



BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 NOVEMBER 2019

ATTENDANCE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR RESOURCES

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Summary

This report sets out activities and progress within the areas covered by the Portfolio Holder for Resources 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 and covered by the Portfolio Holder for Resources are:

- Transformation and Digital Services
- Council Plan and Service Improvement
- Business and Administration Support Service
- Complaints Policy and Management
- HR
- ICT
- Legal
- Property
- Category Management//Procurement
- Travellers

2. Transformation and Digital Services

a) Transformation Programme

- 2.1 The transformation programme has been a 3 year programme with a capital budget of £6m to support the Council's strategic priority to: *Deliver value for money and improved services through transformation, alternative delivery models and new ways of working.*
- 2.2 The Council Plan also sets out our ambition to "*make it quicker and easier for customers to access our services online, to suit their lifestyles and expectations, while delivering value for money*" and "*older and disabled people living independently in their homes*"
- 2.3 The transformation programme had clearly defined target revenue savings of £0.430m in 2016/17, £1.57m in 2017/18, and £5m in 2018/19. Due to the introduction of a "Return on Investment" methodology, clear strategy and roadmap; alongside effective employee communication and engagement; all transformation savings were achieved.
- 2.4 Following the success of the transformation programme a Business Change Team was established to continue the transformation journey and achieve further revenue savings for the Council. Here are some examples of the projects the Business Change Team have completed in the last year.

b) Business Administration Support Service (BASS) & Customer Contact Review

- 2.5 The merger of Customer Contact and the Business and Administration Support Service (BASS) took place on 1st October 2018 to form the new Customer and Business Support Service (CABS).
- 2.6 The merger saved £1m in a full year and was predicated on increasing the numbers of customers opting to self-serve online thereby reducing telephone calls into the Council and the associated back-office processing.
- 2.7 With transformation activities focusing on improving online services we have also been signposting customers to this route wherever possible through our telephony messaging. For example, we have re-recorded our out of hours messages promoting Medway's 24hour online services for requests such as missed refuse collections and fly tipping. The contact centre has been maintained for those that are unable to use online services and we also offer assisted digital support within the Libraries and Community Hubs.

c) Transformation Communications

- 2.8 It has been a really important aspect of the change programme to maintain effective communications with staff and stakeholders to build

confidence in the projects and support staff through a potentially unsettling period.

- 2.9 Real life case studies were used to demonstrate the improvements that have been implemented across the Council.
- 2.10 A programme of staff briefings were hosted by the Assistant Director – Transformation, which provided staff with an overview of the transformation programme followed by workshops on digital processes, business intelligence, ICT and Smart Cities.
- 2.11 The sessions were very popular with staff and well received. The demand was so high more sessions had to be arranged.

d) Innovative Use of Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

- 2.13 The Revenues and Benefits section retendered the contract for Document Imaging and Processing, Database Administration, and Scanning & Indexing. The new contract achieved a saving of £167k.
- 2.14 However, the previous system supplier had quoted a figure of £400k to unencrypt the existing data records and migrate them to the new system. This cost seemed excessive so the Revenues and Benefits Team, Business Change Team and ICT worked together to identify an alternative solution.
- 2.15 The Council had previously used Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to successfully migrate data from one system to another so it was proposed as a solution to this issue.
- 2.16 The “bots” were programmed to replicate the actions of a human user to open the file in the old system, rename the file and then save it in to the new system. This process was carried for all 6 million records with 40 bots working simultaneously 24/7 for 9 weeks.
- 2.17 The project was a complete success and cost £48k, which completely avoided the originally quoted cost of £400k.

e) Review of the Housing Service

- 2.18 The Business Change Team have worked with Strategic Housing and the HRA to review the service and identify opportunities to merge teams and functions where there were synergies.
- 2.19 The Organisational Change Manager within the Business Change Team worked closely with the service to map the current staffing structure and match it to the salary budget build. A new structure was then designed to improve the operation of the service by integrating key teams across Strategic Housing and the HRA.
- 2.20 Following a formal consultation process, which was complimented by the Trade Unions, the new structure was implemented in November 2019 without any redundancies, achieving a full year saving of £166k

across the general fund and HRA.

