At the end of the third year (April 2021–March 2022) of the 2019–2022 Action Plan, **96%** of key success measures in the plan were achieved. The 4% is missing information and relates to one action that partners have not sent us the data.

## The Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

The Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership co-ordinates the monitoring and delivery of the Action Plan. It is made up of representatives from the following organisations:

Sevenoaks District Council, Kent County Council, Sencio Community Leisure, Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, West Kent Housing, West Kent Extra, Moat Housing, Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Age Concern Sevenoaks and Tonbridge, West Kent MIND, Churches Together in Sevenoaks and District, Imago, Kent Police, Compaid, Go Coach.

## Safe Communities



### **We want Sevenoaks to be a safer place to live, work and travel**

**Priority 1, 85% of actions in the Community Safety Partnership action plan achieved each year: Achieved**

**Priority 2, Keep overall crime amongst the lowest in the county and aim for an improvement in that position. Achieved**

**Priority 3, Maintain the low number of ASB incidents (no higher than 3<sup>rd</sup> in the county). Achieved**

**Priority 4, Road safety measures undertaken to prevent people from being killed or seriously injured on local roads.: Information not received**

**Priority 5, Enforcement action taken against dangerously or illegally parked cars.: Achieved.**

## **Key Success Measures: Safe Communities**

### **Safe 1. 85% of actions in the Community Safety Partnership action plan achieved each year:**

The Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership achieved 97% of actions set out in the Community Safety Strategy Action Plan during 2020/21.

The 2021/22 Action Plan focused on Domestic Abuse, Serious and Acquisitive Crime (including Organised Crime Groups, Emerging Trends and County Lines, which is a type of criminal exploitation where gangs and organised crime networks groom and exploit children to sell drugs), Anti-Social Behaviour including Environmental Crime, Safeguarding, Substance Misuse, Doorstep Crime and Scams including Cyber Crime.

This year the Sevenoaks Community Safety Unit (CSU) carried out 626 daily tasking's to address reports over the previous 24-hours, and made follow-up visits and calls to residents who reported issues and concerns.

The Community Safety Partnership continued to target repeat locations of concern to local people during 2021/22. The Partnership has over 35 projects in their action plan and schemes to address specific local community safety issues.

### **Safe 2, Keep overall crime amongst the lowest in the county and aim for an improvement in that position.**

During 2021/22, there were 7056 reports of victim based crime between 1 April 2021 & 31 March 2022. This is an increase of 265 crimes compared to same period last year. At the end of the financial year, Sevenoaks District had the **second lowest number** of reported victim based crimes in the County.

### **Safe 3, Maintain the low number of Anti-Social Behaviour incidents (no higher than 3<sup>rd</sup> in the county)**

During 2021/22, Sevenoaks District had the third lowest level of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the county, with 1513 recorded incidents to Kent Police. Compared to previous year there has been a 44% decrease (1177 reports). During the last three years, Sevenoaks District has maintained the low number of ASB incidents at no higher than the second lowest in the county.

Coronavirus has played a big impact on crime and ASB and has contributed to the decreases and increases.

**Safe 4, Road safety measures undertaken to prevent people from being killed or seriously injured (KSI) on local roads.**

KCC have not given us any data since the last annual report.

Speedwatch continued to operate in eight locations in the District. Speedwatch enables groups of volunteer residents to contribute to their community's safety and quality of life by helping reduce excessive vehicle speed.

**Safe 5, Enforcement action taken against dangerously or illegally parked cars.**

During 2021/22, there have been over 5000 enforcement actions taken against vehicles parked in contravention of parking restrictions/regulations.

## Caring Communities

We want Sevenoaks to be a place where people can be supported to lead independent, fulfilling lives and where children and young people have the best start



### Your priorities for action

**Priority 1**, Increased number of people supported to live independently: Achieved

**Priority 2**, Reduced loneliness and social isolation through social prescribing schemes: Achieved

**Priority 3**, Sevenoaks Local Children's Partnership Group (LCPG) to produce a set of indicators focused on LCPG priorities, with at least 75% of core indicators on target: Achieved

**Priority 4**, The number of positive outcomes where homelessness has been prevented: Achieved

**Priority 5**, Deliver the actions in the Sevenoaks District Housing Strategy, “Wellbeing Starts at Home” to meet the needs of vulnerable and low-income households and improve the condition of existing stock: Achieved

**Priority 6**, Improve opportunities for vulnerable people through the Community Grant Scheme; Achieved

## Key Success Measures: Caring Communities

### Caring 1, Increased number of people supported to live independently.

Sevenoaks District Council's Private Sector Housing team work to support Sevenoaks residents to live independently by supporting them with grants. The Disabled Facility Grants are used for major adaptations to people's homes such as stair lifts and flush floor showers. During 2021/22 there were 52 of these grants given out. This has enabled more residents across the District to live more independently.

Safe and Secure Grants are also given out by our Private Sector Housing Team. There have been 31 of these grants given out for 2021/22. There have also been over £5000 worth of Peabody Handyperson Service work for the year that includes 43 key safes, 10 beds and mattresses, 2 grab rails, 2 rubbish clearance and a property deep clean.

**The West Kent Hospital Discharge Programme** supported by the Better Care Fund is a partnership project between Sevenoaks District Council, Peabody Home Improvement Agency and the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust. During 2021/22, 15 Hospital Discharge Grants were given out.

## **Caring 2, Reduced loneliness and social isolation through social prescribing schemes.**

The Better Care Fund (BCF) is one of the most ambitious programmes across the NHS and local government to date. It creates a local budget to encourage the NHS and local government to work more closely together, placing people's wellbeing as the focus of health and care services.

During 2020/21 Better Care continued to provide around £100,000 of funding for an exciting partnership project aimed at supporting older people in Edenbridge and Swanley. The **"One You - Your Home"** project is a partnership project between Sevenoaks District Council and Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge. It provides a service for older people who are referred by GPs as needing more general support. The project employs two One You Advisers, who aim to remedy health and housing related issues, reduce demand on GPs, promote independence for customers and provide financial assistance in overcoming obstacles within the home environment.

**Your Home Service** continue to support clients across the Sevenoaks District in combating social isolation. For most of 2021/22 the Coronavirus had a major impact on the delivery of the Your Home Advisers held appointments with 180 clients, of these 15 were referred for Community Activity and 7 set goals connected with socialisation. However.

Over the last year Your Home Advisers have held appointments with **over 300 clients**. Most of these clients set goals centred on adaptations within the home to ensure personal safety.

### **Caring 3, Outcomes achieved on Sevenoaks District Local Children's Partnership Action Plan**

The Sevenoaks Local Children's Partnership Group continued to focus on the following priorities during 2021/22, including, secondary school attendance, emotional resilience, domestic abuse and supporting families to make healthy lifestyle choices.

During 2021/22, Kent County Council's **Early Help Service** continued to support families who struggle with multiple and complex problems. The Service brings partners together to help families overcome these problems by working intensively with them to provide the stability and practical support they need to improve their lives.

During 2021/22, on entry to the programme, the four most frequent problems for these families were as follows:

- Children with mental health or emotional health and well-being concerns
- A child with 10% absences or more across the last three consecutive terms
- An adult who requires parenting support
- An adult with mental health or emotional health and well-being concerns

The Local Strategic Partnership continue to support Mental Health throughout the District and especially through COVID-19 and the pandemic a lot of services were held on line. West Kent & North Kent Mind delivered a number of 1:1 and group sessions over Zoom. They also released a lot of information and a tool kit on how to address mental health over Social Media. Face to Face sessions have also been reinstated.

Mental Health reports have seen an increase across the County through the pandemic. Release the pressure has been widely advertised. In January and February 2022 Sevenoaks District Council held Mental Health Awareness Training have promoted Mental Health services through the Council and to partner agencies.

### **Caring 4, The number of positive outcomes where homelessness has been prevented.**

Our Housing Advice Team have continued to provide positive outcomes to prevent homelessness. For the past year, the team have supported 245 people with a positive outcome whereby homelessness was prevented or secured alternative accommodation.

**Caring 5, Deliver actions in the Sevenoaks District Housing Strategy, “Wellbeing starts at Home” to meet the needs of vulnerable and low-income households and improve the condition of existing stock**

“Wellbeing Starts at Home” reflects Sevenoaks District Council’s belief that people’s home environment can have a significant impact on health. If our homes are over-crowded, isolated and under-occupied, badly maintained and full of hazards, cold and damp or unaffordable and causing debt - our health will suffer.

S106 housing pots funding from developers have been awarded to WKHA to refurbish a property in Sevenoaks Town to provide accommodation for those with mental health needs and this will provide 7 bed spaces to those most in need. We are currently awaiting funding for 2022/23 to help on Housing

**Caring 6, Improve the opportunities for vulnerable people through the Community Grant Scheme**

The Community Grant Scheme funded by Sevenoaks District Council enables charities, community groups and organisations to apply for grants from £500-£5,000 for a specific project that helps the health and wellbeing of our residents. From those that applied for funding in 2021/22 **over 85% of targets** were met or exceeded and some funding was returned and carried forward for use in funding Community Grants for 2022/23.

## Green Environment

We want Sevenoaks District to be a place where people can enjoy clean and high quality urban and rural environments



**Priority 1**, Planning policies used effectively as monitored through the Local Plan to protect our high quality natural environment, including Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and biodiversity: Achieved

**Priority 2**, Use and enforce Planning Policies set out in the Local Plan to ensure new development is designed to a high quality and takes into account distinctive local character and impact on the environment: Achieved

**Priority 3**, Ensure new development is designed to a high quality and takes into account local character and the impact on the environment: Achieved

Priority 4, Recycling campaigns delivered: Achieved

## **Key Success Measures: Green Environment**

### **Green 1, planning policies used effectively as monitored through the Local Plan to protect our high quality natural environment, including Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and biodiversity**

During 2021/22, Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan policies **successfully protected open and green spaces** in the District, ensuring that key developments in the District contributed to future open space provision.

Developments across the District have continued to be built in accordance with the adopted policy in the Core Strategy and Allocations and Development Management Plan. The emerging Local Plan also includes policies to conserve and enhance the natural environment, including biodiversity net gain and new developments. Relevant Evidence Base documents also provide development guidance, and include the Green Belt Assessment, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans and Kent Biodiversity Strategy.

### **Green 2, Use and enforce Planning Policies set out in the Local Plan to ensure new development is designed to a high quality and takes into account local character and impact on the environment**

The Local Plan sets out the vision for future development across the Sevenoaks District and used to help decide on planning applications and other planning related decisions.

Sevenoaks District Council's emerging Local Plan also includes policies which encourage development to reflect the distinctive local character of the area and exhibit high quality design.

The Council's Urban Design Officer has delivered training to officers and members on the implementation of adopted local and national policy including the National Design Guide and the High Weald AONB Colour Assessment.

### **Green 3, Weekly refuse service collection maintained**

During 2021/22, Sevenoaks District Council successfully maintained its weekly refuse and dry recycling collection service. Sevenoaks District Council is unique in being the only Council within Kent to maintain a weekly service. It is also one of the few in Kent to retain an in house collection service.

The target for missed collections of waste per 100,000 populations 10.0 and the actual for this is **6.8**, which is a great achievement given the huge increase of waste weights being presented.

### **Green 4, Recycling campaigns delivered**

During 2021/22, 98% of the District's waste was recycled or reused, which is the same as last year. This has been helped by some successful recycling campaigns and initiatives, including:

- In partnership with the Kent Resource Partnership campaigns for recycling happened County-wide.
- The Green and garden waste services were advertised in this quarter via social media, website and Insite magazine.

West Kent Communities manages the Abacus furniture store in Sevenoaks and two others elsewhere in Kent. In addition to providing low cost furniture to those that most need it, the stores recycled **110 tonnes** of goods that would otherwise have gone to landfill

## Healthy Environment

We want Sevenoaks District to be a place where people have healthy lifestyles and where health inequalities are reduced



**Priority 1**, Produce new Health Inequalities Action Plan - Achieved

**Priority 2**, 85% of success measured in the District Deal to be on target - Achieved

**Priority 3**, Service improvements delivered through a health in all policies approach - Achieved

**Priority 4**, Actions delivered in Sevenoaks District Council's Housing Strategy, Wellbeing Starts at Home, focused on supporting the Council's health outcomes and supporting people to remain independent - Achieved

## Key Success Measures: Healthy Environment

### **Healthy 1: Produce new Health Inequalities Action Plan that supports the delivery of the Community Plan**

Sevenoaks District Council's and Kent County Council's "Health Deal - the future of health at a local level" is a ten-point plan which involves:

- Training staff on Making Every Contact Count and how to make appropriate referrals
- Working to establish a health in all policies approach; ensuring everything we do supports a health and wellbeing approach;
- Tackling the housing causes of ill-health through the work of HERO and SuperHERO service;
- Accessing new external funding to support delivery of the deal, including two successful Sport England funding bids;
- Improving health in workplaces in the District;
- Working in partnership with GPs;
- Making best use of open space and active travel, including promotion of led cycle rides in the district, and new quarterly health walk leader training;
- One You Advisers continuing to carry out mapping of the key health assets at the local level;
- One You Your Home Advisers now accessing GP data on GP systems;

The Health Inequalities Action plan has been changed to the Health and Wellbeing Plan and a new plan has been implemented and is monitored by a multi-agency Partnership

### **Healthy 2, 85% of success measured in the District Deal to be on target**

**95% on target**, This has now been exceeded through the new Health & Wellbeing Action Plan.

### **Healthy 3, Service improvements delivered through a health in all policies approach**

A significant portion of our time is being invested in reinstating previous One You services back to face to face. We received funding for Our Parks and this has been delivered throughout the District and working with Involve on delivery health services.

**Healthy 4, Actions delivered in Sevenoaks District Council's Housing Strategy, Wellbeing Starts at Home, focused on supporting the Council's health outcomes and supporting people to remain independent.**

“Wellbeing Starts at Home” reflects Sevenoaks District Council’s belief that people’s home environment can have a significant impact on health. If our homes are over-crowded, isolated and under-occupied, badly maintained and full of hazards, cold and damp or unaffordable and causing debt - our health will suffer.

A number of planning permissions have been determined during the quarter which will provide new accessible affordable homes: These higher accessibility standards ensure homes will meet the needs of a wider range of applicants and therefore support independence.

## Dynamic Economy

We want Sevenoaks District to be a place with a thriving local economy, where businesses flourish, and people have skills for employment



**Priority 1**, Deliver actions against the key themes set out in the Economic Development Strategy (2018-21) for Growth and Investment, Infrastructure, Visitor Economy, Skill and Enterprise - Achieved

**Priority 2**, Develop a digital inclusion strategy - Achieved

**Priority 3**, Funding secured for business support programmes and rural businesses - Achieved

## **Dynamic Economy: Key Success Measures**

### **Dynamic 1, Deliver actions against the key themes set out in the Economic Development Strategy (2018-21) for Growth and Investment, Infrastructure, Visitor Economy, Skill and Enterprise**

Sevenoaks District Council's Economic Development Strategy 2018-21 was agreed last year. This includes a key theme area relating of growth and investment in the district with an ambition to regenerate key market towns.

The Economic Development team continue to deliver actions in the current Economic Development Strategy, as well as the West Kent Priorities for growth strategy. All actions remain on track to be delivered by the end of the Strategy period. A new Strategy is being drafted for the next financial year.

Community Development officers have also worked closely with a partner IMAGO, to deliver an Employability project to enhance the skills of Young Carers and with West Kent Extra on their Job Skills Fayres

### **Dynamic 2, Develop a Digital inclusion strategy with positive outcomes achieved**

Due to our partners Compaid, Age UK, West Kent Housing and other agencies offering support to digitally excluded individuals it has been determined that there is already good provision in the District. However, we are working with KCC on Community Wi-Fi and they have conducted a survey in 2 areas of the District. There is a dedicated Digital Inclusion Hub by KCC and we are working with them on delivering services.

### **Dynamic 3, Funding secured for business support programmes and rural businesses**

SDC is the Gateway for Kickstart West Kent which provides employers with grant funding to employ a young person for 25 hours a week for 6 months. At the end of March over 100 placements had been approved. This scheme has now ended.

## Sustainable Economy

We want Sevenoaks District to be a place where people can live, work and travel more easily and are empowered to shape their communities



**Priority 1,** Projects delivered through the CIL infrastructure plan; Achieved

**Priority 2,** Deliver actions in the Sevenoaks District Housing Strategy, “Wellbeing Starts at Home” to provide a good mix of decent and affordable housing: Achieved

**Priority 3,** A new Transport Strategy for the District produced, which facilitates improvements to transport in the district: Achieved

**Priority 4,** Increase number of people who are helped to shape their local community: Achieved

## **Sustainable Economy: Key Success Measures**

### **Sustainable 1, Projects delivered and/or supported by CIL (Community Infrastructure Plan)**

There have been no recent CIL Boards due to the fact of lack of developments, but these will happen in due course. CIL Training has been delivered to Town & Parish Councils

### **Sustainable 2, Deliver actions in the Sevenoaks District Housing Strategy, “Wellbeing Starts at Home” to provide a good mix of decent and affordable housing.**

The number of affordable homes delivered in 2021/22 was 20 homes. Broom Hill, Swanley and the Tesco's site, Sevenoaks. These will deliver 39 new affordable homes, including 25 "genuinely affordable" homes, in future years. The affordable housing Provider has yet to be selected for either site.

### **Sustainable 3, A new Transport Strategy for the District produced, which facilitates improvements to transport in the district.**

The Council produced a Sevenoaks District Transport Assessment (Dec 2018) and the Swanley Transport Study (May 2018) evidence base documents, to support the preparation of the emerging Local Plan. Developments continue to be in accordance with adopted policy.

### **Sustainable 4, Increase number of people who have helped to shape their local community:**

Until August 2021 we continued our ‘Care for our Community’ Scheme. In March 2022 this was set up for the Ukraine Scheme. A host event has been organised for April 2022 and volunteer group set up to help families coming to the District.



**For more information or to get in contact**

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01732 227000**

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**Item 18 - Sevenoaks District Community Plan 2022- 2032**

The attached report was considered by the People & Places Advisory Committee on 14 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

People & Places Advisory Committee (14 June 2022, Minute 14)

The Chief Officer for People & Places presented the report which outlined the new Community Plan for the period 2022 - 2032. Members were advised that the Plan was made in collaboration with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and focused on Place, Economy, Environment, and People. It was explained that public consultation helped shape the direction of the plan, with particular emphasis on community spirit, the environment, town centres, and transport links.

Members were advised that the new plan emphasised readability, to promote community engagement within it. The plan outlined both what the Council and the LSP partners would do, as well as what the public could do, to reflect the community's engagement in these matters.

The Committee praised the plan for the centrality of resident feedback in its construction and outlook, and encouraged this to continue.

Resolved: That following the Comments from the Committee, it be recommended to Cabinet that the final draft Community Plan and action plan for 2022 - 2032 be agreed.

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**SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COMMUNITY PLAN 2022 - 2032**

**Cabinet - 7 July 2022**

**Report of:** Chief Officer - People and Places

**Status:** For decision

**Also considered by:** People & Places Advisory Committee -14 June 2022

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Executive Summary:** This report seeks approval of the final draft of Community Plan for the period 2022 - 2032. The document and its supporting Action Plan has been developed by the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership following public consultation.

**This reports support the Key Aim of:** the Council Plan.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Lesley Dyball

**Contact Officer(s):** Sarah Robson and Kelly Webb, x 7219

**Recommendation to People and Places Advisory Committee**

That comments on recommendation a) are passed to Cabinet.

**Recommendation to Cabinet**

- a) That Members are asked to approve the final draft Community Plan and action plan for 2022-2032.

**Reason for recommendation:** The draft strategy and action plan has been reviewed by the People and Places Advisory Committee and Cabinet. Final changes noted by Cabinet will be incorporated.

**Introduction and Background**

- 1 The Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) works together to improve the quality of life for people in the Sevenoaks District. The partnership is made up of private, public, voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations who work with communities to identify and tackle key long, medium and short-term local issues to ensure Sevenoaks District remains a great place to live and work.
- 2 This Community Plan is the shared, long-term, partnership vision for Sevenoaks District developed by the Sevenoaks District LSP.

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- 3 The overarching priority for the Community Plan is to increase community participation in the Sevenoaks District as a driver to improving resilience and wellbeing, focusing on those parts of the district with the poorest outcomes. The Plan highlights how adopting a collective approach can help to better achieve the ambitions of the people that live and work in the district.
- 4 Sevenoaks District has an active and vibrant voluntary and community sector that already provides a wide range of valuable services, and that makes a positive contribution to the lives of many in the district. The Community Plan wants to further strengthen the ability of these groups to have a positive impact on the district, through better co-ordination and joining up of the public and voluntary sectors on a collective set of priorities. Most importantly the Community Plan wants to encourage actions that mobilise and involve our local communities, so that they become active partners in helping us to meet the growing and changing needs of our population.

### Public consultation

- 5 Public consultation was undertaken in the second half of 2021, which helped to identify the following four local priorities for action - place, economy, people and environment.
- 6 The consultation together with examination of local data has informed the final strategy and action plan, which sets out how partners will deliver the priorities in the plan.
- 7 Overall, residents of Sevenoaks District expressed their aspirations and determination to support and develop their district. They care greatly about the place they live and want to see it grow and develop in a way that supports them and their communities.
- 8 The consultation provided the following feedback:
- 9 **Community spirit is something that residents rate highly**
  - Increasing importance of helping our neighbours
  - Getting involved in activities in their local community
  - People want to do more, but time is viewed as a barrier
- 10 **Residents care about their local environment and want to recycle more**
  - They would like to have more opportunities to recycle
  - More, clearer information about what they can recycle and how they can play their part
- 11 **Residents highlighted their ambitions and aspirations for town centres**
  - More events and activities
  - Amenities such as family friendly restaurants and leisure facilities
  - Good availability of local services and transport links

- Many people recognised that town centres are changing, becoming less retail focused and developing into destinations where people can enjoy social activities
- 12 **Residents are keen to take part in more leisure activities across the district making the most of its green spaces**
- Being able to easily access the countryside and green spaces within the district
  - More accessible and well-linked cycling and walking routes
  - Continued investment in our green spaces and nature reserves
- 13 The final draft of the Community Plan and Action Plan which take into account the public consultation feedback are attached at Appendix A.
- 14 The action plan and the associated performance monitoring are the result of discussion with partner agencies and Heads of Service and Chief Officers within the Council about realistic delivery of the aspirations in the Community Plan.
- 15 Whilst the District Council is responsible for co-ordinating this work, the Community Plan is a multi-agency strategy, delivered in partnership with many agencies and therefore covers a wide range of issues and services.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

Delivery of the Community Plan is through each agency's own resources. In some cases, work will be dependent upon external funding sources and appropriate funding bids will be made.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

There are no legal implications associated with this report. The Community Plan enables partners to work together in a structured and co-ordinated way, helping to improve efficiency, share resources and most importantly secure additional resources and commitments from partners on the delivery of local community aspirations.

Whilst every effort has been made to identify realistic actions, outcomes rely on the continued input of a range of agencies working together, along with the goodwill of communities and voluntary organisations. Regular quarterly monitoring of the Community Plan will identify at an early stage outcomes that may not be delivered so that alternative strategies or revised actions can be agreed.

#### Equality Assessment

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from

## Agenda Item 18

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. The results of this analysis are set out in Appendix B.

### Net Zero

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. Where possible, the Local Strategic Partnership will seek to align with the Council's net zero ambitions or with their organisation's net zero ambitions.

### Community Impact and Outcomes

The Community Plan is based upon the results of consultation with the community, including its harder to reach groups, partner agencies and other stakeholders. It also reflects community needs identified through local data

### **Conclusions**

The overarching goal of the Community Plan is to build social capital in the district as an underlying driver to improve resilience and wellbeing. Social capital is about creating a shared sense of responsibility and the ways in which communal activity can benefit everyone. It is about shared values and co-operation, building trust and reciprocity. Members are asked to approve the final draft of the Community Plan and Action Plan for publication.

#### **Appendices**

Appendix A - Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership Community Plan - Better Together (2022 - 2032) and Action Plan

Appendix B - Equality Impact Assessment (to follow)

#### **Background Papers**

None

**Sarah Robson**  
Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, People and Places

# Better Together

A Community Plan for Sevenoaks District 2022-2032



## **Welcome to Sevenoaks District Community Plan for 2022-2032.**

This Community Plan is the shared, long-term, partnership vision for Sevenoaks District developed by the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership. The partnership is made up of private, public, voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations who work with communities to identify and tackle key long, medium and short-term local issues to ensure Sevenoaks District remains a great place to live and work.

Times change, but achieving the best for those who live, work and visit Sevenoaks District remains the cornerstone of the work of the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership.

The overarching priority for the Community Plan is to increase community participation in the Sevenoaks District as a driver to improving resilience and wellbeing, focusing on those parts of the district with the poorest outcomes. The Plan highlights how adopting a collective approach can help to better achieve the ambitions of the people that live and work in the district.

Sevenoaks District has an active and vibrant voluntary and community sector that already provides a wide range of valuable services, and that makes a positive contribution to the lives of many in the district. The Community Plan wants to further strengthen the ability of these groups to have a positive impact on the district, through better co-ordination and joining up of the public and voluntary sectors on a collective set of priorities. Most importantly the Community Plan wants to encourage actions that mobilise and involve our local communities, so that they become active partners in helping us to meet the growing and changing needs of our population.

The Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) works together to improve the quality of life for people in the area and is committed to the following values which are embedded in the Strategy's action plan:

### **shared vision - shared values - collective action**

As partners, we will support the Strategy to:

- find simple and effective ways of working together that improve efficiency; make the most of resources and ensure value for money;

- ensure social, economic and environmental wellbeing is embedded in all decisions;
- promote a greater understanding and mutual respect between different sectors and sections of the community; empower local people to make a difference to improve their localities and that encourage them to believe it is both possible and worth it;
- ensure resources are used wisely, become carbon neutral, prevent pollution and waste, and conserve and enhance the environment for future generations, and;
- individual needs and aspirations, the diversity of its landscapes and neighbourhoods contribute to a high quality of life.

The Plan sets out actions for how partners can work collectively with our communities to deliver the priorities. This includes identifying and highlighting the assets in our communities, both physical spaces, as well as people and groups with skills and knowledge that can help strengthen and grow community-led activities.

The emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic has generated very successful networks of residents, businesses, and partners working together to support the most vulnerable residents and key workers across the district. These networks can contribute to achieving the Plan's priorities in a post-pandemic world.

The Strategy is a result of a great deal of information gathering and consultation. The results have allowed us to concentrate on four priorities which the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership can best address through local partners, residents and businesses working collectively together.

### **Consultation feedback**

Overall, residents of Sevenoaks District expressed their aspirations and determination to support and develop their district. They care greatly about the place they live and want to see it grow and develop in a way that supports them and their communities.

### **Community spirit is something that residents rate highly**

- Increasing importance of helping our neighbours

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### APPENDIX A

- Getting involved in activities in their local community
- People want to do more, but time is viewed as a barrier

#### **Residents care about their local environment and want to recycle more**

- They would like to have more opportunities to recycle
- More, clearer information about what they can recycle and how they can play their part

#### **Residents highlighted their ambitions and aspirations for town centres**

- More events and activities
- Amenities such as family friendly restaurants and leisure facilities
- Good availability of local services and transport links
- Many people recognised that town centres are changing, becoming less retail focused and developing into destinations where people can enjoy social activities

#### **Residents are keen to take part in more leisure activities across the district making the most of its green spaces**

- Being able to easily access the countryside and green spaces within the district
- More accessible and well-linked cycling and walking routes
- Continued investment in our green spaces and nature reserves

#### **The Community Plan's four priorities are:**



## Our Place

### What does success look like?

- Communities where people want to live, feel they belong and it is easy to meet every day needs.
- Built and natural environments are highly valued and well managed to keep the Sevenoaks District an attractive place to live.
- New development sits well with the natural environment and recognised for its quality.
- New homes meet local needs and bring improved and new local facilities, employment and contribution to the community.

### What will we do?

- Prepare a revised Local Plan which engages with the public and brings forward the proposals and policies which ensure we have enough homes of the right type to meet future demand and enable existing businesses to grow, new businesses to relocate and provides a range of new employment opportunities.
- Work with central government and key partners to identify the strategic infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development.
- Prioritise environmentally sound policies that enhance biodiversity alongside new development.
- Create a well maintained public realm with accessible facilities and quality public space that encourage people both to get active and stay in the district.
- Improve access to affordable and appropriate housing.

### What can you do?

- Take responsibility for your local area by resolving, recording and reporting any issue.
- Use the district's parks and green spaces to get out, have fun and improve your own health and wellbeing
- Attend and take part in events and activities and encourage others to get involved too.
- Landlords and developers work with us to provide quality homes.

## Our Economy

### What does success look like?

- Increased economic growth making Sevenoaks District a location of choice for business and providing local jobs.
- Towns and villages are lively and welcoming.
- Tourism's contribution to the economy, employment and quality of life is maximised.
- Residents have access to a wide range of local employment opportunities.

