

Sevenoaks Town Council's Strategy 2024 - 2027

- 1. The aim of the Council is to offer community leadership to ensure Sevenoaks develops into one of the best market towns in Kent to live, visit and do business. The objective will be realised in two ways: firstly, engaging 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. Priorities

To achieve these objectives the Council will give priority to:

- i) Recognising the Government and KCC declarations for aiming for Zero Carbon.
- ii) Consideration of an Environmental Committee (or add to Terms of Reference for Committee) to create an Action Plan to review:
 - Reducing cars/traffic particularly in relation to school traffic.
 - Sevenoaks Town Council's (STC) new buildings to be as sustainable and eco-friendly as possible. Existing buildings to be improved to be more sustainable with reduced carbon footprint where practicable.
 - Planting of more trees, where possible fruit and nut trees.
 - Continuing to promote Refill Scheme and Sevenoaks Plastic Free Pledge.
 - Installing of cycle racks/planters.
 - Installing of drinking fountains, where possible, at STC sites.
 - Increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - NDP Transport Strategy recommendations including 20 mph, improved pedestrian facilities in town centre and shared space.
 - Linking STC open spaces together with 'green routes'.
 - Encouraging increased use of public transport – buses and trains – by having improved facilities, including live running information.
 - Installing electric car charging points at STC sites.
 - Considering enabling community initiatives for sustainable living e.g. Toy Library, Zero Waste Shop, Community Orchards, Community Cycle Workshops, Repair Café, promotion of alternative resources e.g. nappies.
- iii) Integrating the above within the vision and throughout the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and within the Town Council's general operation.

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- iv) Working with Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council and neighbouring parishes in order to assess impact and coordinate town facilities.
- v) New leisure and sporting facilities or the expansion of existing facilities including the Stag Community Arts Centre, those items identified in its Community Investment Plan and its NDP.
- vi) Acquiring additional green spaces.
- vii) Increasing tourism, supporting live cultural events and initiatives to promote commercial activity including the Sevenoaks Town Team's initiative to have a monthly calendar of events in the town and the proposed cultural quarter.
- viii) Grant-aiding voluntary organisations undertaking community activities, especially those targeted at marginalised groups.
- ix) Actively promoting environmentally friendly procedures for all Town Council facilities and functions, subject to available resources and quality.
- x) Conserving and enhancing the aesthetics of the town.
- xi) Encouraging and promoting economic growth including the regeneration of the Bat & Ball area and the development of the Bat & Ball Centre, following on from the refurbishment of the Bat & Ball Station building.
- xii) Providing facilities for marginalised groups.
- xiii) 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 to 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 partnerships as appropriate.

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- 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 with the Stag Community Arts Centre and Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership.
- iv) Voluntary Activities – the Council, where appropriate, will continue to support and provide grants for voluntary organisations, which meet its strategic objectives.
- v) Neighbourhood Development Plan – progressing the NDP to referendum will enable the strategic 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 are within limits set by the market, in line with trends, and to meet core objectives.
- ii) Using grants and other resources to support community organisations, for pump-priming, in most cases.
- iii) Contracting out facilities and services, where appropriate.
- iv) Considering the disposal 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.