f) Tell Us Once (TUO) Service Implemented

- 2.21 Tell Us Once (TUO) is the award winning cross-government service that makes it possible for residents to tell central and local government departments, just once, about a death.
- 2.22 The TUO service for Medway went live on Tuesday 27 August 2019. Feedback from customers and the staff delivering the service is very good. To promote the scheme posters are situated at the registry office and leaflets are being handed out to anyone reporting a death in Medway.
- 2.23 Medway is performing extremely well when compared to the national average for the method of enrichment, which is the process where the person reporting the death provides additional information that is used to update Central and Local Government systems. Out of the 81 residents who have used the enrichment service Medway has already achieved a 70.5% channel shift to online reporting, which is well above the national average of 41.37%. This is another example of Medway's residents being keen to adopt digital channels where they are available.
- 2.24 Medway have also achieved a low Face To Face (F2F) percentage (1.44% compared to a national average of over 40%), which is especially pleasing as it demonstrates how well our registrars in Medway are doing in terms of signposting our residents towards the quickest, easiest, and most cost effective method of completing this process.

g) Front Line Services Reorganisation

- 2.25 The Assistant Director Front Line Services requested that the Business Change Team review the staffing structure across the whole of the Front Line Services division.
- 2.26 The Business Change Team have worked with the Assistant Director Front Line Services, and each Service Manager, to produce a proposed structure that will provide more effective delivery of services and achieve savings of £406k.
- 2.27 Informal consultation started in October 2019 and it is expected that formal consultation will commence in November 2019 with the new structure implemented for the 2020/21 financial year.

h) Online Services

- 2.28 A road map of digital projects have been implemented over the past year to support the Council's journey to offering services online.
- 2.29 Here are examples of some of the projects implemented over the past 12 months:

- Resident parking permit online service launched
- Option to report illegally parked vehicles online implemented
- New Shared Lives section of the Medway.gov.uk website launched
- Online form for birth, death and marriage certificates
- 'Medway the place' section created on Medway.gov.uk
- New search tool developed for website
- New online form launched for reporting child safeguarding concerns.
- Online signup form for healthy workplaces within Medway launched.
- New corporate complaints, comments and compliments workflow developed within the JADU system and implemented across the Council.
- New online process for applying for bus passes launched.
- New online form launched for abandoned vehicles
- A suite of new online forms launch for concessionary bus passes
- New Apply & Renew Blue Badge processes launched
- Payments via JADU implemented
- Digital recruitment process implemented
- Online JADU payments implemented for Parking Permits & Planning
- Ongoing Medway.gov.uk website improvements
- Medway For Business section of website launched
- Online presence for Kent & Medway Social Worker Teaching Partnership implemented

3. Council Plan and Service Improvement

- 3.1 The [Council Plan](#) forms part of the Council's Policy Framework and approval of the Council Plan is therefore a matter for Full Council, following consideration by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Following a review of the corporate reporting timetable involving the Council's key strategies and plans, it was concluded that a new overarching [Council Strategy](#) should be introduced and this new Strategy was agreed at Full Council on 10 October 2019.
- 3.2 The overarching Council Strategy sets out the Council's vision and is more of an outcomes focused document than the current Council Plan, without all of the detailed performance measures and delivery plans explaining how the strategic objectives are to be met. The overarching Council Strategy is supported by detailed performance measures and delivery plans which continue to be included in the Council Plan. The 2020/21 Council Plan will be considered by Cabinet and Full Council in February 2020, in line with previous years' timetables.
- 3.3 This was part of a broader plan whereby the main strategies of the Council, which include the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and Risk Strategy, would be agreed in September and aligned together with an annual refresh. The detailed delivery plans then follow in February in the revenue budget, capital programme and Council Plan.

- 3.4 The review of the corporate reporting timetable also sought to increase the consistency with which financial, risk and performance monitoring is reported to Members. In previous years both financial and performance monitoring have been reported on a quarterly basis, while review of the Council's Strategic Risk has taken place every six months. In addition performance monitoring has been presented to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees in previous year, while financial and risk monitoring has only been presented to the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.5 Presenting performance, finance and risk monitoring together is intended to support informed decision making. In June 2019, the Cabinet agreed that from 2019/20 the Strategic Risk Register will be reviewed on a quarterly basis and presented alongside the Council Plan Performance Monitoring and that each Overview and Scrutiny committee will be presented with performance and risk monitoring pertaining to the committee's areas of responsibility. From 2020/21, financial monitoring will be reported alongside performance and risk monitoring.

