

# **Better Together**

A Community Plan for Sevenoaks District 2022–2032

## **Welcome to Sevenoaks District Community Plan for 2022-2032**

This Community Plan is the shared, long-term, partnership vision for Sevenoaks District developed by the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership. The partnership is made up of private, public, voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations who work with communities to identify and tackle key long, medium and short-term local issues to ensure Sevenoaks District remains a great place to live and work.

Times change, but achieving the best for those who live, work and visit Sevenoaks District remains the cornerstone of the work of the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership.

The overarching priority for the Community Plan is to increase community participation in the Sevenoaks District as a driver to improving resilience and wellbeing, focusing on those parts of the district with the poorest outcomes. The Plan highlights how adopting a collective approach can help to better achieve the ambitions of the people that live and work in the district.

Sevenoaks District has an active and vibrant voluntary and community sector that already provides a wide range of valuable services, and that makes a positive contribution to the lives of many in the district. The Community Plan wants to further strengthen the ability of these groups to have a positive impact on the district, through better co-ordination and joining up of the public and voluntary sectors on a collective set of priorities. Most importantly the Community Plan wants to encourage actions that mobilise and involve our local communities, so that they become active partners in helping us to meet the growing and changing needs of our population.

The Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) works together to improve the quality of life for people in the area and is committed to the following values which are embedded in the Strategy's action plan:

**shared vision – shared values – collective action**

As partners, we will support the Strategy to:

- find simple and effective ways of working together that improve efficiency; make the most of resources and ensure value for money;
- ensure social, economic and environmental wellbeing is embedded in all decisions;
- promote a greater understanding and mutual respect between different sectors and sections of the community; empower local people to make a difference to improve their localities and that encourage them to believe it is both possible and worth it;
- ensure resources are used wisely, become carbon neutral, prevent pollution and waste, and conserve and enhance the environment for future generations, and;
- individual needs and aspirations, the diversity of its landscapes and neighbourhoods contribute to a high quality of life.

The Plan sets out actions for how partners can work collectively with our communities to deliver the priorities. This includes identifying and highlighting the assets in our communities, both physical spaces, as well as people and groups with skills and knowledge that can help strengthen and grow community-led activities.

The emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic has generated very successful networks of residents, businesses, and partners working together to support the most vulnerable residents and key workers across the district. These networks can contribute to achieving the Plan's priorities in a post-pandemic world.

The Strategy is a result of a great deal of information gathering and consultation. The results have allowed us to concentrate on four priorities which the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership can best address through local partners, residents and businesses working collectively together.

## **Consultation feedback**

Overall, residents of Sevenoaks District expressed their aspirations and determination to support and develop their district. They care greatly about the place they live and want to see it grow and develop in a way that supports them and their communities.

### **Community spirit is something that residents rate highly**

- Increasing importance of helping our neighbours
- Getting involved in activities in their local community
- People want to do more, but time is viewed as a barrier

### **Residents care about their local environment and want to recycle more**

- They would like to have more opportunities to recycle
- More, clearer information about what they can recycle and how they can play their part

### **Residents highlighted their ambitions and aspirations for town centres**

- More events and activities
- Amenities such as family friendly restaurants and leisure facilities
- Good availability of local services and transport links
- Many people recognised that town centres are changing, becoming less retail focused and developing into destinations where people can enjoy social activities

### **Residents are keen to take part in more leisure activities across the district making the most of its green spaces**

- Being able to easily access the countryside and green spaces within the district
- More accessible and well-linked cycling and walking routes
- Continued investment in our green spaces and nature reserves
- 

### **The Community Plan's four priorities are:**



## **Our Place**

### **What does success look like?**

- Communities where people want to live, feel they belong and it is easy to meet every day needs.
- Built and natural environments are highly valued and well managed to keep the Sevenoaks District an attractive place to live.
- New development sits well with the natural environment and recognised for its quality.
- New homes meet local needs and bring improved and new local facilities, employment and contribution to the community.

### **What will we do?**

- Prepare a revised Local Plan, which engages with the public and brings forward the proposals and policies which ensure we have enough homes of the right type to meet future demand and enable existing businesses to grow, new businesses to relocate and provides a range of new employment opportunities.
- Work with central government and key partners to identify the strategic infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development.
- Prioritise environmentally sound policies that enhance biodiversity alongside new development.
- Create a well maintained public realm with accessible facilities and quality public space that encourage people both to get active and stay in the district.
- Improve access to affordable and appropriate housing.

