

Priority: A clean and green environment

What we aim to do:

Our commitment to the environment includes keeping the streets clean, recycling more rubbish and reducing carbon emissions. We will protect our existing green spaces in urban and rural areas, whilst continuing to invest to create parks that can be enjoyed by all. We want to create an environment where people have opportunities to take more exercise to improve their health and wellbeing. We seek to plan and deliver our services in a sustainable way to protect the environment for current and future generations.

How well are we doing?

Outlined below is performance against the 4 outcomes set out in the council plan under the 'clean and green environment' priority. We have rated our achievement of planned actions and outcomes this quarter as 'amber' as progress has been made to sustain our capacity to deliver an improved environment but there has been an increase in litter, detritus and graffiti. Performance on 7 key measures of success can be reported this quarter – 4 (57%) are on track and 3 (43%) are off target and require significant improvement these are rated red.

Outcome: Manage, protect, conserve and invest in our open spaces to create parks that can be enjoyed by all

'More things for young people to do' has been a consistent message from resident surveys. This remains a priority and Medway has therefore embarked on a programme of open spaces and play area improvement, mostly funded (£0.5 million) by the Phase 1 Playbuilder programme. During quarter 2 the first contracts under the Playbuilder programme were let and awarded for Riverside Country Park and Jackson's recreation ground, to be completed by the end of the calendar year. In addition to the Playbuilder schemes, improvements at playgrounds at Pottery Road and Wigmore Park have been completed, with contractors on site at Abermarle Road play area. Further projects are being progressed at Princess Park, and Barnfield Recreation ground.

External validation of our progress in improving open spaces is demonstrated by the Green Flag scheme having achieved, the third Medway green flag, awarded for Hillyfields and a rating in the top 5% of green flag parks for the Vines. A Green Flag Working Group has been established to undertake further work towards the standard. The group's role is to ensure we retain existing accreditations next year, and consider further potential sites for green flag status.

Outcome: Manage Medway's waste sustainably and reduce waste sent to landfill.

The percentage of waste recycled was roughly constant when comparing the second quarter to the first, at 35.5% and is better than target, although September data is still provisional. This maintenance of position is positive, given that usually the amount of garden waste peaks during the first quarter and declines in the second quarter. However, despite improvements Medway is still below the national average for the percentage of waste recycled and a number of projects are in place to address this.

It is believed that the recession has resulted in a positive drop to 191 kg of residual waste per household collected during the second quarter, down from 206 kg in the previous quarter. However, Medway has historically collected more waste than other authorities.

The current contracts for waste collection were due to change in November. This has been delayed and the contract will be awarded in the first quarter of 2010 to commence in late summer 2010. The contract will see a new kerbside kitchen waste service and an expansion of the council's garden waste collection service.

Making sure as many residents as possible have access to garden waste collections will assist an increase in recycling. The Waste Minimisation Team have won a prestigious Green Apple award for environmental best practice after introducing a successful household waste recycling service at Bryant Street flats. Each flat is designed differently so a unique solution was required, working in partnership with the housing association and the caretaker for the block. Residents recycled more than 1.6 tonnes of waste during the scheme's first eight weeks. Other partnership working between the waste minimisation team and housing associations or letting agents, has resulted in a further 1,217 flats in 56 developments having recycling facilities installed. In addition, so far this year, over 5,500 houses have been assessed for brown garden waste bins, and 1,936 additional households are suitable for brown bins, with a further 1,811 households with space restrictions being given a brown bin if they want one.

Last year the change in recycling markets meant that for a significant part of the year recycling of timber was not possible, but a new processor has now been identified and is in place, recycling 2340 tonnes of wood waste in the first 6 months of 2009/10. The first set of figures is now available for the Neighbourhood Furniture Store initiative reported in Quarter 1. Between April and June 8 tonnes of furniture have been diverted from landfill through re-use. A total of 6031 tonnes of household waste excluding composted waste were sent for recycling in the first quarter of this year. This increased to 6737 tonnes in the second quarter.

Outcome: improving the local street scene

Street cleaning has been highlighted as a priority by residents. Performance for the condition of the streets in terms of littering, graffiti, fly-posting and fly-tipping is reported every 4 months, with the first set of results for April to July now available. They show that the proportion of streets with unacceptable levels of litter has increased from 5% for 2008/9 to 8% this year above the target of 5%. The percentage with unacceptable levels of detritus has also increased from 8% to 14%, as has graffiti, from 4% to 6%. However, fly-posting remains good at 0%, maintained from last year and the graffiti team has removed 843 instances of graffiti so far this year.