4. Business and Administration Support Service – BASS

- 4.1 Under the transformation programme, the Business and Administration Support Service (BASS), as was, merged with the former Customer Contact team on 2 October 2018, the new combined service becoming Customer and Business Support (CABS). The service continues to maintain general and specialist business support across the Council, serving approximately three quarters of council services. CABS incorporates the Customer Relations Team (CRT) which coordinates responses to complaints, and champions the learning that can be distilled from complaints across the whole Council. CRT works for every Council service.
- 4.2 Administration is operated as a shared service. Further to comments in paragraph 4.1, administration staff continue to be moved flexibly between sub teams to match the peaks and troughs of the Council's business needs, following cross-training, increasing overall resilience across the Council. Staff are also able to provide generic business support functions and use the Council's CRM (customer relationship management system) 'Lagan' and other back office systems.
- 4.3 CABS manages the Blue Badge service, issuing c4500 badges annually, although this is set to increase, given national changes to eligibility criteria. Capitalising on previous transformation work on the Blue Badge application process, and in light of the Department for Transport's withdrawal of the previous national database and system, more has been done to provide an effective online application process, popular with customers. For those who say they cannot use the online facility, two assisted services for applications are available: a telephone interview, and face to face appointment at Chatham Community Hub.
- 4.4 The Blue Badge team are responsible for processing applications promptly and efficiently, but completion time will vary according to the

volume and complexity of applications. In 2019 this was hindered by the withdrawal, by the Department for Transport, of the national system and database, prompting the need for work around arrangements to be put in place. Applications now feed directly into Jadu, which has been further developed as a CRM. In September 2019, 483 applications were received, 61% of which were processed end to end within 30 working days. Of those applications requiring expert assessment, 12% were refused as they did not meet eligibility criteria. Work continues with the council's Performance and Intelligence team to further develop a performance reporting suite of data.

- 4.5 CABS has continued to support the council's apprenticeship programme; promoting four apprentices to permanent officers, recruiting a new cohort of four apprentices in the summer of 2019. We have adopted the best practice of working with the Apprentice Academy for future permanent recruitment opportunities.

5. Complaints Policy and Management

- 5.1 The Customer Relations Team (CRT) provides a professional complaints management and reporting service, and supports complaint handlers across the authority, placing an important focus on learning from complaints in order to improve service delivery. CRT acts as the interface with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and as guardian of complaint response timeliness.
- 5.2 A new online form for customers to make a complaint, via the Council's Jadu system, was launched in April 2019. This was designed with an improved customer experience in mind, as well as to streamline the processing workflow. User testing informed the development of the form and feedback has been positive from both complainants and complaint handlers. The complaints web pages were also updated to reflect these positive changes and continue to be under regular review.
- 5.3 In 2018-19 response timeliness performance for stage one corporate complaints against the 10 day response target of 80% achieved 87.26%. Performance at the end of September 2019 is a positive 92% and performance has remained well above the 80% target month on month throughout the first half of this year.
- 5.4 Performance for responding to the more complex stage two corporate complaints within 15 working days achieved 82.99% for the year 2018-19. This has also continued to improve and the year to date performance was 87.95% at the end of September ahead of the 75% target.
- 5.5 The CRT began capturing data to record the reasons that make people complain in 2017, and this information has aided the Council to learn from complaints. This gathering of data and analysis has continued throughout 2018-19.
- 5.6 The data has allowed us to monitor for trends and for the second year running, the top three reasons for complaining remain:

- Poor service quality
 - Service not provided
 - Disagree / unhappy with council decisions.
- 5.7 This remained a consistent trend during both Q1 and Q2, although following a review of the wording of generic categories during the development of Jadu to ensure clear understanding of the categories, these same categories are now known as:
- Service was provided but below the agreed standard
 - Service was not provided
 - Disagree or unhappy with council decision
- 5.8 Analysis has shown that ‘service was not provided’ and ‘service was provided but below the agreed standard’ were consistently the categories most upheld, however ‘inaccurate or poor quality information provided’ and ‘communication not satisfactory’ have also featured within the top three categories most upheld during Q1 and Q2 respectively.
- 5.9 Continued monitoring of categories specific to individual services has allowed analysis and identification of the types of complaints each service receive, and whether these are likely to be upheld. This information in turn informs action plans for service improvement.
- 5.10 The introduction of the new online form and workflow has meant that data can be more accurately drawn upon using Power BI for reporting and analysis purposes. Complaints performance reports are produced and distributed monthly and further analysis reports are issued quarterly and annually, and these are shared with complaint handlers, Service Managers and Assistant Directors.
- 5.11 Trends that are identified from gathering generic and specific complaint categories are discussed at each Compliant Handlers Group, which continues to be well attended, along with examples of lessons learnt and good complaint handling practices.
- 5.12 Additionally, Assistant Directors actively discuss the findings of the quarterly reports with their Service Managers to disseminate the messages and embed learning within services.
- 5.13 The CRT also collect and report on compliments; 191 corporate compliments were recorded during 2018-19. Each of these compliments have been shared with the relevant services so that they can be celebrated, as important lessons can also be gained from such positive feedback

6. HR

- 6.1 The HR Shared Service arrangement between Medway Council and Gravesham Borough Council continues to develop. A review was completed in March 2018, lessons learned and a financial review was conducted. Further work has been identified for 2019/20, which, as an example, includes joint investigation training.

