

26 September 2023 at 7.00 pm

Council Chamber, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks

Published: 18.09.23

This meeting will be livestreamed to YouTube [here](#):

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIT1f_F5OfvTzxjZk6Zqn6g



Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee

Membership:

Chairman, Cllr. Bayley ; Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Thornton

Cllrs. Abraham, Clayton, G. Darrington, Hogarth, Malone, Manamperi, James Morgan, Varley, Waterton and White

Agenda

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

	Pages	Contact
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To agree minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Committee held on 27 June 2023, as a correct record.	(Pages 1 - 4)	
2. Declarations of interest Any declarations not already registered.		
3. Actions form previous meeting (if any)		
4. Update from Portfolio Holder		
5. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit Committee (if any)		
6. Digital Tourism update	(Pages 5 - 38)	Detlev Munster Tel: 01732 227099
7. Draft Council Plan	(Pages 39 - 64)	Lee Banks Tel: 01732 227161
8. Work plan	(Pages 65 - 66)	

EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

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

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

IMPROVEMENT & INNOVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2023 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Bayley (Chairman)

Cllr. Thornton (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, G. Darrington, Hogarth, J.Morgan, Malone, Manamperi,
and White

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Clayton and Waterton

Cllrs. Barker and P. Darrington were also present.

Cllr. Manston was also present via a virtual media platform which did not
constitute attendance as recognised via the Local Government Act 1972.

1. Appointment of Chairman

Resolved: That Cllr Bayley be appointed Chairman of the Advisory
Committee for 2023/24.

(Cllr Bayley in the Chair)

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Resolved: That Cllr Thornton be appointed Vice Chairman of the Advisory
Committee for 2023/24.

3. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held 28 February 2023 be
approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Declarations of interest

There were none.

5. Actions form previous meeting

There were none.

6. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder presented an update on some key areas within her portfolio.
She gave a [presentation](#) on the Council's Strategic Projects, explaining that most
had been successfully delivered.

Agenda Item 1

Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee - 27 June 2023

The new Council Plan was being created by Cabinet, and a draft version would be presented to the Committee at the next meeting.

A staff event was held on 27 June to celebrate the Council's recent Platinum Investors in People (IIP) accreditation. This was the fifth time the Council had achieved the highest level accreditation in a row.

Members had toured the Dunbrik offices to see the recent changes to improve them. Another visit was scheduled for 28 June, for those that were unable to attend the first. The Communications team had organised Social Media Training for Members on 10 July. This would help Councillors manage the increasing number of resident queries and requests that were sent to them through social media.

The Portfolio Holder, as Leader of the Council, had attended the Leaders of Kent meeting. Leaders of the 12 District Councils within Kent gathered to discuss shared issues. She had also attended a meeting of the Sevenoaks Chamber of Commerce and would be attending the Local Government Association conference in early July.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder explained that the Council's neighbouring authorities outside of Kent were also regularly consulted with, particularly with regard to the duty to cooperate in planning matters.

7. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

8. Role of the Advisory Committee and Key Challenges

The Chief Officer for Customer & Resources, the Assistant Chief Executive, and the Strategic Head for Commercial & Property gave a [presentation](#) on the services within the Committee's portfolio and the key challenges they were facing. They explained that teams were working to address these in several ways, including the implementation of new technologies to improve customer experience, but not at the expense of customers that required more traditional engagement.

In response to questions, they explained that the West Kent Partnership, of which the Council was a member, was working to collectively attract external businesses to the area, and ways to support the labour pool. The Sevenoaks and Edenbridge leisure centres had temporary lease arrangements in place, and long-term plans for them were still being investigated. Members were assured that local Members would be consulted before any disposals were presented to the Committee, and there would be opportunities for them to present their views to officers, the Portfolio Holder, and the Committee.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

9. Investors in People

The Chief Officer for Customer & Resources gave a [presentation](#) on the Council's recent platinum IIP accreditation. This marked the fifth time in a row that the Council had achieved the highest level of the award. The Council scored in the highest grading (high performing) across all nine themes - a further improvement from the last assessment. This award was significant external recognition of the Council's approach to supporting and developing its staff.

In response to questions, the Officer outlined the benefits of this accreditation to staff recruitment and retention, which were two key challenges facing many areas of the Council. Competing with the financial incentives of the private sector and proximity to London was difficult within the Council's resources, so it was beneficial to recruitment to have external recognition of the Council's efforts. Members were advised that the IIP assessor had identified other potential areas of improvement which could be considered and that these would be investigated further. It was explained to Members the assessor's view was that hybrid working had been implemented with a managed and positive approach, and that it positively impacted recruitment and retention whilst maintaining productivity.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

10. Meeting Point Update

The Strategic Head for Commercial & Property presented the report, which updated the Committee on the 27 - 37 High Street and the Swanley Meeting Point development. The business hub was operational, with two offices occupied in long-term hires from local businesses, and there had been several inquiries into letting office and hot-desk space. The Housing Team was working to place residents in their new homes. The project had been delivered within budget, despite issues with utility providers and the pandemic. The Officer gave a [presentation](#) highlighting the improvement to the area as a result of the development.

In response to questions, it was clarified that the office rates were favourable and competitive within the market, making the space available for non-profits and charities to use. The site incorporated many green development elements, including air source heat pumps and building fabric that provided enhanced insulation.

Resolved: that the delivery of 17 new affordable homes and a new business hub in Swanley be noted.

11. Work plan

The Work Plan was noted with the following additions:

26 September 2023

- Council Plan

Agenda Item 1

Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee - 27 June 2023

- 2024/25 Budget Setting Process

5 December 2023

- Rural England Prosperity Fund Update
- Economic Development Strategy

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.40 PM

CHAIRMAN

VISITOR ECONOMY - DIGITAL

Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committee – 26 September 2023

Report of: Detlev Munster - Strategic Head Commercial & Property

Status: For information

Also considered by: N/A

Key Decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Thornton

Contact Officer: Emma West, Ext. 7205

Recommendation to Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committee:

That this report be noted.

Reason for recommendation: This report is for information only.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The council's visitor website, visitsevenoaks.co.uk was launched during August 2021. The purpose of the website is to engage with inbound visitors by showcasing the districts offer which is presented in both static content and a rolling calendar of events. Supplementary content includes suggested itineraries, walking trails and [links](#) to the Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership (DVCRP) of which Sevenoaks District Council is the Accountable Body.
- 2 A council managed Instagram account complements the visitor website and is used as a platform to engage with customers on a local, regional, and national level. This method of communication allows us to communicate with audiences quickly using targeted comms and tailored content to increase engagement and awareness of the district. Earlier this month, the account reached 1,000 followers.
- 3 More recently, moresevenoaks.co.uk was launched (June 2022) to actively promote Sevenoaks as a place to Live, Work, Invest, and Visit. The website is used intuitively to promote the district under the preceding four pillars. In terms of promoting the visit element, users are signposted to visitsevenoaks.co.uk.

Agenda Item 6

Under the More Sevenoaks brand sit three social media accounts, specifically, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and professional networking site, LinkedIn. These platforms are used to communicate with users under all four pillars and I will touch on some examples during the presentation.

- 4 Furthermore, our ongoing partnership with Visit Kent includes digital marketing activity which extends to designated content on [visitkent.co.uk](https://www.visitkent.co.uk), blogs and social media. This activity forms part of our Service Level of Agreement (SLA) with Visit Kent.
- 5 The importance of digital tourism activity is a key method of communication, allowing us to actively engage with customers in a curated way with instant impact.
- 6 Monitoring of these channels is effectively carried out by accessing Google Analytics and the insights tool on the respective social media channels. This allows us and our partners to react to trends and understand user demographics including country of origin. The attached presentation provides a summary overview to demonstrate our results to date.

Key Implications

Resource (non-financial)

Officer time to ensure websites and social media channels remain current and relevant.

Financial

The More Sevenoaks website and social media accounts are maintained by Pillory Barn through our ongoing partnership.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

There are no legal implications for the Council associated with 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

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

Appendices

Appendix A – Digital media report

Background Papers

None

Detlev Munster

Strategic Head – Commercial & Property

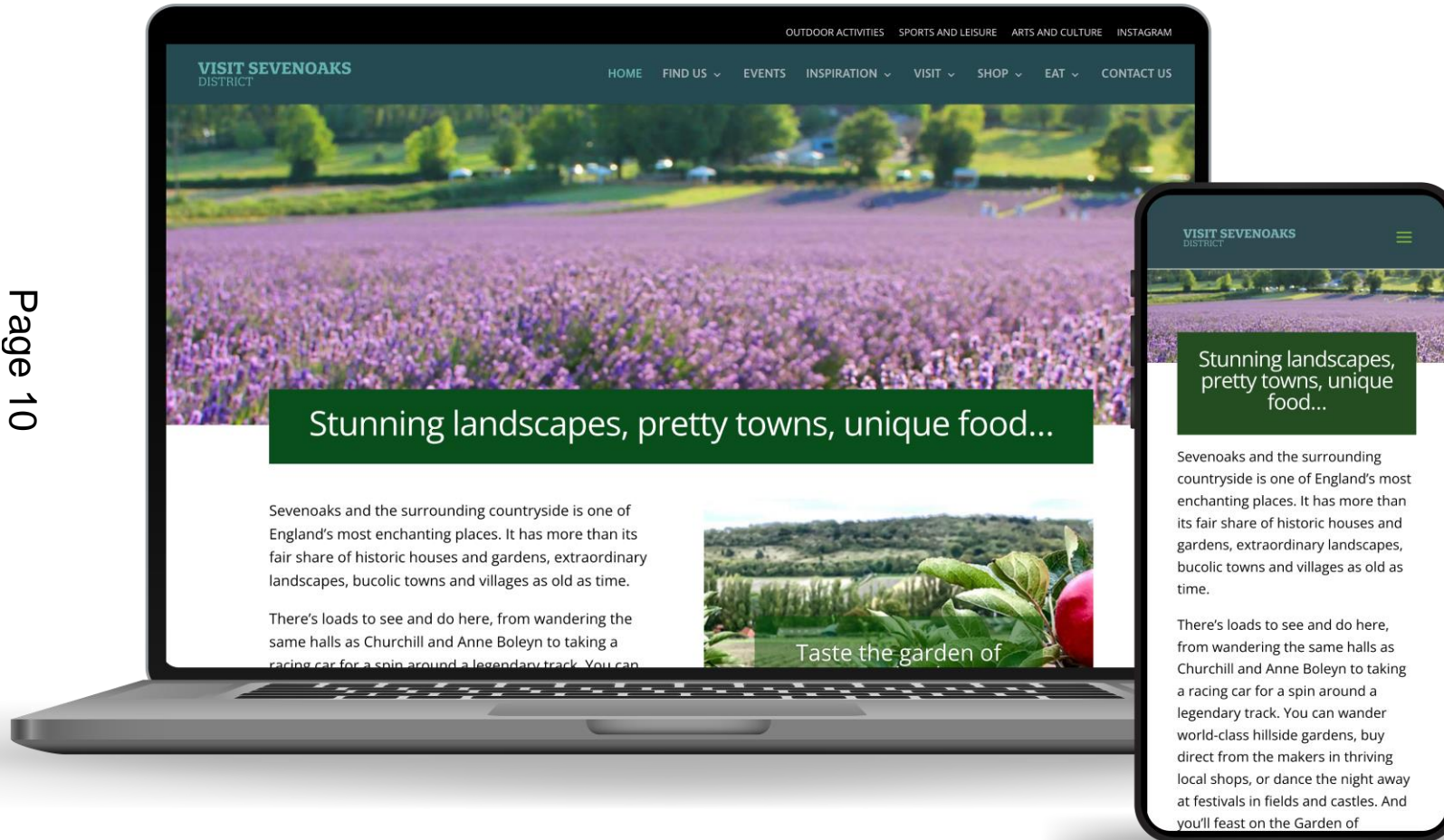
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Digital Media report 2023

