

# Sevenoaks District Council: Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan

## Foreword

Sevenoaks District offers both exciting opportunities and interesting challenges in terms of its economy. With strong retail offers, a highly skilled workforce and unrivalled connectivity; the District can look forward to a prosperous and bright future. We continued to perform excellently throughout the recession, with town centre vacancies some of the lowest in the country and business survival rates continuing to be higher than the county and national averages. We continue to attract strong inward investment and ensure that the most innovative and exciting companies stay here in Sevenoaks District.

Despite the success of the local economy, this is no time to rest on our laurels. As a council we are proud of being proactive with our businesses. One of our biggest challenges is retaining land in employment use at a time when residential values are compelling for potential developers. This strategy aims to support business, attract inward investment and growth and provide more innovation and employment opportunities. We want to continue to make this a great place to live, do business and prosper.

## Signature

**Cllr Roddy Hogarth**

**Portfolio Holder for Economic Development**

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## Introduction

This document sets out the major priorities for economic development in the District over the next three year period (2014-2017). Sevenoaks District Council is committed to developing the local economy and securing future jobs and growth. The document sets out 6 key priorities which support the vision set out in the Sevenoaks District Council Corporate Plan and the Sevenoaks District Council Community Plan. Specifically, it supports *Promise 5* in the Corporate Plan which is 'Supporting and developing the local economy'. It also supports the 'Dynamic Economy' and 'Sustainable Economy' priorities in the Community Plan.

We have consulted widely with the business community and partners to shape the content of this Consultation Draft strategy. We have tried to capture the concerns and aspirations of those businesses, communities and others already consulted.

The key priorities and draft action plan is available to view on page 23. We are now asking for your comments, suggestions and any additional information, priority locations or actions you would like to put forward.

## Who have we consulted?

The following groups have been consulted in the preparation of this document:

- Businesses through a District-wide questionnaire.
- Business Support organisations
- Inward investment organisations
- Tourism groups and businesses
- Rural support groups, businesses and landowners
- Sevenoaks District Council Members
- Town Partnerships
- Town and Parish Councils
- Sevenoaks District Council officers engaged in Planning, Property and Housing and Business Rates
- Young people at the Youth Café at Stag Community Arts Centre, Edenbridge House Project and students at Hextable School

## About Sevenoaks District

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. The quality of the landscape is a distinctive feature of the area. The national significance of the landscape is recognised by the inclusion of 60% of the District within either the Kent Downs (to the North) or High Weald (to the South) Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are also extensive areas recognised for their nature conservation importance. It is rare to find such extensive areas of high quality landscape so close to London. This uniqueness makes Sevenoaks District one of the most desirable places to live and work in the Country. Development to accommodate growth has to be balanced against protecting the landscape.

The District has a thriving business community and strong foundations in place for future economic growth. The resident workforce is very highly skilled, with nearly 50% of the resident population educated to degree level or above. There is a culture of entrepreneurialism; we have a very small number of larger employers. The vast majority of businesses are what are called 'microbusinesses' which have 5 employees or less. We also have some of the highest levels of homeworking, self-employment and home-based businesses in the County.

Our highly skilled local population is reflected in our large finance sector and continually growing businesses in the 'knowledge economy'. These firms and others are brilliantly placed to access the powerhouse of the finance industry, the City of London, often in less than 40 minutes.

Locating in Sevenoaks District gives them distinct advantage of far lower overheads, cheaper business rates and access to a highly skilled, yet competitively priced workforce.

Even during a time of fiscal conservatism, the District's main urban settlements have continued to attract strong inward investment. The land West of Bligh's in Sevenoaks Town Centre is being redeveloped by Marks and Spencer. Late in 2014 a new supermarket store and apartments will be completed. Swanley Town Centre has made a remarkable recovery since the recession, with a number of new high street brands opening in the shopping centre. Edenbridge Town Centre is awaiting the start of construction on a brand new Sainsbury's store and recently welcomed Waitrose to the town. In the large modern village of New Ash Green there is an opportunity to regenerate or redevelop the central business and shopping area to redress the problems stemming from its outdated 1960s design.

The District has an important tourism offer and historic and cultural legacy with 17 nationally designated historic parks and gardens including Knole House and Park. Sevenoaks has a number of historic houses including Penshurst Place, Hever Castle and Lullingstone Roman Villa. The District features a substantial legacy of historic towns and villages, with 40 Conservation Areas, 2,112 listed buildings and 23 scheduled ancient monuments. We hosted the Paralympic Games 2012 at Brands Hatch which boosted our profile even further. This legacy acts as an important base for our burgeoning tourist industry which is worth over £232 million a year, and is continuing to grow.

The rural economy plays a large part in the economic success of the District with over half of the population living in the 40 or so villages and hamlets around the District. The success of the West Kent Leader Programme highlights the strength of our rural business offer. The recent investment in Westerham by the Westerham Brewery and Squerryes Estate are examples of the strength of this sector.





# The Economy

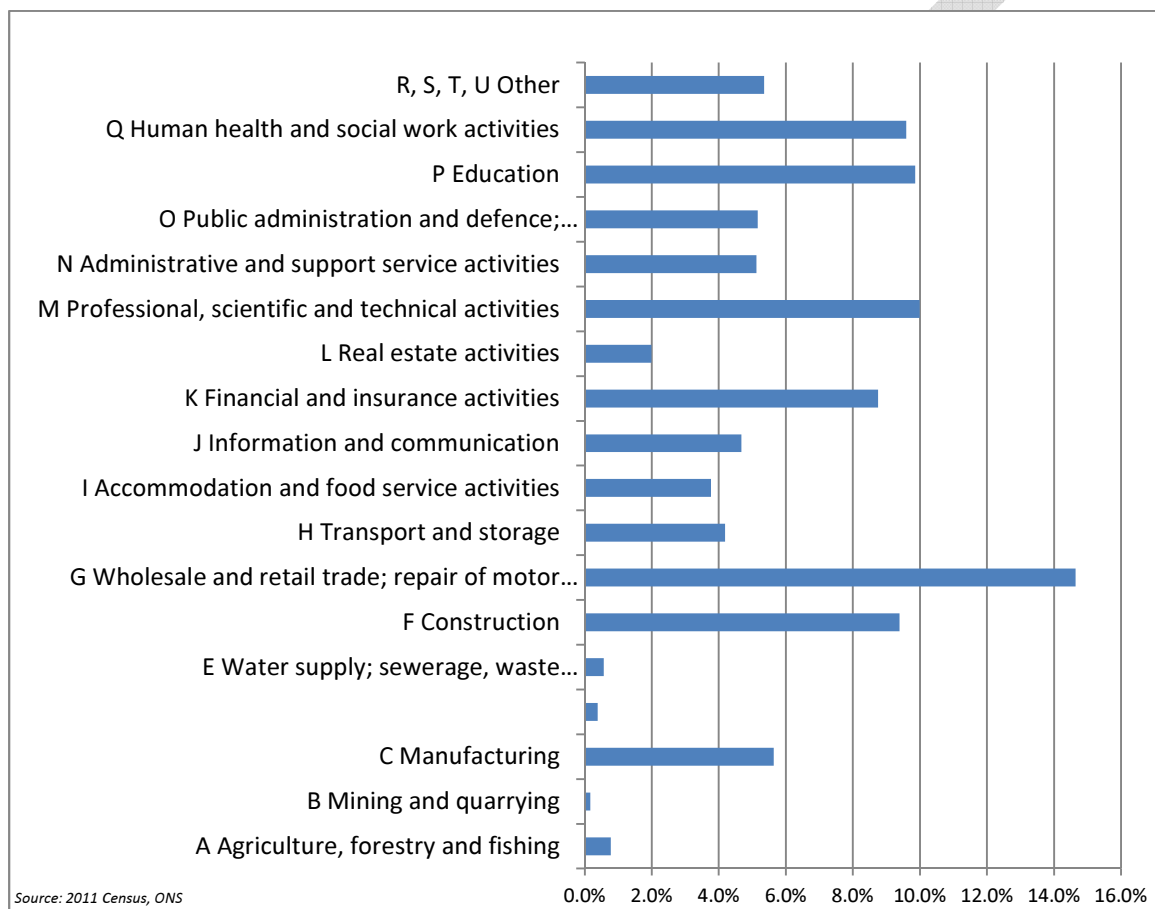




## The Economy

The economy in Sevenoaks is broadly based. There are no dominant sectors or large employers that substantially skew the balance of employment. The District has low public sector dependency.

