

# Working draft

Foreword – Leader

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- People travelling easily and safely in Medway
- Everyone benefitting from the area's regeneration

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## SECTION 1

### 1 ACHIEVING OUR VISION

Medway is one of the largest urban areas in the south east outside London. It is part of the Thames Gateway, a national priority area for regeneration and growth.

The council has ambitions for Medway the place, and Medway the council. As community leaders we seek to:

- lead the renaissance of Medway for the benefit of existing as well as new communities
- and
- provide high-quality services for our customers

The council, with other agencies and groups in the Medway Local Strategic Partnership has adopted the following vision for the future of Medway:

“Medway – city of learning, culture, tourism and enterprise”

We will continue to work closely with all our partners to achieve this vision.

#### **The council’s priorities**

The annual performance plan is the council’s corporate plan. Medway Council has reviewed its work looking at progress to date and following the recent election. This plan outlines two guiding principles for service delivery and six strategic priorities to be achieved over the next 3 years, in order to deliver our plans for Medway’s renaissance.

The guiding principles, or core values, are integral to all of the council’s work:

- Putting our customers at the centre of everything we do
- Giving value for money

The six revised priority areas are:

- A clean and green environment
- Safer communities
- Children and young people having the best start in life
- Older and vulnerable people maintaining their independence
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## **Delivering in Partnership**

Our ambitions for Medway are challenging and we know that we cannot achieve them in isolation. However, working alongside our partners including the NHS, the police, business and the voluntary sector we can achieve great change to develop Medway the area and improve the lives of our residents.

Last year the council worked with partners to agree a new community plan and to produce Medway's Local Area Agreement. The local area agreement includes the public service agreement through which the council has negotiated improved performance on key targets. The theme of this second public service agreement is to ensure Medway's regeneration programme benefits everyone – 'tying old and new communities together.'

The community plan and local area agreement describe the actions that all partners will take, This performance plan focuses on the contribution the council can make.

## **MEDWAY – CITY OF LEARNING, CULTURE, TOURISM AND ENTERPRISE**

### **Medway - the place:**

(Add map of Medway)

Medway is a city in the making. It is a unique urban area in the heart of the Thames Gateway, a national priority area for regeneration and growth. Whilst Medway has a rich and diverse history it is also well placed to grasp the opportunities offered to develop into a city of learning, culture, tourism and enterprise - the city of the Thames Gateway.

Medway will be transformed over the next 20 years, supported by more than £120 million of Sustainable Communities funding and a recently negotiated framework with a private sector investment partner St Modwen's, designed to secure funding of up to £1 billion. This will see the regeneration of brownfield sites and the transformation of the central waterfront into the cultural and retail centre. The development will bring housing and jobs as well as improved transport infrastructure and investment in existing housing and community facilities.

Overall Medway is not a deprived area, but at ward level we have some of the most affluent and some of the most deprived areas in the country. Whilst 85% of Medway's population lives in the urban areas, half of the area is rural. This includes internationally or nationally designated areas of nature conservation.

### **Medway's Population in 2007**

Medway is the largest urban area in the south-east outside London. With a population density three times greater than the national average and pressure on the south-east to provide more development, the council and its partners

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are working to ensure that new housing and business opportunities result in an enhanced quality of life for existing communities as well as the new residents attracted to the area.

Our resident population now stands at 251,100 but is expected to reach 300,000 by 2020. As in the rest of England our older population, currently around 16%, is expected to grow. As life expectancy increases the number of those aged over 85 years in particular will place higher demands on health and social care services. At the same time, we face relatively high demand for children and young people related services compared to other authorities.

Over a third of Medway households (34%) contain dependent children, higher than the rest of the south-east (29%). Conversely the proportion of single person households is smaller than both the south-east and the country as a whole. This is expected to rise as older people are living longer and more independently.

Medway's ethnic minority communities make up 5.3% of the population. Of these, the largest group, 2%, are those who describe themselves as Indian. In schools, the latest figures show that 10% of children from black minority ethnic communities with a further 1.3% of Western and Eastern European origin.

### **Graph to be added**

Employment levels in Medway are higher than the national average with 66.5% of all residents aged 16-74 in employment. Of those, the majority drive to work with the average journey length being 10.7 miles. Medway is also a commuter area with many people travelling to London daily by train and coach. The graph below shows the main methods of travel for Medway residents.

### **Graph to be added**

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## SECTION 2

### HOW WE ARE PERFORMING

This year we have grouped our progress report and performance indicators under the guiding principles and the six new priority areas described above.

## PUTTING OUR CUSTOMERS AT THE CENTRE OF EVERYTHING WE DO

### What we aim to do:

We aim to deliver the services our customers need and want in the way that they want. Central to achieving this has been improving how we communicate with our customers, and listen to their views.

### How do we do that?

The council meets these aims by continuing to:

- Improve access to council services for all sections of the community
- Monitor use of council services to ensure no group or community is disadvantaged and take action where appropriate
- Increase the number of enquiries that are answered fully when the customer first contacts us

### What we think is important to achieve our aims:

#### Customer First - Access to Council Services

The Customer First programme is a key part the Council's drive for excellence. It provides customers with a choice of ways to gain easy access to council services. This is being achieved through new ways of working, making the best use of technology, and through the training and development of staff.

With the opening of Strood Contact Point in March 2007, a joint venture with Kent Police, the council now has a network of service points across Medway's five main town centres, providing local people with a convenient place to get face-to-face help and information on a wide range of Council services. The other Contact Points are in Rochester, Gillingham, Rainham and Chatham.

The range and complexity of enquiries being handled by the council's new Contact Centre, at Civic Centre, on 333333 continue to grow, as it now handles over 65,000 calls and receives over 5000 e-mails each month and in the most recent Residents' Opinion Survey the service achieved a 73 per cent satisfaction rating. The Contact Centre now receives all initial Children's and Older People service and information requests, and an inspection team from the Department for Education and Skills recently praised this service. Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit calls are all also now received by the Centre as are free school meal and school transport enquiries. Working in partnership with the local Primary Care Trust, the Centre is also now providing

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a switchboard service for Medway's new network of Healthy Living Centres. The Centre will further be taking School Admission calls from June 2007.

We are pleased that the programme has attracted wide-ranging recognition; last year it reached the finals for two prestigious national efficiency awards. The success of the programme has further prompted visits from far and wide, including a delegation from Auckland City Council in New Zealand.

This year we are continuing to invest in alternative ways for customers to contact the council and find out about services through a range of digital kiosks in locations across Medway.

### **Listening to our customers**

Medway Council continues to consult widely with customers in a variety of ways. Findings from consultations and research are used to improve services.

The 2006 annual resident opinion poll results are encouraging and show an improvement on last year. 65% of residents are satisfied with the way the council runs things. This is an 8% improvement over last year and the highest level ever recorded in a Medway opinion poll. 63% of people feel the council keeps them well-informed, up 9% on the previous year.

Our latest 3-year postal satisfaction survey showed lower levels of satisfaction, however, they were generally comparable with those achieved by other similar local authorities. We will continue to monitor satisfaction levels closely.

Comparing last year's Residents' Opinion Poll with the previous year's, showed that nearly all services have improved. The services showing greatest improvement over the last year are parks and open spaces, sports facilities, play areas, services for young people, primary and secondary schools and nursery education. Those services rated less positively are being targeted and using the findings to improve their work. Services we want to improve include: The Warden service, due to litter; The Community Safety Team, due to lack of awareness; road maintenance due to poor condition of some roads, pavements were considered poorly maintained and dangerous. We also have a number of customer champions who represent a wide range of services. Their aim is to be the 'voice' of customers.

### **Improving communication with residents**

The council continues to work hard to respond to residents as quickly and effectively as possible. Over the year the council answered 98.9% of emails within 10 days, against a target of 94%. We have also increased the number of letters answered within 10 days, but know we have more work to do to meet our target of 100%.

Our benefits section has shown particular improvement in the last 12 months. Benefit claims were taking 34 days to process, this has been reduced to 28

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days. The introduction of a fast tracking system has had a positive impact on new claims.