### What will we do?

- Identify and promote more employment sites for new and expanding businesses in the district.
- Support market towns, high streets and villages to thrive by encouraging new businesses and enterprises, alongside sustainable, quality public and private investment
- Work closely with our businesses to create suitable employment opportunities for people who find it hard to get into work.
- Work with our schools and colleges to help get their students ready for work and to offer training courses that help.
- Reducing the number of young people who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET).

### What can you do?

- Support your local businesses and shop local.
- Keep your town and village centres clean and tidy by not dropping litter.
- If you run a business, take on an apprentice or offer placements. Think about linking in with schools and colleges to encourage young people to think about their career aspirations from an early age.
- Access the digital opportunities available to make the most of your business.
- If you are an employer, pay the living wage.

## Our Communities

### What does success look like?

- Neighbourhoods are safe for people to live, work and socialise in.
- Residents of all ages enjoy improved levels of health and wellbeing and reduced inequalities within our communities.
- Parents feel supported to give their child the best start during the early years of their life.
- An empowered and independent voluntary sector that has the capacity to tackle local priorities.

### What will we do?

- Address anti-social behaviour within our communities, focusing particularly on the most vulnerable to ensure they are appropriately supported.
- Engage young people in decisions affecting them through regular consultation.
- Work together with partners to get health services right and delivered where you live.
- Deliver targeted health initiatives to help people lose weight, stop smoking and become more active.
- Enable and mobilise our communities to connect and support each other.
- Support carers, providing opportunities to network and come together.
- Support voluntary and community groups to offer a diverse range of volunteering, events and other opportunities to support communities to live happily together.

### What can you do?

- Report anti-social behaviour (ASB) to the district's Community Safety Unit.
- Be willing to support enforcement action e.g. impact statements.
- Make the most of the opportunities in our district to do things that make you happy, that connect you to your community
- Use your local free early years and childcare offer and take advantage of Children Centre activities and engage with health provision.
- Encourage your child to join a local group or club in the community.

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### APPENDIX A

- Tell us if you care for a family member or relative and make sure you look after your own health and happiness as well as the person you are caring for
- Get involved in your community, support events or volunteer.

## Our Environment

### What does success look like?

- Prioritised protection of the environment and increased biodiversity.
- Minimise waste and increase re-use and recycling.
- Co-benefits for our health and wellbeing, resilience and local economy.

### What will we do?

- Develop a Net Zero Action Plan which will set out a roadmap to achieving our carbon reduction targets for the Council and the district.
- Prioritised protection of the environment and increased biodiversity
- Work with partners to increase the number of electric vehicle charging points across the district to promote the use of more environmentally friendly vehicles.
- To promote active travel to work, with a specific focus on co-benefits for climate change.
- Ensure the design and location of new development takes account of the need to improve air quality through the Local Plan in line with Sevenoaks District Council's Air Quality Action Plan.
- Encourage and promote recycling and support national recycling targets and campaigns
- Encourage community participation in efforts to clean-up and directly invest in the management of their local environment

### What can you do?

- Reducing your energy consumption by making your home or business more energy efficient.
- Avoiding using your car or replacing your petrol/ diesel vehicle with a low carbon alternative. For short journeys, try leaving your car at home. Walking and cycling improves health and reduces your carbon footprint.
- Recycle more and recycle right.
- Planting trees on your property and encouraging others to do so.

# Better Together

## A Community Plan for Sevenoaks District 2022-2032

### Our Action Plan



#### The Action Plan

The following pages set out the overall targets for the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership. This is a rolling Action Plan and will be reviewed annually. It does not include details of the numerous activities already undertaken by partners, businesses, 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 next ten years.

#### Funding and monitoring

Funding for the actions included within the Action Plan is available from a number of sources, including partners' own budgets, 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

We recognise that everyone has a contribution to make to our society and a right to access services without being discriminated against or disadvantaged. In preparing the action plan, issues such as equality and diversity were considered. The Action Plan sets out a firm commitment by partners to:

- Increase prosperity and economic opportunity in the district which will benefit all residents;
- Ensure that services are fully accessible to all community groups;
- Ensure that work programmes are scoped to continue to target and protect the most vulnerable people in our communities;
- Recognise that people need different levels of support and services depending on their circumstances, and;
- Promote new opportunities for people living in the more deprived communities of our district, particularly through apprenticeships, training and employment opportunities, especially for young people.

# Better Together - Our Place

Ref	Priority Actions	Lead Agency	Other Partners
1.1	Planning policies used effectively as monitored through the Local Plan to protect our high quality natural environment, including Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and biodiversity	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council
1.2	Through the review of the Local Plan, provide a long-term strategic overview of what is needed in our town centres, within an ever changing environment, putting in place the mechanisms to enable delivery	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Town Councils Businesses
1.3	Working with communities and partners to help identify and deliver the supply of homes which reflects current and future housing needs	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Town & Parish Councils West Kent Housing Other Housing Providers
1.4	Creating communities that have the infrastructure and accessibility to meet the needs of a changing and growing population	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Kent Public Health Town & Parish Councils West Kent Housing Other Housing Providers
1.5	Work with key partners to prevent individuals in financial hardship from becoming homeless through early intervention, advice and support, encouraging people into employment where possible	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Kent Public Health Kent & Medway CCG Housing Providers Voluntary Sector Forum
1.6	Making the most of the benefits of inward investment and economic growth. Promoting the district as an outstanding place to live and work, whilst safeguarding its heritage and natural assets	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Relocate in Kent Town & Parish Councils Business Board

# Better Together - Our Economy

Ref	Priority Actions	Lead Agency	Other Partners
2.1	Reduce the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETS), to include local community & job hubs	Department of Work & Pensions	Kent County Council West Kent Partnership West Kent Housing Business Board Youth Assembly
2.2	Work with Town & Parish Councils and local community groups to deliver on supporting local businesses and keeping areas clean and attractive	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Town & Parish Councils
2.3	Young people have access to and benefit from high quality, comprehensive education and training opportunities, including apprenticeships	West Kent Partnership	Kent County Council West Kent Partnership West Kent Housing Business Board
2.4	Enhance the visitor offer in the district by coordinating a full cultural programme and supporting existing or new attractions, accommodation providers and other tourism related businesses	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council West Kent Partnership Business Board Visit Kent
2.5	Work with the private sector to develop and promote business sites in the district	Locate in Kent	Kent County Council Sevenoaks District Council West Kent Partnership Business Board
2.6	Targeted business support to increase the resilience of businesses, including ecommerce and marketing	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council West Kent Partnership Business Board Chamber of Commerce Federation of Small Businesses

# Better Together - Our Communities

Ref	Priority Actions	Lead Agency	Other Partners
3.1	Establish links with local residents, businesses and community organisations to help empower and mobilise communities to address issues important to them through events, training and links to funding.	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Community Leaders Local Groups Town & Parish Councils Housing Associations Voluntary Sector Forum
3.2	Increase the number of people joining My Community Voice to ensure local community concerns are being heard and supported	Kent Police	Community Safety Unit Community Leaders Local Groups Town & Parish Councils Voluntary Sector Forum
3.3	Implement and promote a range of campaigns to tackle unhealthy weights, promote social inclusion and mental wellness	Kent Public Health	Sevenoaks District Council Voluntary Sector Forum
3.4	Outcomes achieved on Sevenoaks District Local Children's Partnership Action Plan	Kent County Council	All partners Youth Assembly
3.5	Identify social inequalities resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, updating recovery action plans in light of the findings	Sevenoaks District Council	All partners
3.6	Support the Sevenoaks District Access Group to deliver an annual event, promoting a range of information, advice and activities for people with a physical, learning or mental disability who may not be aware of the services that are available, or how to access them	Access Group	All partners
3.7	Identify the challenges and opportunities currently faced by the district's voluntary and community sector as a result of Covid-19, and how best we can support them	Voluntary Sector Forum	All partners

# Better Together - Our Environment

Ref	Priority Actions	Lead Agency	Other Partners
4.1	Deliver on local and partnership Net Zero Policies and Climate Change Action Plan	Sevenoaks District Council	All partners
4.2	Seek opportunities to work with our communities and partners to reduce the amount of household waste produced by increasing recycling and ensuring improved knowledge of our recycling processes	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Town & Parish Councils West Kent Housing Housing Associations
4.3	Ensure the design and location of new development takes account of the need to improve air quality through the Local Plan in line with Sevenoaks District Council's Air Quality Action Plan.	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Kent Developers Group
4.4	Work with partners and communities for all to become more energy efficient	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Town & Parish Councils
4.5	Work with communities, landowners and local groups to project landscape, wildlife and heritage e.g. Darent Valley Heritage Landscape Partnership	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Darent Valley Heritage Landscape Partnership Kent Wildlife Trust Bore Place
4.6	Support Kent County Council's emerging Strategy for Electric Vehicle and Low Emissions, through the provision further public electric vehicle charging points in the district, subject to infrastructure	Kent County Council	Sevenoaks District Council Town & Parish Councils

## What is the Sevenoaks District like?



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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.
- 60% of the District is in the Kent Downs or High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 11% is covered in Ancient Woodland.
- Six main settlements - Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge, Westerham, New Ash Green and Otford.
- Train services to London take just under 30 minutes from Swanley

and just under 30 minutes from Sevenoaks.

- One hour by car to Dover port and 40 minutes by car to London airports.
- Nine miles from Swanley to Ebbsfleet International railway station.
- 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).

## Membership of the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership

Sevenoaks District Council

Kent County Council

Kent Public Health

Kent & Medway Clinical Commissioning Group

Kent Police

Kent Fire and Rescue Service

Kenward Trust

Department for Work & Pensions

West Kent Partnership

Conway

Go Coach

West Kent Housing

Moat Housing

Sevenoaks District Voluntary Sector Forum

Imago

West Kent Mind

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Age UK

Compaid

Change Grow Live

SupaJam

Arts without Boundaries

Kent Wildlife Trust

Darent Valley Landscape Partnership

Bore Place

Sencio Leisure Trust

## **Item 19 - Draft Housing Strategy 2022 - 2027**

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 14 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

### Housing & Health Advisory Committee (6 June 2022, Minute 9)

The interim Head of Housing presented the report which proposed the second draft of the Housing Strategy following consultation. Responses had been positive and there was good support for the proposed schemes. Areas of note included protecting the green belt, the type and quality of new housing, energy efficiency and the need for more affordable housing.

The themes contained in the draft Housing Strategy 2022 - 2027 were subject to public consultation between 14 February and 18 April 2022. Over 140 responses were received. It was considered that a broad range of participants responded to the consultation. Subsequent to the consultation, it remained the case that officers believed the themes of the Housing Strategy addressed the housing needs and aspirations of local people, whatever their background.

Members discussed the number of responses. Officers highlighted that the consultation had been publicised by the Communications team via Social Media and the Council's Magazine, Inshape among other places. Members discussed the possibility of posting out the consultation as pre-paid to stakeholders and residents so as to encourage further engagement. Officers suggested that the cost to this alternative would be great and the quality of response may not ultimately be improved. The cost to response ratio would have to be carefully considered. It was noted that consultation events had been held with members, town and parish councils, housing associations and voluntary sector organisations supporting homelessness. Historically, it had been difficult to generate feedback for Housing Strategy Consultations. It was suggested that should the strategy be recommended, Officers would present additional engagement figures to Cabinet to highlight the length and breadth of the consultation.

In response to questions it was emphasised that the Council's Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-27 which was to be considered on the agenda (minute 60), was a separate document and had generated more engagement as this had a more direct impact on residents and would generate a different, more immediate interest from respondents.

### Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the Committee

- (a) note the feedback received from the public consultation;

## Agenda Item 19

- (b) consider and recommend to Cabinet that it be recommended to Council that the draft Housing Strategy 2022 - 27 be adopted

**DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2022-2027**

**Cabinet - 7 July 2022**

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

**Status:** For Comment

**Also considered by:**

- Housing & Health Advisory Committee - 6 June 2022
- Council - 19 July 2022

**Key Decision:** No

**Executive Summary:** Local authorities are not required by Government to have a formal housing strategy, but they are expected to adopt a strategic approach to housing in their local areas to deliver a thriving housing market and address local needs. This report presents the outcome of a public consultation and the resultant draft Housing Strategy for consideration. The final Housing Strategy document will require approval by Full Council so that it may be adopted.

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** delivering a sustainable economy where people can live, work and travel more easily and are empowered to shape their communities.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Kevin Maskell

**Contact Officer(s):** Sharon Donald, Ext. 7131

Liz Crockford, Ext. 7482

**Recommendation to Housing & Health Advisory Committee:**

- (a) To note the feedback received from the public consultation;
- (b) To consider and recommend to Cabinet that it be recommended to Council that the draft Housing Strategy 2022-2027 be adopted;

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

- (a) To note the feedback received from the public consultation;
- (b) To consider the draft Housing Strategy 2022-2027;
- (c) To recommend to Council that the Housing Strategy 2022-27 be adopted

**Recommendation to Council:**

- (a) To note the feedback received from the public consultation;
- (b) That, subject to any amendments by Cabinet, the Housing Strategy 2022-2027 be adopted.

**Reason for recommendation:** The Housing Strategy is a key document that details the Council's priorities for enabling and delivering new homes, ensuring good quality homes in the private sector, and enabling vulnerable residents to remain in their homes.

**Introduction and Background**

1. The themes contained in the draft Housing Strategy 2022 - 2027 were subject to public consultation between 14 February and 18 April 2022. Over 140 responses were received and the results, by theme, are summarised below. NB. "In agreement" refers to those respondents who either strongly agreed, or agreed.

2. Theme 1 - Developing Sevenoaks District's housing offer: building new affordable homes

What we asked - *How strongly do you agree or disagree that new housing developments should include a proportion of affordable housing for local people?*

The response was - **In agreement 85.8%**

What we asked - *How strongly do you agree or disagree that Sevenoaks District Council should consider building and owning social housing?*

The response was - **In agreement 75.9%**

3. Theme 2 - Promoting quality and optimising suitability of homes

What we asked - *How strongly do you agree or disagree that we should work with housing associations and developers to deliver a range of homes that meet our residents' needs for example, family homes and homes for older and disabled people?*

The response was - **In agreement 92%**

What we asked - *How strongly do you agree or disagree that we should make it easier for residents in socially rented homes with spare rooms to downsize so their property could be made available for families or bigger households?*

The response was - **In agreement 81.1%**

What we asked - *How strongly do you agree or disagree that we should fund home adaptations for older or disabled residents so they can live independently in their own home for as long as possible?*

The response was - **In agreement 86.2%**

**4** Theme 3 - Reducing homelessness and improving routes into permanent accommodation

What we asked - *How strongly do you agree or disagree that we should increase the support we provide to people at risk of becoming homeless and in some circumstances helping with rent?*

The response was - **In agreement 75.7%**

What we asked - *How strongly do you agree or disagree that we should offer support, help and incentives to landlords to make their property available to homeless people on our waiting lists?*

The response was - **In agreement 77.2%**

**5** Theme 4 - Healthy people, homes and places

What we asked - *How strongly do you agree or disagree that, wherever possible housing delivery meets the needs of current and future residents in Sevenoaks District?*

The response was - **In agreement 80.4%**

What we asked - *How strongly do you agree or disagree that new developments should include a mix of housing tenures including homes for market sale or rent, affordable homes available for rent for those on the Housing Register and affordable Home Ownership options such as shared-ownership?*

The response was - **In agreement 79.6%**

What we asked - *How strongly do you agree or disagree that new developments should include a mix of housing for people from different age groups, backgrounds and incomes?*

The response was - **In agreement 70.6%**

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What we asked - *How strongly do you agree or disagree that the effects of climate change are considered at every stage of housing delivery; from the design of new homes, how they are constructed and how energy efficient and easy to use they are for occupants?*

The response was - **In agreement 85.7%**

What we asked - *How strongly do you agree or disagree that we should look to secure external funding to pay for home energy efficiency improvements in residents' homes to tackle climate change?*

The response was - **In agreement 80.4%**

What we asked - *How strongly do you agree or disagree that new developments should have access to existing or new communal services such as schools, health and leisure provision, public transport, community halls and play facilities?*

The response was - **In agreement 90.2%**

6 Respondents were invited to provide further comments on the themes and suggest how SDC might achieve its housing ambitions. Comments fall into a number of broad categories as shown below:

- New build - There were competing issues here, i.e. protect the Green Belt versus build on some areas of Green Belt due to level of unmet need; small developments not large; infrastructure and parking are key; houses/bungalows, not more flats; engage with existing residents; green energy - solar panels heat pumps, water recycling, electric vehicle charging points; build below (above?) surface car parks
- Affordable housing - more homes needed; need more affordable homes for rent to serve wider than the Housing Register; SDC to build homes; help needed by young people, those with disabilities and older people; hand holding for those looking to move/downsize; retain designated older persons' housing
- Existing stock - improve existing homes to tackle poor conditions; provide assistance to older and vulnerable residents to insulate homes and generally make them more energy efficient, including providing practical advice; return empty homes to use; combat anti-social behaviour.

Some of the points raised under “New Build”, provide useful commentary but go beyond the remit of the Housing Strategy. They pick up themes that have greater relevance to the emerging Local Plan, which will go out to consultation later this year, asking residents what it ought to contain. One area where the Housing Strategy could precede the emerging Local Plan is by encouraging the showcasing of exemplar design standards. This may be appropriate where the District Council uses its own land to develop new

housing, particularly 100% affordable housing schemes where these are developed by Quercus Housing (or the District Council itself, if it gains Registered Provider status).

Many of the points raised under “Affordable Housing”, will be addressed through the Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme (subject to approval and adoption) and a proposed under-occupation initiative in partnership with our Registered Providers (subject to approval). The Build to Rent tenure may assist those who require affordable homes to rent, but are not eligible to join the Housing Register.

Our ability to influence and improve the existing stock is extremely limited due to funding constraints. However, as detailed within the Council’s Housing Assistance Policy, funding is available to eligible households through the Better Care Fund to deliver both mandatory disabled facility grants (DFGs) and other discretionary grants which are principally aimed at enabling residents to continue to reside safely in their own homes. The Council has also sought external funding to help deliver energy efficiency improvements to eligible households. This has included external wall insulation to park homes across the District, grants for solar installations and replacement windows. We also work with owners of empty homes to find ways to bring them back into use such as arranging interest free loans for essential works through the KCC initiative, Kent No Use Empty. Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) can be reported to the Police or the District Council and the Community Safety Unit meets daily to address ASB that has been reported.

7 The consultation demonstrates there is strong support for the proposed themes of the new Strategy. Based on this, our consultants, arc4, have developed a draft Housing Strategy 2022-2027, attached at Appendix 1.

8 It is considered that a broad range of participants responded to the consultation. Access to the consultation did not discriminate against any group or section of society. However, it is noted that over 65% of respondents were female, which is not representative of the local population.

Subsequent to the consultation, it remains the case that officers believe the themes of the Housing Strategy address the housing needs and aspirations of local people, whatever their background. An equality impact assessment is attached at Appendix 2.

9 A review mechanism is proposed, so that minor adjustments may be made to the Strategy and its accompanying Action Plan (through delegated authority to the Chief Officer People & Places in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health), to ensure it retains its relevance and robustness.

#### **Other options Considered and/or rejected**

None.

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### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

Activity identified under the action plan will be considered for feasibility within the normal yearly budgeting activity.

#### Resource (non financial)

There are no additional resource requirements arising from the approval of the Strategy. Activity identified under the action plan will be considered for feasibility within the annual Housing Service Plan.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The Council has a range of statutory duties relating to housing, homelessness, and reviewing housing conditions. This strategy will assist the Council in meeting those duties.

#### 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. An equality impact assessment is attached at Appendix 2.

#### Net Zero Implications

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

### **Conclusions**

Whilst there is no statutory requirement for the Council to have a Housing Strategy, the Council's constitution includes a Policy Framework that references a Housing Strategy as a key strategy or plan that should set out the Council's priorities for housing. The Housing Strategy 2022-2027 will fulfil this role.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Draft Housing Strategy 2022-2027

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

**Background Papers**

None.

**Sarah Robson**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - People & Places**

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## Sevenoaks District Housing Strategy 2022-2027

### Foreword

Access to good quality housing is the foundation upon which people can build happy and successful lives and is essential to allow communities to thrive. Housing is not just about bricks and mortar, it's about the quality of the home, the services provided and the positive impact good housing has on communities and the local economy. All agencies, including the NHS, Public Health and Social Care are impacted by housing - its availability, quality and suitability.

While the District has much to offer, the Council is not being complacent. COVID-19 has brought changes that affect how we all see our homes. It has driven a 'race for space', a desire for flexible home working spaces and a focus on the quality of our residential environments.

Strategic planning for the continued and effective provision of housing and related services in the Sevenoaks District is therefore a key priority. However, budgets are under pressure, with demand for our services on the increase. At the same time, we have to be realistic about the challenges that we face and prioritise the limited resources that we have. These and other factors, such as the growing and ageing population, are likely to increase the demand for services while simultaneously reducing resources. Nevertheless, the challenge - and our intention - remains to maximise the supply and quality of suitable homes across tenures, while supporting broader goals around health and wellbeing, tackling climate change and protecting the Green Belt.

Whilst Sevenoaks District Council has a broad role to play in supporting and facilitating the delivery of new homes and tackling the housing challenges of the district, it cannot achieve these on its own. Registered Providers, developers, Government agencies, the NHS, social care and the voluntary and community sector all have important roles to play. Much of what is in the strategy is aspirational and can only be delivered with our partners and with investment. As such it is more important than ever to have effective partnerships built on trust and mutual respect.

The strategy sets a positive context for driving our ambitions forward and demonstrates the commitment we have to always doing the best for our communities.

**Cllr Kevin Maskell**  
Cabinet Member for Housing and Health

# Agenda Item 19

## APPENDIX - 1

### Introduction

Sevenoaks District is a very popular place to live and access to good housing is fundamental to happy, successful residents and thriving communities.

The District's many compelling features include its rural setting in a high-quality landscape with areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, characterful historic towns and villages, a commitment to conservation and a rich heritage offering interesting places to visit. Its strong rural economy, its proximity to Greater London providing easy access to all the Capital has to offer and its well-developed rail infrastructure and proximity to major road, rail and air links, including to the continent, make Sevenoaks a highly connected place. All this makes Sevenoaks District a very buoyant place economically, with high skills and employment levels. It does, however, make it difficult for some to afford to live in the District and makes it easy to overlook pockets of deep deprivation; we need to pay attention to these so that all our residents can live well and share in the district's prosperity.

Sevenoaks District Council aims to shape a housing market that meets a broad range of needs and ambitions for housing - including both market homes and those for rent and to purchase at less-than-market levels - so that more households can find a suitable home to meet their housing needs and aspirations at a price they can afford. It will do this both through influencing the provision of new homes and by helping people to access a home that is suitable for them at their stage in life. Doing this creates opportunities for a more dynamic housing market with more movement and where more people can find a suitable home that meets their general and specific needs.

This strategy builds upon our previous housing strategy in which we have made significant progress in addressing our key housing issues. The following are some of the key achievements since 2017:

### Successes

- Significant sums raised through s106 planning obligations on new housing development have enabled us to fund a range of affordable housing projects, including an enhanced offer to private sector landlords to house those in housing need and 24 new affordable homes for rent through Quercus Housing, the Council's not-for-profit housing company.
- Over 370 new affordable homes have been delivered in the district.
- Our Rural Exceptions Site policies have helped to secure 17 new affordable homes for rent that will stay affordable for local people forever.
- Our hospital to home scheme ensures people are properly supported to settle back into their home to help promote their recovery.
- We have worked with residents to successfully gain their support on a number of large development sites, including approval to redevelop a large brownfield site at Fort Halstead for a mixed use development including 635 homes, a village centre, primary school and commercial space.
- We have enhanced our approach to rough sleeping through partnerships with support agencies Porchlight and Look Ahead and have successfully secured Government funding to work with West Kent Housing Association to deliver rough sleeper and single homelessness supported accommodation.

### APPENDIX - 1

- We improved the insulation and efficiency of 68 park homes, helping to reduce fuel bills and offering a significant improvement in the quality of life and well-being of some of our most vulnerable residents.
- Over 470 Disabled Facilities Grant adaptations were completed, which have enabled people to stay safely in their home. This number would have been higher, but was impacted by Covid restrictions.
- We have continued to work in partnership with West Kent HA to fund an incentive scheme for tenants who wish to “rightsize”, thereby freeing up social housing for other families in need.
- Over 75 enforcement notices were issued in the private rented sector, requiring landlords to take action to ensure their properties provide safe and secure housing.

### Challenges and Risks

- Sevenoaks District is one of the least affordable places in England for housing. In 2021, average (median) house prices were more than 14 times local average (median) incomes (workplace based).
- Social housing provided at Social Rent is often the only affordable option available to residents on low incomes.
- Affordable Rents set at 80% of Open Market Rent (OMR) remain unaffordable for many working people due to the high market rent levels in the District. When capped at the Local Housing Allowance levels (which is the local policy), the Affordable Rent is covered for those who are eligible for housing benefit/housing support through Universal Credit. However, affordability remains an issue for those who are not eligible to receive these benefits.
- High land prices and other planning constraints (e.g. 93% of the district is in the Green Belt and 60% is within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) make delivery of new affordable housing very difficult.
- Government policies that do not go far enough in supporting the provision of genuinely affordable homes for local people e.g. National Planning Policy Guidance.
- Changes to the national policy has made it more difficult for the Council to secure new affordable homes through the planning system (s106 planning obligation). S106 monies have therefore diminished significantly.
- Homelessness has been rising since 2018 as a result of welfare reform, reduced Government funding, the impact of Covid-19 and the rising cost of living.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation has increased significantly due to the lack of affordable move on and rented accommodation in the district.
- Economic uncertainty increasingly due to world events and linked to the COVID-19, the energy crisis, rising inflation and cost of living, affects the housing market.
- The Government’s Levelling Up paper includes plans for a landlord register. Without sufficient financial or other incentives to support property improvement, this could make renting a less attractive investment, potentially reducing the already small size of the private rented sector.
- Pressure will be placed on the development sector in order to achieve the Council’s ambition of achieving Net Zero by 2030 and this may, in turn, put further pressure on the delivery of new affordable and specialised housing.

### Opportunities

- Housing represents a good long-term investment for Quercus Housing due to the District’s buoyant market. This makes it possible to secure money from a range of

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sources - including institutional investors, borrowing from Public Loans Works Board and cross-subsidy from commercial operations.

- Registered Providers that have homes in and around Sevenoaks District can draw upon government grants to develop more affordable housing in the District.
- The Council can choose to utilise land that is in its ownership, for the development of housing, including affordable housing, and showcase exemplar new build standards in advance of the Local Plan requirements.
- New development by Quercus Housing can help to fill gaps in the market, by considering the full range of options for additional modest-scale housing development in appropriate locations, supporting delivery of homes that the market isn't providing, including specialist housing, homes for 'right-sizing' and temporary accommodation.
- A variety of grants are available to improve energy efficiency, alleviate fuel poverty and support the shift to low carbon homes.
- The Council has recently recruited to several new specialist housing posts, bringing new expertise and insights to bear to address the challenges.

### **Sevenoaks District Profile**

#### **Population and household trends; implications for housing in Sevenoaks**

There were 121,415 people living in Sevenoaks District in 2020. The population is projected to increase to 129,442 by 2040, an overall increase of 8,027 or 6.6% over the 20 year period. This increase is not projected to be even across the population: there is projected to be a very small decline in the younger population (0.7% between 0-39 age groups) while the older population will rise, with those aged 75 years and over projected to increase by 43.3% over the same period<sup>1</sup>.

This population increase equates to 5,821 new households over the period from 2020 - 2040<sup>3</sup> with a trend towards smaller and older households. Using the standard methodology for calculating housing need as set out in the Planning Practice Guidance there is a need for 714 new homes per year.

#### **Affordable housing requirements and the challenge of 'genuine affordability'**

There is an overall affordable housing need of 423 units per year in Sevenoaks District, as set out in the Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs (TRLHN 2022). Some of the needs will be met through existing affordable homes being re-let, affordable home ownership resales and new-build, but the unmet need remains high; as of April 2022 there were 795 applicants on the Council's waiting list for social housing.

To be genuinely affordable, a rent should cost no more than 35% of gross income. This equates to someone on an income of £45k (median income) paying a monthly rent of no more than £1,312. In 2020, rents in the lowest quartile (the lowest 25% of rents) across Sevenoaks District were £1,001, making it necessary for most people earning average incomes, to access some form of affordable housing. House prices are well in excess of the 3.5 times household incomes that is considered to be 'genuinely affordable',

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<sup>1</sup> ONS, 2018-based population projections, March 2020

<sup>3</sup> ONS, 2018-based household projections, June 2020

### **The need for homes at varied price-points**

High house prices across the District mean that, in addition to the need for genuinely affordable housing identified above, many other households also need some form of assistance to access a suitable home.

