

From: Derek Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services
Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee
19 July 2022

Subject: **Members' Recent Visit to Sevenoaks District**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: None

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This report is in two parts. It summarises the outcomes of the recent visit by KCC Members to Sevenoaks District and outlines the programme of future visits to other Kent districts in 2022.

Recommendation: The Cabinet Committee is asked to reflect on the visit, and make any recommendations to the Cabinet Member on the future visits programme.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the November 2017 meeting of this Cabinet Committee, Members agreed that officers arrange a programme of informal visits to Kent districts. The objective was to provide an opportunity for Cabinet Committee Members to gain an understanding of the economic development, regeneration, community and infrastructure opportunities and challenges within each of the Kent districts.
- 1.2 This report summarises the main outcomes of Members' visit to Sevenoaks District on 20 May 2022.

2. Visit to Sevenoaks District

- 2.1 The visit to Sevenoaks District on 20 May was arranged with the full support of senior officers of Sevenoaks District Council. The Council Leader, Peter Fleming, his Council colleagues and members of his senior management team gave a comprehensive briefing of economic development, regeneration and community infrastructure opportunities and challenges for the district and which are listed below.
- 2.2 Members were very appreciative that Peter Fleming led the briefing throughout the visit and for his District Council's gift to Kent County Council of framed posters of local railway stations.

2.3 The key issues identified during the visit were:

- Areas of high levels of multiple deprivation
- Unemployment rate
- Health indicators
- Aging population
- Planning constraints
- Lack of employment use land
- Diversifying the rural economy
- Physical and digital connectivity
- Funding challenge

2.4 The key projects currently underway or in development are:

- SDC Trading Companies
 - Quercus 7 – commercial investments - £10m spent on 6 investments to date (excluding Burlington Mews)
 - Quercus Housing – delivery of affordable housing in the district
- Sevenoaks Town Centre
 - Town Centre Regeneration
 - Burlington Mews
- Edenbridge
 - Farmstead Drive
 - Stangrove Estate
- Swanley Town Centre
 - High Street Regeneration
 - Bevan Place
 - New White Oaks Leisure Centre and Prospective Residential Phase

In addition Members noted:

- The ambition of SDC to improve the services offered to both business and the public and to do so on a financially self-sufficient basis.
- The way in which the new White Oaks Leisure Centre was pioneering a sports and leisure facility for local residents at an affordable cost.

2.5 The highlights of the visit are detailed more fully in Appendix 1 to this report. These will be followed up by Officers as appropriate and with the relevant organisations.

2.6 Presentations made on the day are available from the author of this report.

3. Programme of Further Visits

3.1 Further Member visits to Kent districts are being arranged in collaboration with district and borough officers. The format for each visit involves a day-long tour of the principal

economic development, regeneration, community and infrastructure within each district.

3.2 The visit programme for 2022 had to be amended recently and is now:

Thanet	1st July	(instead of 30 June)
Maidstone	15th July	(no change)
Canterbury	2nd September	(instead of 21 st April)
Swale	October	TBC

3.3 The Committee has already visited Swale, Ashford, Folkestone and Hythe, Dover, Dartford, Tunbridge Wells, Gravesham and Tonbridge & Malling as well as the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation albeit these date back to 2017 to 2019.

3.4 These visits will be continued for a new cycle subject to resource and to Committee's recommendation to the Cabinet Member into 2023.

3.5 As agreed by the Committee, should places be available, invitations will be extended to the Chair and Members of the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 The cost of coach hire is approximately £525 per visit.

5. Recommendation

Recommendation: The Cabinet Committee is asked to reflect on the visit, and make any recommendations to the Cabinet Member on the future visits programme.

6. Contact details

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