Medway Matters – the council’s newspaper - has changed to a magazine format in response to customer research. A recent evaluation has shown positive reader feedback on the changes. The young people’s pages, written by young people for young people, are achieving the aim of increasing young people’s readership of the magazine. In addition we have launched Medway Matters TV on the council’s website as well as a young people’s podcast – one of the first in the country.

### **Complaints**

Whilst we aim to provide the best quality services at all times we want to hear feedback from our customers and we particularly want to learn from where things have not gone as well as would be expected. One of the most important ways of doing that is by monitoring our complaints. We monitor complaints in two stages. We responded to 96.5% of stage one complaints within timescale and 92% of stage 2. The number of complaints going to the Ombudsman has dropped by 17%. The council continues to look at a number of ways to improve complaints handling. As part of this approach a new initiative was undertaken during the second half of the year to gather more detailed information with regard to complaints.

### **Working for equal opportunity**

Ensuring all residents have fair and equal access to services is crucial to putting residents at the centre of everything we do. During the last year we have introduced both a Disability Scheme and written a Gender Equality Scheme. This will encourage us to be sure that the different needs of those living in our community are responded to. We will be monitoring these schemes, along with our Race Equality Scheme, on an annual basis to be sure that they are making a real and positive difference to the lives of all of Medway’s residents.

The council has made a commitment to meeting Level 4 of the Local Authority Equalities Standard. New guidelines on the Equalities Standard have just been introduced. In light of the revised standards we have rated ourselves as being at Level 2 of the Equalities Standard and will be looking to move to Level 3 during the next year, with a view to achieving level 4 within the next 3 years.

The council also supports the voluntary and community sector to achieve equal opportunity. We assist with fund raising which has proved successful in the last year. Two dedicated Community Workers have been appointed by the Medway Ethnic Minority Forum, as a result of funding secured from the government through the “Change Up” initiative. The role of these workers will be to provide advice and support to Black and Minority Ethnic community organisations to assist with their development. £38,000 of European Social Fund money has also been secured to assist these community organisations with improving their services by enabling the delivery of new activities and services to communities.

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## **Community centre for all community groups**

Identifying a community centre for all communities in Medway has been an important piece of work that has been undertaken by the council, the Medway Ethnic Minority Forum and the South East of England Development Agency in partnership. A potential site has now been identified and work is progressing to identify possible sources of funding to move the project forward.

## **Working with the voluntary sector to support local people**

The council has agreed the Compact with the voluntary sector. This provides a framework for working in partnership to deliver effective services to the community. The council has also included support for the local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) in our proposals for the second public service agreement.

As part of our PSA we are working to increase the number of volunteers recruited and working in Medway. This will involve the three main Volunteer Bureaux (HANDS and Gillingham Volunteer Bureau, HANDS Rochester Volunteer Bureau and VSU Youth Action) working together in a coordinated way to increase the numbers of volunteers in Medway.

## **Improving Medway's libraries**

The new Rochester library was fully open in April. Visitor figures for Rochester have held up well and the investment in self issue machines is paying off, with 35% of books being issued by this method. Hempstead library has been extended to almost double its former size enabling more activities to take place within it. Lordswood library has had a youth facility incorporated and an adjacent ball park built. Overall numbers of visits to libraries improved in the second half of the year. Total number of items issued is 5 per head of the population, against a target of 5.3, however this is an increase on last years figure of 4.83. As in previous years this figure contrasts with the PC usage levels which exceeded target with 746 uses per 1000 of population. Once again enquiry levels exceeded target with over 138 000 enquiries in reference sections and 169000 overall, much in excess of the 127, 245 target. This year we will be investing in improvements to Rainham library.

## **Our key targets are:**

- Working to achieve level 3 of the Local Government Equalities Standard
- Increasing by 20% the number of calls handled by the Customer First contact centre



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## GIVING VALUE FOR MONEY

### **What we aim to do:**

Providing high quality, value for money services is central to the council's work. Managing our finances well is essential if we are to achieve that. We are proud that council tax levels are amongst the lowest nationally. We want to continue to be independently judged as having good budget setting and monitoring systems.

### **How do we do that?**

The council meets these aims by continuing to:

- attract external funds to support our priorities
- monitor finances and moving resources into high priority areas as part of the budget process
- partnership working with other public services
- reduce costs where possible
- continually improve procurement
- sell our own services externally where appropriate

The Audit Commission has judged that the council provides good value for money for most services – awarding us a rating of 3 out of a maximum 4. In our most recent residents' opinion poll 57% of residents thought the council gives value for money, an improvement of 6% on last year. This compares favourably with other councils.

### **Budget summary**

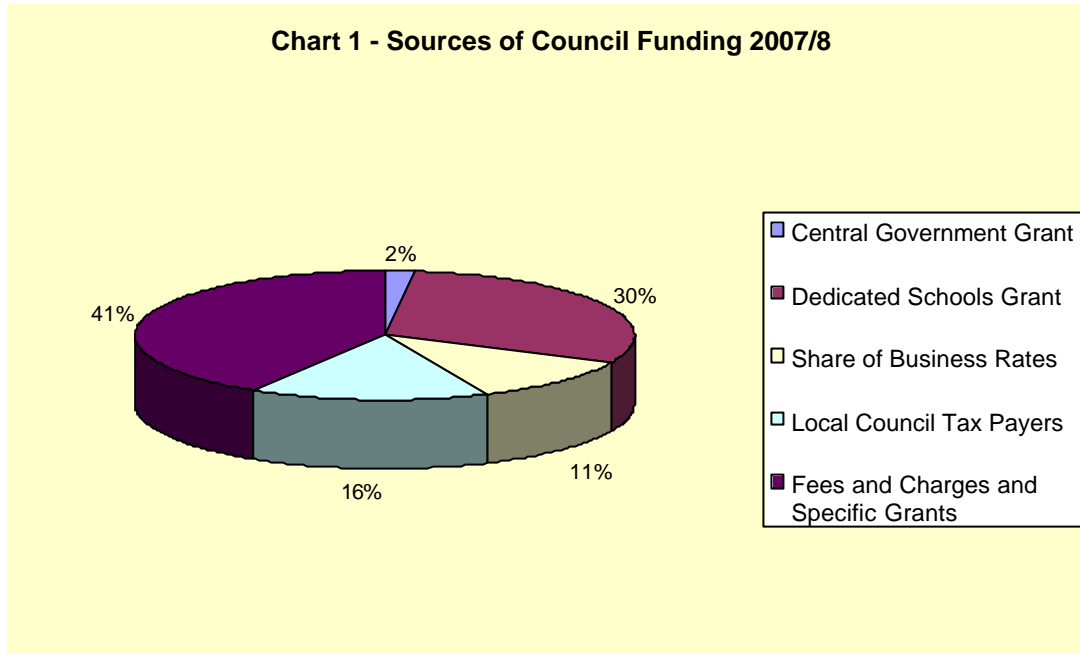
The provisional unaudited accounts show an underspend of £206,000 on a budget of approximately £550m, but there are a number of major overspends shown below, which have been compensated for by savings elsewhere within the council:

Increased demand and cost for physical disability services	£1,255,000
Increased cost of special education services	£1,188,000
Increased pressure on leisure services	£670,000
Increased demand and cost of looked after children	£457,000

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## How council services are funded

Funding for delivering council services comes from a range of sources. Chart 1 below demonstrates the proportions of money that are received from different sources.



	<b>£000s</b>
Central Government grant	10,243
Dedicated School's Grant	160,547
Share of business rates	61,038
Local council tax payers	83,925
Fees and charges and specific grants	220,438
<b>Total</b>	<b>536,191</b>

Council tax band D has been set at £991.89 (£1,175.72 including the police and fire elements) for 2007/08. This is an increase of 4.5 per cent on 2006/07 and still represents one of the lowest council tax rates for unitary authorities in England.

## Revenue spending

The council plans to spend £536.2million on services in 2007/08, which equates to over £2,000 spent for every resident in Medway.

