

7th October 2020



You are summoned to attend a virtual meeting of **the COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE** to be held via Zoom on **MONDAY 12TH OCTOBER 2020 at 7PM.** Town Councillors are reminded that they have a duty to state a Declaration of Interest prior to the appropriate agenda item and to consider the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 s.17 when reaching a decision.

Please note that the proceedings of this meeting will be streamed live to YouTube for the public to watch via the following link: <https://youtu.be/iUj6n-VoZ-8> and may be recorded in line with regulations set out in the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014. A copy of Sevenoaks Town Council's procedure for the recording of meetings is available online at sevenoakstown.gov.uk or by request.

Members of the public wishing to address the Committee should notify the Town Council by 12 noon on the day of the meeting. Zoom joining instructions will then be provided. Members of the public not wishing to be recorded should put this request to the Clerk at the earliest possible opportunity.

Town Clerk

To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the agenda are asked to enquire of the Town Clerk prior to the day of the meeting.

Committee Members:

Cllr R J Parry (Chairman)	Cllr A Clayton (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr N Busvine, OBE (ex-officio)	Cllr J M Canet
Cllr R Hogarth	Cllr C Shea
Cllr R L Piper	

AGENDA

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To enable any questions previously submitted by members of the public on any matter to be drawn to the attention of the Town Council.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
To receive and note apologies for absence.

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- | | | |
|----|---|---------------|
| 2. | <u>REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS</u>
To consider written requests from Members which have previously been submitted to the Town Clerk to enable participation in discussion and voting on items for which the Member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest. (s.31 & s.33 of the Localism Act 2011). | — |
| 3. | <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u>
To receive any declarations of interest from members in respect of any items of business included in this report. | — |
| 4. | <u>MINUTES OF COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 17TH AUGUST 2020</u>
To receive and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Community Infrastructure Committee held on 17 th August 2020. | Copy attached |
| 5. | <u>COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROJECTS CASH FLOW</u>
To consider the Cash Flow. | Copy attached |
| 6. | <u>SEVENOAKS BUSINESS HUB</u>
To consider shortlist of revised tenders received for the proposed Business Hub. | Copy attached |
| 7. | <u>COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PLAN</u>
To consider the report attached: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Bat & Ball Centre ii. Multi Use Games Area iii. Neighbourhood Development Plan iv. Sevenoaks Business Hub v. Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership vi. Electric No.8 Bus vii. The Stag Community Arts Centre | Copy attached |

**Minutes of the Community Infrastructure Committee
Held on 17th August 2020 at 7pm via Zoom**

Committee Members present:

Cllr R J Parry, Chairman	Present	Cllr A Clayton, Vice-Chairman	Present
Cllr R Hogarth	Present	Cllr Dr J M Canet	Apologies
Cllr R Piper	Present	Cllr C Shea	Present
Cllr N Busvine	Present		

Substitute	For
Cllr V Granville-Baxter	Cllr Dr J M Canet

In Attendance: Cllr Eyre, Town Clerk and Senior Committee Clerk.

There were no representations received from Members of the Public.
The meeting was livestreamed via YouTube.

149. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted as noted above.

150. Requests for Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

151. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

152. Notes of the Report to Committee on 22nd June 2020

The Notes of the Report to the Community Infrastructure Committee on 22nd June 2020 were received and agreed as a true record.

153. Community Investment Projects Cash Flows

The Committee received and noted the Community Investment Projects Cash Flows Summary, as at July 2020.

It was noted that the additional items to be funded from the Capital Receipts Reserve, as agreed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee [*Minutes 114.3, 118 & 119 F&GP 20.07.20 refer*], had been included.

The Chairman noted that reference to the year 1819 was for the financial year 2018/2019.

The total unallocated Capital Receipts Reserve was £399,347.

154. 2019 Community Investment Plan Projects**154.1 Bat & Ball Centre**

The Bat and Ball Centre building was very close to completion. Councillors who had visited the site on 10th August congratulated everyone involved on the high quality of the project.

Consideration was given to the naming of the two main rooms in the Community Centre and it was agreed to honour two Sevenoaks Freeman who had passed away last year.

RESOLVED: That the two main rooms at the Bat & Ball Centre be named:

- The Harry Garrett Room (larger room); and
- The John London Room (smaller room).

154.2 Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)

The installation of the MUGA would commence in September 2020.

The Committee considered the draft timetable for charging and non-charging (free access) times for the use of the MUGA, together with a draft fee structure for the charging periods.

It was noted that the charging periods took account of when staff would be available to set up activities. The Town Clerk advised that the fees were still under review to reflect non free public access times and commercial activities. VAT implications also to be considered further.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To agree in principle to have some times at chargeable rates as per the diagram provided;
- 2) That further research be undertaken into the fees, with final proposals to be submitted either to this Committee or to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for approval; and
- 3) That the fees be subject to review following implementation.

154.3 Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

Referendums for Neighbourhood Development Plans had been deferred until May 2021 due to Covid-19.

Discussion took place about the Council's position on the one-way traffic system for the High Street/London Road. The Town Clerk confirmed that there was not an agreed policy. It had been hoped that the proposal contained in the Sevenoaks Recovery Plan could have been an opportunity to trial a one-way system, but this had not been approved by Kent County Council. During the NDP consultation process strong views were expressed on both sides of this issue and whether or not

to make a policy would be considered by Council as part of the review of all responses received to the NDP.

154.4 Sevenoaks Business Hub

It was noted that documents for a “revised tender” had been uploaded to the Government Contract Finder on 5th August 2020, with tenders due to be returned on 14th September 2020.

It was proposed that authority be delegated to the Chairman (Vice -Chairman) of CIC, Chairman (Vice- Chairman) of F&GP, Chief Executive and Responsible Finance Officer to review the tenders received, subject to the tenders being within budget as per previous Capital Projects. This motion was put to the vote and lost.

It was proposed by Councillor Piper, seconded by Councillor Clayton and **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That authority be delegated to the Chairman (Vice- Chairman) of CIC, Chairman (Vice- Chairman) of F&GP, Chief Executive and Responsible Finance Officer to review the tenders received and prepare a shortlist; and
- 2) That this Committee review the shortlist and decide whether the project should go ahead.

Councillor Hogarth abstained from voting on this motion.

154.5 Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership (DVCRP)

It was noted that a Community Rail Partnership Officer had been appointed and that the DVCRP was recently successful in obtaining a £30,000 grant from Southeastern.

154.6 Electric No.8 Bus

It was noted that the Town Clerk was meeting with Kent County Council the following day to discuss the No.8 bus.

154.7 Stag Community Arts Centre

It was noted that in the light of the critical financial situation facing the Stag due to the impact of COVID 19 and social distancing restrictions, Sevenoaks Town Councillors had agreed the following at the Council meeting held on Monday 29th June 2020:

Sevenoaks Town Council was committed to keeping the Stag Community Arts Centre open and operating for the benefit of the residents of Sevenoaks. Therefore, Sevenoaks Town Council proposed to help the Stag achieve funding in the current fiscal year, in line with the Stag’s Recovery Plan. It was noted that the Stag’s Recovery Plan would develop as circumstances change and would need to demonstrate how the Stag would recover to a viable operation, as follows:

1. Sevenoaks Town Council would initially grant the Stag £65,000 in line with the request in the Recovery Plan, to cover the first three months of the Stag reopening.

2. The Stag to launch a fundraising appeal, with Sevenoaks Town Council agreeing to match fund up to £60,000 achieved by the Stag.

3. Sevenoaks Town Council committed to revisit the Stag's financial situation on a quarterly basis, offering further grants if needed at the same time being mindful that the Town Council's revenue reserves should not fall to levels which would put at risk its own services to the Town.

