

## **REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**19 OCTOBER 2017**

### **ATTENDANCE BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND REGULATION**

Report from: Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty

#### **Summary**

This report sets out progress made within the areas covered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation which fall within the remit of this Committee.

#### **1. Background**

1.1 The areas within the terms of reference of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee covered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation are:

- Economic Development
- Employment
- Local Plan
- Markets
- Planning Policy
- Regulation – Environmental Health/Trading Standards/Enforcement and Licensing (executive functions only)
- Social Regeneration
- South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership.

Note: The Leader and Full Council have delegated the Council's building control functions to the South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee. The terms of Reference of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee are set out within the Council's Constitution and include executive and non-executive functions. Councillor Chitty is appointed to sit on the South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee.

1.2 Achievements for 2016/17 are detailed by service area below.

## **2. Economic Development and Social Regeneration**

### **2.1 Employment**

2.1.1 A total of 391 jobs were created and protected in Medway against a target of 300. For Quarter 1 of 2017/18 a further 79 jobs have been created and protected, against a target of 35.

2.1.2 577 intensive assists to local businesses were provided in 2016/17, against a target of 352. For Quarter 1 of 2017/18, a further 111 intensive assists have been delivered to businesses, against a target of 88.

### **2.2 Funding**

2.2.1 Partners for Growth interest free loans and start-up grants totalled £23,800 in 2016/17. A total of ten businesses were assisted, eight with start-up grants of £500, and two interest free loans of £15,000 and £4,800. This has levered in £74,100 of bank and business owner funding.

### **2.3 Apprenticeships**

2.3.1 A total of 60 apprentices were directly assisted into local businesses through the Medway Apprenticeship Placement Service (MAPS) against a target of 50. A further 15 apprenticeships have been placed or pledged in Quarter 1 of 2017/18. Young people have been placed into business sectors, such as engineering and manufacturing, business administration and financial services, with the highest number being placed in the electro-technical sector. Medway directly funded 50 of these apprenticeships at a cost of £50,000.

### **2.4 Medway Business Awards 2015**

2.4.1 The 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Medway Business Awards ceremony was held in November 2016. The overall winner was AC Goatham and Son, taking the top prize of a trophy and £1,000, which they kindly donated to the Oliver Fisher Special Care Baby Unit. A C Goatham and Son is a successful fruit grower on the Hoo Peninsula, which supplies UK supermarkets with one in every 4.5 apples sold.

### **2.5 Innovation Centre Medway (ICM)**

2.5.1 ICM is currently 98% occupied, with a total of 53 businesses. Businesses that have recently become tenants at the centre include Xperisoft Ltd, Corea Ltd and Invictus Energy.

2.5.2 ICM is supporting 300 employee jobs in total, contributing £4.65 million to Medway's GVA (Gross Value Added).

## 2.6 Innovation Studios Strood (ISS)

2.6.1 The Innovation Studios Strood were formally launched in September 2017, offering flexible, modular workspace for small and start-up businesses, based on an innovative shipping container design. The site consists of 15 first floor workspace units (100% occupied) and 18 ground floor storage units (8 occupied).

## 2.7 Town Centre Management

2.7.1 Vacancy rates have remained stable, with Rainham consistent at 2%, Gillingham increasing slightly from 4% to 5%, Chatham from 11% to 12%, and Rochester and Strood remaining at 5% and 9% respectively. These all compare favourably to the UK average of 13.2%. There have been notable new additions to the retail and leisure offer in Medway, particularly in Strood, with recent openings of M&S Foodstore, B&M, Maplin, Starbucks and TheGym. In Chatham, Footlocker has relocated to a prime location at the High Street entrance of the Pentagon.

2.7.2 We have continued to deliver five town centres Christmas lights switch-on events under increasing budgetary pressure, identifying income generation activity to augment the budget, and continue with events.

2.7.3 The pilot for the highways licensing scheme in Chatham for goods, tables, and A-boards on the public highway has been extended to allow for consultation on its success. Initial perceptions are that it has dramatically improved the street scene in the pedestrian zone and made it a safer environment.

## 2.8 Local Growth Fund for Innovation Park Medway

2.8.1 To date, Medway Council has been awarded £8.1m Local Growth Fund (LGF) investment, administered via the South East Local Economic Partnership (SELEP), to implement the Innovation Park Medway.

