

# **MEDWAY COUNCIL PERFORMANCE PLAN 2006-2007**

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### **Foreword Cllr Rodney Chambers – Leader**

This is the seventh performance plan produced by Medway Council to report on our achievements to date and future plans; 2005 saw a number of significant developments.

Building on our commitment to bring the council closer to the community, which started last year with the launch of the customer contact centre, we have extended this service with the opening of three more contact points located in Gillingham, Rochester and Rainham. Our customers can now have an even wider range of face-to-face contact with fully trained staff, emphasising our aim to provide good services and value for money.

Plans to revitalise Medway are moving at a pace. On Rochester Riverside the work is advancing well with the clearance of the site and building of the flood defences. Major road changes are under way in Chatham, which is a vital step in its redevelopment. Inevitably such large-scale work does lead to some disruption and I thank all of you for your patience. It is unfortunate that this has come about at the same time as the necessary work on Rochester Bridge.

A new Children's Services directorate has been created to ensure that we offer the best possible care and support for all of Medway's young people. We have invested more in services for young people in direct response to recent surveys. The second annual young people's expo - Mixit - held recently was a great success, letting young people know what is on offer for them in Medway.

Protecting the environment remains one of your main priorities and in Medway we are now recycling more than 30 per cent of household waste, helped by the blue bag scheme launched last year. Thank you to everyone who recycles. Ranscombe Farm Reserve, our third country park, was opened last autumn. This, together with the introduction of the Urban Park Ranger Service, shows our commitment to protect and improve Medway's public open spaces.

Our last assessment by the Audit Commission judged Medway to be a three-star council that is improving well. We were praised for offering good value for money and improving key services that matter most to the public. We are committed to continuing this positive performance.

Of course the year has not been without its difficulties. Despite setting council tax at a level that is the fourth lowest for any unitary council in the country and significantly lower than any other council in Kent, the Government has said

that for the sake of 9p per week it intends to cap our tax increase. We have appealed against this decision and we will hear the outcome later in the summer. Whatever the result, we will continue to provide the best value for money for your council tax that we can.

Whilst overall the council is performing well, we recognise that there is always room for improvement and we will continue to work to this end.

I hope you will find this performance plan of interest. If you have any comments or suggestions please do send them to [performance.plan@medway.gov.uk](mailto:performance.plan@medway.gov.uk) or to the Research and Review Team, Civic Centre, Strood, Kent ME2 4AU.

Rodney Chambers  
Leader of Medway Council

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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.

#### **Our vision for Medway**

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 and new communities
- Provide high-quality services for our customers
- Give value for money

The council, with other agencies and groups in the Medway Local Strategic Partnership, has adopted this 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.

#### **Local strategic partnership**

Medway Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) brings together 350 organisations representing the Medway community. These organisations include local businesses, voluntary and community organisations and public bodies such as the police, health service and council. Many of the improvements that are sought for Medway cannot be achieved by one organisation alone. This is the strength of working in partnership, enabling each member organisation to use its resources to carry out the work that needs to be done to meet the needs of the community.

Medway LSP is in the process of rewriting the Medway Community Plan – the document that identifies the key priorities for change to be delivered by all these agencies working together.

These will include actions under the following themes:

- A community informed and involved
- A safe and secure Medway
- A healthy Medway
- Learning in Medway
- A prosperous Medway
- Culture and heritage in Medway
- A place built for the future
- Medway on the move
- A young Medway

This performance plan, the council's corporate plan, describes the authority's contribution to those themes as well as giving details about progress against our own key priorities.

### **The council's priorities**

From the full range of activities the council is working on, it has agreed that 10 priorities are key to its success over the next three years. These priorities respond to feedback we have received from residents and service users. They focus on immediate improvements, as well as long-term planning for Medway and future generations.

The council is co-ordinating a significant amount of investment that has been allocated to regenerate parts of Medway – for example Rochester Riverside and Strood Riverside, as well as in Chatham and Gillingham. The council is committed to ensuring that existing communities in Medway benefit from these changes and that we protect the environment and open spaces which our communities cherish. The theme of our second public service agreement (PSA 2) with the Government is 'bringing old and new communities in Medway together'.

### **Our priorities are:**

- 1 Putting our customers at the heart of everything we do**
  - Improve access to council services for all sections of the community
  - Monitor use of council services to ensure no group or community is disadvantaged.
  - Increase the number of enquiries that are answered fully when the customer first contacts us
  - Do what we say when we say we will do it
  - Work effectively with partner agencies to give better services to our customers
- 2 Improve and maintain our local environment**
  - 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, business and housing developers to save energy and reduce carbon emissions to protect the environment
- 3 Develop sustainable communities and regenerate Medway to benefit existing and new communities**
- Deliver the planned developments for Medway waterfront and Chatham centre
  - Improve private sector housing availability 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
- 4 Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour**
- With the Police, reduce incidents of violent crime
  - Help the police to reduce anti-social behaviour and incidents of criminal damage
  - Work with 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
- 5 Work together to protect vulnerable children**
- 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.
- 6 Realise the potential of young people in Medway**
- Raise the achievement of children in our schools across all key stages.
  - Reduce the rate of childhood obesity by promoting healthy lifestyles.
  - Improve the employability of our young people when they leave education
  - Improve services for young people and the information they have about what is available
- 7 Extend and develop the culture, tourism and leisure opportunities in Medway**
- Increase the provision and use of cultural and leisure facilities for all Medway residents
  - Work with partners to improve the health of the community
  - Increase the use of libraries for a variety of activities
  - Develop and increase the contribution that tourism makes to Medway's economy

## **8 Promote independence for vulnerable adults**

- Increase the quality of life for all older people in Medway
- Help more people over 65 to remain at home, with support, for longer
- 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

## **9 Make it easier to travel around Medway**

- Continue to improve the condition of Medway's roads and pavements
- Increase public satisfaction with information on public transport
- Improve public transport to get people, particularly young people, to the places they want to go
- Improve parking in Medway through our regeneration schemes to make shopping easier

## **10 Promote pride in Medway**

- Promote Medway as a city of learning, culture, tourism and enterprise
- Celebrate Medway's successes and encourage local people to have pride in Medway
- Increase volunteering to support community-based activities
- Encourage community spirit and unity so that people are proud of their local areas

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

(Map of Medway)

Medway is a city in the making. It is a unique integral urban area of the Thames Gateway. While 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.

Supported by more than £120million of Sustainable Communities funding, Medway will be transformed over the next 20 years. This will see the regeneration of brownfield sites and the transformation of the central waterfront into the cultural and retail heart. 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 local level we have some of the most affluent and some of the most deprived areas in the country. Whilst 85 per cent of Medway's population lives in the urban area, half of the land - mainly the edges of Medway - is rural. This includes internationally or nationally designated areas of nature conservation.

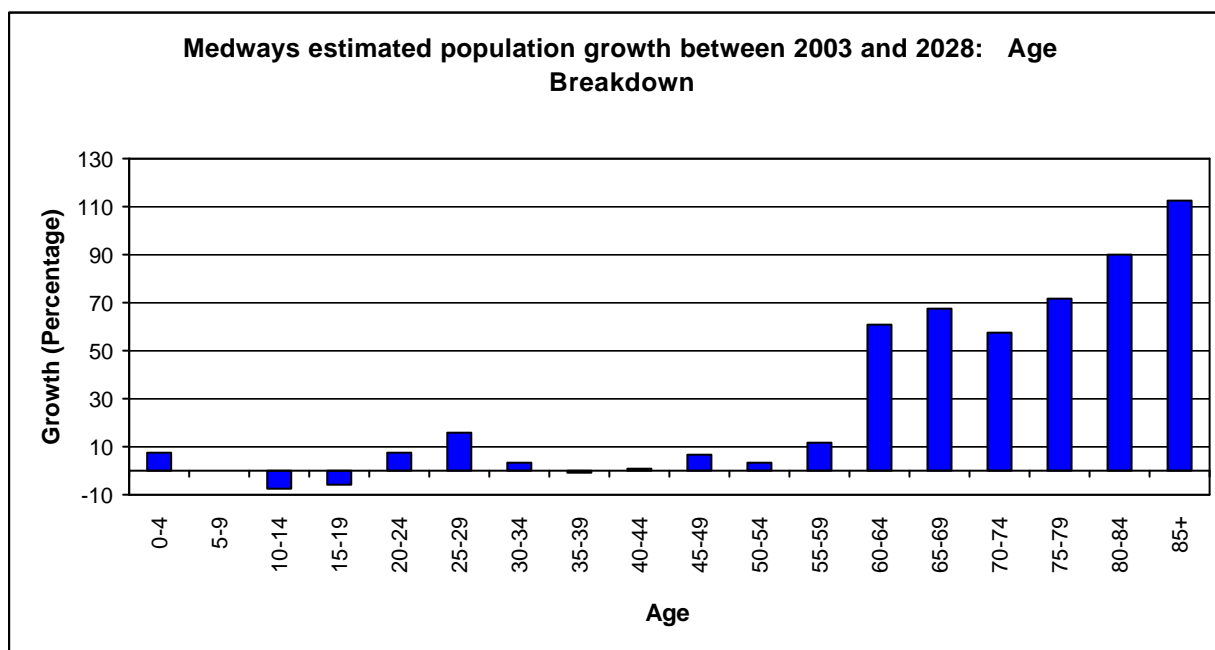
### **Medway's population in 2006**

Today, our population is 250,000. In 20 years, due in part to the planned

development, it will be 300 000. Like other parts of the south-east, Medway is under pressure to provide more development. The aim of the council and its partners is to approach development in a controlled and sustainable way, ensuring that the existing communities of Medway are enhanced while providing new housing and business opportunities that attract people.

Even before population growth for development is taken into account, Medway's population is projected to increase because of positive natural change (more births than deaths) with movement into the area slightly exceeding those leaving. This natural movement will account for about 15 per cent (7,500) of the 50,000 increase in population.

Medway's population of 250,000 is younger than the average for England, but the profile is slowly changing. Our older population is increasing and the predicted growth in the over 60s between 2003 and 2028 is 75 per cent.