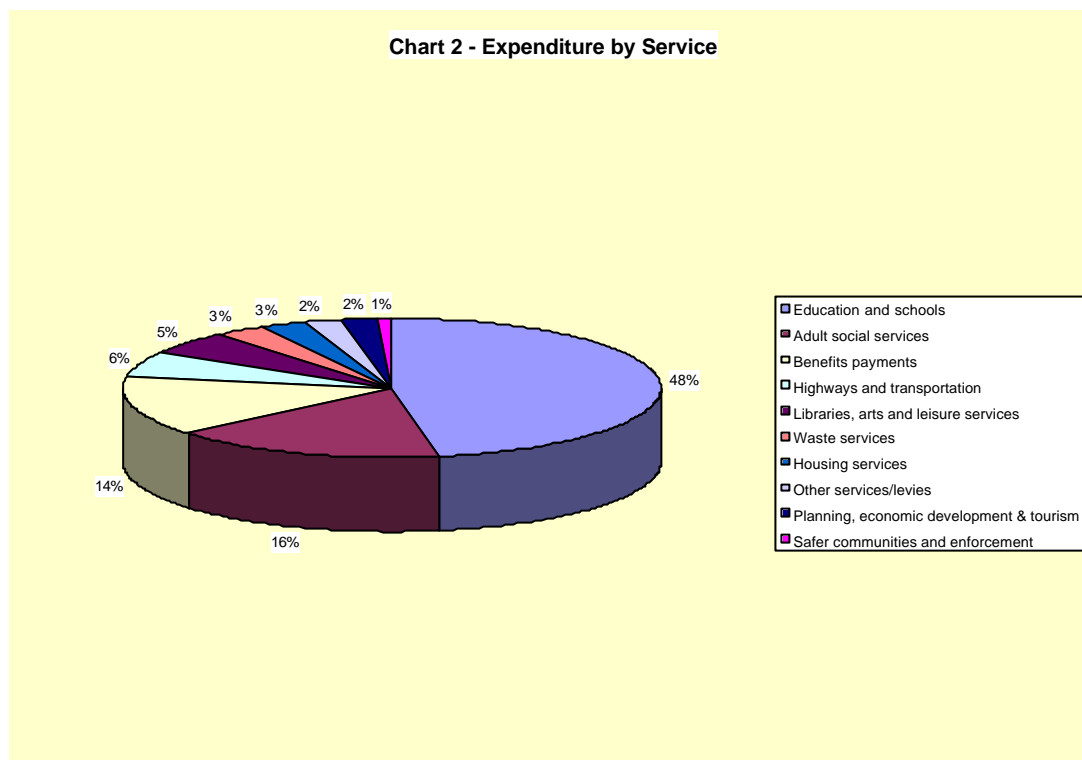
Despite facing severe budget pressures in 2007/08, there are examples of services, which will receive additional funding which include:

- Concessionary fares for school children £250,000

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- Support for the 2012 Olympics £100,000
- Youth workers £90,000

Chart 2 below shows the proportion of budget allocated to the major services of the council.



	<b>£000s</b>	
a. Education and schools	253,300	47.2%
b. Adult social services	88,121	16.4%
c. Benefits payments	75,009	14.0%
d. Highways and transport	31,400	5.9%
e. Libraries, arts and leisure services	28,174	5.3%
f. Waste services	17,350	3.2%
g. Housing services	14,666	2.7%
h. Other services/levies	11,958	2.2%
i. Planning, economic development & tourism	11,092	2.1%
j. Safer communities and enforcement	5,121	1.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>536,191</b>	

### **Priorities for capital spending**

The council has also agreed a capital programme of £34.514 million for 2007/08 and a provisional programme of £32.166 million for future years.

The capital programme for 2007/08 builds on the agreed themes from previous years and includes the following priorities:

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- Children's Centres and school improvements
- Bereavement Services
- Improvements to the Council's housing stock
- Highways and infrastructure improvements
- Innovation Centre.
- Rochester Riverside, Strood Riverside and Chatham Centre.

Specific funding for new projects this year includes:

<b>Major capital projects</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Devolved school capital	6,246	Government grant.
Other education capital	13,707	Supported borrowing, government grant, and contributions from schools' budgets.
Improvements to housing stock (council housing)	3,183	Major repairs allowance paid as subsidy grant and borrowing supported by government grant.
Private sector housing	1,935	Government grant, capital receipts and various contributions.
Medway Renaissance unit	1,100	Government grant
Transport infrastructure maintenance	1,836	Supported borrowing and government grant.
Integrated transport measures	2,535	Supported borrowing and government grant.
Improvements to community and recreational facilities	235	Capital receipts and other contributions
ICT and building maintenance	430	Government grant and capital receipts.
Highways and road safety improvements	1,480	Capital receipts

### **Successful external bidding**

During 2006-07, the council supported the development of 122 Medway-based proposals (council bids and voluntary/community sector bids for UK funds) helping to secure in excess of £3.59million. We are awaiting the outcome of 17 projects, which, if all were successful, would secure an additional £3.2million for Medway. In addition we secured £767K of EU funding.

60% of the 122 projects developed were in direct support of Medway's Voluntary and Community Sectors.

This brings the total cumulative UK funding secured since 2001 to more than £52million. (This figure includes £30million in PFI credits).

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## **Selling services to generate income**

The council provides some services to other organisations to generate income. For example the Customer First Contact Centre provides some services on behalf of the Primary Care Trust. The council's communications team carries out graphic design work for other councils as well as giving communications support to the Primary Care Trust. The council's magazine Medway Matters is self funding through advertising income. The council's temporary staff agency, having been successful in reducing the council's own costs, now sells this service to other organisations.

In other areas the council sells services to the public. Diverse examples include holding weddings at prestige venues like Upnor Castle, and providing lifeline and telecare services to older people.

## **Making efficiency gains**

Following implementation of the Gershon Review all public sector organisations, including local authorities, were charged with achieving 2.5 per cent efficiency gains each year for the years from 2005-8. The aim is to identify resources that can be reinvested in frontline services or used to hold down council tax. This equates to £12.3m over the 3 years for Medway Council. We exceeded the 2005/06 target and anticipate this to continue for 2006/07 and 2007/08

Through our annual service planning and budget setting process we identify the potential for efficiencies that will not have a negative impact on front line services, by working with the service areas to develop reasonable targets. This is a key facet of the financial planning regime of the council and the Medium Term Financial Plan further embeds Gershon principles into budget setting and service planning. Medway Council has begun to explore using prudential borrowing, investing to help get efficiency gains where there is a sound business case..

The council has followed and plans several strategies to deliver efficiencies including:

- Delivering services in partnership with other providers including pooled budgets
- Effective procurement including using consortia buying and proactive management of markets
- Innovative financing solutions eg PFI
- Income generation through trading services
- Investment in electronic government
- Review of processes and rationalisation of support services
- Disposal and rationalisation of property assets
- An ongoing drive towards energy efficiency

Examples of specific initiatives planned for 2007/08 are:

- Investing in Adult Fostering to increase capacity and subsequent placements enabling clients to live independently in family setting – estimated efficiency £229,000

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- Investment in telecare facilities, service users will have the advantage of increased safety from monitoring within their own homes – estimated efficiency £753,000
- Efficiencies from retendering school transport routes – estimated efficiency £100,000
- Increasing recycling to reduce landfill – estimated efficiency £100,000
- Increase demand from internal temp agency – estimated efficiency £120,000
- Internal restructures – estimated efficiency £395,000.

Further efficiencies are made outside of the Gershon agenda, for example, through the implementation of the Corporate Property Strategy, which is designed to challenge property use, identify under-performing assets and rationalise the property portfolio. Medway has an annual target of £4m for property disposal and in 2006/07 we achieved some £6.45m and anticipate achieving or possibly marginally exceeding the annual target in 2007/08.

### **An effective workforce**

Efficient and effective staff are an essential part of the council providing value for money. We have seen staff turnover drop for the second year going to 8.66% from 10.42% two years ago. As recruitment of new staff is expensive this is an important part of keeping costs low.