2.8.2 The first phase of investment was £4.4 million to redevelop Rochester Airport's operational infrastructure, and thereby release land for commercial development. This land will provide modern commercial workspace, over 1,000 high quality jobs and significant land value uplift.

2.8.3 A further £3.7 million of LGF investment was provisionally allocated in 2017, subject to approval of the final business case, to develop enabling infrastructure.

## 2.9 Local Growth Fund for Chatham Destination Place making

2.9.1 £4 million LGF investment was awarded in 2016/17. The project is well underway, which will help to regenerate Chatham and make it a better place for residents, workers and visitors. The project will create an easier journey for pedestrians and cyclists from Chatham railway station through to the Waterfront bus station and town centre. This

route has been divided into five areas; Chatham Railway Station, New Cut Junction, St John's Square, Military Square and Military Road.

## 2.10 Local Growth Fund for Strood Civic Site Flood Mitigation Works

2.10.1 £3.5 million LGF funding was awarded in 2016/17 to provide flood mitigation measures at the Strood Civic site. This will prepare for the area's transformation into an area of prime, high quality residential land with potential for premium housing, offering outstanding views of Rochester Castle and Cathedral.

2.10.2 The mixed use development is expected to create a total of 479 new jobs and 325 new homes and leverage £32m of private sector investment.

## 2.11 Markets

2.11.1 Total gross rental income across all of the markets in 2016/17, was £129,467.

2.11.2 A total of 213 markets were held in Strood, Gillingham and Rochester over the financial year.

2.11.3 Additional markets were held as part of the English Festival, Sweeps and Dickensian Christmas celebrations and events.

2.11.4 Gillingham market continues to remain strong and is very well supported by local people living in close proximity to the High Street.

2.11.5 Strood market will benefit from public realm improvements designed for the Tolgate Lane area and the car park where the market takes place.

## 2.12 Employ Medway

2.12.1 The Employ Medway Service continued its high performance throughout 2016/17. A total of 244 people registered for the service, of which 187 were Work Programme registrations. This represents an achievement of 100% of the target set by DWP.

2.12.2 The 114 jobs taken up, (compared to a target of 88), was slightly lower than in 2016/17, but in line with contract targets. Employ Medway is currently first in the league table of providers delivering the Work Programme in Kent, Surrey and Sussex contract. With a job start achievement of 55% we are delivering to contract whilst supporting customers furthest from the labour market.

2.12.3 A jobs fair held at the Pentagon Centre on 1 September 2016, attracted 30 organisations advertising over 1,000 jobs, and was attended by 1,100 local unemployed people. As a direct result, 289 local registered unemployed people moved into employment and many more local people not registered with the Job Centre Plus gained employment.

- 2.12.4 Employ Medway experiences most success with the 18-24 cohort. The service has a 60% attachment to job start ratio, with 79% of these people remaining in work for at least three months.
- 2.12.5 Success across all cohorts has resulted in market share shift, meaning that all Medway referrals are now channelled to Employ Medway, compared with previous levels of 35%. Employ Medway is the highest performing provider in Kent, Surrey and Sussex and has achieved 100% of DWP and G4S targets for the last five quarters. Of the 2,121 customers attached to the Work Programme (all long term unemployed or disadvantaged), 55% have gained paid employment. Of these, 78.2% have remained in work to outcome (three or six months). This equates to approximately 14,825 confirmed months off benefits for those progressing into work (figures are tracked for two years from job start, so the actual figure will be much higher).

### **3. Planning Policy**

#### **3.1 Local Plan**

- 3.1.1 Consultation on the Development Options document ran from 16 January to 30 May 2017. Over 30 meetings and public exhibitions were held during this time and 650 people attended consultation events across Medway. Key concerns are the impact of development on infrastructure and the need for growth to be supported by investment in services. Over 330 written responses were received to the consultation, together with c 11,000 specific representations on Lodge Hill and over 500 relating to a new stadium for Gillingham Football Club.
- 3.1.2 The Planning Service has recorded all written comments, as part of the formal process of the plan preparation. These will be published and submitted with the draft Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for independent Examination. Planning officers are now carrying out a detailed analysis of the consultation responses to inform the next stage of the plan. Further consultation will take place in early 2018 with details of proposed sites identified as the most sustainable locations for growth, and draft policies.
- 3.1.3 A meeting took place with leading counsel on 16 June 2017, regarding implications of Lodge Hill for the next stages of the Local Plan. It was agreed there is a need for another Reg 18 consultation based on two options, one with and one without Lodge Hill.
- 3.1.4 Work continues on producing the necessary evidence base to support the Local Plan. We will produce the new Local Delivery Scheme with timetable for January Cabinet.

