



# Sevenoaks District **Economic Development Strategy** 2022-2027



## Foreword

With the slow recovery from the pandemic, the current geopolitical and global economic challenges and adjusting to post Brexit conditions, re-building our local economy in a way that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient has never been more important.

The challenges of 2020/21 have set the scene for new ways of thinking, a new approach to working patterns and the growing imperative of climate change amelioration. We have a chance to reappraise the economic priorities for Sevenoaks District and refresh our Economic Strategy. This is an opportunity for the District to 'stand out' and to set the tone for the rest of Kent and the wider South East, whilst continuing to emphasise the three promises made in the Council's Plan.

1. We will build on the District's thriving economy through the regeneration of our market towns, and by enhancing both the visitor and rural economies.
2. We will protect the economy of the District by preserving and making better use of existing employment sites and by redeveloping previously used land.
3. We will support new and existing businesses through our "Team around the Business" approach, combining excellent customer service and supporting local employers to promote mental and physical well-being at work.

## Our vision

Our vision is for Sevenoaks District to have a dynamic growing and inclusive economy for our businesses, communities and visitors that is kind to the environment, contributes to the health and well-being of all our residents and supports our commitment to working towards achieving Net Zero carbon emissions by the Council by 2030.

## The strategic context

A number of key strategic considerations are provided to inform our priorities and are material considerations since the last Economic Strategy. These include:

- Current geopolitical and economic challenges, the latter arising from high inflation rates, the cost of doing business, tight labour markets and the longer term impact and opportunities arising from Brexit
- The need to align this Strategy very closely with the re-positioning of the West Kent Partnership and its refreshed priorities, the Kent and Medway Economic Renewal and Resilience Plan and our UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan to maximise their impact.
- The recent Case for West Kent refresh identified that whilst the area is the largest contributor to total Gross Value Added ('GVA') and GVA per job within the Kent context, there is potential for further economic growth to improve the District's ranking against comparator locations equidistant to London. <sup>①</sup>
- A public sector bidding environment that remains very competitive particularly for a District like Sevenoaks which is perceived as affluent and has had to self-finance past projects. Working closely with the West Kent Partnership, The District needs to strengthen its pipeline of projects and collaborate with partners with complementary bidding skills and experience to provide a greater probability of future success.
- The opportunities arising from new hybrid working practices and the potential to capture changing spending patterns, new investment and business start ups.
- Continuing to support the recovery of all our high streets and those sectors particularly badly hit because of the pandemic.
- Transitioning to a Net Zero carbon economy capitalising on the opportunities to develop and harness new skills and technologies and enhance our natural environment, but also recognising that this transition needs to be adequately financed.
- The need to support our rural economy as it goes through a period of change, in particular with the switch away from the Direct Payment System of subsidies, changes in the labour market and the need to remain relevant and competitive in a global market.
- Adopting a hyperlocal approach to the Strategy to ensure that support is targeted to meet the specific needs of our communities given the increasing challenges of inflation and the current cost of living crisis, particularly through employment and skills initiatives.

*Footnote - \* Gross Value Added ('GVA') measures the contribution made to the economy by an individual producer, industry, sector or region. The figure is used in the calculation of Gross Domestic Product ('GDP'). The figure is a quantitative assessment of the value of goods and services minus the costs of inputs and materials in the production process. GVA per job is a measure of productivity in the economy (GVA/Number of economically active individuals)*

<sup>①</sup> Associates, S. H. (June 2022). *The Case for West Kent - Final Report Update.*

## Economic strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats

The strategy is also informed through assessing key opportunities and challenges as outlined in the table below.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Strong geographical location – proximity to London and to international market gateways	Limited availability of employment use land and buildings for attracting inward investment. Retaining growing businesses and the loss of existing provision to permitted development rights
Highly attractive natural environment	Rural communities have limited public transport links. There are also poor public transport links between centres of education and visitor attractions to support employment
Highly skilled population and labour force. High GVA and GVA per job in the economy	Variable broadband/full fibre coverage and mobile telephony, particularly in rural areas. .
Strong business community with historically good survival rates and a high proportion of enterprises in the knowledge economy	Lack of Higher Education provision ('HE') in the District
An ambitious and financially resilient local authority	House price affordability