Page 9



Emma West
Economic Development Officer – Tourism & Rural



Key data

- 4.1k users
- High ranking Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- 59 sec average engagement time
- Top 3 users by country
 - UK
 - China
 - USA

Instagram – best performing posts

visit_sevenoaks

Page 1

Liked by littleelses and 26 others

visit_sevenoaks There's so much to enjoy this weekend, from the Food Festival at Little Elses near Weald (so much happening there) to the first weekend of the brilliant Art in June (artists open studios all over the area) to the wonderful, award-nominated Penshurst Market (fresh asparagus!). This is a vibrant and wonderful place to live and explore. #visitsevenoaks #moresevenoaks #westkent #foodfestkent #penshurstmarket #penshurst #weald #littleelses #morleysfarm #artinjunekent #artistskent #openstudioskent #sevenoaksdistrict #sevenoaksnewsdesk

thefoodfestkent Thankyou for the post 🙌

ryanmhayman @beth_willson_

2 June

visit_sevenoaks

Liked by thetuliptreetea and 21 others

visit_sevenoaks Time to celebrate Afternoon Tea Week! The Sevenoaks district has a fabulous choice of tea rooms to visit, like the quaint Tulip Tea Room in Chiddingstone or the charming rose garden at the Fir Tree House Tea Room in Penshurst. Or maybe visit Westerham or Otford for a whole range of cafes, with formal towers of cakes and sandwiches or casual tea and cake. Check www.visitsevenoaks.co.uk for inspiration! #afternoonteaweek #moresevenoaks #visitsevenoaks

thetuliptreetea Thanks for mentioning us, delighted you used our photo!

visit_sevenoaks @thetuliptreetea it looks so good!

7 August

visit_sevenoaks
Kent, United Kingdom

Liked by poppynicholson and 23 others

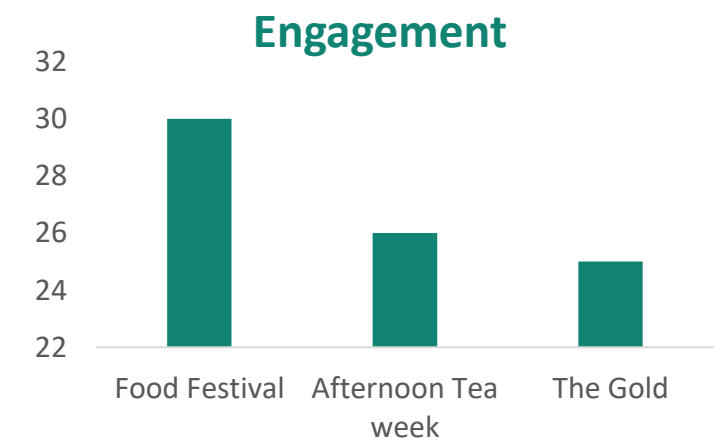
visit_sevenoaks Did you know The Gold was filmed in West Kingsdown in Sevenoaks and is now available on @bbciplayer

#visitsevenoaks #kentfilmoffice #visitkent #kent #TheGold #bbc1

View all 2 comments

visit_tunbridgewells 🙌🙌

9 March

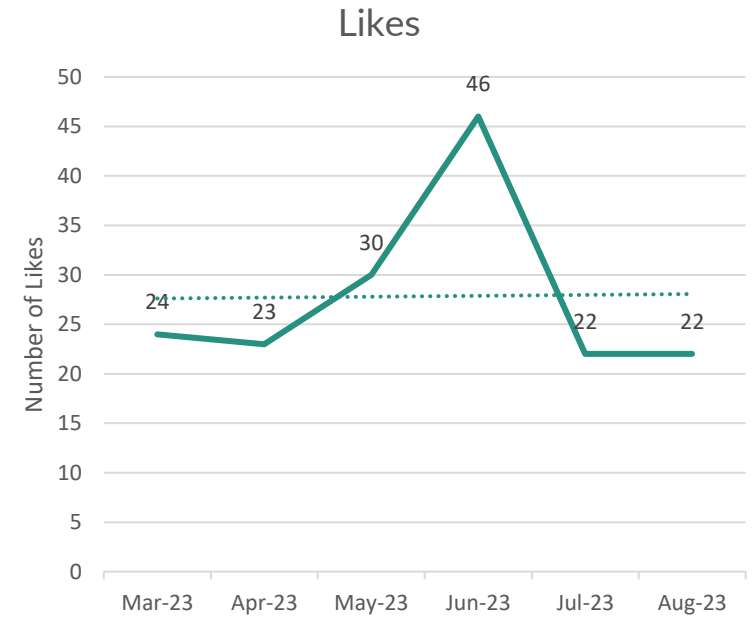
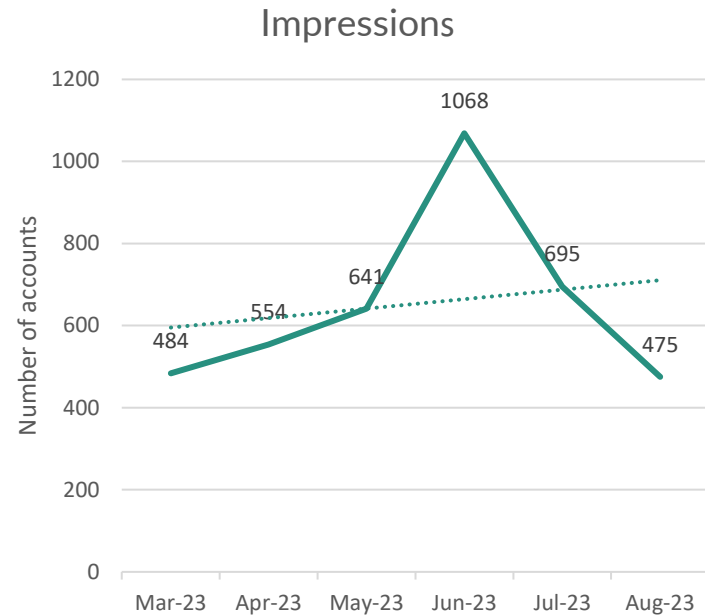
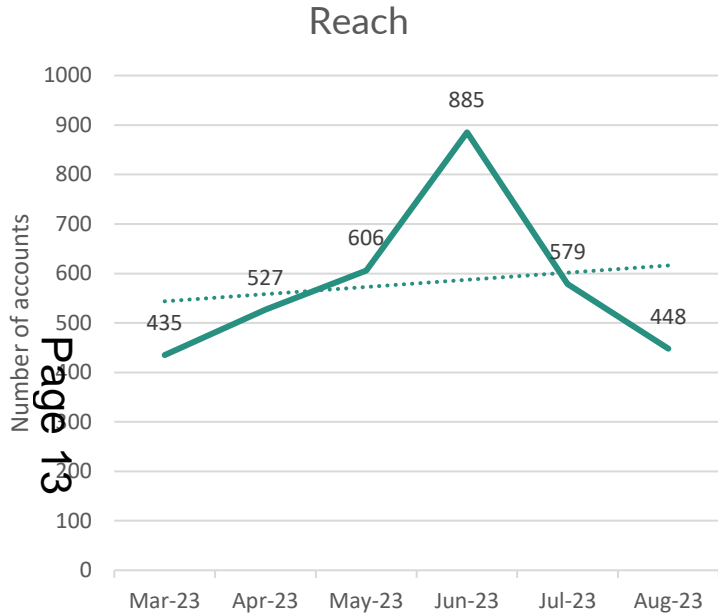


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Instagram - Visit Sevenoaks

Posts	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23
Reach	435	527	606	885	579	448
Impressions	484	554	641	1,068	695	475
Likes	24	23	30	46	22	22
Comments	2	0	1	2	0	2
Profile visits	3	4	2	7	3	7
Total engagements	29	27	33	55	35	31
Engagement rate	6.7%	5.1%	5.4%	6.2%	6%	6.9%

Instagram - Visit Sevenoaks



Digital Marketing Overview

Visit Kent

Visit Kent digital marketing – visitkent.co.uk



'Gorgeous stately homes, irresistible gardens, Roman remains and a picturesque landscape, including the rippling hills of the High Weald and the rolling North Downs, make Sevenoaks in Kent a destination you can't afford to miss.'

1.6M
Page views

1.3M
minutes on the website

926k
Sessions

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Service Level of Agreement Deliverables

Deliverable 1

Dedicated Sevenoaks district destination page on Visit Kent website

<http://www.visitkent.co.uk/destinations/Sevenoaks-district>

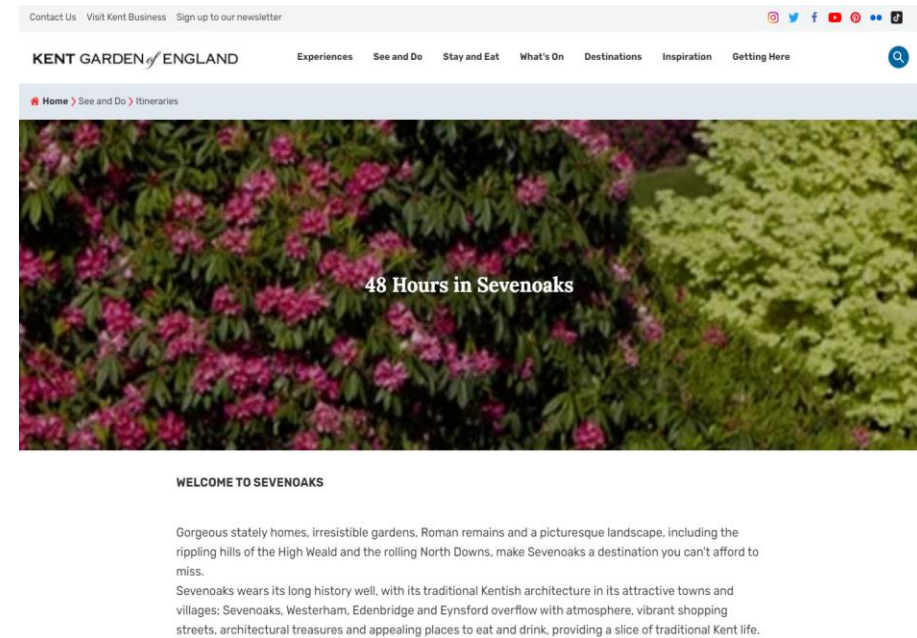
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Deliverable 2