### **4. Development Management**

#### **4.1 Planning Applications - Performance for Quarter 1 2017**

- 4.1.1 During the period 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017, the authority received 403 planning applications, compared to 402 for the same period in

2016. For the year 2016/17 the authority received 1543 applications, which compares to 1421 in 2015/16. Performance for major applications not subject to an extension of time during the quarter is 91.67%. Applications subject to an extension of time is 85.71%. This is against a target of 60%.

- 4.1.2 Performance for applications is split between those subject to an extension of time and those not. An extension of time can be in the form of a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) or a Planning Extension Agreement (PEA).
- 4.1.3 Performance for major applications not subject to an extension of time during the quarter is 100%. Applications subject to an extension of time is 89.89%. This is against a target of 60%.
- 4.1.4 Performance for minor applications not subject to an extension of time during the quarter is 96.36%. Applications subject to an extension of time is 80%. This is against a target of 65%.
- 4.1.5 Performance for other applications not subject to an extension of time during the quarter is 98.56%. Applications subject to an extension of time is 83.33%. This is against a target of 80%.
- 4.1.6 Comparing performance against the latest data available nationally (January to March 2017), Medway performed significantly above the national average for all types of applications.
- 4.1.7 Pressure on officer resources has been carefully managed in order to meet national performance targets. This pressure continues with the added pressure of annual and maternity leave and vacancies. The workload will need to be carefully managed if current performance is to be maintained.

#### 4.2 Appeals performance

- 4.2.1 The percentage of appeals allowed during the quarter is 14%, which compares to 31% for the previous quarter. Appeals decided comprise 7 delegated decisions and no Committee overturns to refusals. There were no applications for costs.

#### 4.3 Enforcement

- 4.3.1 Breakdown of work undertaken in relation to derelict buildings for the period 1 January – 30 June 2017:

New cases received	15
Cases closed	89
Site visits carried out	131
Number of properties with S330 notices served	10
Number of properties with S215 notices served	7
Total number of live cases	72

4.3.2 Breakdown of enforcement activity during the period 1 January – 30 June 2017:

New Cases received	204
Cases closed	269
Breach of Condition Notices served	0
Planning enforcement Notices served	4
Prosecutions	4

4.4 Trees

4.4.1 Breakdown of TPO (Tree Preservation Orders) activity during the period 1 January – 30 June 2017:

Number of TPO applications received	90
Number of TPO applications received within a Conservation area	40
Number of TPO applications determined	103
Number of TPO applications determined with a Conservation area	44

**5. South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership (STG)**

- 5.1 It has been another successful year for the partnership with an increase in market share, by 5% compared to last year with an increase in applications by 7% and income by 12%.
- 5.2 STG's website was redesigned to meet customer expectations. It now incorporates online submissions of applications, payment online, application tracking and customer search enquiries.
- 5.3 STG renewed discussions with Canterbury City Council regarding their building control service becoming part of the partnership, which is planned for 1st April 2018. This will build in further resilience and widen opportunities to increase market share. Additional enquiries are also being progressed with neighbouring authorities.
- 5.4 The partnership was fully audited on behalf of Swale Borough Council by MidKent Audit and had two six monthly inspections by the BSI for their QA accreditation assessment. The partnership passed all of the audits, continuing registration as a quality assured firm by the BSI and achieving the second highest accolade available from MidKent Audit.
- 5.5 The reputation of the partnership within the building control industry has grown from strength to strength with them advising in the development of the partnering of seven authorities in Hertfordshire and a group of five authorities in Derbyshire. They carried out a joint presentation with their back-office provider, Tascomi, to a group of authorities in the north England at Manchester Town Hall and have also been cited as an example of best practice by the IESE in collaboration with LABC.

5.6 A snapshot survey was carried out in December 2016, which revealed over 80% of customers were happy with the changes that have been made in the simplification of forms and the application process. Over the last ten years the partnership has made significant progress in partnering with over 50 local architects and designers.