We have slimmed down our senior management staff and back office services to ensure the maximum amount is spent on frontline service delivery.

Also the council is pleased to see that the numbers of disabled staff has gone up from 3.18% last year to 4.68% this year helping to ensure that the council's workforce is representative of our resident population.

We work with other partners to make the best use of staffing – for example joint public health posts with the Primary Care Trust, integrated health and social care teams and a Building Control Partnership with neighbouring councils.

The council is committed to developing its staff to ensure they can offer the best service. We link learning and development to the organisation's priorities i.e. workforce development activities for staff working with vulnerable adults and children, training to support effective working eg Health and Safety, financial management, procurement, customer service, and skills for life including gaining NVQ's at levels 2, 3 and 4.

Our aim is to manage staff sickness to keep levels to a minimum. Although levels have risen slightly in the past year from an average of 7 days per employee to just over 8, this still compares well with other councils where the average is 9.6 days. Long term sickness accounts for 43% of sickness overall – the main reasons being surgery or stress. We are not complacent. Managers receive regular reports on sickness to enable them to effectively manage their teams. We are looking to see if there are patterns on stress related illness to develop more targeted support for staff.

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## **Effective procurement**

The Council has recently completed a review of its procurement process and has introduced a best practice risk-based gateway procurement model. All significant procurements are risk classified as high, medium or low risk and are subject to appropriately detailed review and scrutiny requirements depending on the level of risk.

The council has also introduced a new eighteen-month rolling planning cycle for procurement. The Forward Procurement Plan and contract register will also be made available to external organisations on the internet in due course.

We will continue to ensure that all individual contracts that are awarded comply with the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in local authority service contracts as we have this year. This means that all companies awarded contracts by Medway Council must treat staff who transfer to them no less favourably than when they were employed by the council.

Medway Council continues to be significantly involved in working in partnership with other local authorities in the region, through the South East Regional Centre of Excellence, Kent Buying Consortia and the Kent Procurement Board.

Advice on procurement is also available for external organisations on the internet, including a selling guide for small and medium-sized companies on how to do business with Medway Council. A concordat is also in place with local small medium enterprises (SMEs), which contains principles on working together more effectively. To supplement this the council's Procurement team are actively engaged in a programme of supplier awareness/meet the buyer events to enable to become more involved with the council.

## **Our key targets are:**

- Rationalise the council's property including a move to a Civic HQ on one site in Chatham
- Deliver the annual target of £4.2 million efficiency target

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## A CLEAN AND GREEN ENVIRONMENT

### **What we aim to do:**

The council's commitment to the environment is as service provider and community leader. It includes keeping the streets clean, protecting green spaces in urban and rural areas, recycling more rubbish and reducing carbon emissions. We seek to plan and deliver our services in a sustainable way to protect the environment for current and future generations.

### **How do we do that?**

The council meets these aims by continuing to:

- Make our streets and local environment cleaner and free from fly-tipping and graffiti
- Enable and encourage all residents to recycle more of their rubbish
- Protect our green spaces and improve our parks
- Encourage residents, businesses and housing developers to save energy and reduce carbon emissions to protect the environment
- Demonstrate good practice by running the council in a more sustainable manner
- Continue to ensure the majority of new developments in Medway are on previously developed land

### **What we think is important to achieve our aims:**

#### **Improving the Street Scene**

Medway Council has been one of 27 pilots for the government's Liveability Fund, to make changes to public space that will improve daily life. Areas for improvement work were selected in Rochester; Chatham and Gillingham. The work has included road and pavement resurfacing, a 'cut through' with improved lighting to provide ease of access between a residential area and local shops and bus stops. Speed cushions have been re-sited to improve road safety, two ball courts have been built and CCTV has been provided in certain areas where anti social behaviour has been reported. A street guardian scheme has been set up in three areas and we plan to expand this. There has been a major clampdown on prostitution in the red light district in conjunction with Medway police.

As part of our public service agreement the council is seeking to improve the cleanliness of our streets and reduce flytipping and graffiti. This year's survey shows that we have already achieved the target on improving the cleanliness of Medway's streets. We are focusing now on graffiti and flytipping.

The level of reported graffiti has increased. To respond to this we have introduced a dedicated service to provide low cost graffiti removal for businesses or free for residential properties. We also use Community Payback workers provided by Kent Probation Service. Although the council does not have responsibility for removing graffiti on private land or equipment



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we recognise that it still gives a poor impression of an area. Discussions are underway with statutory providers (e.g. BT) to allow the Council to remove graffiti from their telecom equipment cabinets and highway installations. Community safety TV is delivering a strong media message that graffiti is criminal damage. Kent Police have taken a significant number of arrests in relation to criminal damage for graffiti (Operation Painter - over 50 arrests). In future the reformed community safety teams will have a stronger neighbourhood focus on local environmental issues. Underage sales activities by Trading Standards to deal with aerosol paint sales

Fly tipping incidents fell from 6398 incidents reported in 05/06 to 4606 incidents in 06/07 - Medway has the lowest reported rate in Kent. Nationally we are judged to have a falling rate of incidents and positively an increasing rate of enforcement activities. We have made effective use of media campaigns and have a dedicated team covering fly tipping and litter enforcement. We will use new legislation to require land owners to fence fly tipped sites after clearance

### **Waste and Recycling**

Recycling levels are good compared to the statutory national target of 30%. In Medway 32.6% of waste is composted or recycled. This is made up of 20.33% of household waste that has been recycled against a target of 19.5% and 12.27% has been composted against a target of 14.1%.

Work continues on waste minimisation initiatives including the real nappy campaign with over 62 families with babies signed up since April 2006 and over 1320 home compost bins distributed in the same period. The council has also issued 80,000 blue bags to supplement the blue box service and 4,000 brown bins for garden waste to properties that had not previously received them.. At this point 88.62% of the population is served by a kerbside collection which is an improvement on our target of 87.7%.

The council is committed to weekly rubbish collections and to maintaining it as one of our best performing public services visiting every house every week.

The new waste contract will be let from 2009 and we are working to increase our recycling from its current rate of around 33% to over 40% and to reduce the amount of our waste going to landfill.

### **Impact of climate change and reducing carbon emissions**

A number of innovative energy efficiency measures have been installed across the council's buildings. For example, council-run swimming pools across Medway have been fitted with motorised pool covers, using funding from the Interreg IIIA Environmental Stewardship project. The pool covers provide both environmental and financial benefits, through reducing the energy consumption associated with pool heating and ventilation and reducing the amount of chemicals needed in the water.

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We have driven a borehole at Deangate Ridge golf course to extract water to maintain greens during a drought (without the need to draw from the national supply).

Through our involvement in the Local Authority Carbon Management programme we have been successful in obtaining grant funding from the Carbon Trust's Salix fund to set up an "invest to save" fund to drive further physical energy efficiency improvements across the council's estate. An Energy Manager will be appointed to develop this work.

In November 2006 the Council signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change - committing the council to working with the community to reduce carbon emissions and to adapt to the likely consequences of climate change. A new dedicated carbon reduction website for Medway will be launched in July 2007. "Medway: Our Planet " will provide a community focus for carbon reduction activity across Medway.

### **Greenspaces**

The service charter for the council's Ranger Service has been introduced and will be publicised in 2007/08. The Ranger Service is fully operational carrying out inspections of green space sites and identifying areas for improvement including undertaking an annual condition survey for footpaths. The service is also working with Park Friends Groups in undertaking volunteer work programmes at Hillyfields and Broomhill Park.

As part of the PSA 2 agreement applications for Green Flag status have been submitted for Castle Gardens, Riverside Country Park and The Vines, and all three sites are due to be judged this summer.

In addition to this, as part of the Local Area Agreement, site management plans are being prepared for Riverside Country Park and Watts Meadow and Local Nature Reserve designations are being progressed for Rede Common and Watts Meadow.

The council has also let a new grounds maintenance contract to Quadron that started on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007. The contract includes management of urban and rural greenspace sites, council housing areas and highways and has been let for a 5 year period.