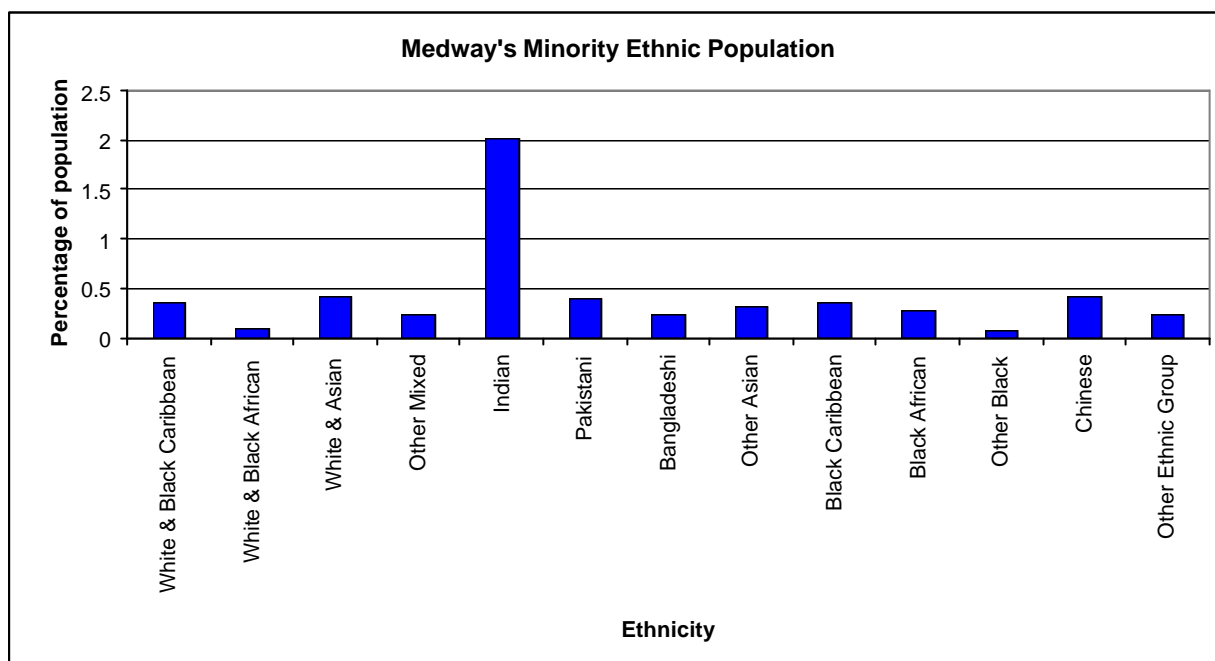


With this demographic profile we are facing an increasing demand for health and social care services for older people in the future and, at the same time, a relatively high demand for children and young people related services, compared to other authorities.

Increases in the number of older people, particularly those over 85, as life expectancy increases, will add to existing demands for social services support.

Homes with a single person living in them now make up almost a third of total households in Medway, reflecting changes in family structure and the number of older people living on their own. Conversely, the proportion of traditional family households has declined to 50 per cent; although this is higher than the rest of the south-east.

Medway has a comparatively small proportion of residents from minority ethnic communities. In terms of the number of residents born outside of the European Union (EU), Medway at 4.3 per cent is slightly below the south-east average of 5.6 per cent. Of these, the largest group is the 2 per cent of people who describe themselves as Indian. In fact none of the other minority groups has a percentage greater than 0.5 per cent. The proportion in our school population is higher – nine per cent in primary and eight per cent in secondary schools.



Medway has a comparatively high proportion of residents born in the UK. Regionally it has less than average residents born elsewhere in the EU. For residents born outside of the EU, Medway at 4.3 per cent is slightly below the south-east average of 5.6 per cent. Medway is an area of mixed faiths. The religion question was the only question in the 2001 census that was optional. However, of those who responded, Medway is very similar to the England and Wales average with 72 per cent of residents stating their religion as Christian. The proportion of people in Medway who said that they had no religion is the same as that for the region, but is slightly higher than the national average. The proportion of Medway's population whose religion is Sikh is 1.2 per cent. While this appears to be a small percentage, it still ranks fifth regionally and 27th nationally.

Medway's unemployment rate is 2.8 per cent - just above the national average. Employment levels in Medway are higher than national average: 64.5 per cent of people in Medway aged between 16 and 74 are employed, compared to 60.6 per cent nationally. Nearly 26 per cent of our working population commutes, many to London. People who work in Medway are more likely to be lower paid and in lower skilled jobs than in other parts of the south-east.

Graph comparing socio-economic classifications for Medway with the South East and England as a whole

While the proportion of people with no qualifications in Medway is consistent with the national average, only 12 per cent of the working population in Medway is educated to degree level or higher, compared to 21.75 per cent in the south-east of England.

## **SECTION 2**

### **HOW WE ARE PERFORMING AGAINST OUR PRIORITIES**

Medway Council adopted a series of core values, following consultation with the residents of Medway. The core values are integral to all of the council's work and its delivery of services to the people of Medway. The council takes pride in maintaining high standards, with the following core values underpinning all our work:

- **Giving value for money**
- **Promoting economic, physical and social regeneration**
- **Fostering citizenship**
- **Improving the environment**
- **Working for equal opportunity and access**
- **Realising everyone's potential**

This year we have grouped our performance indicators and performance information under the 10 priority areas that we believe are key to our success over the next three years. While all our services make a huge contribution towards achieving our priorities and overall vision, this plan primarily reports on key achievements last year and key areas for change and development in the coming year.

### **PUTTING OUR CUSTOMERS AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO**

Medway Council develops plans and services for the area, working with local people. We believe that informing and involving the people of Medway is essential in taking forward our future priorities. The council wants to help and promote the active involvement of the community as citizens, as well as customers. As part of this process it values feedback from residents, as well as their opinions on the services provided. This consultation process is helped by Medway Local Strategic Partnership, which accesses an extensive network of community groups representing a range of interests and concerns. We also have our own standing arrangements for consultation which includes a 1,500-strong citizens' panel, an annual residents' opinion poll and regular focus groups with target communities, for example older people, minority ethnic groups and people with a disability.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS LAST YEAR AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

#### **Customer First - access to council services**

The council aims to improve the customers' experience of contacting the council and the way their queries are dealt with. Extending access to council services is progressing well.

### **Customer contact**

In putting the customer at the heart of everything we do, we have created Customer First. The council has opened a new purpose-designed contact centre handling street scene and environment services enquires, rubbish collection, bulky waste, wardens' service and abandoned vehicles. It also provides general advice and information on a range of other services. A new secure customer portal has been set up, that allows customers to create and track e-form service requests and make payments online.

Three additional face-to-face contact points have been opened during the past year. Rainham Contact Point opened in August 2005. This is a partnership initiative with Kent Police. It provides residents with a local place to get face-to-face help and information about a wide range of council services, with Kent Police staff offering a general front-office counter service. Contact points in Medway Visitor Information Centre in Rochester and in Gillingham Library opened in April 2006. It has also been agreed that the police will have a joint presence in the Civic Centre at Strood.

### **Improving customer care**

In terms of customer care, providing an effective and efficient service to our customers is central to our service. During the past year 89.7 per cent of calls were answered within 15 seconds and 80 per cent of calls handled by the contact centre were dealt with on a 'one and done' basis. This means the customer's query was completed during their first call to the council.

The current cost of call handling through the contact centre is estimated to be almost five per cent lower than before. Mystery shopping, carried out by an independent market research company in August last year, showed high levels of satisfaction with the responsiveness and quality of service across all contact channels. The 2005 residents' opinion poll reported that 36 per cent of residents had used the 333333 contact centre number with a 72 per cent satisfaction rating.

Testament to the success and impact of Customer First so far is that the programme was a finalist in the 2005 National e-Government Awards and has been short listed for a Municipal Journal 2006 Achievement Award.

The council now has ambitious plans to further extend the range and complexity of enquires handled through the contact centre and to increase the number of local face-to-face contact points. In 2006 the contact centre will start to handle basic school admission queries and preliminary social care and benefits enquiries. Customer First will be involved in our PSA 2 target to increase the resident satisfaction levels with some of the key street scene services including environmental services, waste collection, recycling facilities, road maintenance, parks and open spaces.

### **Consulting our customers**

Consultation with our customers and potential customers is essential to identifying and taking forward our future priorities. Our 1,500-strong citizens'

panel is consulted regularly on key issues. In the past year these have included community safety, supporting parents, bus services, Medway Council's website, sports and leisure facilities and the waste strategy. These surveys are used in service planning and developments.

We also conduct an annual residents' opinion poll and have standing focus group meetings with disabled residents, residents from ethnic minority groups and older residents. During the coming year we will also be establishing an inter-faith and young people's focus group.

In the past year we have carried out extensive consultation with children and young people for the development of the Children and Young People's plan. In The Big Idea more than 1,000 young people completed questionnaires and more than 4,000 were contacted in a healthy lifestyles survey. Over the next year we will be compiling a calendar to co-ordinate our consultation activity both internally and with partner organisations. We will be developing a consultation and participation strategy for our work with young people. A major piece of work is being explored with Communities that Care, a Joseph Rowntree Foundation initiative. This will look to survey every young person in Medway between the ages of 11 and 16.

#### **Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) improvements**

Making buildings accessible to people with disabilities continues to be a priority for the council. We set ourselves ambitious targets last year to work towards making 76 per cent of our buildings accessible in 2005/6. Due to funding constraints this target had to be reduced. However, the following areas were prioritised for DDA compliance works: The Central Theatre, Chatham; Black Lion Leisure Centre, Gillingham; Jackson Pavilion Bowls/Tennis Courts, Rochester and Platters Farm Linked Service Centre.

Work has been carried out to provide a virtual tour of Rochester Castle at Medway Visitor Information Centre as it is recognised that some buildings are unable to be made fully accessible. We requested a disability audit on the Guildhall Museum, Rochester, which has just been carried out by the Museum Agency. In June a similar audit will be carried out on Rochester and Upnor Castles.

#### **Progress on community access to ICT services**

Substantial work has been done to ensure that council services can be accessed electronically. We have done this by providing electronic information, forms and payment facilities on the council website. The target of delivering 100 per cent of services electronically was achieved in June 2005, six months ahead of the deadline.

Website use continues to increase on a monthly basis with 67,387 unique visitors in January 2006; more than double the number for January 2004. We have introduced more than 100 electronic forms and so far, on average, 2,000 are received each month. We continue to test use among the population in the residents' opinion poll; currently 46 per cent of people have access at home and a further 26 per cent at work. We provide free internet access and

courses in our libraries and computer use has increased by 25 per cent in the past year. We also offer text messaging contacts too, for example to report faulty street lights. However, residents continue to tell us that telephone is their preferred method of contact. In light of this, we continue to support all methods of contact.

### **Working for equal opportunity**

Medway Council is committed to combating discrimination in all its forms, while fostering community cohesion in the area. We aim to ensure that all our services are equally available to residents whatever their social identity or personal circumstances and that they are equally accessed by all residents.

The council continues to implement the Corporate Equalities Strategy and Race Equalities Scheme. The Equalities Strategy is being updated as we develop a disability equality scheme this year.

The council has made a commitment to meeting level four of the Local Authority Equalities Standard. This is to ensure we are providing services in an open and fair way to all sections of the Medway community. To achieve this we have:

- Developed guidance and implemented impact assessments required under the Race Relations Amendment Act
- Provided training to staff in carrying out impact assessments and responding to the relevant legislation
- Improved our monitoring of service take-up to make sure all groups in the community are able to access services
- Supported service areas to identify equality targets for their area of activity

The diversity impact assessment report on the proposed re-organisation of Medway Language Achievement Service (MLAS) was completed following extensive consultation with key groups. The service re-organisation has now been implemented. The new team has a wider remit to monitor and intervene where appropriate to ensure that all black minority ethnic pupils realise their full potential. Monitoring information on racial incidents in schools has also been improved this year to ensure that all incidents are dealt with immediately.

### **Disability Equality Scheme**

A Disability Equality Duty has been introduced which requires the council to actively promote disability equality. In producing its Disability Equality Scheme the council must:

- Involve disabled people in producing the scheme and developing an action plan
- Analyse how they will gather and analyse evidence to inform their actions and track progress

- Produce a three-year action plan and report on it, review it and amend where necessary every year

During this year the council will be consulting with people with disabilities and their families to ensure that their views are incorporated into the Disability Equalities Scheme. The scheme will be published by the end of 2006 and will set out how Medway aims to promote equality and remove barriers for all disabled people.