Opportunities	Threats
Post COVID working patterns have accelerated new ways of working. This enhances opportunities for flexible working hubs in both urban and rural areas and in capturing new spending patterns in our town centres	Retention of young workers and provision of adequate local job opportunities and the right 'soft' and technical skills that employers need
Interventions to grow those sectors, such as construction, land based industries and creative industries that through further analysis provide the greatest impact on local job creation and economic growth	Although the District has fared better than other locations, a decline in the retail sector through further migration to on line channels or consolidation of national brands
To improve productivity in SMEs through increased take up of available business support, access to finance and the growth of international trade.	Access to Government and grant funding in a highly competitive environment
To gain a reputation as a leading local authority for sustainable best practice and adoption of (new) green technologies	Changes in rural employment brought about by technology, new funding regimes and skills shortages including seasonal workers
To support the development of resilient town centres through our Town Centre Strategy with more diverse uses and an experiential offer including the night time economy	Continued pressure on supply chains, cost and inflationary pressures

To capitalise on our Movement Strategy to encourage sustainable travel including extending cycling infrastructure and walking routes	Community complacency or a preservationist approach seeking to maintain status quo.
To strengthen strategic partnerships and secure new ones such as with HE institutions	Slower than expected recovery and continued uncertainty created by the pandemic
Sevenoaks District has a vibrant mix of sports clubs, training facilities and high profile sports professionals. This sector has very strong potential to create new jobs, develop a diverse set of skills and bring health and well-being benefits	Continued high inflation and escalating costs of doing business leading to more insolvencies and reduced investment and growth



## Strategic priorities

The refreshed Economic Development Strategy has five key strategic priorities

Priorities	Objectives
Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To compete in a changing global economy seizing on the opportunities through technological change and the transition to Net Zero and the green economy</li> <li>■ Secure health and well-being for residents</li> <li>■ Enhance the ecological health of our natural environment</li> <li>■ Support the Council’s Net Zero Delivery Plan</li> <li>■ Embrace the 15-minute community concept</li> </ul>

Skills resilience and job opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To deliver a skilled workforce that drives productivity gains and considers the key drivers identified in the Kent and Medway Workforce Skills Evidence Base: digitisation, decarbonisation, demographic change and changes in working practices. ②</li> <li>■ To provide residents with lifetime learning opportunities</li> <li>■ To help resolve a tight labour market by ensuring we help promote vacancies across the District</li> <li>■ To build a vibrant labour market with the right technical and soft skills that employers need</li> <li>■ To support equality of opportunity and a levelling up of economic prosperity right across the District</li> </ul>
Business Resilience and Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To prioritise business support including innovation, scale up support, export development and improved access to finance with a particular focus on the rural economy</li> <li>■ Prioritise inward investment and promotion of the District as a great location to start a business</li> <li>■ Retain and expand employment land where possible in alignment with the emerging Local Plan and Economic Needs Study and promote commercial spaces that meet the needs of local business.</li> </ul>
Infrastructure First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To transform local infrastructure including full fibre investment and improved 4G coverage and 5G roll out</li> <li>■ Support sustainable travel through our Movement Strategy and facilitate new ways of working</li> <li>■ To support initiatives that improve infrastructure links and public transport options in both urban and rural areas</li> </ul>
West Kent Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To reposition the partnership with a focus on increasing the amount of external funding secured, sectoral development and local skills projects</li> <li>■ To develop the West Kent brand through increased business communications, sharing success stories, participating in business awards and an annual business summit</li> <li>■ Supporting diversification and resilience in the rural economy through a new Rural Economy Forum</li> </ul>

Footnote – A 15 minute neighbourhood involves a menu of policy actions that provides residents access to most if not all their needs within a short walk or bike ride from the home

② Steve Matthews, D. J. (2021). *The Kent and Medway Workforce Skills Evidence Base 2021*.

To deliver the strategic priorities, we have developed four areas of focus that will frame the Strategy's delivery and there will be an overarching framework of promotion relevant to all focus areas through the launch of the Sevenoaks District Place Campaign.

The Place Campaign has four key pillars focussed on 'Live, Work, Invest and Visit'. The campaign proposals have been underpinned by a resident survey that resulted in the development of brand values focussed on the themes 'Historic, Entrepreneurial, Connected, Vibrant and Beautiful'. We will use the Place Campaign resources including the creation of a Place Portal and the Visit Sevenoaks website and we will use social media to promote our visitor economy, our key centres and as a key asset in our inward investment proposition. We want to reach not only our local and sub-regional audience but also London and international markets.