5.7 STG's objectives for the following year include further development of the website, expansion to include Canterbury building control and the development of a more digitally focused service to enable greater agile and mobile working.

## **6. Regulation – Environmental Health/Trading Standards/Enforcement and Licensing (executive functions only)**

### 6.1 Environmental Health Food and Safety Team

6.1.1 The Food and Safety Team delivers a broad range of statutory duties and functions including: food safety; health and safety at work; infectious disease control and poor health. The team also carries out food and health and safety training courses and is responsible for Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) certification at Gillingham Football Club.

6.1.2 Food Hygiene key achievements for 2016/17:

- Delivered 100% due interventions in the food hygiene inspection programme
- Reduced unrated premises to zero at the 31st March
- Broad compliance increased to 97% of food premises (highest in 8 years)
- % of food businesses rated as “Good” (4) or “Very Good” (5) under the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme increased to 93%, with 1,603 premises rated in Medway under the scheme
- The number of written warnings issued reduced from 510 to 438

6.1.3 It should be noted that compliance is the desired outcome and formal enforcement is undertaken as a last resort. During 2016/17, the team put more emphasis on educating and supporting businesses as a more sustainable and cost-effective way of promoting and maintaining public safety. This is in line with the Government's “Better Business for All” initiative, which promotes local economic growth through the supporting “good” businesses to thrive whilst focussing resources on tackling rogue traders and promoting a level playing field.

6.1.4 The team provided advice and guidance to over 175 new and existing premises for food hygiene and 39 premises for health and safety.

6.1.5 The team promoted food safety messages in the run up to Christmas 2016, offering sensible advice to consumers.

6.1.6 The service also participated in two national and one regional food sampling programmes: for environmental swabbing of commercial premises, sauces from catering premises and smoked, cured and



fermented fish, meat and cheese. Unsatisfactory results were taken up with the premises concerned.

- 6.1.7 The team participated in the Food Standards Agency's Food Safety Week 2016 in an efficient manner by using media as a low cost resource to promote its messages.
- 6.1.8 The team investigated over 284 cases of infectious disease, including Salmonella, Hepatitis E, Legionella, Listeria and Typhoid.
- 6.1.9 The Team also investigated:
- 307 food service requests
  - 223 health and safety service requests
  - 122 reports of serious work-related accidents
- 6.1.10 The Team continued to carry out monitoring inspections for spectator safety at Gillingham Football Club and supported the work of the Safety Advisory Group (SAG). The annual inspection was completed in July 2016. This work helps to ensure that the arrangements put in place by the club meet sound, modern safety standards.

## 6.2 Strategic Environmental Protection Team

- 6.2.1 The Environmental Protection team delivers a broad range of statutory duties in respect to contamination of land, local air quality management, private water supplies and distribution systems, environmental permitting, licensing and planning.
- 6.2.2 During 2016/17, the team has declared a new Air Quality Management Area at Four Elms Hill, this has involved undertaking a statutory consultation on the proposed declaration, and Medway Council Cabinet approved the declaration of the area on 5 September. The area will now be formally declared and the team will now start working on producing an Air Quality Action Plan for the area.
- 6.2.3 During 2016/17, the team additionally:
- Completed 100% of the Environmental Permitting inspections that were due.
  - Provided comments on 909 planning consultations and discharge of conditions applications.
  - Commented on 108 licensing consultations.
  - Provided information and advice in respect to 132 environmental enquires/searches.
  - Maintained the two air quality stations within Medway.
  - Continuously worked towards ensuring that new development and activities are placed in suitable locations whilst having regard to the past, present and future uses of the locality.
- 6.2.4 The service also provided comments and guidance to the planning department on proposed major developments within Medway, and areas that may affect the environment of Medway, including:

- 130 houses, Commissioners Road, Strood
- 225 houses, Town Road, Cliffe
- 127 houses, Stoke Road, Hoo St Werburgh
- 650 houses and Retail Unit, Chattenden Lane, Hoo St Werburgh
- 135 houses, Brompton Farm Road, Strood
- Student accommodation (68 Units), Jeffery Street, Gillingham

6.2.5 The team was also involved in issuing consents under section 61 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 to control noise, dust and air pollution from construction sites. Section 61 consents for undertaking noisy works were issued for the Chatham Waters Development at Pier Road, Chatham, maintenance of the Intersection Bridge, Strood and refurbishment works to the Asda car park in Strood. The team continues to support the Council with its regeneration program for Medway.