Inspirational 48hrs in Sevenoaks District

<https://www.visitkent.co.uk/see-and-do/itineraries/48-hours-in-sevenoaks>



Service Level of Agreement Deliverables

Deliverable 3

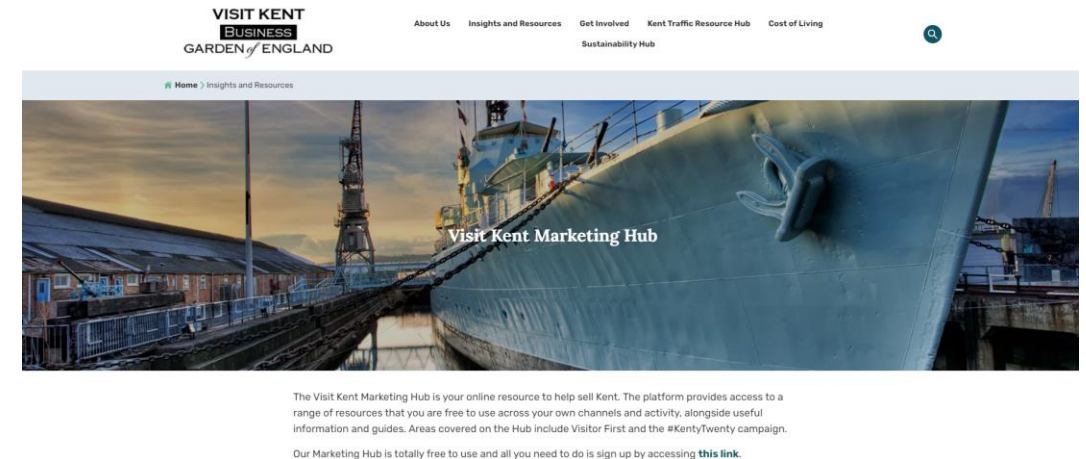
Inclusions in featured inspirational content on www.visitkent.co.uk and shared across all channels. Including council owned tourism businesses and events or non-investor partners

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- [Shared experiences in Kent - Heart of Sevenoaks](#)
- [2021 Taste of Kent Award winners - Brisket & Barrell](#)
- [Kent's intriguing facts - Lullingstone Castle](#)
- [Save the Date - Heart of Sevenoaks \(Street Food Fest & Rhythm and Oaks\)](#)
- [Coffee shops and brunch spots in Kent - Otto's Coffee Shop](#)
- [Pre-Christmas breaks - The Mount Vineyard, Castle Farm](#)
- [Treat yourself in Kent - Chiddingstone village, Eynsford village, Mount Vineyard, Fairmead Cottage, Taylor House](#)
- [Halloween in Kent 2021 - Lullingstone Castle & The World Gardens](#)
- [Dog friendly places to eat and drink - The Leceister Arms, The Spotted Dog](#)

Deliverable 4

Provision of Visit Kent Marketing Hub with marketing assets that are free for businesses in the Sevenoaks district to access



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<https://www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk/insights-and-resources/visit-kent-marketing-hub>

Visit Kent digital marketing – socials

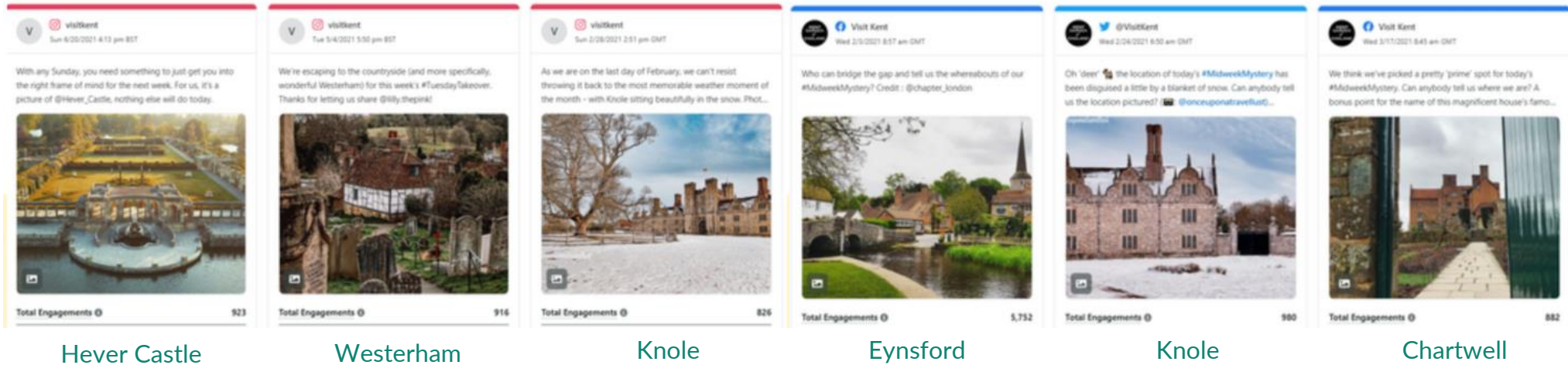
22.8m
Impressions

1,992
Organic social posts
across Instagram,
Twitter and Facebook

654k
Engagements

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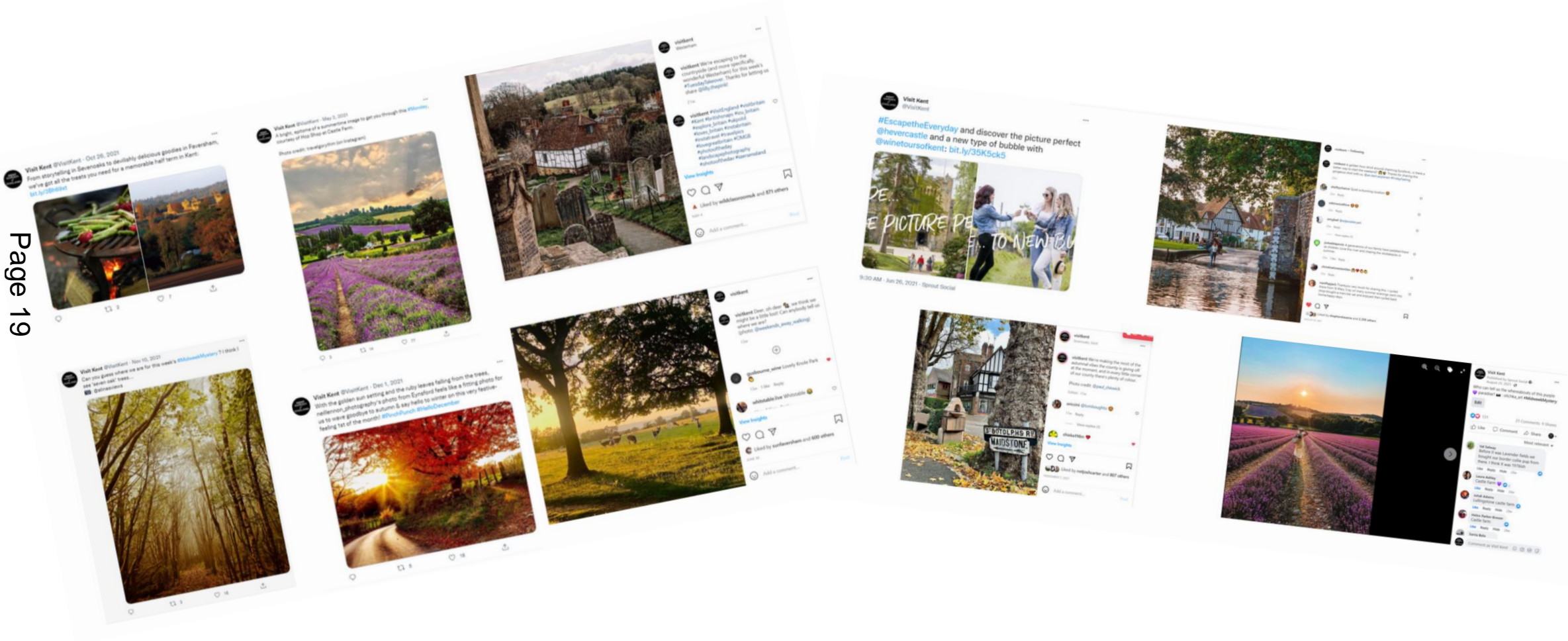
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Sevenoaks on socials and blogs

Over 120 organic social posts featuring the Sevenoaks district, resulting in over 560,000 impressions.