## Focus area 1: Business and Enterprise Key Facts

### Supporting and promoting business

- GVA in Sevenoaks District was £4066 million in 2019 which is the 3rd highest in Kent ③
- GVA per job of £68.183 which is the highest in Kent ③
- The total of 6610 VAT registered businesses, of which over 90% are micro-businesses ④
- 45% of enterprises are within the professional, scientific and technical, Construction and Information and Communications sectors ⑤
- Sectors that are predicted to grow include construction, financial and business services and accommodation and food ⑥

③ - ⑤ Office for National Statistics – Presented by Kent County Council

⑥ Kent and Medway Workforce Skills Evidence Base 2021 – S Matthews, Dr J Pratt, Ross Gill Kent Analytics

- Sevenoaks District has a diverse business community and has traditionally been a good location to start a business
- Higher than Kent average business start-up and survival rates, although most recent data (2019) reveals a slowing of the birth of new enterprises, but in general survival rates have been better than Kent average ③
- The District has one of the highest proportion of businesses in the knowledge economy and those defined as being 'high growth' ⑦

Maintaining Sevenoaks District position relative to other areas and extending opportunities is a key to future economic prosperity

- Data from The Case for West Kent (2022) suggests that local enterprises are not connecting with business support organisations or funding opportunities at the same level as other local authority areas.
- To deliver economic growth it is key to establish a much more comprehensive understanding of the diversity of our local business base. It is essential that we provide the right level of business support and networking opportunities through working with key partners with a focus on building a network of business hubs across the West Kent area with integral business support

We will improve communication with businesses through regular updates and signposting with a particular focus on and celebrating business successes to raise the profile of Sevenoaks District as a first class business investment location.

⑦ *Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) Presented by Kent County Council*

## Inward investment

The Council will continue to work closely with Locate in Kent and with our neighbouring Districts / Boroughs on inward investment enquiries and new expansions and will seek to help facilitate the delivery of new commercial and industrial floor space in line with the emerging Local plan. We will also seek to facilitate a soft landing team to provide targeted commercial property, business start-up and HR advice for those businesses looking to locate here.





## Net Zero and the Green economy

Mitigation for climate change and the growing importance of the transition to a Net Zero circular economy could provide the District with significant opportunities, such as

- The Council sees itself in a leadership role for this agenda by installing electric charging points in its car parks, installing solar power compacting bins and encouraging local communities to engage with nature and appreciate the importance of biodiversity.
- We also have an important role through our skills networks to provide pathways to provide upskilling and employment opportunities in areas like retrofitting, land based industries and ecological and other environmental services.
- We are keen that local businesses benefit from the sharing of best practice and advice available from the Low Carbon Kent Network, the Governments SME Climate Hub and the Low Carbon across the South East Scheme (LoCase). An important focus will be on helping businesses to play their part in reducing emissions from commercial operations and partnering with them as part of our Movement Strategy as they develop travel plans for their employees that emphasizes utilising sustainable transport

We are also keen to explore the use of public and privately owned business assets and land to support renewable energy initiatives such as solar and work with partners such as NFU Energy providing energy audits and an opportunity to use rural infrastructure for micro power generation.

## Digital Connectivity

Another important priority will be to facilitate investment in full fibre broadband and mobile telephony both in urban and rural locations. We will continue to work with colleagues at Kent County Council, the private sector and communities to identify areas that need more investment or an upgrade in broadband to future proof and enable economic activity.



## Focus area 2: Visitor Economy and Rural Economy

### Rural Economy

- Sevenoaks District is a predominantly rural district with 93% green belt and 60% Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) being part of both High Weald, and Kent Downs AONB.
- The rural economy is a significant contributor to the local economy, but has been adversely affected by recent events. DEFRA reports a 10% decline in national farm incomes between 2019 and 2020 and this is expected to be even greater in 2020/21.
- The value of crop output in the West Kent area decreased from £90.4m (2019) to £88.8m (2020), with a similar decrease in output from livestock ⑧

Rural enterprises have also faced significant disruption from the pandemic and from leaving the EU, including rising input costs, ongoing labour challenges as well as logistics and transport difficulties. Farmers also have to manage the volatility faced year on year due to climate unpredictability. Supporting the development of farming clusters, encouraging best use of funding available for rural areas and working in partnership to support farmers will be an important priority for us.