- 6.2 The Council's Apprenticeship Academy continues to flourish and surpassed the challenging Public Sector Target of 2.3% again (2018-19) with 115 new apprenticeship starts, equivalent to 55%. Apprenticeship programmes now being undertaken within the authority range from Level 2 to Level 7 (Master's Degree) and the age range of our apprentices directly demonstrates the versatility of our apprenticeship provision, with our youngest apprentice being 16 years old and our oldest being 62 years old.
- 6.3 Since the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in 2017 we have commenced in excess of 270 apprenticeship programmes, at a cost of over £1.4m. We are one of the only large local authorities to be fully utilising all our funds for the benefit of the organisation; also effecting large savings against training budgets which previously paid for qualifications i.e. Leadership & Management, AAT, CIPD.
- 6.4 In addition to core HR activity, the team are working with the ICT and Transformation teams to improve the self-service provision and enhanced digitalisation platform for transaction HR processes.

7. ICT

a) Office 365 Implementation

- 7.1 3,300 Council staff mailboxes have been successfully moved to Office 365 mail.
- 7.2 GOOD mobile email users have also been transferred to Office 365 (O365) mail access so they can continue to access their business email account using the Outlook mobile application. Now that all mailboxes have been transitioned to Office 365 ICT staff have implemented MS secure email to replace the Egress mail system, which has achieved a saving of £50k.
- 7.3 MS O365 offers secure storage in the cloud on 'One Drive'. ICT have now migrated staff storage to the cloud, which supports the secure sharing of documents and collaborative working. This will increase the storage space for all staff and increase email storage to 99GB for each employee.
- 7.4 Alongside the O365 implementation the Council have implemented Cisco Jabber for Mobile. This is an application that allows staff to use their mobile phones and devices to converse with work colleagues via instant messaging and to make and/or receive calls using the same number as a desk phone. It effectively becomes another phone on the Council's system with a desk number whilst staff are running the application. This would typically be required when staff are working away from their desks. This technology has also facilitated a corporate move to encourage staff to 'bring your own mobile device', reducing the need to provide corporate mobile phones for staff.

b) Public Service Network (PSN) Code of Connection Compliance

- 7.5 Medway ICT have achieved Public Service Network code of connection compliance thereby receiving certified assurance from CESG that our ICT infrastructure meets all of the recommended security controls. This achievement will greatly assist any external accreditations for Information Governance auditing in 2019.

c) Strategic Review of ICT

- 7.6 Phase 1 of the ICT review was completed in July 2019, which has delivered a transformation saving of £420k in 2019/20.
- 7.7 The existing Heads of Service for Business Change Place and People now have responsibility for ICT. This has provided resilience to the management structure within ICT and fully aligns ICT and Business Change priorities and work streams.
- 7.8 The new structure has also ensured that there is professional technical expertise within the new ICT Management Team.
- 7.9 The future ICT requirements within Medway have been reviewed as part of this process to allow Medway ICT to provide the appropriate technical solutions and infrastructure to support Medway in delivering services. An ICT Strategy is currently being written to provide a short, medium and long-term plan for ICT.

d) Service Desk Operating Model

- 7.10 As part of the ICT review improvements have been made to the service offered by the ICT Service Desk. Work has already been completed on creating a contact point within ICT to give Council staff and Members somewhere they can go to talk to ICT staff to get their issues resolved.
- 7.11 This is really important for staff that use laptops or tablets as their primary device as it can be difficult for staff to leave devices whilst ICT resolve issues. A consultation / waiting area has been created using existing furniture within Gun Wharf.
- 7.12 ICT are also proactively offering support to Council staff and Councillors by visiting other locations to offer drop-in sessions for staff not based at Gun Wharf.

e) Leadership & Digital Engagement Programme

- 7.13 The Council have made a significant investment into Office 365, which has delivered new and exciting capabilities to the Council allowing staff to collaborate in new ways.
- 7.14 To ensure the benefits of Office 365 are fully realised the Council's Leadership and Digital Engagement Co-ordinator has moved from the Communications Team into the Business Change Team. The co-ordinator is aligning Leadership Academy support towards digital

leadership where managers can understand and identify the role of digital technology within their service, and the organisation, to encourage employees to consider digital options.