The main forms of financial assistance to rent or buy a home include:

- *Social housing* - available from a council or Registered Provider at a rent which, on average, is 50-60% of the open market rent (Social Rent and capped Affordable Rent);
- *Housing support through Universal Credit* - which is available as a top-up for low wage-earners as well as those who do not have paid employment
- *rents at lower-than-market levels* - whether this is Affordable Rent available at 80% of the open market rent or another ‘intermediate rent’, such as that which is possible through Build to Rent
- *Assisted home purchase* - including through government-backed schemes such as First Homes, shared ownership and Help to Buy equity loans.

### **Identifying and meeting the need for affordable homes in rural areas**

Sevenoaks District Council has commissioned Action with Communities in Rural Kent to undertake a series of housing needs surveys that will include all 31 parishes and town council areas over the 5-year period to 2025. The surveys identify parish-level needs - the level of affordable housing required and the needs of older home owners who wish to “rightsize” to more suitable housing. Rural Kent works with Parish Councils and the Council to actively identify suitable sites for “rural exceptions” affordable homes to meet locally identified needs - which can include homes for rent, shared ownership or through assisted purchase. We use S106 planning obligations to ensure homes developed through this route are affordable for future occupiers and are available to meet local needs in perpetuity.

### **Delivery targets on new housing developments**

The emerging Local Plan will identify the overall housing requirement for the District, and will allocate sites to meet this. It will ensure that the right types and sizes of homes are delivered in the right places to meet identified needs, as well as boosting the delivery of affordable homes and promoting rural exceptions housing. It will also specifically address the District’s ageing population, ensuring that there is choice in the market for people wishing to rightsize and will set ambitious targets for the delivery of homes suitable for those with disabilities.

### **Gaps in the housing market**

We feel there are three key gaps in the local housing market:

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- 1. Suitable accommodation for young people to move into independence:** A shortage of suitable rented options for young, mainly single people starting out in life, coupled with high numbers of homeless cases due to ‘exclusions from the family home’ suggest that young people may be outstaying their welcome, yet unable to find a place to move to. We will work to meet the needs of young people to enable them to move into independence. This might include, for example: ‘Co-Living’ accommodation with some private space and some shared spaces; innovative housing solutions such as the ZEDpod, a low cost prefabricated super energy-efficient micro home; Homeshare<sup>2</sup> where a young person shares accommodation with an older person who has a spare room in their home; and giving a degree of priority to selected homes on new build developments to young people accepted onto the Council’s housing waiting list.
- 2. Homes for purchase or rent by essential workers:** Sevenoaks District needs a better range of housing options for ‘essential workers’ including sub-market rents and assisted purchase options<sup>3</sup>. This would help to ensure the District had a more sustainable economy by attracting and retaining businesses and employment through the provision of affordable housing for those workers providing essential services to the community. Sevenoaks District Council will adopt a local definition for an essential worker. It is proposed that this will be included in the new Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-2027. Priority will be given to local essential workers under the local First Homes policy.
- 3. Older people:** Sevenoaks District has an ageing population. The recent Sevenoaks Older Person’s Housing Study (2022) shows that, while 67% of older people want to stay living in their existing home with help and support when needed, there are also significant numbers (24%) who would like to move to a more suitable home - in a suitable location with access to transport, broadband, shops, healthcare and other amenities - if one were available. There is huge diversity in what older people are looking for and many could afford to buy on the open market. However, there is a big gap in supply for affordable housing/provision for middle market households. We intend to continue to diversify the range of older persons’ housing while at the same time upgrading the support we offer older people in the process of finding a suitable home and managing the moving process. This is of particular value in the social housing sector where our assistance may free up much needed family housing.

#### Targets for specialist homes

The Older Person’s Housing Study (2022) shows that just over a quarter of older people intend to move home although people are more likely to move before they are 75.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://homeshareuk.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Intelligence gathered from the Survey of Employers’ Housing Needs in 2017

Strongest preferences are for town centre locations, neighbourhoods where people currently live, including village locations, bungalows/level access homes and properties in mixed developments of houses, flats and bungalows. Across the social housing sector, the “offer” to older people needs a rethink, including providing larger units of accommodation (not bedsits which are unpopular). More generally, the needs of older people are highly diverse and moving to a smaller property is not a universal ambition - households tend to need at least two bedrooms. The Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-2027 seeks to help rectify this in the social housing sector.

As set out in the Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs (2022), based on population projections there is a need for 1,345 additional units of specialist older persons’ accommodation by 2043. This breaks down to 928 C3 dwellings for older people (40 each year) - which is part of the overall housing need identified for Sevenoaks District - and an additional 418 C2 residential units/bedspaces (or 18 each year) to 2043<sup>4</sup>.

On the basis of available evidence, which takes into account the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance, it is recommended that 5% of new homes should be wheelchair accessible (Building Regulation M4(3)(b)) to support people with disabilities. All such homes should be provided as affordable housing for rent (social housing). All remaining new homes should be built to M4(2) accessible and adaptable standards, to take account of the ageing demographics of the district. This will ensure that new homes can be occupied and also visited by people needing accessible/adaptable living.

There are currently 169 households on the self-build register for Sevenoaks District as at July 2021. Strongest preferences are for detached properties and properties with 4 or more bedrooms. As at March 2020 planning permissions for 111 serviced plots suitable for self/custom build properties had been granted.

### **Condition of private homes**

Of the 50,947 dwellings in Sevenoaks District (in 2020), 73% are owner occupied, 12% are privately rented and 15% are affordable housing. Of those that are privately owned, 5,351 (13%) have a category 1 hazard<sup>5</sup> - which means that property presents a serious and immediate risk to a person’s health and safety - the majority of which are due to excess cold. Also, 4,380 of Sevenoaks’ households (around 9%) are living in fuel poverty<sup>6</sup>.

While social housing is home to the highest number of low-income households, 22% of private renters are on low incomes, compared to just 7% homeowners. Also, 19% of tenants renting privately are living in ‘fuel poverty’ compared to 8% of homeowners. These households have above average fuel costs that leave them with a residual income below the official poverty line.

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<sup>4</sup> SDC Local Housing Needs Evidence Base: Older Persons’ Housing Study

<sup>5</sup> Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Category 1 hazard

<sup>6</sup> BRE Integrated Dwelling Level Housing Stock Modelling and Database; Sevenoaks – April 2020

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The number of private sector dwellings with an energy EPC rating (A is the highest rating and G the lowest) at below band E is estimated to be 4,729 or 11.2%, which is double the England average of 5.4%. For private rented dwellings, the number with a rating of band F or G is estimated to be 647 (10.2%) which is also very high compared to the England average of 6.3%.

A recent analysis from the Building Research Establishment (BRE) shows that the highest levels of category 1 hazards, fuel poverty, excess cold, and dwellings with F and G EPC ratings, within the private rented sector, occur in the same wards in the district: Cowden and Hever, Penhurst and Fordcombe and Chiddingstone. The BRE recommends that interventions to improve disrepair or to improve the energy efficiency levels should therefore be focused, initially, in these wards.

### **Net zero**

The Council has committed to working towards achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030. This means that we have pledged to reach net zero carbon emissions produced by us and our assets, by 2030. We also have an ambition to assist the District to become net zero by working closely with local communities to improve the resilience of the District to a changing climate. As part of our commitment, we are encouraging and supporting sustainable new homes and renewable energy generation. We will also be looking at how to reduce carbon emissions in our procurement and supply chains, and encourage sustainable practice in construction and development using recognised environmental standards such as ISO14001, the Kent STEM Scheme, or EMAS. We will also continue to explore funding to build on the council's successful retrofit projects in order to save energy and extend the life of homes in the district.

### **Our Strategic priorities in Sevenoaks District**

This Strategy establishes our vision for housing in the Sevenoaks District. It sets out four major themes and under each one, the priorities and objectives that we want to achieve. We consulted on the themes in early 2022 and there was widespread support for them.

#### **Theme 1: Developing Sevenoaks District's housing offer: building new affordable homes**

##### **Summary Objectives**

- Enhance our understanding of the full range of housing, particularly affordable and specialist housing, required in the district, including type, tenure and location.
- A greater number and range of affordable homes to meet the housing needs of our communities including the needs of specific groups.
- Enhance and develop partnerships with registered providers, local landowners and private developers to enable the delivery of housing and maximise the delivery of new affordable housing.

##### **How we plan to achieve our objectives**

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- Ensure that the emerging Local Plan contains policies that optimise the delivery of a range of affordable homes through the planning system;
- Maximise the level funding that can be accessed from Homes England funding programmes, by raising the profile of our affordable housing needs and ambitions with them and appraising the benefit of Quercus Housing and/or the District Council becoming Registered Providers;
- Review Council owned land for disposal and development of housing, including affordable housing;
- Undertake prudential borrowing, using Public Works Loans Board or other lending mechanisms;
- Continue the acquisition and delivery of affordable homes through Quercus Housing and consider a complementary role of direct provision for specialist housing by the District Council itself;
- Continue to develop strategic development partnerships with Registered Providers;
- Continue to work with the Rural Housing Enabler (Rural Kent), parish councils and community groups to undertake a programme of local housing needs surveys across the district and to facilitate the delivery of new rural exceptions housing where needs are identified;
- Continue to work with the NHS and Kent County Council to understand the current and future housing needs of older people and other vulnerable groups that require housing with care, including a range of specialist housing types.
- Work with private developers and registered providers to encourage delivery of new homes through Modern Methods of Construction.
- Seek to enable more housing, including affordable housing, through the diversification of provision i.e. self & custom build, community-led housing and co-housing schemes.
- Consider adopting a local definition of affordability, based on local incomes and prices, to ensure no one in affordable housing pays more than 35% of their income towards housing costs.

## **Theme 2: Promoting quality and optimising range and suitability of new and existing homes**

### **Summary Objectives**

- High quality new and existing homes.
- Environmentally friendly, well-designed new homes that are affordable to run, integrating low carbon design and resilience (e.g. flood resilience) in anticipation of the Futures Homes Standard.
- Better choice of housing options in the private rented sector.
- Fewer empty homes.
- A range of new homes that meet the needs of older and disabled people.
- Older and disabled people enabled to continue to live independently in their own home for longer.

### **How we plan to achieve our objectives**

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- Engage with Registered Provider partners to encourage the inclusion of age-appropriate homes within their development programme.
- Include provisions in the emerging Local Plan to deliver accessible and wheelchair adapted housing.
- Consider the inclusion of a specific older persons' housing policy within the emerging Local Plan.
- Work with the NHS and Kent County Council to explore the need for, and enable the delivery of, both specialist accommodation as well as adapted and wheelchair general needs housing.
- Support for older people either to stay living in their existing home or to find and move to a more suitable home, including co-housing.
- Refurbishing, extending or repurposing of dwellings to make better use of them.
- Broaden the engagement with Private Landlords through a Help to Rent Plus service
- Where scheme viability permits, seek to showcase exemplar building standards in new homes built by Quercus Housing and the District Council, in advance of Local Plan policy.
- Review the allocations policy to support better matching of homes, including right-sizing, to particular needs to improve residents' lives.
- Seek to introduce an enhanced rightsizing incentive scheme for social housing tenants.
- Continue to maximise the use of Better Care Fund funding to provide adaptations for older people and people with disabilities.
- Support owners of empty homes through the Council's membership of Kent No Use Empty, to create a downward trend in the number of long term empty homes.

### **Theme 3: Reducing homelessness and improving routes into permanent accommodation**

#### **Summary Objectives**

- Increased support and prevention for homeless people by providing excellent customer service, a range of housing options and good quality temporary accommodation
- Better access to the private rented sector for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- Explore and optimise opportunities to support vulnerable residents in maintaining accommodation and reduce instances of repeat homelessness.

#### **How we plan to achieve our objectives**

- Create a coalition of temporary and move-on accommodation landlords to provide sustainable, reliable, cost-effective temporary accommodation to support homeless households into long-term solutions.

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- Continue regular landlord forums to ensure relationships with local landlords are strengthened and maximise the potential for the placement of homeless households.
- Promote our private rented sector offer ‘Help to Let Plus’ and ensure the offer is comparable with our neighbouring authorities to encourage more landlords to let to previously homeless households.
- Consider Quercus Housing providing its own stock of temporary accommodation.
- Consider the purchase of units of quality temporary accommodation to replace those leased from the private sector.
- Optimise revenue available to create new services by monitoring funding opportunities and bidding for funding where this could fill gaps in service provision.
- Use data technology to improve the early intervention and prevention of homelessness and clearly demonstrate outcomes.
- Through the Council’s HERO team, work to identify those likely to be affected by welfare reform and the pandemic, offering proactive advice and support.
- Work with our Registered Provider partners to enable them to support us with temporary accommodation needs for homeless households.
- Deliver and implement a new five year Homelessness Strategy in 2022/23.

#### **Theme 4: Healthy people, homes and places**

##### **Summary Objectives**

- Use development to drive positive physical and social regeneration, maximise health and social outcomes.
- Identify the most effective interventions to improve conditions and energy efficiency in private sector housing.
- Reduced health inequalities through the use of green technology and innovative built environments.
- Enhanced access to a range of amenities and facilities close to homes, and digital access, through our town centre plans and partnerships
- Work towards meeting our commitment for the council and its assets to be Net Zero by 2030, and work with Kent County Council and other partners towards our ambition for the district to be Net Zero by the same date.
- Implement the priorities and actions in the Council’s Movement Strategy for sustainable movement and transport for the District. This includes reducing the need to travel, promoting active travel, improving the cycling and walking network, encouraging the use of low emission vehicles and making it easier to access and use public transport.

##### **How we plan to achieve our objectives**

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- Work to improve the conditions of the homes let by private landlords, particularly those in areas highlighted through BRE evidence.
- Increase awareness of council services and initiatives in relation to warm homes, energy efficiency and retro-fit technologies.
- Take a targeted approach to areas of high social and economic deprivation through regeneration, which improves the built environment and supports better education, employment and housing outcomes for existing and future residents.
- Encourage developers to bring forward schemes that support our commitment for the council and its assets to be Net Zero by 2030, and our ambition for the district to be Net Zero by 2030. This includes supporting carbon-neutral and carbon-positive technologies in new homes, without diminishing the level of affordable homes provided.
- Introduce a new environmental sustainability standard for all our new developments
- Work with private landlords and Registered Providers to retrofit existing stock with zero carbon technologies, particularly with the least sustainable stock.
- Tackle digital inequality and digital poverty by working with Registered Providers to improve opportunities for their residents to benefit from super-fast broadband.

#### **Monitoring and updating the strategy**

This strategy has been developed in partnership and sets out a 5-year plan. During this period, new priorities may emerge, and new national policy landscapes may be introduced. Whilst we can anticipate that key themes will remain relevant during this period, the way we deliver them may need to change. For this reason, it is important that the Housing Strategy is reviewed annually, so that it is kept up to date.

#### **The Action Plan**

We will only be able to deliver on our Housing Strategy with the assistance of our partners and communities, who have already assisted us to develop the Housing Strategy through the consultation process. An action plan will be developed for the Housing Strategy in the Autumn of 2022.

The action plan will be reviewed annually and published on the Council's website. It will set out the achievements and the challenges of the preceding year, along with any significant recommended changes that may arise.

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**Appendices**

**Appendix 1:** Data sources for local housing need

**Appendix 2:** Affordable Housing Glossary

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

<b>Summary of decision to be made:</b>		Draft Housing Strategy 2022 - 2027	
<b>Lead Officer (job title):</b>		Liz Crockford, Interim Housing Strategy Manager /Sharon Donald, Interim Head of Housing	
<b>Date the final decision is due to be made:</b>		19/07/2022	<b>Date this assessment commenced:</b> 13/04/2022
<b>Is the decision relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty?</b>			Yes / No
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation			Yes / No
Advance equality of opportunity			Yes / No
Foster good relations			Yes / No
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 Housing Needs Survey 2017, Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs 2021, 2011 Census, Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-2027 (emerging), Older Persons' Housing Study 2022, public consultation February to April 2022.	Strategy establishes the need for accessible housing, including a small proportion of wheelchair homes. Specific actions are included in the Action Plan, e.g. development of the District Council's own land to deliver the type of housing not being provided by the market, e.g. disabled adapted and bungalow housing. Through synergy with the Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-2027, to give highest priority for tenants vacating adapted homes. This will facilitate the potential for more suitable homes becoming available to meet the needs of disabled Housing Register applicants.	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>

Appendix 2

Carers	As above	Through synergy with the Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-2027, to ensure carers with a journey time of at least one hour, have priority.	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
Race	As above	None - the Housing Strategy aims to treat all equally, irrespective of race	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
Gender	As above	None - the Housing Strategy aims to treat all equally, irrespective of gender	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
Age	As above	The Housing Strategy recognises the specific difficulties (high property prices and low incomes/zero hours contracts) faced by young people wishing to establish their first independent home. It also recognises the specific needs of older people wishing to downsize/move to more suitable housing. Specific actions are put forward in the Action Plan and linked Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme.	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
Religion / Belief	As above	None - the Housing Strategy aims to treat all equally, irrespective of religion/belief	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
Sexual Orientation	As above	None - the Housing Strategy aims to treat all equally, irrespective of sexual orientation	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>

Pregnancy / Maternity	As above	None - the Housing Strategy aims to treat all equally, irrespective of pregnancy	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>	
Marital or Civil Partnership Status	As above	None - the Housing Strategy aims to treat all equally, irrespective of marital/civil partnership status	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>	
Gender reassignment	As above	None - the Housing Strategy aims to treat all equally, irrespective of gender reassignment	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>	
<b>Summary of impacts :</b> (to be included in committee reports)	<p>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 impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people.</p> <p>The decisions recommended through this paper will result in the adoption of an inclusive and accessible Housing Strategy for Sevenoaks District. The Housing Strategy establishes the priorities for housing and related services within the District, applying for the 5 year period 2022-2027.</p> <p>A review mechanism is proposed, so that minor adjustments may be made to the Strategy and Action Plan (through delegated authority to the Chief Officer People &amp; Places in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing &amp; Health) to ensure it retains its relevance and robustness.</p>			
Please tick the outcome of this assessment:	No impact	<del>Adjust the policy</del>	<del>Continue the policy</del>	<del>Stop and remove the policy</del>
Date assessment will be reviewed:	07/07/2022			

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**DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2022-2027**

**Supplementary paper for Cabinet - 7 July 2022**

Additional information is presented to Cabinet:

1. In light of comments provided at Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 6 June, further information is provided relating to the Housing Strategy consultation.

Whilst we were not under any obligation to carry out a survey, we value our residents' comments. This ensures the Housing Strategy will address issues that are seen as locally important. The survey was promoted to every household in the District via the spring issue of In Shape (published April 2022), giving everyone an opportunity to take part. We also undertook social media marketing to raise the profile of the survey further. The survey also included a free prize draw as a small incentive. This was a self-selected survey (i.e. open to all). By their very nature, these sorts of survey are not representative of a population. However, they are very useful to receive valuable feedback on our ideas and proposals, and for us to understand residents' priorities. Overall, we were pleased with the level of response. It compares favourably with a similar survey undertaken recently in a neighbouring local authority. The survey formed only one part of our consultation - a Members' workshop was held; Council officer colleagues were encouraged to input; and feedback was sought from partners including Registered Providers, Town/Parish /Councils and the National Residential Landlords' Association.

2. The Housing Strategy document makes reference to two appendices - Appendix 1: Data sources for local housing need and Appendix 2: Affordable Housing Glossary. These are provided for Members' information.

**20 June 2022**

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## Appendix 1

### Data sources of local housing need

The evidence base for local housing need is presented in the [Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs \(January 2022\)](#). This brings together a range of household survey and secondary (existing) data including:

- Housing Register data;
- House price (Land registry) and rental (zoopla) data;
- Household income data from CAMEO
- Housing association/Registered Provider lettings data
- Local Authority Housing Statistics (annual to DLUHC)

A previous household survey (2017) provided a range of data to help understand the housing market dynamics of Sevenoaks District and its “placemaking” areas. This was based on 8,858 household survey responses.

The Targeted Review also considers the findings of the [Older Persons Housing Study \(2022\)](#) and the District Council’s five year rolling programme of local housing needs surveys.

Stakeholder consultation has taken place, including representatives from district and county councils, the health service, housing associations, property developers, voluntary groups, estate agents and lettings agents.

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Housing Strategy 2022-2027

Appendix 2 – Affordable Housing Glossary

Term	Explanation
Affordable homes/affordable housing	Defined in full in the <a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework</a> Annex 2 Glossary (NPPF 2021). It includes Social Rented housing, Affordable Rented housing, shared ownership and First Homes . Affordable housing assists those who cannot afford suitable housing on the open market.
Affordable Rented housing	Housing owned by housing associations or other Providers (e.g. Quercus Housing). These homes are let to applicants from the Sevenoaks District Housing Register. Locally, we expect these homes to be provided at a rent which does not exceed the relevant Local Housing Allowance, inclusive of service charges. However the Government allows rents of up 80% of the local Open Market Rent.
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	An area of countryside in England, Wales or Northern Ireland, which has been designated for conservation due to its significant landscape value. In Sevenoaks District over 60% of land is covered by the Kent Downs and High Weald AONBs.
Better Care Fund (BCF)	A single pooled budget to incentivise the NHS and local government to work more closely together around people, placing their wellbeing as the focus of health and care services. Integral to the BCF is the Disabled Facilities Grant allocation.
Brownfield site	Also known as previously developed land, i.e. land which is, or was, occupied by a permanent structure or building
Build to Rent	A form of housing development comprising self-contained homes, held in single ownership (often an institutional owner, e.g. pension fund) and providing 100% of homes for the private rental market.
Building Regulations - Part M	Regulations to ensure that buildings are accessible, not only to disabled people, those with limited mobility and wheelchair users, but also to people who regularly use prams and other wheeled devices.
C2 and C3 (Use Classes)	The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories

	known as 'Use Classes'. Use Class C2 applies to residential institutions such as care homes, hospitals, and nursing homes. C3 refers to “dwelling-houses”, i.e. self contained family homes.
Co-living/Co-housing	These are “intentional communities” where a group of people with a common link (e.g. older people, women, retired teachers, etc.) come together to live. Each resident has a self-contained home, as well as shared community space and facilities.
Community-led housing	A form of housing championed by the <a href="#">Kent Community Housing Hub</a> . It is where local residents have the power to create their own housing schemes, decide how they should be developed and have complete control over how they are run. Schemes can be delivered through community land trusts, co-housing and co-operatives.
Disabled Facilities Grant	A grant administered by the District Council via the BCF, to fund essential adaptations to enable disabled people better freedom of movement into and round their homes and giving access to essential facilities.
EPC rating	An EPC gives a property/home an energy efficiency rating from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient).
First Homes	A form of affordable housing. The homes are sold with a discount to first time buyers only. In Sevenoaks District, a <a href="#">local policy</a> applies.
Fuel poverty	Fuel poverty has usually been defined as when a household spends more than 10% of their income to maintain an adequate level of warmth
Futures Homes Standard	From 2025, the Standard will deliver homes that are zero-carbon ready. Homes built under the Standard should produce <b>75-80% less carbon emissions</b> than currently. The intention is that homes built to the Standard will not need any additional measures to become net zero.
Green Belt	Green Belt policy aims to prevent “urban sprawl” by keeping land permanently open. Local authorities define and maintain Green Belt land in their local areas. Within the Sevenoaks District, 93% of land is Green Belt, which means any form of development is highly restricted.
Green technology	Any technology designed to reduce the negative impact of human activity on the environment.

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Help to Buy equity loans	A Government scheme to help first time buyers get on the property ladder with an equity loan 20% of the market value of a new build home.
Help to Let	A scheme which supports landlords who are willing to work with us to provide homes to those on the Sevenoaks District Housing Register.
HERO service	<p>The HERO (housing, energy and retraining options) service offers complete and personalised advice, giving information and guidance on a range of issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing problems</li> <li>• Saving money on fuel bills</li> <li>• Debt or mortgage advice</li> <li>• Welfare benefits</li> <li>• Retraining and further education options</li> <li>• Getting back to work</li> <li>• Starting your own business.</li> </ul>
Homes England (HE)	The national housing and regeneration agency for England. A non-departmental public body sponsored by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. HE has an Affordable Homes Programme, which allocates grant funding to Registered Providers to deliver new affordable housing.
Innovative built environments	Innovation is crucial to transforming the UK energy system to meet carbon reduction targets and achieve our clean growth ambitions. The Government's Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy's Energy Innovation Programme, expects to invest around £90 million in low carbon heating and energy efficiency options for UK homes and businesses.
ISO14001	ISO 14001 is an internationally agreed standard that sets out the requirements for an environmental management system. It helps organizations improve their environmental performance through more efficient use of resources and reduction of waste. The Kent STEM Scheme and EMAS has a similar ambition.
Kent No Use Empty	A Kent-wide scheme to bring empty properties back into use . The scheme

## Agenda Item 19

	provides advice, guidance and <u>Empty Property Loans</u> .
Local Housing Allowance	The allowance (Housing Benefit or housing element of Universal Credit) paid to claimants, set by the Valuation Office Agency, which takes into account the size and make up of a claimant's household and the location of the home.
Local Plan	A Plan prepared by a Local Planning Authority (LPA) that sets out the strategic and detailed policies for all development within the LPA's area. It guides most of the day to day planning choices and decisions.
Mixed use development	Development projects that comprise a mixture of land uses, or more than just a single use. In terms of planning, mixed use refers to land or buildings used for different purposes, which fall into more than one Use Class
Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)	A method of construction, which focuses on off-site processes, such as mass production and factory assembly, as alternatives to traditional building. The Government (through Homes England) encourages the uptake of MMC in order to improve the rate of delivery of new homes.
Movement Strategy	A <u>Strategy</u> which has the aim of enabling movement across the District to be easy, healthy, safe, low carbon and sustainable.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development, can be produced.
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).	Along with the NPPF, NPPG sets out how the Government envisages the day to day working of the planning system in England will operate.
Net Zero	This refers to the balance between the amount of greenhouse gas produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere. We reach net zero when the amount we add is no more than the amount taken away.
Older Persons' Housing Study	A <u>Study</u> into the future housing needs of older people living within the District. It provides evidence for the development of the new Local Plan.
Planning Practice Guidance	The government's Planning Practice Guidance provides further guidance and detail on how the policies in the NPPF are expected to be applied.

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Public Loans Works Board (PWLB)	A facility for the Government to offer low cost loans. The PWLB is the main lender to local government.
Quercus Housing	Set up by the District Council as an independent housing company to deliver new affordable homes in the District.
Registered Providers/Housing Associations	Providers of affordable housing who are registered by the Regulator of Social Housing (Housing and Regeneration Act 2008).
Renewable energy	Energy that is collected from renewable resources that are naturally replenished on a human timescale. It includes sources such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides, waves, and geothermal heat.
Retro-fit technologies	The addition of new technology to older systems. Retrofitting is an important part of combating and adapting to climate change.
Rural Exceptions Site	Usually small sites, which are developed to provide affordable housing in response to an independently assessed evidenced need (i.e. a Parish Needs Survey) in locations where planning constraints (e.g. Green Belt) mean development would not normally be permitted. Local people have priority for these homes (local connection to the Parish is strictly controlled and set out in a legal agreement - S106 Agreement) and the homes remain available in perpetuity (i.e. there is no opportunity to purchase the home outright),. Also known as "local needs housing".
Rural Housing Enabler	An officer employed by Action with Communities in Rural Kent who works in partnership with the District Council, to help deliver new local needs housing, including Rural Exceptions Sites. The officer carries out local housing needs surveys and helps Parish/Town Councils carry out local site searches.
S106 planning obligation	Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority to enter into a legally binding agreement (planning obligation) with a landowner as part of the granting of planning permission. This may include a requirement to provide new affordable housing.
Self-build register	Local authorities are required to keep a register of those seeking to buy serviced plots in the area for their own self-build and

## Agenda Item 19

	custom house building (Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015). Local authorities must give enough suitable planning permissions to meet the registered demand
Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme	The <a href="#">scheme</a> applying to the allocation of Social Housing within the District.
Shared ownership housing	Also known as “part rent/part buy” housing. Purchasers buy a share of the home - between 10% and 75%, based on the Open Market Value. A discounted rent is paid on the remaining share held by the housing association. Purchasers can generally “staircase” to 100% ownership unless restrictions apply. The purchaser has sole residency, i.e. the home is not “shared” with another household.
Social housing	A generic term for publicly subsidised housing, owned by local councils and housing associations. The term is defined in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. Homes must be let to those who have an identified housing need in line with Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Policy (or its successor).
Social Rented Housing	Housing owned by housing associations, for which rents are determined through the National Rent formula. This is usually equivalent to 50-60% of Open Market Rents. The formula takes account of values of properties and local earnings relative to national earnings, with a “bedroom weighting” factor. Homes are let to applicants from the Sevenoaks District Housing Register. Most of our affordable housing stock is comprised of Social Rented Housing, the majority of which was formerly owned by Sevenoaks District Council prior to the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer to WKHA in 1989.
Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs	An <a href="#">evidence base</a> to support the development of a new Local Plan.
Universal Credit	Introduced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to replace a range of benefits (including Housing Benefit) for people of working age who are on a low income.