4. A Working Group of 4 Town Councillors and appropriate Town Council and Stag officers to regularly review the financial position of the Stag and its Recovery Plan

5. A Working Group of 4 Town Councillors and appropriate Town Council and Stag officers to review alternative governance arrangements to those currently operated at the Stag.

The Town Council continue to support the Stag in other ways including promotion and Live on the Vine events.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 7.50pm.

Signed: Dated:

Chairman

Community Investment Project 2020/21 Cashflows & use of Capital Receipts Reserve (CRR)

CIC 12/10/2020

	Oct 2020 CIC Update			Notes
	2020/21 Sept YTD	Remaining	Total	
<u>Bat & Ball Station Building</u>	(26,133)		(26,133)	Final invoices & automatic door installation. ** £396K Management & Maintenance reserve was created. Current balance £321K to cover operational costs
<u>Bat & Ball , Ancillary ram, bike stores etc</u>	(280)	(79,549)	(79,829)	Oxford steps & Cycle racks budget
<u>Bat & Ball Centre</u>	(1,359,081)	(545,223)	(1,904,304)	Total budget, less spend booked to cc91/ 9063 to y/e 31/3/20
<u>Business Hub</u>	(3,018)	(271,250)	(274,268)	Tenders received
<u>Other Community Investment Plan projects</u>				
NDP & Northern Masterplan	(2,000)	(8,814)	(10,814)	2019/20 cost deducted. Remaining budget used as future spend
Sports Strategy-Rugby	(3,500)	(228,616)	(232,116)	Planning issues. Prior years capital spend deducted
Total Expenditure	(1,394,012)	(1,133,452)	(2,527,464)	
CIL reserves to be released				
Bat & Ball Community centre			570,525	
Business Hub			75,000	
Bat & Ball ancillaries			60,547	
			706,072	
PWL reserves - for Bat & Ball Comm Ctr			1,378,339	
Net funding required (after CIL & PWL)			(443,053)	
Capital Receipts Reserve (CRR) current balance			878,965	Sept 2020 balance
Agreed further use of CRR (F&GP 200720):				
PWLB repayment and interest Jan 2021			35,800	
St John's toilets improvements			2,391	
Replacement Bus shelter			2,779	£5,557 agreed by F&GP, less £2,778 KCC grant received (OSL 280920)
CRR Unallocated			837,995	
Remaining Unallocated CRR (After agreed further use & net project funding required)			394,941	

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Sevenoaks Town Council
Community Infrastructure Committee 12th October 2020

Sevenoaks Business Hub (former Red Cross building)

Planning Permission

Confirmation of approved Planning Permission for the Business Hub was received on 8th April 2019 subject to the following conditions:

- The external seating area shall only be used between the hours of Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. The external seating area shall not be used on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- Prior to the first occupation of the offices hereby permitted details of the provision of two electric vehicle charging points should be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Tenders

Sevenoaks Town Council sought tenders via the Government Contract Finder Website. 14 tenders were returned on 5th April 2019.

Due to not being successful in obtaining funding the project was put on temporary hold and until the Bat & Ball Centre was progressed.

11 tenders have been obtained via the Government Contract Finder ranging from £236,928.30 - £521,605.56 (net). Sevenoaks Town Council has placed **£274,000 in its Capital Receipts Reserve** for the project. Two tenders are within this budget and shortlisted. See tender report below:

	Tender Position	Contractor	Location	Tender £ Gross	Tender £ Net
1	2nd	A	Stratford City	£296,848.00	£247,374.00
2	1st	B	Coulsdon	£284,313.96	£236,928.30

Good references have been obtained for the lowest tender which is a family run contractor company with inhouse joinery department – which may be why they can submit a lower price than other contractors. They have carried out larger projects for London councils.

From date of Sevenoaks Town Council's Resolution, the contractor would need 4 weeks lead in time to order goods etc. the building contract would then take 16 weeks.

Outstanding tree works on the site also need to be addressed and would need to be completed prior to the construction starting.

Building

The building has been empty for a considerable amount of time and is in poor condition. Builders have needed to attend a couple of times to provide additional emergency support to the fabric of the building.

The car park on the site also has problems. Drains need to be renewed and car park area reinstated to the rear of the building. The entrance to the site and car park also needs to be addressed. This would be within the contract.

Business Hub – Short Term Viability

The proposal for using the Building Hub has been within the Sevenoaks Town Council's plans for some time, supported by the members of the Town Team.

The Chamber of Commerce has confirmed that they wish to rent part of the building.

It has always been the intention that part of the building would be used by Sevenoaks Town Council for its Finance Department.

It is understood that need for such a provision has increased due to COVID-19. Whilst people do not want to travel into London for work some find it difficult to work from home with young children and or for younger people living at home needing to work from their bedrooms.

Feedback received is that if the facility can be hired for part or full time and is less than a train season ticket this would be very attractive to use.

Please see additional background information below

Finder.com

- **60%** of the UK's adult population are currently working from home during the Coronavirus lockdown.
- On average, each of these workers will save **£44.78 a week** by cutting out things like commuting and buying lunch out.
- This results in 23.9 million Brits working from home are saving around £1.1 billion each week between them.
- **26%** of Brits plan to continue to work from home permanently or occasionally after lockdown.
- Before the lockdown more than **1.54 million** people work from home for their main job, up from 884,000 10 years ago.
- Two different surveys both found that around two-thirds of employees say they are more productive when working from home.
- However as more people work from home for an extended period, **one in five** remote workers have previously said they struggle with **loneliness**.
- It is currently estimated that the retail industry will lose **£253 million** because of COVID-19, with in-store employees unable to work from home.

Guardian 5th August 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic has prompted a shift from big city centre offices to smaller suburban work hubs, according to IWG, the world's biggest flexible workspace provider. Over the past month, the company, formerly known as Regus, has experienced a surge in interest in flexible office space outside the big cities, as well as its homeworking packages, which include furniture rental, insurance, telecoms lines, video conferencing, stationery and repairs.

Savills November 2014

Smart work hubs have all the much-touted benefits of any co-working space - increased creativity, sharing ideas, collaboration, networking and a sense of community, but also increased productivity through flexible working patterns. One important addition for workers in a smart work hub is that reducing a long commute should ideally increase work-life balance, with flow-on effects for job satisfaction, engagement, and productivity, as well as easing congestion on the roads.