### **Community centre for minority ethnic groups**

The council will continue to work with Medway Ethnic Minority Forum to take forward its objective of establishing a multi-cultural community centre. A brief for the project has been developed and the council is supporting the ethnic minority forum to find a suitable site for the project. In 2006/07, the council will also work with the forum to help it secure funds to appoint a dedicated funding and business development officer.

### **Improving access to services for minority ethnic groups.**

The EU funded CULMINER initiative employed two cultural mediators to help people from local ethnic minority groups to access social care services and to train adult social care staff in cultural awareness. In October this culminated in a conference where the following key results and achievements were presented:

- Access by 45 additional local ethnic minority residents to social care services.
- Delivery of cultural awareness training to 74 staff from social care service provider organisations.
- Delivery of a culturally sensitive meals on wheels programme, focusing on halal meat for Muslim care service users
- The revision of social care provider contracts to ensure providers adhere to culturally sensitive practices.
- The integration of cultural awareness into social care referral packs and care plan templates used by care managers and staff.

The lessons learnt from the Culminer project are being transferred into learning disability services over the coming year.

## **IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT**

The aim of Medway council, in partnership with others, is to ensure that new development in the area is sustainable; taking into the account the needs of future generations and including all sections of the community. Thoughtful design is essential in ensuring effective development in built-up areas. Our aim is to create an attractive environment and a good quality of life.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS LAST YEAR AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

### **Greenspaces**

The council's Ranger Service is now fully operational and carrying out inspections of green space sites; identifying areas for improvement, addressing health and safety issues and monitoring council contracts to improve service standards.

A service charter for the Ranger Service will be introduced in 2006/07 and this will include opportunities for community involvement in green space sites.

Consultation on the Countryside and Open Space Strategy started in March 2006 through Medway's citizens' panel and the council plans further consultation in May before formally agreeing the strategy. As part of its PSA 2 agreement starting this year, the council is proposing to secure the Green Flag status (national standard) for two green space sites in Medway.

Five Friends Groups are being set up. These include Ranscombe Farm Friends Group, Berengrave Friends Group, Broom Hill, Rede Common and Hillyfields Friends Group. Medway Urban Parks Forum has been established in partnership with Groundwork Medway-Swale.

### **Waste and recycling**

This year the council has put together a strategy on how it will dispose of waste. The strategy was devised in consultation with key partners and residents. It outlines plans for waste minimisation, recycling, collection of household waste and plans for alternative uses to landfill for waste disposal.

In 2005 2006 we managed to recycle 19.1 per cent of our household waste, and 12.65 per cent has been composted. Both of these figures are an improvement on last year and better than the proposed target. Single use blue bags to enhance the existing kerbside dry recycling service were introduced in 2005 and will continue to 2007.

Graph on waste recycling

The number of households having a kerbside recycling collection has increased by 1,370. This represents a one per cent increase across Medway. The new Cleaner Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005, which gave councils extra enforcement powers, has enabled Medway Council to issue more than 230 fixed penalty fines for littering. This new power has been publicised to raise public awareness. Our commitment to further improving the local environment by reducing and removing graffiti and fly-tipping is demonstrated by its inclusion in the PSA2.

This year the council is anticipating that each person will produce the equivalent of 518kg of waste, this is a decrease on last years figure of 533kgs per person. This figure compares favourably to the national average. Work

continues on education initiatives as well as various publicity campaigns surrounding waste.

### **Impact of climate change**

We have completed the Carbon Trust's nine-month Local Authority Carbon Management (LACM) programme. We believe taking part in this programme is important because it will help the council to:

- Reduce its use of energy and therefore reduce costs
- Reduce carbon emissions that contribute to climate change problems through reducing energy use
- Identify other areas of council business where we can use more sustainable ways of managing our activities

So far, through participating in the programme we have quantified the carbon emission associated with the day-to-day running of the council and have drafted a Carbon Management Plan that sets out a five-year programme to reduce emissions and minimise rising energy costs. Actions in the plan will be incorporated into our forthcoming sustainability strategy.

We are one of the first authorities in the UK to have negotiated a carbon reduction target as part of the Local Public Service Agreement (PSA 2) package. Actions to support this target will increase the number of Medway homes with loft/cavity wall insulation and will increase the generation of energy from renewable sources in Medway over the next three years.

We aim to help to alleviate fuel poverty and to raise the profile of sustainable energy in the Medway through this work.

## **DEVELOP NEW SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND REGENERATE MEDWAY TO BENEFIT EXISTING COMMUNITIES**

Due to its position as an integral part of the Thames Gateway growth area, Medway has huge potential. It is the ideal place to do business. To achieve this potential we must work to ensure that the necessary vital infrastructure is in place. The council remains committed to supporting and developing transport, ICT, community and education to match the development.

### **Local Development Framework**

In September 2004, the Government introduced a new development planning system, which means that all local planning authorities must draw up comprehensive plans for development in the area.

These are to be more broadly based than their predecessors and are to be linked with other appropriate strategies, in particular the Medway Community Plan. We are drafting the Local Development Framework to replace the current Local Plan. This new development plan includes a vision and strategic

objectives, sites that are allocated for specific use, key areas of opportunity change or conservation, proposal maps, and policies setting out the criteria against which planning applications will be considered.

### **Economic Development Statement**

This statement (2006-9) provides a concise report of Medway's economic position, ambition, and priorities for the area over the next three years. This statement is intended to dovetail with the regeneration work so that both are working towards the future prosperity of the area.

The strategic priorities set out in the statement are:

- To firmly establish Chatham as the city centre and heart of cultural, commercial and leisure activity
- Integrate the University sector into the business and wider community.
- Improve transport infrastructure, especially rail links with London and the south-east
- Provide employment space through regeneration
- Support and grow the key sectors of manufacturing/engineering, construction, health, and cultural/tourism/creative industries

### **Planning searches and Planning Development Grant**

Medway received a grant of £557,031 this year. This was in recognition of improved performance in dealing with planning applications and introducing online access to our planning files.

### **Developing Medway**

Over the next 20 years Medway will be transformed by the delivery of the Medway Regeneration Framework, which outlines how we intend to develop 14 key sites over 920 hectares along an 11-kilometre stretch of the river. The development will deliver homes and jobs and a new cultural heart.

Regeneration achievements to date include:

- The opening of the Universities at Medway campus
- The opening of Ranscombe Farm Reserve
- The Department for Communities and Local Government commitment to the Medway Innovation Centre and national museums in Chatham

However, we are still in the early stages of the project and coming years will see dramatic changes across Medway, notably along the waterfront.

### **Waterfront development**

The development of the waterfront is an exciting and extensive project. This regeneration is at the heart of improving the urban environment. The major planned developments on the waterfront include:

Chatham Waterfront – this development will introduce new housing and a doubling in retail and leisure floor space. The proposal is to develop Chatham

as a new city centre for Medway and as the gateway to the new waterfront developments. We are also developing eight cultural projects in and around Chatham including an application to the Big Lottery Fund towards a cultural centre for the Thames Gateway. This will be a flagship development for the people of Medway, providing space for entertainment, the arts, and a rehearsal area as well as a hotel and conference centre.

Gillingham will see development of the current Akzo Nobel site and the pier area in general. The regeneration will deliver a wide range of facilities to local people including work and leisure space. We are also working on a 20-year framework to provide an agreed way forward for Gillingham High Street and to attract investment into the town centre.

Strood Waterfront developments will deliver services and leisure opportunities, including a riverside walk, community and play facilities, offices and light industrial space alongside housing, some of which will be affordable.

Rochester Riverside will include shopping, hotel/conference facilities, community space, a school, 2000 new homes and shopping. Outline planning permission has been granted and construction of flood defences and land raising have started.

### **Improving skills in adults**

Improving skills is an important element of economic regeneration and we are improving our work in this area by including it in the PSA 2. The aim is to increase the number of local people without qualifications who earn level one and level two qualifications. The idea is to improve their standing in the local labour market and increase access to employment opportunities rising from Medway's regeneration. Our project will target, in particular, disadvantaged wards and neighbourhoods in Medway where there is a higher proportion of local people who could work, but don't have qualifications.

We will be reviewing access to adult learning and looking at how best to use limited funding, while developing and improving our work with partners.

### **Adult skills-based learning**

Medway Local Development Partnership, co-ordinated by Medway Council, centres around a consortium of local training providers: The University of Greenwich; Mid-Kent College; Vines Centre Trust; IPS International Ltd; the new Centre for Work and Learning; Medway Universities; Kent Guidance Consortium and the Medway Learning Partnership.

Medway Council, with its local development partnership partners, is working to deliver a £800,000 EU equal training project called PRIME ADVANTAGE.

This project focuses on the development of a comprehensive and tailored training and guidance programme for older workers in industry. It includes:

- A work placements scheme for older workers in industry.

- A mentoring scheme enabling older workers in industry to pass on their skills to young new entrants
- A management development training programme tailored to older workers
- A skills development programme for unemployed older workers with an engineering background
- Engineering skills refresher programmes for older workers in industry, particularly from small medium enterprises (SMEs)
- Careers development guidance and counselling programme tailored to older workers

This programme started in autumn 2005 and will run until summer 2007. Its aim is to provide training to more than 700 older workers from industry in Medway and across the Thames Gateway. This project reflects the high priority that Medway Council places on training and development of older workers but also, more broadly, on the skills development of the local workforce in tandem with the physical regeneration of the Medway waterfront and the new employment opportunities rising from it.

### **Improving street scene**

Medway Council has been one of 27 pilots for the Government's Liveability Fund – making changes to public space that will improve daily life. Areas for improvement work were selected in Chatham, Gillingham and Rochester.

The work included road and pavement resurfacing. A local short cut was adopted to make it easier for people to get from a residential area to local shops and bus stops. This involved resurfacing providing lighting and handrails. Speed cushions were moved to improve road safety; two ball courts were built and CCTV was installed in some areas where anti-social behaviour was reported. A street guardian scheme was set up in three areas and we plan to build upon this.

As part of PSA 2 the council will be working to improve the cleanliness of streets through reducing levels of litter and graffiti. There will be promotional campaigns to encourage local people to take pride in the local area by not littering and another to reduce and prevent fly-tipping.

### **Involving the community in improving the local area**

The council continues to work closely with partners to lead and co-ordinate potential stakeholders regenerating disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Work included alley gating schemes, removal of fly-tipping, traffic management and environment improvements. The critical factor in the success of these projects was the continued participation of local people throughout the process, creating a sense of community ownership. Projects took place in All Saints, Twydall, Brooklines and Hoo.

### **All Saints Church**

The new All Saints Church link building where a youth and community facility was provided has been a particularly successful venture. It includes a community café and an online training suite. Employment guidance and

counselling sessions were also launched there. Future proposals include a community safety audit, which will lead to community safety improvements.

### Twydall

Involving more than 50 local representatives, a neighbourhood action plan was drawn up for Twydall. Initial projects delivered through the action plan have included:

- Creation and launch of a new community park called Langton Park.
- Establishing new community services at Twydall Community Hall
- An audit of businesses in Twydall to identify business improvement priorities and skills needs for their local workforce
- The creation of a new community newsletter

During 2006/07 work will continue on these projects. A further 10 community futures workshops will be held, this time targeting two more areas – Earl Estate in Strood and White Road Estate in Chatham. It is also hoped that further funding will be received to support this work.