**Figure 1: Employment by industry**



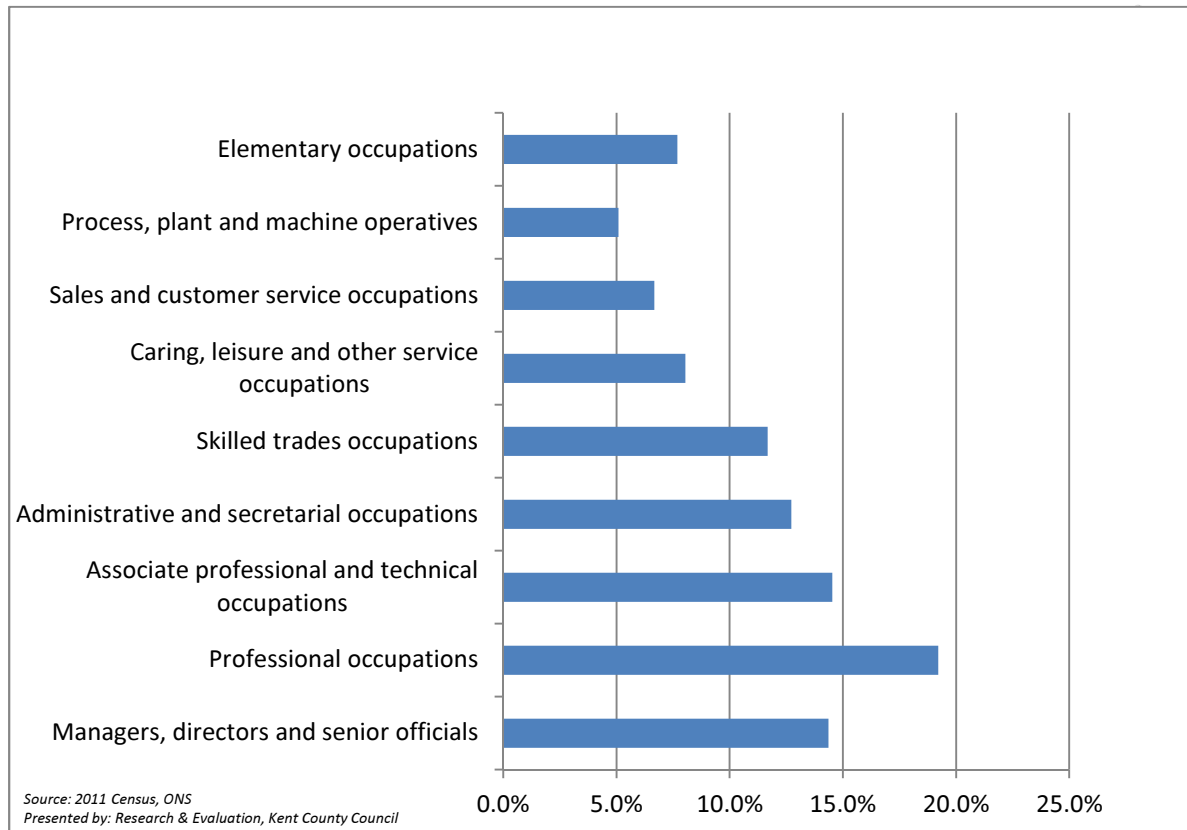
The District has a large 'knowledge economy' with around 7,500 jobs in 2010. Sevenoaks has one of the highest concentrations of jobs in knowledge rich sectors in Kent. Using Kent County Council's definition of the knowledge economy it is evident that the majority of these are in scientific research and development, most of which are likely to be linked to operations at Fort Halstead.

There are also notable concentrations of employment in head office and management consultancy activities (800), legal and accounting services (700), architectural and engineering activities (700), activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities (600) and computer programming and related activities (500).

Such employment tends to be focused in smaller sized organisations. In 2008 around 40% of knowledge economy jobs were in businesses of 1 to 10 employees and a further 20% were in businesses of 11 to 49 employees. There were only around 20 knowledge economy businesses with 50 employees and over in the District.



**Figure 2: Employment by occupation**



The District is not dominated by large employers; 87% of businesses employ less than 10 people. Businesses employing 50 or more staff only account for 2% of the total businesses in the District. This is further reflected in the very high percentage of home-based workers, home-based businesses and self-employed people we have in the District.

## **Workforce (Economically Active population)**

Economic activity relates to a person who was aged 16-74 and working, looking for work or not working at all at the time of the 2011 Census. Those who are economically active include, employees (both full and part time), the self employed, full-time students and the unemployed. Those who are economically inactive include, a person looking for work but not able to start within two weeks, as well as anyone not looking for work or unable to work such as people who are retired, looking after home/family or disabled.

Sevenoaks District has a current economic activity rate of 71.5%. This is above the county average of 69.9% and the national average of 69.7%. However Sevenoaks will see a 6.4% decline in the resident workforce up to 2030.

## **Earnings**

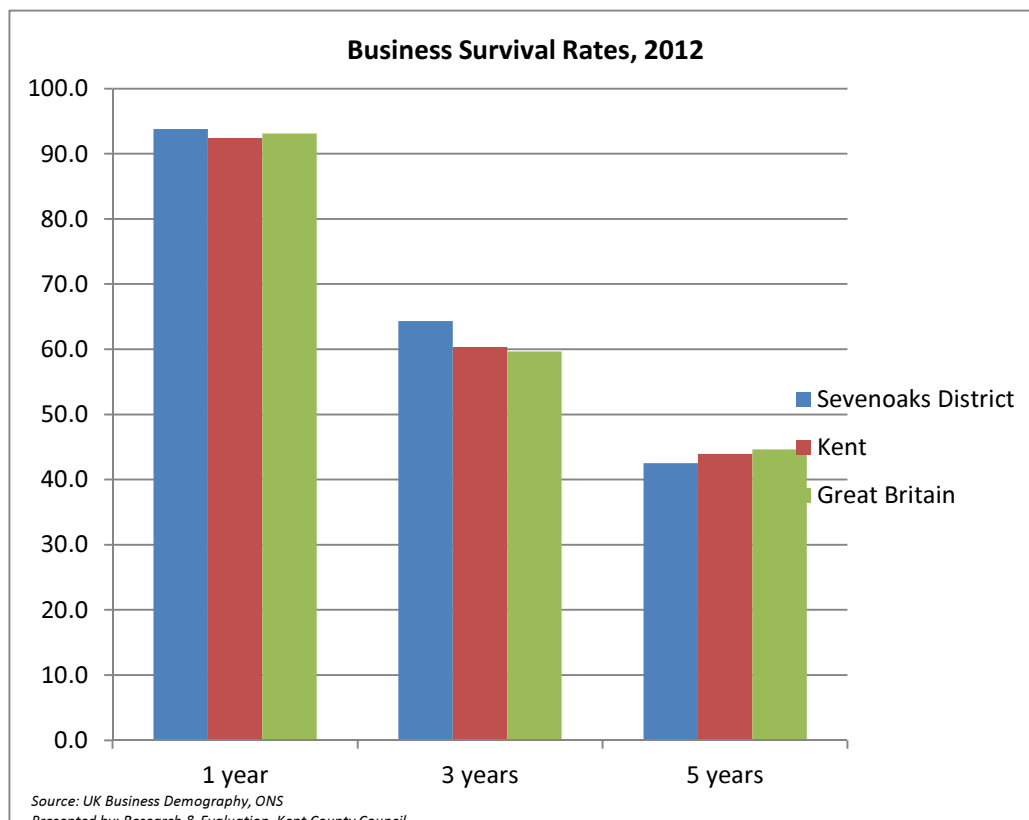
Average earnings for those resident in the District are typically far higher than the County and national average. Median weekly full-time earnings in the district are £690.70, compared with £610.40 in Kent and £558.80 in Great Britain. This translates to high local spend potential and undoubtedly has a positive impact upon our high streets and cultural attractions. The median workforce earnings show a similar trend. Median full-time earnings in the District are £602.00, compared with £542.70 in Kent and £558.30 in Great Britain. Median workforce earnings are slightly higher, reflecting the highly skilled nature of the resident workforce.

There is a significant disparity between the resident earnings and workplace earnings in the District. The likely reason for this is the high level of out commuting that the District experiences, with median earnings in London significantly higher than in Kent.

## Business Survival Rates

Business survival rates in Sevenoaks in Year 1 and Year 3 are above the County and national average. Survival rates are below the County and national average for Year 5. This indicates that although businesses find it easy to start up and survive within the District in the first instance, they are slightly less likely to sustain this than average.

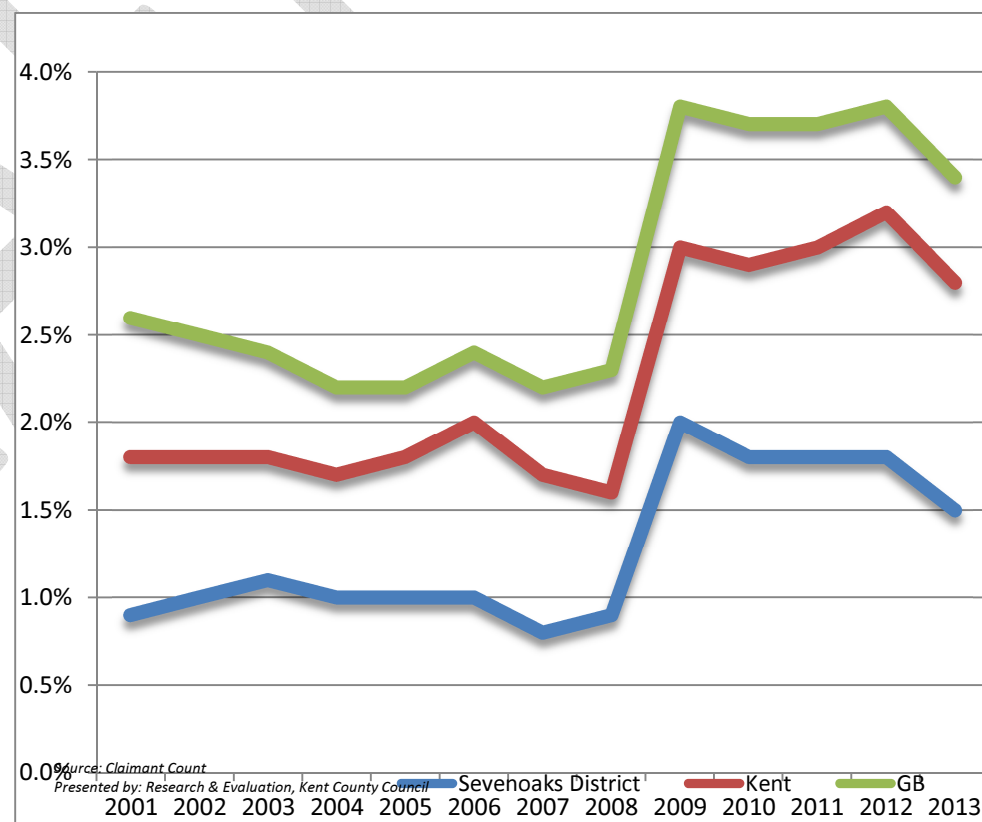
**Figure 3- Business Survival Rate, 2012**



## Unemployment

Unemployment is typically low in most parts of the District. The average rate of unemployment has consistently stayed below the regional and national averages, even during the 2008 recession. The District has pockets of unemployment which are above the regional averages; these are found in Swanley and Edenbridge.