In response to the above performance, officers from Community safety, enforcement and waste services have introduced an local inspection survey looking at all aspects of the street scene. Next quarter waste services will work with the contractor to change the current street cleansing methods, with more emphasis on sweeping as well as litter picking and will then assess if this has a positive impact on cleanliness. A weed removal programme has also been implemented following reports of increased weed growth. During the quarter Medway has carried out 11 Community Clean-Up events, clearing vegetation and rubbish from both public and private land, and supported the Clean-Up Lordswood Day", removing graffiti from 11 sites and providing a waste disposal facility.

A further issue identified is the contractor's street cleansing vehicles ageing, resulting in the fleet being below full capacity due to additional maintenance requirements. The vehicles were due to be renewed at the start of the new contract in September but this was delayed due to the contract extension. Replacements are now on order and will be operational later in the year.

The number of enforcement actions for fly-tipping has increased from 100 per month at the start of the year, to 154 in September, bringing the total for the second quarter to 397, significantly above the 241 recorded in the same period last year. The number of fly tips incidents has seen a slight increase from 984 to 996 from the first quarter, but a decline from the previous year figure of 1015 for the second quarter.

It has been demonstrated that the quality of public toilets has an impact on the public perception of an area. During the second quarter, Medway has refurbished Parkwood toilets with a further 7 receiving minor improvement works. Following the commencement of a new cleaning contract, a significant improvement in standard has been seen, with a corresponding drop in complaints.

Outcome: reduce the carbon footprint and foster sustainable development in Medway

Carbon footprinting is currently only available annually, and results become available for both the council's carbon footprint and that of the local area each year in this second quarter.

The council's carbon footprint from its own buildings and operations is 38,796 tonnes of carbon dioxide as compared to 2005/6 when it was 41,200 tonnes. Whilst the way of measuring this has been updated, it is broadly comparable and represents a 6% reduction. Based on this assessment, officers are now able to prepare for the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC), under which local authorities and other large organisations will be required to buy permits to release carbon dioxide, with the overall amount of allowances reducing year on year. An Energy Manager has been recruited to significantly increase capacity to reduce the carbon footprint and reduce our £3.5m energy bills and limit the potential £0.5m cost of Carbon Reduction Commitment.

The government has released the third report on the total carbon dioxide emissions for whole of the Medway area, and whilst relating to 2007, it is the most up to date information available. Performance has improved from 5.02 tonnes of carbon dioxide per head of population in 2005 to 4.89 tonnes per head of population in 2007, a reduction of 2.7%. Whilst positive, there is still some way to go to achieve the LAA target reduction of 13.9% by 2010. As part of the Multi Area Agreement signed in quarter 2, Medway has agreed a target to further reduce carbon emissions by 16.7% by 2014.

Although there have been reductions, looking at the breakdown of the area's carbon emissions, shows there has been an increase of 1% in emissions due to transport but a reduction of 2.8% in domestic reductions, an indication of the impact of the council's Medway Our Planet campaign to help residents reduce their energy bills and carbon emissions. Provisional data shows that this 3 year campaign has supported residents to install 6,638 home insulation measures, preventing 93,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide being released, surpassing our target of 82,000 tonnes.

This quarter, the focus has been on continued engagement with the Energy Saving Trust's 1-1 support programme, an intense period of consultancy work over two years to develop a comprehensive action plan to reduce the carbon footprint of the local area. The draft report and recommendations were completed during quarter 2, and scored Medway as 5th best of the 44 authorities on the programme for progress to date. The recommendations will be worked up into an action plan during quarter 3.

Summary

Highlights:

- Sustaining increases in recycling to 35.5% (provisional) and reductions in waste going to landfill, although still below the national average.
- 6% reduction in the council's carbon footprint.

Areas requiring development / key risks

- The letting of the waste contract has been reprogrammed and the new enhanced service will not become operational until September 2010.
- Increase in street litter, detritus and fly-posting.