### **Homelessness and affordable housing**

The Housing Strategy sets the strategic direction for all housing in Medway until 2007. The council, with its partners, is now working to deliver the strategy and the challenging targets that have been set. Key priorities are:

- For housing to contribute to the regeneration of Medway
- To ensure housing in Medway meets the needs of the whole community and specifically reduces homelessness
- To provide high quality housing services for residents

The number of affordable homes being developed in Medway is increasing with 145 units last year compared to 52 the previous year.

We have been able to ensure that we meet our current target to negotiate 25 per cent affordable housing through the planning process. These schemes have included intermediate and shared ownership, but the greatest percentage has been social rented housing. We have also been successful in:

- Developing a range of new schemes
- Working in partnership with registered social landlords
- Securing a Housing Corporation allocation for 2006-08 with a total value of £57.7million.

However, we have not, as we had hoped been able to improve the numbers of council dwellings deemed decent during this year. We will be addressing this and the average length of time taken to re-let council dwellings.

### **Private sector housing**

The council continues to recognise the need to help existing communities. Currently, the council is not reaching performance targets in relation to vacant dwellings being returned to occupation or demolished. As part of the process

of increasing affordable housing in Medway, the council has a PSA 2 target of increasing the number of empty private homes brought back into use. A range of activities has been identified to contribute to meeting this target. These include recruiting an empty property officer, a public campaign to raise awareness of empty properties in Medway and the re-launch of the Empty Property Grant Scheme to increase awareness of grant funding for returning empty properties back into use.

We are updating our information about the condition of private sector stock, which will then be used to develop initiatives that will increase the standard of accommodation particularly for the most vulnerable members of our community. The initiatives will allow people to remain in their own homes while reducing homelessness. Further specialist surveys are being carried out to gather information about vulnerable and hard to reach groups to ensure that appropriate schemes are developed to meet their needs.

### **Successful delivery of training and manufacturing programmes to engineering industry**

An EU-funded project called OASES helped employees from 35 companies in the local manufacturing industry. It offered training in engineering skills, management and supervisory skills and ICT skills. The OASES project has been nationally recognised by the Equal Support Unit as one of the best run development partnership projects for the EU equal programme.

### **Olympic opportunities**

The council is developing proposals to ensure that Medway supports and can benefit from the 2012 Olympics. We will, by then, be 30 minutes by train from the Olympic Village and are developing plans to promote the area for example as a potential training camp venue.

### **Impact of tourism**

Developing growth in tourism is an important element of the council's plans to regenerate Medway. Economic impact research has estimated that tourism is now worth about £250million to the Medway economy each year - based on 2003 information. This includes indirect and induced expenditure. The change in economic impact of the sector will be measured again in 2007, using 2006 information. Following a five per cent growth in tourism in 2003, the overall contribution of tourism to the local economy grew by a further four per cent in 2004, testament to a sustainable programme of high-profile tourism marketing led by the council and supported by the Medway Tourism Association. This growth is projected to have continued in 2005 with an estimated three per cent rise in the number of tourists visiting.

### **Attracting and supporting new businesses**

We continue to build on our 2005 Beacon Status for supporting new businesses. Together with our partners, the Medway Enterprise Gateway enables us to contact aspiring entrepreneurs, focusing particularly on the creative sector. Partners for Growth, the council's loan fund, has supported 10 companies in the past two years, creating 68 jobs and protecting 127. The council's funding enables significant leverage of additional private funds.

## **REDUCE CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

Maintaining a safe and secure environment is a continued focus for the council. Medway Community Safety Partnership was formed in 1998 in response to a new duty on councils, the police and other public agencies to form a partnership to tackle problems of crime and disorder in their local area. Last year Medway Community Safety Partnership audited crime and disorder, looking at crime and the patterns of crime in Medway, to include when developing a new community safety plan.

This plan was published in July 2005. It outlines the priorities and targets for the partnership for the next three years. The council has a key role to play in delivering part of this plan. Our challenge is to work in partnership with the police on, in particular, nighttime economy crime, and anti-social behaviour. We have included reducing violent crime and fear of crime as one of our public sector agreement targets.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS LAST YEAR AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

#### **Youth work**

Youth diversion is an important part of our work in dealing with anti-social behaviour. Medway Council has been providing facilities across the area, to offer local meeting and activity areas for young people who may become involved in low-level crime.

A Youth Inclusion Support Programme (YISP) was identified as something that could reduce re-offending. It identifies young people at risk of involvement in anti-social behaviour and crime and helps them to access appropriate mainstream services, such as education or sport. The programme is to be extended to include six more high crime wards by 2008.

In accordance with the Youth Justice Plan, the council's Youth Offending Team and partners developed services to ensure a five per cent reduction in first-time entrants to Medway Youth Court by March 2006.

The YISP is now fully staffed and working alongside the Early Intervention Team. This was established 18 months ago to concentrate on preventing offending and reducing recidivism.

A significant reduction in first time entrants to the youth justice system was achieved last year, exceeding the set target of a five per cent reduction. Medway YOT was successful in securing £260,000 extra Youth Justice Board funding for youth inclusion and support panels for up to 12-year-olds and 13-17-year-olds. This will further help the team prevent offending behaviour and reduce first-time entries into the youth justice system.

#### **Alcohol control zones**

Medway Community Safety Partnership continues to implement and review the use of alcohol control zones. The partnership has considered extending alcohol control zones across Medway and in local areas. Research has been carried out to determine which areas will become alcohol control zones in the future.

Last year the regular police officers, police community support officers and Medway Community Safety Team have run a number of enforcement campaigns on alcohol control. Operation Seahorse (enforcement of Rochester alcohol control zone) has run throughout the year, particularly around school holiday periods.

### **Anti-social behaviour and criminal damage**

Medway Anti-social Behaviour Group has been successful in using Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) on a number of people who are persistently anti-social or commit criminal damage.

A number of police operations to address alcohol-related violence took place and will continue this year. Two further dispersal areas were used in Lordswood. The community safety partnership has evaluated these areas and look to set up other dispersal areas across Medway for 2006/07.

### **Tackling substance misuse**

The council continues to work in partnership with other agencies to reduce the damaging impact of illegal drug misuse on individuals and the community. This year we will carry out a fundamental review of drug and substance misuse services to identify areas for improvement.

We are on target to increase the number of drugs users accessing treatment. We identified that we had an important role to play in two key areas:

- Drugs education in schools and targeting for young offenders
- Housing support for substance misusers to avoid homelessness and further potential decline

As part of this process a peer-led drugs education programme is being funded by the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund. This will be evaluated at the end of the year. Workshops were held with the council's Housing and Substance Misuse Teams to agree on a joint assessment protocol for people with housing and substance misuse needs.

Work is under way with the Healthy Schools Team to meet the national target of 75 per cent of schools engaging with the Healthy Schools programme, and at least 20 secondary schools have signed up to the drugs modules part of the programme.

The Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) was established in Medway in 2005/06 and is delivered by Cranstoun Drug Agency. This programme is designed to support criminal justice clients who have substance misuse

issues. It does not just address treatment issues, but their broader needs such as housing, training and employment, to break the offending cycle. In 2006/07 we are seeking to pilot a prescribing service for DIP clients in an effort to stabilise chaotic drug users.

Another area of key development this year is the improvement of shared care in Medway. Shared care is a vital step in the treatment pathway. Clients who are stable on a substitute prescription can be moved on to community-based GPs, freeing up capacity in the structured treatment service and helping people to move on in their rehabilitation. This year we have been successful in recruiting GPs into the scheme. Next year we will be working with services to ensure clients are improving and moving on to appropriate services as their circumstances change.

## **WORK TOGETHER TO PROTECT VULNERABLE CHILDREN**

There are 69,000 children in Medway, making them 27 per cent of the population. Overall, children and young people feature highly in the priorities of the council. We have increased spending on children's social care by 49 per cent in the past three years, with more in the budget for 2006/07. We have created a Children's Services directorate. The aim is to provide more child-centred services to ensure that every child is healthy, safe, able to enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE LAST YEAR AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

#### **Improving services for children**

The Children's Services directorate was created in January 2006 with a collective ambition for every child in Medway to lead a healthy and enjoyable life, safe from harm and neglect. So far this year a Children and Young People's Plan has been developed in consultation with children, parents and partners. The plan identifies the key areas that we, with our partners, have identified as key to improving the lives of children in Medway.

#### **Supporting vulnerable children and young people**

The council continues to work hard to improve performance in children's social care. Child protection indicators are good – in particular for child protection and looked after children, but we have struggled with staffing shortages. Unallocated cases of children in need have been reduced from 507 in January 2005 to 133 at the end of April 2006.

We have more to do to continue the improvement and are co-sponsoring a staff performance improvement project with Commission for Social Care Inspection and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to make further improvement. This will address performance management and the quality of social work practice. The project began in January. We intend, along

with our partners, to ensure that initial and core assessments of children's needs will be completed within the required timescales. This will help to identify needs earlier to provide appropriate support and, through the introduction of the Common Assessment Framework, promote closer and effective joint working to meet the needs of children.

### **Children's Care division**

This project began in January. We intend, along with our partners, to ensure that initial and core assessments of children's needs will be completed within required timescales. This will help to identify needs earlier to provide appropriate support and, through the introduction of the Common Assessment Framework, promote closer and effective joint working to meet children's needs.

As part of the restructuring, the Children's Care division was developed. It is responsible for leading, managing and taking overall responsibility for vulnerable children. Children's Care provides assessment for a number of vulnerable and specialist groups of children and young people, including:

- Children in need
- Children in public care
- Children at risk of harm
- Children with disabilities
- Children with special educational needs

The Children's Care division is putting area-based integrated teams in place to ensure interactive and appropriate responses to need. Three area teams include staff from a range of professional backgrounds, based in three areas:

- Gillingham and Rainham
- Chatham and Walderslade
- Rochester, Strood and Hoo

### **Services for children with disabilities and high support needs**

Working with Medway Primary Care Trust we have opened Aut Even, a high quality respite centre for children with disabilities and their carers. It is an innovative project and feedback during consultation and the implementation phase has been positive.

Valuing Medway People - Learning Disability Partnership Board was approached by a parent to develop local services for her son and others like him who had been sent hundred of miles away due to lack of services. This was agreed and a partnership group was established. The Further Education/ Challenging Behaviour Service was developed and opened in September 2005, with student accommodation in Hempstead and with Mid-Kent College providing further education. Learning Disability Development Fund money was used to develop accommodation and re-develop classrooms on the college site. Individuals are on an induction course preparing them for a full

course starting in September. This has become a nationally recognised project with many areas showing an interest to do something similar.

### **Children with disabilities review**

We are reviewing our services for children with disabilities. The review is due for completion later this year. The focus of the review is:

- Partnership working with the voluntary agencies and other bodies
- Inclusion of parents' views
- Improved access to services for children with physical disabilities
- Improving transitions for children at key developmental stages
- Providing information regarding autism
- Promotion of the 'blue box' information on services for children with disabilities

Interim findings from the report indicate widespread support for a high quality, integrated service that is responsive and flexible. It has also discussed the idea of a time limited multi-agency group to collect information about need. This would ensure that any changes in services are planned on the basis of robust up-to-date information.