**Item 20 - Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022 - 27**

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 14 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

Housing & Health Advisory Committee (6 June 2022, Minute 10)

The Interim Head of Housing presented the report which outlined the Council's Housing Strategy Allocations Scheme. The report presented a second draft of the Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-2027, which had been refined in light of feedback received from a recent public consultation.

The Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme enabled the Council and its partners to work together to ensure that those in most need of affordable housing were prioritised. The Council operated a Choice Based Letting Scheme and the Housing Register Allocations Scheme set out a framework that described how to register, the assessment process and property allocation process. Over 500 responses were recorded including from Members, partners and key stakeholders. The Committee noted their thanks to all those involved in the consultation process.

A few respondents had commented on the difficulties faced by young people who wanted to move to their first independent home, but who were impacted by high property prices and rents combined with low wages/zero hour contracts. As was drafted, people sharing facilities (e.g. young people still living at home with their parents and sharing cooking and bathing facilities, who wanted to live independently), were not classed as having a housing need and were not eligible to join the Housing Register. Therefore, it was recommended that an additional category be added in Band D (low priority) and to create a Local Lettings Plan to give an element of priority, which would be agreed on a site-by-site basis, to this category of applicant on selected schemes.

The current scheme did not require applicants to disclose whether they were staff or Members of the Council or related to, partner of, or living with staff or Members of the Council. It was recommended that this requirement be introduced to protect the Council's interest and that of its employees and elected Members. It was recommended that their status be flagged on the Council's computer system, and failure to disclose this information could result in the application being suspended or cancelled as determined by the designated manager. It was also recommended that applicants for vacant pitches on the Hever Road traveller site were required to join the Housing Register, in the same way that all other applicants requiring housing assistance were required to do. It was suggested that a bespoke allocations policy be prepared for the letting of pitches on Hever Road.

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Members discussed the proposal to retain a 'low priority' category band D. It was expressed that adding excess numbers of people onto the register would be unnecessary and have the potential to stretch the Council's resources. Officers confirmed that the long waiting times and low-priority status of young people living with their parents meant that younger, key-workers were discouraged from attaining a place on the register. The additional category would allow a small amount of those essential workers to gain a small percentage priority on the register which would help those younger key workers in high-value areas.

Officers confirmed that for clarity the local connection criteria would be reiterated under the new band category.

Members discussed the need for a local connection requirement should a resident wish to join the housing Register. Residents could be left in limbo should they not be able to afford property within the Sevenoaks district despite being able to find affordable property outside the district. Officers outlined that the constraints of the District did cause problems in terms of the Green Belt and Housing development restrictions.

Members asked questions of clarification regarding the local connection criteria's effect on homeless inhabitants and temporary accommodation. Officers confirmed that the local connection criteria were correlated to a family member or previous home under homeless law. It was confirmed that the homelessness and allocations policies were separate. Applications for temporary accommodation and the housing register were established under separate legislation. The previous local connection criteria had been 6 months. The new criteria had been extended to three years via employment and living which would encourage those that were committed to obtaining social housing. This also encouraged users to seek private accommodation. It was also emphasised that social housing demand outstripped supply.

Members asked clarifying questions as to the requirement to disclose working for or being related to Council employees. It was confirmed that this was recommended for the purposes of transparency to ensure fair claim to social housing. Officers suggested being mindful about a failure to disclose the information being subject to discretion for a period of three years to encourage users to come forward.

### Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) the feedback received from the public consultation be noted;  
and

- b) following consideration, it be recommend to Cabinet to recommend to Council that the second draft of the Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-2027 be adopted.

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**SEVENOAKS DISTRICT HOUSING REGISTER ALLOCATIONS SCHEME 2022-2027**

**Cabinet - 7 July 2022**

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

**Status:** For Comment

**Also considered by:**

- Housing & Health Advisory Committee - 6 June 2022
- Council - 19 July 2022

**Key Decision:** No

Significant in terms of its effects on the communities living or working in an area comprising of 2 or more wards in the District.

**Executive Summary:** As a Local Housing Authority, Sevenoaks District Council has a statutory duty to publish a Housing Allocations Scheme for assessing and prioritising applications for social housing to determine who can join the housing register and the criteria to determine the priority banding of each application. Making changes to the Housing Allocations Scheme requires a period of consultation. This report presents a second draft of the Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-2027, which has been refined in light of feedback received from the recent public consultation. The final Housing Allocation Scheme document will require approval by Full Council so that it may be adopted.

**This report supports the Key Aim of:**

Caring Communities - to help people live safe, independent and fulfilling lives and meeting the needs of vulnerable and low income households - by helping those in housing need to have fair and proportionate access to suitable homes in the social housing sector.

Sustainable Economies- provide a good mix of decent and affordable housing - by ensuring local people have priority for social housing in the District and awarding high priority to social housing tenants who wish to downsize, thereby freeing up family size housing for others in housing need.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Kevin Maskell

**Contact Officers:** Sharon Donald, Ext. 7131

Liz Crockford, Ext. 7482

**Recommendation to Housing & Health Advisory Committee:**

- (a) To note the feedback received from the public consultation;
- (b) To consider and recommend to Cabinet to recommend to Council that the second draft of the Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-2027 be adopted;

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

- (a) To note the feedback received from the public consultation;
- (b) To consider the draft Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocation Scheme 2022-2027;
- (c) To recommend to Council that the Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocation Scheme 2022 - 2027 be adopted.

**Recommendation to Council:**

- (a) To note the feedback received from the public consultation;
- (b) That, subject to any amendments by Cabinet, the Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocation Scheme 2022-2027 be adopted.

**Reason for recommendation:** To ensure the District Council has a Housing Register Allocations Scheme that complies with statutory provisions, and which treats all applicants for social housing in a fair and equitable manner.

## Introduction and Background

- 1 Housing, health, wellbeing and life-chances are inextricably linked. A comprehensive, fair, transparent and flexible allocations scheme enables the Council to manage expectations, make the best use of current housing stock and plan for future housing supply across all tenures to meet the needs and aspirations of its current and future residents.
- 2 Covid-19 has brought into sharp focus the need for key workers to ensure the local economy and local services continue to function. Many key workers have families with young children or are single people, often on low incomes, at the start of their career or are returning to work and need affordable local housing to sustain employment and deliver essential services in the district. A key element of the policy is a revised local connection, to enable homes in the district to be prioritised for local residents with a housing need, who can demonstrate continued residency and employment within the Sevenoaks district.
- 3 The Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme enables the Council and its partners to work together to ensure we prioritise those in most need of affordable housing. The Council operates a Choice Based Letting Scheme and the Housing Register Allocations Scheme sets out a framework that describes how to register, the assessment process and property allocation process.
- 4 The recommendations within this review have all been subject to a comprehensive two-stage public consultation exercise which included; bite-size briefings, webinars, workshops, surveys, on-line questionnaires, small meetings and one to one conversation.
- 5 The Council is legally required to consult with Housing Providers operating within the district, but it has also been important to seek views and feedback from other partners, stakeholders and residents. The feedback received has enabled amendments to be considered for inclusion within the policy ahead of a final version being considered by Cabinet and full Council in July 2022. The consultation feedback also enables the completion of a thorough equalities impact assessment.
- 6 The draft Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-2027 was subject to public consultation between 14 February and 18 April 2022. Over 500 responses were received and the results are summarised, by question, below. NB. "In agreement" refers to those respondents who either strongly agreed, or agreed.
- 7 What we asked - Question 1.

*We want to offer greater support to local people.*

*We are proposing to give priority to housing register applicants who have lived or worked in the Sevenoaks District for a minimum of three years.*

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*Currently applicants are given priority if they have lived or worked in the District for a minimum of six months.*

The response was - **In agreement 78.9%**

**Recommendation:** It is recommended to approve this proposal, as the 3 year local connection period was broadly supported in the public consultation. A revised local connection will enable homes in the district to be prioritised for local residents with a housing need, who can demonstrate continued residency and employment within the Sevenoaks district.

### 8 What we asked - Question 2.

*As there is not enough social housing to help everyone, we need to prioritise the most urgent cases. We propose to rank applications on the Housing Register into four Bands. Band A will be the highest and will include:*

- *People with an urgent medical need;*
- *Those living in hazardous housing;*
- *Tenants who want to move out of a home that has become too large for them;*
- *Tenants who want to move out of a home that is adapted for someone who uses a wheelchair.*

*Applicants in Band A will have the greatest chance of being allocated social housing, with Bands B to D having less opportunity.*

The response was - **In agreement 61%**

**Recommendation:** It is recommended to approve this proposal, as the banding and outline for Band A (urgent need to move) was broadly supported in the consultation.

### 9 What we asked - Question 3.

*Social housing is provided for those who cannot afford to buy or rent a suitable home on the open market. We want to set income caps so that only those with limited incomes are eligible to join the Housing Register. We are proposing to set a higher income cap for families and a lower income cap for applicants without children.*

The response was - **In agreement 62.5%**

**Recommendation:** It is recommended to approve this proposal, as the proposed increase to the income cap to reflect local housing costs and their impact on different sized households, was supported in the public consultation. The revised thresholds will be as follows:

Up to and including 1 bedroom need - £40,000 (current: £30,000)

2 bedroom need - £50,000 (current: £40,000)

3 or more bedroom need - £60,000 (current: £40,000)

10 What we asked - Question 4

*Because of the high number of people seeking our help and the very limited supply of social housing, we intend to maintain a “one offer only” policy for most applicants. This means applicants who successfully bid for a property that meets their needs, cannot bid for another.*

The response was - **In agreement 53.6%**

**Recommendation:** It is recommended to maintain our current policy, due to the demand for social housing being much higher than the numbers of suitable properties being available.

11 What we asked - Question 5

*We want to help people who receive care and people who care for others. This could include where the carer and person receiving care need to live together in a larger home. It could also include when a carer needs to live in a home that is close to the person they are caring for. Care can mean many things and can be given in many forms. Housing Register applications under this category can be very difficult to assess in a fair and consistent way. Therefore, to ensure clarity and consistency with other local housing authorities, we are proposing that people who provide care must claim a ‘Carer Allowance’ or be providing unpaid care of at least 35 hours per week. Either the person receiving care or the person giving support, must be currently living outside the District.*

The response was - **In agreement 55.7%**

**Recommendation:** The public consultation was broadly supportive for applicants who undertake formal care of dependents and are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance at the higher rate for care or its equivalent, or are in receipt of Carers Allowance. The consultation supported unpaid carers providing at least 35 hours unpaid care per week, which would need to be evidenced by a medical assessment of the dependent. The consultation also broadly supported ‘in District’ applications, where the one-way journey time is over 1 hour’s duration. This would make the position equitable with those located outside the District.

12 Overall, the consultation shows there is positive public support for the draft revised Scheme, which is attached at Appendix 1.

13 General comments

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- A few respondents commented on the difficulties faced by young people who wanted to move to their first independent home, but are impacted by high property prices and rents combined with low wages/zero hour contracts. As currently drafted, people sharing facilities (e.g. young people still living at home with their parents and sharing cooking and bathing facilities, who want to live independently), are not classed as having a housing need and are not eligible to join the Housing Register. It is recommended that an additional category be added in Band D (low priority) and create a Local Lettings Plan to give an element of priority, which will be agreed on a site by site basis, to this category of applicant on selected schemes.
- The current scheme does not require applicants to disclose whether they are staff or Members of the Council or related to, partner of, or living with staff or Members of the Council. It is recommended that this requirement be introduced to protect the Council's interest and that of its employees and elected Members. It is recommended that their status will be flagged on the Council's computer system, and failure to disclose this information may result in the application being suspended or cancelled as determined by the designated manager
- It is recommended that applicants for vacant pitches on the Hever Road traveller site are required to join the Housing Register, in the same way that all other applicants requiring housing assistance are required to do. It is suggested that a bespoke allocations policy is prepared for the letting of pitches on Hever Road.

14 It is considered that a broad range of participants responded to the consultation, including approximately 20% of respondents who were already on, or in the process of joining, the Housing Register. Access to the consultation did not discriminate against any group or section of society. However, it is noted that 79% of respondents were female. From the comments received, it can be seen that:

- there are lots of “carers” (31% of all respondents, look after or give support);
- there are a number of references to domestic abuse;
- there are also references to overcrowding and adult children still living at home not being able to access their own accommodation

Without stereotyping, it is not unreasonable to think that there will be more women than men who have an interest in the Allocations Scheme, as they belong to, or identify with, one or more of the categories above.

Subsequent to the consultation, it remains the case that officers believe the draft Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme will help to

address the housing needs of local people, whatever their background. An equality impact assessment is attached at Appendix 2.

- 15 Periodic reviews of the Scheme are allowed for, whereby minor amendments (which do not represent a major change of Scheme), may be made. This is delegated to the Chief Officer (People & Places) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health. Through this mechanism, it is intended the Scheme will retain its relevance and robustness throughout its five year lifespan.
- 16 The proposed changes ensures that the Scheme works to make the most effective use of the social housing that becomes available. This is important because the supply of homes is limited and the district can only meet a small amount of the demand each year

#### **Other options Considered and/or rejected**

None.

#### **Key Implications**

##### Financial

There will be a cost for updating the Kent Homechoice Locata system as well as overtime costs for staff as detailed above. It is anticipated that this can be covered from existing grant funding.

##### Resource (non financial)

The new Allocations Scheme will assist the Accommodation Team in making and defending decisions, thereby freeing up officer time for other duties. When first implemented, the Accommodation Team will encounter additional work when transferring applicants over. It is felt this work can be managed through agreed overtime, ensuring the new Scheme is up and running by 30 September 2022.

##### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The District Council is required to have a Scheme that complies with the statutory provisions contained in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Failure to have a lawful scheme will lead to legal challenges that the authority would not be in a position to defend.

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### Equality Assessment

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and varies between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out in Appendix 2.

### 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 Children and Vulnerable Adults.

The new Allocations Scheme will be operated by the Accommodation Team who are fully conversant with our responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. If the Team has any concerns, the District Council's policy of, "if you see it, say it", will continue to be followed and taken up by a Safeguarding Designated Officer.

### Human Rights

Section 5 of the new Allocations Scheme recognises the needs of those seeking our help due to humanitarian and human rights abuses.

### Wellbeing

The new Allocations Scheme will promote wellbeing by assisting applicants into homes that are best suited to their needs, including homes that are accessible to those with disabilities and housing with support.

### **Conclusions**

The District Council is required to have an Allocations Scheme that complies with the statutory provisions contained in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). The current policy has identified deficiencies, which the new Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-2027 will rectify.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 - second draft of the Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-2027

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

**Background Papers**

None

**Sarah Robson**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - People & Places**

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**Sevenoaks District Housing Register  
Allocations Scheme 2022 - 2027  
Second draft May 2022**

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## 1. Introduction

This Scheme sets out the Council's priorities for how social housing in Sevenoaks District is allocated and the guidelines that determine entitlement and eligibility to join the Housing Register. This will supersede any existing and former scheme relating to the allocation of housing and is in accordance with the requirements of Section 167 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

The Scheme explains what help people can expect from the Council in meeting their housing needs and sets out the system and processes by which social homes are allocated and information on nomination agreements with housing owned and managed by housing associations and other approved Providers.

If an applicant does not meet any of the priority criteria set out within this Scheme, they will be excluded from joining the Housing Register because they have no identified housing need for social housing. If an applicant's circumstances change, they will need to submit a new application.

The Council will consider all applications for social housing in accordance with this scheme, which sets out:

- who qualifies to be included on the register
- how to apply to get on the register
- how we determine an applicant's priority on the register
- how to bid for available properties
- how available properties are allocated
- how we keep the register up to date
- how applicants can seek a review of decisions made regarding the application assessment and allocation process

The demand for housing from people in need of social housing in Sevenoaks, or wishing to move to Sevenoaks, is significantly higher than the number of homes available. There is an insufficient supply of social housing owned by housing associations to offer a home to everyone who would want it, or even to everyone who needs a home.

This allocation scheme ensures that we allocate the limited number of social homes available as fairly as possible and to those in the greatest need. The scheme is designed to ensure we comply with our legal obligations and to support the objectives of the Sevenoaks Housing Strategy.

Some homes have a Local Lettings Plan applying or they may be located on a Rural Exceptions Housing Scheme. This means these homes may not be to those in greatest housing need.

Specific allocation policies may be implemented and apply to supported housing schemes or other specialised accommodation.

### 2. Aims and objectives

The broad objectives of the scheme are to:

- to ensure we are letting properties in line with housing law
- determine the priority of applicants in a clear, transparent and consistent way
- ensure that homes are allocated fairly and to those in greatest need
- provide accurate and timely advice and information to allow applicants to make informed choices about their housing options
- create sustainable communities by the use of local lettings plans
- make the best use of the housing stock within Sevenoaks, working with our housing association partners to ensure that vacant homes are let quickly and efficiently
- to give applicants a choice of housing accommodation, or the opportunity to express preferences about housing accommodation, where this is reasonably practicable, by using choice-based lettings through Kent Homechoice

### 3. Local Connection Criteria

You will not be able to join the Housing Register if you do not have a local connection with the Sevenoaks District. A local connection under this scheme means you are:

- currently living in the District and have been resident for a continuous period of three years at the point of application. This does not include households placed in temporary accommodation under the homelessness legislation or Children Act 1989;
- currently employed in the District, and your place of work is within the District and you have been working within the District continuously for the last three years at the point of application;
- self-employed, where documentary evidence shows at least 50% of your work is within the District, and this has been the case continuously for the last three years at the point of application;
- an applicant for whom we have accepted the main housing duty under the homelessness legislation (s193 Housing Act 1996);
- a serving member of the Regular Armed Forces or a former member within five years of discharge (or a bereaved or separated spouse or civil partner of such a member);
- a serving or former member of the Reserve Armed Forces within five years of discharge who needs to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.

In exceptional circumstances, applicants will not need to demonstrate a local connection. This can include (but is not limited to) applicants who:

- have had a break in the period of continuous residence or employment due to circumstances beyond their control. For example, a temporary move to escape

violence or threats of violence, or a temporary change to their usual place of work;

- are currently residing outside Sevenoaks District but need to move into the District to provide or receive significant and ongoing care or support to, or from, a close family member (i.e. children, parents or siblings, only). A care giver/receiver must currently live a minimum one hour's journey time away. This is measured by shortest car journey or, if the applicant does not have access to private transport, the shortest timetabled public transport route
- need to move to receive significant and ongoing care or support from regulated providers
- are at risk of violence or harassment (including domestic abuse or hate crime) and that risk would be substantially reduced by a move to a permanent home in the District
- have fled from another local authority due to domestic abuse and are currently placed in a refuge or other form of temporary accommodation by the District Council
  
- are Sevenoaks residents temporarily displaced because they are currently residing in a supported housing or rehabilitation scheme outside the district
- are aged 55 years or over and wish to apply for designated older persons' housing
- applicants who are unable to demonstrate a local connection because they are travellers who have been pursuing a nomadic lifestyle in accordance with their cultural tradition

Different local connection criteria will apply to new social housing provided on Rural Exceptions Housing schemes and other schemes in rural parishes where local needs nomination arrangements have been approved by the District Council. Here, priority will be given to applicants with a local connection to the host Parish. Full criteria is set out in the legal agreement applying to each scheme. Details of these schemes and the local connection criteria applying, can be obtained from [housing.policy@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:housing.policy@sevenoaks.gov.uk)

#### **4. Qualifying Persons**

Section 160ZA Housing Act 1996 (as amended) gives power to Local Authorities to define classes of applicants that will be considered as qualifying persons. Qualification must be met at both point of application and point of offer. The Secretary of State may prescribe who are or who are not, qualifying persons.

Anyone aged 16 or above is able to join the Housing Register, unless they are ineligible or disqualified. You will be ineligible if you are a person the Government says cannot be on the list (this includes people who are subject to immigration control and do not have permission to be in the United Kingdom (UK), or whose immigration status does not allow them to benefit from government help)

## 5. Ineligible due to immigration status

The Government states that normally we will not be able to allocate social housing to persons who are not already social housing tenants and who need leave to enter or remain in the UK. This applies to all persons except British citizens or persons with a right to reside in the UK under the Withdrawal Agreement entered into between the UK and the EU.

If you need leave to enter or remain in the UK (regardless of whether you have leave) you will only be eligible to join the housing list if you are a person who falls into one of the following:

- recorded by the Secretary of State as a refugee
- granted Exceptional Leave to Remain outside of the Immigration Rules who is not subject to a condition of non-recourse to public funds
- granted unconditional and unlimited leave to remain in the UK, is habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man or Republic of Ireland) unless they are sponsored, have been resident for less than 5 years and at least one sponsor is still alive
- granted Humanitarian Protection
- granted limited leave to enter or remain in the UK on family or private life grounds under Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights under 12 paragraph 276BE (1) or 276DG or Appendix FM of the Immigration Rules who is not subject to a condition of non-recourse to public funds
- habitually resident in the Common Travel Area and who has been transferred to the United Kingdom under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 and has limited leave to remain under paragraph 352ZH of the Immigration Rules
- habitually resident in the Common Travel Area and who has Calais leave to remain under paragraph 352J of the Immigration Rules (Effective from 1 November 2018.)
- limited leave to enter and remain in the UK as the family member of a ‘relevant person of Northern Ireland’ by virtue of Appendix EU of the Immigration Rules
- habitually resident in the Common Travel Area and who has limited leave to remain in the UK as a stateless person under paragraph 405 of the Immigration Rules
- has limited leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom by virtue of Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas) of the Immigration Rules, is not subject to a condition of non-recourse to public funds and is habitually resident in the Common Travel Area
- has been granted leave to enter or remain under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy or the previous scheme for locally-employed staff in Afghanistan
- has leave to enter or remain who left Afghanistan in connection with the collapse of the Afghan government, but not if not subject to a condition of non-recourse to public funds or if the person has been given leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom upon an undertaking given by their sponsor

and has been resident in the Common Travel Area for less than five years and whose sponsors have not died

The Government also states that we cannot allocate housing to anyone unless they are habitually resident in the Common Travel Area, subject to certain exceptions for persons with rights of residence under the Withdrawal Agreement and persons who are in the UK as a result of being deported or expelled from another country.

The Government also states that we cannot allocate housing to a person from abroad whose only right to reside in the UK is based on their status as a jobseeker or an initial three months' right of residence, or is a derivative right of residence based on being the principal carer for a British citizen.

The Council is not allowed to allocate housing to an ineligible person by granting them a joint tenancy with another eligible person.

These rules do not apply to a person who is already a Secure or Introductory Tenant or an Assured Tenant of a Private Registered Provider. In that case, you are free to apply for a transfer regardless of your immigration status.

The detailed provisions of these rules are complex and the above is only a summary of them. They are also subject to change by statutory instruments issued by Government from time to time.

## **6. Unacceptable Behaviour**

Unacceptable behaviour is behaviour that is sufficiently serious enough for us to consider you to be unsuitable to be a social housing tenant. You will not usually qualify to be included on the Housing Register if you or a member of your household, has behaved in an unacceptable manner in the preceding two years on the date of your application.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include, but are not limited to the following:

- eviction or otherwise lost accommodation as a result of anti-social behaviour or rent arrears
- conviction of criminal offences in or near your home and we are satisfied you still pose a threat to neighbours or the wider community
- threatening or aggressive behaviour towards our staff or contractors
- racial, sexual or homophobic harassment, or harassment due to sexual orientation.

The decision to disqualify you will be made by the Housing Register Panel. They will take into account any supporting information from you, your current or previous landlords, and the police, the Community Safety Unit, Probation or any other relevant professional body

## 7. Assessment of Need – the banding system

To be as fair as possible in deciding who should be offered social housing, we use a banding system to determine priority for re-housing. Assessment is based on an applicant's housing circumstances, suitability of the property and any long-term medical problems.

Persons eligible to join the housing register will have their application assessed by the District Council's Accommodation Team and placed into one of four bands, in accordance with the 'fair and flexible' statutory guidance. The bands are referred to as 'A, B, C and D'. Applications in band A will be given the highest priority for re-housing, band B the next highest, then C with band D applicants having the lowest priority.

All references to "transfer applicant" means, existing tenants of a housing association partner/Provider who are currently living in social housing the District.

### **Band A**

Applicants in Band A have the highest priority for social housing. However, other housing options may still need to be considered so that Applicants can move more quickly and the Housing Advice Team will discuss this with you.

This band includes the following:

- Those with an urgent need to move as their current accommodation is unsuitable for their medical or disability needs and due to this they are unable to be discharged home from hospital or other clinical or respite facilities (e.g. "bed blocking");
- Where an applicant has a terminal illness and the current accommodation is unsuitable for their medical needs and end-of-life care or cannot be suitably adapted (such suitability/capability is as assessed by KCC Occupational Therapy and/or the District Council's Private Sector Housing team);
- Where an applicant or a member of their household has an urgent medical condition or there is an emergency medical situation, and the current home is not suitable for their medical needs or is not capable of being adapted to be able to meet these needs (such suitability/capability is as assessed by KCC Occupational Therapy and/or the District Council's Private Sector Housing team);
- Transfer applicants currently living in a designated wheelchair accessible home or a home with significant and useable adaptations (as assessed by the landlord housing association/Provider) but those adaptations are not required by any member of the household;
- Transfer applicants who need to move because their home is scheduled for redevelopment;
- Applicants who have been assessed by the Housing Register Panel as needing a move under the National Witness Mobility Programme (NWMP) or other similar vulnerable person protection scheme;

- Where the Private Sector Housing Team have assessed there are one or more Category 1 hazards (as assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme) or other severe property conditions that impose an imminent risk of harm to the occupants and remedial action is considered unreasonable or impractical for cost or other reasons;
- Applicants who have been assessed by the Housing Register Panel as needing a move due to an immediate, urgent or exceptional need;
- Where there is a rehousing obligation because a demolition, prohibition or compulsory purchase order has been served in respect of the applicant's current accommodation;
- Transfer applicants who are looking to downsize and move to a home with at least one bedroom fewer than in their current home;
- Applicants who have been assessed as requiring 3 more bedrooms to meet the needs of their household and are classed as statutory overcrowded;
- Serving members of the Armed Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service;
- The bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner;
- A member of the Armed Forces who is a tenant occupying HM Forces service accommodation, who is threatened with homelessness because they have been served with a valid notice to vacate their tenancy, or those who are otherwise leaving said service accommodation;
- An applicant who is being made redundant from, or is retiring from, a job that includes tied accommodation and their departure from the job means they are required to give up their tenancy;
- Homeless applicants who are fleeing domestic violence or abuse, where we have accepted the full rehousing duty to secure accommodation under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, and who are assessed by the Housing Register Panel as being at imminent risk of harm in their current accommodation (such current accommodation may include temporary accommodation arranged by the District Council);
- Homeless applicants (including those who are fleeing domestic violence or abuse and who are assessed by the Housing Register Panel as not being at imminent risk of harm in their current accommodation) where we have accepted the full rehousing duty to secure accommodation under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and who have been placed by the District Council in nightly paid accommodation for a period of at least 6 months (or other period that may be set by the District Council) and where no suitable accommodation (including private sector accommodation) has been identified by the Accommodation Team during this period in order to discharge the council's homelessness duty;
- Applicants who have been assessed by the District Council's Private Sector Housing Team as statutory overcrowded (Housing Act 1985) and requiring an additional bedroom(s) to meet the needs of their household in accordance with "suitable size of accommodation (Section 9); ;

### Band B

Applicants in Band B have a high priority but are still likely to have to wait some time to be re-housed. Alternative housing options should therefore be discussed with the Housing Advice Team.

This band includes the following:

- Homeless applicants where we have accepted the full rehousing duty to secure accommodation under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and they have the following additional needs:
  - Long-term health conditions that are unlikely to improve as assessed by the Housing Register Panel,
  - Households where there is a need to place them in Sevenoaks due to Child Protection Plans under Children Act 1989,
  - Households with children who have an Educational Health and Care Plan;
- Homeless applicants (including applicants fleeing domestic violence or abuse, who are assessed by the Housing Register Panel as not being under imminent threat of violence in their current accommodation) where we have accepted the full rehousing duty to secure accommodation under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and who have been placed in temporary accommodation other than nightly paid accommodation, for a period of at least 6 months (or other period that may be set by the District Council) and where no suitable accommodation (including private sector accommodation) has been identified by the Accommodation Team during this period in order to discharge the council's homelessness duty;
- Homeless applicants (including applicants fleeing domestic violence or abuse, who are assessed by the Housing Register Panel as not being under imminent threat of violence in their current accommodation) where we have accepted the full rehousing duty to secure accommodation under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and this duty has been in existence for a period of at least 12 months (or other period that may be set by the District Council), who have not been placed by the District Council in any form of temporary accommodation, and where no suitable accommodation (including private sector accommodation) has been identified by the Accommodation Team during this period in order to discharge the council's homelessness duty;
- Where an applicant or a member of their household has a high medical condition and the current home is not suitable for their medical needs or is not capable of being adapted to be able to meet these needs (such suitability/capability is as assessed by KCC Occupational Therapy and/or the District Council's Private Sector Housing Team);

- Where the Private Sector Housing Team have assessed that there are one or more Category 1 hazards (as assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme) which are having a negative impact on the medical, disability or welfare needs of a member of the household and remedial action is considered unreasonable or impractical for cost or other reasons;
- Applicants living in supported housing schemes within the District (or temporarily displaced to a supported housing scheme in another borough or district) who have been assessed as ready to move on into independent living;
- Young people (16 – 25 year olds) in care accommodation and considered ready to move out of care by KCC Social Services;
- Young people (16 -17 year olds) who are threatened with homelessness;

### **Band C**

Applicants in Band C can expect to wait a long time to be re-housed. They should proactively look at other housing options to resolve their housing difficulties.