Priority: Safer communities

We want people to be safe in Medway, and as important, to feel safe. Medway residents' perceptions of safety lag behind the actual levels of crime and disorder and we want to change that so people feel safe and confident. The council has an important contribution to make, working in partnership with the police, to reduce crime and the causes of crime, and increase confidence and pride in the area. We will continue to work in partnership with the police, focussing on tackling serious violence, reducing antisocial behaviour and reducing domestic violence. We want to build safe, strong and cohesive communities.

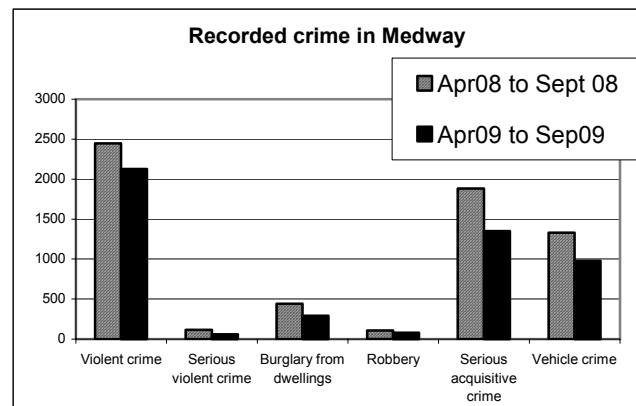
How well are we doing it?

Outlined below is performance against the 5 outcomes set out in the council plan under the 'safer communities' priority. We have rated our achievement of planned actions and outcomes this quarter as green as both crime and antisocial behaviour are showing a decline. Proxy measures continue to show a decrease in the fear of crime and an increase in public confidence. Performance on 5 key measures of success can be reported this quarter – all 5 (100%) are on track (rated green).

Compared to the same period last year the police are reporting that levels of crime in Medway have dropped by 19.4%. This exceeds the reduction for all of Kent which stands at 16%. This includes:

violent crime down by 13.1%
serious violent crime down by 46.6%
burglary from dwellings down by 33.8%,
robbery down by 27.3%,
serious acquisitive crime down by 28.2%,
vehicle crime down by 26.4%,

The reduction in serious violent crime and serious acquisitive crime are particularly encouraging as these are partnership local area agreement priorities. Medway is now on track to achieve its targets.



Outcome: build strong communities by improving community cohesion

The council has secured £1.029 million of external funding for investment in community cohesion projects to strengthen the integration of new migrant communities and deliver neighbourhood cohesion projects. These funds will enable the council and partners to deliver a programme of community cohesion projects over the next three years, to promote the aim of people from different backgrounds getting on well together.

This work will be supported by the employment of a community cohesion officer who will also take on responsibility for the continued development of the existing community cohesion group.

Outcome: reduce antisocial behaviour, criminal damage and youth crime

Anti-social behaviour is a high profile local and national priority. The role of councils is key to tackling anti social behaviour. Positively, the perception of anti social behaviour being a problem has reduced in Medway from 15% in September 2008 to 8% in September 2009.

Criminal damage offences have also reduced by just over quarter comparing figures for April to September 2008 and 2009. As part of this work the council employs ward based officers who are visible in local areas and support the neighbourhood police role.

The Safer Communities Service was re established in April 2009 to provide 3 area ward based teams in East, West and Central whilst maintaining a lead community officer for each ward. This has led to reinforcing the council's partnership arrangements with the police and led to task groups to tackle various types of crime. Examples include Victoria Gardens, Anchor Wharf and Greatlines.

Work to prevent youth offending continues to have a positive impact 11 young people at risk of offending have completed an accredited 6-week course providing diversionary activity. Youth re-offending rates have dropped from 0.58 in the first quarter to 0.18 against an annual target of 1.13.

Outcome: reduce repeat occurrences of violent crime, such as repeat offenders, location and victims

Tackling repeat violent crime, including domestic violence, is one of the Community Safety Partnership's priorities for 2009-2012. Repeat victims of domestic violence has decreased by 12% compared to this point last year.

The Community Safety Partnership has formed a Violent Crime Partnership to tackle disorder in the night time economy.

The Police and the Council continue to work with the Safer Medway Partnership to provide a solution for businesses in the night time economy to work together to promote safer socialising working with the Council's CCTV service.

Outcome: reduce substance misuse including alcohol

The Medway Drug and Alcohol Team (DAAT) has been praised by the National Treatment Agency for increasing the numbers of drug users in treatment. Performance information is awaiting national verification by the National Treatment Agency (NTA) this information will be available for quarter 3 reporting.