### 6.3 Environmental Protection

6.3.1 The team consists of 5 FTE and deals with statutory noise and other nuisances. This involves an initial investigation following any complaint of statutory nuisance from a local resident. Statutory nuisance is mainly defined as something that seriously disturbs the comfort and enjoyment of a person's property. It relates to noise, light, air pollution and odours, sewers and drainage, pest infestations and hoarding.

6.3.2 Last year, the team dealt with 2,691 such complaints from members of the public. The vast majority of these complaints are resolved without the need for formal action. The team operates an out-of-hours callout service, which is essential in establishing whether or not a statutory nuisance exists.

6.3.3 In relation to noise nuisance, 11 abatement notices were served, as well as 6 Community Protection Warnings. One audible intruder alarm was silenced in default of notice.

6.3.4 Stereo equipment was also seized from an address in Gillingham when a resident continued to breach a notice served on him.

6.3.5 In a separate case, seized noise equipment that had been subject to a court forfeiture order was donated to the Wisdom Hospice. The equipment, which included a large 3D TV and an Apple Macbook Air, had an approximate value of £3,000.

6.3.6 Officers responded to a noise issue in Rochester High Street relating to a generator at The King's Head. Although it was necessary to serve an abatement notice, the situation was resolved informally through direct intervention and facilitating discussion with other departments, resulting in the generator being moved to a nearby car park.

6.3.7 Two notices were served relating to filthy and verminous premises and eleven relating to drainage where rats were involved.

- 6.3.8 Work was carried out in default of notice at a hoarder's filthy & verminous address in Gillingham. 11.6 tonnes of rubbish was removed and a charge has been placed on the property.
- 6.3.9 14 kennelling/cattery licences were renewed, as well as 11 pet shop licences and 13 day care businesses.
- 6.3.10 1 new dog breeder licence and 1 new cattery licence was granted.
- 6.3.11 1 unlicensed cattery was cautioned and instructed to cease trading. The team's initiative, encouraging dog day care and home boarding establishments to register with the council has continued to grow. Since providing information about day care licencing on the stray dogs Facebook page, 15 new enquiries have been received.

#### 6.4 Environmental Enforcement

- 6.4.1 This section is split into two teams, which work very closely together to take action against those that blight our environment so as to create a cleaner and safer Medway.
- 6.4.2 The Environmental Enforcement Team consists of 7 FTE and deals with the investigation of fly tipping and other waste related crime such as untidy private land, trade waste and illegal waste carriers.
- 6.4.3 The Street Scene Enforcement Team consists of 7 FTE and deals with on street enforcement of littering and dog fouling offences as well as the removal of fly tipping.
- 6.4.4 Last year the team dealt with 5,416 cases, most of which were resolved without the need for formal action. However, it was necessary to prosecute in 56 cases.
- 6.4.5 The team secured a 100% conviction rate. Fines and costs totalled £26,041.
- 6.4.6 Included in this total is one high profile case where the offender was operating a scrap metal business from his garden. He was issued with a Community Protection Notice, which he did not comply with and was summonsed to appear at Medway Magistrates' Court, where he was convicted. Fines and costs in this case totalled £4,543.
- 6.4.7 Another long standing environmental problem was resolved in Strood using new powers granted under the Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act. For many years we had received complaints about car repairs being carried out in Barton Road by the garage businesses that occupy the railway arches. For a number of reasons, this situation could never be properly addressed. However, using the new Community Protection Notice the situation was resolved in a few weeks and car repairs no longer take place in Barton Road.

- 6.4.8 313 fixed penalty notices were issued for littering and other waste related offences. Three cautions were administered.
- 6.4.9 1,233 fly tips were attended, searched and cleared. 98% of these fly tips were removed within one working day, including 607, which were dealt with proactively; i.e. they were removed before a complaint was received from a member of the public.
- 6.4.10 The team has entered into a Service Level Agreement for the removal of fly tipping from the HRA estate. Last year, the team dealt with 305 requests for service, all of which were completed within one working day, removing a total of 31.18 tonnes. This arrangement will provide an annual income of approx. £23k.
- 6.4.11 The total amount of waste removed from the public realm for the year was 199.62 tonnes.
- 6.4.12 150 notices were served on businesses requiring them to account for the disposal of their trade waste.
- 6.4.13 30 notices were served on untidy land.
- 6.4.14 19 notices were served requiring information relating to fly tipping offences.
- 6.4.15 2 Community Protection Warnings were served relating to fly posting.