**Figure 4- Annual Average Unemployment Rate- 2001-2013**



## Economic Output (Gross Value Added)

Gross Value Added (GVA) is a measure of economic output. It is primarily used to monitor the performance of the national economy and is now the measure preferred by the Office for National Statistics to measure the economic wellbeing of an area. GVA and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are not the same. GVA measures the economy excluding tax and subsidies.

Sevenoaks District has a GVA of (£mil) 2,090; this is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest in the County. The GVA per head is also the 6<sup>th</sup> largest in the County at 18, 112.

We must exercise caution with these estimates for a number of reasons. Firstly, national statistics are not available for District GVA. It is an approximation based on the total GVA for Kent. This can be misleading as the estimate is based on the number of employees, rather than actual productivity. Secondly the estimate excludes the self-employed. We have one of the highest self-employed workforces in Kent. Thirdly the GVA per head figure is grossly affected by out-commuting. A high proportion of our residents commute to London each day.



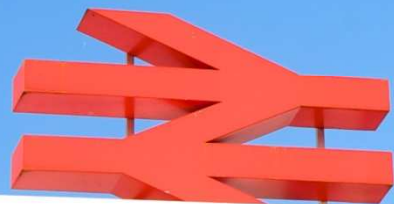
## **Connectivity**

The connectivity in Sevenoaks District is often seen as one of its most appealing traits for the commercial sector. There are excellent transport links to London, Europe and the Thames Gateway via rail, air and road. There is also easy access to a number of major roads which cross the District including the M25, M26, M20, A25, A20 and A21. The rail services are excellent, with services to London, Kent/Sussex coasts, Redhill, Uckfield and East Croydon.

Thameslink trains run from Sevenoaks and Swanley into central London and beyond with connections to Luton Airport and Bedford. International destinations are closer than ever via Ebbsfleet International Station. The main priority airports are easily accessible and the Port of Dover is just over an hour away. The Medway Valley Line offers fast services to London, Medway Towns and Ebbsfleet International Station.

Large areas of the District have been part of the countrywide expansion of the 4G service for mobile communications. Broadband is one of the top issues for businesses throughout the District.

There has already been significant investment in this area through the BDUK project led by KCC, independent providers and community based projects. However broadband speeds are still substandard in some parts of the District and this must be addressed. This form of connectivity is vital to the ongoing growth of the rural economy and will continue to be a priority.



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## Economic Strengths

The economy continues to perform strongly in the face of increasing economic uncertainty and pressure:

- There are strong levels of **inward investment** such as Blighs (Sevenoaks) and the West Kent Cold Store (Dunton Green). We host some of the most exciting companies in Europe and the rest of the world such as BT, Siemens Nixdorf, QinetiQ and Marks and Spencer.
- Sevenoaks District has **exceptional connectivity**. There is excellent access to London (London Bridge, Waterloo, Charing Cross, London Victoria and Blackfriars) from any of the major towns in the District (Sevenoaks: 25 minutes, Swanley: 26 minutes and Edenbridge: 40 minutes). The District also benefits from access to London provided by the Thameslink and links to London and international destinations provided by Ebbsfleet International station. The Medway Valley Line offers fast services to London, Medway Towns and Ebbsfleet International Station. All of the major airports in the south east (Gatwick, Heathrow, Stansted and London City) are easily accessible by rail or car. Road access is exceptionally good with strong links to the M25, M26, M20, A25, A20 and A21. Access to Europe is easy with the Port of Dover a short distance away.
- Sevenoaks District has a strong base of **very high skilled** workers. Nearly 50% of workers in the area have qualifications at NVQ4 and higher level. This is far above the UK and South East average.
- There are a number of **key sectors** with strong growth potential such as: Tourism, Financial Services and Professional Scientific and Technical
- **Unique landscapes and scenery** which attract people from all over the world.
- Superb **cultural and leisure** facilities.
- The District has a **very high quality of life**. Sevenoaks is consistently named as one of the top places to live in the UK, combining beautiful countryside with a host of cultural attractions.
- The **tourism industry** continues to grow strongly year upon year. It is now worth over £230 million annually and continues to go from strength to strength.
- Resilient and **entrepreneurial** culture. Our business survival rates in Year 1 and Year 3 are better than the UK and County average. We have some of the highest levels of **self-employment** in the County.
- Robust **retail offering**. Sevenoaks, Westerham, Swanley and Edenbridge have some of the lowest retail vacancy rates in the County, offering an eclectic mix of independent shops and high street brands.

## Key Challenges

The local economy faces a number of challenges that need to be addressed in order to facilitate further growth:

- Swanley Town Centre has seen some incremental improvements since the recession, however there are still areas in the town centre which could be improved and regenerated. **Bevan Place and the Meeting Point** are key strategic sites for regeneration.
- New Ash Green Village Centre struggles to provide the services and amenity that residents now require. **Regeneration** of this area is a key strategic priority for the Council.
- **Fort Halstead** is a major developed site within the green belt. The current occupier is DSTL, who have announced that they will be leaving the site in 2018. This one of the largest employment sites in West Kent and as such, needs strong commercial development.
- **Bat and Ball and the BT Exchange** have been identified as potential regeneration sites within Sevenoaks town. The future development of these sites will play a vital role in the prosperity of the town in years to come.
- Loss of **employment land to residential**
- Supporting growth in our burgeoning **tourism industry** through increased marketing and the availability of suitable accommodation for tourists.
- Making sure **broadband speeds** are superfast in rural areas of the District.
- **Graduate retention** is falling and higher level skilled staff are being lost to London due to out-commuting.
- We should ensure that we continue to have the best transport links to London. Enabling Swanley to be included as a in Transport for London's travel zone and making it Oyster card ready and investigating the inclusion of Bat and Ball and Eynsford in the Transport for London's travel zone could kick start regeneration and further improve connectivity.
- A high proportion of residents in the District have a high level of skills and qualifications, however, there is still a small proportion that **lack skills** and **work readiness**.
- Apparent affluence masks pockets **of deprivation** where there can also be low levels of educational attainment.

## **National Policy Context**

The vast majority of public funding to support the local economy and employment is channelled through various national, regional and sub-regional agencies. The government has introduced a series of policy initiatives and legislative changes designed to assist economic growth. The main channels for stimulating economic growth are:

### **Localism Act**

The Localism Act aims to give more power to local authorities and communities to influence planning and housing decisions. In particular, the Community Right to Bid could potentially foster a spirit of entrepreneurialism in local communities. Another important aspect of this act is Neighbourhood Planning, allowing communities the opportunity to get the right type of development for their community.

### **Local Enterprise Partnerships**

In 2010 the government decided to abolish the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and replace them with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). LEPs are private/public sector partnerships that have a clear remit to drive sustainable private sector led growth. Sevenoaks is part of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), which consists of Kent, Essex and East Sussex. The Lord Heseltine review 'No Stone Unturned' in 2013 encouraged the government to devolve further powers and funds to LEPs so that they can drive economic growth. The

SELEP has developed a strategic growth plan which includes two major growth areas in the District, Fort Halstead and Swanley.

Our submission to the LEP included a number of other areas for growth which they have not currently accepted into their plans but that we think is vital to the further regeneration and prosperity of the District. They are listed as priorities later in this document

### **Growing Places Fund**

The Growing Places fund is designed to improve local funds in order to unlock growth on specific development sites, infrastructure projects and stimulate economic growth.

### **Regional Growth Fund**

The £1.4 billion Regional Growth Fund has been developed to support the creation of more private sector jobs. Currently, businesses in Sevenoaks are able to access the £5.5 million Escalate fund. Escalate is designed for high growth businesses in the Sevenoaks District and other Districts along the A21 corridor.



## **Regional and Local Context**

At the District and sub-regional level there are a number of plans that either link or support delivery of our economic priorities.

### **Unlocking Kent's Potential**

Unlocking Kent's Potential sets out Kent County Council's overarching vision for how the County should look in the next 10 years. It assesses the major opportunities and challenges facing the County.

### **West Kent Priorities for Growth**

The WKP for Growth is a strategy developed by the West Kent Partnership which is an economic partnership of Sevenoaks District Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The strategy sets out a proactive and strategic approach to the future investment needed to support the West Kent economy now and in the future.

### **Sevenoaks District Council Core Strategy**

The Core Strategy was adopted by full council in February 2011. It sets out the vision and policies for future development in the District up to 2026. The core strategy sets the general approach to the scale and location of development. It does not deal with specific development sites, nor does it deal with the most detailed policy issues which are considered by the Allocations and Development Management Plan. The Core Strategy will soon

be reviewed to bring it in line with current government guidance and the ADMP.

### **Sevenoaks District Council Draft Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP)**

The ADMP allocates specific sites for development such as housing and employment land. The examination hearing sessions considering the soundness of the plan have recently closed. If found sound, the Council will be able to adopt the plan.

### **Sevenoaks District Council Corporate Plan**

The Corporate plan sets out the Council's vision up to 2015. It commits to 5 promises in the coming years which are to provide value for money, to work in partnership to keep the District of Sevenoaks safe, to collect rubbish efficiently and effectively, to protect the green belt and to support and develop the local economy. The overriding vision for Sevenoaks District is "to sustain and develop a fair, safe and thriving economy".