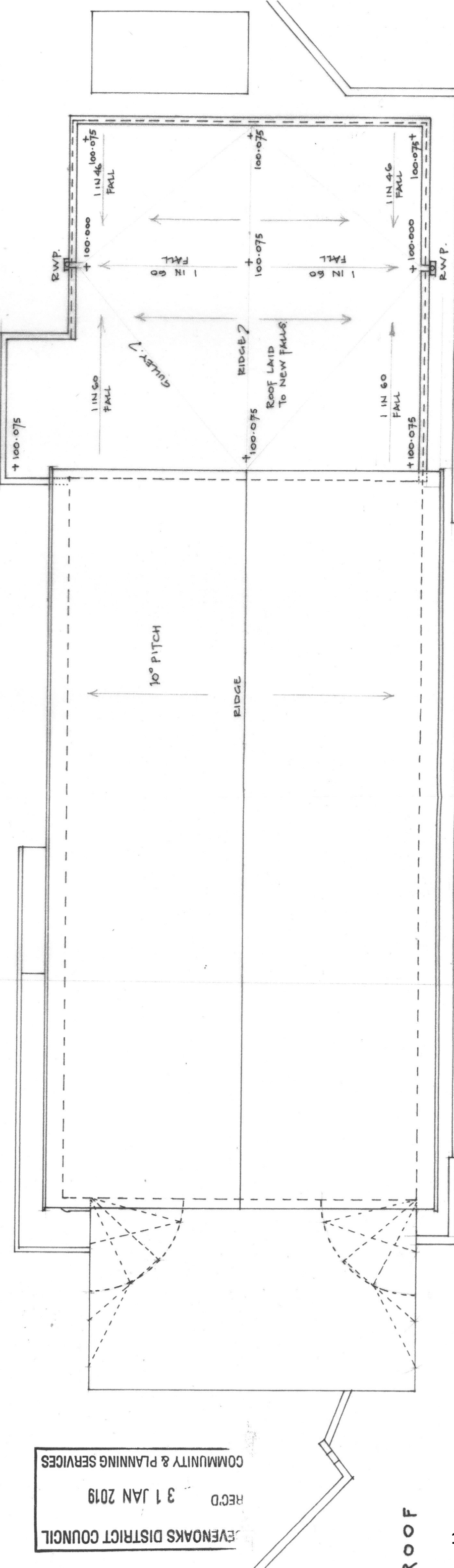
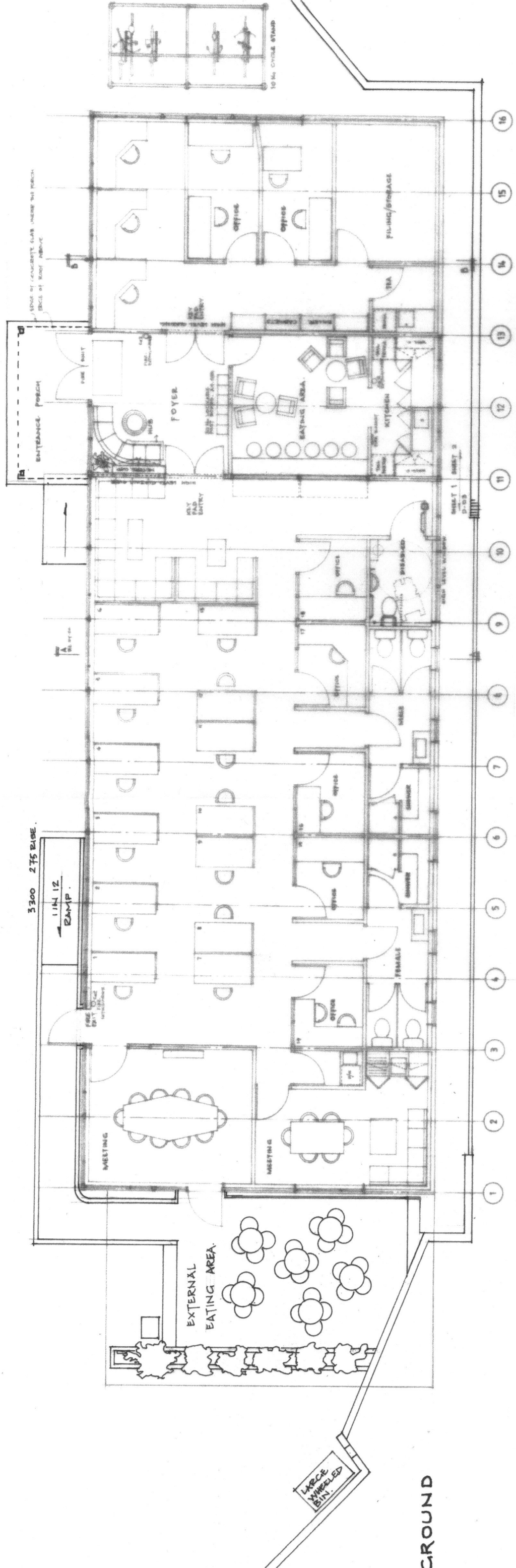
Smart work hubs appeal to smaller clients – like SMEs, start-ups, freelancers, and consultants – because they want to be part of the community being developed, and upgrade from working from home to a professional but progressive office environment with flexible terms.

Building Long Term Viability

Once restored, if the Business Hub were not viable long-term Sevenoaks Town Council would have a restored building to lease or sell. The Town Council's experience has been that projects need three years to develop fully in normal circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION:

- i) Sevenoaks Town Council accepts Tender B of £236,928.30 net and enters a contract for the refurbishment of the former Red Cross building to create a Business Hub.
- ii) Fees & Charges are reviewed and agreed by Finance & General Purposes Committee



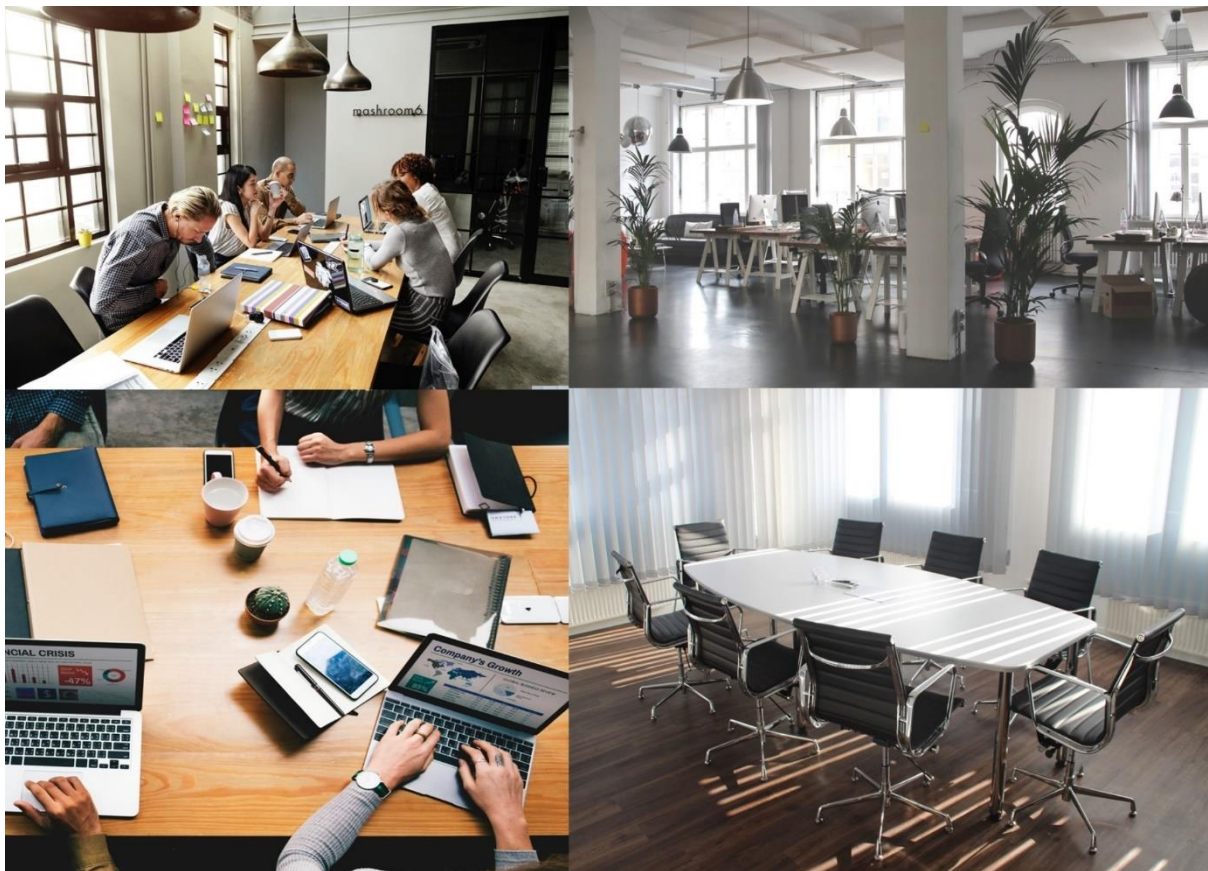
REVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL
COMMUNITY & PLANNING SERVICES
REC'D 31 JAN 2019

12
vision Description
GIVEN DIMENSIONS TO BE READ IN PREFERENCE TO SCALED CHECK ALL DIMENSIONS ON SITE PLEASE CONTACT THE ARCHITECT IF ANY ANOMALIES IN THE DIMENSIONS IS FOUND PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION
GLENN BALL
Chartered Architect
Tel. 01732 761629
Date
Site: 47 BRADBOURNE VALE ROAD, TN13 3QG Dwg: 96/D-05.
Client: SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL
Scale: 1:100 @ A3
Date: JAN 2018
Dwg Title: PROPOSED GROUND & ROOF PLAN

SEVENOAKS BUSINESS HUB

FEASIBILITY STUDY BY SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL

September 2019



Sevenoaks Town Council
Council Offices
Bradbourne Vale Road
Sevenoaks Kent TN13 3QG
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sevenoaks Town Council (STC) had publicly announced its decision to sell its current office site and invest proceeds into building new offices on the second floor of the new Bat & Ball centre. One of the reasons that the Town Council changed its development plans on its community centre site was due to the opportunity to develop the former Red Cross building into a Business Hub for small and start-up businesses.