This band includes the following:

- Homeless applicants (including applicants fleeing domestic violence or abuse, who are assessed by the Housing Register Panel as not being under imminent threat of violence in their current accommodation) where we have accepted the full rehousing duty to secure accommodation under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 but who are not assessed as having additional needs;
- Applicants who are lacking a bedroom(s) and require an additional bedroom(s) to meet the needs of their household in accordance with “suitable size of accommodation (Section 9);
- Verified rough sleepers who have a local connection to Sevenoaks;
- Where an applicant or a member of their household has a medical condition (“other condition”) and the current home is not suitable for their medical needs or is not capable of being adapted to be able to meet these needs (such suitability/capability is as assessed by KCC Occupational Therapy and/or the District Council’s Private Sector Housing Team);
- Households where one or more members are awarded a priority on medical, disability or welfare grounds, as the current housing conditions are having a negative impact on the medical, disability or welfare needs of a member of the household. This includes where care is given or received (See Section 11);

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### Band D

Applicants in Band D can expect to wait a very long time to be re-housed, unless they are applying for designated older person's housing. They may wish to look at other housing options to resolve their housing difficulties.

This band includes the following:

- Homeless applicants who have a housing need but where we do not owe a duty to secure accommodation, such as:-
  - non-priority homeless households or
  - households assessed as having become homeless intentionally;
  
- Applicants who meet none of the criteria in Bands A –C above, but are eligible, only, to be considered for properties on rural exception sites or accommodation in rural parishes where local needs housing nomination arrangements have been agreed by the Council;

*Explanatory note: Applicants will only be eligible to bid for the above categories of **rural housing** and then only for vacancies that arise in their local parish or specified neighbouring parishes. They will not be eligible to bid for any other social housing. Their inclusion on the Housing Register means the District Council does not need to hold a separate register for local needs rural housing. We know that applicants and Providers, as well as our own Housing staff, value the benefit and fairness of a single point of application for social housing.*

- Applicants age 55 years and over who wish to be considered for designated older persons' housing, and who are not currently residing in such accommodation, and who may, or may not have, a local connection to Sevenoaks District.

*Explanatory note: A local connection is not necessarily required for **designated older persons' housing**. This is to ensure there is a ready pool of eligible applicants for whenever vacancies arise. Traditionally, vacancies occur more frequently in older persons' housing and lettings tend to take longer. Wherever possible, the District Council wants to ensure vacant homes are re-let as quickly as possible, as this makes the most efficient use of the social housing stock. If applicants age 55 years and over have a local connection to the District and have other housing needs, they will be placed in the highest Band applying. Applicants who do not have a local connection to the District will only be eligible to be placed in Band D.*

## 8. Medical and Welfare Priority

The level of medical need, urgent, high or other, will be assessed and determined by the Accommodation Team. The assessment will be based on:

- **Band A (Urgent medical need):** A person will be awarded Band A if the household contains one or more members with a currently life-threatening illness or disability, and whose housing circumstances are affecting their health very severely.
- **Band B (High medical need):** A person will be awarded Band B if one member of the household or more has a serious illness or disability and their present living conditions are affecting their health to a marked degree and where a move is recommended to improve the health of the individual.
- **Band C (Other medical need):** A person will be awarded Band C if one or more of the household has an illness or disability of a moderate nature which is affected adversely by their living conditions, and where a move is recommended to improve the health of the individual.

Our assessment is not based on the nature or severity of any medical condition or disability but is focused on the direct impact that the current housing has on any condition or disability, and whether this could be alleviated by a move to a more suitable home.

For example, priority may be awarded if you have mobility issues which make it difficult for you to climb stairs and you are unable to access your bedroom or bathroom facilities on a different floor as these are only accessible by stairs. In this situation, you would benefit from a move to a property that provides level living. We will only assess your priority on medical and/or welfare grounds if there is evidence that your current housing impacts directly on your medical condition, disability, or welfare. We will not usually assess your priority on medical or welfare grounds if your household is already in Band A as an assessment cannot increase your priority.

Priority on medical or welfare grounds is assessed based on the information you submit. If you consider that anyone in your household has a medical condition that is adversely affected by your current housing, you must provide independent verification. This may be from your GP, Nurse, Hospital Consultant, Occupational Therapist or other health care professional. In welfare cases you should provide independent verification of your circumstances from your Social Worker, Support Worker or other professional involved in your case. For medical cases we may ask you to provide further evidence or refer your case for independent medical advice. For welfare assessments we may ask you to provide further evidence or (where appropriate) we may make a joint assessment with Social Services, or an appropriate support agency.

We assess your priority by looking at your current housing. If it meets the medical and welfare needs of you and all members of your household there will be no change in your housing priority. We look at whether your current housing makes a medical condition or disability worse, and whether it is possible to make relevant adaptations, such as providing a stair lift or wet room to your home. In mobility cases we look at

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the severity of your difficulties in relation to your property. Factors such as the number of steps inside and leading to a property, width of internal doorways and circulation space, and whether you have a lift or ramp may be relevant. The assessment will consider whether a move to more suitable housing would either improve the medical condition or substantially improve your quality of life. If you have medical needs, but a move would not significantly improve the situation, there will be no change in priority based on medical grounds.

Overcrowding may impact on the health and well-being of some or all members of your household and/or the needs of any dependent children. This is taken into account in the banding priority awarded due to overcrowding, and usually no further priority will be awarded.

Similarly, when assessing priority on welfare grounds we will consult with other people involved in your care, as this may identify ways to help you stay in your current home with appropriate ongoing support. If this resolves your support needs, you will not be awarded any priority on welfare grounds. Otherwise, we look at whether your needs are made worse by your current housing. If so, we will consider whether a move to more suitable housing would improve things for you. If you have welfare needs, but a move would not significantly improve the situation, there will be no change in priority on welfare grounds.

If you need to move into the district in order to provide or receive significant and ongoing care or support to or from a close family member (children, parents, or siblings, only) you will need to meet to satisfy the conditions given in section 11. You will not normally be eligible to join the housing register if you want to move within the district to provide or receive significant and ongoing care or support to or from a close family member.

If you are currently living in supported housing (including refuge) and have been assessed by the support provider as ready to move on into independent living, you will usually be awarded Band A priority on welfare grounds.

If you are experiencing difficulties in accessing your home due to non-medical matters such as carrying children, shopping, prams or pushchairs on external or communal stairs or do not have access to a private garden, you will not usually be awarded any change in priority based on medical or welfare grounds.

## 9. Suitable Size of Accommodation

Generally, social housing is offered in line with the following guide:

*Table of suitable size accommodation depending on household*

Household composition	Type and size of home
A single person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shared accommodation</li> <li>▪ Bedsit</li> <li>▪ Studio flat</li> <li>▪ One bedroom flat/house</li> <li>▪ Or designated older persons' housing, if appropriate</li> </ul>
A couple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One bedroom flat, house or bungalow</li> <li>▪ Or designated older persons' housing ,if appropriate</li> </ul>
Two adults (or couple with verified need for separate bedrooms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Two bedroom flat, house or bungalow</li> <li>▪ Or designated older persons' housing, if appropriate</li> </ul>
A couple or single parent with one child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Two bedroom flat, house or bungalow</li> </ul>
A couple or single parent with two children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Two or three bedroom flat, house or bungalow (depending on the age/sex of children)</li> </ul>
A couple or single parent with three or more children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Three or four bedroom house (depending on the age/sex of children)</li> </ul>

Exceptions to this guide, depending on individual circumstances, which include (but are not limited to) applicants where:

There is a medical recommendation for a bigger home for example:

- To meet a medical or disability need for an extra bedroom;
- To accommodate a carer;
- The available home has special adaptations which you need and there are no other applicants of the correct household size available that need those adaptations.

Other reasons include:

- The home is offered as the result of an emergency;

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- The home is offered to a homeless applicant as temporary accommodation;
- The home is offered under the specific terms of a Local Lettings Plan;
- The home is offered to a Band A transfer applicant, where the applicant has reached the qualifying age for Pension Credit (i.e. the under-occupation restriction, or “Bedroom Tax”, does not apply) and the applicant is downsizing from a home with at least 3 bedrooms, then such applicant is eligible to be considered for a 2 bedroom home or less, irrespective of the size of their household.

Bungalows will usually only be allocated to households where the applicant or a member of their household has been assessed as needing single level living accommodation.

### **10. Shared responsibilities for children**

We acknowledge that many separated or divorced parents continue to share responsibilities for their children including providing a home for them. Where any dependent children live with you some of the time and at other times with their other parent/guardian at a separate address, we will assess whether your address is their main home so that they can be included as members of your household.

We will consider the following:

- the financial support you receive including Child Benefit, Universal Credit/tax credits, disability benefits (if appropriate) and maintenance from their other parent/guardian
- any Family Court Order(s) under the Children Act (1989) in respect of parental responsibility, contact or residency
- supporting evidence from Social Services in respect of fostering, guardianship or adoption placements. Whether the children currently reside with someone else for all or part of each week

Regardless of the amount of time that your children spend with you, if we decide that their main home is not with you, they will not be included on your Housing Register application; and they will not be considered when assessing overcrowding/under-occupation or the size of property (number of bedrooms) that you can apply for or be offered under this scheme.

### **11. Carers**

A carer is someone who looks after and supports a partner, friend, relative or neighbour who would not be able to manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness or disability. It does not mean a professional care worker or personal assistant who gets paid for their work.

In terms of this Scheme, a care giver/receiver can be only be a partner/spouse, sibling or child. A care giver/receiver must currently live outside the District and be a minimum of one hour's journey time away by car, for each one-way journey, or, if

they do not have access to private transport, the journey time will be measured by the shortest timetabled public transport route.

To be considered for Band C priority due to care needs, the care giver must be in receipt of Carer's Allowance or can demonstrate they provide care for at least 35 hours per week (this will be assessed by the Housing Register Panel) and the care receiver must be in receipt of at least one of the following;

- Disability Living Allowance (Care component);
- Personal Independence Payment (Daily living component);
- Attendance Allowance;
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit;
- Employment and Support Allowance.

If you have requested to be re-housed in order to provide a bedroom for your carer, this will be considered by the Housing Register Panel who will take into account the following:

- whether your care needs have been assessed as including overnight support
- whether you have been awarded benefits because of illness or disability including
- the level of care that you need and whether this is likely to change in the future
- the ability of your carer to provide the level of care required
- your current accommodation, and where your carer currently resides

## **12. Exceptional Priority**

To assist the national police force to tackle serious crime and to support witnesses in the legal process, the council works in partnership with colleagues in the National Witness Mobility Programme (NWMS) and will, as required, accept referrals from this source.

Such cases will have been assessed and verified by the NWMS managers and referrals will only be accepted with the agreement of the Service Manager (Housing Options). There are confidentiality considerations for such cases and no personal information will be taken until the applicant accepts a direct offer of accommodation in the district. Any proposed offer will be checked for suitability by the NWMS before the offer is made and details of successful lettings may not subsequently be made available to the public.

### 13. Direct Lets

Certain properties are excluded from choice-based letting (bidding) and are allocated by making a direct offer to an applicant. This includes (but is not limited to) the following applicants:

- with an immediate need to move on health or welfare grounds, where the current home is unsuitable, or where there is an immediate threat of violence
- who are subject to current multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPAs), and who pose a very serious risk to the community, where the type or location of properties that are suitable may need to be restricted
- who have been temporarily decanted from their current housing to enable demolition or redevelopment work and who need to transfer to a suitable property within the new development
- with a need for a bespoke adapted/wheelchair accessible home which is to be provided within a new development (as assessed by the Housing Register Panel)
- to discharge our duty to provide accommodation to some homeless households under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended)

Wherever possible the direct letting of a property will match the applicant's assessed need in terms of number of bedrooms needed or floor level, and any essential requirements on health and welfare grounds. Other factors such as non-essential preferences regarding the location or type of housing will not normally be considered.

### 14. One offer/refusals

Only **one** offer of housing will be made to applicants under this Scheme, except in the case of applicants who are applying for designated older persons housing or for existing social housing tenants who are seeking to downsize.

Where we have accepted a homelessness duty, the offer of accommodation could be a property the applicant has bid for through Kent Homechoice, or a property bid for by a Housing Officer on behalf of the applicant, or a direct offer made to end the Council's homelessness duty. The final offer will be confirmed in writing stating that the Council's duty to the applicant under part VII of the 1996 Housing Act (as amended) will be ended. Every homeless applicant has the right to request a review of suitability of the accommodation offered in discharge of the Council's Part VII duty.

Auto bidding on Kent Home Choice is automatically enabled for all homeless applicants and can be arranged for any other applicant on request. Any successful bids through auto bidding will count as the final offer of accommodation.

An offer of suitable accommodation, which is arranged by way of a nomination to a housing association or private sector property, will be considered to be a reasonable offer.

In all cases, offers will be seen as suitable if they reasonably meet the housing and medical needs of the household. Factors taken into account include property size, location, affordability and, where predetermined by the Accommodation Team, any areas that are considered unsafe. In considering suitability, the Council will give regard to the overall supply and availability of accommodation and the demands placed on it by all priority groups.

If an offer is refused, the reasons for refusal will be considered by the Housing Register Panel who will decide if the property offered was suitable. If the property offered was unsuitable, then one further offer will be made. However, if the property offered was suitable then no further allocation will be made, and the applicant will be removed from the Housing Register and disqualified for 12 months.

See Section 26 for how to ask for a review of an offer if you feel the property is unsuitable for you.

## **15. Determining Priority**

### **Assessment and Priority List Date**

We assess all of the information you provide to support your application and may ask you to provide further evidence to support your application.

If you are eligible and not disqualified, the two main factors that determine priority on the register are your assessed need (Bands A to D) and your priority date. Your priority date will usually be the date that your online application is verified, unless your application is rejected if you fail to provide the information we need to assess it within 28 days of applying.

Where there is a subsequent relevant change in your circumstances that affects your priority band assessment, your priority date will usually be changed to the date we were notified of the change. We will email to tell you whether or not you have been included on the register. If you have been included, we will tell you the size of property you are eligible to bid for and in which priority band you have been placed. You have the right to request a review of the facts of your case that we have used in this assessment.

You must tell us of any change in your circumstances within 14 days of the change. We will email you to let you know if the change affects your level of housing need and/or your priority band. The banding reflects broad levels of housing need, so some changes in your circumstances may make no difference to the band you are in. However, sometimes a significant change in circumstances, such as a move to another address, the birth of another child, a change to your household income or savings or a substantial change in mobility may result in a reassessment of your priority. Your application will usually be suspended and you will not be able to bid for any properties until you have provided enough written evidence to allow us to verify the change and reassess your priority, regardless as to whether your priority banding actually changes.

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Your household will be placed in the appropriate band according to its highest need, not the accumulation of its needs. For example, if you are awarded priority on the grounds of overcrowding and are lacking two or more bedrooms, you will be placed into Band B regardless of whether you also have another need such as a non-essential medical or welfare reason for moving.

### **Overcrowding/Under Occupation**

We assess overcrowding and under-occupation by comparing the number of bedrooms in your home against your household's needs and in acknowledgement of the minimum standards set out in the Allocations Code of Guidance. You will be assessed as needing one bedroom for the following:

- Every adult couple
- Any other adult aged 18 or over
- Any two children of the same sex aged under 18
- Any two children under aged 10

Households will also be assessed as needing one bedroom for each of the following if they are assessed by the Accommodation Team as being included as part of the household:

- A member of your household who is temporarily absent from your home because they are attending a full time University or higher education course;
- A tenant requiring a non-resident overnight carer - It must be demonstrated that it is essential that applicants require both day and night care. This will be assessed by the Accommodation Team based on a care needs assessment provided by Kent County Council adult social services;
- A disabled child who cannot share a bedroom with their sibling due to their disability - to award this we will require confirmation of the need for an additional bedroom from a medical professional and proof of Disability Living Allowance with care awarded at middle or high rate. The Accommodation Team will assess the information provided and their decision will be final;
- An adult child who is serving away with the armed forces;
- A room for a foster child or children - only one room will be awarded and is subject to confirmation of approved foster status from Kent County Council. Children who are on weekend or holiday visits do not count as being fostered;
- Pregnancy will be included in the room calculation from 22 weeks gestation, although it will not be included in any overcrowding calculation until the baby is born.

A bedroom is defined as any room intended to be used as a bedroom, in line with what is stated on any tenancy agreement and to reflect the level of rent charged. If

your current home has two separate living/reception rooms it is probable that one of these could be considered as suitable for use as a bedroom.

For the purposes of assessing overcrowding:

- Two children of the same sex would be expected to share a bedroom until the eldest reaches 18 years of age
- Two children of the opposite sex would be expected to share a bedroom until the eldest reaches 10 years of age
- A couple or single parent would not be expected to share their bedroom with a child
- A room measuring less than 50 sq. ft. (4.65 sq. m) would not be treated as a bedroom.

### **Deliberately worsening circumstances**

If we consider that an applicant has acted unreasonably to make their housing circumstances deliberately worse in their previous accommodation without good reason, or with the aim of qualifying for a higher banding, no additional priority will be awarded.

This applies where an applicant or member of their household has committed anti-social behaviour that would render them unsuitable for re-housing. Cases will be reviewed once the applicant can demonstrate that this behaviour has been addressed. Where applicable, applicants will retain the banding and priority they held before worsening their circumstances.

## 16. Property Condition

If you rent your current home from a private landlord and you state that your reason for seeking social housing is due to problems with the condition of your home, a member of our Private Sector Housing team will contact you and your landlord or managing agent responsible for the property. You must cooperate with this and any subsequent property inspection that may be required. No priority will be awarded if you withhold your consent to allow us to contact your landlord or prevent works being carried out, for example by refusing to let contractors into your home to undertake the works.

If a visit is determined necessary by the Private Sector Housing team, they will inspect and assess your home using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). We use this to identify and categorise any hazards to health and safety. A crowding and space hazard is included within the housing needs assessment of overcrowding and, if present, no additional priority will be awarded under property condition grounds.

Band A priority will only be awarded to applicants who currently occupy a property which has at least one Category 1 hazard (excluding crowding and space) where the conditions present an immediate threat of serious injury or are life threatening and where remedial action is considered unreasonable or impractical for cost or other reasons.

Examples of where remedial action is considered unreasonable or impractical is where:

- Work cannot be carried out to remedy a serious hazard with the applicant in residence and no alternative accommodation is available to the applicant to assist in progressing remedial works.
- The risk from the hazard in the property is greater because of being an elderly person or having a young child but the property would be relatively safe for occupation by others.

Band B priority will only be awarded to applicants who occupy a property which has at least one Category 1 hazard (excluding crowding and space) where:

- The hazard(s) identified pose a threat to the health and wellbeing of the occupants but where there is no immediate danger or it is not life-threatening, and remedial action is considered unreasonable or impractical.
- You do not have access to one or more of the basic facilities: bathroom, kitchen, inside toilet, cold or hot water supplies, or gas/electricity and this cannot be remedied within a reasonable timescale. (This does not apply if you live in shared accommodation and share facilities with another household.)

Any priority awarded on the grounds of property condition will be removed if the necessary remedial works are completed before you are offered social housing.

## 17. Financial Criteria

If you have a total household income or capital (including savings) above the thresholds described below, you will not usually be included on the Housing Register. The current thresholds for households are:

- Without dependent children, a total gross annual income of up to £40,000
- With dependent children, a total gross annual income of up to £56,000
- Total capital assets or savings of £16,000 or more, except where the applicant is applying for designated older persons' housing, in which case the total capital assets or savings threshold is £50,000 or more.

When looking at gross income, everything will be taken into account including earnings, overtime payments, benefits, child maintenance and any other relevant income. The gross income level and the asset level will be based on average private rents or the level of deposit required to buy an average priced property in the area and will be reviewed as part of the annual review of this Scheme

Current payments of the following are disregarded as income for the purposes of this assessment:

- Disability living allowance
- Attendance allowance and any benefit treated as attendance allowance
- Personal Independence Payments (PIP)
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- War pensioner's mobility supplement
- Payments in compensation for non-receipt of the above

The financial thresholds do not apply to homeless persons to whom the Council owes the main housing duty under section 193 of Housing Act 1996 or transfer applications from Secure Tenants/Assured Tenants of housing associations e.g. tenants who wish to downsize.

If you own, or jointly own a property (including under a shared ownership arrangement), whether or not you currently live there, you will not usually be eligible to join the Housing Register. Homeowners who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, or grounds relating to a disability, may be eligible to join the Housing Register if their needs cannot be met by the purchase of a suitable property, funded by the proceeds of the sale of their current property or by using their current income and capital, including savings. All applications from home owners will be considered by the Housing Register Panel.

If you exceed the income/savings limits but wish to apply to join the Housing Register due to exceptional circumstances, all such cases will be considered by the Housing Register Panel. If you are unable to join the Housing Register, you may wish to consider alternative affordable housing options. For information on First Homes and Help to Buy options, such as shared ownership, view our [affordable homes webpage](#).

## 18. Outstanding housing related debt

It is essential for our partner housing association landlords and private sector landlords to collect rent and other housing-related debt.

Applicants who have an outstanding housing-related debt owed to another Council, housing association or private sector landlord, including, but not limited to, rent arrears, council tax arrears, Housing Benefit or Universal Credit over-payments and rent deposit scheme arrears, will usually be disqualified from joining the Housing Register, unless they have entered into a repayment plan and have made continuous repayments in accordance with the plan for a minimum period of six months. In assessing an application to join the Housing Register, the Council will take into account the size of the debt, the means to pay and the degree of need.

Once their application has been accepted onto the Housing Register, repayments should continue to be made on a regular and sustained basis until the debt is cleared. If the applicant breaches their repayment plan, they will be suspended from receiving any offer of accommodation. If the applicant is successful in bidding for a social home, any outstanding debts must usually be cleared in full before a property will be allocated.

In some cases where an applicant would otherwise be offered accommodation but for such a debt and where it is considered that although regular repayments are in place there is no reasonable prospect of them repaying the debt within the time frame required because they are unable to gain employment because of physical or mental illness, learning or physical disability, or are considered to be unable to adequately manage their finances due to health or disability reasons, the offer may still be agreed. This decision will be made by the Housing Register Panel.

Applicants who have been cautioned or convicted of housing or welfare benefits related fraud where that conviction is unspent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, will usually be disqualified from joining the Housing Register. Any person may apply to join once this conviction is spent.

## 19. Allocations exceptions

The allocation of housing by a local housing authority (Sevenoaks District Council) is defined in s.159 of the Housing Act 1996 and includes nominating a person to be an assured tenant of housing accommodation held by a registered social landlord / Registered Provider/Housing Association.

The following are not “allocations” under this Scheme:

- An offer of accommodation to an existing social housing tenant (transfer applicant) with no reasonable preference. Under the Localism Act 2011 such cases are no longer subject to the Allocation rules set by section 166 of the

Housing act 1996 Part 6:

- Succession to a tenancy on an existing social housing tenant's death pursuant to s89 Housing Act 1985, or
- Assignment of a tenancy to a person qualified to succeed to the tenancy on the tenants death, or
- Transfer of the tenancy by a court order under family law provisions or under the Civil Partnership Act 2004, or
- An introductory tenancy becoming a secure tenancy. or
- Mutual exchanges (a swap of homes), unless these relate to Rural Exceptions Housing or accommodation in rural parishes where local needs housing nomination arrangements have been agreed by the Council.
- A housing association initiated transfer (e.g. decant to alternative accommodation to allow for major works).
- Provision of non-secure temporary accommodation in discharge of any homelessness duty or power.
- Allocations which housing associations make outside of their nomination agreement commitments with Sevenoaks District Council.
- Allocations where there may be public protection risks
- Where a Court makes a decision about a tenancy (such as an order under the Children Act).
- Where we let a property directly to someone as temporary accommodation only.
- Where the tenant is returning to the property after refurbishment or improvement.
- Tenancies granted under section 39 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 or sections 554 and 555 of the Housing Act 1985.

## 20. Making an application

Everyone who wants to be considered for inclusion on our Housing Register must carry out the application process set out below:

- Follow instructions on how to apply for housing on the online application form.
- Provide original documents to verify your identify and current housing circumstances
- Complete any supplementary forms that we may send or answer further questions that we ask you.

This process ensures that all applicants are assessed in a transparent and consistent manner. That we have all the information needed about your household and current circumstances to determine whether you qualify to join the Housing Register and if so, what priority banding is appropriate.

You can complete an assessment form to record your household's housing needs if you are 16 years of age or over. You can be included on only one application for housing in this district. This can either be your own personal application or you can be included as a household member in another person's application.

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You must complete the assessment form fully and accurately. We will use it to decide your priority on the Housing Register so that housing can be allocated fairly on the basis of the greatest need. We will carry out home visits and interviews to confirm housing needs.

If you are between 16 and 18 years of age, before you are offered social housing, your ability to manage a tenancy will be assessed, usually via a referral to Social Services or other support services, to identify any need for support. You will need a guarantor, usually your parent, legal guardian or other relative as any tenancy granted will be held in trust until you reach 18 years of age.

You are required to sign declarations to confirm that you:

- Have provided true, accurate and complete information
- Will notify us of any change in your circumstances within 14 days of the change.
- Understand that information given on the assessment form will be shared with housing association landlords, other council departments, data matching companies and other relevant parties.
- Consent to us making relevant enquiries to verify the information given on the assessment form.
- Consent to the disclosure of relevant information by third parties to us, or by us to third parties.
- Understand that information provided may be used to help in the detection and prevention of fraud.

If you do not have access to the internet, the Accommodation Team can help you make an application.

### **Who can be included on your application?**

You can include members of your household who are currently living together with you, including:

- Your partner, whether you are married, in a civil partnership or cohabiting
- You and your partner's dependent children under the age of 18, including adopted children
- Relatives, which under this Scheme means adult children, parents or sibling, who have a need to live with you for which evidence is provided.
- Someone who currently lives with you as your caregiver.

We will also consider including partners, carers and dependents who are not currently living with you if you are:

- No longer able to live independently because you need care and support that they can provide (or they need care and support that you can provide) and you are unable to live together as your current accommodation does not meet any needs arising from a disability (see Section 10).

- Unable to live together as neither you nor any other member of your household have accommodation available which is large enough to accommodate your whole household together
- Where you are applying to set up an independent home for and your household

### **Advice and information about your application**

If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness, you should contact [housing@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:housing@sevenoaks.gov.uk) for immediate advice and assistance. Further information can be found on our website [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk).

Advice and information about your application to join the housing register can be obtained by emailing [accommodationteam@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:accommodationteam@sevenoaks.gov.uk). All applicants accepted onto the Housing Register are entitled to see their registration and receive a copy of their application. An applicant also has the right to request general information to assess how their application is likely to be treated under this housing allocation scheme and whether and when housing appropriate to his/her needs is likely to become available.

Waiting times depend on number of factors:

- Your personal circumstances including your priority banding and the size and type of property needed to meet your household's need
- The number of properties available for letting
- the number of bids placed on each property
- Changes in the law, regulations or guidance, or the rules of this Housing Allocation Scheme.

Only a very general indication can be given as to how long an applicant may have to wait to be successful by using historical allocations data. There is no guarantee of housing by a certain date regardless of the priority band awarded. Households with a relatively low need are likely to wait a very long time and many have no realistic prospect of receiving an offer of social housing.

## **21. How to Bid**

Social housing within the Sevenoaks District is allocated through the Kent HomeChoice (Choice Based Lettings) scheme  
<http://www.kenthomechoice.org.uk/choice/>.

Applicants who are eligible to join the housing register can express a preference over the area and type of accommodation in which they would like to live. When properties are advertised on the Kent Home Choice website, applicants are able to express an interest (bid) for the appropriate size of home but with type and location of their choosing.

After a property is let, feedback about the number of households that made a bid, the priority band of the successful applicant, and their priority date is available to view to bidders on Kent Homechoice. This helps applicants to understand the availability of

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suitable properties, their likelihood of success when applying and to gain an indication of the time they could be waiting.

When your application has been accepted onto our Housing Register you will receive confirmation of your priority banding and details of how to access the Kent Homechoice bidding process. All housing offered by our housing association partners is generally advertised on Kent Homechoice and each property will be available for applicants to place bids for a period of five calendar days.

