

Appendix D

Phase 1: Sevenoaks Town - Engagement and Communications Plan People and Places: Regeneration and Protecting our Assets.

Background

The Council's emerging Local Plan (Plan 2040) and Town Centres Strategy (April 2022), alongside Sevenoaks Town's Neighbourhood Plan identified Sevenoaks Town as an area for opportunity in terms of improving connections to Knole; exploring the relocation of the market; revitalising the eastern part of the town centre; the Post Office and telephone exchange site; improving the station arrival; and curating a programme of events, alongside expansion of its cultural scene; including more things to do in the evening; widening the leisure offer; and providing new homes that support different income levels and life stages.

As part of an initial fact-finding exercise, the Council identified a number of assets under its ownership in Sevenoaks Town, which alongside assets put forward by Kent County Council (KCC) could potentially contribute to a shared regeneration vision and provide a collaborative delivery framework for protecting the Council's and partners assets.

Various feasibility work and other due diligence studies have been undertaken to explore potential redevelopment options for the site.

Using the place-based approach to engagement outlined, the Council and its partners will ensure the community and stakeholders have been part of the conversations to consider, protect and enhance our assets as part of the initial regeneration concept to promote the town centre with great stories to tell.

Communications and engagement plan

Sevenoaks District Council and Kent Country Council are exploring how their property assets in Sevenoaks Town centre, including a library, museum and 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.

We have launched a communications and engagement plan to provide more information about the concept regeneration vision and design being developed by Sevenoaks District Council in partnership with Kent County Council.

Our proposals are being brought forward to benefit you – someone who lives, works or plays in Sevenoaks Town. That’s why it’s important to us that we hear your views. What do you think of our plans? How can we make them even better? Please get involved and let us know your thoughts today!

Pillory Barn, a Kent-based strategic marketing and brand agency, has been appointed to support Sevenoaks District Council in this phase of the town centre regeneration.

The objective for this activity is to communicate Sevenoaks District Council’s vision and the early concepts for changes to its facilities in the town centre, the purpose of which is to encourage more people to visit and spend time in the town centre and the surrounding areas.

The engagement and communications 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, which focus on two key areas:

- People: Improved access to jobs and business opportunities and a strong and healthy community.
- Place: Better caring for the place and delivering improved public realm.

Engagement and key milestones

Stakeholder/Activity	Date
Strategic Management Team	26 th March 2024
Ward Member Briefings	8th April 2024
Staff Briefings - SDC, KCC	w/c 8 th April 2024
Press Release (Project Overview, Invitations to public engagement events and focus groups). 1. All Councillors 2. Leader of KCC 3. Laura Trott (MP) 4. Sevenoaks Town Council 5. Local partners: West Kent Housing, Kent Police, West Kent Health and Care Partnership 6. General Press (from Pillory Barn/SDC Communications Team)	From 9 th April 2024

Everyone Active Staff (Leisure Centre)	10th April 2024
Briefings	
- Laura Trott MP	18 th April 2024
- Public Realm Commissioner	19 th April 2024
- National Trust	19 th April 2024
- Lord Sackville Knole Estate	22 nd April 2024
Focus Groups (with Pillory Barn)	
- Sevenoaks Town Council	15 th April 2024
- Access Group	18 th April 2024
- Buckhurst residents	22 nd April 2024
- Commercial tenants	22 nd April 2024
- Chamber of Commerce Members	23 rd April /1 st May 2024
- Sevenoaks Mums	26 th April 2024
- Sevenoaks Women's Forum	26 th April 2024
Public Engagement Events	24 th and 27 th April 2024
Online engagement website survey open (including online evening meeting on 29 th April 2024)	24 th April to 6 th May 2024
Engagement Findings - Summary Key Headline Responses	10 th May 2024

The location for the engagement events was within Sevenoaks Leisure Centre to encourage a varied age range of respondents.

The events included information boards outlining the concepts and there were Officers from both SDC and KCC on hand to answer questions throughout the day, although with the Design and Engagement Consultants.

There was also the opportunity for people to interact with the development by writing or drawing those areas that they would like to see included in the new facilities being proposed.

We included facilitated sessions with young people and children in attendance including:

- Example venue maps where people could create their vision for the facilities including cut-outs that they could stick to a venue outline.
- Drawing and colouring examples for younger children to feel part of the process and to encourage parents to stay and take part in the public engagement events.

We also encouraged local schools to take part and to bring children along to provide their views, after all, this is their future town centre.

Providing feedback

Feedback was provided through two channels.

- **On the day** we facilitated feedback through 'one liner's that people could note down throughout the day and stick to a feedback board. Pillory Barn (the Engagement Consultants) collated this feedback throughout the day.
- **Online engagement** was collated through a bespoke digital survey based around the project concepts which launched on 24th April 2024 and ran until midnight on the 6th May 2024.

Survey questions and interactive responses were added to the engagement boards.

The survey questions are outlined below.

Have your say

Complete our online survey to let us know your thoughts and provide any further suggestions.

WHAT WE PROPOSE

We've produced some information to explain our thinking to date and present some early concepts. Please review these by clicking the download button below and then have your say by completing the survey on this page.