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SEVENOAKS

SO MUCH MORE

Digital media report | August 2023



Vibrant



Historic



Entrepreneurial



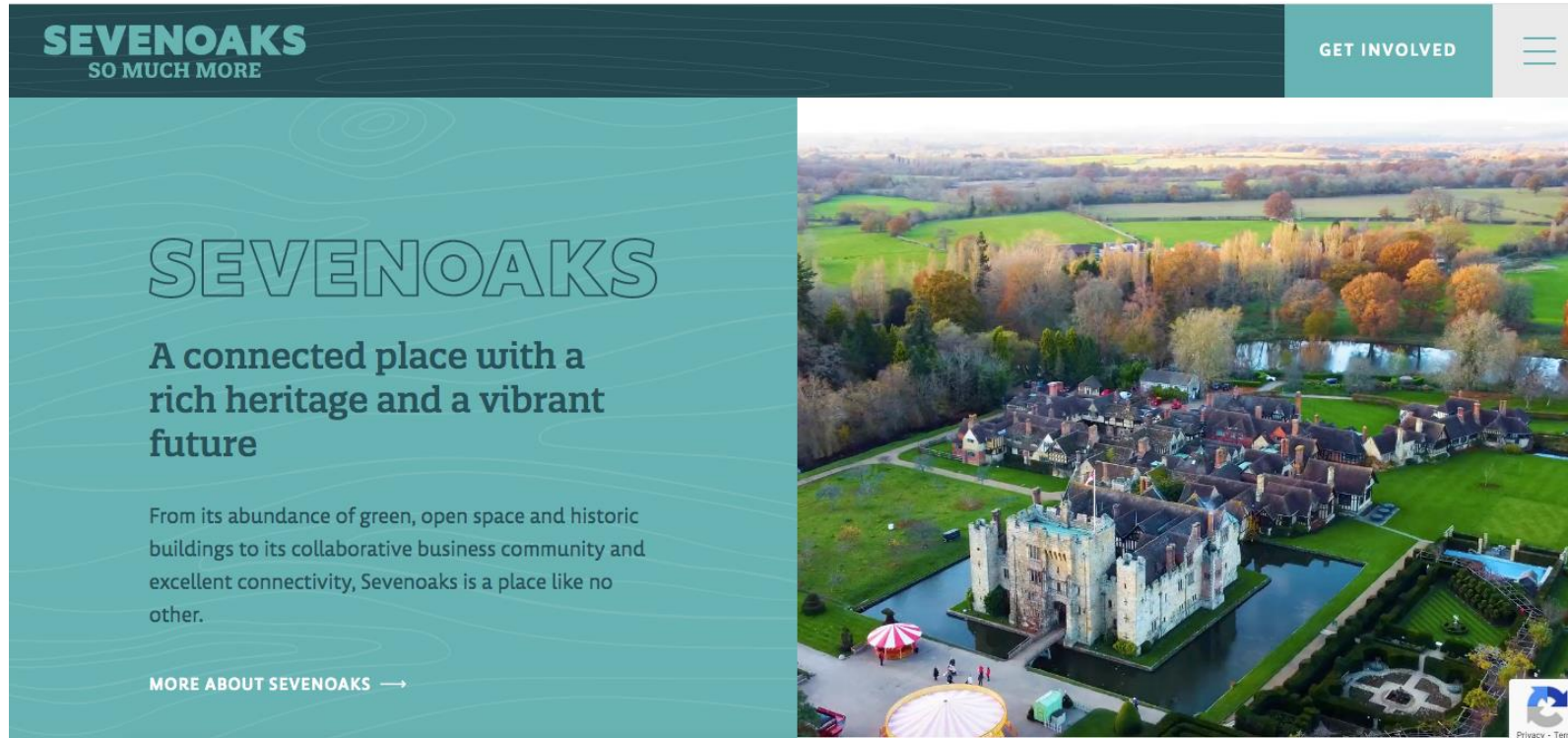
Beautiful



Connected



More Sevenoaks website



<https://www.moresevenoaks.co.uk>

Key stats

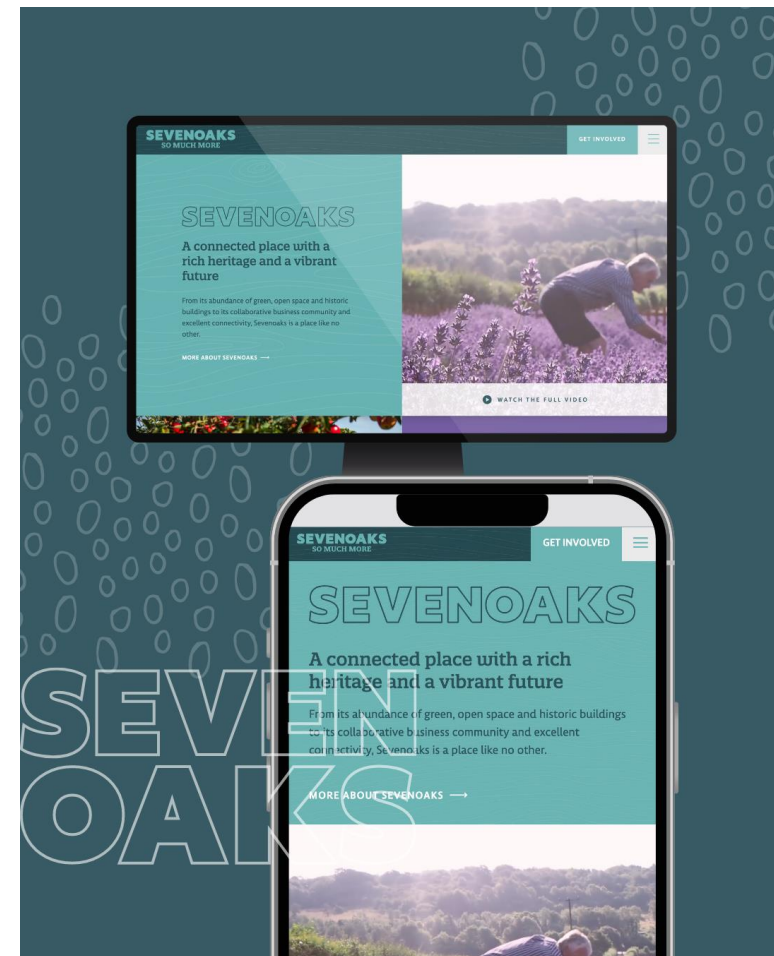
- 3,895 total website views
- 1,901 unique website users
- 1 min 35 sec average engagement time
- Average engagement rate on desktop: 64.76% (compared to average GA4 engagement rate of 55%)

More Sevenoaks website

Key stats

- Organic social is the best performing channel for website traffic (by user)
- Top three website traffic locations: London, Sevenoaks and Maidstone
- Top three website pages: Homepage, Autumn Hamper Competition and Business Directory

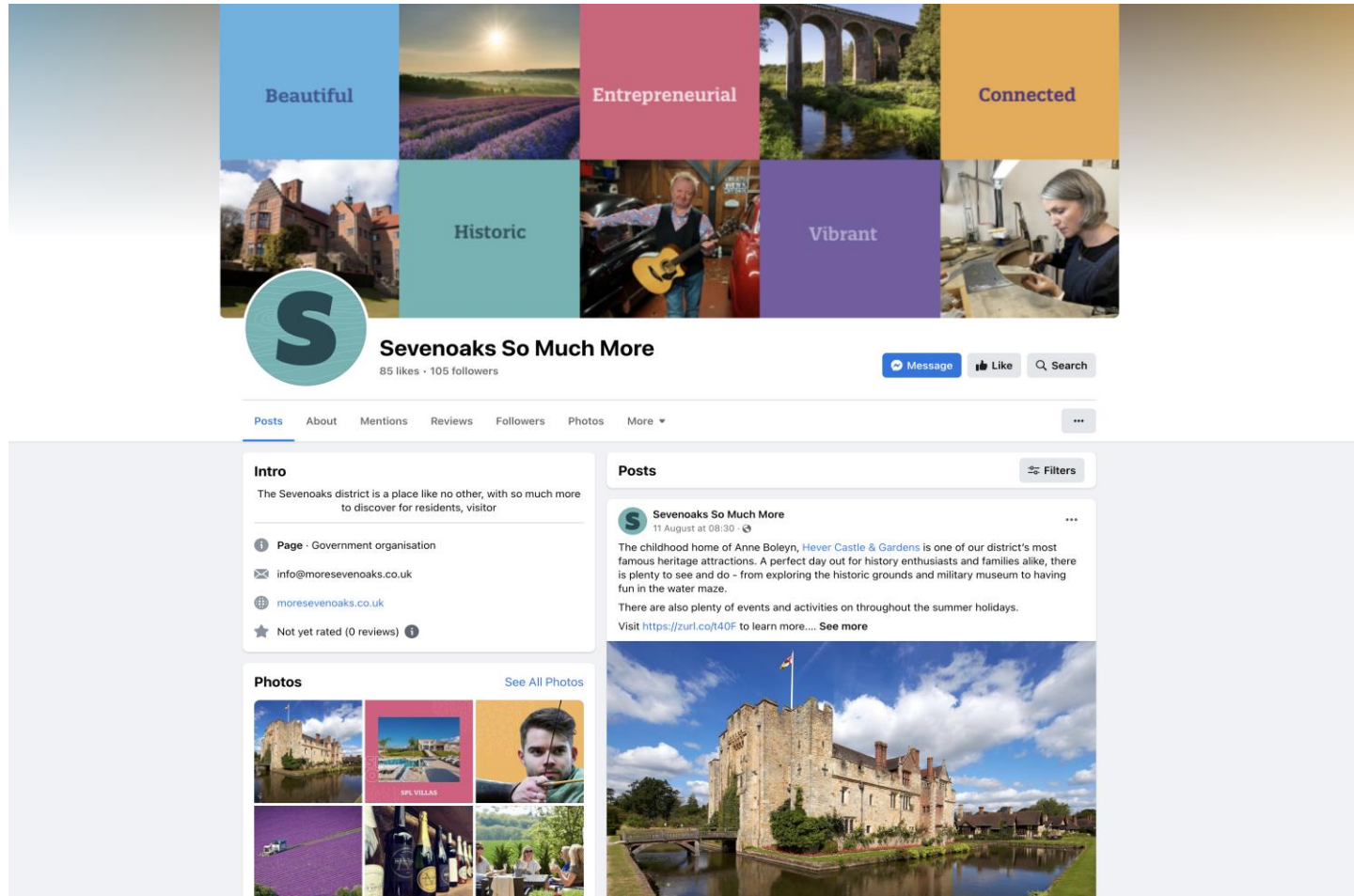
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<https://www.moresevenoaks.co.uk>

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Facebook



Key stats

- Average engagement rate: 11.1% (compared to the industry average of 0.15%)
- Total followers: 105
- Total reach: 8,258
- Best performing post: Robin Hood competition.

<https://www.facebook.com/moresevenoaks>

Facebook

Since commencing the Sevenoaks So Much More campaign in June 2022, we have seen some good performance statistics, most notably the **average engagement rate of 11.1%, which is well above the industry average of 0.15%**. The channel has also **reached 8,258 accounts**.

The **best performing post to date was the Robin Hood competition post**, which would have helped drive traffic to the entry post on Instagram. It shows the value in running competitions on social media.

Across the 12 months, we can see some peaks and troughs in performance, which is to be expected. The **highs can be attributed to the launch, social media competitions and increased posting schedule**, while the **dips can be attributed to reduced activity** while we agreed ongoing support from Pillory Barn, to help move the brand forward.

It is extremely promising to see that the **performance figures for May are a notable increase month-on-month** and among the best performing months to date. For instance, **reactions were up 175%** and there was a **122.3% increase in impressions in May 2023**. June 2023 performance remains strong.

Facebook

Posts	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sept-22	Oct-22	Nov-22
Reach	823	2,184	1,178	801	1,216	144
Impressions	888	2,273	1,068	916	1,301	165
Reactions	57	97	85	21	40	8
Comments	6	6	1	2	3	0
Shares	14	29	19	10	3	1
Website clicks	6	19	17	76	88	1
Total engagements	83	151	122	109	134	10
Engagement rate	10.09%	6.91%	10.35%	13.6%	11.01%	6.94%

Posts	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23*	Mar-23	April-23	May-23	Jun-23
Reach	783	49	-	332	132	300	316
Impressions	829	55	-	354	152	338	346
Reactions	28	5	-	13	12	33	18
Comments	4	0	-	0	0	1	0
Shares	5	0	-	2	1	0	1
Website clicks	63	0	-	21	6	19	9
Total engagements	100	5	-	36	19	53	28
Engagement rate	12.77%	10.2%	-	10.8%	14.3%	17.6%	8.8%

* Please note that due to an error in Meta Business Suite we have not been able to source data for February 2023.