Diversification of rural activities with new revenue streams will be key to the success of rural areas, supported by improved transport infrastructure and the availability of affordable housing. We will support this sector directly through our interventions in the visitor economy, the promotion of local producers working with key partners such as Produced in Kent, and through our Place Campaign, the Visit Sevenoaks website and through local markets.

⑧ Quoted from Kent On-line 31/12/2021 – DEFRA Report

### Visitor Economy

- The visitor economy supports 5500 jobs in the District (2020) ⑨
- The sector was valued in 2019 at £265 million per annum with a total of 465 active enterprises ⑨
- The District has a number of major attractions including historic houses, castles and gardens, together with the variety of unique smaller independent attractions and experiential opportunities which provide a strong basis for future growth in visitor numbers.

Success in the future will depend on developing a more diverse and niche tourism offer in response to the growth of the staycation market and making the most of the District's natural environment and 'telling stories' that engage our audience. The added benefits to health and wellbeing through the rural nature of the District will be particularly important in a post pandemic world.

Our priorities will be delivered collaboratively through our Visitor Economy Forum with a focus on a number of key areas such as improving 'first' and 'last' mile infrastructure encouraging sustainable travel including cycling and improved wayfinding. We will capitalise on wider initiatives and partnerships such as the Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership ('DVCRP'), Visit Kent's Interreg Experience Programme and the Gateway Gatwick Network.

We will work with the sector locally to improve the quality of visitor information, building a reputation as a leading centre for a sustainable and accessible tourism where increasing visitor numbers do not have a detrimental impact on the environment or emissions and to increase the accommodation provision. We will also deliver itineraries and visitor products including eco-tourism, heritage, cultural and food and drink trails and walking holidays including 'pilgrimage tourism' will be an important focus. An influencer's familiarisation programme to highlight Sevenoaks District to include travel agents, journalists and trade bodies with a better integration and promotion of lesser-known attractions/events with our 'national/international' assets.

Cultural development will also be a key objective through the creation of an arts and cultural forum in collaboration with existing groups to encourage better planning and co-ordination of events and activities raising the profile of the District. The District also has very strong assets in the sports sector, whether local clubs, training facilities or the presence of high profile sports professionals that should be further capitalized on.

⑨ ONS Presented by Kent County Council



### Focus area 3: Town Centres

■ The Council has a number of key centres in particular the mains ones of Sevenoaks, Swanley, Edenbridge, Westerham and New Ash Green

The Council has published a new Town Centre Strategy to look at the key centres above and identify bespoke public realm and wider regeneration initiatives. This will provide resilience and capitalise on new trends in the current make up of high streets and neighbourhood shopping centres and improve connectivity with local communities.

There have been significant changes to the shopping habits within the UK that have been confounded by the pandemic. In 2010, internet sales were £58bn and have now climbed to £84bn, an increase of 45%. The total share of internet sales is now 27% of total retail sales. Another important development is that major retailers are reviewing the format of their real estate requirements, with many national brands looking to rationalise in larger regional centres and out-of-town locations. ⑩

A combination of new planning rules concerning permitted development rights and the new Use Class 'E' Order, will provide new opportunities (but in some cases also threats) to the future high street. To thrive, centres will need to combine retail with hospitality, leisure, healthcare and other experiential uses through cultural anchors (15% of businesses in the District's high streets are in creative sectors). (Source SELEP Creative High Streets report)

We will work closely with Planning colleagues on supporting positive investment into key centres and to agree a model of how such centres are managed in a collaborative way with

town and parish councils, maximising the use of public spaces and promoting a diverse events programme to drive footfall and dwell time, building on projects implemented as part of the Welcome Back Fund.

<sup>10</sup> *Avison Young Town Centre Study Baseline Report 2021*

## Focus area 4: Skills and Employment

Recent events have highlighted how quickly the landscape around skills can change. At the beginning of 2020, Sevenoaks District and the West Kent area in general had high levels of employment and relied heavily on migrant labour in many sectors. Contrast this now with a chronic shortage of labour and skills in hospitality, retail, care and other sectors, but equally there are significant opportunities in the emerging green economy such as in retrofitting and sustainable construction. <sup>11</sup>

There are a number of national, regional and county initiatives ongoing to deliver on the skills agenda. In particular, the Government's Plan for Jobs and the Local Skills Improvement Plan trailblazer in Kent and Medway should provide more employer led and integrated skills provision. The Kent and Medway Employment Taskforce is proactive and responsive to skills needs.