The advertisements show photographs and give basic details of the properties including:

- The area
- Number of bedrooms
- Floor levels
- Mobility levels
- Weekly rent
- Service charges
- Any pet or age restrictions
- Any specific criteria e.g. Rural Exception Housing and/or Local Lettings Plans

There are no restrictions on the number of properties that you can bid for and you can place bids on any property that meet your household's needs as and when they are advertised.

If you prefer, we can set up auto-bidding on your account which means that a bid will automatically be placed on all properties that meet your needs by the close of bidding so that you will be included on all of the relevant shortlists and do not miss any opportunities to be offered affordable housing. Auto Bidding will be set up for all homeless applicants.

If you do not have access to the internet, the Accommodation Team can help you place bids.

Certain properties will not be advertised on Kent Homechoice and will be offered as direct lets, or will only be open for bids from certain applicants, e.g. designated older persons' housing and properties that have been adapted for wheelchair users. Properties made available under local lettings plans, Rural Exception Sites or accommodation in rural parishes where local needs housing nomination arrangements have been agreed by the Council, will be open to general bidding but will only be allocated to applicants meeting the specific criteria set.

## **22. How homes are let/allocated**

After an advertisement closes on Kent Homechoice, a shortlist is produced. In most cases, the property is offered to the household on the shortlist with the highest position in the highest band. Within each band, the order of bids is ranked by the applicant's date of registration on the housing register, starting with the earliest. The

more type and area choices an applicant makes the greater the chance the applicant will be successfully housed.

Different shortlisting rules apply to Rural Exception Sites or accommodation in rural parishes where local needs housing nomination arrangements have been agreed by the Council. In these cases, the applicant's local connection to the host Parish is considered first, followed by Band order and date of registration. An applicant's local connection to the Parish will be verified by the host Parish Council (this will be done in anonymised form).

If two or more applicants share the same priority date within the priority band, the system will place them in order of priority. The applicant at the top of the shortlist will be verified to check that the information they have given is correct and that the property is suitable. Once verified, the highest priority applicant will usually be offered the property, subject to any additional criteria that apply such as a local lettings plan, age restriction or suitability. If an applicant is not verified, does not respond to an offer or the offer is refused, the property will be offered to the next applicant in the shortlist, and so on, until the property is successfully let.

The relative position of bidders on the shortlist for a property may change between the close of bidding and when the property is offered. This will only happen where there is a change in the priority band awarded for one or more bidders on the shortlist, this would normally be as a result of the verification process. In such cases, the property will usually be offered to the applicant with the highest priority at the time the offer is made.

If there are no successful bidders the property will usually be re-advertised or it may be offered as a direct allocation to another applicant on the Housing Register. Once you are shortlisted and nominated for a property you will not be considered for any other properties that you have placed a bid on.

Our housing association partners may have their own lettings policies which prevent a property being offered to an applicant.

Specific allocation policies may apply to supported housing schemes and other specialist accommodation, and these will determine how such homes are let/allocated.

In exceptional circumstances, we may decide to restrict bidding and allocations to certain categories of applicant, e.g. homeless households. This restriction will be time limited and our website will show how long it will remain in force before it is reviewed. The decision to impose restrictions will be made by the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health.

## **23. Keeping the register up to date**

It is our intention to renew all applications annually, or earlier as and when

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required. Failure to respond within 28 days to a request to renew your application, will result in your application being removed. If good reason can be shown why there was a failure to respond, then your application may be reinstated at the discretion of the Accommodation Team.

We will also remind you to tell us about any changes in your circumstances. If you fail to respond, or fail to provide any further information we ask for within 28 days, we will assume that you no longer wish to be on the register, and your application will be removed. If you notify us of a change of circumstances, you must also supply evidence of the change within 28 days so we can reassess your application.

Your application will be removed from the Housing Register if you:

- Accept an offer of accommodation made from the Housing Register
- Accept a private sector tenancy, including when we have provided financial assistance by way of a rent deposit, and no longer have a qualifying housing need
- Do not respond to the annual review
- Do not respond to correspondence from the Council asking you to provide information
- Are no longer eligible to be included on the register
- No longer wish to be re-housed
- Have left temporary accommodation that we arranged for you and we do not have your forwarding address
- Have moved without notifying us of your new address

## **24. Local Lettings Plans**

National and regional policies encourage new housing schemes to be mixed tenure, catering for a range of needs and aspirations. Alongside this we may use Local Lettings Plans to make social housing available to a wider range and variety of households, rather than concentrations of those with particular support needs, to contribute towards balanced and sustainable communities. This may include giving priority to Local Essential Workers (see Appendix 1) or other categories of applicant.

Local lettings plans will set out the criteria and priorities for letting homes within a specific housing development or area. Local Lettings Plans have to be approved by Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health and confirmed by the Head of Housing and the partner housing association.

## **25. Housing Register Panel**

The Housing Register Panel comprises a group of three or more officers with at least one representative from the Accommodation Team, the Housing Options Team and an independent senior manager from the District Council who is not connected to Housing Services. They will meet on a regular basis to make and review decisions. The Panel will normally be chaired by a senior manager who will be responsible for notifying the applicant of the outcome.

The panel may also invite other relevant partners to attend, including but not limited to, the Community Safety Team and partner housing associations landlords. There is no right to review a decision made by the Housing Register Panel.

## **26. Consideration of offers and refusals**

After the shortlisting and checking processes, the successful bidder will be contacted to arrange for them to view the property and attend a verification interview. If you are offered a home, then you would normally be expected to accept or refuse it within 24 hours of the viewing.

If you refuse an offer, your application will be removed from the Housing Register and you will be disqualified for 12 months. You may apply to join the Housing Register again after 12 months. See section 14 for more details.

If you feel the property you have been offered does not meet your needs, you can ask for a review as to the suitability of the property and you will need to provide detailed reasons for your refusal.

Your request will be considered by the Housing Register Panel who will consider the suitability of the offer in accordance with your assessed needs taking into account (but not limited to):

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- The size, floor level, space and arrangement of the property, and whether it meets the housing needs of the household
- Any medical or welfare grounds for re-housing
- Any risk of domestic or other violence.

We will not hold the property for you during the review period; it will be immediately re-offered to another applicant and you will not receive any further offers during this time. If the review confirms the property was suitable your refusal will result in your application being removed from the Housing Register and you being disqualified for 12 months. If your reasons for refusal are accepted by the Housing Register Panel and the property offered is considered to be unsuitable for your needs, you will be able to continue bidding without any penalty.

### **27. Reinstatement of exceptional cases**

In exceptional circumstances the Council may reinstate applications which have been disqualified or suspended for a particular reason. Applicants should write to the Housing Register Panel who may reinstate the applicant or make an offer if they are satisfied, and it can be proved that disqualification from the Housing Register would cause exceptional hardship to the applicant and their household. There will be no further right of review of the decision of the Housing Register Panel.

The effect of a decision to reinstate a disqualified application on the grounds of exceptional hardship will be that the application is treated as having been made on the date it was originally made, not the date on which it was reinstated.

### **28. Ineligible or disqualified from the register**

We will write to you to notify you if we decide that you are not eligible or disqualified from the housing register. You have a right to review the decision, details of how we carry out the review can be found at Section 30 of this Scheme.

### **29. Inaccurate information provided**

The Council is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers and to this end may use the information you provide for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other Council departments, other local authorities, Government agencies and credit referencing agencies for the detection and prevention of crime.

It is an offence under the Housing Act 1996 and/or the Fraud Act 2006 for anyone seeking help from the Council to:

- give false or misleading information
- withhold information that we have asked for on an assessment form or other correspondence

- fail to tell us of a relevant change in circumstances which could affect the priority of housing awarded

This may result in prosecution, your application being suspended or cancelled and/or any tenancy granted to you being terminated. Prosecution by the Council could result in a sentence of up to ten years in prison.

It is your responsibility to inform us of any change that could affect the priority that has been awarded. If we offer affordable housing to you and, on further investigation, it appears that your circumstances had changed before the offer in a way that affected your housing priority, we reserve the right to withdraw the offer. While the investigation is ongoing the property will not usually be held for you and will be reallocated to the next person on the shortlist.

When housing has been allocated on the basis of false or misleading information, legal action may be taken to obtain possession of the property. We will decide when these provisions apply and when to begin criminal proceedings.

The Housing Register is registered under the current data protection legislation. Information on it is received, held, and disclosed only for registered purposes. For Rural Exceptions Housing schemes and accommodation in rural parishes where local needs housing nomination arrangements have been agreed by the Council, applicant details may be shared with the host Parish Council prior to an offer of housing being made.

Applicants have the right to see information on their file relating to their application except where this involves confidential third-party information. If an applicant is not eligible or does not meet the qualifying criteria for inclusion on the register or respond to an annual review of their entry on the register or is otherwise removed from the register, their records will be kept for five years before being confidentially deleted.

### **30. Right to review**

You have the right to request a review of any decision:

- To treat you as ineligible because of your immigration status
- To exclude or suspend you from the register because you do not qualify
- Setting out the facts of your case which have been, or are likely to be, considered in determining your priority on the register.

The notification of the decision will give clear grounds for the decision based on the relevant facts of your case. To request a review of a decision you must make a request in writing within 21 days of receiving it and clearly state why you do not agree with the decision. We may ask you to provide more information and/or attend an interview. Reviews will usually be carried out by the Housing Register Panel.

The review will look at your case based on the rules in our Scheme, any legal requirements and all relevant information. This includes information you have

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provided and any changes since the original decision was made, for example paying off arrears or setting up a repayment plan, or where someone responsible for anti-social behaviour has left your household. We will not carry out a further review of the decision unless there is a material change in your circumstances.

### **31. Equality and diversity**

Sevenoaks is a diverse district and home to people from a wide range of backgrounds and communities. We are committed to all our residents having the opportunity to reach their potential and seek to ensure our services meet all their needs.

We seek to ensure that no section of our community is excluded from the benefits and opportunities available and that we always have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

This housing allocation scheme will be applied consistently to everyone who applies to or is on the housing register, regardless of race, gender, disability, age, sexuality, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

### **32. Scheme maintenance**

The Scheme will remain in place and in operation for 5 years from the date of adoption.

Sevenoaks District Council's Housing Service is responsible for this Scheme and will review its operation every 12 months and follow any changes to the relevant legislation or regulations.

It may sometimes be necessary to make minor amendments, which do not represent a major change of Scheme. This will include an annual review of income thresholds. Authority to introduce such minor amendments is delegated to the Chief Officer – People and Places, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health.

We will seek to inform all applicants of any changes to this scheme by publicising details on our website and on Kent Homechoice.

## **Appendix 1 – definition of Local Essential Worker**

A Local Essential Worker is defined as someone employed/self-employed in the Sevenoaks District as set out in Section 3, and who works in one of the following occupations:

- Public sector employees providing frontline services in areas including health, education and community safety, including NHS staff, teachers, police, firefighters, military personnel, social care and childcare workers;
- School support staff in the public sector;
- District Council employees who provide frontline services;
- Kent County Council and Town/Parish Council employees (from the 31 Town/Parishes located within the District) who provide frontline services;
- Private sector employees and the self-employed\*, providing frontline services in care, including teachers and school support staff, health care, social care and childcare workers;
- Private sector employees and the self-employed who provide frontline services in amenities, including cleaners, kitchen/catering staff, shop workers, hairdressers, local transport, food processing/production and agriculture; and
- Any other frontline occupational group experiencing recruitment or retention issues - such issues being first evidenced to the satisfaction of the District Council.

Any changes to the definition will be at the sole discretion of the District Council, as approved by the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health. Any changes will be shown on the District Council's website.

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## Equality Impact Assessment

### Appendix 2- Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme

<b>Summary of decision to be made:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft of the Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocation Scheme		
<b>Lead Officer (job title):</b>	Liz Crockford, Interim Housing Strategy Manager /Sharon Donald, Interim Head of Housing		
<b>Date the final decision is due to be made:</b>	19/07/2022	<b>Date this assessment commenced:</b>	13/4/22
<b>Is the decision relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty?</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>		
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	<b>Yes / No</b>		
Advance equality of opportunity	<b>Yes / No</b>		
Foster good relations	<b>Yes / No</b>		
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:			
<b>Characteristic:</b>	<b>Data and consultation</b>	<b>Summary of impact</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Disability	Sevenoaks District Housing Needs Survey 2017, Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs 2021, 2011 Census, Sevenoaks District Housing Strategy 2022 - 2027 (emerging), Older Persons' Housing Study 2022, public consultation February to April 2022.	Highest priority proposed for tenants vacating adapted homes. This will facilitate the potential for more suitable homes becoming available to meet the needs of disabled Housing Register applicants. See also Carers.	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
Carers	As above	Reasonable travel distances now stipulated as a factor when determining priority. This will ensure applicants experiencing unsustainable journeys to give/receive care, will have priority.	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
Race	As above	None - the allocations policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of race	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
Gender	As above	None - the allocations policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of gender .	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
Age	As above	Highest priority proposed for tenants	

## Equality Impact Assessment

		vacating larger family-size properties and downsizing to homes with fewer bedrooms. This will facilitate more family-size homes becoming available to meet the needs of other Housing Register applicants. Applicants age 55 years or over and wishing to live in designated older persons' housing will not need to demonstrate a local connection.	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
Religion / Belief	As above	None - the allocations policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of religion or belief	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
Sexual Orientation	As above	None - the allocations policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of sexual orientation	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
Pregnancy / Maternity	As above	The draft scheme prioritises pregnancy and maternity as a protected characteristic.	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
Marital or Civil Partnership Status	As above	The allocations policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of this status	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
Gender reassignment	As above	The allocations policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of gender reassignment	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
<b>Summary of impacts :</b> (to be included in committee reports)	<p>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 impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people.</p> <p>The decisions recommended through this paper will result in clearer definitions and transparency within the new Sevenoaks District Housing Allocations Scheme. The Scheme determines eligibility for, and the allocation of, social housing within the District. Social housing is owned by Registered Provider partners</p>		

## Equality Impact Assessment

	<p>as well as other Providers, including Quercus Housing. The Scheme will provide greater opportunities for people with a genuine local connection and an identified housing need, including those in reasonable preference groups and with protected characteristics, to join the Sevenoaks District Housing Register. The Scheme ensures priority is given to those in the greatest housing need, except where homes are delivered on Rural Exceptions Sites or where a Local Lettings Plan has been approved.</p> <p>A review mechanism is proposed, so that minor adjustments to the Allocations Scheme may be made (through delegated authority to the Chief Officer People &amp; Places, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing &amp; Health) to ensure the Scheme retains its relevance and robustness.</p>			
Please tick the outcome of this assessment:	<del>No impact</del>	<b>Adjust the policy</b>	<del>Continue the policy</del>	<del>Stop and remove the policy</del>
Date assessment will be reviewed:	07/07/2022			

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SEVENOAKS DISTRICT HOUSING REGISTER ALLOCATIONS SCHEME 2022-2027

Supplementary paper for Cabinet - 7 July 2022

Additional information is presented for consideration by Cabinet, as follows:

1. The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) and Persons Subject to Immigration Control (Housing Authority Accommodation and Homelessness) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2022, comes into force on 22 June 2022. In light of this, Section 5 - *Ineligible due to immigration status*, of the draft Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022 - 2027 ("the draft"), needs to be updated. The following wording is proposed:

Certain persons in the UK who have limited leave to remain are exempt from the residential criteria and local connection set out in this Scheme if they are deemed to be a Ukraine Refugee, as set out in the updated Regulations which took effect from 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022.

2. In Section 7 - *Assessment of need - the banding system* and Section 16 - *Property Condition*, of the draft, the points of clarification in relation to Category 1 hazards have now been determined. The wording as shown in the draft, is considered suitable.
3. In light of comments provided at Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 6 June, the additional category of applicant proposed for Band D (low priority), is suggested to be revised to:

Single, concealed households (including young people who live in the family home), who also meet the definition of Local Essential Worker.

*Explanatory note: On selected new build housing schemes, a small number of homes (to be agreed on a scheme by scheme basis by the Chief Officer People & Places), may be put forward for allocation to this category of applicant under the terms of a Local Lettings Plan (subject to approval by the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health). This position will ensure applicants in housing need from the higher Bands will continue to have priority to the vast majority of homes that become available for letting. However, we recognise the needs of Local Essential Workers and the important work they do in the local economy. We wish to help where we can and this is particularly the case with young people who have lived in the District for many years, but who now want to move to their first independent home. The above will enable us to help Local Essential Workers in a small but careful way, whilst ensuring we manage the expectations of this category of applicant.*

20 June 2022

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## **Item 21 - Out of Area Placement Policy**

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 14 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

### Housing & Health Advisory Committee (6 June 2022, Minute 11)

The Chief Officer People and Places presented the report which proposed the Council's Out of Area Placement Policy.

The demand for both temporary accommodation (TA) and settled accommodation was growing across the district with the number of applicants approaching the Council for resettlement support growing each year. Alongside the increase to local demand, the Council was also competing for both TA and longer-term accommodation with other districts and boroughs including unitary London Authorities, whom have a far more generous budget and funding streams than Sevenoaks District. There was a lack of available move on properties. These pressures led the Council to consider the manner in which resources were allocated based on household composition; community contribution including work and volunteering; and social and welfare needs. The proposed Out of Area Placement Policy set out how the Council sought to work with households based on their priorities, presenting needs and affordability in order to offer the most appropriate accommodation for both TA and through the Private Rented Sector as a longer-term housing solution.

Members discussed the report and asked questions of clarification.

It was confirmed that a financial incentives package was being looked at to encourage landlords to get involved. Private sector offers were encouraged to prevent homelessness and prevent residents getting stuck in temporary accommodation.

Members expressed some concern regarding vulnerable people being moved out of the area. It was confirmed that permanent relocation was possible for those that wanted it but that this was not an ideal solution and could cause problems long-term for residents if they wished to return. It was also confirmed that the Council kept track of temporary accommodation placements. Costs and duration were tracked. In-district accommodation was also encouraged with support being offered to those in temporary accommodation including schooling and transportation needs. Members also raised concern regarding the breadth of choice being provided for those with temporary accommodation needs.

### Public Sector Equality Duty

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

## Agenda Item 21

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet to adopt the Sevenoaks District Out of Area Placement Policy.

**SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL OUT OF AREA PLACEMENT POLICY**

**Cabinet - 7 July 2022**

**Report of:** Sarah Robson, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - People and Places

**Status:** For Decision

**Also considered by:**

- Housing & Health Advisory Committee - 6 June 2022

**Key Decision:** No

**Executive Summary:** In order for Sevenoaks District to adhere to relevant case law and good practice the Homelessness prevention service has developed an Out of Area Placement Policy (Appendix 1) which gives a framework and structure to the allocation of both temporary accommodation and Private Rented Sector Offers to homeless applicants who have approached for housing assistance.

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** the Council's Housing and Health Strategy.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Kevin Maskell

**Contact Officer:** Sharon Donald, Interim Head of Housing, x 7131

**Recommendation to Housing and Health Advisory Committee:**

That comments on recommendation (a) below are passed to Cabinet.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

- a) To adopt the Sevenoaks District Out of Area Placement Policy.

**Reason for Recommendation:**

The policy will enable Sevenoaks District Council to work in a structured and transparent manner when allocating properties which at times will sit outside of our district boundaries.

**1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The demand for both temporary accommodation (TA) and settled accommodation is growing across our district with the number of applicants who are approaching the Council for resettlement support growing each year. In the preceding four years we have had an incremental increase, as set out below:

**Table 1: Homeless approaches**

	<b>Number Of Approaches</b>
Jan - Dec 2017	1080
Jan - Dec 2018	1314
Jan - Dec 2019	1193
Jan - Dec 2020	1199
Jan - Dec 2021	975

- 1.3 Approaches have slightly decreased because homeless preventions have increased over the past 12 months and new temporary accommodation placements have decreased. However, the team is struggling to secure suitable and affordable ‘move on’ accommodation in the district, which is impacting numbers of households remaining in temporary accommodation
- 1.4 The need of temporary accommodation continues to increase and has naturally led to a greater demand on longer term accommodation including both affordable housing through the Housing Register and access to the private rented sector through our Private rent Scheme (PRS). As such, the pool of decent affordable units within Sevenoaks District is shrinking, as new build affordable housing cannot keep pace with demand. We are finding it considerably more difficult to place the growing number of households within our district boundaries.
- 1.5 A large number of recent reports have demonstrated the negative effects of homelessness and temporary accommodation on people’s physical and mental health and more stable, settled accommodation available in the private rented sector may contribute to resolving this. Please see Background Paper ([22.7 HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS\\_v08\\_WEB\\_0.PDF \(local.gov.uk\)](#)).

**Table 2: Numbers in Emergency Accommodation**

<b>Period</b>	<b>No in all Emergency accommodation (as at 1st of each month)</b>
Jan - Dec 2017	663
Jan - Dec 2018	834
Jan - Dec 2019	903
Jan - Dec 2020	1083
Jan - Dec 2021	1423

- 1.6 It is noted that an increase in temporary accommodation has meant there has been a requirement to also source accommodation outside of Sevenoaks District. Sevenoaks District Council has adapted the Help to Rent Scheme so that residents are able to source the property independently or through the assistance of Sevenoaks District Council whom have built up a number of links to access private accommodation. In each instance, the Council will conduct a number of checks to ensure the property is affordable, meets the needs of the household and is at a standard of quality in which residents would be happy to reside.
- 1.7 Alongside the increase in our own local demand, we are also competing for both Temporary Accommodation (TA) and longer-term accommodation with other districts and boroughs including unitary London Authorities, who have a far more generous budget and funding streams than Sevenoaks District. There is lack of available move on properties. These pressures have led us to consider the manner in which we allocate our resources based on household composition; community contribution including work and volunteering; and social and welfare needs. The proposed Out of Area Placement Policy sets out how the Council will seek to work with households based on their priorities, presenting needs and affordability in order to offer the most appropriate accommodation for both TA and through the Private Rented Sector as a longer-term housing solution.
- 1.8 The Policy sets out how households will be prioritised for properties, both for private rented sector offers and for temporary accommodation. Its key principle is to ensure that health and welfare needs are taken into account when households are prioritised for housing in different locations
- 1.9 Accommodation in the private rented sector within Sevenoaks District is often not affordable for many residents whom approach the council. The local housing allowance (LHA) sets the amount of housing support paid out either as part of Universal Credit (UC) or under the legacy Housing Benefit, to those living in the PRS. LHA rates are set by calculating the 30th percentile of rents in 'Broad Rental Market Areas'. In Sevenoaks's case, the area includes neighbouring districts and boroughs where rents are cheaper. The shortfall between LHA rates and private rents in Sevenoaks District is significant as shown in Table: 3.

Accommodation type Gap between LHA and rents	20/21 LHA rate Per Week	Effective monthly LHA rate	Properties to Rent (Rightmove) in Sevenoaks District Lowest appx rent £	Gap between monthly LHA and rents
Shared Accommodation Rate	£88.85	£385.02	£680.00	-£385,02
One Bedroom	£155.34	£673.14	£950.00	-£276.86
Two Bedroom	£195.62	£847.68	£1,200.00	-£352.32

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Three Bedroom	£241.64	£1,047.17	£1,500.00	-£452.83
Four Bedroom	£299.18	£1,296.45	£1,800.00	-£503.55

- 1.10 The Placement Policy will ensure we comply with the relevant case law, including the Supreme Court judgment in the case of *Nzolameso v City of Westminster* [2015] UKSC 22 and the Court of Appeal decisions in the cases of *Alibkheit v London Borough of Brent* and *Adam v City of Westminster* [2018] EWCA Civ 2742, which set out that Local Housing Authorities should adopt a structured and fair process, which determines how applicants will be prioritised for accommodation in our district and beyond.
- 1.11 In order for private rented offers to be affordable to homeless households within benefit levels (or as close as possible), many of these offers are likely to be outside the Sevenoaks District. Support will be offered to households relocating outside the District and to other households where needed, in order to minimise adverse impacts and to enhance the prospects of relocated families integrating into the new area. The policy also aims to help to improve outcomes for homeless households in that they will receive a quicker permanent offer of housing, in an area where they are able to settle and put down long-term roots.
- 1.12 The cost of nightly paid temporary accommodation has increased by 40% from last year. The policy aims to reduce temporary accommodation use and contain costs by offering homeless households private rented housing, as an alternative to them spending many years in temporary accommodation waiting for social housing.

### **Cost of emergency accommodation (Nightly let) April to April**

- 2021/22 - £1,086,572 to December 2021
  - 2020/21 - £769,664
- 1.13 The Council's first priority will be to secure accommodation in Sevenoaks District. Where it is not possible to secure good quality affordable accommodation in the District, the Council will next look in surrounding districts and boroughs, then in other areas increasingly further afield if we deem it to be suitable and meets the requirements as set out by Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017; statutory guidance on suitability; and the Homelessness Code of Guidance. The Council will also work to secure accommodation for those households who wish to live outside of this area."
- 1.14 The Placement Policy sets out the way in which we will offer residents homes in the private rented sector and ensure that these are both suitable for the household and sustainable in the longer term. It also covers the way in which we will prioritise households for accommodation within Sevenoaks District in situations where there is not enough housing within the district. Our policy though remains not to place families out of the district unless this is either what they want or where there is no suitable alternative

- 1.15 If the applicant refuses the offer of accommodation and cannot provide further evidence that it would be unsuitable we will discharge our duty and no longer be under a duty to secure accommodation for the applicant. An ongoing duty to provide advice and assistance continues and this may include access to the Housing Register and assistance with obtaining private rented accommodation. The decision on ending our duty to secure accommodation will not be taken lightly and the policy speaks to our aspiration of working in a supportive and transparent manner.
- 1.16 We particularly struggle to procure properties big enough for larger families that is both affordable and suitable. Four bedroomed social housing stock is very limited and larger properties in the private rented sector in Sevenoaks District are often unaffordable.
- 1.17 The human cost of homelessness and households spending years in temporary accommodation is enormous. At the same time the financial cost to the Council of an ever-increasing number of households in temporary accommodation is growing from its current level of £1.2 million per annum. The proposals outlined represent a shift in focus and investment in the prevention of homelessness and support for residents to proactively reduce the number of households reaching crisis point.
- 1.8 The impact of Covid-19 has meant that we have had a sudden rise in the number of single people approaching us for help and who we have accommodated on the basis of their risk of rough sleeping as required by Government. This has led to us accommodating over 75 people in short term emergency housing. The pandemic has also highlighted the role that overcrowding plays in the sustainability of the lockdown for many of our poorest households. Recent figures on mortality from Covid-19 have also added physical risk to the dangers of overcrowding. The Allocations Scheme gives additional priority to social housing tenants who are overcrowded. For private rented tenants, we are working to improve access to the private rented sector to make it easier for them to move to a more suitable home. The Placement Policy sets out our approach to this.

## **2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 Option 1: Do nothing - this is not recommended because if we continue to operate without an adopted Placement Policy, this could leave Sevenoaks District Council open to legal challenge and in a precarious position when seeking to end our duties by making an offer of suitable accommodation which sits outside our district boundaries. Households would be in temporary accommodation for longer than necessary which would lead to a negative financial cost implication.
- 2.2 Option 2: Endorse the new Placement Policy - to ensure those households in Temporary accommodation can be offered appropriate accommodation outside of the district in accordance with an adopted policy that reflects the relevant case law and good practice. This may mean households we have an open duty to, could be offered accommodation beyond our district

## Agenda Item 21

boundaries - but this will be undertaken in a transparent and consultative manner with the applicant.

### **3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Our preferred option is Option 2, to endorse the Out of Area Placement Policy. This will enable the homelessness prevention service to work within a framework with households to ensure good quality affordable housing options are offered to applicants.
- 3.2 The Placement Policy will give the housing service team a structure in which to work and also provides transparency to our customers on how allocations will take effect. Sevenoaks District Council will also be working within the spirit of good practice and relevant case law.
- 3.3 The secondary outcome of this we hope would support a reduction in our TA budget moving forward as we can offer more households (currently residing in TA) offers of private rented accommodation which means their housing journey will come to an end quicker than previously.

### **4. RISK**

- 4.1 The Placement Policy codifies the approach to the use of the private rented sector. The transformation programme is based on making best use of the private rented sector. Without a formally approved policy there is a risk of legal challenge.
- 4.2 The policy also enables us to work closely with applicants in a transparent and fair way - this ensures an equitable process for all - instead of an approach that is perceived to be subjective by an aggrieved applicant.
- 4.3 There is a risk that there will be limited affordable private rented properties to meet the needs of homeless households. While the research gave an indication of different locations where properties may be available, market changes can happen quickly and the actual availability of properties depends on the willingness of landlords to let accommodation to homeless households. To mitigate this risk, incentives will continue to be offered to landlords to secure properties in line with local market intelligence. The supply and availability of properties will be kept under review but it needs to be noted that building up supply to meet demand is likely to take time.
- 4.4 There is a risk of legal challenges where offers are outside Sevenoaks District and, or where shared accommodation is offered. To minimise this, individual suitability assessment will be carried out before an offer is made in line with legislation and statutory guidance.