The DAAT have published a draft alcohol strategy that is currently being consulted on. This aims to promote health related messages and respond to the crime and disorder related effect of alcohol misuse, including the impact on children's safety.

The Council continues to visit premises to ensure underage sales of alcohol and tobacco do not taking place. 76 premises have been visited this year; out of these 21 underage sales advice was given. The majority of the underage sales where for sales of tobacco from vending machines. Fixed Penalty Notices are expected to be introduced in the fourth quarter to enforce against underage alcohol sales.

Outcome: reduce the fear of crime and improve public confidence

To increase the feeling of safety in Medway and improve the confidence of the public of the police, council and partners working effectively together the Community Safety Partnership have developed a marketing campaign. The campaign includes the multi agency organisation of the 'Confidence and Reassurance Conference' taking place in

November, ward specific newsletters and Community Safety Partnership road shows. The marketing campaign will continue into 2010 and a post-campaign evaluation will be commissioned to measure its effectiveness.

The existing Community Safety Television system is being developed through further filming opportunities. The contract is being re-let and the hope is to extend the system beyond the current 14 plasma screens. (This follows on from a successful external evaluation of the scheme last autumn). Currently the Community safety partnership has agreed a three-month extension whilst contract negotiations are conducted. Televisions are based in a variety of locations across the area including schools, shopping centres and leisure centres.

To improve information sharing with the 17 Partners and Communities Together (PACTS) the Community Safety Partnership Manager is investigating methods of information sharing, who to share information with and how the information will be used before January 2010.

Summary

Highlights:

Perception of antisocial behaviour down by 7%.
Reducing incidents of domestic violence

Areas requiring development / key risks

Priority: People travelling easily and safely in Medway

What we aim to do:

We have a key role in supporting the development of a transport system that supports the planned physical and economic regeneration of Medway. Our focus is on delivering improved public transport services, tackling congestion, monitoring the condition of our roads, and encouraging alternatives to the car. We will achieve this by delivering the actions identified in the Local Transport Plan, and reviewing our transport strategies through the annual monitoring report process.

How well are we doing?

Outlined below is performance against the 2 outcomes set out in the council plan under the "people travelling easily and safely" priority. We have rated our achievement of planned actions and outcomes this quarter as 'green' as progress is being made on key actions. Performance on 5 key measures of success can be reported this quarter – all 5 (100%) are on track (rated green). One further indicator is awaiting information from a partner organisation.

The Local Transport Plan sets out the priorities for the council currently, of the 23 targets in the plan, 22 are being achieved. The only target not being met is to reduce the number of air quality management areas (AQMA's) by 3. Monitoring indicates that this may not be achieved in the life of the plan. This is partly due to national changes making it harder to meet the UK air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide. An Air Quality Action Plan is being produced which will contribute to tackling air quality issues.

Outcome: limit the growth of traffic and tackle congestion, responding to the travel demands resulting from regeneration

The council has secured £4.9 million funding from the Department of Transport for capital improvements, including upgrading CCTV and the environmental management system for the Medway Tunnel. These works will be discussed at Cabinet in November 2009. Work is due to commence in early 2010.

Progress on delivering improvements to the Chatham Road Network is proceeding well, tenders have been received for Union Street and works are due to commence early 2010.

Work continues to reduce congestion and make it safe for people to travel in and around Medway. CCTV vehicles, foot patrol officers and the parking enforcement team have issued 10666 parking notices for quarter 2.

During quarter 2 planning applications have been submitted for the A228 Phase 2 for Fenn Corner and A228 Phase 2 for Stoke Crossing, this will improve the A228 and make it easier to access the Hoo Peninsular and its economic regeneration sites.

To encourage people to use different forms of transport and to leave their car at home. 33 bus stop improvements have been delivered this quarter and the bus shelter improvement contract has been awarded.

Outcome: keep people safe on our roads and reduce the number killed and seriously injured in road crashes

Based on the 2009 school census data, there has been an overall 1.5% decrease in the number of Medway pupils travelling to school by car compared to the 2008 data, from 32.0% to 30.5%. This is on track to achieve the LAA target. The number of approved School Travel Plans in Medway has increased again in 2009, with 102 out of a possible 118 schools having one. This figure equates to 86.4% of all schools in Medway, including non-LEA establishments. For new walking bus routes have been established this quarter. As of July there are 40 walking bus routes with some 695 pupils participating. 21 Medway schools are currently signed up to the KM Green Footsteps walk to school initiatives in Medway from September 2009.