## 6.5 Trading Standards Team

- 6.5.1 The Trading Standards team delivers against a broad range of statutory duties and functions including: product safety; food standards & feed safety; weights & measures; intellectual property; trade representations; unfair terms; unfair trading practices; animal health & welfare; price indications; explosives & petroleum and the Medway Council Act 2001.
- 6.5.2 The year has seen the team continue their work challenging the topic of illegal tobacco sales and smuggled tobacco. The team have provided HMRC with witness statements assisting major investigations relating to tobacco smuggling. A campaign is programmed to revisit suspected premises with sniffer dogs to challenge those suspected of selling illicit tobacco.
- 6.5.3 The team work extensively with Public Health in delivering community engagement events on the topic of illegal tobacco and stop smoking. The team have also participated in a national campaign organised by the Department of Health to examine whether the packaging and display materials used to promote tobacco sales comply with strict rules.
- 6.5.4 The service continues its work controlling age-restricted goods and has covered a broad range products in these exercises. An emergent area of concern is the sale of E-liquids that contain nicotine which are used

in vaping; these must not be sold to anyone under 18 years old. Three traders have received formal warning for sales to a fifteen year old test purchasing volunteer. Revisits are planned and these traders face formal action if a further sale occurs.

- 6.5.5 The topic of E-liquids is also an area of concern in the product safety field, with new labelling requirements on maximum nicotine content and maximum bottle size. Officers have visited all the premises advising them of their new legal obligations and getting them to remove illegal products from sale. With both the local and national Public Health agendas recommending vaping as a safe alternative to smoking it is vital that only safe product are offered for sale.
- 6.5.6 Over 43,000 'No Cold Calling' stickers have been issued to local residents and an early warning system developed with local banks to support vulnerable consumers. The scheme is now well established with numerous referrals coming from banks and building societies. This work is essential in preventing victims of fraud, many of whom have been coerced into handing over hundreds or thousands of pounds in cash.
- 6.5.7 The team provide a rapid response service to vulnerable householders who have had the misfortune to become involved with doorstep criminals and over the last twelve months they have ensured that £221,000 has remained in the bank accounts of local residents and not in the pockets of rogue traders. The simultaneous promotion of Medway Council's established Fair Trader Scheme is improving awareness and access to accredited trades people, and reducing the opportunities for rogue traders to exploit.
- 6.5.8 The service delivered a comprehensive food standards inspection programme and inspected 100% of high-risk premises and 100% of medium risk inspections as required by the Food Standards Agency. This year saw the team continue to advise local businesses on the controls on the allergen labelling of food products. The service also undertook a comprehensive food-sampling programme.
- 6.5.9 A broad range of food products are sampled by the team as part of local, regional and national sampling campaigns to ensure descriptions and compositional requirements are correct. A recent project saw 100% success rate for takeaways who were asked to supply peanut free meals
- 6.5.10 The service delivered a comprehensive animal feed standards inspection programme and inspected 100% of high-risk premises and 100% of medium risk inspections as required by the by DEFRA and the Food Standards Agency.
- 6.5.11 The team undertook a summer screen testing campaign to ensure that sunglasses afford the correct level of UVA/UVB protection, twenty three samples were tested and four models failed. This resulted in the removal of the non-compliant sun glasses and referral has been made to organise product recalls by the importers. The team participated in a