Instagram



moresevenoaks

Edit Profile



53 posts

490 followers

239 following

Sevenoaks So Much More

The Sevenoaks district is a place like no other, with so much more to discover for residents, visitors, businesses and investors.

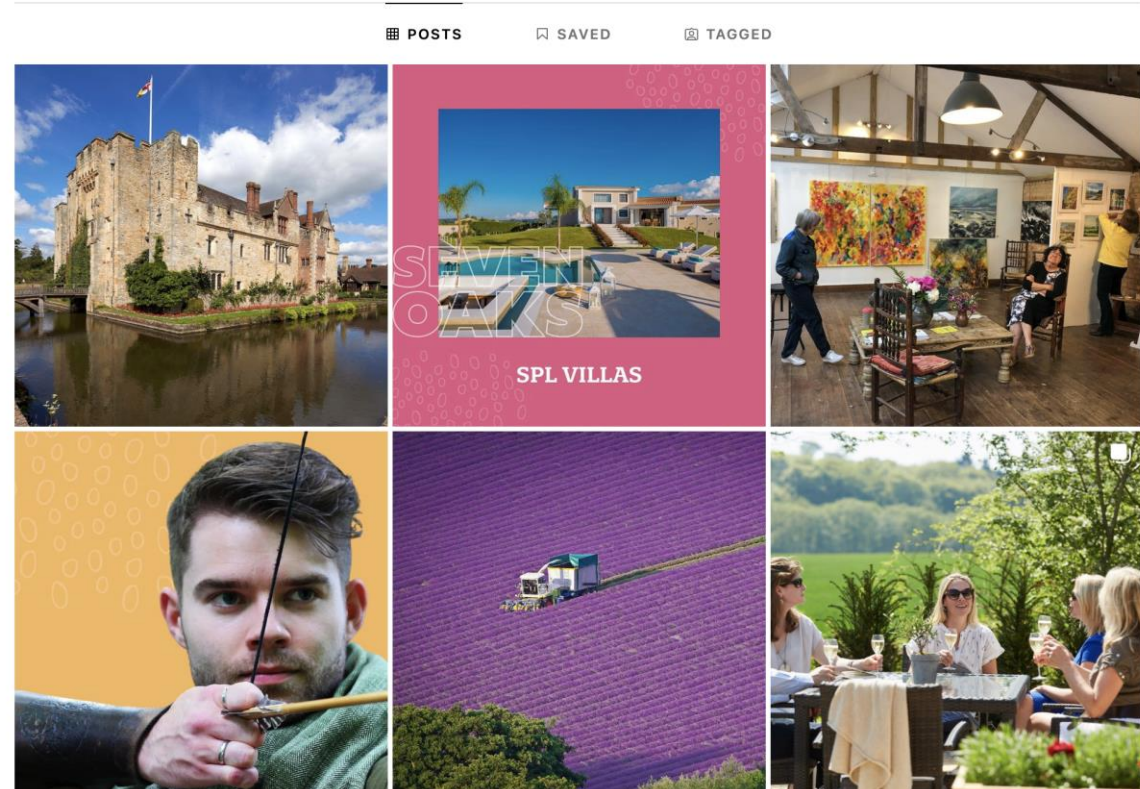
#sevenoaks

🔗 linktr.ee/moresevenoaks

Key stats

- Average **engagement** rate 23.6%
(compared to the industry average of 1-5%)
- Total **followers** 490
- Instagram has generated a **total of 9,236 impressions**.
- **Best performing post:** Launch post

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<https://www.instagram.com/moresevenoaks>

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Instagram

Since commencing the Sevenoaks So Much More campaign in June 2022, we have seen some good performance statistics, most notably the **average engagement rate of 23.6%, which is well above the industry average which sits between 1-5%**. The channel has also generated a **total of 9,236 impressions**, which is the number of times our content was seen.

The **best performing post to date was the launch post**, which demonstrates the buzz we managed to create around the launch of the Place brand. It also shows that **graphics perform as well as lifestyle images** on Instagram.

Across the 12 months, we can see some peaks and troughs in performance, which is to be expected. The **highs can be attributed to the launch, social media competitions and increased posting schedule**, while the **dips can be attributed to reduced activity** while we agreed ongoing support from Pillory Barn, to help move the brand forward.

It is extremely promising to see that the **performance figures for May are a notable increase month-on-month** and among the best performing months to date. For instance, **reach is up 302%** and there was an **88.39% increase in total engagements in May 2023**. June 2023 performance remains strong.



Instagram

Posts	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sept-22	Oct-22	Nov-22
Reach	819	1,619	1,462	201	441	219
Impressions	963	1,173	1,729	232	498	235
Likes	127	163	144	25	40	4
Comments	9	15	3	0	2	0
Profile visits	40	67	217	70	155	48
Total engagements	176	245	264	95	197	52
Engagement rate	21.49%	15.13%	18.05%	47.2%	44.6%	23.7%

Posts	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23*	Mar-23	April-23	May-23	Jun-23
Reach	1,216	184	-	588	336	1,354	894
Impressions	1,348	206	-	581	234	1,011	1,026
Likes	70	11	-	33	8	84	56
Comments	0	0	-	7	0	6	6
Profile visits	79	71	61	124	78	72	77
Total engagements	149	82	-	164	86	162	139
Engagement rate	12.2%	44.5%	-	27.8%	25.6%	11.9%	15.5%

* Please note that due to an error in Meta Business Suite Pillory Barn have not been able to source data for February 2023.

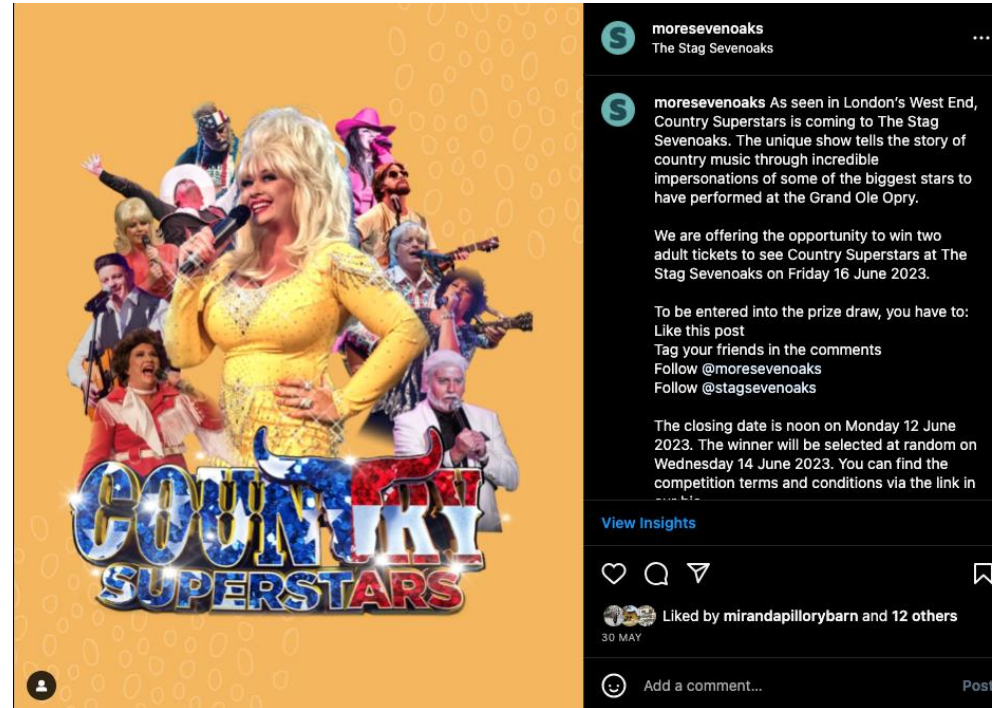
Social media competitions

Autumn Hamper



52 unique newsletter sign ups, 57 new Instagram followers and an excellent selection of images from across the District.

County Superstars



Reached 295 people and 21 engagements

Robin Hood



Reached 1,873 people and generated 21 engagements

LinkedIn

Key stats

- Average engagement rate: 8% (compared to the industry average of 2%)
- Total followers: 105
- LinkedIn has directed 463 clicks through to the website.
- Best performing post: Rightmove's Happy at Home Study

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The screenshot shows the LinkedIn profile for 'Sevenoaks So Much More'. The profile banner features a grid of six images with labels: 'Beautiful', 'Entrepreneurial', 'Connected', 'Historic', and 'Vibrant'. The profile picture is a teal square with a white 'S'. The page title is 'Sevenoaks So Much More' with a notification bell icon. Below the title is the description: 'The Sevenoaks district is a place like no other with so much more to discover.' and metadata: 'Government Administration · Kent · 105 followers · 1 employee'. It also shows 'Lee & 35 other connections follow this page' and three buttons: 'Message', 'Following', and 'More'. A navigation bar includes 'Home', 'About', 'Posts', 'Jobs', and 'People'. The 'About' section contains two paragraphs of text describing the district's features and diversity. At the bottom, there is a 'Show all details →' link.

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/moresevenoaks>

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LinkedIn

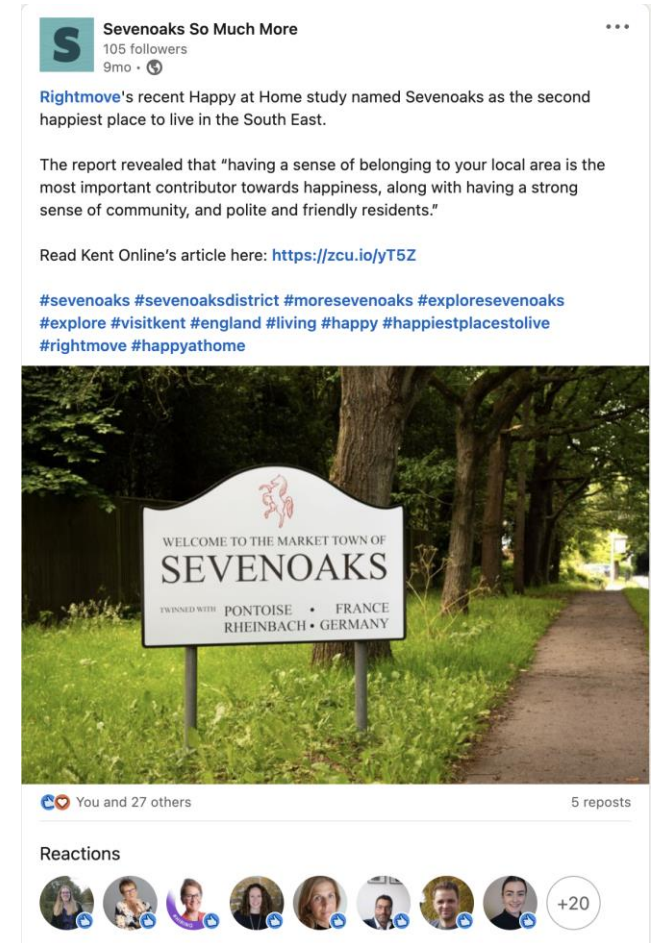
Since commencing the Sevenoaks So Much More campaign in June 2022, we have seen some good performance statistics, most notably the **average engagement rate of 8%, which is four times the industry average.** The channel has also generated **463 clicks through to the More Sevenoaks website.**

The **best performing post to date was the Rightmove's Happy at Home study**, which shows content linked to the 'Live' pillar performs well on LinkedIn as well as 'Work' and 'Invest' content.