### **What can you do?**

- Take responsibility for your local area by resolving, recording and reporting any issue.
- Use the district's parks and green spaces to get out, have fun and improve your own health and wellbeing
- Attend and take part in events and activities and encourage others to get involved too.
- Landlords and developers work with us to provide quality homes.

## **Our Economy**

### **What does success look like?**

- Increased economic growth making Sevenoaks District a location of choice for business and providing local jobs.
- Towns and villages are lively and welcoming.
- Tourism's contribution to the economy, employment and quality of life is maximised.
- Residents have access to a wide range of local employment opportunities.

### **What will we do?**

- Identify and promote more employment sites for new and expanding businesses in the district.
- Support market towns, high streets and villages to thrive by encouraging new businesses and enterprises, alongside sustainable, quality public and private investment
- Work closely with our businesses to create suitable employment opportunities for people who find it hard to get into work.
- Work with our schools and colleges to help get their students ready for work and to offer training courses that help.
- Reducing the number of young people who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET).

### **What can you do?**

- Support your local businesses and shop local.
- Keep your town and village centres clean and tidy by not dropping litter.
- If you run a business, take on an apprentice or offer placements. Think about linking in with schools and colleges to encourage young people to think about their career aspirations from an early age.
- Access the digital opportunities available to make the most of your business.
- If you are an employer, pay the living wage.

## **Our Communities**

### **What does success look like?**

- Neighbourhoods are safe for people to live, work and socialise in.
- Residents of all ages enjoy improved levels of health and wellbeing and reduced inequalities within our communities.
- Parents feel supported to give their child the best start during the early years of their life.
- An empowered and independent voluntary sector that has the capacity to tackle local priorities.

### **What will we do?**

- Address anti-social behaviour within our communities, focusing particularly on the most vulnerable to ensure they are appropriately supported.
- Engage young people in decisions affecting them through regular consultation.
- Work together with partners to get health services right and delivered where you live.
- Deliver targeted health initiatives to help people lose weight, stop smoking and become more active.
- Enable and mobilise our communities to connect and support each other.
- Support carers, providing opportunities to network and come together.
- Support voluntary and community groups to offer a diverse range of volunteering, events and other opportunities to support communities to live happily together.

### **What can you do?**

- Report anti-social behaviour (ASB) to the district's Community Safety Unit.
- Be willing to support enforcement action e.g. impact statements.
- Make the most of the opportunities in our district to do things that make you happy, that connect you to your community
- Use your local free early years and childcare offer and take advantage of Children Centre activities and engage with health provision.
- Encourage your child to join a local group or club in the community.

- Tell us if you care for a family member or relative and make sure you look after your own health and happiness as well as the person you are caring for
- Get involved in your community, support events or volunteer.



## **Our Environment**

### **What does success look like?**

- Prioritised protection of the environment and increased biodiversity.
- Minimise waste and increase re-use and recycling.
- Co-benefits for our health and wellbeing, resilience and local economy.

### **What will we do?**

- Develop a Net Zero Action Plan which will set out a roadmap to achieving our carbon reduction targets for the Council and the district.
- Prioritised protection of the environment and increased biodiversity
- Work with partners to increase the number of electric vehicle charging points across the district to promote the use of more environmentally friendly vehicles.
- To promote active travel to work, with a specific focus on co-benefits for climate change.
- Ensure the design and location of new development takes account of the need to improve air quality through the Local Plan in line with Sevenoaks District Council's Air Quality Action Plan.
- Encourage and promote recycling and support national recycling targets and campaigns
- Encourage community participation in efforts to clean-up and directly invest in the management of their local environment

### **What can you do?**

- Reducing your energy consumption by making your home or business more energy efficient.
- Avoiding using your car or replacing your petrol/ diesel vehicle with a low carbon alternative. For short journeys, try leaving your car at home. Walking and cycling improves health and reduces your carbon footprint.
- Recycle more and recycle right.
- Planting trees on your property and encouraging others to do so.