This year we will be investing more in CCTV and security at Riverside and Capstone Country Parks and in Medway's allotments.

### **Protecting greenspaces from development**

In response to the Council's draft Local Development Framework, a private consortium has again proposed large scale development in the Capstone Valley. The Council will continue to vigorously oppose this, as it has done in connection with a number of other plans over the last few years.

### **Our 3 key targets are:**

- Reducing waste and increasing recycling

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- Reducing carbon emissions
- Delivering development on brownfield sites to protect greenspaces

## SAFER COMMUNITIES

### What we aim to do

Making Medway as safe as possible is important to the council's plans. The council, along with the Community Safety Partnership have had success with CCTV and introducing alcohol control zones. Our challenge is to work in partnership with the police in particular on night-time economy crime and anti social behaviour. Information received from our residents' opinion poll indicates that fear of crime continues to exceed levels of crime. There is an improving trend in feelings of safer during the day but a significant proportion of people feel unsafe at night. We want people to feel safer in Medway.

### How do we do that?

The council meets these aims by continuing to:

- With the police, reduce incidents of violent crime
- Help the police to reduce anti-social behaviour and criminal damage
- Work with our police and health partners to reduce drug and alcohol misuse, which leads to crime
- Reduce the number of young people who offend
- Design new developments and improve existing areas, for example with good lighting and CCTV to make people feel safer in Medway

### What we think is important to achieve our aims:

#### Reduce crime and anti social behaviour

The council's community safety and street team wardens are being reorganised and integrated, and with police staff will provide a more coordinated approach to anti social behaviour. As part of our PSA we are working with the police to reduce recorded violent crime and criminal damage in the night-time economy. Much of this crime and anti social behaviour is alcohol related so effective licensing and enforcement has an important part to play.

#### Reducing the fear of crime

Medway Community Safety Partnership launched twelve 42 inch plasma TV screens in key locations across Medway in March. Public information, safety messages and news and weather are being broadcast direct to the public on the screens. This is the first initiative of its kind in Kent. As well as providing public information the screens can broadcast different information in different locations, allowing them to be used to convey important information in the event of an emergency – for example a missing child. Community Safety Partnership TV (CSP TV) will run for two and half years initially while public opinion is gauged and is a part of the partnerships ongoing commitment to building safer communities.

The screens are located at:

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Monkey Bizz, Medway City Estate, Rochester  
The Pentagon Shopping Centre, Chatham  
The Black Lion Leisure Centre, Gillingham  
Strood Leisure Centre  
Medway Maritime Hospital, Gillingham  
The Thomas Aveling School, Rochester  
Morrisons, Knight Rd, Strood  
Morrisons, Princes Ave, Chatham  
Municipal Buildings, Gillingham  
The Hundred of Hoo School, Hoo  
Rainham Healthy Living Centre  
The Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre, Gillingham

We will this year be investing in alleygating schemes to improve safety and feelings of safety in medway.

### **CCTV**

Significant investment has been made in CCTV technology within Medway to ensure residents feel safe whilst out and about in the area. Fourteen areas have benefited from this investment over the course of the last year. The council's CCTV control room has played an important part in supporting several successful prosecutions. In the coming year we will continue to invest in more CCTV cameras across Medway.

### **Drugs**

The drug treatment services for adults in Medway services were put out to tender and new contracts were awarded in April 2007. We hope to be able to help more people through treatment and to an aftercare service to move those clients completing treatment into housing and employment to prevent relapse into drug use. Drug misusers in treatment, per 1000 of the population, has gone up from 5.82 to 6.94.

To improve drug education for young people the Drug and Alcohol Action Team of which the council is part have funded a Drugs Education Adviser. The adviser works with schools on drugs education and ensures young people know how to get support if they need it.

In order to better prevent young offenders from entering a cycle of crime to fund a drugs habit we have funded a dedicated Youth Offending Team drugs worker to offer one to one support for young people with a drug using history whilst also supporting staff to better identify problems and support these young people into treatment.

### **Road casualties**

The council is committed to making the roads safe for pedestrians and drivers alike. This year numbers of people killed or seriously injured has gone down from 96 people in the previous year to 90 people over the course of the last

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year. Also, the number of children killed or seriously hurt has gone down from 15 to 9 children. We will continue to work to make our roads safer.

We are investing in improved signage at the Medway Tunnel. Additionally, significant investment has been made into speed warning signs.

### **Alcohol control zones**

The Alcohol Control Zone currently covering part of Rochester is proving effective. The council continues to work in partnership with Kent Police, who are patrolling the area, to ensure the legislation is complied with. A further alcohol control zone has been set up covering the center of Chatham, which has already had positive results. There have been a number of arrests for public drinking since the zone was introduced.

### **Youth offending team**

The youth offending team has been assessed as improving from the Youth Justice Board classification level 1 in April to December 2005 to level 4 in for the equivalent period in 2006 (level 5 being the highest). Preventative services have been judged to have improved. The Youth Intensive Support Programme designed to prevent offending, has been introduced in target areas. Up to 200 children and young people will go through the programme this year. Plans are in place to continue this improvement through the Youth Justice plan 07-08 and the Youth Justice Board Improvement Plans.

### **Our 3 key targets are:**

- Improving feelings of safety
- Reducing anti social behaviour
- Minimising road casualties

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# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVING THE BEST START IN LIFE

### What we aim to do

We want to provide services which give children and young people the best possible start in life to enable them to be safe, happy, healthy, and with a bright future. Supporting children and their parents continues to be a priority for the council. We continue to work with our partners to allow children and young people to enjoy their early years whilst being given every opportunity to move forward into adulthood equipped with the necessary skills and confidence.

### How do we do that?

The council meets these aims by continuing to:

- Safeguard the children and young people of Medway, particularly those who are vulnerable or at risk
- Improve services for children with disabilities
- Improve services for vulnerable children and their families through better partnership working
- Provide a range of activities for young people in Medway

### What we think is important to achieve our aims:

#### Improving services for vulnerable children

Improving children's care services is the council's top priority. Following the recent inspection of Children's Services in 2006 the council developed a comprehensive plan for improvement. Key elements of the plan were to improve the way children were referred for social care services and how we make sure services are performing well

We have made significant progress this year. We now provide one clear point of entry for all referrals so that anyone with concerns about a child knows who to contact. There is then a well run process for transferring them to one of the three integrated area teams. The council has also restated the eligibility criteria used to assess whether a case qualifies for social care services. This means that individuals and partner organisations are now much clearer about which cases we are able to help with. The council continues to make improvements in the way it manages this service.

The number of child referrals not allocated to a social worker has reduced from 60 at the beginning of the year to 30 at the end. No child protection cases are unallocated.

The focus is now on working with partners to improve preventative work as well as ensuring children in care are supported in receiving the best education.

#### Youth services

The Youth Service underwent an enhanced inspection by OfSTED in 2006. Overall the verdict was that the service was not performing to a high enough

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standard. It was agreed that the service would undergo major reorganisation. Follow up inspection has judged that improvements are being made. Youth worker capacity has increased by 25% and co-ordination with youth services in the voluntary sector has improved.

Publicising services for young people saw the second Mixit event in the last year and Mixit online has been launched to improve communication and information for young people.

This year we are developing consultation with young people including introducing the Hear by Rights standard, and are investing more money in youth workers. The service will play a part in preventing youth crime and anti social behaviour.

Alongside externally validated improvements there has been an increase in the percentage of young people participating in youth work.

The Youth Opportunity and Capital Fund (YOF & YCF) has just completed its first year of operation. The Young People's Panel received 70 bids and awarded 30 grants to Young People's Projects. They allocated £189,000 to projects across Medway. One project was highly commended by the DfES – A Young People's bid for a Disability Games for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. The event takes place on 7 June 2007. In 2007/08 the panel will again allocate another £180,000 to projects for young people.