### **Community Plan**

The Economic Development Strategy has been developed to complement the Sevenoaks District Community Plan. The Community Plan sets the long term vision for Sevenoaks District and encompasses the community's priorities for action. This vision already includes a number of priorities related to economic growth and employment. The document is a 15 year vision which is the result of widespread consultation with the community.

## **Strategic Objective 1: Inward Investment**

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## **Inward Investment**

The core aim of any Economic Development strategy is to deliver projects and actions which facilitate business growth, expansion, inward investment and an atmosphere of entrepreneurialism.

It means that we have to ensure that businesses already located here are sufficiently supported in being able to grow. The Sevenoaks Business Demand Survey, compiled by URS in September 2013 has given us a robust evidence base for understanding the needs of businesses in the future. The following results give us a strong steer for our future objectives:

- The top issue affecting businesses surveyed was the 'building or site size'.
- The majority of respondents to the survey expect the market to grow gradually over the next five years.
- For businesses intending to move, the most popular reason is that they are ready to expand and need larger premises. Furthermore, the majority of businesses intending to move required larger office space.
- 87% of those businesses planning to move premises want to stay within Sevenoaks District. This is a 23% increase since the last telephone business survey in 2005.

It is clear that businesses want to stay within the District, and are anticipating strong growth in the future. It is vital that the size and quality of office space is developed to ensure that these businesses stay here.

Our own consultations corroborated the findings from the business survey and identified additional need for employment space that is required. Start up business units or a 'business hub' was frequently mentioned throughout the consultations. It was felt that there is a lack of space for people starting a business who might need flexibility with their working arrangements until they are able to grow their business and move into a longer term lease on a property. This is a need which has also been identified in the West Kent growth strategy. Additional units or hubs would help engender a stronger sense of entrepreneurialism and ensure that more businesses develop and grow in the District.

A recent report compiled by Locate in Kent confirmed that there is significantly less commercial property to choose from in Sevenoaks District in comparison with the rest of West Kent and the County.

The Council's pro-business attitude has led to significant amounts of inward investment such as the recent Marks and Spencer's development in Blighs in Sevenoaks town. A number of innovative multinational companies have chosen to locate and invest in the District such as BT, Siemens Nixdorf and Bayerngas. As well as growing businesses already located here, we want to ensure that the District continues to attract strong investment and the most exciting businesses.

We cannot achieve significant economic growth in the District without enforcing strict protections on our current employment land. Current land values mean that it is more profitable for developers to build housing than good quality commercial premises. Our planning policy stipulates that we will protect employment land where there is a market for it now or there is likely to be one in the future. This is vital if we are to attract and keep businesses in the District.

**The following aims will be progressed by the Council and**

**The following aims will be progressed by the Council and its partners in order to achieve this ambition:**

- **Aim 1.1 Market Sevenoaks District as a place to invest and grow**
- **Aim 1.2 Encourage viable and vibrant town centres through a range of partnerships**
- **Aim 1.3 Maintain and protect employment land and commercial premises**
- **Aim 1.4 Work with QinetiQ to develop an engineering cluster and training opportunity**



## **Strategic Objective 2: Skills and Support**

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## Skills and Support

Sevenoaks has a very highly educated and skilled population. A large proportion of young residents are who are educated outside the District in some of the highest achieving schools in the country. The District has a higher proportion of individuals with NVQ4 and NVQ3 and above equivalent qualifications compared to the South East (41.9% in Sevenoaks District compared to 36.2% in the South East and 32.9% in Great Britain). The District has a higher proportion of individuals with NVQ3 and above equivalent qualifications (62.7% in Sevenoaks compared to 56.7% in the South East and 52.7% in Great Britain).

We also have a high proportion of residents with very low qualifications. The proportion of individuals in Sevenoaks District with no qualifications is higher than for the South East as a whole, but lower than Great Britain (11.1% in Sevenoaks District compared to 9.1% in the South East and 12.3% in Great Britain). Evidence of low skills has been corroborated by a number of local businesses who have had to appoint workers from outside the District due to a skills shortage at the local level. A common theme throughout the whole consultative process is that businesses struggle to find trainee staff with a work-ready attitude.

With local housing being amongst the most expensive in the UK, both in the owner-occupier and private rented sectors, more affordable housing is key to keeping younger and other economically-active groups as part of the District's workforce.

Studies have consistently shown an out-migration of those groups in search of cheaper housing elsewhere. All too often, those people will seek out employment local to their new home area and the District will lose essential workers. The District Council's Housing Policy Team works with social housing providers and a wide-range of other partners to enable the delivery of new affordable housing across the District. The Housing strategy also aims to make better use of the existing social housing stock, with under-occupation being a key issue currently being tackled.

The following points are just a selection of those that were mentioned during consultation:

- Not enough young people with the right attitude to work
- Some worklessness
- Poor links to training for young people in the District
- More links with businesses needed.
- Gap in sector skills

A number of consultees emphasised that there has been a strong focus on young peoples' training and employment. There needs also to be a focus on getting people over 50 retrained and back to work. This is an often neglected age range whose unemployment rose dramatically during the recession.

The Local Strategic Partnership Employment sub-group which is a multi-agency partnership of organisations who work to reduce unemployment were also consulted. They highlighted two

important issues: the trouble young people have in getting to work from rural areas in the District and the lack of links between themselves and the private sector. A similar response was encountered in the consultations with young people who found public transport expensive and unreliable and wanted more links with local businesses so that they can build up their experience. In the north of the District many young people make use of schools and colleges in Dartford and Gravesend and in the south many access schools in Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and other adjoining districts.

Unemployment in Sevenoaks District is below the County and country average. The perception is that unemployment is low throughout the District. This is incorrect. There are a number of unemployment hotspots throughout the District. Job fairs are an excellent opportunity for the Council to bring unemployed people and employers together in these areas.

We are unfortunate in that we do not have a Jobcentre Plus within the District or a College. Therefore we must ensure that we make excellent links to colleges and training establishments outside the District, for example Hadlow College, Bromley College and West Kent College. We should also take advantage of better links with Universities and training colleges in London. There are a plethora of underemployed and capable graduates in London who would like to work with growing, innovative companies. We need to ensure that our businesses are able to capture the talents of underemployed or unemployed graduates in London.

The District Council delivers a number of services to businesses. It is vital we ensure that different departments in the Council communicate with one another to enable businesses to feel welcomed into the District and that they can turn to the Council if they need assistance. Whether it be for a planning application, business rates or licensing, it is clear that we need to be able to work more closely together to ensure that businesses are nurtured and feel supported by the District Council rather than simply looking upon us as the billing authority.

Our consultations identified a need for the Council to provide more clarity with regards to businesses support and what funding is available. Businesses sometimes find the large amounts of information offer confusing and don't know who to contact in order to get the best information. We need to ensure that the Council is providing clear, concise advice that businesses find easy to access.

**The following aims will be progressed by the Council and its partners in order to achieve this ambition:**

- **Aim 2.1: Work with businesses to identify skills gaps**
- **Aim 2.2: Work with education and skills providers to bring the right skills**
- **Aim 2.3: Our Team around your business – soft landing for new or expanding businesses**
- **Aim 2.4: Single point of access for funding and business support**

## **Strategic Objective 3: Transport and Infrastructure**

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## Transport and Infrastructure

Infrastructure is vital to the continuing economic growth of the District. There are a number of key infrastructure projects that need to be delivered over the timescale of this strategy in order for us to facilitate economic growth. The Sevenoaks District Strategy for Transport (2010-2026) is a document which sets out the range of transport issues facing the District. The Economic Development strategy seeks to support the initiatives identified in the strategy for transport. Our consultation process identified a number of other key areas for improvement in the District such as improvements to Swanley and Bat and Ball stations and inclusions of some stations within the Transport for London travel zone.

The Sevenoaks Business Survey (2013) indicated that Transport and Infrastructure were still very important considerations for businesses throughout the District. This has been corroborated by local parishes and other groups who are keen for us to lobby for integrated and improved public transport.

The consultations highlighted that many areas want to take advantage of our close proximity to London. In particular, those in Sevenoaks and Swanley want to be included in the travel zone for Transport for London. This has obvious advantages for businesses and residents. For Swanley, inclusion in the Transport for London travel zone would help to kick start significant regeneration in the area and create new jobs. For Bat and Ball and Eynsford, consultees felt it inclusion in the Transport for

London travel zone would take pressure off the service to London Bridge and also stimulate local regeneration projects. Train services from the District to London are not undergoing the improvements necessary to keep pace with other areas. Commuters are being unfairly targeted with high prices which are being used to subsidise new and improved services in other parts of the South-East. The London Bridge redevelopment is having a negative impact upon commuters in Sevenoaks. The recent timetable changes for 2015 mean that commuters can no longer stop at London Bridge on the London Charing Cross service.

The flooding and bad weather that visited us over Christmas 2013 had dire consequences for residents and businesses. Our consultations identified that those areas flooded would like additional support from us to engage with the Environment Agency on flood protection and funding for those affected.

Car parking has been another consistent theme during the consultative process. Businesses and local communities are very concerned about future parking capacity. There are also significant concerns about the capacity of the road network in Sevenoaks and Swanley. The Sevenoaks District Transport Strategy and Cycling Strategy identify a number of schemes which would help ease congestion and promote sustainable forms of transport. The enabling of the Lower Thames Crossing would take considerable pressure off M25, M26 and M20 junctions; benefitting traffic flow in the District.