The challenge in Sevenoaks District, and across West Kent, is to ensure that our local population and businesses benefit from these initiatives and that we tailor support to fit local need. This is particularly important for those wards in our District that have unemployment levels above the Kent average.

The West Kent Skills group provides this local focus and will be one mechanism through which West Kent and Sevenoaks can ensure that challenges and opportunities are identified and actioned. Building on existing strong partnerships with local organisations such as the Jobcentre and West Kent Extra and creating new partnerships will be a key element of delivering on our skills ambitions for the District.

There is also the challenge to build on past successes and identify future projects to improve skills levels across a range of demographic groups and to focus this development on the current and future needs of our businesses. Two West Kent Skills programmes – The West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network and Kickstart West Kent - are coming to the end of their life, both of which have been managed and run through Sevenoaks District Council. Ensuring that legacy projects funded by the UKSPF as highlighted in the Delivery Plan are delivered particularly in respect of supporting people into employment pathways and enhancing their life skills is a top priority moving forward. The District also strong ambitions to enhance local education provision by supporting the location of a Further or Higher Education Campus.

<sup>11</sup> *The Local Government Association Equity Consulting Report estimates that the sector could deliver 30,000 jobs in Kent and Medway*

## Working in partnership

We cannot deliver this Strategy alone. Much of this will be delivered in collaboration with partners and stakeholders and the importance of the West Kent Partnership as highlighted earlier is a strategic priority. Key partners that will support us meet the need of the local economy are wide ranging and include:

- Public bodies such as Kent County Council, neighbouring local authorities and town and parish councils have the ability to work together with Government agencies to unlock national and local funding support to deliver and facilitate positive change for local communities and the local economy
- Business partnerships and business support groups include Sevenoaks District Chamber of

Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses ('FSB'), the Institute of Directors ('IOD'), the Growth Hub network, Locate in Kent and Visit Kent

- Other important groups including a number of social enterprises and community hubs that provide an important central point of contact into grass root networks



## Delivery Plan

### Focus area 1: Business and Enterprise

Aim	Activity	KPI/measures	Partners for all aims
<p><b>Improve awareness and visibility of businesses through business communications strategy at West Kent level</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Development of a business database/directory</li> <li>■ Annual West Kent Business Summit</li> <li>■ Business awards at West Kent level</li> <li>■ Annual Economic Report</li> <li>■ Place Campaign web portal</li> <li>■ Establish a Sevenoaks District brand/trademark</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Successful business summit</li> <li>■ Publication of the annual Economic Report</li> <li>■ Participation in annual business awards event</li> <li>■ Business success stories case studies</li> <li>■ Analytics on SDC business webpages</li> <li>■ Develop an online portal</li> <li>■ Develop and publish a Brandbook for the District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ West Kent Partnership</li> <li>■ Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>■ Growth Hub</li> <li>■ Department of International Trade/Locate in Kent</li> <li>■ Federation of Small Businesses</li> <li>■ Kent CC Digital Team</li> <li>■ Kent Film Office</li> <li>■ Low Carbon Kent</li> </ul>

<p><b>Encourage businesses to locate within the District and West Kent</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop Inward investment proposition collateral</li> <li>■ Launch West Kent Inward Investment Strategy including attendance at trade and investment events, meeting inward delegations and promotion in the business press</li> <li>■ Create 'soft landing team' for new companies locating in the District/ West Kent</li> <li>■ Identify opportunities on the place portal as part of the Place Campaign.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New jobs created and retained</li> <li>■ Number of promotional events attended</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Locate in Kent</li> <li>■ Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sectoral development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Undertake further research on sectors including assessing results of the Economic Needs Study</li> <li>■ Study to identify growth sectors</li> <li>■ Sectors action plan to establish series of interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increase in sector location quotient (a measure of the significance of a local cluster against a national average)</li> <li>■ New business start-ups</li> <li>■ Jobs created/ retained</li> <li>■ Increase in research and development in businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Kent and Medway Economic Partnership</li> <li>■ HE Partnerships</li> <li>■ FE Partnerships</li> <li>■ Sector based trade associations</li> </ul>