### **Children with disabilities review**

The review has looked at a number of key areas:

- Need for partnership working with voluntary agencies and other bodies
- Need for the inclusion of children's and parents' views
- Improved access for the physically disabled, particularly in relation to housing
- Better transition from children to adult services, ensuring multi agency reviews at 14
- Transition at key points eg from early years to primary and primary to secondary

The council is working with the PCT to establish an integrated service for disabled children. The children and young people's strategic partnership has agreed that the service will be a pilot for children's trust arrangements. An options report will be presented in the autumn with a new service due to be introduced in December 2007.

### **Improving attendance and behaviour at school**

At the end of the academic year 06/07 Medway had its lowest ever rate of permanent exclusions. There were 32 exclusions and none were in Primary Schools. We are pleased to be performing well in this area but remain aware of the challenge ahead.

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## **Key stage results**

### **Foundation Stage**

Although currently below the national average the council is beginning to improve performance at foundation stage, through a strategy to improve the quality of pre school provision. As part of PSA a project has been developed focussing on children's learning in the areas of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy where current levels of attainment are below expected levels. The initial stages of the project involved recruitment of additional advisory teacher support, and the development of professional development programmes for teachers and pre-schools practitioners.

As part of the developments in foundation stage work, the percentage of early education settings that have input from trained staff has gone up from 4% to 17.95%.

### **Key Stage 2**

The percentage of pupils in schools maintained by the local education authority achieving level 5 or above (BV194) at key stage 2 is 27.4% for English and 27.2% for Maths. Both are currently below targets of 29% and 31% respectively, although both have increased from the previous summers figures (2005). While the actual achievement is short of the challenging targets, for most pupil groups, including those with special needs, we have achieved significantly above expected performance at level 5, and overall there is an upward trend.

Action has already been taken to identify schools where performance was lower than expected, they have been supported to identify steps to take to raise achievement in under performing groups. They will be further supported during the year as necessary.

### **Key Stage 3 Results**

The percentage of 14-year old pupils in schools maintained by the local education authority achieving Level 5 (BV181) at key stage 3 has fallen for English tests and ICT assessments compared to last year. The performance in mathematics and science has increased compared to previous summer's figures (2005) but they have not achieved their specified targets. However, Medway's performance was significantly better than expected both at level 5+ and level 6+ in comparison with pupils in similar schools. The Statistical First Release for KS3 results shows us as third ranked at Level 5+ in English in relation to our statistical neighbours and first ranked for Level 6+.

### **GCSE Results**

The percentage of 15-year-old pupils in schools achieving five or more GCSEs shows an increase. A\*-C or equivalent (BV38) has increased from the last year's figure of 51.7% to 55.1%. A\*-G or equivalent (BV39) has dropped from last year's figure of 91.7% to 89.9%. 17 out of 19 schools currently reach national GCSE targets.



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The average GCSE/GNVQ point score of 15-year-old pupils in schools (LEL1) is performing well at 352.5 points; currently exceeding the target of 350 set for this summer. This is an 8.7 increase from summer 2005.

As part of our PSA the council is committed to improving the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs grades A\*-C including Maths and English. In order to achieve this focused support is being provided to improve teaching and learning within Key stage 4. September 2006 saw the introduction of School Improvement Partners which will focus on teaching and learning in core subjects enabling standards to be raised further.

### **Supporting positive parenting**

Parenting advice, including home visiting support, can be beneficial to some parents and children. The council recognises the need for parents to have access to a range of local services providing information, education and support to empower them to bring up their children confidently. We have undertaken some successful parenting support work with our partners. Following consultation with parents and professional a parenting strategy will be implemented over the course of the year.

### **Medway Excellence Cluster**

Medway operates an excellence cluster in a number of primary and secondary schools. It provides additional support to increase the attainment and attendance of children and young people. Over 700 children attending the cluster schools have received mentoring, holiday programmes have been set up and as have a wide variety of activities covering a number of issues, including health and fitness.

### **Reducing the numbers of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training**

This is part of PSA and focuses on students in schools with the greatest number of students whose destination is not known, or who are not in education, employment or training. Support will be directed at the Year Groups 9-11. Behaviour at school is an indication of a student being more likely to leave school and not progress to further education, employment or training, and these students will be identified as a priority for support.

The introduction of the 'socially included' project will be a multi agency, flexible approach supporting students. A link worker in partnership with Connexions, Adult Education, schools and the council's inclusion manager will directly support and commission services from other providers to ensure students either remain in school or have a clear route for progression post 16.

### **Our 3 key targets are:**

- Continue improvement of children's social care
- Provide, with our partners, a better range of preventative services including youth services

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- Improve achievement for children at school

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# OLDER AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE MAINTAINING THEIR INDEPENDENCE

### What we aim to do:

We aim to encourage and support healthy lifestyles and choices for all and improve the quality of life for our residents. We have a key role to play in helping older and vulnerable people maintain their independence.

### How do we do that?

The council meets these aims by continuing to:

- Increase the quality of life for all older people in Medway
- Help more people over 65 to remain at home, with support, for longer where they want to
- Develop centres of excellence to care for older people with dementia and for people living with long-term conditions
- Improve the quality of services for adults with disabilities

### What we think is important to achieve our aims:

#### Older peoples' plan

This document is an overarching plan setting out the priorities for the older people of Medway and how we will achieve them over the next 3 years. In order to ensure the plan achieves that aim partners are committed to consulting as widely as possible on the key issues, themes and priorities.

#### Direct payments

The council has been committed to increasing the number of people receiving direct payments which allow individuals to make important choices about the care they receive. This year the number of direct payments has gone up from 58.6 to 77.8 per 100 000 of the population.

#### Progress on development of joint older peoples services

In April 2006 the Rehab @ Home service was established as a full time team including care managers from the Hospital Team and two Occupational Therapists. In the year that the team has been running evidence confirms that they are highly successful in ensuring that people get a high level of rehabilitation support on leaving hospital which increases their long term chances of maintaining their independence at home and avoiding residential care. The team are based at Medway Maritime Hospital to ensure close working relationships with Health colleagues.

Three new integrated teams have been established at the new healthy living centres in Rainham, Lordswood and Rochester. The PSA2 work to reduce the length of stay in hospital has progressed and with the appointment of an additional Care Manager and additional Occupational Therapy hours in the A&E department designed to prevent avoidable hospital admissions.

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## **Support to remain at home**

The council continues to deliver to support to older people to remain in their own homes. 17.99 people per 1,000 population aged 65 and over received intensive home care last year. The most recent figures for authorities in the south east show an average of 9.4. Inspectors noted that the council has done particularly well in providing non-residential intermediate care to prevent hospital admission. Over the forthcoming year we will continue to help people remain at home.

## **LIFT Scheme**

The Local Improvement Finance Trust opened three new healthy living centres- in Rainham, Lordswood and Rochester funded as part of the LIFT initiative which the council supports. The aim of the centre is to bring all the GPs in Rainham together. Medway LIFT is one of 42 projects across the country aimed at improving modern, innovative and value for money primary care facilities. As part of the initiative pedestrian access has been improved to the new centre with controlled pedestrian crossings being installed, plus a new bus stop, and a walkway from an adjacent road.

## **Progress on Shaws Wood and Woodlands**

The proposed developments are key to the delivery of the council's Older People's Plan and represent a capital investment of £27.1m in developing new facilities which will support the modernisation of care services for older people. The development of detailed proposals have taken longer than anticipated.

The council aims to introduce three centres of excellence. These would maximise the independence of older people and delay the time when they may need to move into permanent care. The plan proposes that Woodlands will be run by Medway Primary Care Trust (PCT) as an integrated health and social care facility which would have an additional specialisation in the training and development of the care workforce. Shaws Wood would be run by the council as a Care Court and would provide a range of preventative and day services as well as providing residential and extra care accommodation for older people. To support the development of Woodlands and the redevelopment of Shaws Wood, the council has secured £31.38m of PFI credits.

## **Our 3 key targets are:**

- Supporting people to remain independent and at home
- Developing care facilities for older people
- Introducing the older people's plan

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# PEOPLE TRAVELLING EASILY AND SAFELY IN MEDWAY

### **What we aim to do:**

The council has a key role to play in supporting the development of a transport system that underpins the planned physical and economic regeneration of Medway. Our focus is on delivering improved access to bus services, delivering on the actions identified in the Local Transport plan and encouraging alternatives to the car.

