

APPENDIX A

Economic Development Strategy – Delivery Plan – Year 1 Achievements

Key

GREEN	On track to deliver by the end of the strategy term or already achieved
AMBER	Activity commenced and working towards achievement, project working towards achievement of objective
BLUE	Activity not yet commenced
RED	Some risks or challenges associated with achievement at the current time.

FOCUS AREA 1 – BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE			
Aim	Activity	Key Achievements	Rating
Improve awareness and visibility of businesses through business communications strategy at West Kent level	Create and keep up to date the business directory/ business database	Business enquiry form introduced to monitor and record business enquiries received by the team and establish customer database. Business Directory established on More Sevenoaks with 150 businesses signed up with more promotion to follow.	GREEN
	Deliver annual West Kent Business Conference	West Kent event held 22 nd March with approx. 40 attendees – included launch of UKSPF business support programme. West Kent business support contract includes annual West Kent expo events. Currently preparing for the West Kent Business Expo in March 2024.	GREEN
	Participate in business awards as part of the West Kent Partnership	West Kent Partnership sponsorship of Kent Business Awards in 2022. Future awards schemes to be considered at West Kent level.	AMBER
	Produce an annual economic Report	Access to statistical data to be reviewed in light of changes to the Local Enterprise Partnership and changing external environment. Data to be captured as part of Sector Skills research to be undertaken as part of UKSPF programme and will provide additional data to contribute to economic profile of the District. Data infographic for Sevenoaks recently produced as a resource for attendance at events and as part of inward investment offer.	AMBER
Encourage businesses to locate within the District and West Kent	Develop Inward Investment proposition collateral as part of the place campaign	More Sevenoaks includes Invest theme, which was used to promote investment at recent Completely Retail Expo. More Sevenoaks website is being regularly refreshed with case studies.	GREEN

	Launch West Kent inward Investment strategy including attendance at trade and investment events meeting inward delegations and promotion in the business press	West Kent partnership rebrand as Invest West Kent. Logo produced and role and remit being developed alongside working with Locate in Kent to be clear on potential in West Kent.	AMBER
	Create soft landing team for new companies locating in the District / West Kent	Team around your business approach provides soft landing support for Sevenoaks businesses. Further consideration of West Kent approach as part of development of Invest West Kent	GREEN
Sectoral development	Undertake further research on sectors including assessing results of the Economic Needs Study	UKSPF project to undertake this research. Procurement process underway. Brief includes consideration of key sectors, skills and productivity now and predicting future changes and requirements.	AMBER
	Sectors action plan to establish series of interventions	To be considered as part of second stage of Sector Skills study which will include action plan.	AMBER
Facilitate new ways of working	Develop a hub strategy covering the West Kent Partnership area for both public and private sector facilities including feasibility studies for additional sites	A bid to create a hub strategy for West Kent area was unsuccessful. Current focus on Meeting Point site in Swanley as pilot with a view to integrating into a strategic hub network in the future. Initial discussions taken place with authorities outside West Kent area to develop ideas around joint working.	AMBER
	Successful launch and management of the new business hub at Swanley	Meeting Point Swanley launched July 2023 with all 3 individual offices now let with one company having already expanded beyond available space and now located in the local area. Regular group of meeting room users and hot desk users from a variety of sectors and organisations of differing sizes. Events space booking enquiries received and successful networking events hosted at Meeting Point include Sevenoaks Chamber of Commerce networking and an event for local neighbouring businesses as well as charity fundraising events. Staff team in place and delivering marketing activities with social media impressions increasing.	GREEN
	Digital / Broadband investment in collaboration with Kent County Council and commercial operators	Changes in county approach to broadband investment necessitate a new approach. Currently broadband coverage for the District is at 97% superfast coverage. Meetings to take place to develop this objective further.	RED

Develop and Grow	Research the specific present and future business needs of SME's particularly for rural businesses	Sector skills study to consider rural economy as key sector, alongside other sectors. West Kent Business support scheme launched which provides range of business support and will improve data on future needs. The REPF funded West Kent rural grants scheme provides Capital funding to support rural based businesses to develop and grow.	AMBER
	Team around your business including new 'welcome pack' providing information on all relevant services in the Council	New business enquiry process adopted and research to understand needs and requirements for business pack ongoing.	AMBER
	Feasibility of launching a training app for businesses	Digital funding in UKSPF investment plan for financial year 2025/25. Training apps for businesses already in existence so requires further consideration.	AMBER
	Effective signposting to external organisations including business start up advice	Smarter Society business support programme launched engaging 100 Sevenoaks District businesses since outset, with 18 organisations currently receiving mentoring and high level of interest in micro grants. A regular programme of training events is established with an annual conference scheduled for 14 th March. Team around your business approach delivered through ED team now including delivery from Meeting Point in Swanley. Newly adopted business enquiry form to improve quantitative data in the future	GREEN
Local Procurement Programme	Identify the Council's geographical spend profile for goods and services	Commitment to considering procurement approach within the FSB Local leadership partnership signed in November 22. This area of work not included in UKSPF investment plan – delivery not yet commenced on this objective.	BLUE
	Develop an action plan to improve visibility of procurement pipeline and building capacity for local businesses	Work on this objective to take place in later years of the strategy currently.	BLUE
Net Zero economy	Connect business community with existing advice on energy efficiency and emissions reduction including Low Carbon Kent and the LOCASE programme	UKSPF approved investment plan includes Green Business Grants scheme. Engagement on this scheme included presentation to Chamber of Commerce sustainability forum. First round of green grants completed with further funding for new scheme in financial year 2024/25.	GREEN