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Across the 12 months, we can see some peaks and troughs in performance, which is to be expected. The **highs can be attributed to the launch, social media competitions and increased posting schedule,** while the **dips can be attributed to reduced activity** while we agreed ongoing support from Pillory Barn, to help move the brand forward.

It is extremely promising to see that the **performance figures for May and June 2023 are a notable increase month-on-month** and among the best performing months to date. For instance, **impressions are up 299% in May 2023** and there was a **62.79% increase in engagement rate in June 2023.**



LinkedIn

Posts	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sept-22	Oct-22	Nov-22
Impressions	1,120	2,147	397	165	686	181
Clicks	54	263	9	5	24	3
Reactions	57	97	29	10	36	10
Shares	5	15	3	0	8	1
Engagements	116	375	41	15	68	14
Engagement rate	10.36%	17.47%	12.4%	2.24%	9.01%	3.79%

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Posts	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	April-23	May-23	Jun-23
Impressions	1,231	369	6	106	310	1,238	703
Clicks	29	7	0	7	15	26	21
Reactions	44	7	0	8	5	62	33
Shares	4	0	0	0	1	1	4
Engagements	77	14	0	15	21	89	58
Engagement rate	5.3%	7.73%	0	16.2%	8.44%	4.22%	6.87%

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Twitter

Key stats

- Average engagement rate: 4.96% (compared to the industry average of 0.037%)
- Total impressions: 7,214
- Total followers: 85
- Best performing post: Time Out's inclusion of Castle Farm in their lavender fields article

The screenshot displays the Twitter profile for 'Sevenoaks So Much More' (@more_sevenoaks). The profile bio states: 'The Sevenoaks district is a place like no other, with so much more to discover for residents, visitors, businesses and investors.' It also includes the location 'Sevenoaks, Kent', the website 'moresevenoaks.co.uk', and the date 'Joined August 2021'. The profile shows 80 following and 85 followers. A recent post from August 11 features a photo of Hever Castle and mentions Anne Boleyn's childhood home. The post has 1 reply, 3 likes, and 71 retweets. The right sidebar shows trending topics like 'Manchester United vs Wolverhampton Wanderers' and '#JeremyVine'.

https://twitter.com/more_sevenoaks

Twitter

Since commencing the Sevenoaks So Much More campaign in June 2022, we have seen some good performance statistics, most notably the **average engagement rate of 4.96%**, which **sits well above the industry average of 0.037%**. The channel has also generated a total of **7,214 impressions**, which is the number of times More Sevenoaks content has been seen.

The **best performing post to date was TimeOut's lavender fields article** which included Castle Farm. Moving forward, Pillory Barn will use external endorsements of the Sevenoaks District on Twitter as this works well.

Across the 12 months, we can see some peaks and troughs in performance, which is to be expected. The **highs can be attributed to the launch, social media competitions and increased posting schedule**, while the **dips can be attributed to reduced activity** while we agreed ongoing support from Pillory Barn, to help move the brand forward. Across the board, we have seen **reduced engagement since the acquisition of Twitter by Elon Musk**, therefore we need to consider if this is a platform for the campaign in the future.

It is extremely promising to see that the **performance figures for May 2023 are a notable increase month-on-month** and among the best performing months to date. For instance, **impressions are up 510.3%** and a **600% increase in engagements in May 2023**. June 2023 performance remains strong.



Twitter

Posts	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sept-22	Oct-22	Nov-22
Impressions	1,107	1,939	1,425	318	208	33
Retweets	5	7	2	2	4	0
Likes	24	35	9	3	3	2
Clicks	26	15	5	1	10	0
Engagements	100	81	42	22	15	3
Engagement rate	9.03%	4.18%	19.25%	3.4%	4.7%	1.1%

Posts	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	April-23	May-23	Jun-23
Impressions	219	107	87	111	145	885	630
Retweets	0	0	0	0	0	6	7
Likes	3	3	0	2	1	20	13
Clicks	1	0	3	1	2	6	1
Engagements	8	5	0	7	8	56	31
Engagement rate	3.3%	4.7%	0.1%	5.95%	5.75%	3.5%	3.1%

Questions



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DRAFT COUNCIL PLAN

Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee – 26 September 2023

Report of: Chief Executive

Status: For Consideration

Also considered by:

- Cabinet – 12 October 2023
- Council – 14 November 2023

Key Decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Julia Thornton

Contact Officer: Lee Banks, Ext. 7161

Recommendation to Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee:

- (a) The Advisory Committee's comments on the draft Council Plan are noted; and
- (b) That the draft Council Plan is considered by Cabinet.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

- (a) The draft Council Plan is approved, and
- (b) The Council Plan is adopted by Council.

Recommendation to Council:

The Council Plan is adopted.

Reason for recommendation: To ensure Members' views on the Council Plan are sought and considered as the policy is developed by the Advisory Committee.

Agenda Item 7

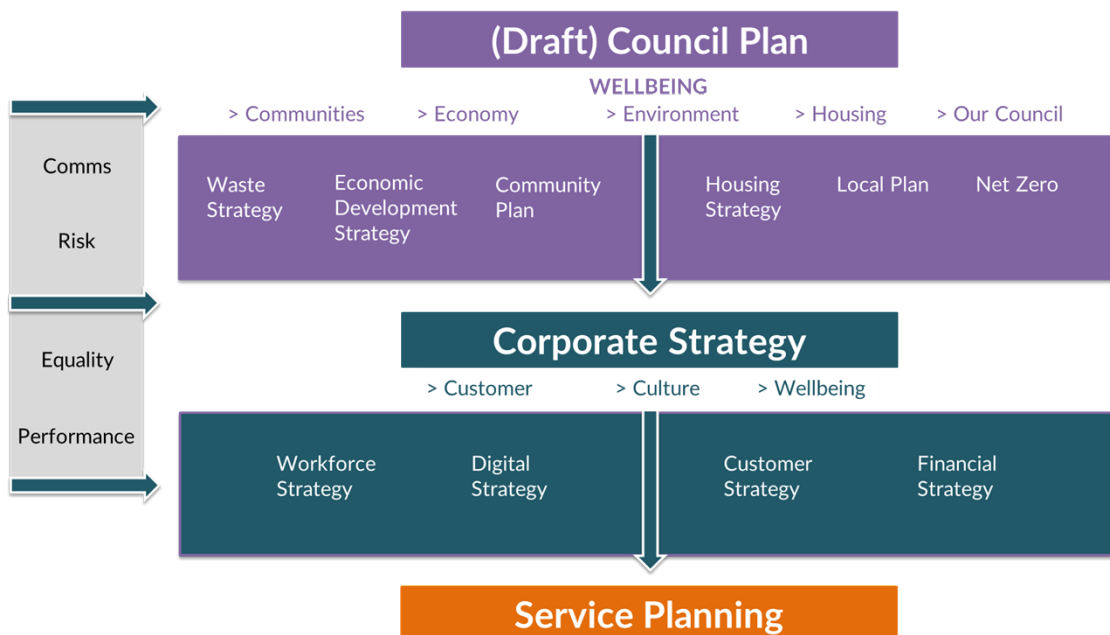
Introduction and Background

- 1 As part of the council's policy framework, the Council Plan aims to provide clarity about the council's priorities and what it will aim to deliver for its residents, businesses and local communities.
- 2 Following the May 2023 elections, the Leader of the Council and her Cabinet have worked to draft the Council Plan setting out their priorities for the coming years. At draft stage, Members consideration of the draft Council Plan and their comments and contributions are welcomed through the Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee.

The Draft Council Plan

- 3 The Council Plan is a key document in directing the work and resources of the Council. Once adopted, it is the commitments in the Council Plan that other strategies, policies and initiatives are aligned with as far as possible, to ensure that the priorities that Members determine for the District are at the forefront of the council's work. This is illustrated in the image below.

Council Planning Framework



- 4 The draft Council Plan is provided as Appendix A in plain text form for Member's consideration.
- 5 Following an introduction from the Leader of the Council, the draft Plan highlights the importance of wellbeing and its influence over the council's approach to its work, before taking a brief look back. The look back explains some of the council's achievements during a challenging period which included the height of the Covid pandemic, national and international political challenges and challenges within the UK economy.

- 6 This is followed by a short section, 'looking ahead', which highlights some of the challenges facing local government and Sevenoaks District Council.
- 7 Through the work of the Leader and her Cabinet, the proposed priorities for the Council are explained. In alphabetical order these priorities are:
 - Communities
 - Economy
 - Environment
 - Housing
 - Our Council
- 8 On the pages that follow, each Portfolio Holder sets out the services within their portfolio and the contribution they make to deliver the priorities set out above. Within each of the Portfolio Holder sections promises are made. These are proposed actions that the council should seek to deliver.
- 9 The draft Council Plan concludes by committing to annual progress reports, including a review of the council's priorities and promises to ensure that they remain the right ones as the needs of our residents and businesses change.
- 10 Member's views, comments and contributions on the draft Council Plan are welcomed.

Other options Considered and/or rejected

None. The Council Plan forms a part of the council's Policy Framework and is required to set and give clarity about the priorities, actions and initiatives that Members wish to deliver for the District.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations associated with this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

There are no legal implications or risk arising from the recommendations for this report.

Equality Assessment

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

Agenda Item 7

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

Following the May 2023 elections, the Leader of the Council and her Cabinet have worked to draft the Council Plan setting out their priorities for the coming years.

As the Plan is developed, Members' views are welcomed on the content to inform both further review of the Plan and the decisions of Cabinet and Council as the Council Plan progresses to adoption.

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Council Plan

Background Papers

Previous Council Plan - www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/file/548/council_plan

Dr Pav Ramewal

Chief Executive

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

'Delivering together' our Council Plan

Introduction from Cllr Julia Thornton, Leader of the Council

I am delighted to introduce our new Council Plan which sets out our commitments to you; our residents, businesses and communities.

This plan builds upon the foundations we have laid to make Sevenoaks a district which is ambitious and confident about its future.

Our Plan is being introduced at a challenging time. As our communities and our local economy continue to recover from the impact of the pandemic, we have also seen the cost of many of the things we rely upon rise sharply. The cost of living is high and the effects of climate change are impacting the environment that we cherish.

We have risen to challenges before, and we will do so again.