### **How do we do that?**

The council meets these aims by continuing to:

- Improve the condition of Medway's roads and pavements
- Work with bus operators to increase the use of local buses
- Improve public transport to get people to the places they want to go
- Improve parking in Medway through regeneration schemes

### **What we think is important to achieve our aims:**

#### **Increasing use of local buses**

Following the award of £581,000 of 'Kickstart' funding from Government, the Council has worked in partnership with Arriva to deliver improved service frequency of the 176 bus service between key areas such as lower Gillingham and Chatham via Medway Maritime Hospital. This route links some of the most deprived areas in Medway, and therefore improves accessibility to a key service.

The numbers of passengers on local bus services has gone up this year to 8.7 million. Whilst this is positive, the numbers of people travelling on buses is still below our ambitious target of nine and a half million. The reliability of bus services in Medway is important to our transport aims. 99.57% of individual bus journeys which operators are obliged to provide under the terms of their contracts were run in the period. This is below the target of 99.68%. A detailed survey of all 900 bus stops in Medway has been undertaken, with the view to improving stop accessibility. A programme of installing CCTV cameras on all 114 Arriva buses based at the Arriva Gillingham Depot is underway. The council is operating two community buses in the rural area of Medway, which have already attracted nearly 200 individual members and 28 group memberships.

#### **Future transport planning**

The council submitted eight major scheme bids to the South East of England Regional Assembly (SEERA) for regional funding from 2011, five of these bids originated from the *Transport for Medway (TfM)* study. The strategic bus corridor scheme on the A2 has been identified as a priority project for regional funding after 2011.

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## **Condition of roads and pavements**

The council has 521 miles of road and 248 miles of public rights of way to maintain. Each year the council spends millions of pounds on maintenance and our surveys show that the condition of roads is improving. However, although improving slightly in the last year public satisfaction with the condition of roads and pavements remains low. In the last year the council spent just over £2m and undertook 75 projects. We will continue to invest this year and aim to complete 64 projects.

## **Travel to schools**

The school travel plan was submitted to Government of the South East and Department for Transport in July 2006 in accordance with the Local Transport Plan timescale. The number of walking buses has increased from 17 to 26, and the number of school travel plans has increased from 34 to 53, plus a further 35 are being developed in the current financial year. Medway Council continues actively to support the KM Walking Bus project and in September 2006 made a £15,000 sponsorship amount. In September a new initiative "Catch the walking bus with the KM Green Footsteps Challenge" was launched for schools to complement the walking bus project and to encourage further take up of walking to school for children.

The council is this year investing £250,000 in a half price bus fare scheme for young people up to the age of 16 in Medway travelling to and from school. The scheme is due to start in the new academic year from September 2007.

## **Park and ride**

Plans to improve access to park and ride services are underway with permission the construction of facilities at Whitewall Creek. In February 2006, Medway Council joined forces with the Kings Ferry Travel Group in the development of a Park and Ride site in Maidstone Road, Wigmore. This is designed to remove commuters' cars from residential streets and into the purpose built car park for their ride to work. With parking for around 40 cars the Wigmore Coach Park and Ride site provides shelter, lighting and CCTV. Last month the car park was full. The medium term plan is to have park and ride in the north, west, south and east of Medway.

## **Chatham traffic**

Traffic in Chatham has been an important issue for the council during the last year. The two-way system is designed to open up Chatham's waterfront and improve access for pedestrians and motorists. It is a vital factor in attracting future investment in Chatham as Medway's £1billion regeneration programme gathers pace. Following public consultation the turn from Globe Lane into Medway Street was re-opened to all motorists. Additionally residents and traders requested the installation of a pedestrian crossing at the end of Railway Street to get shoppers into the High Street area across Best Lane. This is being taken forward. Additional car parking spaces are being provided in Chatham following demolition of the old library.

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The council is consulting on the detailed development of the Brook, station and Chatham waterfront areas. This will include deciding the site for the proposed new bus station.

Our 3 key targets are:

- introducing half price fares to school
- Tackling congestion
- Improving condition of roads and pavements

## EVERYONE BENEFITTING FROM THE AREAS REGENERATION

### What we aim to do:

The council remains committed to developing the area so that all residents can benefit from the regeneration, with social and economic regeneration and protection of the environment accompanying physical change.

### How do we do that?

The council meets these aims by continuing to:

- Deliver the planned developments for Medway waterfront and Chatham centre
- Improve the quality and range of housing available in Medway
- Deliver neighbourhood renewal schemes with the local community, other agencies and the private sector
- Improve basic literacy skills for adults
- Increase business activity by helping businesses to grow and attracting new ones

### What we think is important to achieve our aims:

#### Regeneration Programme

The council's Regeneration Framework outlines the planned physical and social redevelopment of the area. Central to our regeneration are the new cultural centre at Chatham, obtaining world heritage status for Chatham, developing Great Lines City Park, creating Kent's second biggest shopping centre after Bluewater in Chatham, improving parking and public transport, building 17 000 new homes and creating up to 40 000 new jobs.

Medway's regeneration programme continues to progress, with an investment partnership now in place which has potential to secure a further £1 billion of private capital investment. Development site clearance at Rochester Riverside is well advanced; flood defence and river wall construction is almost complete. Outline planning permission has been granted and marketing of the site has begun. Four potential developers have now been identified.

Additionally, the Chatham ring road has now been returned to two-way traffic and the development brief for the Pentagon Centre has been approved.

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Development briefs have also been agreed for Strood and Temple Waterfront sites.

Further money has been invested into the University campus to further develop the site for increased student numbers.

£3.5m has been secured from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for Medway Innovation Centre. Phase 1 of the Innovation Centre within the BAE site opened in October 2006. MIL (Medway Innovation Limited) will be managing this on behalf of Medway Council. Planning permission covering infrastructure, access and an outline planning permission for phase 2 were approved on the 29 November.

### **Developments in Gillingham**

In the next twelve months Gillingham will be the focus for taking forward significant development proposals. The Town Centre Development Framework is likely to be adopted as Supplementary planning guidance and will provide the guidance for feasibility and design work for both private and public sector investment. Forecourt improvements to the station are planned and discussions are underway with landowners and stakeholders. Gillingham will benefit from links with the expanding University and new MidKent College project.

### **Medway Park and the redevelopment of the Black Lion**

The council with the support of the University of Kent at Medway, will be redeveloping the Black Lion leisure centre to create a regional centre of sporting excellence. The project includes complete refurbishment and extension of the existing centre and an eight lane athletics track. All these developments will be to the standard required to host pre Olympic games training camps. More importantly though the new centre will be of lasting benefit to Medway's residents. The facilities should be completed by the end of 2009.

### **Improving the council's housing stock**

During 2006/7 the council spent around £2 million on improving its housing stock. The works undertaken included new doors, roofs, windows and central heating systems. In 2007/8 it is planned that £4 million will be spent to further improve Council homes, and it is anticipated that this will have a major impact on the levels of decent homes within the stock.

### **Affordable Housing**

The council continues to work hard to improve performance on planning for and delivering affordable housing this year. The number of affordable units completed in Medway was 190, just short of our prediction of 200 sites units.

Of the units that were completed we also had targets for the type of tenure that the schemes should achieve. As the table below illustrates these targets were met.



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Tenure	Target	Achieved
Rented	60% (+/-2%)	59%
Intermediate	40% (+/-2%)	41%

Of the 4071 new homes gaining planning permission we have been able to exceed our target to negotiate at least 25% affordable housing on schemes by securing 1031 of the planned new homes as affordable.

The council works with Registered Social Landlords to develop schemes for which support and funding is sought from the Housing Corporation. Bids are submitted every 2 years. We have received funding for 15 schemes which will deliver 521 units from 2006-8. This represents an 82% increase in the number of units and a 445% increase in the funding received compared to the previous two years.