Broadband is a vital 21<sup>st</sup> century amenity for both residents and businesses. The speed and access to services can have a severely detrimental effect on business performance and has the potential to negatively affect house prices. The 2013 business phone survey indicated that broadband is now the number 1 concern of businesses within the District. Many of our businesses are located in rural areas which may not feel the benefit of normal

commercial broadband upgrades. For the District to remain competitive we must ensure that superfast broadband services are rolled out to all areas of the District. The number one concern for businesses in the 2014 Business Survey was access to superfast broadband services; 91% of those surveyed thought that this was the most important issue. In the face to face consultations with business groups this was highlighted as the most important infrastructure upgrade in the District. To help solve this problem in the most rural areas of the District we should engage the landowners to try and find an effective solution. There are examples of successful community and landowner led schemes in the District.

Our consultations also highlighted another important issue. Mobile phone signals and 3G/4G signals are often very poor in the rural parts of the District. We must ensure that future

connectivity is first rate. Wi-Fi is an increasingly sought after service and currently the service is limited. Increasing the scope of Wi-Fi is vital for the visitor experience, for those accessing services and shopping in our main towns.

**The following aims will be progressed by the Council and its partners in order to achieve this ambition:**

- **Aim 3.1: Ensure that the District has broadband, mobile telephone and other 21<sup>st</sup> Century connectivity**
- **Aim 3.2: Inclusion of Swanley in Transport for London's travel zone including making it Oyster card ready and making improvements to the rail station**
- **Aim 3.3: Investigate the inclusion of Bat and Ball and Eynsford in Transport for London's travel zone**
- **Aim 3.4: Support efforts to improve car parking in the District**
- **Aim 3.5: Support efforts to ease congestion in Sevenoaks and Swanley**
- **Aim 3.6: Ensure areas are sufficiently protected from extreme weather and flooding**



## **Strategic Objective 4: Energy and Sustainability**

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## Energy and Sustainability

Local authorities are being encouraged to make cuts in energy costs and 'go green'. Businesses are also looking to cut overheads in the face of ever climbing energy prices. The 2013 and 2014 Sevenoaks District Council business surveys indicated that energy costs were one of the most important concerns for businesses looking forward.

The District Council is supporting the Climate Local initiative led by Kent County Council. This is a Local Government Association initiative to drive, inspire and support council action on climate change. As part of this we are committed to a number of actions to reduce our carbon footprint and ensure that residents and businesses are given the right information to cut costs and go green.

We have already started a number of initiatives to support this exciting programme of work. In partnership with the KCC Low Carbon Team we have delivered two Steps to Environmental Management (STEM) workshops. We are also developing an information pack for businesses so that they can make the right decisions when it comes to being energy efficient. Our consultations showed that there was some confusion amongst businesses and other organisations as to what schemes are operating and that there needs to be greater clarity and understanding about what support and funding is available.

We need to ensure that the green infrastructure is in place to enable businesses and residents to be able to buy more energy efficient vehicles. Charging points for electric vehicles are becoming increasingly prevalent in London and surrounding boroughs. The installation of charging points in the District will be a priority.

### **The following aims will be progressed by the Council and its partners in order to achieve this ambition:**

- **Aim 4.1: Ensure that businesses are able to access training and funding opportunities to become more energy efficient**
- **Aim 4.2: Install charge points for electric vehicles in the District**
- **Aim 4.2: Provide energy efficiency workshops and information packs**

## **Strategic Objective 5: Places for growth and improvement**

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## Places for Growth and Improvement

After consulting our corporate plans, emerging local plans and the business community a number of areas were identified for improvement:

### Swanley

Swanley is the second largest town in the District. It is located adjacent to Junction 3 of the M25.

It has services which include a youth and community centre, leisure centre, library, civic centre, schools, railway station and a range of other community facilities and support services.

Improvements to the library and information centre will facilitate the continued provision of good services to local people. The town centre itself contains a pedestrianised shopping centre which includes a major food superstore.

The Retail Study update 2009 showed that the town was at that time only capturing a low proportion of available spend, particularly for non-food goods and suggested that the town could be more attractive to shoppers if larger units were available in order to attract more high street names. Currently there is no additional land available adjacent to the pedestrianised centre to enable this. It is important that the retail offer satisfies the needs of local people and encourages visitors to the town.

The local market continues to attract a large number of people into the centre and there is scope for additional marketing and support for this event.

There is scope for improvement to the land at the vehicular entrance to the town centre, which could provide additional employment, possibly a small business hub for new businesses and workshops. This could nurture a new generation of businesses which will go on to stimulate further economic growth and jobs in the town. Land at Bevan Place is earmarked for housing. These two sites together could improve the attractiveness of the 'gateway' to the town.

A key part of the regeneration of Swanley is ensuring that the transport links are of sufficient quality and dealing with traffic congestion. The train station is not currently up to standard, it lacks many of the facilities you would expect at a top quality commuter station. The accessibility is poor and it lacks appropriate signage and links to the Town Centre. The inclusion of the station in Transport for London's travel zone would assist in progressing the much needed improvements and encouraging regeneration in Swanley. The Transport Strategy for the District has identified the need to deal with congestion.

Another opportunity to help skills and employment in Swanley would be to bring back into use the technical and vocational centre at the Orchards Academy. A new Job Centre Plus service will soon be available when the new Swanley gateway opens in February/March 2015. We will work proactively to market the services available here.

## **Fort Halstead**

Fort Halstead is a previously developed site situated in the Green Belt and the Kent Downs AONB that was originally a Ministry of Defence research establishment and is still occupied by defence related industries. It is currently the largest employment site in the District.

Since the adoption of the Core Strategy, DSTL, the largest employer, has announced its intention to withdraw from the site by 2017. The Council is working with DSTL, QinetiQ and the site owners to develop proposals for the future. In line with our policy (Fort Halstead is identified as a Major Employment Site in the Green Belt) we expect future development to be employment led.

The site currently employs over 1200 people. The District Council expects that any future redevelopment would provide the same number of jobs. QinetiQ have indicated that they plan to stay on the site. There are excellent opportunities to develop the site with other partners such as Biggin Hill Airport. Our ambition is that Fort Halstead is transformed into a park specialising in science and engineering. We want to develop a new studio school onsite which will provide businesses with the specialist skills they need and young people with the bespoke training, education and experience that will help them into employment straight after leaving school. We want to take advantage of the excellent strategic position and expansive location at Fort Halstead and develop a start up business hub. Our vision is that the site will harness the skills and expertise of residents in West Kent with

new innovative start up businesses and an assortment of high flying science and engineering firms. There is also space on the site for a high quality hotel with conference facilities. This would support business visitors and take care of a well established need in the district for high quality conference facilities. It would also accommodate our growing tourism industry.

## **New Ash Green Village Centre**

New Ash Green was developed as a new community in 1960s with its own village centre. The centre has proved to be far less successful than other aspects of the development and continues to suffer from a high amount of vacant units and environmental issues. The local community are enraged by the dilapidated state of the town centre and are disappointed by the lack of action by the local landowners. Significant improvements are needed in the village centre.

The Council is attempting to work with landowners and the local community to develop proposals for its regeneration so that it better meets the needs of the local community, while retaining a scale appropriate to the size of the community it is intended to serve and a form that respects the distinctive character of the settlement. An element of residential development could be included as part of the regeneration scheme. The final form of development will follow local consultation and will be mixed use to adhere to the established planning policy.

## Sevenoaks Town Centre and Bat and Ball

Sevenoaks has a successful town centre. Despite competition from other larger centres outside the District and increased vacant premises during the recession, it has one of the lowest vacant premises rates in the country. It benefited from the completion of the Bligh's Meadow development in 2007 and has a good range of independent shops and services and multiple stores. Recent and current investment includes a major Waitrose store and a new Marks and Spencer store. Both of these developments should help Sevenoaks town to remain an important shopping centre in the future, attracting further high street names as well as boosting footfall to the benefit of the smaller, independent traders. The town has a high quality environment that needs to be maintained and enhanced as it continues to develop. An active town partnership ensures a focus on the town with a variety of events and marketing activities.

Parking for the town has been an issue and the District Council is seeking to remedy this by creating additional long-stay spaces at Buckhurst. Congestion has also been identified as an issue for the town centre and this may require a range of solutions including smarter technology to improve traffic flows.

Further growth will be needed over time if the town is to maintain its position relative to other centres. Vital to this is two main regeneration projects, Bat and Ball and the BT Exchange.

Bat and Ball lies just to the north of Sevenoaks Town and has some properties that are empty or substandard. The rail station

is of a substandard quality and the surrounding environment could be significantly upgraded in order to support the vibrant business atmosphere at the Bat and Ball Enterprise Centre. Any investigation of the inclusion of Bat and Ball in Transport for London's travel zone, will need to be determine whether the inclusion of this area in the travel zone will relieve pressure from the London service of the nearby Sevenoaks town station.

The BT Exchange site is located in the centre of Sevenoaks Town. This has been identified for future redevelopment.

## Vestry Estate

The Vestry Estate is located in Otford on the edge of Sevenoaks Town with access to the motorway network via Junction 5 of the M25. The estate comprises a mix of industrial, warehouse and workshop units covering a range of sizes. Some of the B1 and B8 properties located on this site are old and need redevelopment. This site has been identified as an area appropriate for new business development within these areas, including the provision of sites for small and medium sized businesses and start up facilities.