## **Better Together**

### **A Community Plan for Sevenoaks District 2022–2032 Our Action Plan**

#### **The Action Plan**

The following pages set out the overall targets for the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership. This is a rolling Action Plan and will be reviewed annually. It does not include details of the numerous activities already undertaken by partners, businesses, town and parish councils, the voluntary sector and others as part of their day-to-day work, but highlights activities in addition to core work, which partners will undertake throughout the next ten years.

#### **Funding and monitoring**

Funding for the actions included within the Action Plan is available from a number of sources, including partners' own budgets, and other small amounts of funding from a variety of sources. Regular monitoring will take place to ensure that individual projects continue to deliver positive results as well as value for money and that this Action Plan is on target.

#### **Equalities**

We recognise that everyone has a contribution to make to our society and a right to access services without being discriminated against or disadvantaged. In preparing the action plan, issues such as equality and diversity were considered. The Action Plan sets out a firm commitment by partners to:

- Increase prosperity and economic opportunity in the district which will benefit all residents;
- Ensure that services are fully accessible to all community groups;
- Ensure that work programmes are scoped to continue to target and protect the most vulnerable people in our communities;
- Recognise that people need different levels of support and services depending on their circumstances, and;
- Promote new opportunities for people living in the more deprived communities of our district, particularly through apprenticeships, training and employment opportunities, especially for young people.

## Better Together – Our Place

Ref	Priority Actions	Lead Agency	Other Partners
1.1	Planning policies used effectively as monitored through the Local Plan to protect our high quality natural environment, including Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and biodiversity	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council
1.2	Through the review of the Local Plan, provide a long-term strategic overview of what is needed in our town centres, within an ever changing environment, putting in place the mechanisms to enable delivery	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Town Councils Businesses
1.3	Deliver actions in the Sevenoaks District Housing Strategy, working alongside communities and partners to help identify and deliver the supply of homes which reflects current and future housing needs	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Town & Parish Councils West Kent Housing Other Housing Providers
1.4	Creating communities that have the infrastructure and accessibility to meet the needs of a changing and growing population	Kent County Council	Sevenoaks District Council Kent Public Health Town & Parish Councils West Kent Housing Other Housing Providers
1.5	Work with key partners to prevent individuals in financial hardship from becoming homeless through early intervention, advice and support, encouraging people into employment where possible	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Kent Public Health Kent & Medway CCG Housing Providers Voluntary Sector Forum
1.6	Making the most of the benefits of inward investment and economic growth. Promoting the district as an outstanding place to live and work, whilst safeguarding its heritage and natural assets	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Relocate in Kent Town & Parish Councils Business Board

## Better Together – Our Economy

Ref	Priority Actions	Lead Agency	Other Partners
2.1	Reduce the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETS), to include local community and job hubs	Kent County Council	DWP West Kent Partnership West Kent Housing Business Board
2.2	Supporting events and initiatives to assist job seekers	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Town & Parish Councils
2.3	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	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council West Kent Partnership West Kent Housing Business Board
2.4	Improve public realm to support multiple uses and better facilities	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council West Kent Partnership Visit Kent
2.5	Work with the private sector to develop and promote business sites in the district	Locate in Kent	Kent County Council Sevenoaks District Council West Kent Partnership Business Board
2.6	Ensure businesses are able to access suitable business support to develop and grow business support to increase the resilience of businesses, including ecommerce and marketing	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council West Kent Partnership Chamber of Commerce Federation of Small Businesses
2.8	Continue to work with colleagues at Kent County Council, the private sector and communities to identify area that need more investment or an upgrade in broadband to future proof and enable economic activity	Kent County Council	Sevenoaks District Council Town & Parish Councils Housing Associations