Had the Town Council sold its current site and moved offices into the community centre site the development opportunity for the Business Hub would have been lost as it would not have been economically viable to purchase or construct a new building for this facility.

The proposed Business Hub has been a long-term aspiration of both Sevenoaks Town Council and Sevenoaks Town Partnership and will provide the following for new and small businesses. The building is currently derelict and not in use. When refurbished, a part of it will be retained for Town Council staff and BID Admin staff if the BID develops.

Most of the building will be used for the creation of a Business Hub which will function as an incubator for small and new businesses and will include the following facilities:

- 13 x Desk Space
- 5 Office Pods
- Separate small office (Chamber of Commerce)
- Reception and Postal Box service
- Limited storage
- Meeting room for 8-10
- Communal kitchen and dining area
- Free car and cycle parking
- 2 electric car charging points

2. INTRODUCTION

Justification

Sevenoaks Town Council (STC) has inherited the former Red Cross building that currently sits, disused, on the town council site in Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks. STC would like to renovate the building to make it, once again, valuable to the surrounding community.

The proposed solution is to create a Business Hub with rentable desks and a meeting room for self-employed professionals and small businesses to rent.

This aims to solve the problem of a lack of affordable office space in Sevenoaks for small and new businesses, as well as positively contributing to economic development in the area by promoting business growth. This is in keeping with the aims set out in the masterplan for Northern Sevenoaks, to develop and rejuvenate the area.

What are the potential benefits of the Business hub to our area?

In Sevenoaks parish 9.1% of the population are small employers and own account workers, and 12.6% are self-employed which is higher than the Kent average of 10.9% (ONS, 2011). Additionally, the number of people working from home is on the rise, with those who usually work from home having increased by a fifth (19%) over the past decade (TUC, 2016).

This demographic has great flexibility regarding their work location; however this flexibility comes with obstacles such as professional isolation which “occurs when the desires for support, understanding, and other social and emotional aspects of interaction are not met” (Gerdenitsch et al., 2016). Business Hubs can provide a potential solution to professional isolation, since they aim to establish a social atmosphere in which social interaction and collaboration are possible (Gerdenitsch et al., 2016).

By establishing a Business Hub, it is possible to assemble a number of micro and other businesses all in one place; this concentration and accumulation of knowledge can create a business cluster phenomenon that has key economic benefits for the community (Kuah, 2002). Such benefits include an increase in human capital to the cluster, as well as bringing ‘under the radar’ micros into the open and consequently helping to identify a number of businesses previously unknown to the council and the surrounding community (Kuah, 2002). Furthermore, when the hub is established, the reputation of a cluster, whether in quality or innovation, will draw not only customers but also other businesses wanting to benefit from the concentration of knowledge (Kuah, 2002).

Limits

However, just the existence of a business hub is not enough to ensure an economic cluster environment and the reduction of professional isolation; spontaneous knowledge sharing does not “just happen” (Brown, 2017; Jackson, 2017).

Research shows that there must be a formal organisational structure that not only facilitates social interaction and encourages business improvement, but also continues to refine this process to suit new needs (Jackson, 2017). One such structure is a Business Hub Manager that is shown to play a vital role in facilitating the interactions and exchanges that develop among co-workers, and those between co-workers and external parties (Brown, 2017). Examples of this curation or mediation includes: the choice of co-workers, the composition of membership, Coworking practices (behaviours), and the production of tailored engagement and networking activities (Brown, 2017).

Thus, the success of the business hub will depend on several criteria. Some of which includes:

- The role and duties of the business hub manager.
- The facilitating of face-to-face interactions to foster trust and knowledge exchange.
- The success of networking events and activities to encourage business growth.
- The attractiveness and quality of the interior design of the Hub.
- Flexible, diverse rates and services tailor made for the community.

(Castilho and Quandt, 2017; Jackson, 2017)

3. BUSINESS HUB PROPOSAL

The proposal

Sevenoaks Town Council wants to develop a disused building on the town council site, into a business hub for small and start-up businesses and self-employed professionals.

Aims

The project would aim to provide a professional, affordable co-working space for entrepreneurs and professionals to work out of, that would encourage business growth, create networking opportunities, and eliminate the isolation that can occur in small businesses and in those who are self-employed.

Plans

Initial plans envision a large office space with desks in a communal layout for hotdesking and dedicated desk services; individual 'office pods', a meeting room that sits 8-10 people that can be hired out; a kitchen with a communal eating space; separate male and female toilets; lockers for storage of personal items and mail, and a number key lock for secure access.

4. BUSINESS HUB MANAGEMENT

The proposal is for the Sevenoaks Business Hub to be a direct operation of Sevenoaks Town Council. The Town Council operates a variety of public buildings and hires facilities. It also has very close links with the Sevenoaks Town Partnership whose membership comes from a variety of business organisations including the Chamber of Commerce.

The day to day operation will be part of the Town Council's central operation in relation to booking procedures, financial controls, caretaking and cleaning etc.

The Project Management Team for the Project Build and responsibility for operation is as follows:

Linda Larter MBE, Chief Executive / Town Clerk

Linda has a degree in Local Policy and is a Fellow of Institute of Local Council Management and has extensive experience in project management and was nominated for an MBE by the Millennium Commission for project management of a capital building project.

Stephanie Harrison, Sevenoaks Town Partnership Administrator

Stephanie has been proactively working with local businesses in Sevenoaks for a couple of years and is well known to them.

5. MARKET ASSESSMENT

UK market

In recent years, the number of co-working spaces in the UK have rapidly expanded, gaining popularity among autonomous creative workers, free lancers and micro-businesses. These spaces are described as a shared physical workspace where cooperation between independent workers may encourage productivity and business growth (Brown, 2017).

Data from both the 2011 Census and Labour Force surveys partly explain why there are a growing number of successful business hubs/co-working spaces in the UK. These trends appear to be disconnected from the economic cycle.

These trends include:

- Two thirds of homeworkers are self-employed
- The fastest growing section of the UK workforce is the self-employed homeworker
- Homeworking is around 50% higher in rural than urban areas
- Many parts of a more rural Britain now have more than one-in-five workers using their home as their main workspace
- Even though the number of people working from home or for themselves (or both) in urban places may be lower than rural places, numbers are still big. For example, more than half a million work mainly from home in London.
- Homeworkers are more likely to be men (66%)
- More affluent areas have higher levels of homeworking than poorer areas. Kensington & Chelsea in central London is the capital's hotspot for home-based business for example.

(ONS, 2011)

Trends in the South East

In our market assessment we identified two business models that are prominent in the South East, however some businesses take features from both.

Model 1 – Basic functional co-working

Summary:

Simple, homely interiors based on functionality and comfort with a focus on dedicated desks for professionals, self-contained offices for small companies and a small space for open plan drop-in workspace. Aimed at professionals or small businesses wanting a comfortable professional office space that is not at home. No permanent on-site management.

