

Cllr Lesley Dyball, People & Places snapshot Report to Scrutiny Committee, 22 March 2022

Communities, Leisure and Community Safety

- The District Voluntary Sector Forum undertook its second Barometer Survey of the Voluntary Sector to assess the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the sector, which shows the sector has stabilised.
- The Queen's Green Canopy is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites people from across the United Kingdom to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee". Trees have been planted by the Council in late 2021 and more recently at Argyle Road and the new White Oak Leisure Centre.
- The Big Sing for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee will be held at The Stag on 7 June, with all proceeds going towards mental health services for young people.
- Family Fun Days have been confirmed for Easter and Summer 2022.
- We received KCC funding for a Community Mobilisation Officer to support a programme of community empowerment work over the next 15 months.
- Internet Safety day was held in February and attended by all Primary and Secondary schools in the District.
- The new Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan for 2022/23 has been finalised and includes an additional priority for Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). The Council has launched a VAWG website page to provide details of support and services in the district.
- Oliver Barratt has been selected as the artist to commence the project. A public event was held on site in January. The project is on track for instalment in summer 2022.
- The Community Grant scheme has been allocated for 2022/23
- The new White Oak Leisure Centre opened its doors on Saturday 12 February.

Economic Development and Tourism

- First draft of Economic Development Strategy completed. Consultation plan for the new strategy in place.
- Business Grant scheme has been administrated through the Revenues and Benefits and Economic Development teams.
- The Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership has been successful in securing £100k funding from Thameslink towards the community rail partnership. Six new artworks produced for train stations along the Darent Valley line.
- A new tourism website www.visitsevenoaks.gov.uk has been launched.
- The district's place brand strategy has been prepared. The brand strategy focuses on the district's unique selling features and has four key pillars: live, work, visit and invest. A Brand Book and brand platform has been developed. Recent marketing initiatives included a Christmas Hamper consisting of local produce.
- The Kickstart West Kent programme has seen 52 young people starting in post with a further 60 posts being actively recruited to and a total of 167 posts approved since the Scheme began.
- West Kent Scale Up is a 12 month coaching programme for 12 high growth West Kent businesses, involving 36 hour support and peer activities – delivered through Kent Invicta Chamber for Commerce and jointly funded by West Kent Partnership, South East Business Boost and Growth Hub.