It is important to me that the Council remains focused on its residents and their wellbeing. That businesses have confidence and our local economy grows. And that we protect our environment and lead locally on addressing the climate change challenge.

We will remain a caring Council, one that has wellbeing running through everything that it does. We will continue to be managed efficiently and be responsible with the money that we have to spend on our services and in our communities.

We will be our most effective by *delivering together*. Listening to what is needed, empowering communities to act, and working with the people and organisations across our District that share our values and ambitions to make the place we live, work or visit the very best it can be, for the wellbeing of all.

This Council Plan sets out our priorities and will help us to keep our focus on the health and wellbeing of our communities, the strength of our local economy and the future of our environment.

Julia

Cllr Julia Thornton,
Leader of the Council

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

Wellbeing

Wellbeing runs through everything we do.

Wellbeing isn't just about access to health services. It's about quality of life: doing all we can to provide suitable homes for people to live in, supporting people to live independently for longer, creating a safe, healthy and protected environment and a strong local economy that provides the jobs and services we need.

It's about our lifestyle choices and opportunities to plan for our future, cherishing our natural environment and responding to climate change.

Driven by a desire to improve wellbeing, a focus on good financial management and exceptional customer service we have achieved some great outcomes for our District.

Our **Here to Help** scheme has been supporting residents with the impact of the cost of living. Through the Household Support Fund we distributed £800,000 to help low-income households with essential costs such as food and utilities, as well as supporting food bank provision across the District. There was also practical support provided through our Warm Spaces initiative. Supported by local community venues, people were provided with community support, housing, financial and employment advice, alongside a Family Cooking Programme.

Working with Police and partners through the **Community Safety** Unit, our District has the lowest levels of anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, drug misuse, robbery, shoplifting & sexual offences in the county, making it the second safest place to live in Kent.

The Council's **Better Together** initiative builds on the legacy and projects that people created during the pandemic in their own neighbourhoods and is helping to provide practical support, skills development and capacity building to individuals and community groups to enable new initiatives and groups.

Through work undertaken by the Council and its affordable housing company, Quercus Housing, we have provided 24 **affordable homes** for the District's residents and worked with partners, including West Kent Housing and the charity Hft, to deliver a further 17 homes since 2020. A further 17 new homes will be delivered by Quercus Housing in 2023.

In 2022 we also opened a brand new **leisure centre** at White Oak in Swanley; secured funding of £1.5m to deliver a programme of **energy efficiency** upgrades to low-income households who live off of the gas grid and were awarded £1.5m of funding to invest in **local businesses** through the UK Shared Prosperity and Rural Prosperity Funding schemes.

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

A look back

Sevenoaks District Council was the first council in the country to become self-sufficient of central government funding. We are almost unique in planning our finances over 10 years to give us a stable financial footing and are one of very few public sector organisations to hold Platinum status for Investors in People, the fifth time in a row we have achieved the highest accreditation available.

The years immediately before this plan have been unique in our lifetimes. A pandemic that radically changed how we lived, worked and looked after our health and our neighbours. The pandemic has left lasting change in people's lives and the way in which people and our economy work.

National and international factors have created further uncertainty and challenge. Political change, conflict in Ukraine, heightened energy costs, increased cost of living and high rates of inflation are all impacting communities and businesses as we write this plan.

Local communities and businesses have responded. 1,500 volunteers joined the Care for our Community scheme during the pandemic. Homes have been offered to people seeking safety from the war in Ukraine and for refugees. Community groups have sprung in to action and sustained their efforts to support people locally. Their efforts have been supported and celebrated through events including Run, Walk, Push for Dementia, the Big Sing and the Making It Happen Community Awards.

Local businesses have diversified, sustained their presence in our towns and villages and this has encouraged new businesses in to our local economy. To support our local businesses we have secured funding, prepared our economic development strategy, launched the Sevenoaks So Much More campaign and invested in the Visit Sevenoaks tourism website.

The Council has remained steadfast with a focus on what is needed locally. Services continued throughout the pandemic with Councillors and staff making sure residents had the food and supplies they need, and ensuring tens of millions of pounds of grant funding was distributed to businesses.

We have launched two companies that deliver new income to support our services and make sure more of the affordable homes that the District needs are being built.

When the operator of our leisure centres in Sevenoaks and Edenbridge abruptly ceased trading, we were prepared and ready to act quickly with a new operator to re-open the centres and the health and leisure facilities that our communities value.

And we have made a commitment to Net Zero and addressing the effects of climate change within the district. We have made great strides already, which we report back on annually.

Much progress has been made, but there is always more to do.

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

Looking ahead

The years ahead are likely to present us with some difficult challenges.

Over the last decade the Council has worked hard to deliver a strong and sustainable financial position, finding £8.4 million of savings whilst continuing to provide the services that our communities rely upon.

However, the scale of the challenge to our budgets is at its highest level for many years. This is caused by high inflation, large increases in utility costs, wages and the price of fuel for our refuse freighters. We have also seen an increased demand for our services since the start of the pandemic, for example, Christmas week levels of household refuse and recycling has become the norm every week, with more home working and a greater reliance on home deliveries. Securing new contracts for the operation of our leisure centres also came at a cost.

Providing good value for council services, and continuing to collect rubbish and recycling every week, means that there have been managed rises in council tax. From April 2023, the average household payment towards District Council services is £237 per year, just £4.55 per week.

The pressure to provide the housing that people need in a district that is 93% Green Belt means some difficult decisions may need to be taken. At the same time, there are further reforms to the planning system expected from Government and the potential for national standards to be set that could change the way rubbish and recycling is collected.

The climate challenge is one that is upon us and amongst our highest priorities. Our emerging Local Plan, the framework for what can be built where in our district for the next two decades, presents an opportunity to make sustainability a key focus in our planning decisions. This will allow us to manage the inevitable growth of our district in a way that will help local efforts to counter the effects of climate change.

Sevenoaks District Council has a strong financial footing, a track record of delivering and confidence that, by delivering together, we can continue to overcome the many varied and complex challenges that are faced by local government and public services.

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

Our Priorities

▪ Communities

We are fortunate to live in one of the safest places in the country, but we understand we will need to continue to work with our communities and partners to maintain this.

We will continue to nurture safe, supportive, and inclusive communities, taking a 'delivering together' approach to keep communities safe.

Empowering local people and supporting our outstanding voluntary and community groups in their work with the most isolated and vulnerable residents in the District will continue to be a priority.

We also have the tools and partnerships in place to support happier and healthier communities. By linking our leisure facilities, housing, open spaces, planning and environmental health work together we can improve health and wellbeing across our district.

Focus areas:

Community empowerment & engagement, health & wellbeing, leisure & active lifestyles, community safety and a strong voluntary & community sector

▪ Economy

The District's economy is greatly influenced by our proximity to London. As the economy changes new jobs will be created and new skills will be required. We will support businesses and residents through the transition ahead, with tailored support programmes, a focus on our towns and rural economies and new opportunities for training.

The rural nature of our district and the post-pandemic shift to home based working further creates demand for high quality broadband and mobile phone reception to be available across the whole district.

With such high visitor numbers to our historic homes and buildings, incredible landscapes and visitor attractions, tourism makes a significant contribution to our local economy and is an area we will continue to highlight, promote and support.

Focus areas:

Skills and opportunity, business growth, improving infrastructure (employment land, broadband, 4G & 5G, transport links), rural economy, green economy, visitor economy & the arts, town centres

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

▪ Environment

Our District's high quality natural environment plays a pivotal role in the wellbeing of our residents. Our focus remains on protecting this very special asset.

The number of homes we should be building to meet future demand is a huge challenge in an area that is 93% Green Belt. 60% of the District also falls into recognised and protected Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The district is also fortunate to have a rich historic environment including a significant number of listed buildings, conservation areas and registered parks and gardens. Yet we know there are many families, young people and key workers who need an affordable home of their own or more space to grow.

Adapting to the impact of climate change; reducing our carbon emissions and improving biodiversity are critical both now and for future generations.

Focus areas:

Climate change, Local Plan, natural environment, sustainable travel, biodiversity and waste & recycling

▪ Housing

Having a safe and secure place to live is one of the most critical factors to a person's wellbeing. With the link between housing and health well known, the need to provide the right homes for the future of the District has never been greater.

Available land for new homes is limited by the high quality natural environment that blankets our district. This means that land values locally are some of the highest in the country, making it more expensive than most areas outside of London to build new homes. And when homes are built, their prices for sale or rent are often out of reach of our local residents.

This contributes to making the availability of affordable housing a huge issue facing the future of the district. Through our emerging Local Plan, taking the actions set out in our Housing Strategy and building new homes ourselves we can continue to address the need for more affordable homes across our district.

Focus areas:

To deliver a new Local Plan, deliver more affordable homes, rural housing, housing standards, housing options – right homes in the right places, homes for older people and supported housing and continuing our work to prevent homelessness

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

▪ Our Council

Ensuring the Council remains on a sound financial footing, is managed effectively, focused on the customer, provides value for money and seeks continuous improvement will help us to achieve the priorities we have for our communities.

A well run, well managed, open and transparent council provides reassurance and we are determined to remain a fiscally sound organisation that is trusted and relied upon.

It is not only about getting the basics right and delivering excellent statutory services, it's about acting on the things that our residents have told us are most important to them. Providing those discretionary services that make our district a great place to live and work. With budgets continually stretched and savings needed, it is protecting these discretionary services that will challenge us the most.

Despite the current challenges to our budgets, we will continue to work in partnership and seek to secure the funding required to deliver bold and visionary regeneration plans for our own land and assets.

Through our established Advisory Committee structure, new projects and policies are fully and transparently considered and assessed by our Councillors before any recommendations are put forward to Cabinet or Council for adoption.

Focus areas:

Financial responsibility, long-term stability, investments, customer focus, continuous service improvement, regeneration and capital projects

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

Delivering our Council Plan

Photo to be added

Councillor Margot McArthur

Portfolio Holder for Cleaner & Greener

My portfolio...

The services I am responsible for include street cleaning, waste & recycling, Net Zero action plan, CCTV, environmental health, parking, licensing, air quality and emergency planning

▪ Delivering together...

Direct contribution to our Council Plan priorities for our Communities, the Economy and the Environment.

The services in my Portfolio are also important to ensuring that the Council is able to achieve its priorities for Housing and Our Council.

▪ Track Record

Maintained a weekly collection of all rubbish and recycling

91% resident satisfaction with refuse and recycling services (national average 79%)

20% increase in customers using the fortnightly green waste collection service

Reduced the council's carbon emissions by replacing vehicles and reviewing our collection rounds, resulting in reduction of over 30%

Electric vehicle charging points installed in car parks and for taxis

Introduced the additional option of cashless parking payment in our council owned car parks

Investment in our fly-tipping enforcement team has led to a number of successful prosecutions of offenders in court

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

▪ **Our Challenges**

The Environment Act 2021 could introduce statutory collections of weekly food and glass waste, standardised containers and significant changes to garden waste

Continuing to collect the high levels of waste and recycling in the most efficient way

Meeting new targets for air quality

Tackling the challenge of climate change with our residents and businesses

▪ **Promises:**

To maintain weekly rubbish & recycling collections

To keep our streets clean and seek to tackle those that break the law by fly-tipping in our District

To continue to reduce our carbon emissions, including making our vehicle fleet more energy efficient

Improving wellbeing by maintaining high standards through our environmental health, animal welfare and licensing services

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

Delivering our Council Plan

Photo to be added

Councillor Simon Reay

Portfolio Holder for Development & Conservation

My portfolio...

