

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. I am very pleased that we have a **new Economic Development Strategy** which sets the framework for the Council's work on the economy for the next three years. The Strategy aspires to build on our strong economic performance and to continue to work with local businesses to give them support they need when they need it. It also commits to enabling relevant skills training and sets out what we will be doing on growth and investment, infrastructure, the rural economy and the visitor economy.
  
2. The current **Economic Development Strategy** is now complete with 86% of the actions being successful. The full monitoring was reported to the Advisory Committee in December 2018 but here are a few interesting facts.
  - Over the period of the strategy the business count in Sevenoaks District increased from 6090 in 2014 to 6580 in 2018.
  - Working with the West Kent Partnership, we have enabled funding for businesses to develop and for business support and advice. Sevenoaks businesses accessed a total of £1.4million creating 56 new jobs and safeguarding a further 72.
  - LEADER funding facilitated business development in the rural economy with grants of £326 bringing an investment of over £800,000.
  - A bid to the Regional Growth Fund has secured funding towards the upgrade of Swanley station.
  - Charging points for electric vehicles have been installed in Bradbourne car park with further plans for Buckhurst 2 car park.
  - The West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network has been hugely successful with 29 advisers working with schools across West Kent.
  - The Visitor Economy Study has been a catalyst for improvement in the visitor economy. At the time of the last survey (2017) the tourist economy generated £243million in value and provided jobs for 5,287 people. Both of these figures were increases over the previous year with £230 million generated in 2016 and 5,032 jobs.
  - We have completed a review of broadband across the District and are identified 'not spots'. We are planning how to engage with potential suppliers and communities.

3. I am pleased to say that close working between **the ED and Planning Policy teams** has facilitated a number of studies contributing to our overall knowledge on the local economy and helped to inform the new Local Plan as well as the new Economic Development Strategy.
4. I have asked the ED team to engage in a new **Community Rail Partnership** that will enhance the visitor economy along the Darent Valley by focusing on 'the Samuel Palmer' line.

#### **COMMUNITY PLAN**

5. The new draft Community Plan, following considerable public consultation, has been drafted and the final public consultation will start in February. We have delayed the consultation date so that it doesn't clash with the Local Plan. The draft was considered by the Advisory Committee in December and sets out the priorities identified by the Community along the themes 'Safe and Caring Communities', 'Green and Healthy Environment and 'Dynamic and Sustainable Economy'.

#### **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

6. A recent visit from the Chief Constable enabled us to discuss issues such as police presence, speeding vehicles, Neighbourhood Watch and the work of the Community Safety Unit. The Chief Constable is committed, within his resources, to having as many officers and PCSOs out in the community as possible. He also values the work of the CSU and the speedwatch volunteers. We discussed the 'Organised Crime Group' work which is taken forward in a multi-agency way by the CSU and the successful outcomes that have been achieved at various sites across the District. Sevenoaks CSU is recognised as being particularly successful and recently won the Chief Superintendent's Team Contribution Award.
7. We have been measuring our levels of crime in comparison with other Districts in Kent. We usually have crime levels within the lowest three in Kent. Recently, we have been improving on that position, having either the second lowest or the lowest in the County.
8. The Advisory Committee received a presentation on the annual assessment of crime and disorder in the District. The priorities for our multi-agency Community Safety Partnership for 2019-20 will include Domestic Abuse, serious and organised crime, anti-social behaviour, safeguarding, substance misuse, doorstep & cyber crime and road safety.

#### **EMERGENCY PLANNING**

9. The Council continues to be prepared for emergencies and provides training and practice opportunities for Officers.