

SEVENOAKS FIRST

Cabinet - 21 April 2016

Report of Chief Officer Communities and Business

Status: For decision

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: The report informs Cabinet about a proposal to produce an inward investment magazine for Sevenoaks aiming for publication in October/ November 2016.

This report supports the Key Aim of: Value for money and supporting the local economy.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Fleming

Contact Officer Robin Cooper Ext. 7099

Recommendation to Cabinet:

That Cabinet endorse the production of an inward investment magazine for Sevenoaks District and put forward a growth item for future years of £4,950.

Reason for recommendation: The production of the investment magazine will help to raise the profile of the district to outside developers and investors, show that we are open for business and explain about the business opportunities for developing and living in the district.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Council already produces a magazine 'In Shape' which is delivered to every household in the district. A recent resident's survey showed that the magazine is well liked, well read and highly regarded. The proposal here is for a totally different magazine which is not aimed at residents at all (or even sent to them) but aimed at investors, developers and those looking for business opportunities who perhaps have not considered Sevenoaks at all, or do not feel it is right for them - usually because of their perceptions of the place.
- 2 Cabinet is of course aware of the great location of Sevenoaks for doing business but we have not always been best at telling people in the wider business community and one of the main aims of the magazine is to take that

message far and wide and to help to change the business image of Sevenoaks.

- 3 The company which produces the magazine only produce magazines for the public sector and understand the market well. They have been producing the magazines since 2004. They currently produce the magazine for Medway and also for London Boroughs such as Croydon, Southwark and Bromley and further afield in places such as Belfast, Edinburgh. Bradford and Newcastle.
- 4 In the immediate future the Council will increasingly need to rely on income from Council Tax, Business Rates and the income from its investments and the magazine, by promoting the area, will help to raise the profile and encourage businesses to locate or continue to trade in the district.
- 5 The proposal is for one magazine per year dedicated to inward investment and regeneration. An investment event will also be organised to coincide with the launch of the magazine. These are usually held in London to attract maximum attention and attendance by the development and finance sector. The event is sponsored by the publisher at no cost to the Council. An invitation is also extended to be part of a national public sector marketing event (last year at the top of The Shard) where we can promote our business opportunities directly to decision makers. The event is called Site Match and the idea is to match development sites with potential investors. The event is high profile (it normally attracts the likes of the DCLG Secretary of State to give the opening address) and is paid for by the publisher. An e-newsletter is published 4 times a year and this is paid for by the publisher.
- 6 There is also the scope to produce investment videos and children's material which is helpful for the inevitable requests Council's frequently receive to have student based information on the district ready for download. There is also an updated inward investment website promoting the magazine articles and news services and this is updated weekly.
- 7 The 6 main objectives of the magazine are to:
 - create a positive impression of the Council engaging with the private sector and keen for growth;
 - influence the development community perceptions of Sevenoaks as a good place to invest;
 - attract attention to specific investment opportunities such as Swanley;
 - inject a sense of aspiration, excitement and ambition into placemaking;
 - help attract the attention of funders (eg KCC, LEP);
 - work with other Councils such as the West Kent Partnership where appropriate to create a more compelling message about West Kent and Kent.
- 8 The magazine is normally 48 – 56 pages with independent business to business content written by trained in-house journalists. Sevenoaks is not required to write

any of the articles or supply photographs or sell advertising which is all undertaken by the publisher. An editorial plan is developed with two Council checking stages as copy is produced. Nothing is produced in the final edition which the Council is unhappy with. The content list is agreed with the Council before commissioning. Advertising by firms associated with or developing in the district pays for the magazine and the firm does not believe they will have any problem selling space for the magazine. Approaches are not made to any firm the Council does not want to be associated with (e.g. a firm we are currently pursuing for non payment of business rates or where we are taking enforcement action).

9 A print run of 5000 magazines is produced and 3500 of those are mailed out directly from a carefully targeted database of 40,000 regeneration and development senior decision makers plus 1000 copies delivered to us and 500 directly to advertisers. The Council's copies are used for business events, exhibitions, mail outs and for job packs as they help to promote the Council as a good place to work.

10 Suggestions for copy in the first edition aiming for distribution in October/ November would be:

Setting the Sevenoaks scene – growth plans. Local Plan search for sites; economy; lifestyle; advantages and attractions but commitment to protecting what is good about the district;

Welcome by the Leader;

Portfolio Holder for Economic and Community Development – our economic priorities for the district

Council support – how we help business; Council development company; plans for financial independence;

Infrastructure requirements to support jobs growth and promotion of our connectivity;

Skillset – quality and range of schools and our international dimension (proximity of airports, ports and HS1);

Homes – range of opportunities, types of building and housing requirements;

Projects such as REEF, Countryside, Fort Halstead, U and I in Swanley;

Culture and Leisure – what Sevenoaks has to offer;

More car parks for Sevenoaks;

New hotels;

What Oyster means for the district.

Key Implications

Financial

The Council pays for one advert to promote its own services at a cost of £9,950 for edition one and £4,950 for subsequent editions. The remainder of the costs are all paid for externally. For the coming year the finance can be found from existing budgets but it is recommended that the magazine is put forward as a growth item for future years.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations.

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.

Conclusions

Agreement of Cabinet is sought to proceed with an inward investment magazine for Sevenoaks with a publication date of October/ November 2016 and a launch event before the Christmas close down.

Lesley Bowles
Chief Officer for Communities and Business