### **Mixit**

Last year saw the inaugural Mixit event. The one-day extravaganza, organized by the council with partners, was aimed at 13-19-year-olds and offered a mix of activities, entertainment and education. Mixit 2006 took place on 31 May 2006 and again attracted about 1,500 young people. It once again proved to be an exciting day which gave young people the chance to see what is on offer locally. The event included live music, lots of information and advice from stall holders and many free activities. Feedback questionnaires show that young people also liked being able to get information on health promotion and from organisations taking part, like Connexions and the Medway Youth Service.

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

The review of school exclusions was completed last year. The review, led by Professor Carl Parsons from Canterbury Christ Church University, made a number of recommendations for change to reduce the number of children excluded from schools in Medway. Some of the key proposals include:

- More effective co-ordination and brokerage of support services available to schools on the verge of excluding pupils,
- More effectively managed transfers of pupils between schools
- Pupil Referral Units to have a more active role in maintaining and returning children to school.

The review has helped us to reduce permanent exclusions from 89 pupils in 2003/04 to 55 in 2004/05 (in line with national average). This year we are pleased to report that at this point in the year there have been 16 permanent exclusions compared to 32 at this point last year.

There have not been any exclusions from primary schools in the past 18 months, achieved by services working closely with schools, which have responded flexibly to achieve better outcomes for young people.

The service will be tracking and evaluating outcomes for young people who have been part of managed moves. A further programme to support the reduction in risk of exclusion from school or offending is Project Esteem. Through INTERREG funding the Health Promotion Team is working to improve the mental health of vulnerable young people between the ages of 12 and 18. It provides young people with an understanding of how to develop and achieve goals.

### **Reducing the rate of childhood obesity**

In Medway eight per cent of five-year-olds are obese and a further five per cent are overweight. Medway's young people's lifestyle survey highlighted that 91 per cent of young people acknowledged their health was important to them, yet only half reported eating healthily and taking enough exercise. We have a new PSA 2 target to reduce childhood obesity through improved nutrition and increased physical activity, referrals can be made by GPs, schools and parents.

### **Teenage sexual health**

While recognising there is further work to do the council, together with partners, is pleased that the under 18 teenage pregnancy rate has declined by 12 per cent from 1998-2004. We will continue to work proactively with partners through the multi-agency teenage pregnancy partnership board. A Living, Loving, Learning programme (a multi-agency training team) supports secondary schools with health education, targeting schools with the highest teenage pregnancy rates. Alongside this has been the production and launch of the Little Black Book – a young person's pocket guide to local sexual health services. A draft Sexual Health Strategy will be agreed in June.

## **REALISE THE POTENTIAL OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN MEDWAY**

### **Educational attainment**

Raising educational standards is a priority for the council. This is reflected in the PSA 2 target to raise attainment at GCSE. The council is pleased that results have improved over the past couple of years and is committed to supporting schools to continue this trend.

### **Key Stage 2 results**

Results continue to improve. The table below sets out our attainment levels and targets for key stage.

Percentage of 11-year-olds achieving the national target of level four or above	Current figure %	2007 target %
English	76	80

Maths	70	78
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### **Key stage 3 results**

The percentage of 14-year-old pupils in schools maintained by the council achieving level five at key stage 3 has increased compared to last year. The table below shows attainment levels and targets.

Percentage of 14-year-olds achieving national target of level five or above	Current figure %	2007 target %
English	75	76
Maths	64	74
Science	69	72
ICT	69	77

### **GCSE results**

Educational achievement at GCSE continues to be a priority for the council. This year the percentage of 15-year-old pupils in schools achieving five or more GCSEs, in any subject, shows an increase. A\*-C or equivalent has increased from the last year's figure of 49.6 per cent to 51.3 per cent.

The focus on this area will continue through the new PSA 2, which is setting a target of improving the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs grade A\*-C including English and maths or equivalent. Current performance (academic year 2004/05) for this 41.2 per cent the target for this is 46.2 per cent of pupils achieving this level by 2009.

### **Medway's Excellence Cluster**

The council has an excellence cluster in Medway that works with 21 of its primary and secondary schools and provides additional support to increase the attainment and attendance of children and young people. Medway Partnership Board is developing the following strands:

- Learning mentor support
- Early intervention counselling support in primary schools
- Learning support units in secondary schools
- Support for able and talented pupils
- Language enrichment programmes for foundation and key stage one pupils
- Development of basic skills programmes in primary schools
- PSHE programmes in emotional literacy in secondary schools

### **Foundation stage improvements**

Although improvements are being delivered, the council continues to seek to improve performance at foundation stage, which is well below the national average. This area is part of PSA 2. As part of this programme there will be focused support to improve teaching and learning in the foundation stage. Specific attention will be given to children's learning in physical, social and

emotional development, and communication, language and literacy, where levels of attainment are below expected levels.

### **Medway Plus and the 14-19 Strategy**

To support the improvement in schools a number of schools-based initiatives have been put in place. Medway Plus, a scheme that recognises activities outside of the classroom, has been extended to 10 out of 19 secondary schools.

Alongside this the 14-19 Strategy for Medway has been developed and agreed by strategic partners and all Medway providers. They have agreed to co-ordinate programme delivery and develop common timetabling, extend course provision below level three and extend vocational offers, develop impartial information, advice and guidance within schools and tackle underachievement by providing additional support to underachieving schools.

### **Improving future prospects for young people**

One of our previous PSA targets was to improve the level of education, training and employment for care leavers aged 18–19. Although the PSA target was achieved, this high level of performance has not been maintained this year in terms of attainment at GCSE level, and although still within target the percentage of care leavers engaged in employment and training has also reduced. However, we are looking to remedy this in the forthcoming year and this group continues to be supported and the services offered to them are still developing.

This year 30 young people were contacted by the Leaving Care Team to ensure that they had something constructive to do during the day and had appropriate housing. At mid point in the year 60 per cent of those in the scheme were receiving this support. It is hoped that the figure will be 80 per cent at the end of the year, meeting the current target.

Support is provided through a virtual team of agencies including mental health social workers, a housing co-ordinator, Connexions and voluntary agencies. Stronger links continue to be forged with the Youth Service.

### **Engaging children and young people in education**

Ensuring that young children achieve their potential through the education system is a priority for the council. This is reflected in the PSA 2 target, which focuses on support to pupils who are at risk of exclusion from school and dis-engagement from the curriculum. The project aims to re-engage young people who are currently educated at home so that they can access further education. It will also work to raise the expectations and self-esteem of vulnerable young people so that they can get into education, employment or training.

### **Increasing the use of leisure facilities for young people**

During the year several projects have been established to encourage the use of leisure facilities. External funding was used in the summer term of 2005 to

establish four successful after-school clubs in the rural area of Medway, with about 75 young people taking part. Following completion of these projects work has started on a set of procedures for teachers to follow when setting up out-of-school hours sports clubs and to help them access a coaches register on the Sports Development Team website.

External funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport through Sport England and other smaller funders enabled the recruitment and employment of a Disability Sports Coach for six hours a week. Cricket coaching was offered twice per week to about 30 young people with disabilities from February 2005 to June 2005. This was followed by the appointment of two coaches - one cricket specialist and one athletics specialist - who coach children with special needs. This project will be funded for three years. About 100 children with disabilities accessed this coaching in leisure centres and special schools.

The Black Lion Leisure Centre has targeted young people from eight to 18 with a successful 'just for kids' fitness programme with specialist Shokk equipment and trained staff. It offers a broad range of ways to get fit, from gym workouts, to retro and salsa dancing, as well as pilates, kick boxing and even chairbics for the less mobile. The number of new junior Shokk Gym members from September 2005 to March 2006 was 170.

Services for young people remain a concern for our residents. Our Youth Service reaches 17.5 per cent of young people 13-19, compared to 25 per cent nationally. Following the recent council re-organisation greater priority is being given to youth services. We have now created a dedicated assistant director post to drive these improvements.

### **Healthy Schools Initiative**

Ninety schools are now involved in the Healthy Schools programme. We are working to the new national standard which was introduced in September 2005. A major health event was held in October 2005 to launch the new standards. We have a multi-agency team that assesses schools' evidence against the national criteria. The team recently awarded the first Healthy Schools status under the new system.

## **EXTEND AND DEVELOP THE CULTURE, TOURISM AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES IN MEDWAY**

The council views cultural services as vital for delivering its agenda of physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE LAST YEAR AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

#### **Big Lottery Fund bid**

Medway has moved a step closer to winning National Lottery funding to build a world-class cultural centre in Chatham and transform Gillingham's Great Lines into a vast new city park.

In February the projects came through the first round of approval for the Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmarks programme. Both schemes were selected for further assessment and those visits have now taken place ahead of a short-listing process in August.

The biggest bid is for Medway REACH – a £78million project encompassing an iconic landmark building, a sky cable car system linking the river's north bank to the cultural heart of the city and a unique 150ft 360-degree viewing platform. This new cultural quarter would give Medway first-rate facilities for popular entertainment, film, theatre, exhibitions, opera and music.

If the REACH bid succeeds, another seven projects will come with it including music venues, an art gallery, improvements to The Brook Theatre and The Central Theatre – both in Chatham – and a community well-being centre, promoting healthy living.

The second bid is for a £36million Great Lines City Park. This would transform the historic Great Lines between Chatham and Gillingham into 30-hectares of open space for residents and visitors to enjoy wildlife, sports, leisure, performing arts, education and training.

The project would also revive interest in - and restore - the site's internationally important fortifications: Chatham Lines and the former Field of Fire that formed part of the defences of The Historic Dockyard, Chatham.

Living Landmarks has two streams – one for projects like the Great Lines City Park hoping to receive £10-25million, another for projects like Medway REACH hoping to receive £25-50million. The smaller bids will find out if they have succeeded in September 2007. In the larger programme, the winner will be decided by a televised national public vote, provisionally scheduled for October 2007.

The £78.5million Medway REACH project consists of a £47million bid and partnership contributions of £31.5million. The £36.6million Great Lines City Park consists of a £25million bid with £11.6million coming from partnership contributions.

### **Tourism in Medway**

The recent rise in tourism reflects the council's successful campaign to highlight Medway's maritime heritage. Tourism in Rochester in 2005 remained stable resulting in a greater concentration on Rochester in the tourism marketing plan for 2006/0.

### **Tour of Britain and Tour de France**

This September the Tour of Britain will be speeding through the streets of Medway. In 2007 we will welcome the world's media as they track the Tour de France on its first leg from London to Canterbury. With 200 riders and an entourage of 5,000 we can demonstrate Medway has a sense of pride to rival

anywhere in the rest of the world. One of the tour's prestigious time trials will be taking place in Gillingham and the world's cycle racers and elite sportsmen will be watched every inch of the way.

### **Dickens Festival**

This year's Dicken's Festivals, in the summer and at Christmas, will showcase Rochester at its best. Where else in the world will thousands of people come to celebrate one of England's most-loved and prolific writers - Charles Dickens - than in Medway. We are seeking to appeal to a broader range of tourists this year and have made contact with a range of agents to secure more visitors to the area.