**5. NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 The draft timeline for reporting, and final approval for the implementation of the Out of Area Placement Policy is as follows:

Housing & Health Advisory Committee	6 June 2022	This report asks HHAC to recommend the Out of Area Placement Policy to Cabinet
Cabinet	7 July 2022	The adoption of the Out of Area Placement Policy

**6. COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 6.1 The policy will be uploaded on to our website so that the general public can review and have access, ensuring transparency.
- 6.2 If the policy is endorsed, the Housing teams will be trained to implement the new processes.
- 6.3 Finally, the Policy will be monitored and reviewed formally in line with the development of a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2022. The Policy may also be reviewed at any time, in line with any relevant changes in legislation or Guidance issued by relevant Government Departments.

**7. Other Options Considered and/or Rejected**

None.

**Key Implications**

Resource (non-financial)

Existing staffing resources will be utilised.

Financial

There are no financial implications from the introduction of this Policy because the implementation will be delivered within existing resources. Any financial impact that results as an outcome of the new policy should have a positive impact on the Homelessness service because it will reduce the number of people in TA thus reducing service costs. The effects of the policy will be monitored and reported as part of the overall monthly budget monitoring.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

The judgement made by the Supreme Court in *Nzolameso vs Westminster Council* [2015] are set out in this report.

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Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996 Part 7 imposes a duty on the Council to secure accommodation for an applicant where it has reason to believe that they may be homeless, eligible for assistance and has a priority need.

Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 Part 7 imposes a duty on the Council to secure accommodation for an applicant where it is satisfied that they are homeless, eligible for assistance, has a priority need and are not homeless intentionally.

Section 17 of the Children's Act 1989 also provides a general duty on the Council to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their areas who are in need by providing a range of services to the child and/or his family, which may include the provision of temporary accommodation on a temporary basis.

Section 208 of the 1996 Act also provides that so far as reasonably practicable the Council shall in discharging their housing functions secure that accommodation is available for the occupation of the applicant in their district and that if it secures accommodation outside its district it shall give notice to the local housing authority in whose district the accommodation is situated. The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2012 sets out factors to be taken into account in determining whether accommodation provided under part 7 is suitable, which includes the location of the accommodation. It also lists various factors to be regarded as unsuitable in relation to a Private Rented Sector Offer. The Homelessness Code of Guidance and Supplementary Guidance include various provisions on suitability of accommodation in relation to part 7.

### Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. 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 impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people.

The key policies within the Out of Area Placement Policy have a particularly positive impact for disabled people by ensuring a new suitability assessment and ensuring prioritisation for disabled people with the highest needs for in-district accommodation and transfer moves. Overall the impact of the policy upon homeless people with disabilities is positive; ensuring all disabled groups can now access clear guidance on the whole homeless placements process.

Ethnic minority & female households, who are more likely to be homeless and on low income, will benefit from assistance from the council to help them find affordable housing solutions beyond Sevenoaks District when no solution can be found in district. See Appendix 2.

### Net Zero Implications

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

### **Conclusions**

The annual supply of social housing is reducing and after a long period of steady reduction numbers of households in temporary accommodation are increasing. The affordability of temporary accommodation for the Council is a major concern. Changes to temporary accommodation subsidy rules, welfare reform and a private rental market experiencing above inflation rises all combine to put significant financial pressure on the Council.

The extent of demand for temporary accommodation and its limited supply within the Sevenoaks District has historically meant that the majority of temporary housing procured and used has been provided outside the district's boundaries.

For the most part, the proposed policy is simply formalising an existing procedure that the Council has worked to in making out of district placements for many years. However, given the decreasing supply of affordable temporary accommodation and increased competition between Kent and London local authorities to secure it, the majority of households will continue to be placed a considerable distance away. The potential for an increased number of legal challenges exists and therefore, in those circumstances, a policy highlighting which households, where possible and when reasonably practicable will be offered temporary accommodation in the local area is deemed prudent.

Sevenoaks District Council intends to make use of the existing powers to fully discharge its full housing duty by way of a 'private rented sector offer' under (s193 7AA - 7AC) Part VII Housing Act 1996 as amended by s.148 (5)(7) Localism Act 2011. The policy will apply for most homeless applicants who have made a homeless application to the Council and will particularly be apt in cases where there is a significant financial burden on the local authority or applicant. There will not be a blanket application of the legislation and a decision will be taken after a full consideration of each household's individual circumstances and the facts that apply to that case.

The policy makes the Council's position clear and provide a realistic message to applicants on their chances of being placed into accommodation locally.

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**Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Sevenoaks District Council Out of Area Placement Policy

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

**Background Papers:**

LGA The Impact of Homeless on Health [22.7 HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS\\_v08\\_WEB\\_0.PDF \(local.gov.uk\)](#)

Sarah Robson  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Chief Officer - People and Places

<b>Appendix 1:</b>	
<b>Sevenoaks District Council</b>	
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Out of Area Placement Policy</b>
<b>Key legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002; Homelessness Code of Guidance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation)(England) orders 1996, 2003 &amp; 2012. Supplementary Guidance on the Homelessness changes in the Localism Act 2011 &amp; the homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation)(England)Order 2012</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness Reduction Act 2017;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (England)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Children Act 2004;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The Localism Act 2011</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Equality Act 2010; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Civil Contingencies Act 2004</li> </ul>
<b>Key strategies and policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community Plan (2019-22);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Housing Strategy (2017);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Housing Allocations Policy (2019);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> West Kent Homelessness Strategy (2016-21); and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Kent &amp; Medway Housing Strategy (2020).</li> </ul>
<b>Version</b>	Final (14/02/22)
<p><b>Contents</b></p> <p>1. Introduction .....1</p> <p>2. Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO) and Temporary accommodation ..... 4</p> <p>3. Suitability of accommodation.... .....6</p> <p>4. Criteria for prioritising placements inside and outside of the Sevenoaks District..... 8</p> <p>5. Monitoring and Review.....11</p> <p>APPENDIX A: Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates..... 11</p>	

### Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out Sevenoaks District Council's policy for the placement of households in private rented accommodation, both inside and outside of the Sevenoaks District.
- 1.2 It covers *longer term* temporary accommodation placements for households accepted as homeless under section 193 HA96 and a private rented sector offer defined by section 193(7AC) with a view to bringing the section 189B(2) duty, or section 193(2) duty to an end.
- 1.3 This policy does not cover interim temporary accommodation for homeless households where this is required under section 188 of the Housing Act 1996 while inquiries are carried out.
- 1.4 This policy does not apply to offers of long-term accommodation under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 as amended.

In accordance with legislation and statutory guidance, the Council seeks to accommodate homeless households in Sevenoaks District as far as reasonably practicable. However, as there is a serious shortfall of accommodation in the District to meet housing need, it will not be reasonably practicable to provide accommodation within Sevenoaks District to every household and there will be an increasing need to use accommodation that may be at some distance from the District.

#### **The policy complies with:**

- The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002
- The Localism Act 2011
- Equality Act 2010
- Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Orders 1996, 2003 & 2012.
- Supplementary Guidance on the Homelessness changes in the Localism Act 2011 & the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation)(England) Order 2012
- The Homelessness Code of Guidance
- The Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2024
- The Allocation Scheme
- Children Act 2004 (in particular section 11)
- Relevant decisions by the Courts including the Supreme Court judgment in the case of *Nzolameso v City of Westminster* [2015] UKSC 22 and the Court of Appeal decisions in *Alibkheit v London Borough of Brent and Adam v City of Westminster* [2018] EWCA Civ 2742.

- 1.5 The policy takes into account the statutory requirements on local authorities in respect of suitability of accommodation as per Section 206 Housing Act 1996 (HA96), including Suitability Orders, Supplementary Guidance on Homelessness changes in the Localism Act 2011 and on the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation (England) Order 2012, the Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018, the Children Act 2004 s.11 which places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 1.6 As per Section 208 Housing Act 1996, and paragraph 17.50 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance, so far as reasonably practicable, the Council seeks to accommodate homeless households as close as possible to where an applicant was previously living and always considers the suitability of the accommodation, taking into account the circumstances of the individual household. However, due to an acute shortage of affordable housing locally, and rising rental costs, an increasing number of households are likely to be placed outside the District, as it will not be reasonably practicable to provide accommodation within Sevenoaks District. The application of housing benefit caps, Local Housing Allowance rates within the District, welfare reform and universal credit, together with restrictions upon overall benefit entitlement, has further restricted the number of properties that will be affordable to homeless households in Sevenoaks District, and particularly larger families.
- 1.7 When determining whether it is reasonably practicable to secure accommodation in Sevenoaks District, as opposed to simply what is reasonable, the cost of the accommodation is a relevant and proper consideration. Matters to be taken into account here include information provided by the applicant, together with paragraph 17.45 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance. The reality however, is that the demand for housing greatly exceeds supply in respect to securing affordable Private Rented Sector Offers (PRSO) accommodation and all forms of temporary accommodation within our District boundaries.
- 1.8 The scale of demand and the limitations on resources are such that the Council and its partners cannot build enough affordable accommodation for households on lower incomes to meet all housing need. Even if resources were available, there is a limit to capacity given that the opportunities for large scale new development in Sevenoaks District are constrained by land availability and costs.
- 1.9 The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is used to work out how much Housing Benefit a tenant will receive to pay their rent. LHA rates depend on who lives in the household, and the area they are making their claim in. These areas are called Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMA). The local authority area of Sevenoaks District is divided into two Broad Rental

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Market Areas (BRMA), which are used to calculate LHA rates in Sevenoaks, namely High Weald BRMA and North West Kent BRMA. Appendix 1 provides a link to the Valuation Officer Agency website where the LHA rates for each District can be searched.

- 1.10 The Council is making efforts to ensure that its temporary accommodation portfolio reflects the most common locations for applicants presenting as homeless in our district. However, the Council is committed to securing suitable accommodation for homeless households under all relevant sectors of the Housing Act 1996.
- 1.11 The policy therefore details how applicants will be prioritised for housing inside the Sevenoaks District and out of District.

### **Section 2: Private Rented Sector Offer and Temporary Accommodation Lettings**

- 2.1 **Temporary Accommodation:** Due to the shortage of suitable accommodation in Sevenoaks District, homeless applicants who are housed under the Council's interim duty to accommodate pursuant to section 188 HA96 may initially be placed in emergency accommodation, including bed and breakfast and short-term self-contained accommodation, such as annexes, or nightly-paid accommodation while enquires are carried out. This accommodation is highly likely to be outside of the District. Where it is not reasonably practicable to offer an applicant in-District accommodation on a specific day, and it has been necessary to offer an applicant out-of-District accommodation, there is no legal requirement on the Council to continue to search for in-District accommodation, only that they have done all that is reasonably practicable to offer a particular applicant accommodation within its own District. If the Council decides the Section 193(2) main housing duty is owed, they will be moved to longer-term temporary accommodation or made a Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO) as soon as a suitable property becomes available.
- 2.2 Wherever possible and in compliance with the regulations, the Council will avoid placing families with dependent children, pregnant women and young people aged 16/17, in bed and breakfast accommodation. Where no other suitable accommodation exists and such placements are necessary, the Council will move these households to more suitable self-contained accommodation within six weeks.
- 2.3 Applicants will be given one offer of suitable accommodation. This may be under longer-term temporary accommodation where the main housing duty has been accepted, or a Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO). Offers of temporary accommodation will be made verbally over the phone by the Accommodation Services Team and followed up in writing thereafter.

- 2.4 **Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO):** If a PRSO is being offered the Housing Advice Service will discuss the potential offer with the applicant in a supportive manner, explaining why this decision has been made and follow this up in writing. **The applicant will be advised to accept the offer made, with both the Officer and the offer letter explaining the consequences of refusal and any right of review that they have of the suitability of the offer of accommodation.** There is no obligation upon the Council to enable applicants to view the accommodation prior to acceptance but in terms of a PRSO we would endeavour to enable a viewing. In making the offer, the household's individual circumstances will be considered, taking into account the factors set out in section 3 of this policy and the Council's criteria on in/out of District placements detailed in section 4.
- 2.5 If an applicant rejects an offer of accommodation, they will be asked to provide their reasons for refusal. This applies to those being transferred from existing Temporary Accommodation (TA) or those in TA who are required to move by the Council and whom the Council has accepted a rehousing duty towards under Section 193 HA96. The Council will consider the reasons given and undertake further enquires as necessary. If the Council accepts the reasons for refusal and agrees the offer is unsuitable, the offer will be withdrawn and a further offer will be made.
- 2.6 Where applicants refuse suitable accommodation (which may include out of Area placements) and the Council does not accept their reasons for refusal and considers that the offer is suitable, applicants will not be offered further accommodation and will be required to make their own arrangements.
- 2.7 In cases where the applicant still refuses a suitable offer of accommodation, after having been informed that the Council has not accepted their reasons for refusal, the interim homelessness duty will be discharged. The homeless household will be provided reasonable period of time to leave the interim accommodation unit. In accordance to the Council's safeguarding policy and procedure relevant referrals would be made to Adult and Specialist Children's Social Services to promote the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children.
- 2.8 If they are already in longer-term temporary accommodation, the main housing duty will be discharged, and the applicant will be served with the appropriate Notice to Quit this accommodation. For applicants where the Council has accepted a rehousing duty under section 193 HA96, (s.193 duty) there is a right to request a review of the suitability decision, pursuant to section 202 HA96.

- 2.9 Where applicants, for whom the Council has accepted a s.193 duty refuse a suitable offer and submit a review request, they will only continue to be accommodated during the review period in exceptional circumstances. The Council will apply the principles laid down in the judgment in *R(Mohammed) v Camden LBC* [1997] 30 HLR 315 when reaching a decision on providing discretion to accommodate an applicant pending a review. Each case will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the overall merits of the review request, any new information or evidence that may affect the original decision, the personal circumstances of the applicant and the potential impact of the loss of accommodation. In accordance with the Council's safeguarding policy and procedure relevant referrals would be made to Adult and Specialist Children's Social Services to promote the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children.

### **Section 3: Suitability of accommodation**

- 3.1 In relation to a temporary or private sector offer of accommodation, the Council will consider the suitability of the offer, taking into account the following factors:

3.2 **Accommodation available in the District**

If suitable accommodation is available in the local authority area, the Council will seek to house applicants in the Sevenoaks District, allowing them to maintain any established links with services and social/support networks. However, when there is a lack of suitable accommodation or there are higher priority households awaiting accommodation in the District, out of Area placements will be used to meet the Council's housing duty (see section 4 on priority for local accommodation below).

The Council may also keep aside local vacant units in anticipation of applicants presenting who meet the criteria for a local placement. This has been confirmed as a reasonable practice in the Court of Appeal decisions in *Alibkheit v Brent LBC* and *Adam v Westminster*.

3.3 **Affordability**

'Affordability' as defined in this policy means: "the household must have its equivalent level of income support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (whether claimed or not) available to spend on reasonable living costs after accommodation costs have been deducted from the household's income". Due regard will be given to s.17.45 of the Code of Guidance 2018 when assessing affordability.

3.4 **Size and location of the property and availability of support networks in the area**

Accommodation must provide adequate space and room standards for the household in light of the relevant needs, requirements and circumstances

of the household (e.g. health or mobility issues and free from any Category 1 Hazards under the Housing Health Safety Rating System).

The Council will consider whether the applicant can afford to pay for their accommodation without being deprived of basic essentials such as food, clothing, heating, transport costs and all other reasonable expenditure. We will therefore take into account the rent that the household can afford as well as any additional costs, such as travel costs, resulting from the location of the accommodation.

In deciding on the fitness of the property, consideration would be given to the length of time needed to complete any necessary repairs and whether it is reasonable to complete these while the property is occupied. The quality of the decoration/furniture, the layout/type of accommodation, provision of parking and lack of access to a garden are unlikely to be acceptable reasons for a refusal.

### **3.5 Health factors**

The Council will consider health factors, such as ability to get up the stairs, care and support provided by other statutory agencies or the need to access any specialist medical services that are only available within the District. If the applicant or a member of the resident household is citing medical grounds that were not identified during the initial assessment, the applicant must submit medical evidence within 48 hours. The key test in determining the impact of medical issues is whether the condition itself makes the housing offered unsuitable. Problems such as depression, asthma, diabetes or back pain would not normally make a property unsuitable, as the problems would persist in any accommodation.

### **3.6 Education**

Attendance at local schools will not be considered a reason to refuse accommodation, though some priority will be given to special educational needs and students who are close to taking public examinations in determining priority for in-District placements (see Section 4).

### **3.7 Employment**

The Council will consider the need of applicants who are in paid employment to reach their normal workplace from the accommodation that is secured (see Section 4).

### **3.8 Proximity to schools and services**

The Council will consider the proximity to schools, public transport, primary care services, and local services in the area in which the accommodation is located

### 3.9 Pet ownership

Pets are not allowed in temporary accommodation. If you have pets you should make arrangements for them to be looked after by a friend, relative or a charity. You will be responsible for any costs incurred. However, where

a PRSO offer of accommodation is made by the local authority, the Accommodation Services Team will advise the homeless household if the private landlord will allow pets in the private rented accommodation unit.

### 3.10 Any special circumstance

The Council will consider any other reasons for refusal put forward by the applicant and come to an overall view about whether the offer is suitable.

## Section 4: Criteria for prioritising placements inside and outside of the Sevenoaks District Council

- 4.1 It is the Council's preferred position to house applicants within the Sevenoaks District. The Council acknowledges that in the current housing market it will be necessary to make decisions about the suitability of out of area placements for individual households and balance these against the type and location of temporary accommodation and private rented accommodation that can be offered. In some cases, housing outside of the District might be more sustainable for the household in the long-term, with lower rents allowing them to better meet their subsistence and household costs and avoid rent arrears.
- 4.2 In placing households in temporary accommodation and private rented accommodation, there will be a general presumption that placements outside of Sevenoaks District may be used to discharge housing duties where the accommodation is suitable and where an affordable accommodation solution is not available locally.
- 4.3 Our preference for resettlement will follow a stepped approach, we will seek accommodation within our district, then to the wider County of Kent and finally we may consider placements outside of Kent across the whole country. All of these options will be fully considered using the prioritisation listed below. However, we may at times withhold available accommodation in the district or the wider Kent County if we feel other households would be more in need as set out in *Alibkheit v London Borough and Adam v City of Westminster*. Each application will be assessed according to the household's presenting needs.

## Placements within the Sevenoaks District

4.4 Priority for in-District accommodation will be given to certain households whose circumstances indicate that they would best be housed locally. These include but not limited to:

- Applicants with a severe and enduring health condition requiring intensive and specialist medical treatment that is only available in Sevenoaks District.
- Applicants who are in receipt of a significant package and range of health care options that cannot be easily transferred.
- Applicants with a severe and enduring mental health problem who are receiving psychiatric treatment and aftercare provided by community mental health services and have an established support network where a transfer of care would severely impact on their wellbeing.
- Households with children registered on the Child Protection register in Sevenoaks District, or families who have high social needs who are linked into local health services and where it is confirmed that a transfer to another area would impact on their welfare.
- Households containing a child with special educational needs who is receiving education or educational support in Sevenoaks District, where change would be detrimental to their well-being.
- Households containing one or more children in secondary school in their final year of Key Stage 4 (generally Year 11) with exams to be taken within the next six months
- Applicants who have a longstanding arrangement to provide care and support to another family member in Sevenoaks District who is not part of the resident household and would be likely to require statutory health and social support if the care ceased.
- Any other special circumstance will also be taken into account

### **Priority for placements in the County of Kent will be given to:**

- 4.5 Applicants who have been continuously employed in Kent for a period of 12 months, and for 24 hours or more per week.
- 4.6 Women who are on maternity leave from employment and meet the above criteria would also be prioritised for placements in Kent.
- 4.7 Applicants who have as part of their household, a child or children who are enrolled in public examination courses in Sevenoaks District, with exams to be taken within the next six months or in year 11 and year 13 of their secondary education. Wherever practicable the Council will seek to

## Agenda Item 21

place such households within 60 minutes car travelling distance of their school or college.

- 4.8 Wherever practicable, any applicant who works for more than 24 hours per week and has been employed continuously for more than 12 months will not be placed more than 90 minutes travelling distance by public transport, from their place of employment.
- 4.9 Applicants who meet none of the above criteria may be offered properties out of Kent when no suitable property is available.
- 4.10 The Council will access 'safe' accommodation for victims or survivors of domestic abuse. Victims will have individual and varying needs and support will be tailored to the individual. To meet the needs of all victims, paying special attention and consideration to those who share protected characteristic(s) under the Equality Act 2010 or who share a vulnerability requiring additional support.
- 4.11 We will make services easier to access by identifying and removing barriers and creating clear pathways to access support for those living in safe accommodation, including, for example, quick access to independent, and specialist services to help them with any financial difficulties they may be experiencing as a result of economic abuse. The Homelessness case officer will undertake a DASH (Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment) risk assessment to assess risk and safer locations a victim and (or) households are able to reside at.
- 4.12 Children are recognised in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 as victims in their own right. We will ensure that children's individual needs and preferences are taken into account and that all children affected by domestic abuse in safe accommodation have access to support that will help them recover from abuse
- 4.13 Applicants who are at risk of violence being perpetrated against them will be placed outside of the District, however, this will be subject to a Domestic abuse, stalking and harassment risk assessment (DASH) risk assessment. The Homelessness case officer will assess the risk and safer locations a victim and (or) households are able to reside at. Whilst having given consideration to all other factors within this policy.
- 4.14 Applicants who indicate a desire to be housed in a particular area outside of Sevenoaks District will be housed in those area(s) so far as reasonably practicable.
- 4.13 Any other special circumstance will be taken into account.

**Notification arrangements when households are placed outside of Sevenoaks District**

- 4.14 The Council, when discharging a homeless duty, will aim to ensure that information concerning details of placements in temporary accommodation and private rented accommodation outside Sevenoaks District is shared as far as possible in a fair and timely manner with the relevant Local Housing Authority in areas where families are moving to.
- 4.15 Notification arrangements - The Council will notify the receiving Local Housing Authority of any placement (as far as this is possible). The receiving Local Housing Authority should also notify Sevenoaks District Council as to any action they may have taken against a landlord/agent.
- 4.16 Pay a Fair Rent - The Council will, as far as is practical, ensure that the rent paid is in accordance with the prevailing local housing allowance rent levels and is not at a level that is likely to encourage inflation of rent levels.
- 4.17 Vulnerable families - So far as is practicable, if placing vulnerable families outside of Sevenoaks District, the Council will ensure that such families will continue to receive appropriate support.
- 4.18 For any household offered long-term temporary or permanent privately rented accommodation outside of the District, information will be provide on how to access local services, amenities and facilities in the local area. In particular they will be given general guidance on registering for Local Council Tax Support, applying for benefits, registering with a local GP, what to do if they need emergency funds and how to apply for a school place in the local authority area in which they are to reside.

<b>Section 5: Monitoring and Review</b>
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- 5.1 The Policy will be monitored and reviewed formally in line with the development of a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2022. The Policy may also be reviewed at any time, in line with any relevant changes in legislation or Guidance issued by relevant Government Departments, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Health.

**Section 6: Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates**

Visit: <http://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/Search.aspx>

**Sevenoaks District**

As at February 2022, the North West Kent LHA levels are as follows:

Shared £88.85 per week per week or £385.07 per month.

1 bed £155.34 per week or £673.14 per month.

2 bed £195.62 per week or £847.69 per month.

3 bed £241.64 per week or £1,047.11 per month.

4 bed £299.18 per week or £1,296 per month.

As at February 2022, the High Weald LHA levels are as follows:-

Shared £100.11 per week per week or £433.81 per month.

1 bed £159.95 per week or £693.12 per month.

2 bed £207.12 per week or £897.52 per month.

3 bed £260.05 per week or £1,126.88 per month.

4 bed £345.21 per week or £1,495.91 per month.

## Equality Impact Assessment

### Appendix 2 - Out of Area Placement Policy

<b>Summary of decision to be made:</b>	Out of Area Placement Policy		
<b>Lead Officer (job title):</b>	Abigail Agba, Interim Head of Housing		
<b>Date the final decision is due to be made:</b>	19/07/2022	<b>Date this assessment commenced:</b>	16/02/2022
<b>Is the decision relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty?</b>			<b>Yes / No</b>
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation			<b>Yes / No</b>
Advance equality of opportunity			<b>Yes / No</b>
Foster good relations			<b>Yes / No</b>
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:			
<b>Characteristic:</b>	<b>Data and consultation</b>	<b>Summary of impact</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Disability	Sevenoaks District Housing Needs Survey 2017, Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs 2021, 2011 Census, Sevenoaks District Housing Strategy 2022 (emerging), Older Persons' Housing Needs Study 2022.	<p>People with physical disability or mental health condition and need health treatment that cannot be transferred out of area, or those with longstanding care arrangements will be given In District Priority therefore the policy will have no impact on this client group.</p> <p>People with more severe disabilities are therefore less likely than other households to have their duties discharged into the private rented sector by offer of a PRSO and are more likely to be offered supported or adapted accommodation within the council's own stock. For this reason, the policy has a neutral effect on this group</p>	
Carers	As above	Reasonable travel distances now stipulated as a factor when	

## Equality Impact Assessment

		determining priority. This will ensure applicants experiencing unsustainable journeys to give/receive care, will have priority.	
Race	As above	None - the out of area placement policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of race Ethnic minority groups are more likely to be homeless and on low income, therefore it is less likely to for them to find affordable housing solutions in the district or within 90 minutes travelling distance. This policy will have a positive impact on this client group as they will benefit from assistance from the council to help them find affordable housing solutions beyond Sevenoaks when no solution can be found in district	
Gender	As above	None - the Out of Area Placement Policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of gender Female lone parents are more likely to be homeless and on low income, therefore it is less likely for them to find affordable housing solutions in District or within 90 minutes travelling distance. This policy will have a positive impact on this client group as they will benefit from assistance from the council to help them find affordable housing solutions beyond Sevenoaks when no solution can be found in district.	
Age	As above	Vulnerable children with needs that	

Equality Impact Assessment

		<p>cannot be met outside the district will be given In District Priority, and young homeless persons have access to a number of supported housing schemes in Kent, therefore the policy will have no impact on these client groups. People aged 65 accepted homeless those needing health treatment that cannot be transferred out of District or with longstanding care arrangements will be given In District Priority therefore the policy will have no impact on this client group.</p> <p>The placements policy has a positive impact for children who are at key stages of education enrolled at public examinations in the same school year (GCSE level or above). to prevent any disruption to educational attainment and will not be placed more than 60 mins traveling time to place of education. Households with dependent children under the age of 18, who are not due to take qualification exams in the same academic year, may be adversely affected by this policy as comparably they do not have as high education need to remain in-District. Households may find additional travel requirements and transport fares to current place of schooling. If this becomes unaffordable, a negative impact may arise meaning that an alternative school placement closer to home may have to be found. The Council will take distance to</p>	
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## Equality Impact Assessment

		schools into consideration during individual assessments however will not use this as a reason to consider the household for in-district placement. To mitigate any negative impact arising from an out of District placement, the service will be providing developed resettlement advice that will include help with aspects of travel and setting up links to support or community based amenities.	
Religion / Belief	As above	None - the out of area placement policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of religion or belief. There are no perceived implications on the basis of religion or belief	
Sexual Orientation	As above	None - the out of area placement policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of sexual orientation There are no perceived implications on the basis of sexuality	
Pregnancy / Maternity	As above	The Out of Area Placement Policy prioritises pregnancy and maternity as a protected characteristic.	
Marital or Civil Partnership Status	As above	The policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of this status.	
Gender reassignment	As above	The out of area placement policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of gender reassignment	

## Equality Impact Assessment

<p><b>Summary of impacts :</b> (to be included in committee reports)</p>	<p>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 impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people.</p> <p>The key policies within the Out of Area Placement Policy have a particularly positive impact for disabled people by ensuring a new suitability assessment and ensuring prioritisation for disabled people with the highest needs for in-district accommodation and transfer moves. Overall the impact of the policy upon homeless people with disabilities is positive; ensuring all disabled groups can now access clear guidance on the whole homeless placements process.</p> <p>Ethnic minority &amp; female households, who are more likely to be homeless and on low income, will benefit from assistance from the council to help them find affordable housing solutions beyond Sevenoaks when no solution can be found in district.</p>		
<p>Please tick the outcome of this assessment:</p>	<p><b>Continue the policy</b></p>		
<p>Date assessment will be reviewed:</p>	<p>19/07/2023</p>		

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## Item 22 - Homelessness Out of Hours Service Update

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 14 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

### Housing & Health Advisory Committee (6 June 2022, Minute 12)

The Chief Officer - People and Places presented the report which gave an update to the Committee on the Council's contract with Centra to deliver the Council's homelessness out of hours service. Since October 2019, 135 calls were taken by the Out of Hours team which released increasing pressure on the Housing Advice team and provided continued support to residents out of office hours to find immediate emergency accommodation in line with legislation. The CCTV team took a weekly log of calls which were recorded for monitoring purposes along with internal Officer meetings. An on-call Housing Officer could be contacted by Centra in an emergency. The log was sent to Centra and the CCTV team in case of emergency.

