

Meeting of Council on 23 April 2024

Leader's Report on the work of the Cabinet since the last Council meeting

This report covers the period since the last Council meeting held on Tuesday 20 February.

Meetings attended by the Leader of the Council & Cabinet Members

- Kent County Leaders' Meeting on 21 February
- Visit to Dawn to Dawn Nursery, Swanley on 22 February
- Meeting of Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee on 22 February
- Member training – Urban Design on 26 February
- Meeting of Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee on 29 February
- Meeting of People & Places Advisory Committee on 5 March
- Kent County Leaders' Meeting on 6 March
- Sevenoaks District Business Board on 7 March
- LGA good governance and assurance webinar on 11 March
- Edenbridge Annual Town Meeting on 11 March
- West Kent Expo on 14 March
- Quercus 7 Trading & Guarantor Board on 14 March
- Meeting of Cabinet on 14 March
- Meeting with Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce on 15 March
- Kent & Medway Economic Partnership Meeting on 15 March
- Attendance at Scrutiny Committee on 19 March
- Meeting of Development & Conservation Advisory Committee on 26 March
- Southeastern Spring Stakeholder Forum on 5 April
- Meeting of Finance & Investment Advisory Committee on 9 April

Updates from Cabinet since the last meeting of Council

£600,000 secured for White Oak Leisure Centre

- Through a successful application to Phase 2 of the Government's Swimming Pool Support Fund, £612,950 has been secured to fund new solar panels at White Oak Leisure Centre in Swanley.

- When it was opened in 2022 White Oak leisure centre is one of the most environmentally-friendly, energy efficient centres in the region. The solar panels will further reduce energy use and running costs. Work on their installation is expected to start later this year.
- Securing this funding demonstrates further progress towards our commitment to tackle the challenge of climate change that we set out in our Council Plan and our new Climate Change Strategy.

Land East of Sevenoaks High Street

- A once in a generation opportunity exists to regenerate the land owned by the District Council and KCC, to the east of Sevenoaks High Street, around Buckhurst Lane and Suffolk Way.
- At these very early stages, an Engagement Plan has been agreed to reach out to stakeholders and residents asking for their views to help shape possible improvements to the area. This could include replacing the existing leisure centre with a new, energy efficient building, a new hotel and bringing the library, museum and art gallery and adult education services together under one roof, creating a more accessible learning hub.
- Other ideas include creating better pedestrian links through a new green corridor from the town centre to Knole Park and a providing a new vibrant market hall for local vendors.
- These early proposals also allow some land to be released for new homes, providing much needed affordable housing in the heart of the town, as well as market housing to help fund the leisure improvements.
- A series of meetings have been arranged during April to discuss these very early ideas with key stakeholders. There will also be two community events taking place at Sevenoaks Leisure Centre on Wednesday 24 April 2024 from 1.30pm to 8.30pm and Saturday 27 April 2024 from 10am to 3pm.
- An online event will also be held on Monday 29 April 2024 from 7pm. Information available at the events, and an online survey for the public to express their views and offer their own ideas, will be available online from Wednesday 24 April until midnight on Monday 6 May 2024.
- This is an early stage of community engagement and there will be several more opportunities for residents and businesses to have their say as the project develops.
- Progressing the proposals for land east of the High Street would directly align with promises made in the Council Plan and be in line with the priorities and commitments in the Communities Plan, the emerging Local Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan, the Economic Development Strategy, the Town Centre

Strategy and the draft Climate Change Strategy. Reports to Members, including the feedback from the early engagement will be reported through Finance & Investment, Improvement & Innovation and People & Places Advisory Committees, then Cabinet and Council.