The services I am responsible for include the Local Plan, development management, conservation, contributions from developers, building control, transport policy and planning enforcement.

▪ Delivering together...

Direct contribution to our Council Plan priorities for the Environment, the Economy and Housing.

The services in my Portfolio are also important to ensuring that the Council is able to achieve its priorities for our Communities and Our Council.

▪ Track Record

Delivery of the emerging Local Plan remains on course. Our consultations focus on securing district wide engagement, including with traditionally hard to reach groups

Our Development Management team has long been the busiest in Kent, processing more planning applications each year than any other District or Borough Council in the county

Investing heavily in planning enforcement, ensuring it underpins the integrity of our planning function

Our highly respected Building Control Service oversees more than two out of every three building projects within the district

More than £14m secured for the district from developer contributions through the Community Infrastructure Levy, of which £4.2m has been distributed directly to Town & Parish Councils for local projects and facilities

Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan - £1.2m secured to deliver Sevenoaks East to West cycle route. A further £45k secured to plan and design routes from Sevenoaks to Otford, Sevenoaks to Seal to Otford & to develop a Swanley Urban Area Cycling & Walking Plan

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

▪ **Our Challenges**

Delivering housing and economic growth through our Local Plan, whilst protecting our high quality natural environment, the Green Belt and our Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Government reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework

Securing the funding necessary for strategic infrastructure

Implementation of the Building Safety Act

▪ **Promises:**

To deliver a new Local Plan for the District, that has a positive impact on the number of new homes, addressing climate change and promoting wellbeing

To protect our historic environment, high quality natural environment and improve biodiversity

To adopt planning policies that secure necessary contributions towards affordable housing and infrastructure from developers

To implement new cycling and walking routes and progress the Council's Movement Strategy

Ensure the health and safety of people, and to help conserve fuel and power through the application and enforcement of the Building Regulations and associated legislation

Improving wellbeing by promoting high quality design and environmental improvements in new developments

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

Delivering our Council Plan

Photo to be added

Councillor Kevin Maskell

Portfolio Holder for Finance & Investment

My portfolio...

The services I am responsible for include financial strategy, assets, investments, business rates, council tax, benefits and council tax support and fraud prevention

▪ Delivering together...

Direct contribution to our Council Plan priorities for the Economy, Housing and Our Council.

The services in my Portfolio are also important to ensuring that the Council is able to achieve its priorities for our Communities and the Environment.

▪ Track Record

Continuing to set a balanced 10-year budget to help plan for a fiscally strong long-term future

Secured property investments returning £1.5m a year to Council budgets

Reviewed our Treasury Management policies and achieved improved interest returns on Council money held in the bank and other investments

Supported business through the pandemic and beyond, ensuring more than £40m of grant support was distributed to qualifying businesses in the Sevenoaks District since 2020

Supported residents by ensuring benefits and council tax support to the value of £20m are paid annually

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

▪ **Our Challenges**

Increasing demand for council services

Continued reductions in funding to maintain council services

Reducing number of grant funding schemes to meet the costs of services and deliver investment schemes

High inflation and interest rates

High land and property values and increased building costs impacting investment in capital schemes

Staff recruitment and wage pressures

Reducing the environmental impact of council activities

▪ **Promises:**

Continue to deliver a long-term balanced budget and maintain our position as one of the most fiscally strong councils in the country

Manage the council's assets and investments effectively to maximise income to support the delivery of Council services

Ensure that council services are resilient by exploring innovative and alternative approaches to service delivery that improve cost effectiveness and quality of provision

Monitor the quality of service delivery to residents and ensure value for money

Improving wellbeing by supporting residents faced with increased cost of living and reducing the environmental impact of council services

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

Delivering our Council Plan

Photo to be added

Councillor Perry Cole

Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health

My portfolio...

In addition to being the Deputy Leader of the Council I am responsible for services including housing strategy, housing standards, housing advice & homelessness prevention, rough sleeping, empty homes, health & wellbeing, energy efficiency and fuel poverty.

▪ Delivering together...

Direct contribution to our Council Plan priorities for our Communities, the Environment and Housing.

The services in my Portfolio are also important to ensuring that the Council is able to deliver our priorities for the Economy and Our Council.

▪ Track Record

Provided 24 affordable homes through Quercus Housing, the Council's affordable housing company. Working with our partners we have delivered 17 further supported housing schemes together

Secured funding of nearly £700,000 over three years to support single homeless and rough sleepers with housing and support

Secured funding of £1.5m to deliver a programme of energy efficiency upgrades and low-carbon heating solutions to low-income households living off the gas grid

Our HERO service has supported residents to manage their household bills and debt, access local support and seek training and employment opportunities

Supported the Homes for Ukraine scheme, ensuring more than 200 privately owned homes were ready to be shared with those seeking safety in our District

Our dedicated One You Team works directly with local residents to improve their health

Reopened Edenbridge and Sevenoaks leisure centres and Lullingstone Park Golf Course following the abrupt closure of the operator. Ready-made plans allowed an interim operator, Everyone Active, to re-open the centres in just six weeks

▪ **Our Challenges**

High land and property values

Delivering more homes, including affordable homes

Reducing homelessness

Addressing climate change and fuel poverty

Supporting residents impacted by increases in the cost of living

Improving wellbeing and reducing health inequalities

Supporting those seeking asylum through UK Government programmes

▪ **Promises:**

To provide a range of affordable homes to meet the housing needs of our communities including the needs of specific groups

Working with partners to deliver the housing needed to meet local needs, the right homes in the right places

To reduce homelessness and improve routes into permanent accommodation by delivering the Housing and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategies

To promote high quality homes and optimise the range and suitability of new and existing homes in both the public and private sector

To provide grant funding to adapt homes and reduce the number of empty homes

To deliver the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan, including the provision of the Council's One You Healthy Lifestyles service

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

Delivering our Council Plan

Photo to be added

Councillor Julia Thornton

Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Improvement & Innovation

My portfolio...

In addition to being the Leader of the Council I am responsible for services including equalities, customer service, service improvement, performance management, communications and the projects we undertake for economic development & regeneration.

▪ Delivering together...

Direct contribution to our Council Plan priorities for the Economy and Our Council.

The services in my Portfolio are also important to ensuring that the Council is able to deliver our priorities for our Communities, the Environment and Housing.

▪ Track Record

Our 2021 resident survey told us that:

81% resident satisfaction with the way the Council runs things (national average 56%)

86% of residents trust Sevenoaks District Council (national average 53%)

82% satisfaction with keeping residents informed

81% resident satisfaction with helpfulness of staff

Provided 17 flats for key workers & the Meeting Point business hub through the redevelopment of 27-37 High Street, Swanley

Secured planning permission for approximately 100 new residential units at Council owned developments across Edenbridge and Swanley, with retail units and a new community hall included within those proposals

Secured over £1.5m funding to invest in local businesses via the UK Shared Prosperity and Rural Prosperity Funds

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

▪ **Our Challenges**

Sustained increase in customer demand for council services

Lack of available funding from a national level to invest in locally important public services and local regeneration projects

Difficult market and economic conditions from high inflation and higher cost of living on the Council and local businesses

High land values, borrowing costs and cost of materials required to deliver plans for regeneration

▪ **Promises:**

To provide high quality, customer focused services

To keep levels of resident satisfaction and sense of wellbeing high

To deliver the Economic Development Strategy; supporting businesses to come to the District and to grow

To progress and deliver regeneration plans, like those already underway at the Stangrove Estate and Spitals Cross in Edenbridge and White Oak in Swanley

Improving wellbeing through council services, supporting the economy and well-designed regeneration schemes

To ensure Sevenoaks District remains a special place to live, work and enjoy

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

Delivering our Council Plan

Photo to be added

Councillor Lesley Dyball

Portfolio Holder for People & Places

My portfolio...

The services I am responsible for include the Community Plan, community safety, town centres, tourism, community grants, safeguarding, youth services and leisure activities

▪ **Delivering together...**

Direct contribution to our Council Plan priorities for our Communities, the Economy and Health.

The services in my Portfolio are also important to ensuring that the Council is able to deliver our priorities for the Environment and Our Council.

▪ **Track Record**

Here to Help scheme launched, supporting residents with the impact of the cost of living

Household Support Fund – over £800,000 to help households with food & utility costs, alongside support for food banks

Community grants scheme - £253,000 awarded to local groups supporting people across our District

[Community Plan](#) refreshed in 2022 and supported by new funding through the Local Strategic Partnership Community Wellbeing Fund

Community Safety - In the top 2 safest places to live and work in Kent, with the lowest levels of anti-social behaviour

Opened the new White Oak Leisure Centre in 2022 – Everyone Active outperformed all membership targets

A varied communities programme delivered each year including Family Fun Days, Silver Sunday, Run, walk or push for Dementia event, The Big Sing and the Community Awards

Launched the 'So Much More' place campaign and Visit Sevenoaks website, promoting the Sevenoaks District as a great place to live, work, visit and invest

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

▪ **Our Challenges**

Reduction in funding available to provide services in our communities

Impact of cost of living, including higher demand for our community services

Resilience of the voluntary sector, following the impact and greater customer demand from the pandemic and more recently, the cost of living

Understanding the changing skills and employment needs of our District

▪ **Promises:**

To work with the District's Local Strategic Partnership to deliver the 'Better Together' Community Plan, empowering communities to come together to improve their local community

To ensure the District remains a safe place to live and visit by delivering the Community Safety Strategy with our partners

To provide a support programme for households experiencing financial hardship

To support a growing tourism offer in the District through the Sevenoaks So Much More and Visit Sevenoaks campaigns, alongside the Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership

COUNCIL PLAN DRAFT

The next steps

Our Council Plan has set out our promises to you.

Each year we will monitor our progress and report how we are doing publicly.

Undoubtedly things will change that we cannot forecast today. New laws and regulations, changes that effect our economy and changes in the funding we receive to deliver our services are just a few examples. Importantly, our residents and local businesses may tell us that their needs have changed and, as we have in the past, we will be ready to adapt.

Each year, we will take the opportunity to review our progress and ensure our priorities and promises to you remain the right ones.

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Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committee Work Plan 2023/24 (as at 07/09/2023)

5 December 2023

- Rural England Prosperity Fund Update
- Economic Development Strategy
- Budget 2024/25: Review of Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)

29 February 2024

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