Summary

Highlights:

- 86.4% of schools have a school travel plan
- 1.5% decrease in the number of children travelling to school by car

Areas requiring development

- Air quality management targets for the LTP may not be met due to national developments

Priority: Everyone benefiting from the area's regeneration

What we aim to do:

We remain committed to developing the area so that all residents, businesses and visitors can benefit from regeneration, with social and economic regeneration and protection of heritage and the environment accompanying physical change.

How well are we doing it?

Outlined below is performance against the 5 outcomes set out in the council plan under the 'everyone benefiting from regeneration' priority. We have rated our achievement of planned actions and outcomes this quarter as 'amber' because although significant progress has been made against regeneration projects, and Medway appears to be bucking the trend of recession in terms of housing, skills and development, the recession remains a risk to performance. Performance on 15 key measures of success can be reported this quarter – 9 (60%) are on track (rated green), 3 (20%) are off target but we believe are capable of reaching target within the year (rated amber), and 3 (20%) are off target and require significant improvement – these are rated red.

Although the council is responding well, during Q1 the economic recession was identified as the major challenge for this regeneration priority, particularly in terms of the pace of delivery of the regeneration performance, the social and economic impact on residents and the affect on council income. The council continues to work hard to redress the recession in terms of employment, economy and skills and a raft of counter-recessionary initiatives are in place. Although the council is continuing to deal with this effectively, the impact of the recession is still being seen in numbers of people unemployed, claiming benefits and requiring housing support.

Outcome: Decent homes and living environments for all

Our aim is to provide decent homes and living environments for all by maximising the supply of suitable and affordable homes whilst improving their quality and efficiency. The capital works programme to address poor levels of non-decency in HRA stock is underway the impact will be demonstrated at year-end. The latest figures for 2009/10 show a 42% increase in households receiving energy efficiency advice and there is continued targeting of our most vulnerable neighbourhoods through the 'In Focus' project. Since April £11 million investment has been secured for affordable homes in Medway and 110 affordable homes have been delivered so far this year. Significant investment, £700,000, has been made available to adapt the homes of disabled people to support them to remain living at home. Over the course of this financial year 7 new homes have been delivered for people who use wheelchairs, and before the end of November 20 homes will have been delivered for people with learning disabilities including 8 for clients with autism. The Occupational Therapist located in the HomeChoice Team continues to support the allocation of suitable housing for disabled clients. This year to date we have approved 169 Disabled Facilities Grants as compared to 197 for the whole of 2008/09.

There is clear potential for the current economic situation to impact on homelessness, there is now a month on month increase in applications. Bailiff warrants and notices of possession have increased by 30%. This quarter has seen a focus on prevention, whilst responding to the needs of those that have been made homeless. A Prevention Toolkit to provide information for homelessness officers, was developed during the last quarter, this

has assisted the council and partners in preventing 722 households from becoming homeless between July and September. The service is implementing a new Rough Sleepers initiative which will involve counting the numbers of people sleeping rough and 'sofa-surfing' (a new requirement). Once these people have been identified there will be a requirement to proactively provide advice and support. The Homelessness Forum webpage and newsletter have been improved to keep stakeholders updated on changes to legislation and good practice.

Processing of homeless applications remains at a static level A Business Continuity Plan had to be put into place during September due to a number of Swine Flu cases within Housing Services and is being used to cover ongoing increases in sickness within Housing Services. Work also continues to reduce the number of households living in temporary accommodation, currently 132 against a target of 250. 100 per cent of temporary accommodation visits were carried out, this assists with maximising benefits, monitoring Homechoice applications and with preparations to move on.

This years target to return empty homes back to use is 55, the figure for the first half of the year is already 47, it is therefore very likely that the target will be exceeded. Additionally, work has been carried out using council tax information to identify empty homes.

Outcome: Medway as a 21st century riverside city and destination of choice

Delivering the Chatham regeneration programme by 2011 continues to be a priority. The Chatham Road works are progressing to timescale and on budget.