- 7.15 This will ensure that the Council's managers and staff receive support and training in the effective use of Office 365. With a large range of Office 365 applications to choose from services will be assisted in identifying the most appropriate solution for their needs and then supported in the set up and use through training.
- 7.16 "Digital Café" sessions continue to be offered for staff to receive informal training and guidance on the use of Office 365. Digital Café sessions have been arranged at other locations to support staff not based at Gun Wharf. Engaging with dispersed teams in this way will help them feel better engaged with the organisation and reduce silo working.
- 7.17 Services are also able to book workshops for their teams to receive demonstrations of how Office 365 can assist them followed by a session where Microsoft TEAM sites, Jabber Soft Phones, SharePoint and other applications are setup and configured ready for the teams to instantly use them in their day-to-day work.

8 Legal

a) Place Team (Property, Contracts, Planning, etc)

- 8.1 A summary of some achievements of the team during the first half of the year 2019/2020 is set out below:
 - 8.1.1 The Place Team has continued to perform above expectations this year. A restructure was completed in the summer which allowed for the creation of senior roles to enable more experienced members of the team to mentor others, to provide a degree of career progression and help to retain skills and experience within the team.
 - 8.1.2 The Property Team have built on previous successes and have delivered a number of high profile projects including resolving title issues which have allowed the site of the former Civic Centre to come forward for development and the new Fire Station café in the New Cut.
 - 8.1.3 The team as a whole are working to deliver regeneration projects by acting for both the Council and Medway Development Company (MDC) to secure planning agreements and leases between Medway and MDC to facilitate the development of a number of sites.
 - 8.1.4 The team are taking forward a challenge to the NHS review of Stroke Services provision as an Interested Party in Judicial Review proceedings which are due to be heard at a 3 day hearing in December.
 - 8.1.5 The Shared Legal Service with Gravesham Borough Council (which went live in April 2017) has continued to strengthen over the past year with the team providing advice in all areas, including providing support

on a significant town centre regeneration projects - mirroring the successes achieved for Medway.

- 8.1.6 The Information Governance (IG) Team which forms part of the Legal Services Team also become a shared service with Gravesham Borough Council on 1st April 2018. The IG team have provided support to departments across both local authorities in relation to GDPR compliance, monitoring the Councils' performance in responding to Freedom of Information requests (within a statutory timescale of 20 days) and reviewing how improvements can be achieved.

b) People Team (Childcare, SEN/Education, Adult Services)

- 8.2 The average period for child care court proceedings for the last 12 months is 32 weeks. The previous 12 month period showed an average of 33 weeks. The target is 26 weeks. This has reduced from 55 weeks when the 26 week target was introduced 5 years ago so significant improvements have been made. Legal Services continue to work with their Children's Services colleagues to meet the 26 week target whenever possible. The team continue to deal with some complex care cases that will take longer than 26 weeks, which will affect the average.

9 Property

- 9.1 The Council's Capital Projects Team were winners in the Make a Difference awards 2019, Business Support Directorate, for the Fire Station Café Project Team. The Team were highly commended in the Make a Difference awards 2019, Business Support Directorate, for making a difference to our customers' lives.
- 9.2 Re:Fit is a new initiative that Medway Property and Capital Projects have developed a new energy funding initiatives, and has approval to proceed. It is a national energy performance contracting framework that is a Joint Venture between HM Treasury and the Local Government Association that allows various funding streams to implement a buy to save project. This also ties in with the declared Climate Emergency with Kent and Medway Councils collaborating to achieve Net Zero emissions by 2050. The initial strategic areas covered by Re: fit are corporate properties, retained schools and social housing.
- 9.3 In 2019 the Capital Projects team has delivered works to Holcombe Grammar, Rainham Mark, Riverside Primary and Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School in Rochester successfully completed on time and on budget. Education works across thirty retained schools are nearing completion in 2019 for essential FRA fire risk assessment projects.
- 9.4 Housing works this year continue from the HRA 2018/19 programme for window replacements, flat roofs, and the FRA fire risk assessment works into the final of a 3 year programme. A three year housing programme is now being completed and a new three year programme commencing in 2019, as well as new capital works improvements.