Services include:

- Basic kitchenette
- Meeting room
- Open air seating
- Pigeon holes for post
- Professional business address
- Storage for personal belongings
- Boards for advertising
- Networking events
- Access through keypad/fob

Model 2 – Advanced services co-working

Summary:

A focus on attractive contemporary interiors to attract a younger, more creative clientele. A bigger focus on open plan drop-in workspace (hotdesking) rather than dedicated desks and private offices. Offering more advanced services that require a bigger management staff.

Services include:

- Scanning & printing
- Receptionist
- IT support
- Barista style coffees
- Café
- Using their website to advertising companies using their facilities
- Draught beers
- Meeting room
- Networking events

Both models have advantages and disadvantages and attract different audiences. Model 2, for example may restrict membership to a particular demographic, such as creatives in their 20s and 30s. Additionally, the open plan structure it boasts of may be off-putting to those wanting somewhere they can work effectively without distraction. Whereas Model 1, lacks the onsite support that could be valuable to those who have not used similar services before.

However what business hubs and co-working spaces of all types offer include:

- A social alternative to the isolation that can come from working from home.
- A professional place to meet clients.
- Shared and therefore cheaper high-end equipment and fast broadband.
- Increased productivity.

- Flexible solution to renting office space.
- Potential business growth through networking, peer mentoring etc.

Target market

The STC is focusing on small businesses, start-up businesses, entrepreneurs and self-employed professionals as the target market for the business hub. This is the group that we feel would benefit from access to a professional but affordable space to work out of as an alternative to working from home or renting out serviced office space from competitors.

In terms of the types of businesses STC are looking to attract, consideration should be given to the industry statistics of the area. The largest industries in the Sevenoaks parish are financial and insurance activities at 14.3% and professional, scientific and technical activities at 14.6%, much higher than the Kent averages at 5.0% and 6.4% respectively. Creatives, who some co-working spaces are set up for, in comparison make up the smallest percentage of the labour force.

Given this data, STC must consider whether to target the bigger more prominent industries that already exist in Sevenoaks or encouraging growth in smaller industries such as the creative industry. This choice will impact which features STC include and the overall interior style of the hub.

Market demand

STC have examined the market in Sevenoaks and it principally consists of serviced office space that is considered very expensive even for more established companies. Consequently, there is a clear space in the market for a company offering more affordable office space in the Sevenoaks area.

STC's initial market research indicated a clear demand for not only affordable office space, but for a Business Hub that is designed to encourage networking and business growth. Some see such businesses as a brilliant way of making new contacts if they have just moved into a new area or if they are in the initial stages of launching a new business.

What are people willing to pay

What are people already paying?

The price for common services offered by competitors around Sevenoaks vary depending on the clientele of the co-working space, the amenities offered by the spaces, and the economic climate of the area. However, based on our research of 15 co-working spaces/business hubs, the table below displays the average range of prices for the services that STC are looking to offer.

	<i>Hotdesking</i>	<i>Dedicated desk</i>
<i>Average price range (£)</i>	60 - 162	203 - 243

Forecasting potential demand

It is difficult to predict the potential demand of the hub, as users of other similar ventures vary. However, initial market research via an online questionnaire and from a small focus group of entrepreneurs has indicated a strong interest for professional affordable office space in Sevenoaks.

6. COMPETITION ANALYSIS

Who are the major competitors?

A list of major competitors can be seen in the Tables 1 & 2 in the Appendix. The former includes similar ventures that exist in and around Kent whose services and price points vary. The latter is the competition exclusively found in Sevenoaks and includes several companies offering serviced offices averaging in price at £420 per month per person. STC has outlined two principle models based on two potential competitors The House, a co-working space in Tunbridge Wells, and Dragon co-working in Rochester.

What are the competitor's major strengths?

Strengths of similar ventures:

- Offering a broad range of flexible options at competitive prices.
- Offering a range of desk renting options such as hotdesking and dedicated desks.
- Providing business support and/or peer mentoring for business growth.
- Offering networking nights/events.
- Offering open plan "co-workings spaces" to allow for networking and cooperation.
- Coworking spaces are offered at a cheaper price than traditionally serviced offices.
- Modern, visually attractive spaces.
- Close to/in town centres and close to railway stations.
- Offering virtual office services including business/postal addresses.
- Reception services/general IT support.
- Offering access to meeting rooms.

Strengths of Sevenoaks competition:

- The majority are in central Sevenoaks close to the mainline station or high street.
- Offering business/postal addresses with the prestigious Sevenoaks address.
- Offering spaces for bigger more established companies.

What are the competitor's major weaknesses?

Weaknesses of similar ventures:

- Businesses not based in Sevenoaks.
- Most are not advertised to have car parking.

Weaknesses of Sevenoaks competition:

- Offering offices space that are very pricey for a growing business.
- Only offering spaces for bigger more established companies.
- Prices do not include overheads such as setting up Wi-Fi, printing, electricity bills etc.
- Not offering short term or flexible contracts.

Location of competitors

The similar ventures are based in thriving town/city centres such as Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone and Canterbury and are close to railway and bus stations for easy transport links.

Can the Sevenoaks Business Hub compete?

There are no similar ventures in Sevenoaks which gives STC an advantage in securing the market. In addition, Sevenoaks is a very attractive place to work which is characterised by high levels of economic activity and a skilled resident workforce.

The space STC has available may not be initially as big as those in Canterbury or other serviced offices in Sevenoaks but by using a modular style of building we would be able to expand and grow as the demand is established for the hub. Similarly, STC will not be able to offer the range of services that bigger more established competitors do. However, initially it could give a competitive advantage if STC focuses on offering a select few services very well with the potential to expand further if there is a demand.

The location is not in a town/city centre like most of our competition, but the site is a five-minute walk from a train station that will be newly refurbished by the time that the Business Hub is up and running and a twenty-minute walk to a mainline station with frequent and fast direct trains to London. Additionally, there is free parking available, a few nearby shops, and only a twenty-five-minute walk from the centre of town. Furthermore, feedback from market research has indicated that being outside of the town centre and being able to avoid the related traffic congestion is a positive. These draws should make up for the lack of proximity to a town/city centre.

7. MARKETING STRATEGY

How will the market be assessed?

Using both questionnaires and focus groups STC aim to gather market research including: what services would be valuable to customers, what price point they would buy these at, and who would be interested in the proposed product.

What is the competitive advantage of the product and or benefits in relation to competitors?

In Sevenoaks there are no other businesses offering services which STC plan to, such as hotdesking or dedicated desks. The geographically nearest direct competitors (as seen in Table 1 in Appendix) are in Kings Hill, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge. There are individuals and companies offering serviced office space to rent but these are very expensive (see Table 2 in Appendix) and involve the small companies that use them, paying additional overheads such as electricity, Wi-Fi, printing etc.

STC's principle selling point is offering a more affordable, flexible option than serviced office space. Customers pay a fixed price each month depending on their usage and the services they need without having to worry about overhead costs or signing into a long contract. As this would be the first business of this type in Sevenoaks STC would be the first to offer services such as hotdesking and a co-working space at an affordable price.

What will attract businesses

- This is the first venture of its type in Sevenoaks.
- It has good railway links and lots of available free parking.
- The opportunity to network and make new business connections is extremely valuable.
- The area is undergoing regeneration, including the refurbishing of the nearest train station, opening a new community centre, opening a nursery and building new homes.

How is this different to others?

- Unique in Sevenoaks.
- Offers extensive parking.
- Fast fibre optic broadband that is not available in other parts of the district.
- Renovated and designed specifically to create a business hub.

Pricing methods

We will use a gym membership inspired system with more expensive tiers offering more access or services. This is to keep our market open to as many people as possible. Below is an example of the system we would like to put in place. This does not reflect our final pricing structure.

