

## Westerham Town Council: Strategy for 2019-2023

### Background

Following the election of the new Council in May 2019, Westerham Town Council re-examined its strategy for its period of office, 2019 -23.

To do this, all committees put forward proposals for their area, a first review was carried out by the Chairman and Vice Chairman and a process of consultation was initiated.

This paper sets out the results, of these exercises, and proposes the priorities for the next four years.

Council's ongoing obligations will continue and will continue to be funded primarily via the precept. (see Appendix A)

The level of response to the public consultation was disappointing. However, clear themes emerged.

1. **Keep Westerham a thriving, clean and tidy small town**
  - a. Litter, dog poo
  - b. Public footpaths and pavements
  - c. Preserve Green Belt & AONB; limit development
  - d. Street scene (shop fascias, cobbles, flowers etc)
2. **Parking**
  - a. No pavement or grass verge parking: parking enforcement
  - b. Better use of existing spaces
  - c. Residential parking – review on street parking
3. **A Safe town**
  - a. **Traffic:**
    - i. Speed of traffic through town: 20mph limits / sleeping policemen
    - ii. Pedestrian safety: pedestrian crossings
  - b. **ASB/Vandalism**
    - i. Greater police presence & visibility; CCTV
    - ii. Fly tipping
4. **Community and commercial**
  - a. KGF: more things to do: more for young teens: facelift needed: football, cricket; youth leader.
  - b. Community events: young teens; toddlers & young children
  - c. Market the town: maintain variety of shops & restaurants
  - d. Bus transport: east – west bus service

There is a strong correlation between the proposals put forward by committees and the views expressed by residents. (see Appendix B for initial sift of committee proposals, July 2019)

It is therefore proposed that the following become the key priorities for the Council term 2019-23. These will need to be managed alongside and in addition to Council's ongoing obligations and will need to be funded from separate external sources.

- 1. Keep Westerham a thriving, clean and tidy small town**
  - a. Continue current stance on WWW, Covers Farm & Moorhouse
  - b. Review and intensify programme to keep town clean and tidy (review role and hours of maintenance operative?)
  - c. Continue support of Greensand and Darent Valley Pathway (subject to acceptable progress)
  - d. Complete Town Signs project (with WTP)
  
- 2. Parking**
  - a. Complete current parking project (dependent on CIL funding)
  - b. Consider further parking solutions – and funding
  
- 3. Safe Town**
  - a. Traffic**
    - i. Safety signage
    - ii. Traffic calming/ speed restriction
  
  - b. ASB/vandalism**
    - i. Provide alternative activities: KGF – see below
    - ii. Continue to influence SDC CDU and Kent Police
  
- 4. Community and commercial**
  - a. Redevelop King George's Field and pavilion for the community (the Big Project)
  - b. Prepare fund and implement programme of Youth work
  - c. Engage businesses – key to 'vibrant and enticing town': develop & fund programme of work
  - d. Investigate feasibility of E-W bus service

**If adopted, these priorities will become the focus of the next 4 years activities, and will be reviewed at each Council meeting, when progress and any need for change in priorities will be discussed and agreed.**

## Appendix one

### **Ongoing obligations**

#### **Planning:**

- As a consultee on Westerham Parish planning applications presented to SDC our role is to provide SDC with local knowledge on applications that can affect decisions taken. In this role we will represent the views of residents of Westerham Parish and seek to explain to individual residents our community planning policies that affect them.
- We will seek to identify significant planning issues arising in local authorities bordering the Parish as well as KCC, communicate with the community where appropriate and respond where it is considered these may affect us.
- We will review, consider and respond to wider public consultations on behalf of our community, endeavouring where possible to communicate this to residents as appropriate.
- We will keep under review the changing framework of Neighbourhood Plans, and if considered appropriate bring proposals forward to the WTC
- We will use training seminars and conferences provided to improve and update the knowledge of both Town Councillors and staff involved in planning matters.

#### **Youth and Community:**

- We will support, either by providing directly, or by engaging with other organisations, activities which engage and support the young of the community
- We will work with the Community Warden, the Police and Sevenoaks District Council to reduce anti-social behaviour and to deal with the perpetrators.
- We will continue to support the elderly of the community by working with others to provide eg the Forget-me-Not cafe.
- We will work with retailers, businesses and the Town Partnership to support and develop economic activity in the town, taking leadership where appropriate.
- We will monitor services provided by other bodies which are regarded as a benefit to the community: eg library childrens centre, and lobby to ensure that they remain.

#### **Allotments, Playing Fields and Open Spaces:**

- We will actively manage the allotment sites, ensuring as far as we can that there is sufficient supply to meet demand, making improvements as and when we can
- We will maintain the open spaces in the Council's ownership so that they remain attractive to visitors and in good state for residents to use.
- We will encourage the use of the Playing Fields in the Council's ownership or management, expanding the variety of sports which can use them. We will maintain them to the standard which enables them to be used safely and regularly

**Highways and Lighting:**

- We will manage the street lighting in the Council's ownership, ensuring that it is effective, efficient and takes full advantage of technological advances. We will seek out the best value provision of energy for it.
- We will work with the Town Partnership and other organisations in the town to improve parking provision in and around the town.
- We will monitor road related issues, and lobby and influence those responsible for them to take appropriate actions.

**Finance and General Purposes:**

- We will ensure responsible financial management of all funds within the Council's control, complying with best practice all relevant legislation
- We will ensure that all staff employed by the Council are recruited, managed, remunerated and trained to enable them to carry out the Council's strategy to high standards
- We will ensure that all Councillors attend training session appropriate to their Council roles which keep them up to date on legislation and regulations and current thinking on relevant topics.