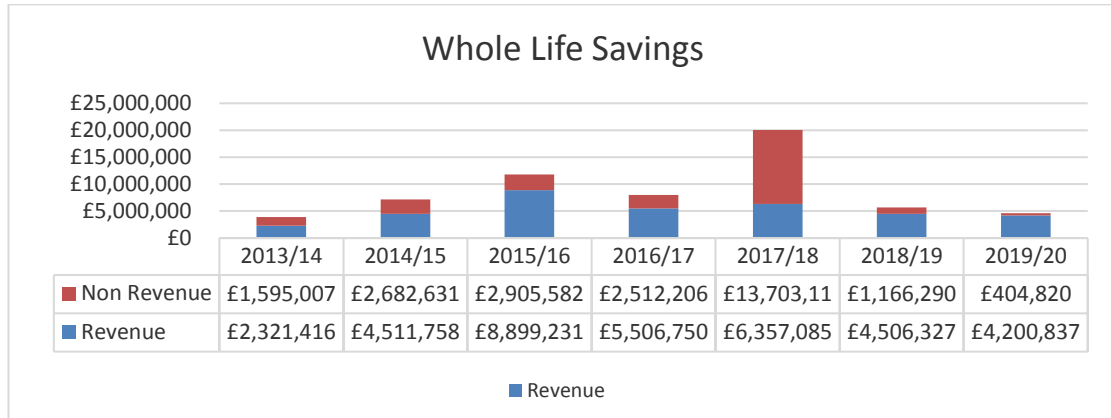
- 9.5 The Capital Projects team have taken on, following an internal audit of our assets, the duty to regularly survey the Rochester City ancient city walls and undertake their repair. This will enhance the Council's City bid and tie in with Heritage England and English Heritage work streams.
- 9.6 A review of the Gun Wharf fire emergency plans and procedures has been undertaken and a new tag system is being implemented to improve safety systems, which has been considered with and approved by our health and safety team.
- 9.7 Rochester station is now home to a new electronic totem sign board that the team has assisted in delivering for the Medway communications Client team.
- 9.8 Strood has benefitted from another Client being installed in the Elaine Centre where Children's Services can now work as one unit having been relocated from various locations and this has proved to be a great success with excellent feedback from this Client team.
- 9.9 Heritage sites updated this year include Rochester Castle which now has a new viewing platform and health and safety upgrades, such as a wooden walkway and upgraded balustrades delivered on time and on budget.
- 9.10 The team has responsibility for the overall management of the One Public Estate (OPE) project and the Council has obtained funding. The following schemes are under development, and in various stages of progress.
- White Road Community Centre (Community /Social residential)
 - Clover Street Chatham, Healthy Living Centre and housing with CCG
 - Temple Street, Strood – Healthy Living Centre with CCG
 - Britton Farm office and residential options – 44 units
 - Temple water front remediation study – potential residential site
 - Gillingham Fire Station – “make ready” site for South East Coast Ambulance Service
 - Chatham Dockyard old Police Station development
- 9.11 The team has worked closely with Medway training officers to establish new apprenticeship positions. These apprentices are working towards Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and The Institute of Workplace and Facilities Management, degree level. We will be looking to take on new apprentices in 2020.

10 Category Management/Procurement

a) Whole life benefits

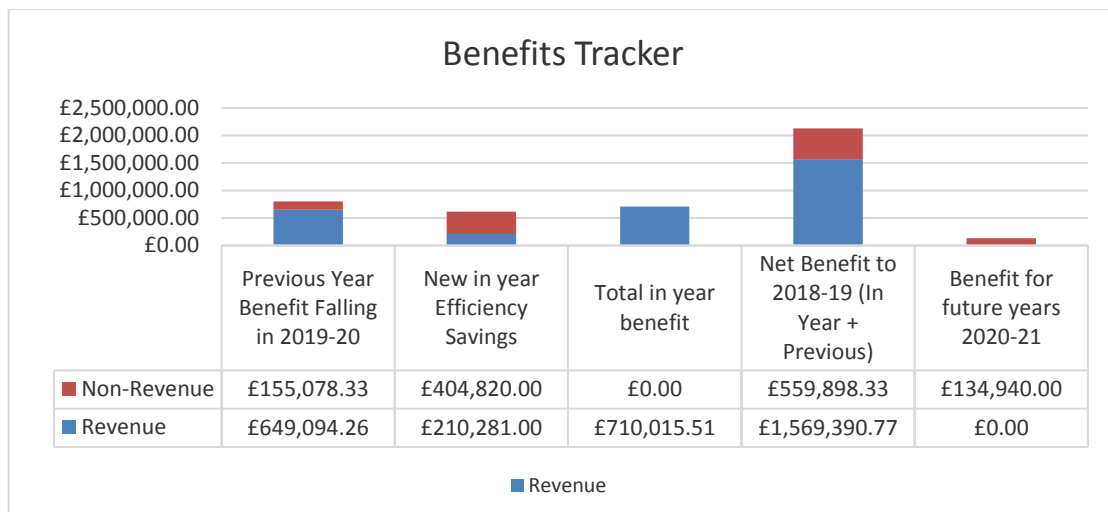
- 10.1. The Category Management team, since its creation, has been recording the benefits that it has delivered back to the Council. The chart below details the whole life benefits of the procurement activity that has been undertaken to date. In fact, whole life savings over the 6

year life of the Category Management team now stands at approximately £62m.



b) In year benefits

10.2 The Category Management team tracks the in-year benefits of its activities so that a record of achievement can be maintained. The information below details where the benefits for this year to date have been achieved.