		West Kent Rural business fund also includes objectives around sustainability.	
	Work with landowners in the public and private sector to identify assets that could be utilised for local renewables and power generation	Continue to engage with planning policy team as they build evidence base for emerging Local plan. Currently working on decentralised power opportunities and undertaken pre-feasibility work for a solar farm	GREEN

FOCUS AREA 2 – RURAL AND VISITOR ECONOMY

Aim	Activity	Key Achievements	Rating
Maximise promotion and exposure of the District	Regular Visitor Economy Forum meetings to share best practice and promotion of activities.	Working in collaboration with Visitor Economy and Rural partners to strengthen the economy through enhanced marketing and strategic guidance. Partners engage directly and respond to requests when required.	GREEN
	Collaborate with key partners including Visit Kent and Visit England on joint initiatives	Regularly collaborate with external partners to access key opportunities. Most recently this includes investing in Visit Kent's latest campaign, 'Its in our nature' and being represented at the Annual Hotel Conference.	GREEN
	Active member of the Gatwick Gateway Group	Sevenoaks regularly attend Gateway Gatwick meetings as a driver to signpost inbound visitors to Sevenoaks.	GREEN
	Continue to establish the Visit Sevenoaks website and social media coverage through the Place Portal	Visit Sevenoaks and More Sevenoaks websites performing well. Visit Sevenoaks website is the leading website for inbound visitors. Visit Sevenoaks website (July 2023): 4.1k users, More Sevenoaks website (July 2023): 1,901 unique website users. More Sevenoaks social media accounts are all performing above average and are regularly updated by responsible marketing agency. Portals are continually refreshed with new information.	GREEN
Encourage visitors to Sevenoaks District and attractions	Develop annual programme of campaigns including familiarisation visits for influencers group	Actively participate in campaigns to drive the visitor economy, most recently this includes Visit Kent's latest campaign, 'Its in our nature'. Influencer visits form part of the campaign with further trips in development. Promotional imagery of the district continues to feature in the arrival terminals at London Gatwick. Furthermore, printed materials provide enhanced promotion of	GREEN

		the district. This includes a revised Sevenoaks visitor leaflet and a Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership leaflet. In addition, a collaboration with Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme resulted in a Rail Trails pack which highlights walks along the Darent Valley.	
	Increase niche offerings for experiential and specific demographic requirements	Social media accounts highlight key audiences, which will inform marketing opportunities and target audiences. Recent Google Analytics stats suggested the American and Chinese markets were classed as two of our top three reviewers of the Visit Sevenoaks website.	AMBER
	Secure additional coach parking capacity	Challenging to find appropriate locations given geographical constraints. Continue to liaise with planning teams to identify potential locations which may arise as part of the Local plan process.	RED
	Develop the sports sector as a tool to drive promotion of the District, but also wellbeing	Economic Development comments provided for planning applications to improve sports facilities within the District e.g., Millwall Football Club. Regular engagement with key sports venues and attractions within the District such as Brands Hatch, London Golf Club. Engagement with a variety of businesses within the sports sector. Currently preparing a Sports and Leisure Strategy for District with consultants having been appointed.	GREEN
	Use innovative social media platforms	More Sevenoaks website, Facebook, Instagram, X (formally Twitter) and Linked In performing well. Visit Sevenoaks website and Instagram gaining following.	GREEN
Increase the Accommodation offer	Identify opportunity to develop 5 star / luxury resort of exhibition / conferencing facility	Feasibility studies are being progressed with the focus on implementation	GREEN
	Work with key partners and planning colleagues to increase/diversify the accommodation offer	Contribution to Local plan evidence base documents to present need for accommodation. Continued promotion of existing accommodation providers and opportunities for diversification of offer through UKSPF and REPF grant funding.	AMBER
Support the diversification of rural areas	Work through a new Rural Economy forum to share best practice in rural land use. Lobbying and securing access to funding through the West Kent Partnership	Rural forum has been established to support the West Kent Rural Grants Scheme which is funded through Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). A Rural Projects Officer, funded by the West Kent Partnership, has been appointed to administer the REPF.	GREEN