<p><b>Facilitate new ways of working</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop a hub strategy covering the West Kent Partnership area for both public and private sector facilities including feasibility studies for additional sites</li> <li>■ Successful launch and management of the new business hub at Swanley</li> <li>■ Support Digital/broadband investment in collaboration with Kent County Council and commercial operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Swanley hub operational within agreed timescales with approved operating model</li> <li>■ New business starts and scale up of growth businesses</li> <li>■ West Kent Business Hub Network Group created</li> <li>■ Extending Superfast/Full Fibre coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>■ Kent County Council Digital Team</li> <li>■ Department of Culture Media and Sport</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure businesses are able to access suitable business support to develop and grow</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Research the specific present and future business needs of SMEs particularly for rural businesses</li> <li>■ Team around your business including new 'welcome pack' providing information on all relevant services in the Council</li> <li>■ Feasibility of launching a training app for businesses</li> <li>■ Effective sign-posting to external organisations including business start-up advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Business starts</li> <li>■ Business survival rates</li> <li>■ Number of businesses in the knowledge economy</li> <li>■ Growth of rural enterprises</li> <li>■ Number of companies on business support programmes</li> <li>■ Number of businesses benefiting from Team Around The Business and Sevenoaks District Council Economic Development Team interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>■ Federation of Small Businesses</li> <li>■ Kent International Business</li> <li>■ Department of International Trade</li> <li>■ DEFRA</li> </ul>

<b>Local Procurement Programme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify the Council's geographical spend profile for goods and services</li> <li>■ Develop an action plan to improve visibility of procurement pipeline and building capacity for local businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increase in local suppliers in the local authority supply chain</li> <li>■ Reduced carbon footprint for the local authority</li> </ul>	
<b>Net Zero Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Connect business community with existing advice on energy efficiency and emissions reduction including Low Carbon Kent and the LoCASE programme</li> <li>■ Work with landowners in the public and private sector to identify assets that could be utilised for local renewables and power generation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reduced District emissions from commercial activities</li> <li>■ Number of local businesses taking up decarbonisation advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Low Carbon Kent</li> <li>■ Carbon Trust</li> <li>■ Innovate UK</li> </ul>





## Focus area 2: Visitor Economy and Rural Economy

To engage with and support the Visitor Economy and rural sectors, local food producers and the cultural community to ensure Sevenoaks District continues to grow as a leading visitor location with a growing number of jobs and enterprises in the sector.

Aim	Activity	Measures	Partners for all aims
<b>Maximise promotion and exposure of the District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Regular Visitor Economy Forum meetings to share best practice and promotion of activities.</li> <li>■ Collaborate with key partners including Visit Kent and Visit England on joint initiatives</li> <li>■ Active member of the Gatwick Gateway Group</li> <li>■ Continue to establish the Visit Sevenoaks website and social media coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Growth in visitor numbers and spend</li> <li>■ Growth in enterprises and jobs in the sector</li> <li>■ Website analytics and social media reach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Visit Kent</li> <li>■ Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership ('DVCRP')</li> <li>■ Gatwick Gateway</li> <li>■ Visit England</li> <li>■ Town and Parish Councils</li> <li>■ ELAG</li> <li>■ Sevenoaks</li> <li>■ Rural Landowners Group</li> </ul>
<b>Encourage visitors to Sevenoaks District and attractions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop annual programme of campaigns including familiarisation visits for influencers group</li> <li>■ Increase niche offerings for experiential and specific demographic requirements</li> <li>■ Secure additional coach parking capacity</li> <li>■ Develop the sports sector as a tool to drive promotion of the District, but also wellbeing.</li> <li>■ Use innovative social media platforms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ See above- number of inbound visitors/ overnight stays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Visit Kent</li> <li>■ Kent County Council</li> <li>■ DVCRP</li> <li>■ Gatwick Gateway</li> <li>■ Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce (sports network)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Increase the accommodation offer</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify Opportunity to develop 5 star/ luxury resort or exhibition/ conferencing facility</li> <li>■ Work with key partners and planning colleagues to increase/ diversify the accommodation offer.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Visit Kent</li> <li>■ Locate in Kent</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support diversification of rural areas</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Work through a new Rural Economy Forum to share best practice in rural land use, lobbying and securing access to funding via the West Kent Partnership</li> <li>■ Where possible, support the provision of affordable housing in rural areas and last mile infrastructure projects</li> <li>■ Promote the sustainable reuse of redundant farm buildings and facilities to support enterprise, economic activity and/or housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Growth in rural enterprises and jobs created and retained</li> <li>■ Increased funding secured for rural areas</li> <li>■ Increase in affordable housing in rural areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sevenoaks Rural Landowners Group</li> <li>■ Rural Local Action Group</li> <li>■ Kent County Council</li> <li>■ DEFRA</li> </ul>
<p><b>Biodiversity and sustainable land management</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Work with local landowners, nature conservation partners and Planning Policy colleagues on nature recovery and biodiversity initiatives</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme</li> <li>■ Kent Wildlife Trust</li> <li>■ North West Kent Countryside Partnership</li> <li>■ Kent Downs AONB</li> <li>■ High Weald AONB</li> </ul>