Type of membership	Price month	per	Services included
Postal/business address	£25		Postal/business address Storage for post until collection Post forwarding services
Hotdesking up to 2 days a week	£80		Access 1 to 3 days a week
Hotdesking up to 5 days a week	£130		Access up to 5 days a week
Dedicated desk	£200		Unlimited access Dedicated desk 6 hours of meeting room time per week Storage for personal belongings
Private Pod Workspace	£250		Unlimited access Dedicated desk in enclosed lockable pod workspace 2 hours of meeting room time per month Locker for personal belongings
Meeting room hired by Members	£15 per hour		Room seating 10 people around a table Refreshment facilities
Meeting room hired by Non – members	£18 per hour		Room seating 10 people around a table Refreshment facilities

Interest to date

Initial focus group

The reaction from our initial focus group was very positive. The focus group was comprised mainly of start-up business owners and self-employed professionals. The general feedback was that there was both support for the idea and a demand for the business hub in the community. They stated that either themselves or their clients would be interested in utilising the hub and their enthusiasm for the project was highlighted by questions about how quickly the hub will be set up and how soon will it be open for use.

8. FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Budgeted Revenue Income and Expenditure per annum

Budgeted Income

Facility	P. Month	Qty	Total p. month	Total p.annum
office pod	250	5	1,250	15,000
postal address	25	4	100	1,200
dedicated desk	200	9	1,800	21,600
hot desking	80	10	800	9,600
meeting room			330	3,960
separate office	400	1	400	4,800
100% occupancy			4,680	56,160
90% occupancy			4,212	50,544
80% occupancy			3,744	44,928

Budgeted Expenditure

Non-Domestic Rates	4,000
Utilities	8,000
Cleaning	10,000
Maintenance	6,000
internet provision	2,000
administration	12,000
	42,000

9. CAPITAL FINANCING

	Budget Heading	Budget £
1	Construction Costs	260,000
2	Audio visual	11,000
3	Internet provision	2,500
4	Interior Design	5,000
5	Fixtures & Fittings	20,000
6	Signage	3,500
7	Car Park	35,000
	Sub Total	337,000
8	Contingency at 10%	34,000
	Sub Total	371,000
9	Car charging points x 2	2,000
	Total	373,000

10. ECONOMIC IMPACT

The scheme

Sevenoaks Town Council (STC) has inherited a derelict former Red Cross building and is planning to bring the currently disused building back into use as a modern business hub.

There is a current shortfall in affordable office space in Sevenoaks and a limited supply of land for employment related development¹. STC are therefore proposing to create a new Business Hub which help address this shortfall and contribute towards business growth ambitions by providing office space for small and start-up businesses.

The Hub will offer affordable office space on a 'gym membership style' subscription basis and this will be ideal for self-employed professionals and small businesses. There is also potential for the new accommodation to accommodate business support and incubator activities, thereby further promoting business growth.

It is estimated that the delivery of the Business Hub could cost in the order of £200,000 and once refurbished, a small part of the building will be retained for use by Town Council staff.

A Feasibility Study September 2018, reviewed in April 2019 demonstrated potential and capacity for the Business Hub to deliver:

	September 2018	April 2019
Desk Space	16	13
Office Pods	0	5
Separate Office (Chamber of Commerce tbc)	0	1
Reception and postal service	1	1
Lockers for personal storage	√	√
Free car parking	√	√
Electrical car charging points	0	2
Cycle parking	0	4
Meeting room for 8 – 10 people	√	√
Communal kitchen, eating area	√	√
Relaxed seating / working area		√

Under current plans, the business hub will be operated directly by STC and through its planned subscription rental pricing terms, the Business Hub will be open to as many entrepreneurs as

¹ Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Economic Needs Study, Turley Economics (2016)

possible. Customers would pay a fixed price each month depending on their usage (envisaged at between £80 and £250 per month) and this will help start-up businesses to avoid unnecessary overhead costs and the flexible terms offered by the Hub will also mean that businesses would avoid the risks of signing into a long-term contract.

As such, the scheme will bring a new quality business accommodation product to Sevenoaks, which will help to diversify the local office market, which currently principally consists of very expensive serviced office space. The need for low cost workspace to support local enterprise is recognised within the Sevenoaks Economic Development Strategy². Sevenoaks Business Hub would provide a professional, affordable co-working space for entrepreneurs and professionals, that would encourage business growth, create networking opportunities, and eliminate the isolation that can occur in small businesses and in those who are self-employed.

Strategic context

The lack of affordable office space in Sevenoaks is a significant problem for small sized businesses and for new and emerging start-ups and this is a constraint on local economic development this is currently hindering the towns ability to fully contribute towards to local and sub-national (LEP-level) growth ambitions.

Contributions to Local growth ambitions

As well as delivering a new business accommodation product that can ensure the continued supply of start-up businesses in the town, the delivery of the Sevenoaks Business Hub has potential to improve investor confidence and catalyse the economic benefits of other STC initiatives locally, particularly the development of Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan.

There is a wide evidence base nationally that confirms that public investment in similar Business Hub's facilities can be important enablers for improving investor confidence and bringing forward wider surrounding regeneration and the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan includes plans for the regeneration of the 'Tarmac' quarry site into a mixed-use urban extension providing 800 new homes. This increase in local population will further drive demand for co-working and affordable office spaces in the immediate area and in embedding a new asset for the local entrepreneurial community, Sevenoaks Business Hub could act as a catalyst for attracting new talented residents to the area. The scheme will therefore make an important contribution towards the wider growth ambitions for the town.

Contribution to South East LEP growth ambitions

The South East LEPs Strategic Economic Plan (SEP 2014) identifies a number of key ambitions and growth objectives for which the delivery of the Sevenoaks Business Hub would support, including a contribution towards boosting productivity by supporting start-up businesses and investing in business infrastructure at the local level. Sevenoaks is itself situated within the strategic A21 London - Tonbridge - Tunbridge Wells growth corridor, one of 12 corridors identified as key drivers of economic prosperity.

More widely, the Business Hub will be entirely in keeping with the SEP ambition to '*establish core business support, via Growth Hubs, across the South East*'. The focus for the Growth Hubs is on improving information flows, linkages and quality across business support services in

² Economic Development Strategy 2018-2021, Sevenoaks District Council (2018)

each local area, including the promotion of flexible start-up accommodation, and the delivery of the Business Hub will therefore strengthen Sevenoaks contribution towards the South East LEP's start-up and business support agenda.

Forecasting Economic Impacts

The primary economic benefit of the Business Hub will be derived from the Hubs ability to attract and accommodate new start-ups in Sevenoaks, and thereby supporting new employment in the labour market and Gross Value Added (GVA) in the economy. In the absence of public investment to bring the disused building back into commercial use it is considered that in current market conditions there is little prospect that private investment will bring forward the proposed scheme.

A bespoke economic impact model has been developed which forecasts gross Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs that could be accommodated within the Business Hub. The model then estimates the net additionality of the gross employment gains to the South East LEP labour market, by applying prudent adjustments to account for leakage, displacement and indirect and induced (multiplier) effects.

The effects on the economy arising from the net additional employment gains have then been expressed in terms of cumulative GVA gains over the next 10 years to 2028/29. The Cumulative GVA estimates generated through the scheme have also been expressed in Net Present Value (NPV) terms, reflecting society's preference over economic growth now versus in the future.

Whilst some Town Council activities would be relocated into the converted Hub building following the completion of the scheme, these have been deducted from the modelling as 'deadweight' and the 'reference case' position is that these activities would continue irrespective of the scheme.

Whilst some tenant business activities may otherwise continue within the South East LEP area irrespective of the scheme, either from alternative premises or through home working, these effects are considered through displacement deductions. The projected net additional FTE jobs described below are therefore considered to be wholly additional to the scheme.

