

Council Priority: GROWTH

Maximising regeneration and economic growth

BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

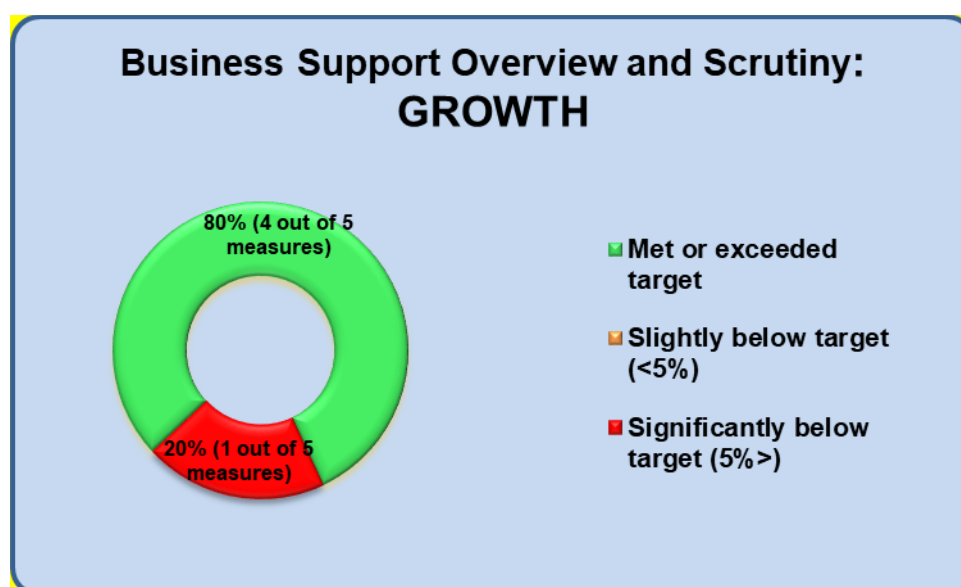
Performance: Quarter 1 2020/21

Key

Red	significantly below target (>5%)	Amber	slightly below target (<5%)	Green	met or exceeded target
Imp	Improved	Det	Worsened	Static	Static

Council Plan measures: summary performance

There are 5 Council Plan measures that fall under the remit of this committee.



Improved performance

- 20% (1 out of 5*) improved long term (average of previous 4 quarters)
- 20% (1 out of 5*) improved over the short term (since last quarter)

*where data available

Measures in target (green)

Code	Status	Name	Long Term	Short Term
MAE 3	Green	Achievement rate (pass rate)	Det	Det

Code	Status	Name	Long Term	Short Term
NI 156	Green	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	Det	Det
HC3	Green	No. of households with dependent children in B&B who have resided there for 6+ weeks at the end of the quarter	Static	Static
HC4	Green	Number of private sector properties improved as a result of the Council's intervention	Imp	Imp

Measures significantly below target (red)

Code	Status	Name	Long Term	Short Term
MAE 2	Red	% Retention rate	Det	Det

Strategic Risks

During quarter 4 19/20 risks were maintained through the specialist cells set up in response to the Covid-19 pandemic). In quarter 1 20/21, as the Council has moved from the Response to Recovery phase of the Emergency Planning procedures, risk monitoring has returned to the Strategic Risk Management Group (SRMG).

Working alongside the Governance Cell, the SMRG has undertaken a fundamental review of the Strategic Risk Register in light of the Covid-19 Response and Recovery.

The quarter 1 20/21 strategic risk register is attached at Appendix 5. The register shows all strategic risks together with mitigation in place to minimise impact and likelihood. The risks pertaining solely to this council priority are shown below (full details in Appendix 5).