<b>Sevenoaks Trademark</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Explore creation of a unique Sevenoaks District trademark for local producer and crafts in collaboration with Made In Kent</li><li>■ Develop and promote the place campaign brand strategy and book</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Made in Kent</li><li>■ Produced In Kent</li></ul>
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### Focus area 3: Town Centres

Enabling our market towns to remain viable and vibrant to support local residents

Aim	Activity	KPI's	Partners for all aims
<b>Encourage diversification of use in town centres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Work with Planning Policy Team in retaining employment space and supporting mixed uses where possible</li> <li>■ Introduce a new Town Centres Steering Group and arts/cultural forum sub-group to co-ordinate events, promotion and the Night Time economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Employment floor space retained or provided</li> <li>■ Footfall and dwell time measures</li> <li>■ Delivery of agreed events programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ SDC Planning Team</li> <li>■ Town and Parish Councils</li> <li>■ Town Centre Partnerships</li> <li>■ SELEP/KMEP (South East LEP/Kent and Medway Economic Partnership)</li> <li>■ KCC</li> <li>■ Developers</li> <li>■ Commercial Agents</li> </ul>
<b>Secure investment and regeneration in towns and large villages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consider the Town Centre Strategy</li> <li>■ Agree a pipeline of projects from the final strategy to direct and support future funding bids</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Successful funding bids secured</li> <li>■ Project delivery of agreed interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Town and Parish Councils</li> <li>■ KMEP</li> </ul>
<b>Improve public realm to support multiple uses and better facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Support provision of electric vehicle charging points</li> <li>■ Improve way finding and signage</li> <li>■ Support the Public Realm Commissioner to improve the public realm and promote the ethos of the Place Campaign</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Town and Parish Councils</li> <li>■ Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership</li> </ul>
<b>Encourage locals to shop locally</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Movement Strategy</li> <li>■ Use local campaigns</li> <li>■ Redevelop 96 High Street Sevenoaks into a maker space/artisan/artist/farmers market hall</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Kent County Council</li> <li>■ Produced In Kent</li> <li>■ Made in Kent</li> </ul>

## Focus area 4: Skills and Employment

Ensuring residents and businesses can gain the skills they require including supporting young people into employment and lifelong learning and training.

Aim	Activity	Measures	Partners for all aims
<b>Supporting events and initiatives to assist job seekers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Job and career Fairs</li> <li>■ Promoting apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Unemployment measures</li> <li>■ Apprenticeship placements and vacancies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Department of Work and Pensions</li> <li>■ West Kent Skills Group</li> <li>■ North Kent College Network</li> <li>■ Retrofit Academy</li> <li>■ Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce (Local Skills Improvement Plans)</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting careers advice in schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continue to support the Enterprise Adviser Programme through the TEP team</li> <li>■ Expand enterprise events for young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Achieving Gatsby benchmarks</li> <li>■ Delivery of training/CPD programmes for schools</li> <li>■ Children's Business Fair or other enterprise event during the period of the Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Education People (TEP)</li> <li>■ Children's Business Fair</li> </ul>

<p><b>Provide local innovative skills programmes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lifelong and intergenerational skills activities</li> <li>■ Delivering programmes to help disadvantaged groups or those with protected characteristics into employment</li> <li>■ Digital inclusiveness programme in conjunction with community Wi-Fi pilot</li> <li>■ Sector skills programmes including retrofit boot camp, and land based skills 'Farming in Protected Landscapes ('FIPL')</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Employment and job creation</li> <li>■ Sector and economic growth</li> <li>■ Digital inclusiveness data</li> <li>■ Growth in the green economy</li> <li>■ Deliver FIPL project engaging young people with farming and landscapes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Kent County Council</li> <li>■ Kent and Medway Economic Partnership</li> <li>■ Kent Downs and High Weald AONB</li> <li>■ Hadlow College</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improving the provision of HE/FE in the District</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Establish an HE/FE offer in the District</li> </ul>		



## Annex A

### Economic Development Strategy Dashboard

The following key measures will be used for monitoring the economy with an annual Economic Report bringing together a number of other measures to provide a comprehensive overview. This will provide our economic baseline at the time the Strategy is adopted.