**The following aims will be progressed by the Council and its partners in order to achieve this ambition:**

- **Aim 5.1: Improve and redevelop places for growth and employment in the District**



## Other sites for Development

A number of other sites are listed in the draft ADMP which are identified for retention, intensification and regeneration for B1-B8 uses:

- Erskine House, Sevenoaks
- Hardy's Yard, Riverhead
- High Street, Sevenoaks
- London Road, Sevenoaks
- Morewood Close (excluding housing area), Sevenoaks
- South Park, Sevenoaks
- Lime Tree Walk, Sevenoaks
- Wested Lane Industrial Estate, Swanley
- Swanley Town Council Offices, Swanley
- Swan Mill, Goldsel Road, Swanley
- Media House, Swanley
- Moreton Industrial Estate, Swanley
- Park Road Industrial Estate, Swanley
- Teardrop Industrial Estate, Swanley
- The Technology Centre, Swanley
- Edenbridge/Warsop Trading Estate
- Station Road, Edenbridge
- Westerham Trading Centre, Westerham
- Blue Chalet Industrial Park, West Kingsdown
- West Kingsdown Industrial Estate, West Kingsdown
- Horton Kirby Trading Estate, South Darenth
- 160 London Road, Sevenoaks
- Broom Hill, Swanley
- Powder Mills, Leigh
- United House, Swanley

## **Strategic Objective 6: Rural Economy**

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## Rural Economy

The rural economy is a significant part of the District's economic output. We have a broad and diverse agricultural industry which assists the smaller rural hamlets and villages throughout the District. We also have some of the highest levels of homeworking, self-employment and home businesses in the County, many of which are located in rural areas. Our draft planning policies recognise the benefits to the local economy of tourist accommodation and visitor attractions and seek to protect existing facilities from conversion, where they remain viable.

In consultations with rural landowners and rural businesses a number of important issues were identified:

- Farmers are having to be increasingly efficient and find ways to diversify their businesses
- Rural housing for workers is in short supply
- Support for change of use for agricultural buildings could encourage new businesses and generate jobs in rural areas
- It is essential to train and maintain a skilled and motivated workforce
- Food and drink production should be better supported
- There are opportunities for use of sustainable fuels, such as wood-burning
- There is an urgent need for better broadband in rural areas

Rural Kent Plc highlights the value of the farming sector to the rural economy. It highlights farming as “the key ingredient in the

UK's food sector, the key ingredient to 1 in 7 UK jobs and GVA of £85 billion.” Rural Kent Plc aims to continue to attract investment into Kent's Food and Farming sector by demonstrating its strengths and opportunities.

Planning policies support the maintenance and diversification of the rural economy, including development for agriculture, forestry, small scale business development and rural tourism. This is provided that development is compatible with policies for protecting the Green Belt and the value and character of the woodland and landscape. For more details see the Council's LDF Core Strategy and associated documents and the Kent Downs and High Weald AONB documents.

The District Council is committed to engaging with rural and agricultural stakeholders and supporting them in their ambition to raise the profile of the rural sector and seek new inward investment opportunities.

A key part of our support for the rural environment is the West Kent Leader programme. This £1.5million fund worked diligently to support rural enterprise. Work is currently taking place to attract further funding to support rural businesses and provide local jobs.

**The following aims will be progressed by the Council and its partners in order to achieve this ambition:**

- Aim 6.1: Retain existing employment sites in rural settlements
- Aim 6.2: Establish rural sector skills pathways and consider the need for worker accommodation
- Aim 6.3: Showcase food produced in Sevenoaks
- Aim 6.4: Set up regular rural stakeholder meetings

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**Strategic Objective 7:  
Tourism**

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## Tourism

The tourism industry is a major contributor to economic viability and growth in the District. We have a wealth of excellent tourist attractions which bring hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. The tourism industry is worth over £230 million to the local economy and visitors are increasing on a yearly basis. The tourism sector supports over 4,250 jobs in the Sevenoaks District and in 2011 generated over 290,000 visitors, of which 47,000 were from overseas.

In 2012, the District hosted the Olympic Torch Relay and Paralympic Games Road Cycling events at Brands Hatch as part of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Around 30,000 visitors and residents spectated at these events over an eight day period.

The District has the highest proportion of tourist attractions in Kent, with internationally renowned historical houses, gardens and castles. These include Knole, Hever Castle, Chartwell, Chiddingstone Castle and Penshurst Place, many of which have featured in Hollywood and British films.

The District Council will work with new attractions on the outskirts of the District to maximise tourism and economic opportunities for the District. This includes the £2billion Disney-style theme Park in Swanscombe on the outskirts of the District has now been granted nationally significant infrastructure project status.

Sevenoaks District Council will work to support tourism investment projects, including two new Heritage Lottery funded initiatives which will strengthen community infrastructure and increase the influx of visitors to the District.

- £7.75 million has been granted to the National Trust at Knole for a five year project to repair and conserve Knole House, the former Archbishop's palace, and share its heritage with visitors.
- The Darent Valley's Landscape Partnership scheme "Samuel Palmer's Earthly Paradise" has been given a development grant to work towards a £2.1million grant.
- We have consulted extensively with tourism businesses, town partnerships, town & parish councils and rural land owners. It is recognised that tourism plays a vital role in sustaining the economy within this District. Consultations have highlighted a number of key developments for tourism in the District and the District Council continues to work with local businesses and partners to progress the following:
  - There is a need for tourism businesses to work closer together to offer integrated packages for tourists visiting and staying in the District.
  - The District Council, in partnership with local businesses and Visit Kent, continue to improve tourist access and information across the District.
  - A shortage of overnight accommodation as been identified. Attracting new accommodation providers



would increase the number of staying visits in the District, including hotels, as identified within the planning policies.

- Parking for visitors at town centre locations needs to be improved with public transport more integrated.
- More sustainable travel opportunities including better facilities for cyclists, cycle paths, walking trails and electric car charging points are needed.
- There is a need to provide training and knowledge sharing opportunities for accommodation providers and attractions to improve their social media and online presence to maximum bookings and visitor numbers.
- There is a need to provide business start-up workshops for local residents considering setting up a new bed & breakfast or self catering establishment in the District

We are working closely with tourism attractions, local businesses, land owners and accommodation providers to develop a Districtwide Destination Management Plan and a new website, in partnership with Visit Kent and other tourism providers, to further promote Sevenoaks District as a key tourism destination in Kent. This will ensure that all partners are working together to achieve economic benefits and tourism outcomes for the District.

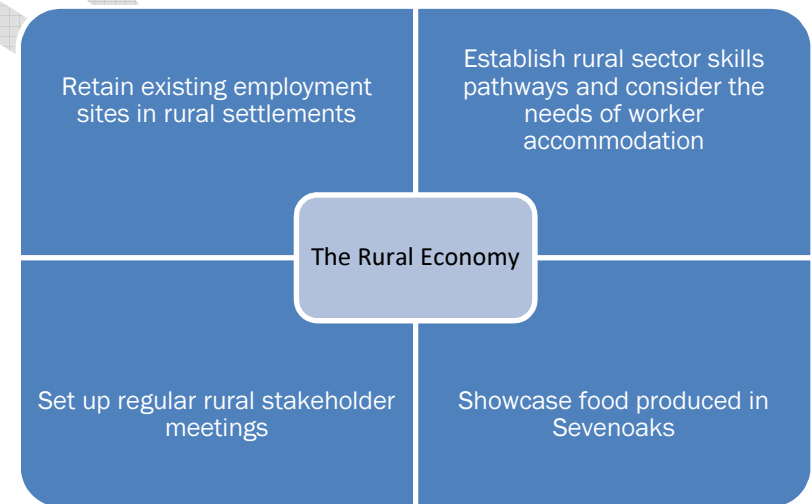
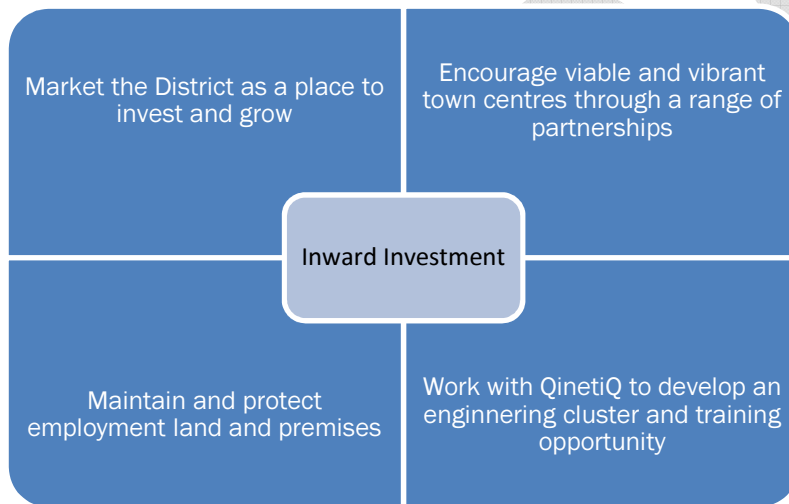
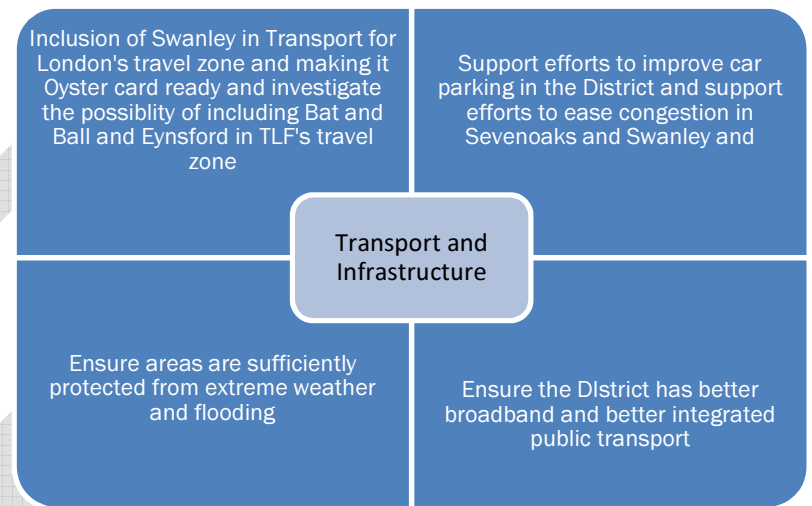
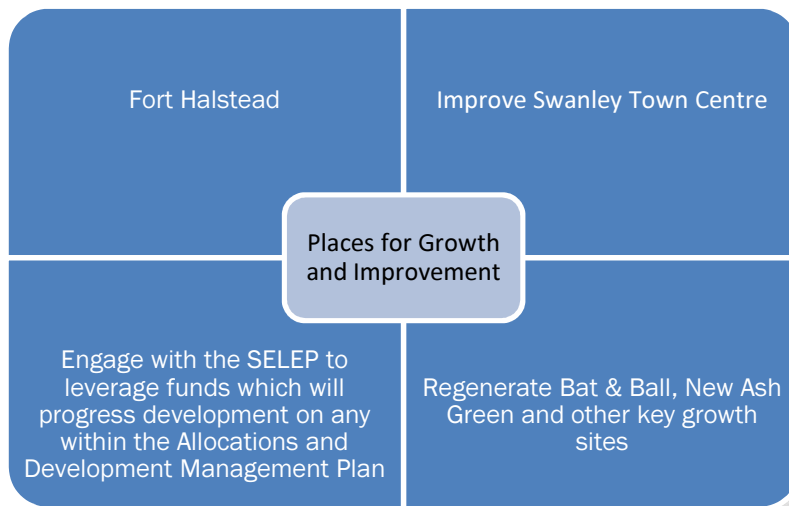
## Summary of Corporate Priorities