### **Dickens World**

Work on a theme park celebrating the world of Charles Dickens and characters from his books is continuing at a tremendous rate. Construction of the long awaited Dickens World theme park is ahead of schedule and the first set of attractions are to open next year. It has been projected that Dickens World will attract 450,000 visitors per year and create up to 200 jobs.

The council granted full planning approval for the new Dickens visitor attraction at Chatham Maritime. Dickens World will be a substantial two-storey building opposite the Dockside Outlet Centre. It will have a nine-screen cinema and several restaurants incorporated into it. The visitor attraction itself will comprise 71,500 sq ft floor space. Visitors will walk through courtyards, streets and a town square, based largely on a fictitious Victorian London setting. Highlights of the visit will include a 12-minute dark ride and an auditorium with theatrical renditions of Dickens' novels and Victorian music hall entertainment.

### **Bid for World Heritage Site status**

A bid for World Heritage Site status for Chatham is a major project with a number of important implications. The recognition of The Historic Dockyard, Chatham and its defences as being of world importance has importance in itself. Other potential benefits include improvements to tourism and civic pride.

The World Heritage Convention (adopted by UNESCO in 1972) is concerned with the identification, protection, conservation and presentation of cultural and natural sites of universal human value (UHV). In October 1997 the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport proposed 32 potential UK sites, including The Historic Dockyard, Chatham and its defences, which could be nominated to UNESCO for World Heritage Site status over the next five to 10 years.

### **Library improvements**

Planning permission has been granted for the re-location of Rochester Library to the Adult Education Centre in Eastgate, Rochester. This is expected to open in summer 2006. Grain Library moved to the former URC chapel in March 2006. The library service has been successful in securing £400,000 from the Government to refurbish Gillingham Library. The library has re-opened also housing a Customer First contact point.

Libraries did experience some difficulty in meeting targets visitor numbers, but continued to perform well against other targets. Final figures show that last year libraries received 4,005 per 1,000 population visits, which is below the target of 4,900 per 1,000. To increase numbers this year libraries have continued with stock marketing techniques employed by the retail sector. This is thought to have had the desired effect of encouraging more visitors. There has been an increase in the number of people using computers in libraries with 717.99 per 1,000 population using the service against a target of 589.93.

### **Bringing communities together**

The EU EUROFOOT project has paid for the delivery of a programme of social education and football training and four tournaments in Medway and its partner cities of Malmo, Grande-Synthe and Charleroi. Medway Ethnic Minority Forum helped to publicise the EUROFOOT project to young people from local ethnic minority communities to enable them to participate in these multi-cultural girls' and boys' football teams, engaging in a programme that is promoting cultural awareness and celebrating cultural diversity. The final tournament for the EUROFOOT project took place in our partner town of Grande-Synthe. More than 60 young people in Medway have benefited from the EUROFOOT project, participating in the coaching sessions, youth development sessions or in one of the four trans-national tournaments.

### **Museum visits**

Museum and gallery visiting figures are just below target with 260 visits per 1,000 achieved against a target of 265. However, there has been a significant rise in visits from school groups with the number reaching 17,567 pupils against a year-end target of 14,000 pupils. This excellent achievement is, in part, due to the launch of new Museum Outreach Service to Medway schools in April 2005.

### **Leisure events**

Since 2003, the council has commissioned speciality markets in all its main town centres. These markets have included French, Italian, Continental and Garden Markets. The monthly Farmers' Market in Rochester, has now become the biggest and most diverse in Kent.

Over recent years the council has introduced several new festivals to Medway to benefit local residents, to broaden its appeal to visitors and to raise Medway's cultural profile – these include the Chinese New Year, Rochester Son et Lumiere, Black History Month celebrations and Rochester Food and Drink Festival.

## **PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS**

The council works closely with health agencies to provide integrated services to people in Medway, while recognising the importance of its own services for the health and well-being of the people of Medway. Our priorities in this area are to encourage and support healthy lifestyles and choices for all, extend leisure opportunities and improve quality of life for our residents. We have a key role in health promotion to try to prevent disease and maintain independence.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS LAST YEAR AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

### **Development of an Older People Plan for Medway**

The plan, Opportunities in the Third Age, recognises that people are living longer than ever and the trend is set to continue into the future. The plan will focus on the steps needed to improve and sustain the contributions made by older people. The aim is to help older people remain active and healthy, while recognising that a small number of older people suffer from ill health and/or disability and need care and plans in place to meet their special needs. The plan is in draft form and being consulted upon to ensure the final plan:

- Reflects the matters of concern to Medway's older people
- Sets out the key strategic priorities and agreed targets
- Establishes the actions that must be undertaken

Outlines the resources needed to deliver the plan

### **Health promotion**

The council and Medway Primary Care Trust are preparing a joint health promotion campaign. Literature about healthy living and eating is on display in the council's contact points, as well as in the council's leisure centres. The council's website will be expanded to offer health promotion advice for all ages. There are also a number of health promotion activities focused on older people including.

- Telecare services – to help manage high risk cases at home
- The Falls Strategy to help prevent older people falling
- Sports and fitness activities for older people

### **Obesity**

In 2005 Medway developed an obesity strategy following consultation with the community and key partners. This identified milestones for local action in different settings, for example in the home, workplace, community and faith groups. Activities contributing to reducing obesity in the area include:

- A well-developed Sports Strategy that recognises the impact its services have on health and well-being
- Passport to Leisure is a discounted access scheme for pensioners, people with disabilities and those on benefits, giving access to all council facilities.

### **Smoking**

The council takes seriously its duty to provide its employees with a safe and healthy work environment. In November 2005 the council introduced a smoking ban on council property with a few exceptions such as residential

care homes. It is proposed that from 31 December 2006 all smoking rooms available on council properties be removed. The council is also proposing to offer support and guidance to employees to help them stop smoking.

Figures show that since April 2003, 2,669 people have quit smoking in Medway. The smoking cessation service continues to target hard-to-reach groups with the service. The coronary heart disease project was a direct outcome of a health equity audit. It focused on areas of greatest need, but there is still more to do.

Medway continues to have higher than average rates of smoking in pregnancy which contributes to lower birth weights. We have recruited a specialist worker to support pregnant women. We also know from the healthy lifestyles survey that 23 per cent of young people who responded are addicted to tobacco, though 84 per cent want to give up. Our future work will focus on young people and smoking cessation in schools.

Graph on smoking in pregnancy

### **Disability services for adults**

The Joint Service to Adults with a Learning Disability continues with its improvement and modernisation agenda. The Valuing Medway People ' Partnership Board ', with input from service users, and carers oversees the service, sets priorities, and monitors performance . In broad terms, the service aims to facilitate independent, inclusive lives by promoting the uptake of supported living opportunities, reviewing the needs of people living in residential care homes.

As of April 2006 we have established, with our health partners, an integrated Physical Disabilities Assessment service that incorporates Occupational Therapy, Care Management, services for deaf and blind people and the Disability Facilities Grant. Future plans are to develop a rehabilitation at home service, to increase the uptake of direct payments as well as looking to develop a Physical Disabilities Board in consultation with service users.

### **Progress on development of joint older people's facilities**

The proposed development of the Shaws Wood site in Strood, will provide 30 extra care units and a 60-place daytime well-being centre. Confirmation has been received from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Department of Health that they are prepared, to financially support the re-development of Shaws Wood and Woodlands in Gillingham, through Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits. If the business cases are approved by the DCLG and the Department of Health in 2006, the new facilities will be opened in 2008. The development of these projects will also have a major impact on the number of mental health beds available for older people and the quality of care they receive.

### **Supporting older people to live independently**

Supporting independence for older people continues to be a priority for the council. The older people plan's aim is to maximise the independence of older people. It focuses on developing community infrastructure, health promotion for all and independent living. Particular emphasis is placed on developing rehabilitation at home. A successful pilot project focused on giving six weeks free rehabilitation care to people in their homes as they are discharged from hospital. It is proposed that the rehabilitation programme will be rolled out to more people by early August 2006. To achieve this we are improving the joint working between hospital and community-based staff to ensure that the rehabilitation support starts immediately when a person returns home. We are developing more sophisticated ways of working with homecare providers - ultimately aiming to measure their performance by the results they achieve for older people, rather than the amount of care they provide. We will also be following up on a recommendation from a recent recommendation to build on our good practice and develop an integrated strategy for older people.

This area is a focus of PSA 2, which will focus on reducing the number of days spent in a hospital bed where a community setting may have been a more appropriate response to the admission. The project will ensure that care management cover is available in the accident and emergency unit over an extended day and over the weekend to ensure all options are considered.

## **MAKE IT EASIER TO TRAVEL AROUND MEDWAY**

The council has a key role to play in developing a transport system that fits in with the planned physical and economic regeneration of Medway. This year the focus will be on delivering improved access to bus services, improving bus stops to enable access for all, delivering the actions identified in the Local Transport Plan and working with health professionals to encourage physical activity to improve the health of residents.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS LAST YEAR AND FUTURE PLANS**

#### **Local Transport Plan and Transport for Medway**

Transport is recognised as a major factor in the plans for Medway's future development. As a result Medway Council and the Government commissioned the Transport for Medway study. Its purpose was to consider the short and long-term transport needs of the built-up area of Medway in light of the proposed programme of regeneration, while at the same time maintaining the quality of the environment.

Revision of the Local Transport Plan has been completed. Following detailed consultation, Medway Council adopted the new plan in February 2006 and the plan, together with supporting documentation, was submitted to the Government. Supporting documentation includes an Accessibility Strategy, a Strategic Environmental Assessment, an Air Quality Action Plan, a Cycling Action Plan and a Walking Action Plan.

The plan became a key policy framework document of the council from 1 April 2006. Key actions will focus on implementing schemes and initiatives detailed in the Local Transport Plan and supporting documentation that delivers the overarching priorities of the plan and contributes towards achieving the challenging targets. Strategies will be developed covering school travel plans, road safety, buses, public transport information and public rights of way.

### **Channel Tunnel Rail Link – Medway rail services**

The new franchisee was announced by the department of transport in December 2005. GoVia took over operation of the Kent Rail Franchise from 1 April 2006. Existing timetables will continue with some minor improvements until December 2009. Then there will be major change in the service provided, including the start of domestic services on the high-speed line. Once the new company has had time to consolidate its position, it will be finalising the details of services to be provided at that stage. The council will be encouraging GoVia to provide the best possible services for Medway and endeavour to build an effective working relationship with GoVia to secure further improvements to the services for the benefit of Medway's passengers.

### **Quality Bus Partnerships**

Medway Council remains keen to work in partnership with local bus companies to increase the availability of buses on certain routes. In 2004 Arriva's £10million Operation Overdrive provided 61 new low-floor buses, 40 refurbished low-floor buses; 12 yellow buses for school and CCTV on buses. Initial feedback shows an increase in bus use in the past six months, reversing a decline. The Local Transport Plan outlines our aim to raise kerbs ensuring that 80 per cent of bus stops on main roads and 30 per cent on residential roads are accessible to people with disabilities by 2010/11. In addition 310 extra roadside bus timetables displays and real-time information displays are being introduced.