#### Focus area 1: Business and Enterprise

Measure	Latest data 2020	Source	Frequency of reporting/notes
<b>Birth of new enterprises rate</b>	Between 2010-2020, there were 715 new enterprises born.  This is a growth rate of 9.7% (Kent average growth rate was 12.1%)	ONS Business Demography 2019 (kent.gov.uk)	Annually
<b>Death of new enterprises rate</b>	Between 2010-2020, there were 765 enterprise deaths a rate of 10.4%. (Kent average is 10.1%)	ONS Business Demography 2019 (kent.gov.uk)	Annually
<b>Ratio of enterprise births to deaths</b>	In 2020, the figure was 0.93% (Kent average is 1.20)	ONS Business Demography 2019 (kent.gov.uk)	Annually <i>Please note that a figure below 1.0 shows that the number of deaths exceeds that of births</i>
<b>Stock of active enterprises</b>	In 2020 there were 7370 active enterprises. (6610 VAT registered)	ONS Business Demography 2019 (kent.gov.uk)	Annually <i>Between 2010-2020, 880 new enterprises were created equating a rate of 13.6% which is the lowest in Kent after Tunbridge Wells</i>
<b>Enterprise survival rates – Three and five year</b>	3 Year 61.7% (Kent average 58.9%). i.e.: business born in 2017 - survival rate in 2020  5 Year 47.8% (Kent average 42.6%). i.e.: business born in 2015 – survival rate in 2020	Business Demography 2019 (kent.gov.uk)	Annually <i>We will also monitor % of enterprises that are 'high growth' and in the knowledge economy. In 2020 some 19.8% of jobs were in the Knowledge Economy, but this has decreased from 25.9% in 2017</i>

<b>Number of SDC significant business interventions including Team Around Your Business</b>	Not currently measured	Quarterly SDC report	Quarterly
<b>GVA</b>	£4066 million 2019	ONS/KCC	Third highest in Kent although small growth between 2018-2019
<b>GVA per Job</b>	£68,183 2019. This grew by 15.8% from 2014-2018. The Kent average was 12.3%	ONS/KCC	Highest in Kent
<b>Superfast Broadband Coverage</b>	96%	ThinkBroadband.com	
<b>Full Fibre (to the premise)</b>	74.65%	ThinkBroadband.com	
<b>Loss of accommodation under permitted development rights</b>	Benchmark figure will be established	SDC Annual Monitoring Report	
<b>% of available employment space in the district</b>	Benchmark figure will be established	SDC Annual Monitoring Report	

## Focus area 2: Tourism and Rural

Measure	Latest data 2020	Source	Frequency of reporting/notes
<b>Value of the Visitor Economy</b>	£265 million 2019 (£105 million 2020)	Cambridge Data - per visit Kent	
<b>The number of tourism enterprises</b>	465	KCC/ONS	2019 data
<b>The number of jobs supported by the visitor economy</b>	5500	KCC/ONS	2019 data
<b>Number of users on the Visit Sevenoaks website</b>	295		
<b>Number of visitors</b>	4.3 million 2019 (2 million 2020)	KCC/ONS	
<b>Growth in the provision of affordable housing in rural locations?</b>	Benchmark figure will be established		
<b>Growth in the number of rural enterprises</b>	Benchmark figure will be established		



### Focus area 3: Town Centres

Retail footfall		GOAD	
Vacancy rates in key centres (total floor space) November/ December 2021 figures	Will be updated and a benchmark figure established		
Amount of employment space in town centres retained or provided (from agreed baseline)	Benchmark figure will be established		
Number of retail, leisure and hospitality jobs	Benchmark figure will be established		

### Focus area 4: Skills and Employment

Unemployment	2.1% May 2022	DWP	Special focus on wards with above average unemployment. The figures for Edenbridge SW (3.2%), Swanley St Mary's (4.2%) and White Oak (4.0%)
Youth unemployment 18-24 year olds	3.4% May 2022	DWP	
No of apprentices advertised	50 May 2022	ESFA	
NVQ Level 4	49.1% Kent Average 39.9%	ONS	Annually
NVQ Level 3	60.5% Kent average 58.1%	ONS	Annually
NVQ Level 2	80.4% Kent average 78.2%	ONS	Annually

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