	Where possible support the provision of affordable housing in rural areas and last mile infrastructure projects	Continued close working with planning policy team to ensure that comments are included within evidence base and emerging Local Plan documents.	AMBER
	Promote the sustainable reuse of redundant farm buildings and facilities to support enterprise, economic activity and/or housing	West Kent Rural grant scheme (funded by REPF) provides funding to support businesses with Capital projects. Round one of funding has completed fully allocating funds with further funding to be available in next financial year. Approved applications include both extensions to premises as well as reuse of buildings.	GREEN
Biodiversity and sustainable land management	Work with rural landowners, nature conservation partners and planning policy on nature recovery and biodiversity initiatives	West Kent Rural grant scheme (funded by REPF) approved 4 applications in the first round providing nature recovered and biodiversity projects.	AMBER
Sevenoaks Trademark	Explore the creation of unique Sevenoaks District Trademark for local producer and crafts in collaboration with Made in Kent	The development of the More Sevenoaks place campaign provides an opportunity for use of this branding to create a Trademark if required.	AMBER
	Develop and promote the place campaign brand strategy and book	More Sevenoaks branding in place and regularly promoted through events, social media channels and businesses.	AMBER

FOCUS AREA 3 - TOWN CENTRES			
Aim	Activity	Key Achievements	Rating
Encourage Diversification of use in Town Centres	Work with Planning Policy Team in retaining employment space and supporting mixed uses where possible	Contributed to Local plan evidence base documents such as Economic Needs Study, Town Centre Strategy.	GREEN
	Introduce a new Town Centres Steering Group and arts/cultural forum sub-group to co-ordinate events, promotion and the Night Time economy	Liaise with existing Town Centre groups where available. UKSPF provides funding for cultural grants. Working with Town and Parish Councils to identify priorities for UKSPF funded improvements to public realm.	AMBER
Secure investment and regeneration in towns and large villages	Consider the Town Centre Strategy	Worked with Planning Policy Team on producing Town Centre Strategy - softer interventions suggested in this document were included in UKSPF investment plan wherever possible and delivery against this programme is ongoing providing investment.	AMBER

	Agree a pipeline of projects from the final strategy to direct and support future funding bids	Town Centre soft interventions helped to shape UKSPF investment plan priorities for delivery which is taking priority for initial delivery.	AMBER
Improve public realm to support multiple uses and better facilities	Support provision of electric vehicle charging points	Electric charging points are included in new Council developments. Working with Direct Services on an EVCP strategy for district and also providing additional EVCP in our public car parks.	GREEN
	Improve wayfinding and signage	Wayfinding schemes being considered by Town Centre organisations /Town and Parish Council's. In some areas UKSPF contributions are assisting with this work.	AMBER
	Support the Public Realm Commissioner to improve the public realm and promote the ethos of the Place Campaign	UKSPF funding provides a contribution to public realm commission, plus a capital funding to improve public realm in collaboration with Town and Parish Councils	AMBER
Encourage locals to shop locally	Movement Strategy	ED engagement with the published movement strategy and current consultations on walking and cycling improvements.	GREEN
	Use local campaigns	Place campaign includes information on travelling around the District in a sustainable way. The Visit Sevenoaks, More Sevenoaks website and business directory highlight key businesses available locally.	GREEN
	Redevelop 96 High Street Sevenoaks into a maker space/artisan/artist/farmers market hall	Proposals to develop this area are awaited.	AMBER

FOCUS AREA 4 - SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT			
Aim	Activity	Key Achievements	Rating
Supporting events and initiative to assist job seekers	Jobs and careers fairs	Regular programme of jobs fairs continues across West Kent. The West Kent Partnership has delivered an inclusive employment event along with the DWP and People+, at which employers were able to engage with a number of support options to enable them to employ people with disabilities.	GREEN
	Promoting apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience programmes	Promoting opportunities with key local businesses and helping to place students in work experience	AMBER

		placements within ED team and local businesses. Currently have an intern working with ED team as part of the Council's internship programme. Further activity under 2024/25 UKSPF people and skills programme.	
Supporting careers advice in schools	Continue to support the enterprise adviser programme through the TEP team	Member of the ED team is an Enterprise Advisor for local school. Continued engagement with the Careers hub team now running this.	AMBER
	Expand enterprise events for young people	ED team work experience and internship programme support.	AMBER
Provide local innovative skills programme	Delivering programme to help disadvantaged groups or those with protected characteristics into employment	UKSPF People and Skills funding available from financial year 2024/25. Procurement on support for employment to commence soon along with a West Kent project call around employability programmes.	BLUE
	Digital inclusiveness programme in conjunction with community wifi pilot	Engagement with KCC digital skills team. Funding available for digital skills project within the UKSPF programme for 2024/25.	BLUE
	Sector Skills programmes including retrofit boot camp and land based skills	UKSPF programmes include retrofit training and support programme with funding being available for this programme from financial year 2024/25.	BLUE
Improving the provision of HE/ FE in the District	Establish an HE/FE offer in the District	Increasing provision is challenging, particularly given the proximity of existing locations, combined with a change in focus towards T-levels and the unknown impact this will have on demand for progression routes. Whilst achievement of an FE / HE offer is unlikely to be delivered within the 5 year ED strategy period, alternative opportunities are actively under consideration and supported by the ED team.	RED

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE:

23 ACTIONS GREEN – 42%

24 ACTIONS AMBER – 44%

5 ACTIONS BLUE – 9%

3 ACTIONS RED – 5%