### **Real-time information for public transport**

Providing real-time information to inform bus passengers is moving on well. This year the focus has been on equipping buses with the GPS tracking systems that allows the system to work effectively. All Arriva buses are now equipped. The ambition over the next five years is to equip bus stops with the necessary equipment to display the waiting times for buses.

### **Improving parking for business activity**

Improving parking is an important area for development. An example of this is the work that has been done as part of the All Saints regeneration programme, which has included a programme of business environment improvements such as the creation of a new shoppers' car park with designated parking for businesses.

### **Satisfaction with roads and public transport**

Last year's road maintenance work was completed on budget. This year the council will be resurfacing 41 sections of road and carrying out 37 pavement-resurfacing programmes. The council will be replacing all of the white and

yellow lines across the area. During the coming year the Highways department will be undergoing a restructuring process that will encourage an even greater focus on customer needs.

This year the 99.67% of bus services contracted by the council were on time. This was both above target and an improvement on last year.

## **PROMOTE PRIDE IN MEDWAY**

### **Pride in Medway**

The council is supporting the Pride in Medway scheme for the seventh year running. These awards demonstrate that Medway has many exceptional people to be proud of. Along with mhs homes, the University of Kent at Medway and the Kent Messenger Group the council sponsors this annual event, which culminates in a gala dinner where the winner is announced.

Award categories include community involvement; courage; emergency heroes (blue light services); employee of the year; environmental project; good carer; health heroes; outstanding achievement; teacher of the year and young heroes.

### **Duke of Edinburgh Awards**

Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal visited Medway this year. She was here to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme. She spent 0 minutes visiting three separate sites seeing the excellent work that is carried out as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme in Medway. She also met young people taking part in the national award programme.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a voluntary, non-competitive programme of practical, cultural and adventurous activities, designed to support the personal and social development of young people aged 14 to 25. Medway Council holds a licence to operate the award locally. Award groups are based in schools, colleges, universities, youth clubs, voluntary organisations, open centres, young offenders' institutes and many businesses.

In the past three years nearly 2,000 of our young people have taken part in the programme, and this year 17 achieved gold. There are about 1,500 people taking part in the award programme at any one time and 41 per cent of young people who registered in the south-east last year came from Medway.

### **Integration projects with Racial Equality Council (REC)**

Medway REC will lead a partnership of organisations to deliver a series of integration projects this year. These will focus on finding opportunities for people from different communities to come together and will include:

- Sporting activities for young people
- Get to know your neighbour scheme

- Tell us about your culture arts activities

### **Increasing the capacity of the voluntary sector to support local people**

The council has included support for the local Community Voluntary Services (CVS) in its proposals for the second public service agreement. The idea is to increase the number of people involved in volunteering, particularly people from minority groups. This is in line with the council's identified priority to increase volunteering to support community-based activities.

Change Up is a national initiative to develop the voluntary and community sector. The council is part of the Change Up consortium for Medway and aims to develop and nurture new community and voluntary organisations to support local people. A report was produced on behalf of the Change Up consortium, mapping all voluntary and community sector organisations and what developments may be required to meet some of their identified needs.

A Local Implementation Development Plan was developed and consulted upon. It highlighted relevant issues, including funding, volunteering, representation, training, ICT and supporting new organisations and actions to address these issues. Part of this is the development of Medway Voice – a forum for the community and voluntary sector. The Change Up Local Implementation Development Plan was submitted to the Government Office for the South East at the end of March 2006 for approval.

The council has recently agreed the compact with the voluntary sector. This will go out to voluntary organisations for further consultation. The compact provides a framework for working in partnership to deliver effective services.

### **Putting Medway on the Map**

The council continues to recognise the importance of 'putting Medway on the map' if it is to attract inward investment and make the area a special place where people will want to work, live and relax.

The good news is that it is working. In the past year there have been visits from HRH The Princess Royal and HRH the Countess Wessex.

We have welcomed a number of ministers from the Department of Communities and Local Government as well as ministers from other Government Departments.

Officers from the council's regeneration team have been taking part in a number of high profile national and international exhibitions. They are confident that the contacts made at these events has raised much interest in Medway and will result in huge investment potential.

Few will have failed to notice the new bright welcome to Medway road signs that greet visitors as they enter Medway via Rochester, Strood, Gillingham, Rainham and Chatham.

We are hopeful that our two Big lottery bids to create a cultural heart in Chatham and a City Park on the Great Lines will proceed. If the cultural heart bid makes it through to the final round it will go to a national televised vote when millions of viewers will be asked to vote for their favourite scheme - putting Medway firmly on the map.

### **Celebrating Medway**

Celebrating Medway was part of the Black History Month celebrations in October 2005. The purpose of the event was to foster social cohesion and community spirit by promoting a better understanding of the rich and varied cultural environment of Medway.

A wide range of events took place throughout the month following a launch in Rochester Castle Gardens, including a reggae show, traditional Indian dancing, Chinese dragon dancing and gospel singing. Medway residents had the chance to attend film presentations and music, dance and craft workshops.

Following the success of last year's event, we will again be Celebrating Medway in 2006, with the fun being launched in Rochester on 1 October. Events will include salsa dancing, lion dancing, a black footballers exhibition and Indian R'n'B music. Additional events are planned throughout the month.

## **Section 3 How your money is spent**

### **Revenue budget summary**

The table below shows a budget summary of the previous two years' expenditure and the estimates for the current financial year.

	2004/05		2005/06		2006/07 Estimate		
	Estimate	Actual	Estimate	Unaudited outturn	Direct Expenditure	Direct Income	Direct Net
	£' 000	£' 000	£' 000	£' 000	£' 000	£' 000	£' 000
<b>Total service costs</b>	<b>268,239</b>	<b>268,929</b>	<b>283,172</b>	<b>283,160</b>	<b>518,240</b>	<b>(219,065)</b>	<b>299,175</b>
<b>Financed by:</b>							
Contributions to/ (from) reserves	0	(690)	(330)	(318)			344
Government grants (revenue support grant)	196,906	196,906	206,977	206,977			219,294

and re-distributed business rates)

<b>Council tax requirement</b>	<b>71,333</b>	<b>71,333</b>	<b>75,865</b>	<b>75,865</b>	<b>80,225</b>
Council tax for band D dwelling	£851.22	£851.22	£899.73	£899.73	£949.23

The unaudited outturn for 2005/06 is an overall under spend of £37,000. However, there are a number of major overspends shown below, which have been compensated by savings elsewhere within the council:

Increased cost of special education service	£825,000
Increased cost of special education transport	£615,000
Increased demand and cost of foster care for children	£287,000
Increased demand and cost of looked after children	£204,000
Increased pressure on adult services	£1,132,000

#### Income for 2006/07

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	10.049
Dedicated School's Grant	152,031
Share of business rates	57.214
Local council tax payers	80.225
Fees and charges and specific grants	218.721
<b>Total</b>	<b>518.240</b>

Council tax band D has been set at £949.23 (£1,125.00 including the police and fire elements) for 2006/07. This is an increase of 5.5 per cent on 2005/06 and still represents one of the lowest council tax rates for unitary authorities in England.

#### Estimated gross revenue expenditure for 2006/07

The council plans to spend £518.2million on services in 2006/07, which equates to about £2,000 spent for every resident in Medway.

Despite facing severe budget pressures in 2006/07, there are examples of services, which will receive additional funding which include:

- Enhancing the ranger service £200,000
- Additional children's social workers £210,000
- Litter enforcement officers £90,000

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

	<b>£'000</b>	
a. Education and schools	254,489	49.1%
b. Adult social services	82,456	15.9%
c. Benefits payments	72,092	13.9%
d. Highways and transportation	33,707	6.5%
e. Waste services	16,070	3.1%
f. Leisure services	15,115	2.9%
g. Housing services	14,728	2.8%
h. Planning and economic development	9,694	1.9%
i. Other services/levies	7,689	1.5%
j. Libraries, museums and arts	7,275	1.4%
k. Safer communities and enforcement	4,925	1.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>518,240</b>	

### **Capital priorities**

The council has also agreed a capital programme of £38.813million for 2006/07 and a provisional programme of £45.861million for future years.

The capital programme for 2006/07 builds on the agreed themes from previous years and incorporates the following priorities:

- Universities.
- Innovation Centre.
- First Point of Contact.
- Building maintenance.
- Integrated Children's Services.
- Improvements to leisure and recreational facilities.
- Improvements to roads and council/school buildings.
- Rochester Riverside, Strood Riverside and Chatham Centre.

Specific funding for new projects this year is identified below:

Major capital projects	£'000	Funding
Devolved school capital	5,827	Government grant.
Other education capital	16,392	Supported borrowing, government grant, and contributions from schools' budgets.
Integrated children's facilities	675	Government grant and reserves
Improvements to housing stock (council housing)	2,903	Major repairs allowance paid as subsidy grant and borrowing supported by government grant.
Private sector housing	1,900	Government grant, capital receipts and various contributions.
English Heritage properties	850	English Heritage grant and capital receipts.

Medway Renaissance unit	1,500	Government grant
Transport infrastructure maintenance	1,702	Supported borrowing.
Integrated transport measures	2,269	Supported borrowing.
Improvements to community and recreational facilities	1,780	Government grant, reserves and capital receipts.
ICT and building maintenance	625	Capital receipts.
Highways and road safety improvements etc.	2,390	Government grant, reserves and capital receipts

### **Efficiency gains**

Following implementation of the Gershon Review all public sector organisations, including local authorities, are charged with achieving 2.5 per cent efficiency gains each year for the years 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08. The aim is to identify resources that can be reinvested in frontline services or used to hold down council tax.

Medway Council's target for efficiency gains is £4.1million per year cumulative (although the individual year of 2005/06 target is £4.3 million). Therefore efficiencies gain targets year on year will be:

- 2005/06 £4.3million (2.5 per cent)
- 2006/07 £8.2million (5 per cent)
- 2007/08 £12.3million (7.5 per cent)

From Medway Council's perspective this is consistent with the council's core values (value for money). It reinforces our approach to pursuing efficiencies included in the annual budget and service planning exercise. Our strategy towards generating efficiency gains is demonstrated by our commitment to high quality services, provided in a cost-effective manner, with continuous improvement in all our services for the benefit of the community.

Through our annual service planning and budget setting process we identify the potential for efficiencies (that will not be detrimental to front line service provision), 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, to help the release of efficiency gains supported by sound business cases

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

- Delivering services in partnership with other providers
- Developing new alternative services to maintain quality but reduce costs

- Pooled budgets
- Proactive management of markets
- Smarter procurement through consortia
- Innovative financing solutions
- Income generation through trading services
- Investment in electronic government
- Establishment of the Customer First contact centre
- Review of processes
- Rationalisation of support services
- Disposal and rationalisation of property assets
- A renewed drive towards energy efficiency and other sustainability issues
- Identifying the savings from reduced transaction costs associated with e-forms
- Ensuring that the progression of integrated children's services delivers both improvement and efficiency
- The use and marketing of telecare/telemedicine
- Maximising the benefit to both clients and the council in developing our plans for the care of older people

## **Procurement**

The Council continues to make good progress implementing the National Procurement Strategy.

Of particular importance is a review of the procurement process, where there is a requirement to deliver a risk-based procurement model. Significant procurements should be subject to risk classification (either High, Medium or Low Risk) against a basket of risk factors and once classified, be subject to appropriately detailed Gateway reporting and scrutiny requirements depending upon the nature of the classification.