### **Homelessness**

The figures for repeat homelessness within 2 years have improved which highlights the priority being given to preventative work.

### **Improving private sector housing**

As part of our PSA we aim to improve the quality of private sector housing in Medway. The project will increase the number of empty properties brought which are brought back into use. This will be done by recruiting an empty property officer, relaunching the empty property grant, developing and implementing an empty property strategy and introducing a publicity campaign.

### **Improving Skills in Adults**

This is a PSA2 target, showing an increasing number of learners now attending Skills for Life (SfL) provision, the majority of which are from targeted priority areas in Medway. As such we fully expect to achieve if not exceed our year-end target in this area of work.

We have a Community Liaison Officer post whose remit is to make links with local people and providers within Medway's communities, to identify learning and development needs and matching these with appropriate support. This includes extending our links with schools for the delivery of Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy as part of our wider SfL provision.

The council is applying for Train to Gain status for the adult and community learning service, and through this we hope to extend our range of skills for life delivery to include businesses and small commercial enterprises, as part of a wider skills brokering service. This will play an integral part in the 'Skills Plan' currently being developed within Medway Council and contribute to Medway's social and economic regeneration activities over the next two to five years.

### **Social regeneration – involving the community in improving the local area**

We have secured a further £1.2m of external funding over the year to support the delivery of Neighbourhood Action Plans in Twydall, Brook Lines and All

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Saints. This means that over £3 million of external funding have been secured to deliver Neighbourhood Action Plans over the last two and half years.

A key strand of this work is to strengthen the position of local people in the labour market to put them in a stronger position to access future employment opportunities arising from the waterfront regeneration programme.

Project SCORE has combined European Social Fund and SEEDA money to enable voluntary and community organisations to work with training providers to deliver Level 1 and 2 training to local people, including training in numeracy and literacy, which is responding to one of the Council's PSA2 targets to raise basic skill levels. A total of 800 people will benefit from this project, being equipped with qualifications that will help them find higher value jobs.

Project REIGNITE has combined SEEDA and European Regional Development Funds to recruit Neighbourhood Managers in each of the target areas. They are working with local teams of volunteers and staff from local community organisations to offer local unemployed people and those on low incomes support and advice on how to remove barriers that prevent them from accessing employment. These could be social, personal, financial or economic barriers. A total of 400 people will benefit from this project and by the end of 2006-2007, over 150 people had already benefited.

Other projects identified in neighbourhood action plans that have received funding include road improvements in Twydall, alleygating and community clean ups. The alleygating and clean up programme is set to be expanded in 2007-2008 across Medway.

Ten more Community Futures Workshops were held over the course of the year, bringing local residents together with local service providers and council staff. As a result of these Workshops, 2 more Neighbourhood Action Plans have been drawn up - one for the Strood South area and one for the White Road estate. Already Strood South has a new residents association and neighbourhood community organisation at the St Francis of Assisi church.

### **Our 3 key targets are:**

- Delivering our regeneration plans
  - Chatham city centre
  - Rochester Riverside
  - Black Lion Olympic redevelopment
- Delivering planned housing improvements
- Ensuring residents of Medway benefit from regeneration by improving skills levels

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## Section 3 Improving our services

### **Feedback from independent auditors and inspectors**

#### Corporate assessment and joint area review

During the last year the council has undergone an intensive period of inspection and planning. During May the council underwent an inspection of children's services called a Joint Area Review and a corporate assessment .

The corporate assessment reported that overall Medway Council is performing well. The authority has retained its three star rating and is described as improving adequately. The report recognised the 'challenging but realistic' ambition to develop Medway – city of learning, culture, tourism and enterprise. It noted that the ambition is based on good understanding of local needs based on regular, effective consultation. The report also highlighted the particularly successful regeneration work, the effective focus on customers, a strong commitment to diversity and good value for money demonstrated by the council.

The inspection outcome for Children's Services was adequate overall. The service achieved an overall rating of 2 out of a possible 4. The report noted the areas of health, education and enabling young people to achieve economic well being positively, whilst describing social care services for children inadequate. A subsequent reinspection has rated the service as adequate.

The corporate assessment report identified the following as areas for improvement:

- Identifying and implementing measures to improve the transport infrastructure
- Improving the effectiveness of the LSP, along with partners
- Implementing corporate performance management across all services
- Improving management processes and performance in Children's services

The Joint Area Review report highlighted a number of matters for action, including:

- Establishing clear and effective systems for referral
- Ensuring clarity in relation to its threshold for intervention
- Ensuring all cases of children and young people at risk are allocated promptly to suitably qualified staff
- Ensuring that accurate and reliable data informs performance

The steps being taken to improve transport infrastructure and children's services are included in the body of this report.

A full review of the LSP including its structure and fitness for purpose in the light of the local government White Paper proposals will take place in 2007. The LSP is participating in a national pilot for improving LSPs run by the

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government office and the leadership centre. A new post of LSP manager has been recruited to, to respond to the changing support needs of the LSP. The LSP has been fully involved in the process of rewriting the Community Plan and developing the Local Area Agreement. This has strengthened the partnership and developed very specific shared objectives and bases for action.

The Council's approach to performance management is being reviewed to ensure a stronger link between financial and service performance. Further improvements will be introduced in 2007.

### **Supporting People**

The Audit Commission inspection rated the Supporting People programme which provides housing related support services to a wide range of vulnerable people as 'fair' with 'promising prospects for improvement'.

The supporting people inspection recommended improvements in needs analysis, user involvement and service information. Good progress has been made in introducing a new system to manage referrals to supporting people services and ensure needs are well met. A service user consultation strategy has also been developed.

### **Review outcomes**

This year reviews have been carried out looking at multi agency drug and alcohol services and mental health provision for adults and services for disabled children. Updates of the reviews are covered in the relevant sections of this plan.

## Public Sector Agreement 2

The table below outlines the areas covered in the second Public Sector Agreement, these targets are monitored and reported on quarterly. The PSA is an agreement between the council and the Government. It outlines how the council will improve performance in specific areas in return for a performance reward grant. The PSA concludes in April 2009. The council will receive financial reward if all targets are met.

TARGET		INDICATOR
1	<b>Participation Post-16</b>	GCSE passes at A-C (including Maths and English)
2	<b>Improve basic literacy</b>	Adults in Medway achieving a Skills for Life qualification at levels one & two for Literacy, numeracy and language

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<b>3</b>	<b>Supporting independent living for vulnerable adults</b>	a) Bed days in hospital
		b) Satisfaction measured by the older people home care survey
<b>4</b>	<b>Supporting early learning</b>	Improving children's performance at foundation stage in communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development

<b>5</b>	<b>Supporting vulnerable young people</b>	Reducing the number of 16 year olds who have no educational training or employment opportunities
<b>6</b>	<b>Increase volunteering</b>	Number of people involved in formal volunteering
		Total number of hard to reach volunteers
<b>7</b>	<b>Improve residents' satisfaction with key council services</b>	a) Satisfaction with street scene services including waste collection, recycling, road maintenance, parks and open spaces. b) Achievement of Green Flag awards
<b>8</b>	<b>Reduce incidence of violent crime</b>	Number of incidents of violent crime in the evening
		How safe do you feel at night in Medway - Measured through the Kent crime and victimisation survey
<b>9</b>	<b>Reduce carbon emissions</b>	Number of loft and cavity wall installations in Medway private sector homes
		Amount of electricity generated from renewable sources
<b>10</b>	<b>Increasing healthy living in young people</b>	Reducing the body mass index of young people involved in the programme
<b>11</b>	<b>Improving the environment</b>	Level of graffiti
		Level of fly-tipping
		Level of street litter (BV199a)
<b>12</b>	<b>Improve private sector housing</b>	Empty properties brought back into use free of hazards

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## **Service reviews for 2007/8**

In 2007/8, in addition to completing the reviews of services for disabled children, mental health and drug and alcohol services, we will also carry out one further improvement project.

This will look at a Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). The service continues to experience long waiting lists and several partners have identified this as an area for improvement in the recent review of the Children and Young People's Plan.