## Better Together – Our Communities

Ref	Priority Actions	Lead Agency	Other Partners
3.1	Establish links with local residents, businesses and community organisations to help empower and mobilise communities to address issues important to them through events, training and links to funding	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Community Leaders Local Groups Town & Parish Councils Housing Associations Voluntary Sector Forum
3.2	Maintain the lower number of ASB incidents (no higher than 3 <sup>rd</sup> lowest in the county)	Kent Police	Community Safety Unit Community Leaders Local Groups Town & Parish Councils Voluntary Sector Forum
3.3	80% of Health and Wellbeing action plan on target, through the delivery of a range of campaigns to tackle unhealthy weights, promote social inclusion and mental wellness	Sevenoaks District Council	Sevenoaks District Council Voluntary Sector Forum Kent Public Health
3.4	Outcomes achieved on Sevenoaks District Local Children's Partnership Action Plan, with at least 75% of core indicators on target	Kent County Council	All partners Youth Assembly
3.5	Improve opportunities for vulnerable people through the Community Grant Scheme.	Sevenoaks District Council	Voluntary Sector Forum
3.6	Support the Sevenoaks District Access Group to deliver an annual event, promoting a range of information, advice and activities for people with a physical, learning or mental disability who may not be aware of the services that are available, or how to access them	Sevenoaks District Council	All partners
3.7	Increased number of people supported to live independently	Kent County Council	All partners

## Better Together – Our Environment

Ref	Priority Actions	Lead Agency	Other Partners
4.1	Deliver on local and partnership Net Zero Policies and Climate Change Action Plan	Sevenoaks District Council	All partners
4.2	Seek opportunities to work with our communities and partners to reduce the amount of household waste produced by increasing recycling and ensuring improved knowledge of our recycling processes	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Town & Parish Councils West Kent Housing Housing Associations
4.3	Ensure the design and location of new development takes account of the need to improve air quality through the Local Plan in line with Sevenoaks District Council's Air Quality Action Plan.	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Kent Developers Group
4.4	Work with partners and communities for all to become more energy efficient	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council Town & Parish Councils
4.5	Support Kent County Council's emerging Strategy for Electric Vehicle and Low Emissions, through the provision further public electric vehicle charging points in the district, subject to infrastructure	Kent County Council	Sevenoaks District Council Town & Parish Councils
4.6	Weekly refuse collection maintained	Sevenoaks District Council	Kent County Council

## What is the Sevenoaks District like?



Sevenoaks is a large District lying to the south east of London with an overall area of just over 143 square miles (370 square km). It is long and relatively narrow measuring 20 miles north-south by about 7 miles east-west. The Thames Gateway lies to the north, Surrey and East Sussex to the west and south and the rest of Kent, including Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells to the east and south east.

- Despite adjoining the outer edge of London it is predominantly rural with 93% of the District designated as Green Belt.
- 60% of the District is in the Kent Downs or High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 11% is covered in Ancient Woodland.
- Six main settlements – Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge, Westerham, New Ash Green and Otford.

- Train services to London take just under 30 minutes from Swanley and just under 30 minutes from Sevenoaks.
- One hour by car to Dover port and 40 minutes by car to London airports.
- Nine miles from Swanley to Ebbsfleet International railway station.
- Sevenoaks District is perceived to be affluent but this masks local pockets of urban and rural deprivation. For example, Swanley St Mary's ward falls within the 10% most deprived wards in Kent and the South East (2015, Indices of Multiple Deprivation).
- 11.6% of children under 16 (2,465) live in low-income families in receipt of Child Tax Credit where rural deprivation is more isolating than poverty in the towns. The majority of children living in poverty (73.9%) live in lone parent families.
- According to the Kent County Council housing led population forecast projections, the population of Sevenoaks District is forecast to grow by more than 13,500 by 2028.
- The 2017 mid-year population estimates (Office for National Statistics) show that Sevenoaks District has a population of 119,400 residents and the third lowest population density in Kent measured at 3.1 persons per hectare.
- According to Kent County Council the number of people over 65 is forecast to rise by 41.1% by 2036 (10,400 people) and the number of people over 85 is forecast to rise by 97.2% by 2036 (3,500 people).

# Membership of the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership

Sevenoaks District Council  
Kent County Council  
Kent Public Health  
West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group  
Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Clinical Commissioning Group  
Kent Police  
Kent Fire and Rescue Service  
Department for Work & Pensions  
West Kent Partnership  
Conway  
Go Coach  
West Kent Housing  
Moat Housing  
Sevenoaks District Voluntary Sector Forum  
Imago  
West Kent Mind  
Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services  
Age UK  
Compaid  
Change Grow Live  
SupaJam  
Arts without Boundaries  
Kent Wildlife Trust  
Darent Valley Landscape Partnership  
Bore Place  
Sencio Leisure Trust