Your feedback is invaluable as we consider how we can deliver an exciting new chapter for Sevenoaks town centre.

The survey will remain open until midnight on Monday, 6 May 2024.

Please share your views on our early ideas to improve the land to the east of Sevenoaks High Street.

This short survey should take no more than 10 minutes.

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Question 1

Please let us know your postcode so that we know if you live locally. This will not be used for marketing purposes.

Question 2

How often, on average, do you visit the town centre?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly

- Less than once a month

Question 3

Currently, what aspects of Sevenoaks town centre do you find most appealing?

Please select your top five options.

- Choice of shops
- Places to eat and drink
- Selection of services (for example hair dressers, travel agents, opticians etc.)
- Nearby open spaces (such as Knole Park)
- Leisure facilities
- Library, museum, art gallery and cultural facilities
- Parking availability
- Public transport
- Market stalls
- Other
[Free text box]

Question 4

How do you most commonly travel to Sevenoaks town centre?

- Car
- Motorbike
- Walk
- Train
- Bus
- Cycle
- Taxi
- Other
[Free text box]

Question 5

Do you use the existing Sevenoaks Leisure Centre?

Yes [Go to Q6]

No

If your response is no please tell us why? [Go to Q8]

Question 6

How often do you use Sevenoaks Leisure Centre?

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Less than once a month

Question 7

What facilities do you currently use at Sevenoaks Leisure Centre?

Select all that apply.

- Leisure pool
- Teaching pool
- Gym
- Sports courts
- Children's play area
- Café
- Spectator area
- Group exercise studio
- Function room
- Other (please state)
[Free text box]

Question 8

If a new leisure centre was provided in Sevenoaks town, please tell us what facilities would be most important to you.

Please select your top five options.

- Leisure pool
- Teaching pool
- Modern gym
- Sports courts
- Children's play area
- Spectator area
- Day spa facilities (sauna, steam, plunge pool, Jacuzzi) and treatments
- Group exercise studio
- Climbing wall
- Flexible space for events
- Other
[free text box]

Question 9

Do you feel that combining the adult education centre (currently in Bradbourne Road) with a library in a new, energy efficient building with multi-purpose rooms, close to the High Street, would benefit users?

Yes

No

Don't know

Question 10

Please tell us which of the following you would use in a new library, museum, gallery and education space?

Select your top five options.

- Adult education
- Traditional library facilities
- Exhibition and gallery space
- Museum
- Children's reading space

- Study spaces
- Space for internet access/computer use
- Communal seating space
- Space for charities and local groups to hold sessions
- Printers and copying facilities (or similar)

Question 11

We are proposing to build a new Market Hall in the former M&Co shop in the High Street (currently Hospice in the Weald). What amenities and features would you use in a new Market Hall?

Tick all that apply

- Live music
 - Cooking demonstrations
 - Local produce
 - Flexible workspace
 - Space for artists and cultural activities
 - Wine tasting
 - Food festivals
 - Cultural festivals
 - Evening dining/entertainment
 - Street food stands
 - A walk through from the High Street to Knole Park
 - Loyalty scheme
 - Family friendly areas
 - Toilets and changing facilities
 - Other
- [Free text box]

Question 12

Sevenoaks needs a range of housing to ensure people can afford to live and bring up their families in the town.

What type of housing would you like to see most of as part of this development?
Select the top three that you believe are important and should be considered.

- Senior living
- Student accommodation
- Family homes
- Assisted living

- Shared ownership
- Market rent
- Private sales
- Affordable homes to rent

Question 13

Protecting our environment and tackling the challenge of climate change is important as we develop our plans.

What environmental features should the development contain?

Select your top five options.

- Electric vehicle charging points
 - Smart technology for energy monitoring
 - Smart technology for automated lighting
 - Smart technology for temperature control
 - Eco-friendly building materials
 - Solar panels
 - Rainwater harvesting
 - Air source heat pumps
 - Other
- [Free text box]

Question 14

We would like to create better links from the town centre to Knole Park. What features would you like to see included in a new green corridor from the High Street?

Please select your top five options.

- Dedicated to biodiversity
- Public art
- Water features
- Renewable energy provision e.g. solar panels
- Informal seating spaces
- Dedicated spaces for market stalls
- Children's play area
- Dedicated dog zone
- Trim trails
- Permeable pavements
- Cycle path

- Tree and flower planting and green landscaping

Question 15

Do you feel that a new quality hotel would support existing businesses by increasing visitor numbers and spending in the town?

Yes
No
Don't know

Question 16

Is it important to you that bus stops are retained in the centre of Sevenoaks town?

Yes
No
Not sure

Question 17

From the early information that is available, are you generally supportive of our proposals to redevelop the land east of the High Street?

Yes
No
Not sure

Questions 18

Finally, is there anything else you'd like to say about our early ideas?
[Free text box – limit to 1,000 characters]

Question 19

Tell us about yourself. This information will not be used for marketing purposes. We are not asking for your name and any information you provide will be treated in accordance with our [Privacy Policy](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/privacy) (link to www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/privacy)

Your gender
Your age
Do you have a disability?
Your ethnicity

Thank you for completing our survey
[Return consultees to the homepage of the website.]