10.3 The above benefits derive from all the projects delivered by the Category Management team where benefits fall into this financial year's spend.

c) Working with others

10.4 Since the launch of the Category Management team in December 2013, the skill and professionalism of the team has been recognised and evidenced by the number of external bodies that have been keen for Category Management to not only undertake their procurement exercises but have used our established Frameworks. The range of organisations include:

- Medway Clinical Commissioning Group
- Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Clinical Commissioning Group
- Swale Clinical Commissioning Group
- Gravesham Borough Council

- Maidstone Borough Council
- Kent County Council
- Medway Development Company
- Medway Norse
- Medway Commercial Group
- The Kent Buying Consortium

d) Creation of new frameworks

10.5 At present, Category Management has a range of organisation wide beneficial frameworks, namely;

- Construction Professional Service Consultancy
- Transport – including but not limited to SEND
- Supported Living
- Communications Printing
- Civil and Structural Engineering Consultancy
- School Catering and Cleaning
- Personal Protective Equipment (Clothing)

10.6 Additional Frameworks which are soon to be awarded or in the pipeline of delivery include:

- Events Infrastructure – this will cover many lots for the production of events and will have cross-departmental and authority requirements such as security.
- Supported Accommodation – currently ad-hoc block purchased so this will drive competition and quality within the local supply chain.
- Homecare

10.7 All possible frameworks going forward will at least be open to Kent public bodies and where evidently sensible will be open for more national purposes to give the greatest level of exposure. It is important that by opening a framework to a more national supplier base we do not dilute the market to only a handful of contractors.

10.8 As previously reported, as the Team's reputation spreads, we should also see increments to the rebates earned through other public bodies using our frameworks.

e) Supporting the local economy

10.9 The Team is keen to develop local supply chains and as such holds relevant market engagement events. These events have increased in popularity and the Team believe that some of the increased outcomes achieved from procurement activity stems from them – namely value for money, communication, approachability with the market and increased competition.

f) Reducing red tape

- 10.10 The Team is keen to adopt as many model form documents as possible to ensure accessibility to the market. For example, within the building and construction arena, we are using model form documents such as the Publicly Available Specification 91 (PAS91) which enables bidders to be familiar with the information they are providing and, once done, can be used at other authorities which also use the PAS91.
- 10.11 In line with national standards, the team has adopted the standard Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) for all non-construction projects. This assists in the streamlining of the process and resulted in praise from external businesses.
- 10.12 The Team is currently working towards implementing the use of the National Social Value Framework which evolved to reflect the changing needs and pressures in society. This is an important reflection on what the organisation, collectively, wishes to see delivered from projects awarded.
- 10.13 The team is also using model form contracts to ensure consistency with industry best practice and has a complete suite of Medway Council terms and conditions for projects without model contracts to utilise.

g) Improved services, better outcomes

- 10.14 The Team has worked hard to harmonise a distinct disparity in working practices, as such the cohort of documents and information provided is now standardised. Our stakeholders have commended the more streamlined and succinct approach as the Team is able to more robustly resolve any issues which may arise. As such, should there be any sickness, other team members are confidently able to backfill any outstanding work.

h) Intelligent spending

- 10.15 Finance have a well-established e-invoicing to Automate Invoice Processing to speed up payments for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The cataloguing system within the finance system has also been revised to give granularity against spend to ensure the Team is able to in turn analyse and achieve the greatest efficiencies possible. The Team is constantly looking for procurement opportunities which can utilise the cataloguing functionality.

i) Sustainable Procurement

- 10.16 We have embedded internal self-service when using frameworks via the Kent Business Portal to speed up awards. The relevant teams are given training and their subsequent awards/projects are sporadically spot checked to ensure compliance to what a normal procurement activity should look like.

j) The process

- 10.17 A service led procurement process for opportunities between £5k and £25k, which was introduced last year, is now working efficiently. This process works within pre-defined limitations for low risk procurements and can be attributed to many hours of saved resources.