Gross operational employment effects

The scheme will refurbish a disused building and bring it back into commercial use. The former Red Cross building has been identified as an ideal location for delivering new flexible co-working office space for small and start-up businesses and there is known demand for such a Hub locally. When delivered the Hub will provide co-working space with 16 desks (based on Sept 2018 proposal) on rented on flexible terms and this will in turn provide space for up to 16 gross FTE jobs.

Although there is known latent demand for such space within the town, for prudence it is assumed that there will be a degree of under-occupancy within the Hub and an occupancy assumption of 80% has been applied to reflect periods of under-utilisation of desk space. In practice, the Business Hub may achieve close to a 100% occupancy and the flexibility afforded through the subscription model means that more than 1 job per desk space may be achieved.

Based on typical churn rates achieved among similar business hubs, it is anticipated that over a 5 year period, around 50% of Hub tenants will move into grow-on space elsewhere in the town and that the growth and re-location of these start-ups will free-up capacity at the Hub to support further FTE jobs.

Over a 10-year operational life of the Business Hub, it is estimated that this could support a further 14 gross FTE jobs at the Hub and on this basis it is estimated that the scheme has potential to support **30 gross FTE jobs over the first 10 years of the Hub's operation.**

Net additional employment effects

To estimate the net additionality of the gross FTE employment impacts of the scheme to the South East LEP area labour market, prudent adjustments have been made to reflect leakage (-25%) and displacement (-50%) effects - Both are considered to be medium-high levels based on benchmarks reporting in the HCA Additionality Guide (4th Ed, 2014).

Leakage reflects the level of jobs at the Hub that may be occupied by individuals living outside of the South East LEP area. Assumptions regarding the levels of leakage are derived from Census 2011 commuting data (ONS, 2011), which indicates reasonably high levels of in-commuting to Sevenoaks from outside of the South East LEP (25%). This level of leakage has been applied for prudence, although in practice the Hub is likely to target tenants living within the immediate area.

Displacement effects reflect the proportion of jobs accommodated at the Business Hub that may be accommodated elsewhere in the South East LEP. Whilst there are known deficits in affordable small business accommodation in Sevenoaks, it is likely that some start-up businesses / FTE jobs may form in other similar facilities in the LEP area or through home working. In practice, the shift from home working to more formal business accommodation represents an important step towards full-time employment and arguably some existing or future home working activities may in fact not be considered as a measurable FTE job. Nevertheless, displacement is considered to be at the medium-high level.

A multiplier of 1.35 has also been applied to reflect the downstream indirect (supply chain) and induced (wage-related) effects of the direct FTE jobs and this adjustment has drawn on Input Output Multiplier Table evidence published by ONS (2014).

Based these adjustments, it is estimated that the scheme will generate a **total of 8 net additional FTE jobs following initial occupation of the Hub, rising to 15 net additional FTEs over the first 10 years.**

Gross Value Added effects

The benefits to the economy arising from the net additional FTE job gains within the South East LEP labour market has then been quantified through an assessment of GVA impacts.

It is assumed that the additional job impacts will persist within the labour market for 10 years, although, in line with national trends, it is likely that a proportion of start-up businesses / jobs are likely to fail. A 'decay factor' has therefore been assumed based on ONS UK Business Demography series (2016) evidence for the South East. This assumes that around 75% of start-ups/FTE jobs will still be present within the labour market after the first 3 years and that 40% of FTE jobs would survive the first 6 years. In practice, any attrition of jobs supported through

the Hub may be mitigated though the Hubs role in facilitating closer collaborations/co-working alongside any business support activities provided through the Hub.

A GVA per job metric of £41,806 per job has then been used to estimate the annual GVA effects of the anticipated net additional employment gains. This GVA per job figure represents 75% of the figure for Kent (ONS Sub-National GVA Estimates, 2016 and ONS Business Register and Employment Survey, 2016) to reflect the lower than average incomes generally supported within early stage businesses.

To determine Net Present Value (NPV), a HM Treasury 3.5% annual discount factor has then been applied to the cumulative GVA figure.

It is estimated that the scheme will generate a cumulative total of **£3.35m of GVA by 2028/29, equivalent to £2.80m of GVA at present values.**

Summary of Impacts and Value for Money

The Sevenoaks Business Hub scheme is forecast to deliver 30 gross FTE jobs, or 15 net additional FTE jobs within the South East LEP area labour market over the first ten years. By 2028/29, a total of £3.35m of cumulative GVA is forecast to be generated by the net additional FTE job gains (£2.80m at NPV).

In order to assess the relative Value for Money arising from the scheme, cost per job and Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) analysis has been applied to the estimated £200,000 capital cost of the scheme.

Economic Modelling Outputs	
Item	Value
Gross FTE jobs	30
Net FTE jobs	15
GVA	£3.35m
NPV	£2.80m
Funding ask	£200,000
BCR	14.0
Cost per job	£12,995

Based on a total of 15 net additional FTE jobs, the scheme is anticipated to have a **cost per job of £12,995** (£0.2m/15 net FTEs). HCA guidance identifies an acceptable cost per net job benchmark of £28,700 for projects with a key focus on job creation (HCA, Calculating Cost per Job, 3rd ed. 2015) and when compared to the established benefit the scheme is anticipated to deliver jobs at an excellent cost.

When scheme costs are compared to the present value GVA generated over the first ten years, the scheme deliver a **BCR of 14.0: 1**, meaning that for every £1 of investment in delivering the Business Hub is anticipated to generate £14.00 in value within the economy.

As such, it is considered that the scheme **would deliver excellent value for money.**

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been the ambition of Sevenoaks Town Council and Sevenoaks Town Partnership for several years to provide a Business Hub to act as an incubator for small and new businesses. The Hub would also provide natural integration between local businesses to enable them to assist each other in their growth.

It has not been possible to progress the project to date due to the capital costs relating to obtaining or building an appropriate building for a business hub.

An opportunity arose recently when the Town Council had a building returned to it after the tenants decided to relocate elsewhere. The building is not in a good condition, however if capital investment is obtained for its refurbishment it is believed that the Business Hub will be self-financing in the future. The Economic Impact Assessment has stated that the proposal will deliver 'excellent value for money'.

The initial reaction from start-up and self-employed businesses has been extremely positive, to the point that they are frustrated that we cannot complete the project sooner. Businesses are aware that other facilities in Kent exist such as House, and Fruitworks and very much want one locally.

12. APPENDICES

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Tables and graphs

Table 1 – Competition/similar ventures in the South East

OFFICES	LOCATION
Kings Hill Avenue	Kings Hill, ME20
DeskTeam	Beckenham, BR3 4JG
Castle Lodge (Desk Renter Limited)	Tonbridge
The House TW	Tunbridge Wells
Fruitworks Coworking	Canterbury
Hub for Innovation and Enterprise Workspace	Canterbury
Kent Enterprise Trust	Herne Bay
Dragon co-working	Rochester
The Pantiles Chambers	Tunbridge Wells
Business Terrace	Maidstone
Calverley House	Tunbridge Wells
Marlowe Innovation Centre	Ramsgate
The Nucleus Business and Innovation Centre	Dartford
The Werks	Brighton
The Werks	Hove

Table 2 – Competition in Sevenoaks

OFFICE	PRICE PM PP
London Road Halstead	£550
Lime Tree House	£300
High Street Sevenoaks	-
Buckhurst Avenue	£250
London Road Sevenoaks	-
London Road Halstead	£550

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SEVENOAKS BUSINESS HUB

New affordable
office workspace
coming soon
to Sevenoaks
Bradbourne Vale
Road



*Work by yourself
but not alone*





OVERVIEW

Sevenoaks Town Council is in the process of developing a Business hub that will provide professional, affordable workspaces for small businesses, start-up businesses and self-employed professionals.

WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE?