Reference	Risk Register Page (app 5)	Risk	Owner	Current residual risk score	Definition (current score) (L-likelihood) (I-impact)
SR35	28	Homelessness	AD Physical and Cultural Regeneration	CIII	L - significant I - marginal

The following risks pertain to all priorities:

Reference	Risk Register Page (app 5)	Risk	Owner	Current residual risk score	Definition (current score) (L-likelihood) (I-impact)
SRO3B	4	Finances	Chief Finance Officer	AI	L – very high I - catastrophic
SR46 NEW	7	Medway's Economic Recovery from Covid19	Assistant Director Regeneration (Recovery Lead Officer for Medway Council	BII	L - high I - critical
SR21 REMOVE	12	Procurement savings – capacity and delivery	Chief Legal Officer	DIII	L - low I - critical
SR32	15	Data and information	Chief Legal Officer	CII	L - significant I - critical
SR36	17	Alternative service delivery models	Chief Legal Officer, Director of RCET	BIII	L - high I - Marginal
SR37	20	Cyber Security	Chief Finance Officer	CI	L - Significant I - Catastrophic
SR02	25	Business continuity and emergency planning	Director of RCET	DII	L - low I - critical

Council Plan Outcome: Resident with jobs and skills

Programme: Jobs, Skills and Employability

Council Plan Measures: Performance

MAE 2		% Retention rate					Aim to Maximise	
	Value		Value	Target	Status	Long Trend	Short Trend	
Q2 2019/20 academic yr	92.45%	Q3 2019/20 academic yr	72.84%	94%	Red	Det	Det	

Comment

This PI is based on academic year rather than financial year. Data shown is for Q3 of Academic year 19/20 (February 2020 – April 2020).

Retention rates have been severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many classes have had to close, and not all learners can access online sessions.

Overall, 953 learners withdrew after starting their course due to Covid-19.

Action

Medway Adult Education Centres was closed in Q1 due to Covid-19. The service has worked hard to ensure that learners have access to online and remote delivery keeping many ASB funded learners on track to achieve their qualifications. Tutors have had to be innovative and respond quickly to the challenges presented by new ways of delivering learning. In Community Learning tutors have provided online keeping in contact and engagement sessions and are planning more online and remote sessions for this learner cohort in Q4 academic year (May – July).

MAE 3		Achievement rate (pass rate)					Aim to Maximise	
	Value		Value	Target	Status	Long Trend	Short Trend	
Q2 2019/20 academic yr	99.8%	Q3 2019/20 academic yr	99.13%	96%	Green	Det	Det	

Comments

This PI is based on academic year rather than financial year. Data shown is for Q3 of Academic year 19/20 (February 2020 – April 2020).

The pass rate measures how many of the learners, who complete their course, achieve a qualification or their learning aim. Performance has not been affected by Covid-19. It shows that Medway Adult Education learners continue to achieve very high pass rates and demonstrates the excellent processes in place to support learners achieve their qualifications, or to achieve their learning outcomes in non-accredited provision (RARPA).

Action

Medway Adult Education's approach to improving performance is one of continuous improvement through a range of quality measures including monthly quality review meetings scrutinising KPIs, observations of teaching and learning, learner and partner evaluations, performance and development reviews, self-assessment reviews and quality improvement plans at Service and Programme level. These ensure the Service's overall excellent KPI rates are maintained. Medway Adult Education has maintained its Information, Advice and Guidance Matrix kite mark, and monitors the effectiveness of assessment processes, ensuring learner needs are met through differentiation, and additional learning support if required, enabling learners to reach their goals and is evidenced in the good pass and achievement rates and high learner satisfaction.

Council Plan Project - Medway Adult Education (MAE) learning programme to boost local skills levels for those furthest from employment

The Work skills programme which targets employability skills and provides qualifications for learners who are unemployed, in receipt of benefits or who are wanting to improve their current employment prospects or progress in work has a refreshed offer. This remains a challenging area of work due to the introduction of Universal Credit, Employ Medway closing and the lower number of referrals from JCP locally. The introduction of shorter introduction course has proved successful and the offer also includes entry level courses to provide a better stepping stone progression route for learners who are unskilled or have no or very low levels of qualification.