Valuation & Asset Management

- 10.18 The action plan for the Corporate Property Strategy has been reviewed and many of the required actions are now completed. Two progress updates on this have been shared with management and Members.
- 10.19 The Council has acquired the Pentagon Centre for £34,875,000 on 26 April 2019 which will give a net budgeted income (before borrowing) of £2,290,500 (£1,192,250 after the cost of borrowing) in 2019/20 and will also open up development and regeneration opportunities for the Council.
- 10.20 Using One Public Estate and other external funding, planning consent has been secured for the change of use of the former supermarket in Britton Farm Gillingham, an agreement for a lease has been signed with the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT) and work has started on the conversion of the building into a new facility for KMPT. The works should be completed before the end of this financial year and the lease can be completed, which will result in the Council obtaining a rental income from the premises and KMPT will be able to locate to better premises.
- 10.21 Terms have been agreed for the grant from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to grant it a lease of a proposed special school site at Cornwallis Avenue.
- 10.22 A site has been acquired for a new Waste/Vehicle depot and agreed terms to let part of the former Deangate Ridge site as a temporary vehicle depot so that the Medway Norse Depot at Pier Road can be used as a temporary waste depot until the new depot is available.
- 10.23 Last financial year, the Council obtained over £3,431,000 in capital receipts from 17 transactions including £435,000 from the Inspiration Centre, £590,000 from the former Conservancy building, £800,000 from a ransom strip/covenant variation at Street End Road, £1,000,000 from Temple Waterfront and £403,750 from the sale of the Howard Depot. The Council has already received £643,450 so far in 2019/20 are likely to receive a total of over £3.1M by 31 March 2020.
- 10.24 Countryside has been appointed as the developer for Rochester Riverside and we have completed the development agreement. A planning consent has been granted (outline for the whole site and detailed for the first 3 phases). Works have started and phases 1 and 2 have transferred with land payments being 12 months later. The phase 1 Land payment has been agreed at £519,000 and paid. The phase 2 payment has been agreed at £2,428,114 and is due on 30/11/19. The Team will continue to work with regeneration and Countryside to ensure that the requisite

licences and agreements are in place with service providers so as not to hold up the development. The sale of a small additional area of land to Countryside for £60,100 has been completed.

- 10.25 The masterplan (Supplementary Planning Document) for Strood Riverside and the former Civic Centre site have been approved and the construction of the flood defences is underway with works now completed at the Civic Centre site. Carter Jonas and Wombles Bond Dickinson have been appointed to advise on the disposal/development of the Civic Centre site and the Civic centre site will be marketed this year.
- 10.26 In relation to the Chatham Waterfront site, the Council has acquired the former Fire Station and have let this as a café/restaurant. The land needed to develop the Chatham Waterfront site has been acquired and planning permission for this has been secured. This site will be developed by Medway Development Company for 175 apartments and some commercial space.
- 10.27 The Council's rented properties are achieving a return of circa 7% weighted average per annum. Long-term voids (at over 6 months) are running at 1.9%. In 2018/19, the Council generated rental income of circa £1.612m and the Valuation and Asset Management team generated fee income (ignoring SLA income) of circa £202,000.
- 10.28 Amongst other things, in the last year (1/11/18 to 31/10/19) the following transactions have been completed:
- Leases granted: 50
 - Leases Taken: 5
 - Rent Reviews: 20
 - Disposals: 11 totalling £4,069,594
 - Acquisitions: 1
 - Matters completed at the Pentagon: 11 Leases, 2 Licences, 1 surrender and renewal and 1 wayleave.
- 10.29 The housing stock was revalued as at 31 March 2019 (185 Beacon valuations) and all asset valuations for the 30 September 2019 re-valuation date have been completed. (80 valuations). Work is underway on the valuations for the 28/02/20 valuation date. The Team has categorised leases for finance, carried out an impairment review and assisted finance with any audit queries. (142 Valuations in all and the review of over 1100.)
- 10.30 No complaints have been received and the average case load is now 133 cases per FTE.

11. Travellers

- 11.1 National Planning Policy and legislation dictate that Local Planning Authorities should understand the need and plan for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's accommodation within their areas. The Planning Policy Team is doing this through the development of the new Local Plan.

- 11.2 So far the Planning Policy Team has completed a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). The GTAA assesses the need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling show people pitches/plots in the Local Plan period. The results of this assessment outlined a need for 36 pitches for Gypsy and Travellers and 3 plots for Travelling Show people.
- 11.3 To calculate if Medway can accommodate the outlined need in the GTAA the Council has also been undertaking site assessments on potential sites. This work has involved a review of existing sites and search for new sites. The conclusion of this work is to develop allocations for the new Local Plan in order to set the areas for growth. Supporting this work is the development of a new planning policy relating to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people to be adopted in the new Local Plan that will be used to manage any proposed development for Gypsy, Traveller and Traveller Show people use over the plan period.
- 11.4 All results of this work are to be adopted into the new Medway Local Plan when it is adopted

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Appendices:

None

Background papers:

None