

(For Democratic Services use)

Decision Number: 20 (2023/24)

## Portfolio Holder Executive Decision Statement

### The Local Authority (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

**Subject: Land East of High Street - engagement plan**

Details of Decision taken: Approval to commence engagement and communication activity as part of plans by Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council to transform their assets to the east of the High Street in Sevenoaks town centre through a once-in-a-lifetime regeneration project.

#### Reason for Decision

Sevenoaks District Council and Kent Country Council are exploring how their property assets to the east of the High Street in Sevenoaks town centre, including a library, gallery and leisure centre, can help support a child and family-friendly, safe and sustainable thriving place for local businesses, shoppers, visitors, and residents both now and for the future.

An engagement plan is necessary to provide more information about the initial, early ideas, being developed by Sevenoaks District Council in partnership with Kent County Council.

The objective for this activity is to communicate the vision and initial concepts for changes to its facilities in the Sevenoaks town, the purpose of which is to encourage more people to visit and spend time in the town centre and the surrounding areas and to improve our public facilities.

The engagement plan sets out a series of events with key stakeholders and the wider public to gain insights and sentiment into how they use our assets and more specifically the early concepts.

There will be further opportunities for residents and stakeholders to engage and give their views on the project as it develops.

#### All Documents considered:

Land East of High Street: Engagement Plan

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**Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the Member when making the Decision:**

To choose not to engage with residents and stakeholders at an early stage of the project design.

**Financial implications:**

There are no financial implications arising from this Portfolio Holder decision to approve the engagement plan. A Kent-based strategic marketing and brand agency, has been appointed to support Sevenoaks District Council in this phase of the project, with budgets previously allocated for this purpose. Choosing not to follow the engagement plan would reduce the value achieved from the agency.

**Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement:**



No legal implications or risks arise from the proposal for an engagement plan. However, it should be noted that using existing insight and engaging with residents and stakeholders to understand what our communities need will shape the development and its implementation going forward. Further opportunities to engage will be embedded throughout the process. The overall proposals for our properties in this scheme will address potential future risks in relation to the maintenance of our assets and our ambitions to tackle the challenge of climate change.

**Equality Impacts** (Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty)

A place based engagement approach seeks to have a positive impact by broadening the opportunities for communities to be engaged in the development of individual schemes, such as land east of the High Street. Engagement events will be held in an accessible venue, with alternative online provision available for those unable to attend in-person. The engagement plan seeks to gain the views from across our communities, with specific focus groups with representative groups and activities to encourage people of all ages to contribute their views. Anonymous data about protected characteristics will be collected through the online engagement survey and will inform the final report and be assessed in making decisions on the scheme.

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Details of any conflicts of interest a) declared by any executive member who is consulted by the Decision Taker  N/A  b) and any details of dispensations granted by the Chief Executive in respect of any declared conflict  N/A	
Decision taken by:	Cllr Julia Thornton, Portfolio Holder for Improvement and Innovation
Signed by Portfolio Holder	
Date of Decision	08/04/2024
Record made by:	
Date of record:	10/04/2024