

Sevenoaks Town Council's Strategy 2015 - 2019

1. The aim of the Council *is* to offer community leadership to ensure Sevenoaks develops into the best market town in Kent, the objective will be realised in two ways. First, by engagement in local initiatives and forming relationships with other stakeholders. Secondly, by promoting the well-being of residents of the town through support for leisure, sporting and cultural activities, by improving the environment and infrastructure of the town and by fostering its commercial prosperity.
2. To achieve these objectives the Council will each year give priority to:
 - i) New leisure and sporting facilities or the expansion of existing facilities including the Stag Community Arts Centre and those items identified in its Community Investment Plan.
 - ii) Acquiring additional green spaces
 - iii) Increasing tourism, supporting live cultural events and initiatives to promote commercial activity including the Sevenoaks Town Partnership's initiative to have a monthly calendar of events in the town.
 - iv) Grant aiding voluntary organisations undertaking community activities especially those targeted at marginalised groups
 - v) Actively promoting environmental friendly procedures for all town council facilities and functions, subject to available resources and quality.
 - vi) Conserve and enhance the aesthetics of the town.
 - vii) Encourage and promote economic growth including the regeneration of the Bat & Ball area, the development of the Bat & Ball Centre and refurbishment of the Bat & Ball Station building.
 - viii) Provide facilities for marginalised groups.
 - ix) Working with Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council and neighbouring parishes for assessing impact and coordinating of town facilities.

- x) Localising local budgets – (Highways etc). investigating new opportunities and initiatives for undertaking operational matters under service level agreements locally to provide enhanced delivery.

3. Achieving our strategic aims

- i) Leisure and sporting activities – The Council will provide additional or improved facilities for its existing sports and recreation grounds and continue its long term commitment to the provision of the Stag Community Arts Centre. It will also consider assuming responsibility for existing grounds from the District and County Councils.
- ii) Open Spaces – The Council will endeavour to purchase land within the town boundary or land adjacent or near to the boundary which might be used to promote its objectives, including the prevention of unwanted development and to improve public accessibility to Council owned land, creating partnership as appropriate.
- iii) Commercial Development, Tourism and Cultural events – the Council will continue its support for cultural events and other initiatives which promote community and commercial activities enhancing the image of the town *in particular* with the Stag Community Arts Centre.
- iv) Voluntary Activities – the Council where appropriate will continue to support and provide grants for voluntary organisations which meet its strategic objectives.
- v) Neighbourhood Plan – the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan will enable the strategies priorities to be met.
- vi) Community – making Sevenoaks a clean and safe community to live and visit, addressing social cohesion and anti-social behaviour. The Council will also support measures which combat anti-social behaviour.

4. Resources

To achieve these ambitious aims the Council requires a financial strategy to raise additional income and capital. This strategy would combine the following elements, rather than treat the precept as a first recourse to funding:-

- i) Ensuring rents, fees and charges within the limits set by the market in line with trends, and to meet core objectives.
- ii) Using grants, and other resources in most cases for pump priming
- iii) Contracting out facilities and services where appropriate
- iv) Consider disposing of assets where appropriate which are not relevant to strategic objectives.
- v) Borrowing for major capital projects or purchases.
- vi) Applying where appropriate for external funding to underwrite town projects.
- vii) Consider entering into agency agreements to carry out contracts on behalf of other organisations for the benefit of the town – either through new initiatives, an improved service and, or cost saving.