Members expressed the importance of the out of hour's safety net. In response to questions Officers confirmed that during the initial months of the scheme in 2019, communications problems were identified but had been resolved since. Mental health and social services support provided a challenge, but it was emphasised that from a homelessness perspective the scheme was working well.

In response to Member queries The Chief Officer - People and Places advised that any issues with the service should be reported to the team and would be looked into. Officers would review the reported incident and the contact information for the service in light of Member queries.

*Action 1: For the Chief Officer - People and Places to report back to the Committee with an update on an incident reported by a member on 22 May 2022 relating to a homelessness gentleman, which could not be resolved due to CCTV being unable to contact the homelessness out of hours service or on call housing officer.*

It was confirmed that the Housing team would pick up the problems from the Out of hours homelessness service during office hours and the two operated in unison. Discretion was used once users had been checked and their validity assessed for placement in accommodation.

### Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that an extension to the current contract with Centra for a further three years to deliver the Council's homelessness out of hours service, be approved.

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**HOMELESSNESS OUT OF HOURS SERVICE UPDATE**

**Cabinet - 7 July 2022**

**Report of:** Sarah Robson. Deputy Chief Executive Chief Officer - People and Places

**Status:** For Decision

**Also considered by:**

- Housing & Health Advisory Committee - 6 June 2022

**Key Decision:** No

**Executive Summary:** The Council is required to deliver a dedicated service to customers facing homelessness outside standard office hours. This report provides an update on the current contract with Centra to deliver the Council's homelessness out of hours service.

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** the Council's Housing and Health Strategy.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Kevin Maskell

**Contact Officer:** Sharon Donald, Interim Head of Housing, x 7131

**Recommendation to Housing and Health Advisory Committee:**

That comments on the recommendation below are passed to Cabinet.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

That, subject to comments from Housing and Health Advisory Committee, Members approve an extension to the current contract with Centra for a further three years to deliver the Council's homelessness out of hours service.

**Reason for Recommendation:** The Council is required to deliver a dedicated service to customers facing homelessness outside standard office hours.

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1 As a Local Housing Authority, this Council has a duty to provide a housing and homelessness advice service to people at risk of homelessness. This service includes an out of hours (OOH) service for people who are made homeless outside office hours, to assist them to find immediate emergency accommodation.
- 2 Since the changes to housing legislation through the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, the work of the Council's Housing Advice Team has increased, with the need to support more people, for longer periods of time and help people with very complex needs and vulnerabilities.
- 3 All councils nationally are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit to posts as there is such a high demand for experienced housing staff to cope with the additional workload demand and customer contact, including the out of hours period.
- 4 Cabinet approved a request to work with Centra to handle the Council's homelessness out-of-hours service, which commenced on 17 October 2019. The appointment was based on a 6 month pilot however, due to the additional pressures of the Covid-19 response, it was agreed to extend the contract up to Spring 2022, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Health.
- 5 Centra is a not for profit organisation, providing a range of high quality face-to-face support services, telecare monitoring and call handling services to over 200,000 customers across the UK each year. Centra provide housing out-of-hours services for a large number of other local authorities and housing associations including West Kent Housing Association.

#### **Council's Homelessness OOH Service**

- 6 The Council's homelessness out-of-hours telephone service provides an essential emergency contact for anyone who is going to be imminently homeless and need to contact the Council out of core business hours, during evenings, weekends and bank holidays.
- 7 It is important for people to have access to emergency housing support, as the Council continually strives to place the district's most vulnerable residents at the heart of what it does.
- 8 Prior to the Centra pilot, Housing Advice Officers were operating the service during the day and also taking OOH calls on a rota basis, outside the Council's office hours. This presented a significant challenge to officers, particularly during periods of vacant posts, sickness and covering annual leave. On occasions, two officers were covering these hours

continuously, meaning officers were taking emergency homelessness calls 24/7 across an extended number of months each year.

- 9 For the Council’s Housing Advice Officers to provide this service, it costs the Council an additional £506.44 per month, as it is paid as an OOH payment in addition to monthly salary costs. The pilot has cost the Council £195 per month (for up to a maximum of 180 calls). On balance, for the last financial year Centra have call handle approximately like for like call since the pilot started.

**SERVICE DETAILS**

- 10 The Council contracts the OOH service with Centra, but continues to maintain the majority of our housing service in-house, most importantly during weekdays when we see the highest levels of customer contact.
- 11 The OOH service still enables customers to telephone the Council’s main office number, which is answered by the Council’s CCTV operators who take the details and contact Centra if a customer needs an emergency accommodation placement. This ensures consistency in service for customers and customers calls are answered promptly with no waiting time.
- 12 The table below illustrates the customer contacts to the Council’s Housing Advice and Homelessness Service, compared to the service provided by Centra during out of hours.

Service	1 Oct 2019 - 31 Oct 2020	1 Nov 2020 - 31 Oct 2021	1 Nov 2021- February 2022	TOTAL
<b>SDC Housing Advice Service</b>				
No. of customer calls	2846	3126	2955	8927
No. of new customer cases	1258	1066	227	2551
No. of TA placements	286	231	46	563
<b>Centra OOH Service</b>				
No. of calls	33	50	53	135
No. of TA placements	11	7	9	25

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- 13 The majority of customer calls are received during weekdays during office hours. On an annual basis, the Housing Advice and Homelessness Service on average receives and responds to approximately 3,000 calls during weekdays, compared to an average of 9 calls supported by Centra within the same annual period.
- 14 The Housing Advice and Homelessness Service capacity is already under severe strain during the week to cope with increasing customer demand. The majority of the customer calls handled by the team are incredibly complex, supporting vulnerable people with mental health, addiction, other disability, age or illness issues, as well as those who have been released from prison or are victims of domestic abuse. Officers always strive to provide the best customer service to ensure the right support and advice is provided.
- 15 Officers meet regularly with Centra and the Council's CCTV Manager to provide updates, review calls and make adjustments to scripting and information to assist both teams dealing with OOH calls. Centra continues to utilise our CCTV scripting so that they can assess whether the person needs a placement.
- 16 Centra provide a dedicated customer telephone number to ensure that a customer can ring Centra direct with any follow-up queries or questions.
- 17 The Council's senior housing officers continue to have contact with Centra operators advising them on issues above and beyond a standard placement, mainly where there is an issue with an existing placement and they are being asked to leave. Managers have always found Centra very helpful, professional and have provided clear and accurate advice to customers, based on current housing legislation.
- 18 The Council has access to Centra's OOH online portal, which shows all call logs and actions taken for each call, accommodation placement details and customer outcomes. This is checked by the Council's Housing Advice Team every morning and all customers who present through OOH are allocated with a Housing Advice Officer who contacts them to take a full homelessness application.
- 19 The contract with Centra continues to be a success. It has released the pressure on existing housing officers to concentrate fully during the day to support customers to the best of their ability, as they have not had disturbed sleep during the night delivering the service 24/7. In addition, Centra has represented this Council to a high customer service standard and professionally at all times.
- 18 To ensure that customers have received a high standard of service, senior housing officers have continued to carry out a number of mystery shopper calls to the service. These calls were dealt with quickly with accurate information provided, whilst demonstrating empathy and consideration for the difficult housing circumstances.

- 19 The Housing Advice and Homelessness team are fully supportive of continuing the contract with Centra. Officers continue to strive to provide the best customer service to ensure the right support and advice is provided.

**CUSTOMER FEEDBACK**

- 20 Throughout the past 12 months, officers have undertaken spot checks, contacting customers who have accessed the OOH service to obtain their feedback on the service:

Customer	Q.1: Were you satisfied with the service you received?	Q.2: Is there anything you would want us to change about this service?
Customer 1	Yes, they were helpful and found me somewhere to stay.	No.
Customer 2	Yes, the service was good.	No, the service was fine.
Customer 3	They found me somewhere quick, so I was happy.	No, nothing to change.
Customer 4	Yes, I was satisfied.	No
Customer 5	Yes, I was satisfied.	No, it was good.
Customer 6	Very good service. I felt like they wanted to help me.	They don't need to change anything.
Customer 7	Yes, they helped me to find somewhere and were very helpful.	No, it's a good service.
Customer 8	The man was very kind and helped me find somewhere to stay.	No.

- 22 All feedback was positive.

### Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

- 29 Two options were considered:
- a. Option A - To extend the current contract with Centra for a further three years, with an annual break clause, to deliver the Council's homelessness out of hours service with regular monitoring of the service in place. The total cost to the Council of this service would be £3,689 per annum. This would ensure the residents of Sevenoaks District continue to receive the same high standards of service required for contacts of this nature.
  - b. Option B - To bring the service back in-house. It would be difficult to deliver this service in-house, additional work from the new legislation and more complex customers have already increased workloads and pressures on the service and team. The small team of two housing advice officers are working on high and complex caseloads during the day, with no capacity to take on this service outside of normal working hours. This may also have a negative impact on staff morale and mental wellbeing, service standards during the day and be a less attractive employment opportunity when trying to recruit new officers in the future. The two existing housing officers employed by this Council would be on a rota basis for at least two to three weeks a month (as well as covering annual leave, vacancies and sickness cover). In addition 95% of all housing staff are accessing weekly, fortnightly, monthly one to one clinical supervision due to the impact and trauma that the complexity of their caseload places upon them. The cost of providing the service in-house is in excess of £6,077.34 per annum.
- 30 The current contract with Centra is coming to a close and therefore, the preferred option is A, because it delivers a cost-effective and efficient service for customers and the Council.
- 31 It is recommended the Council enter into a longer-term contract with Centra to be reviewed every 3 years, subject to Member approval. This would ensure the residents of Sevenoaks District continue to receive the same high standards of service required for contacts of this nature.
- 32 Based on customer feedback, officers are satisfied that the Council and its customers have received a good-value and efficient service from Centra since 2019.
- 33 Providing the service externally would continue to support the morale and wellbeing of the housing team, who deal with difficult and complex customers daily. This would create a better work-life balance for staff, whilst not compromising the high standard of customer service.

**KEY IMPLICATIONS**

Financial

The budget to provide this service would come from existing housing budgets, with no additional financial burden to this Council. A contract with Centra would cost the Council £3,689 per annum, handling up to 180 calls per annum. The annual cost has been confirmed for a three year period. There would also be a need for a Council Housing Officer to be paid the emergency out-of-hours payment of approximately £112 per month, to provide a back-up contact for Centra and CCTV, only in the case of an emergency. This compares to the cost to this Council to provide the service in-house in excess of £6,077.34 per annum.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

This Council has a legal duty to provide a 24/7 homelessness service, which includes an emergency OOH service for people made homeless outside office hours, who are statutory homeless and in priority need between 17.00-09.00 (under part VII of the Housing Act 1996).

Risk	Risk level	Measures to balance risk
Increase in emergency accommodation placements	Low	<p>The service since October 2019 has not seen an increase in placements.</p> <p>Placements monitored as part of the Contract. Service Specification clear on requirements of the Section 188 duty to provide temporary accommodation if a customer is eligible, homeless and in priority need.</p> <p>OOH Operators have a strict script in place detailing requirements to prevent unnecessary placements being made.</p> <p>Approved list of Kent housing providers agreed in advance.</p> <p>Senior officer contact details provided for any issues above and beyond a standard placement.</p>

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Impact on customer service	Low	<p>Contract in place with regular reviews with the provider, during which any issues raised would be discussed with the Provider and processes amended.</p> <p>If the service was not meeting the high levels required for our customers, we could consider another external provider or bring the service back to the council, at break clause intervals or at the end of the contract period.</p> <p>Customer feedback would gathered as part of the service monitoring arrangements.</p> <p>All OOH calls would be recorded and can be accessed by SDC, to ensure customer service standards are high.</p>
Failure to deliver the SLA requirements	Low	<p>If Centra failed to deliver the service outlined in the Contract, service standards would be discussed with the provider and process adjustments made. If no improvement, contract review and break clauses within the Contract would be actioned.</p> <p>Regular monitoring meetings with the provider, performance measured set out in the Contract with reviewed at regular intervals.</p>
GDPR and data sharing	Low	<p>A GDPR Compliant Data Sharing Agreement in place as part of the Contract, developed in partnership with our Legal Team.</p> <p>SDC access to the provider's online OOH portal and database to see details and recording of all calls, placements and advice given.</p>

### 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.

Working in partnership with Centra and outsourcing the OOH function has not impacted the Council's lawful responsibility, statutory homelessness duties or customer delivery

### Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact

regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The Council is required to deliver a dedicated service to customers facing homelessness outside standard office hours. The contract with Centra continues to be a success. It has released the pressure on existing housing officers to concentrate fully during the day to support customers to the best of their ability. In addition, Centra has represented this Council to a high customer service standard and professionally at all times. It is recommended the Council enters into a 3-year contract with Centra.

**Appendices:** None.

**Background Papers:** None.

**Sarah Robson**  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Chief Officer - People and Places

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**Item 23 - Quercus Housing - Increasing delivery of affordable housing in the District**

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 14 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

Housing & Health Advisory Committee (6 June 2022, Minute 7)

The Chief Officer, People and Places presented the report which recommended that the Council approve £15 million to be drawn down by Quercus Housing over a 10-year period to deliver affordable housing in the district.

The report laid out that Quercus Housing remained ambitious in achieving the delivery of affordable homes in the Sevenoaks District and was seeking a longer term position to support this ambition and develop a project pipeline for the next 10 years. Quercus Housing had identified sites that were under development by the Council, including Stangrove, White Oak and Farmstead Drive, where Quercus Housing could acquire the affordable units.

An indicative pipeline of projects was discussed. Each site would be looked at on a scheme by scheme basis and subject to the usual due diligence, financial assessment and securing relevant permissions, such as planning.

Projects costs, financial viability assessment and borrowing requirements would be impacted by existing inflation levels and would therefore be undertaken on a site by site basis. Quercus Housing would benefit from an ongoing income stream on the assets that should increase in value over time which would reduce the overall risk.

Members asked questions of clarification and the Chairman used his discretion to allow the Chairman of the Finance and Investment Advisory Committee in attendance to address the Committee. The Chairman of the Finance and Investment Advisory Committee expressed a desire for an illustrative model of how the borrowing might be used in order to generate funds to pay the loans. It was explained that this would be completed on a scheme by scheme basis.

In response to questions Officers advised that any profits generated by Quercus Housing would be retained by Quercus Housing and utilised for further affordable housing. The business cases would be approved on a case by case basis as approved by the Quercus Housing Board in line with the business plan approved by the Quercus Housing Guarantor Board which was made up of Cabinet Members. This would then go to the Deputy Section 151 Officer and the Chief Executive. Officers emphasised that the cases would be considered individually and would have to be identified as affordable.

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In response to questions it was confirmed by Officers that up to 45 units could be delivered in the 10 year timeframe. If more sites were viable on the proposed funding model then additional funding may be looked into. Two developments had already been completed Gladedale House and 11-13 High Street, Swanley. The viability for the developments would be constantly assessed including land viability assessments and maintenance costs over a comprehensive timeframe.

Members discussed the importance of the affordable housing proposals and noted that the Council continued to work with other local housing providers and landlords. The proposals would provide another way to meet the demand for affordable housing. Members noted that the assets would ultimately be owned by the Council as the shareholder of Quercus Housing.

### Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet to recommend to Council that

- a) a financial facility of up to £15m to be drawn down by Quercus Housing over a 10-year period from prudential borrowing obtained by the Council and to be used for the purpose of delivering affordable housing, be approved; and
- b) the Deputy S151 Officer in consultation with the Chief Executive be delegated authority, to agree the terms of any borrowing to be determined at the point of draw down.

**QUERCUS HOUSING - INCREASING THE DELIVERY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE SEVENOAKS DISTRICT**

**Cabinet - 7 July 2022**

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

**Status:** For Decision

**Also considered by:**

- Housing & Health Advisory Committee - 6 June 2022
- Council - 19 July 2022

**Key Decision:** No

**Executive Summary:** Reliable access to decent housing is fundamental to improving life chances and reducing dependency on wider social support systems. In Sevenoaks District there is a shortfall between the demand for and supply of new affordable homes. This report sets out a proposal.

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** the Council's Housing Strategy.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Kevin Maskell

**Contact Officer(s):** Sarah Robson, Ext 7129

**Recommendation to Housing and Health Advisory Committee:**

That recommendations (a) to (b) below be recommended to Cabinet to be recommended to Council.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

That recommendations (a) to (b) below be recommended to Council.

**Recommendation to Council:**

- a) To approve a financial facility of up to £15m to be drawn down by Quercus Housing over a 10-year period from prudential borrowing obtained by the Council and to be used for the purpose of delivering affordable housing.
- b) To delegate authority to the Deputy S151 Officer in consultation with the Chief Executive, to agree the terms of any borrowing to be determined at the point of draw down.

### Introduction and Background

- 1 Sevenoaks District Council is taking a pro-active approach to ensure and influence the supply of new homes in a sustainable way that protects the character of and improves the fabric and public realm of the district.
- 2 However, there remains a shortfall between the demand and supply of new affordable homes in Sevenoaks District, both in absolute terms as viability issues result in below policy delivery, and in specific specialist tenures especially in the provision of affordable rental housing, older people's housing, specialist accessible housing and social rented housing for large families.
- 3 The lack of affordable housing has contributed to a rise in homelessness. Given the Council's statutory responsibility to assist homeless residents, this is creating a greater financial burden and placing significant pressures on the Council's annual Revenue Budget. These pressures are not expected to reduce over the short-to-medium terms.
- 4 The provision of affordable homes has historically been planning led with reliance on Planning Obligations, i.e. through Section 106 (s106) agreements to deliver affordable homes in the district or through the provision of commuted sums.
- 5 With 90% of the district designated as rural belt and 60% as AONB, developable land is in short supply. The Council recognises the importance of Rural Exception Sites in providing affordable housing to areas that need them and continues to promote the opportunities they will bring in providing affordable housing to rural areas.
- 6 The Council is already looking at how it can use its own land assets more effectively to deliver additional housing to assist the Council in satisfying the housing demand caused by the failure of the market to deliver in these areas, whilst at the same time retaining asset value and providing greater control of what is built.
- 7 Limited land supply and the high cost of land in the District makes it difficult for our private Registered Provider (RP) partners, also known as housing associations, to acquire land for building new affordable housing themselves. To make the most cost effective use of s106 commuted sums, the Council has subsidised new developments that could not proceed without some assistance. For example, we are currently working with West Kent Housing Association to subsidise the delivery of 7 new supported housing flats for rough sleepers, using commuted sums at Vine Court Road. Supporting this proposal through the use of s106 commuted sums is an appropriate use of the funding, particularly as this type of supported housing would not otherwise be delivered by our RP partners.
- 8 Intervening in the housing market through direct delivery also offers opportunities to deliver a wider housing offer in areas and tenures that reduces demand elsewhere on the Council's service provision.

### **Quercus Housing - overview**

- 9 Sevenoaks District Council is a non-stock holding Council. Therefore in 2019, the Council established Quercus Housing, a Local Authority Trading Company, to support the delivery of affordable homes in the district.
- 10 £6 million in s106 commuted sums for affordable housing was allocated to support the delivery of the Quercus Housing Business Plan. The funding has been provided by developers where affordable housing could not be delivered on-site. The funding has been used to deliver affordable housing in the Sevenoaks district.
- 11 Until 2021, Quercus Housing's business model was reliant on receiving s106 commuted sums for affordable housing, which impacted its ongoing financial scope to provide an annual programme of affordable housing delivery in line with its Business Plan. This is because the amount of commuted sums is dependent on private sector schemes entering the planning system, being granted planning consent, and S106s being agreed.
- 12 However, at its meeting on 16 September 2021, the Quercus Housing Guarantor Board approved amendments to its Business Plan to enable the company to undertake prudential borrowing via the Council. Any borrowing would be subject to the usual approval mechanisms, including the review of the financial compliance aspects and scheme viability in consultation with the Quercus Housing Guarantor Board.
- 13 Most local authorities opt to borrow, generally from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), at rates lower than Quercus Housing could obtain themselves and then on-lend to their subsidiary companies. There is an exemption from Subsidy Control (State Aid) compliance for non-commercial purposes, thus in the case of Quercus Housing, this approach is possible.

### **Quercus Housing - completed investments**

- 14 In 2019, Quercus Housing purchased Gladedale House in Westerham. 5 units conform to the new 'genuinely affordable' definition in that they are within the Local Housing Allowance rate and the remaining 4 units are 'intermediate rent', in that they are 80% of market rent and offered to local essential workers. Five of the units have been leased to Quercus 7 for market rent. The total cost of the project was £3.771m, with £2.481m funded from S106 affordable housing contributions and the remainder of the cost, paid for by Quercus 7, for its leasehold properties.
- 15 Quercus Housing has recently completed the purchase of the freehold of 11-13 High Street in Swanley, which comprises 12 two-bed flats and 3 one-bed flats. 10 units are within Local Housing Allowance and 5 are at 80% of market rent. The development has provided a good opportunity to invest the remaining s106 monies available to Quercus Housing, assisting affordable housing requirements in a single block investment in an area which is popular with renters.

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16 All available s106 monies have now been spent or allocated.

### **Quercus Housing - future pipeline**

17 Quercus Housing remains ambitious in achieving the delivery of affordable homes in the Sevenoaks District and is seeking a longer term position to support this ambition and develop a project pipeline for the next 10 years.

18 Although the Council has limited land holdings, exploration of using these sites to maximise affordable housing is imperative. The Council has identified sites as suitable for housing development, including Stangrove, White Oak and Farmstead Drive.

19 These sites would enable Quercus Housing to meet its 'massive small' delivery ambitions to support small sites to play a more meaningful role in the District's affordable housing delivery, including Council-owned sites.

20 The table below, provides an indicative pipeline of projects for the next three years, which will continue to be reviewed and updated over the next 10 years, being presented to Quercus Housing Guarantor Board and at the annual Quercus Housing AGM, when it presents to full Council.

21 A future pipeline of projects could potentially include, subject to the usual due diligence and securing relevant permissions, such as planning, the following sites:

- Abbey Court, West Kingsdown
- Abbeyfield, St Marys, Riverhead
- Stangrove Estate, Edenbridge
- White Oak Leisure Centre residential, Swanley
- Farmstead Drive, Edenbridge

22 Projects costs, financial viability assessment and borrowing requirements will be impacted by current inflation levels and will therefore be undertaken on a site by site basis.

### **Financial Facility**

23 Quercus Housing is therefore seeking Council approve for a financial facility of up to £15m to assist with the delivery of affordable housing. This facility would be funded from prudential borrowing (for example, PWLB) obtained by the Council. The financial facility would be made available to Quercus Housing to support the delivery of the Quercus Housing Business Plan as approved by the Quercus Housing Guarantor Board. Quercus Housing would draw funds from this facility on a case-by-case basis and would be subject to appropriate due diligence being undertaken and subject to the Deputy S151 Officer's approval in consultation with the Chief Executive.

- 24 The headline terms of the proposed financial facility are summarised as follows:
- a. Total facility amount of £15m (which can be extended subject to further Council approval), with a loan repayment over a 30-50 year period, subject to financial assessment and viability
  - b. The facility is to be drawn down by Quercus Housing in ad hoc tranches over a term not exceeding 10 years from the date of Council approval.
  - c. The facility is to be used to support the provision of affordable housing in accordance with the Quercus Housing Business Plan approved by the Guarantor Board, which will review the business plan annually;
  - d. A minimum notice period of 1 month is to be given to the Deputy S151 Officer for a withdrawal from the facility, using an agreed Withdrawal Notice Form. The Withdrawal Notice Form will specify:
    - i. The amount required, its term and repayment details;
    - ii. The scheme against which the withdrawal amount is required;
    - iii. Confirmation from the Quercus Housing Board that:
      - it has approved the scheme and has undertaken necessary due diligence to determine the viability and feasibility of the scheme;
      - it has undertaken Anti-Money Laundering regulatory compliance checks, and;
      - The Council will be granted a registered charge (principal) against the assets to be created.
  - e. Having received a completed Withdrawal Notice, the Deputy S151 Officer will assess the Withdrawal Notice and will have discretion, in consultation with the Chief Executive, as to whether or not to grant the loan and will confirm his decision and release funding if deemed appropriate within 3 weeks of having received a notice or as otherwise agreed with Quercus Housing.
  - f. The facility is also conditional upon:
    - i. Quercus Housing ensuring its schemes, where viable, seek to comply with the Council's Net Zero Carbon Strategy and sustainability policies;
    - ii. The Quercus Housing scheme being compliant with all statutory provisions;

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- iii. Secondary charges against the real assets of the organisation are subject to the Council's agreement, and;
- iv. In the event of Quercus Housing ceasing to trade for whatever reason, the assets of the organisation will revert to the Council.

### Prudential Borrowing

- 34 The Prudential Borrowing Capital Finance system was introduced in 2004, allowing councils to borrow without Government consent. A council can invest in "any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment, or for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs". There are Government and CIPFA guidelines which councils must follow and they must adopt an investment strategy on an annual basis. Councils are also required to set aside a minimum revenue provision against any investment. As local authority borrowing contributes to the public sector debt, its overall level of borrowing and future constraints on such have to be considered.
- 35 In principle the Council can use prudential borrowing to support affordable housing development. The great advantage is that the Council is able to borrow from Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) at very competitive rates. For the Council, affordable housing can represent a safe return on investment and it can take security over the properties acquired or developed. The Council has to consider the amount it can lend and what bodies it can lend to within the context of its investment strategy and prudential limits.

### Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

- 36 **Option 1:** If Council approves the recommendations in the summary of this report, it will enable Quercus Housing to develop a long-term ambition to deliver affordable housing in the District over the next 10 years.
- 37 **Option 2:** Status Quo - the Council could decide not to approve the recommendations, which would restrict Quercus Housing's financial ability to deliver affordable housing in the district. This would impact homeless households remaining in temporary nightly paid accommodation due to the limited availability affordable move on accommodation in the district, which would have a knock on effect on budget pressures created as a result of the cost of nightly paid accommodation.

## Key Implications

### Resource (non-financial)

None. Utilising existing staff resources.

### Financial

New Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) guidance issued in August 2021 specifically mentions that it can be used for housing schemes including on-lending to a wholly owned housing company. The guidance goes on to state: “Housing can include all spending on delivering new homes, maintaining or improving existing homes, and purchasing built homes to deliver housing services. This is the case irrespective of the financial arrangements of the housing project or housing delivery. However, the government expects that the location and value of any housing expenditure be appropriate to meet the local authority’s housing needs.”

Finance will advise whether Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) may need to be considered to help facilitate any loan. It is important that Finance advises on what the MRP impact is on the Revenue Account. Auditors will need to advise on the MRP percentage to be applied and if they are willing to have this partially collateralised through the properties acquired.

This borrowing would then be forwarded to Quercus Housing who would repay the Council from the rental income received.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

Areas for consideration by Legal include the legality for the Council in terms of providing borrowing via PWLB to Quercus Housing, for example, the defaults and duty of the Council as a lender and default position of the assets held by Quercus Housing (this is particularly important for the auditors in determining MRP).

The Council as principal funder and shareholder should have set-in rights for each development in the event of a default. The assets should be retained as collateral (first charge) against which the loan is secured until such time the loan is repaid. Any insolvency risk should result in the collateralisation of assets to Council. Quercus Housing will work in partnership with the Strategic Head of Commercial and Property regarding any responsibilities under the Environment Act need to be noted in the event of default.

The Quercus Housing Business Plan is reviewed annually and approved by Guarantor Board. The company’s Risk Management Strategy and Assessment will continue to be reviewed and updated to incorporate any future risks and mitigation of borrowing. Detailed budget monitoring is completed on a monthly basis where all variances are explained.

Quercus Housing will need to ensure it has the appropriate governance within to manage the loan facility. All investment decisions resulting in draw-down will have undergone the appropriate due diligence and approved by Quercus Guarantor Board and the S151 Officer.

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### 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.

Where possible, Quercus Housing will seek to align with the Council's net zero ambitions, embedding sustainability measures into any new development, subject to viability.

### 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.

### **Conclusion**

Sevenoaks District is the least affordable area in Kent, with a median house price to median income (workplace based) factor of 12.59, compared with 9.82 in Kent. The factor for lower quartile house prices to lower quartile incomes (workplace based) is 12.92 compared with 10.41 across Kent. (ONS data, March 2020).

Quercus Housing places a high priority on delivering decent affordable housing meeting residents need, and, if the recommendations in this report are approved, will enable the Council through Quercus Housing to proactively and directly provide appropriate affordable housing for local residents.

Quercus Housing would benefit from an ongoing income stream on assets that should go up in value over time, which reduces the financial risk.

If approved, Quercus Housing will continue to build affordable housing in addition to those provided through the planning system, and housing associations utilising their Homes England grant money in the district.

#### **Appendices**

None

#### **Background paper**

None