The Council is reviewing its procurement planning and is looking to implement a Forward Procurement Planning process linked to its' Contract Register and Forward Plan. This will enable the Council to improve planning and allocation of resources, to ensure the effective delivery of procurement programmes. The Forward Procurement Plan and Contract Register will also be made available to external organisations via the Internet.

The Council is currently updating its' procurement documentation in view of changes in legislation and the proposed new risk based gateway procurement process. Revised documents will be supported by guides, to ensure a greater understanding of their purpose and use.

We will continue to ensure that all individual contracts awarded comply with the code of practice on workforce matters in local authority service contracts. 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 Kent Connects e-Procurement Group.

Advice on procurement is now 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 has also been concluded with local Small Medium Enterprises and contains principles on working together more effectively. To supplement this, linked to the new Forward Procurement Planning process, the Council is looking to put in place a programme of supplier awareness/meet the buyer days; enabling external organisations to i) meet Contract Managers in advance of procurement projects commencing, and ii) network and build beneficial relationships with other organisations, thus equipping them to better engage with the Council.

### **Performance Management**

The council continues to improve its performance management systems. We have developed our managers to ensure they have a clear understanding of the principles of good service planning. The benefits of this include ensuring identified customer needs are addressed, whilst enabling managers to focus on key issues such as quality and productivity. To help with this process, during the year we have introduced a new electronic service planning tool which is used by all managers. This enables us to drive the targeting of resources by providing a picture of key priorities and to have a consistent approach to service planning across the council.

### **Summary of Corporate Bidding Unit Work in 2005/06.**

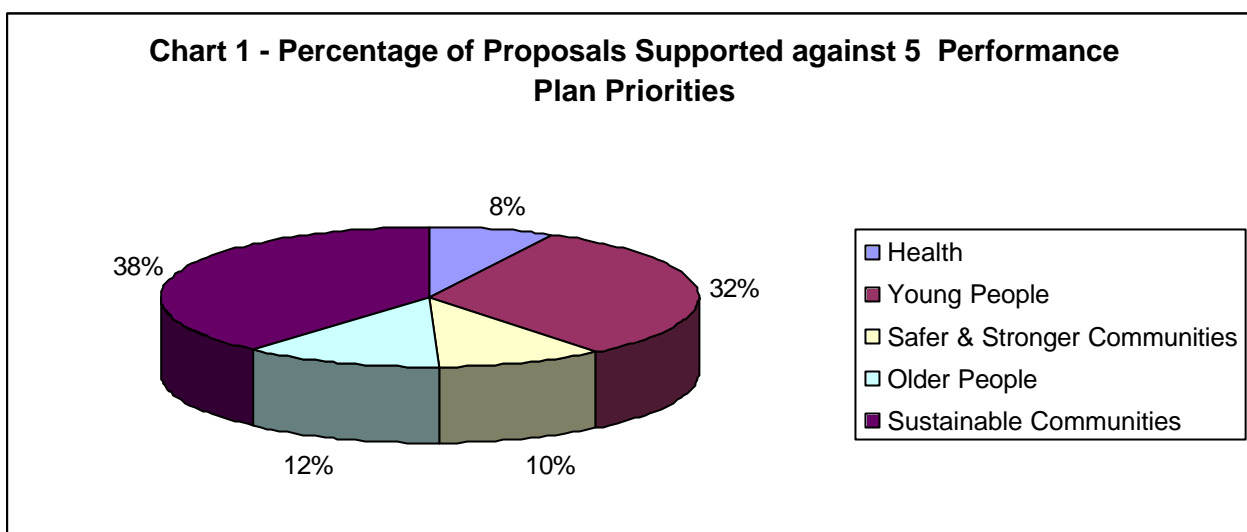
The Corporate Bidding Unit has supported the development of 119 Medway-based proposals (council bids and voluntary/community sector bids) in the past financial year 2005/06, securing in excess of £1.27million.

This brings the total cumulative funding secured by the bidding unit since 2001 to more than £22.5million. This figure does not include an additional £30M in PFI credits secured.

We are awaiting the outcome of 13 projects, which if all were to be successful, would realise an additional £116million.

Of the 119 proposals developed, 35 were fully approved, one was approved to stage two, 13 projects have been submitted and are awaiting a response, 25 projects have been unsuccessful, eight proposals were not submitted, two projects have been postponed and 33 are work in progress.

All 119 projects align with the agreed key funding priorities of the council and with the Performance Plan targets of supporting people's health, young people, safer and stronger communities, older people and sustainable communities. See chart 1 below:



## **Section 4 Improving our services**

### **Public Service Agreement 2**

This is Medway's second public service agreement. National guidance has changed since 2002 when we negotiated the first agreement. There is now an expectation of greater partnership working to deliver the PSA targets. Our main partners, particularly the police and health, have been working with the council on target negotiation, and will have an important role in helping to deliver a range of targets. The original proposals for PSA2 were submitted to ODPM (now Department for Communities and Local Government) in April 2004. They have been through a long process of negotiation. The agreement will run from April 2006 – 2009.

The funding associated with PSA2 takes two forms. The amount available for pump priming projects at the start of the agreement is £1,001,100 and is available regardless of the outcome of the targets. However, if we are successful in meeting all the PSA2 targets by 2009 we stand to gain £7,071,050 Performance Reward Grant (2.5% of net budget for 2005/2006).

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

#### **Audit and inspection letter 2004**

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) is required under the Audit Commission code of audit practice to issue an annual letter to councillors on the completion of the audit, demonstrating that the code's objectives have been addressed and summarising all issues of significance arising from its work. The letter also includes a summary of the results of inspection work done in 2005 by the Audit Commission. The summary includes a summary of the most recent results of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA).

In 2005 the council was classified by the Audit Commission as improving well and as a three-star council.

The letter said: "The council's track record of delivering improved services is strong. Robust improvement plans are in place to ensure that services continue to develop. In 2006 the council must build on its foundation to ensure that the plans are delivered in its overall framework.

'The council is in the process of completing its organisational restructuring with the majority of posts now filled. The restructuring is one of a number of cost saving and service capacity measures currently being actioned at the council. In 2006 the council will need to ensure its new structure is 'fit for purpose' and delivers not only economies but also improved working practices and a focus on the council's key objectives and activities.'

Other key issues highlighted in the letter include:

- An unqualified opinion on the statement of accounts
- The council works at improving services it knows are important to local people, including exceeding the Government's target on recycling, tackling litter levels and developing more green spaces for community use.
- The council has an improving track record of delivering improvements and efficiency savings against its priorities
- The council continues to use the findings of consultation to develop its plans, such as services to young people, the condition of roads, housing management and benefits, as well as street cleaning

## **Review outcomes**

### **Exclusions Review**

The Exclusions Review involved extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including headteachers, staff, parents and pupils. This is an important area as research indicates that pupils who are excluded from school are more likely to have low qualifications, have greater difficulty finding employment and are more likely to become involved with criminal activities. The research findings were analysed against models of best practice, both locally and nationally.

The aims of the review were to identify a process by which Medway could reduce the permanent exclusions rate and to draw up an action plan to achieve this in three years. The thrust of the review was that Medway needs to use all its key services in a more integrated way with a strategic co-

ordinator who has this as a main part of their role. We have already seen improvements in this area over this year.

### **Update on Community Safety Review**

The scope of the review was wide-ranging and aimed to:

- Improve the effectiveness and co-ordination of the street enforcement teams with other council services and key partners.
- Ensure that there is effective partnership working with all the key agencies working on issues addressed by Medway Community Safety Team.
- Identify structural and procedural options for organising, managing the whole function including hours of operation to deliver improved performance against key targets notably on priority issues outlined in Medway Community Safety Plan.
- Put in place, where appropriate, partnership protocols to improve partnership working and customer service.
- Ensure there are effective mechanisms in place to monitor performance against key community safety targets.
- Assess the impact of Medway Community Safety Partnership in meeting the council's targets for the Youth Offending Team and Drugs and Alcohol Action Team.

The findings of the review will be considered during the course of this year

### **Update on Children with disabilities review**

## **Inspection Feedback**

### **Cultural inspection**

The council's cultural services were inspected during 2005. The council was judged to be providing a good service with promising prospects for improvement. Tourism, heritage, arts and events services were seen to be clearly contributing to the achievement of local area priorities. Other cultural services were providing good quality facilities and delivering services more efficiently in response to financial challenges.

The inspection found:

- Resident satisfaction levels high across cultural services
- Cultural services, in particular tourism, heritage, events and the arts, are making a significant contribution to the council's ambitions to improve quality of life and to the economic, social and physical regeneration of Medway

- The council has a good track record in working with other organisations and securing funding for a range of sources to support its cultural services activities

Recommendations from the report included the need to:

- Develop more robust targets and measures to assess the impact and benefits of cultural services activities on the local area
- Further develop services for older teenagers and ethnic minority communities
- Develop more robust plans to address long-term revenue funding for cultural service development.

### **14-19 inspection**

The inspection report was published in 2005. The overall finding was satisfactory. The report identifies areas of strength that should be built on and areas that need to be addressed for progress to be made.

The strengths identified included

- Rigorous analysis of the education, training and employment needs of the area
- Shared vision and good arrangements for collaborative working between partners
- Clear strategies for the development of 14-19 education and training and for improving participation and progression
- Good provision and support for vulnerable groups of young people
- Well structured initiatives for promoting progression to higher education
- Good support for schools and work-based training improvements from the council and the local Learning and Skills Council
- Some high performing sixth forms

Areas for additional attention included

- The slow implementation of 14-19 strategies
- Lack of clearly resourced and targeted consortia and associated vocational centres
- Lack of robust systems for assessing the value for money provided by sixth forms and consortia
- Inequality of access to curricula that meet the needs of all learners
- Lack of clear 14-19 curriculum pathways

The inspection noted that the individual strategies and plans that partners had put in place address raising achievement rates and improving progression to higher education. These strategies and plans place particular emphasis on learners with special educational needs and those at risk of disengagement, which underlines the partners' desire to promote educational and social inclusion. The inspection noted that partners had researched the needs of the area and the local economy. The clarity about future opportunities arising from growth within a higher skills and knowledge based economy.

Subsequently, to the report the Department for Education and Skills has agreed the post inspection action plan.

### **Adult education inspection**

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out a full service re-inspection of Medway Adult and Community Learning Service in May 2006. Its work focused on a number of areas of learning, which included ICT, foundation courses (covering literacy, numeracy and ESOL), health and fitness, visual and performing arts, family learning and some of the languages provision. Leadership and management overall, which also includes equality of opportunity and quality improvement, were part of the rigorous inspection process. While the grades awarded are provisional and still need to go through the ALI's moderation, we are expecting its report on the inspection in June/July. Over the past 12 months, staff in the service have given a strong commitment to remedying the weaknesses identified in the previous unsuccessful inspection in April 2005. They have followed a detailed post-inspection action plan. There is every expectation that this hard work will be appropriately rewarded when the results are made known.

### **Service reviews for 2006/7**

The areas being proposed for fundamental review in the coming year include:

- Mental health services
- Substance misuse services
- Gillingham area review

## **PART 2**

Section 5      Performance indicators – summary (details to be confirmed)