

THE DEVELOPING VISION: “PRIDE IN THE DISTRICT OF SEVENOAKS BY WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, TO SUSTAIN AND DEVELOP A FAIR, SAFE AND THRIVING LOCAL COMMUNITY”

Cabinet – 12th April 2012

Council – 24th April 2012

Report of the: Leader of the Council

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: Yes

This report and appendices supports the key aims of the Council’s

- i) Community Plan;
- ii) Vision of Balanced Communities;
- iii) Local Development Framework; and
- iv) Value for Money and 10-year budget programme.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Fleming

Recommendation to Cabinet: It be resolved that Members recommend the developing Leader’s Vision to Full Council for approval and adoption.

Recommendation to Full Council: It be resolved that Members adopt the developing Vision for the District Council.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION: To agree the three Core Values which will guide and define the current and emerging District Council policies for the Sevenoaks District.

Introduction

- 1 The District Council has had a strategic vision (the key aims referred to in the beginning of the report) which has been developed over the last few years and the main message is: “To lead the whole community in meeting its needs and to work in partnership to improve the quality of life within the District“. This Vision has not changed and has helped to provide a strong local leadership, effective working with partners, value for money and quality services, with a robust Local Development Framework. In the context of this District Council I have therefore been reviewing this Vision.
- 2 At our last Council meeting, we confirmed our 10-year budget and noted that our first year objectives had been achieved and our second year is on track. Against that financial framework and other changes such as the Localism Act and the Welfare Reform it was felt timely to review and develop this Vision. The developing Vision will reflect the emerging needs of the whole community and the District Council is committed to working closely with local people and partners to achieve this. The District Council will be honest and open and will provide quality services. The District Council shares the local people’s sense of pride in the District, which is a unique place.

Developing Vision

- 3 The developing Vision is summarised as: “Pride in the District of Sevenoaks by working with the community as a whole, to sustain and develop a fair, safe and thriving local community”.
- 4 The following are the three related Core Values that will guide and define the District Council’s policies for the District and local area:

- i) **Fairness**

In the current climate the District Council ,like everyone ,will need to take difficult decisions. We will consider very carefully how our decisions impact on residents, to ensure that although some may be difficult, we will always seek to be fair and balanced. We will particularly consider those who are vulnerable and depend on us for support.

- ii) **Integrity**

We will be open and honest with local people, partners, local businesses and our staff. We aim never to make promises we cannot keep and when we get something wrong we will admit our mistake and learn from that experience to get it right next time. We value above all else, the trust of the local people.

- iii) **Quality**

We will concentrate on doing the things that matter to local people. We will constantly find innovative ways, work harder and smarter to provide the highest possible quality services.

5 These three Core Values develop the Vision with the resulting five promises:

i) We will provide value for money

The District Council has had its funding severely cut so there is less to go round. We will continue to spend the local council tax payers' money as carefully as possible. We will look to get things right the first time, drive hard bargains with suppliers, work in partnership and be innovative and resourceful to provide value for money.

ii) We will work in partnership to keep the Sevenoaks District safe

The District Council is one of the safest places in the United Kingdom. We work hard with partners, such as the Police and other agencies to keep it that way. We are vigilant and continuously looking at ways to reduce crime and make the District even safer.

iii) We will continue to collect rubbish efficiently and effectively

Collecting rubbish on a weekly basis and ensuring the streets are kept clean is a basic requirement and affects everyone. We know it matters to local people and we will ensure it continues to the high standard all residents expect. We will not reduce the service, as others have, in an attempt to save money. We will keep providing a high quality service and we will keep collecting rubbish weekly

iv) We will protect the Green Belt

The Sevenoaks District is 93% Green Belt and this is of paramount importance to local people. Through our planning processes and the LDF we will protect and defend this for the present and future generations.

v) We will support and develop the local economy

A thriving local economy is key to the quality of life in our District and an important source of employment for many local residents. Along with partners we will work with our local businesses to support and help them grow to ensure the District enjoys a good reputation as a place to work and do business. In addition, we will also make sure there are different housing options available.

Key Implications

Financial

The objectives of the developing Vision will be delivered from existing budgets and bids for external funding will be made where appropriate.

Legal, Human Rights etc.

This Vision is compatible with the provision of the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) and is not likely to result in any HRA implications.

Resource (non-financial)

The Vision will be delivered using existing resources and there will be no additional non-financial implications.

Value For Money and Asset Management

The Vision will support value for money with efficient effective quality services. Working in partnership helps to reduce costs and make savings.

Equality Impacts

The Vision treats everyone fairly and appropriately. In the individual components of the Vision, equality impact assessments are undertaken accordingly.

Sustainability Checklist

Completed and available by request.

Conclusions

The developing Vision will enhance the four key aims already embedded in District Council policies and plans, such as the Sustainable Community Action Plan.

The three Core Values will guide and define the current and emerging District Council policies for the District and local areas.

The five key promises will ensure that the Core Values and aims are delivered and will demonstrate that the District Council has integrity and is committed to improving the quality of life for people in the local community.

Risk Assessment Statement

By not having an up-to-date Vision, there would be a lack of political and strategic direction reflecting current times and emerging issues.

Background Papers: Community Plan, Balanced Communities and previous Vision.