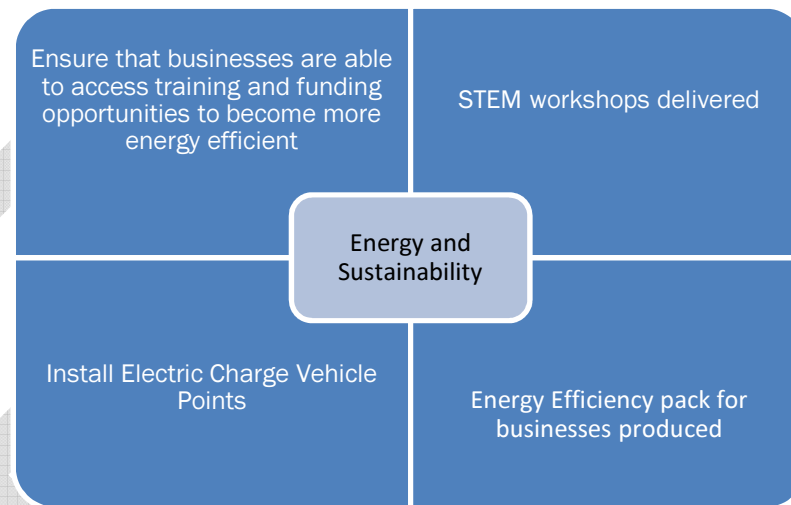
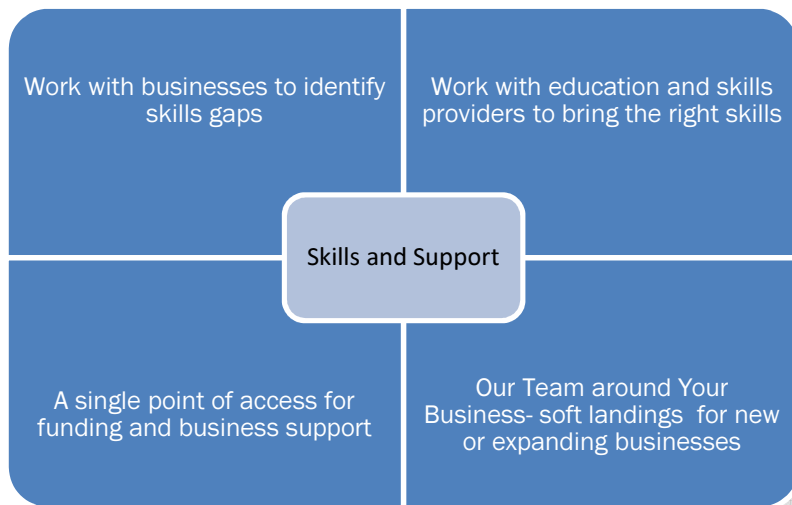
Tourism networking and training events bring together tourism businesses and are found useful by the industry.

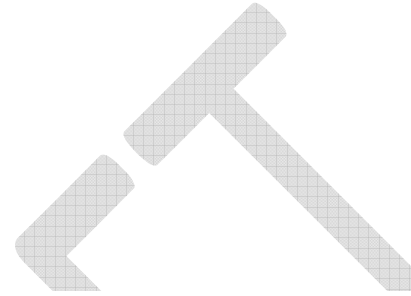
Promotion of staying accommodation and the marketing of tourism businesses is key to the success of the local economy.

### **The following aims will be progressed by the Council and its partners in order to achieve this ambition:**

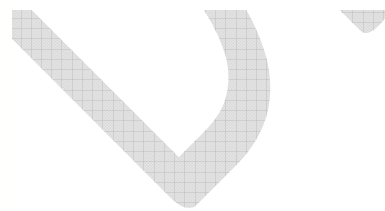
- Aim 7.1: Work with local businesses to market the District as a place to work, live, travel and stay.
- Aim 7.2: Help facilitate growth in the tourism industry
- Aim 7.3: Co-ordinate partnership working to develop longer term destination plans to enhance the District's offer as a key tourism destination in Kent
- Aim 7.4 Support existing accommodation providers and attractions through training and knowledge sharing workshops to enhance and share their skills







## **Economic Development Strategy Action Plan**



Ref	Action	Target	How will we do this?	Timescale	Lead	Delivery Supported by
<b>Strategic Objective 1: Inward Investment</b>						
1.1	Market Sevenoaks District as a place to invest and grow	<p>1.1A Increase the number of businesses locating or setting up in Sevenoaks District over the plan period</p> <p>1.1B Increase in commercial space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a new Business and Regeneration Team</li> <li>Create an investment prospectus featuring the unique selling points and case studies of successful businesses.</li> <li>Work closely with partners; especially Locate in Kent to advertise business development opportunities.</li> <li>Set up the 'team around the business'- the purpose of the team is to assist businesses coming into the District.</li> <li>Develop start up units and work hubs</li> <li>Promote small rate relief and investigate other rate discounts</li> </ul>	2015-2018	SDC	<p>LSP Partners and Sub Groups</p> <p>Locate in Kent</p> <p>West Kent Partnership</p>
1.2	Encouraging viable and vibrant town centres through a range of partnerships	<p>1.2A At least 70% A1 frontage within Primary Frontage of Sevenoaks Town Centre</p> <p>1.2B At least 45% of A1 frontage within Primary frontage of Edenbridge Town Centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with town partnerships to help them progress their objectives.</li> <li>Help town partnerships access funding and support for local priorities</li> </ul>	2015-2018	SDC	Town Partnerships
1.3	Maintain and protect employment land and commercial premises	<p>1.3A Measure the change in employment space in non allocated sites through the floor the</p> <p>1.3B No loss of Employment allocations Major Developed Employment Sites in the Green Belt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocating and safeguarding the District Council's planning policy land for employment use.</li> <li>Resisting changes of use from employment to other planning use classes</li> <li>Work proactively with</li> </ul>	2015-2018	SDC	Developers

			developers to identify new brownfield sites for development as part of the review of the core strategy.				
1.4	Work with QinetiQ to develop an engineering cluster and training opportunity	1.4a – Regular meetings held with QinetiQ 1.4b - Feasibility study for training opportunities produced as part of plans to redevelop Fort Halstead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish regular meetings with QinetiQ and draw up feasibility study for training opportunities linked to the development of Fort Halstead</li> </ul>	2015-2018	SDC	QinetiQ	
<b>Strategic Objective 2: Skills and Support</b>							
2.1	Enable businesses to access support and advice and finance	2.1A	Number of business accessing 1:1 support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with colleagues in the West Kent Partnership to develop a business support offer that reflects local concerns and needs.</li> <li>Ensure the District Council website provides clear, up to date information on funding and support available to businesses</li> </ul>	2015/16	SDC	Kent Libraries Business Information Team  Business Support Organisations
		2.1B	The number of businesses in the District accessing Escalate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicise and engage with businesses interested in the Escalate fund.</li> </ul>	March 2015		
		2.1C	Increase the amount of LEP funding obtained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) to ensure that we can access funds and specialist advice.</li> </ul>	Ongoing		
		2.1D	Amount of European funding leveraged into the District increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to investigate further European funding opportunities</li> </ul>	Ongoing		
2.2	Improve the skills and employability of residents in the	2.2A	Reduce the number of NEETs in line with targets set KIAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting 16-24 year olds into employment through a range of training courses.</li> </ul>	2015	KIAS SDC	LSP Supporting Young



	District.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that jobs and training within the District is well marketed and available to all people</li> <li>• Work with the Local Strategic Partnership to progress actions on employment issues throughout the District.</li> <li>• Engage Kent Foundation</li> </ul>		People into Employment Group  Kent Foundation  Job Centre Plus  SDC Access Group
	2.2B	Reduce the number of JSA claimants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more coordinated support for business start ups and encourage entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Establish Annual Entrepreneurship event</li> <li>• Support people over 50 in retraining and access to skills and employment opportunities</li> <li>• Work with businesses to identify skills gaps.</li> <li>• Engage landowners and rural businesses about rural skills</li> </ul>	LSP Supporting Young People into Employment Group	SDC  Job Centre Plus  LSP Older People Sub Group  Older Peoples Forums Land/estate owners  Business Support Organisations  Land based business Support organisations  West Kent

