

Item 14 - Sevenoaks District Draft Economic Development Strategy

The attached report was considered by the People & Places Advisory Committee on 14 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

People & Places Advisory Committee (14 June 2022, Minute 10)

The Economic Development & Programme Manager presented the report which detailed the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) for the District for the period 2022 - 2027. He explained that the Strategy addressed the changes in supply and the labour market that resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic, and captured changes from new working and spending patterns.

He further explained the four focus areas of the Strategy, which were Business Engagement and Diversity, Tourism and Rural Enterprise, Town Centres, and Job Skills, and outlined the elements within these that the EDS specifically targets. He emphasised the importance of sustainability and Council's Net Zero plan within all these areas. The Committee raised the potential costs and difficulties associated with the transition to Net Zero, to which he outlined the resources of the Strategy for businesses to ease this process.

The Committee then heard about the importance of the District Council's partnerships in the Strategy, and the role of consultation with these groups in the creation of the Strategy's priorities. They also heard about how the Strategy includes an annual economic report to monitor its performance.

The Committee raised the issue of jargon within the report, which might present a barrier to public understanding of it. In response to concerns raised, Members were advised it would be addressed where possible. In response to further queries Members were informed that the Strategy was local in its focus, and that problems would be prioritised on an area-by-area basis.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that the Economic Development Strategy 2022 - 2027 be adopted.