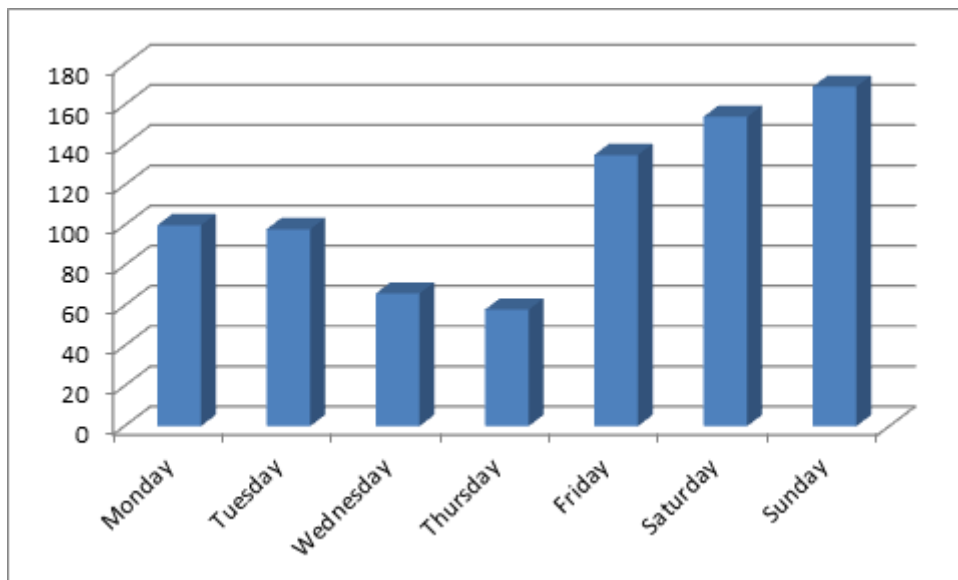
number of national safety campaigns in areas ranging from cosmetics to fridge magnets to phone chargers.

6.5.12 The team is preparing to undertake 100% inspections of local premises selling fireworks to ensure that only compliant products are stocked and that the explosives products are being stored safely. The team also acts as a national contact point for two major importers of fireworks and are responsible for overseeing the compliance checks of imported fireworks from China.

6.5.13 The team, in its capacity as the Petroleum licensing authority, is continuing to inspect all Petrol forecourts for safety and ensure that accurate records of fuel are maintained. The service also responds to out of hours requests from forecourt owners and the fire brigade when incidents occur. Out of hour calls have been responded to this year on matters such as suspected leaks and driver damages to petrol pumps.

6.5.14 Data was monitored over the preceding 12 months, a total of 780 calls were received from the public by MCG on behalf of the Out of Hours Noise & Nuisance Service. They were broken down by the day on which they were received as follows;

Monday	100
Tuesday	98
Wednesday	66
Thursday	58
Friday	135
Saturday	154
Sunday	169



6.5.15 The evidence shows that peak demand is Friday – Sunday, with Thursday receiving the fewest calls.

6.5.16 For this reason, it is recommended that the Out of Hours Noise & Nuisance Service continues unchanged.

## 6.6 Business Compliance Team

- 6.6.1 The business compliance team sits alongside the Trading Standards Enforcement Team and the Food and Safety Team.
- 6.6.2 One of the main tasks is to act as a portal for complaints and to triage each customer contact to ensure that appropriate advice and guidance is given to customers at the earliest opportunity. Only the more serious issues requiring specialist intervention are passed to the relevant team, allowing the most qualified and specialised officers to spend more time out in the field, and/or to enable them to concentrate on the higher risk areas and to therefore improve the efficiency of resources.
- 6.6.3 In 2016/17 the Business Compliance Team successfully dealt with over 64% of Trading Standards contacts and 65% of Environmental Health food complaints without the need to involve more specialist officers, in accordance with '*Better for Less*' principles and providing value for money.
- 6.6.4 The team works with the National Scams Hub to provide support and advice to the victims of scams in Medway through a series of personal visits. In 2016/17 over 65 visits were carried out to residents who had been identified as potential victims of scams. This work is backed up by a series of talks to local groups to raise awareness and help protect the most vulnerable. More recently the team has worked with the national scams hub to provide truecall devices to the residents who are most vulnerable to scam telephone calls on a trial basis.
- 6.6.5 The Fair Trader Scheme is administered by the Business Compliance Team and aims to both protect consumers and promote local businesses, whilst deterring and/or restricting rogue traders. Following a number of successful marketing campaigns, including the placement of scheme information onto a number of council vehicles and roadside banners, 2016/17 reported further increase of revenue to over £36,000.
- 6.6.6 Each March the team hosts the Consumer Challenge Quiz (CCQ), which is open to the Special Educational Needs schools in Medway. This year saw a hotly contested competition resulting in the Hundred of Hoo School being declared the overall winner. The CCQ teaches the children about their consumer rights and who can help them when things go wrong, as well as a number of other important messages. Once again a number of local businesses and Fair Trader Scheme members sponsored the event, which offset the cost, making this valuable event cost-neutral to the Council for the third year running.

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**Appendices**

None

**Background papers**

None