						Partnership SDC Access Group
2.3	Set up the 'team around the business'- the purpose of the team is to assist businesses coming into the District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Businesses are satisfied with contact with the District Council. Information channels are clear and the number of businesses accessing the Real Business newsletter increases.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with all departments at the Council who have some kind of contact with businesses.</li> <li>Distribute the Sevenoaks Business Guide and Burrows Directory to ensure that businesses have a clear understanding of our services.</li> <li>Clarify the business support and funding available and ensure that there is one single point of contact.</li> <li>Continue to publish the monthly Real Business newsletter.</li> <li>Continue to advertise and promote sources of funding.</li> </ul>	2015	SDC	
2.4	Clarify the business support and funding available and ensure that there is one single point of contact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A single point of contact is established for business support and funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure our website provides clear, up to date information on funding and business support.</li> </ul>	2015	SDC	
<b>Strategic Objective 3: Transport and Infrastructure</b>						
3.1	Broadband, mobile telephone and other 21 Century	3.6 Increase the number of communities accessing superfast broadband	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applying for funding to support communities in getting superfast broadband</li> <li>Support local communities in</li> </ul>	2014-2017	SDC	Landowners/ Estate owners

	connectivity'		<p>finding alternative broadband solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with independent broadband providers to develop innovative solutions in rural areas of the district.</li> <li>• Work with broadband providers to ensure that towns in the District have a reliable and fast Wi-Fi service</li> <li>• Develop a programme of Digital inclusion with appropriate partners to ensure that all residents and businesses have the skills to embrace new technology and connectivity.</li> </ul>			
3.2	Inclusion of Swanley in Transport for London's travel zone and making it Oyster card ready, including improvements to the Rail Station	<p>3.1A .A Improvements to Swanley Rail Station and making it Oyster Card ready</p> <p>3.1B Inclusion of Swanley in Transport for London's travel zone</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange meetings with TFL to discuss future expansion of Swanley the TFL travel zone</li> </ul>	2015-2017	SDC	<p>Transport for London</p> <p>Kent County Council</p>
3.3	Investigate the inclusion of Bat and Ball in Transport for London's travel zone and improvements to the Rail Station.	<p>3.2A Improvements to Bat and Ball Rail Station</p> <p>3.2B Investigate the inclusion of Bat and Ball and Enysford train stations in the Transport for London's travel zone</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange meetings with South Eastern to discuss further improvements to the Bat and Ball and Swanley Rail Stations.</li> </ul>		SDC	<p>South Eastern</p> <p>Kent County Council</p>
3.4	Support efforts to improve car parking in the District	3.3 A Buckhurst 2 decked car park is built.	Support the development of Buckhurst 2 decked car park.	2015	SDC	
		3.3B The expansion of the Darenth car park is successfully delivered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the expansion of the Darenth car park in Westerham.</li> </ul>		SDC	

3.5	Support efforts to ease congestion in Sevenoaks and Swanley and improve integration of public transport	3.5A: Increase the amount of funding for transport infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby for fairer and improved bus and train services in the District</li> <li>Improvements made to public transport as a result of major developments</li> <li>Work with Kent Highways and the SELEP to access funding to implement solutions which will ease traffic congestion and improve integration of public transport</li> </ul>	2015-2018	SDC	West Kent Partnership KCC
		3.5B Proportion of housing supply in the major settlements (Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge) – LDF Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus the majority of new housing, employment and retail development in the towns of Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge with smaller scale development in the larger villages which have a more limited range of local facilities</li> </ul>	2015-2018	SDC	Registered Social Landlords Developers
3.6	Ensure areas are sufficiently protected from extreme weather and flooding	3.6A The number of businesses accessing support for flood prevention measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable businesses to access funding for flood protection if they are liable to flood</li> </ul>	2015-2018	SDC	Business Support Organisations
		3.6B Rural areas reporting improvements to mobile phone signal coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby and Work with mobile phone providers to ensure that rural areas have sufficient mobile signal coverage.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	SDC	Town and Parish Councils
<b>Strategic Objective 4 Energy and Sustainability</b>						
4.1	Ensure that businesses are able to access training and funding opportunities to become more energy efficient.	4.1A Successful planning permissions for renewable energy schemes in the District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with land/estate owners to encourage energy efficiency schemes, particularly wood fuel</li> </ul>	2015-2018	SDC	SDC Climate Change Group Landowners/ Estate owner
		4.1B Increase the number of businesses taking up energy efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a series of STEM workshops in partnership with</li> </ul>		SDC	Business Support

		measures (Annual survey)	<p>the Low Carbon team at Kent County Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy efficiency information pack completed and distributed</li> <li>• Support the rollout and delivery of the Green Deal</li> </ul>			Organisations Kent County Council
4.2	Install charge points for electric vehicles in the District	4.2 Charge points are installed and the number of charging points increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with colleagues to install charge points for electric vehicles</li> </ul>	2014-2015	SDC	KCC Transport Planners
<b>Strategic Objective 5 Places for Growth and Employment</b>						
5.1	Improve and redevelop Places for Growth and Employment in the District	5.1 Funding identified for places for growth and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work proactively with developers and identify funding to regenerate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sevenoaks Town Centre and Bat and Ball</li> <li>○ Vestry Estate</li> <li>○ Fort Halstead</li> <li>○ New Ash Green Village Centre</li> <li>○ Swanley Town Centre</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Engage with the SELEP to leverage funds which will progress development on any within the Allocations and Development Management Plan</li> </ul>	2015-2018	SDC	Developers Town Partnerships Town and Parish Councils West Kent Partnership Kent County Council
<b>Strategic Objective 6 Rural Economy</b>						
6.1	Enhance and improve the rural	6.1A Successful West Kent Leader funding bid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with West Kent Partnership to identify</li> </ul>	2015-2018	SDC	Land/estate owners

	economy.	<p>6.1B Enhance the rural economy through the West Kent Leader fund by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jobs created</li> <li>• Jobs safeguarded</li> <li>• Start ups</li> <li>• Business expansion</li> </ul> <p>6.1C Explore other opportunities to lever in funding/investment</p>	<p>sector specific support and funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to secure private sector investment to support Leader projects</li> <li>• Work with land/estate owners to identify opportunities</li> </ul>		West Kent Partnership	Business Support Organisation
		6.1D The number of rural and home-based businesses taking up business support services increased.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that rural and home-based businesses are able to receive business support and advice</li> </ul>	2015-2018	SDC/Land/Estate Owners	Land based support organisations
		6.1E Set up regular rural stakeholder meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up regular land/estate owner meeting with the District Council's SMT and establish shared priorities for action</li> </ul>	2015/16	SDC	Business Support Organisation s
6.2	Establish rural sector skills pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up rural skills and rural work accommodation workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate rural skills and worker accommodation issues through rural skills sector workshops</li> <li>• Identify rural housing issues</li> <li>• Engage land/estate owners</li> </ul>	2015/2016	SDC	Land based support organisations
6.3	Showcase food produced in Sevenoaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing campaign and case studies and key messages disseminated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with key partners in the rural food industry, farmers and land/estate</li> </ul>	2015/16	SDC	Land/estate owners
					Produced in	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>owners to promote food and drink produced in Sevenoaks</li> </ul>		Kent	<p>Rural Businesses</p> <p>Land based support organisations</p>	
<b>Strategic Objective 7 Tourism</b>							
7.1	Work with local businesses to market the District as a place to work, live, travel and stay	7.1A	Increase number of users for a District Tourism web portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop District Tourism website portal for the Sevenoaks District</li> </ul>	2015-16	SDC	Land/estate owners
		7.1B	Provide at least 2 sector specific workshops and 1 networking event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide additional support, networking and skills workshops for tourism businesses.</li> </ul>	2015-16	SDC	<p>Tourist destinations</p> <p>Tourism businesses</p>
7.2	Help facilitate growth in the tourism industry	7.2A	Sustain the number of bedrooms provided by tourist accommodation providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide support for bed and breakfast providers</li> <li>Work with planners and developers as part of major developments to encourage hotel accommodation</li> </ul>	2015-2018	SDC	Town and Parish Councils
		7.2B	Increase the number of providers of hotel accommodation				
7.3	Co-ordinate partnership working to develop long-term destination management plans to enhance the District's offer as a key tourism destination in Kent	7.2A	Destination management plan (DMP) produced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with tourism businesses to develop a new destination management plan for the District</li> </ul>	2016/17 for production of plan	SDC	Town Partnerships
		7.2B	Partnership meeting coordinated to take actions within the DMP				Visit Kent
7.4	Support existing accommodation providers and attractions through		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver 4 training workshops a year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with Visit Kent to provide targeted training and information sharing workshops to improve the</li> </ul>	2015-2016	SDC	Land based support organisations

	training and knowledge sharing		skills of tourism information businesses			
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## Equality and Inclusion statement

We recognise that everyone has a contribution to make to our society and a right to access services without being discriminated against or disadvantaged because of their:

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

## Abbreviations

3G- Third Generation Wireless  
4G- Fourth Generation Wireless  
ADMP- Draft Allocations and Development Management Plan  
AONB- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
DSTL- Defence Science and Technology Laboratory  
GVA- Gross Value Added (£)  
LEP- Local Enterprise Partnership  
NVQ- National Vocational Qualification  
RDA- Regional Development Agency  
SELEP- South East Local Enterprise Partnership  
Wi-Fi- Wireless Local Area Network  
WKP for Growth- West Kent Partnership for Growth