

Housing

Challenges:

- The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act gives the council more responsibilities and earlier response times to help people. This coupled with a freeze in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates (the amount of money the government will pay private landlords for rent) and the benefits freeze (so people are less able to bridge the gap between private rents and LHA rates) is putting increased pressure on our limited social housing stock, which was traditionally heavily supplemented with private rented housing.
- The need to increase the amount of temporary accommodation, rural accommodation, affordable housing across the board and supported housing.
- House prices remain high (up to 17 times higher than average wages), planning constraints and limited scope for development, ageing population, need to try and keep families and communities together.

Successes:

- Housing strategy now in place. HERO upskilled to Super HERO with some health training to better understand the links between debt and ill health.
- Quercus 7 Housing company set up to complement the work of our Housing Associations in meeting the districts housing need.
- West Kent Housing Association has now introduced 5 year fixed term tenancies after the initial one year probationary tenancy.
- 48 affordable homes were built last year
- New allocations policy will be going to full council in the autumn
- 9 villages are carrying out rural housing needs surveys which will hopefully lead to rural exception sites
- The rapid hospital discharge scheme is growing from strength to strength making a noticeable difference on discharge times across the district. There are two One You advisors funded from the Better Care Fund and employed by Age UK working in GP surgeries and other settings to prevent falls.
- The Housing Strategy will be included in the new local plan which will help ensure the new houses that are built in the district meet the district's housing needs.

Health & Leisure

Challenges:

- To prevent falls (Sevenoaks has the highest number of hip fractures in the county), to help take the pressure off the health service, to work with Public Health and Kent County Council to help reduce demand on hospital admissions and social care. To tackle ageing well, obesity and mental ill health across the district.

Successes

- We are a leading District Council in the country with our health vision
- The Health Integration Deal between Sevenoaks District Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and Kent County Council is now a reality with the districts acting as full and equal partners with the county in one of the first health devolution deals in a two-tier area in the country.
- The West Kent Health and Wellbeing Board has been abolished and replaced by a members forum made up of representatives from the NHS, the portfolio holder for health from Sevenoaks District Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council plus the Chairman of the Health Committee from Maidstone Borough Council, and Roger Gough Kent County Councillor. The new board will be responsible for enacting the 10 point plan from the health integration deal - and shows how in West Kent districts have moved from being commissioned to provide public health services to be full and equal partners with the county. The Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Health & Wellbeing Board could follow a similar pattern.
- The council won the iSES Health & Social Care award for our Health Work
- The council has two more One You advisors working from GP surgeries and other settings partnering closely with Super Hero to tackle the non-medical reasons why people seek medical help: asthma caused by damp housing, anxiety caused by debt and a range of conditions caused by loneliness, poor diet and lack of exercise. They are funded by Public Health money but fully integrated and managed by the council's health team.
- The council is undergoing a Health in all Policies policy review to ensure all our tools are working together to promote the health and wellbeing of our residents.
- Health will be a major consideration, equal to the Greenbelt, in the new local plan.