As anticipated the progress on Rochester Riverside continues to be affected by the economic downturn. Meetings continue to review how to address current funding gaps. Despite the current regeneration climate plans are moving ahead, the initial study analysing opportunities and options in Strood has been completed and good progress has been made on the redesign of the hotel quarter in Rochester. The first draft of the Public Realm Strategy has been completed.

Public Consultation on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy ended on 18 September 2009. Over 140 representations have been received which are now being analysed. The process to produce Medway's Local Development Framework (as set by government) is complex and it will be challenging to complete the process in accordance with the agreed timetable. A new Project Manager for the LDF has been recruited enabling more effective management and monitoring of the process.

The design and relocation of the Bus Station are being reviewed and a planning application will be submitted with a decision expected early in the new year. Community Infrastructure Funding for station improvements has now been secured. Network Rail and South Eastern trains have also allocated funding for station improvements and the total sum identified is around £3million. The council and Network Rail have been working together to look at improvement options around Gillingham Station. Following consultation, Network Rail will submit a planning application later this year.

Outcome: Quality jobs for local people

There are still clear indications that the projects already in place to reduce the impact of the economic recession are having an impact on job creation and business investment. During the last quarter the Employ Medway Advice Centre opened on Chatham High

Street. The current focus is on people recently made redundant and already over 150 people have benefited from the service. It is also anticipated that approximately 40 businesses will get assistance to employ local people. A further positive sign is the success of the Future Job Fund Programme, monies secured with North Kent Partners, this will help to generate up to 420 new temporary jobs for young unemployed people in Medway.

Outcome: Realising everyone's potential

Alongside the work that is being done to support job creation for local people the council continues to focus on raising skills levels. Over £300,000 of external funding has been secured and the council is working with our voluntary and community sector partners to access funding from Community Grants schemes to implement new community learning programmes.

In addition to this the council is using its role as an employer and a community leader to assist young people by providing apprentice schemes. The number of apprenticeships within the council is 20, with a further 21 in the pipeline. This is a total of 41, up from 35 in the last quarter.

Outcome: Culture & leisure for all

Medway continues to develop the culture and leisure activities it offers to the local population recognising the positive impact they can have on community cohesion and health and well being. The future plans are set out in the Cultural Strategy, which was approved in October by Cabinet. To ensure our cultural offer is widely advertised in the way that residents want, Medway launched the What's On website in quarter 2, which details all the up coming events, festivals and entertainment. This quarter has seen a positive improvement in library usage, showing the impact of increased investment in book stock, and museum visits.

Satisfaction with cultural activities during the last quarter remains high. The Castle Concerts came in on budget; 14,000 people attended and satisfaction ratings were 97%. The concert series concludes with the Under Siege, allowing young aspiring musicians to perform on the same professional stage setting. The Will Adams Festival changed venue to Gillingham Park, this significantly increased attendance compared to last year (4-5000 compared to 1500) and satisfaction levels were 96%. Swimming for the over 60s show an increase of 143% compared to this time last year (7069 in 2008 and 17194 in 2009). The Medway Park development continues to take shape, with the running track completed during quarter 2.

Summary

Highlights:

- Increased funding to deliver affordable homes
- Employment Medway Advice Centre opened

Areas requiring development

- The economic recession continues to present the greatest challenge for regeneration, in terms of income. Need to remain vigilant in terms of identifying counter recessionary measures.

Priority: Children and young people having the best start in life

What we aim to do:

We want children and young people in Medway who are:

- safe and cared for,
- succeed in learning and
- thrive.

This will be championed by a confident and competent workforce and we will have arrangements in place to ensure:

- effective safeguarding
- integrated services and support
- timely and targeted interventions

How well are we doing?

The Medway Youth Trust delivers the Connexions service in Medway:- a recent Ofsted Inspection was very positive and identified areas of good practice and highlighted the range of interventions that successfully support vulnerable young people in education, employment and training. The percentage of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training is 8.7% against a target of 5.8% mainly due to the current economic climate and rising unemployment generally. Options are being identified during quarter 3 to seek to reverse the increase in young people not in education, employment and training.

The free-swimming initiative aimed at those under 16 years of age continues to be a success. Participation has increased by 134% compared to this time last year (45303 in 2008 and 106936 in 2009).