When completed, Sevenoaks Business Hub will be a large, modern office with around 20 workspaces designed for comfort and privacy. It will also include comfortable communal areas including a kitchen and dining area for eating, and couches for relaxing and networking with likeminded professionals.

The workspaces will be rented out on a flexible basis, providing professional, affordable office space in Sevenoaks as an alternative to working from home, or renting out serviced office space.

Located on Bradbourne Vale Road next to the Town Council building, the Hub is a 5 minute walk from Bat and Ball railway station, a 20 minute walk to Sevenoaks railway station and has ample free parking and bike storage facilities.

HOW COULD IT IMPROVE YOUR WORK/BUSINESS?

- ◇ Give you access to flexible, professional, affordable office space in Sevenoaks
- ◇ Provide networking opportunities to grow and develop your business
- ◇ Access to fast fibre optic broadband that is not available in other parts of the district
- ◇ Eliminate isolation that may occur in people that are self-employed
- ◇ Give you access to a professional meeting room



BUSINESS HUB SERVICES

Dedicated desk

Rent out a personal desk with some storage to leave your belongings in.

Meeting facilities

Rent out a meeting room, with teleconferencing equipment and refreshment facilities.

Networking events

Regular networking events and guest speakers to help grow and improve your business.

Hotdesking

Rent out one of a range of communal desks that you can select from when you arrive for the day.

Business address

Pay for a professional physical address that you can have post delivered to.

Free parking

MEMBERSHIP/RATES

Membership for desk and business address access is on a month by month basis, allowing for flexibility if your business grows or changes.

Type of membership/ rates	Price	Services included
Postal/business address	£25 per month	Postal/business address Storage for post until collection
Hotdesking up to 2 days a week	£80 per month	Access 1 to 3 days a week
Hotdesking up to 5 days a week	£130 per month	Access up to 5 days a week
Dedicated desk	£200 per month	Unlimited access Dedicated desk 4 hours of meeting room time per week Locker for personal belongings
Private pod workspace	£250 per month	Unlimited access Dedicated desk in enclosed lockable pod workspace 2 hours of meeting room time per month Locker for personal belongings
Meeting room hired by members	£15 per hour	Room seating 10 people around a table Refreshment facilities
Meeting room hired by non-members	£18 per hour	Room seating 10 people around a table Refreshment facilities

FIND OUT MORE

If you want to hear more about the Sevenoaks Business Hub or are interested in reserving a desk when it opens, then email the form below to **council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk** or call us on **01732 459953**.

Register your interest in Sevenoaks Business Hub

Name:

Email address:

What services are you interested in? (select all that apply)

☐

Hotdesking

☐

Dedicated desk

☐

Meeting facilities

☐

Business address

☐

Private pod workspace

Please check this box to consent to be contacted by Sevenoaks Town Council about the Business Hub project.

☐

PHONE:

01732 459953

EMAIL:

council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

ADDRESS:

Town Council Offices,
Bradbourne Vale Rd,
Sevenoaks
TN13 3QG



Sevenoaks Town Council
Community Infrastructure Committee – 12th October 2020

Community Investment Plan Projects

i) Bat & Ball Centre

Contractors from BJF Group have stayed on site and working throughout the pandemic. The building subject to some snagging works has been completed. Building works have continued satisfactorily, on schedule and within budget.

A site visit was arranged for Town Councillors on 10th August 2020. A site visit for the SDC CIL Board and Town Team members also took place. Members of the Community Centre Users Group (hirers) have been invited for a site meeting on 5th November 2020 – there has been a very good take up of the invitation. Arrangements are being put in place for a promotional video of the building to be produced to enable this to be on the Town Council's website and for people to view remotely.

The 'official opening event (s)' is scheduled for **Friday 4th December 2020**, however it is not possible at this stage to plan activities for this. It is recommended that a soft opening takes place e.g. Mayor cuts the ribbon and public are able to access the building and view in small groups (currently 6 recommended) and that a grander opening event takes place in 2021 – details to be confirmed.

Capacity numbers subject to approval for Premises Licence are shown below:

Room	Standing	Previous Building	Revised Numbers Proposed	Theatre Seating	Previous Building	Revised Numbers Proposed	Sit down Meal / Meeting	Previous Building	Revised Numbers Proposed
Meeting Room	20	N/A	20	20	N/A		12	30	
Harry Garrett Room (large hall)	250	310	340	200	340	340	160	150	160
John London Room (small hall)	80	130	130	80	120	120	50	65	65
Harry Garrett and John London Room combined (sliding door opened)	350	N/A	470	300	N/A	460	260	N/A	260

**Sevenoaks Town Council
Community Infrastructure Committee – 12th October 2020**

Hard landscaping commenced in July and scheduled to be completed in November. This will include paths, walls, underground electrics, lighting, new car park areas, resurfacing and marking out of original car park. Once the hard landscaping is completed the soft landscaping of planting will take place.

ii) Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)

The installation of the new MUGA has been delayed until October 2020.

iii) Neighbourhood Development Plan

Unfortunately, due to COVID 19, referendums for Neighbourhood Plans have been deferred until May 2021.

However, there is nothing to stop us progressing the Neighbourhood Plan and submitting it to SDC so that they can arrange for independent examination and prepare for the running of a referendum.

STC will continue to work on the following and will need to submit the following documents to the SDC:

- Submission draft Neighbourhood Plan
- Map of Neighbourhood Plan area.
- A Consultation Statement summarising all the engagement undertaken throughout the NP process; and
- A Basic Conditions Statement

To progress this STC will need to agree changes and they will need to be signed off by the NP Steering Group / Planning Committee.

The Town Clerk has written to SDC to enquire whether the Sevenoaks Northern Masterplan could be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

iv) Sevenoaks Business Hub

This is a separate agenda item.

v) Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership (DVCRP)

The partnership was launched on 1st September 2019. A Community Rail Officer has been appointed. Proposals for a Community Interest Organisation / Company have been agreed by the Partnership and Sevenoaks Town Council has agreed to be the 'Accountable Body' for the new structure.

The DVCRP will be arranging its first AGM and separate Stakeholders Meeting soon. A website is also currently being working on.

vi) Electric No 8 Bus

The project fits within the Town Council's No. 1 Priority of addressing climate change.

Sevenoaks Town Council

Community Infrastructure Committee – 12th October 2020

An application for funding will be made to the next round of CIL Board at Sevenoaks District Council. The Town Clerk was invited to a meeting with KCC last month to discuss potential revenue funding for the bus. The outcome of the meeting was 100% revenue funding for the No. 8 bus at a total of £105,000.

vii) Stag Community Arts Centre

COVID-19 continues to have a considerable negative financial impact on the venue and other similar venues nationally.

Separate notes relating to Finance and Governance of the facility will be provided to the Finance & General Purposes Committee and full Council.

Borrowing Permission

At its Cabinet Meeting held on 9th July 2020 Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) agreed to loan Sevenoaks Town Council up to £220,000 for supporting the Stag during COVID-19.

Extract from Minute 101, SDC Cabinet 09.07.2020

Resolved: That

- a) a Council loan to Sevenoaks Town Council of up to £220,000 over the next 8 months towards essential recovery, maintenance and utility costs in respect of the Stag Theatre, be agreed; and
- b) the loan would be interest free with the stipulation that it would be paid back to the Council in financial year 2021/22. If the loan is not paid within the repayment period, any outstanding balance will accrue and be charged a rate of 6% interest with effect from April 2022.

Sevenoaks Town Council has previously been through the complicated application process to the Public Works Loan Board for permission to borrow funds and is aware that to date whilst it is possible to borrow from the District Council or elsewhere this is restricted to Capital Projects only.

Given the importance and urgency of funds required for the Stag it is

Recommended: An application be made to the Public Works Loan Board for permission to borrow up to £220,000 for the Stag and that this is considered within the current national emergency of a pandemic.