Priority: Older and vulnerable people maintaining their independence

What we aim to do:

We aim to encourage and support healthy lifestyles and well being for all. We also aim to improve the quality of life for our residents. We have a key role to play in helping older and vulnerable people and their carers maintain their independence and exercise choice and control over their care. The safety of vulnerable adults is also a key priority for us.

How well are we doing it?

Year-to-date performance on the percentage of adults with learning disabilities in employment is 2.1% compared to the council's target of 3% for 2009/10. There is much more to do to improve this when we compare our performance to other areas. Our comparator councils achieve an average of 6.2%. The Getting-a-Life cross-directorate and multi-agency project is designed to achieve this improvement. This project helps people with a learning disability to find suitable employment and meets the requirements of 'Valuing Employment Now' strategy.

An Expression of Interest has been submitted to Project Search for an Office of Disability Issues pilot. This is a work programme for adults with severe and moderate learning

disabilities. This will identify work placements within the Council for adults with learning disabilities.

A detailed social marketing research project was completed in September 2009. The aim of this research was to provide evidence on attitudes and barriers to healthy living among people living in Medway. This evidence underpins the activities being planned for the year-long healthy living campaign in 2010. The campaign will provide an overarching message or challenge to Medway residents to make practical, realistic and achievable lifestyle changes to improve their health. It will also signpost people to relevant public health and related services, including Sure Start and leisure, that already exist in Medway.

Detail of participation in sport and swimming are included in the regeneration chapter of this report.

Summary

Highlights:

- Progress on increasing direct payments, though this remains below national averages

Areas requiring development / key risks

- Embedding revised systems for adult safeguarding

Our Core Values

1. Putting our customers at the centre of everything we do

What we aim to do:

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

How well are we doing it?

We are currently undertaking a Residents' Opinion Poll and refreshing our Citizens' Panel which will support this work. At this point over 700 interviews have taken place and the fieldwork will be completed at end the of November. A summary of the results will be reported in Q3. Following the tragic Pilkington Case the council supported a Kent and Medway Disability Hate Crime Conference. The conference will produce a good practice action plan to assist public authorities to recognise and prevent this type of crime.

The council continues to review the ways that our work benefits the whole community. This quarter we have focused on ensuring the Local Development Framework and the Local Transport Plan take account of different needs of the community. The council's diversity impact assessment process is crucial to achieving this. Workshops continue and real improvements have been seen, but a more rigorous scrutiny procedure has been introduced to ensure that the quality is consistent across the authority.

Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups on disabled parking bays, child protection and support for people in temporary accommodation have concluded with reports due back to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees in October.

2. Giving Value for Money

What we aim to do:

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

How well are we doing it?

During quarter 2, Medway was graded 3, or 'performing well' for its Use of Resources, a significant achievement against the more stringent assessment process under Comprehensive Area Assessment. It reflects the careful management of all aspects of the council's resources including financial, workforce and natural resources.

The council continuously reviews its services to find greater efficiencies and share services with other organisations to save money. During the second quarter a Value-for-Money Strategy was adopted by the council, and PWC have been engaged to provide a

benchmark analysis of Council performance. An Executive Member Performance and Efficiency Group has been established to oversee continued improvements.

Partnership

The development of the new Sustainable community strategy has continued during the quarter, with the Project Manager role filled to support its development. A programme of consultation on the new community strategy vision and priorities is underway and includes the annual Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Plenary event planned for October, together with further events for members and lead officers of partner agencies and feedback on area priorities through the residents' opinion poll, the results of which are due early in December 2009. The new LSP performance managers group will work to strengthen the performance managements arrangements for the Local Area Agreement.

There has been a loss of income within Leisure services as a result of the redevelopment of the Black Lion centre, with the total income lost forecast to be £486,000 by the end of 2009/10, some 31% of income. However, performance across the rest of the leisure portfolio is better, with a slight increase of 4% in income, although this is 9.6% below the £3.2m income target. Overall across the whole service (including Black Lion) this therefore equates to a 1% reduction in income, and 16% behind the delivery target.

Summary

Highlights:

- Medway was graded 3, or 'performing well' for its Use of Resources by the auditors.
- A value for money strategy has been agreed and adopted by the council

Areas requiring development

- Loss in income of 1% compared to last year and 16% behind income target across leisure services as a result of Black Lion Leisure Centre re-development and the recession with fewer visits to our leisure facilities.