During Q1, despite lockdown and the closure of education centres, face to face delivery managers and tutors have continued to support learners with their studies and qualifications by online and remote delivery. Many learners will still gain their planned qualification and will be able to access the employment market. Covid-19 provided an opportunity to fast-track the plans to offer an online qualification programme and MAE have developed a subcontract with an online provider to further boost this offer for people looking to gain qualifications during the period of lockdown. This programme has quickly recruited learners who are keen to gain qualifications and retrain. Target income for this subcontract was reached quickly and provided opportunities to 158 learners despite the challenges of Covid-19. This online qualification programme will continue and is planned as part of MAEs 2020/21 offer.

Council Plan Project - MCG and Housing Company to improve local employment levels

Q1 20/21 MCG has seen a high level of interest from Medway Council departments for temporary staff and a further 6 positions have been filled already within Medway

In Q1 MCG have found employment for 170 staff within Medway Council, 101 in Children's Social Care, 22 in Adult Social Care and a further 47 across other Council departments from MCG's internal pool of staff. The majority of these staff are Medway residents.

The recruitment team have also been engaged to provide 3 executive search level candidates including the Permanent CEO of MCG, the new Interim Assistant Director for Culture & Communities, and the Interim Assistant Director for Adult Social Care all of which are well underway.

As Medway's Housing Company progress through the delivery phases for each of their major projects they will record local labour as well as establishing subcontractor requirements to ensure apprenticeships are provided.

For their design and build contracts, they have incorporated requirements into their contracts which stipulate that contractors appoint one apprentice per £1million contract sum either directly or via their subcontractor supply chain.

Council Plan Project - Support Medway Skills Board to champion skills development to all ages and to support lifelong learning

Providing people with the skills they need to be able to make a positive contribution to all levels of Medway's economic future is critical to delivering economic growth. Medway will need a pool of skilled and employable staff to ensure the long-term growth of high economic value contributors, such as the business likely to locate at the Innovation Park Medway. As Medway Council encourages existing businesses to grow and new businesses to move to Medway, it is vital that there is a suitable workforce ready to meet business need.

In order to do this effectively, two Medway Skills Boards have been established. An Officers Skills and Employability Board first met in August 2017 to begin defining emerging skills priorities, which were then discussed at the first Members Skills Partnership Board and has been established as a Cabinet Advisory Group. The group has overseen the development of the Skills and Employability Plan for Medway and will oversee the action plan delivery.

Due to Covid-19, the majority of skills programmes have been paused as they involve group training and engagement with businesses. These include:

- Supported Employment project - was due to start in April - rearranged for August.
- Scaffolding training project -was due to start in April - will start in September/October
- Medway Apprenticeship Advice Service - was due to start in April - will start in September/October.

The Enterprise Coordinator programme has continued and used this time to engage will with schools, developing new careers strategies.

Work is being undertaken to liaise closely with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and Government funding and initiatives to ensure Medway benefits.

Medway Adult Education has been integrated with Skills and Employability, with work being done to align priorities and activities. The Skills and Employability Plan will be reviewed in light of Covid-19 and be updated as more information and data is gathered.

Council Plan Outcome: Preventing homelessness

Programme: Preventing homelessness

Council Plan Measures: Performance

NI 156		Number of households living in temporary accommodation					Aim to Minimise	
	Value		Value	Target	Status	Long Trend	Short Trend	
Q4 2019/20	344	Q1 2020/21	346	350	Green	Det	Det	

Comments

At the end of Q1 2020 there were a total of 346 households residing in temporary accommodation (TA) provided by the Council in line with its statutory responsibilities. This is a very slight increase from the 344 households that were accommodated at the end of Q4 2019/20. Most households in TA will have children. Therefore, there is a correlation between the overall number of households in TA and the number of children in TA. The accommodation provided to families will usually be in the form of a self-contained property located in Medway.

Benchmarking

The rate of households in temporary accommodation in Medway is currently 1.26 per 1000 households, this is slightly lower than the national rate of 1.27 (latest benchmarking figures June 2019.)

Further benchmarking has been undertaken to identify how Medway compares with other similar sized unitary authorities. In June 2019, the numbers in temporary accommodation in Brighton was at a rate of 5.45 households per 1,000 and Milton Keynes had a rate of 2.64 households per 1,000. Locally, Dartford had a rate of 2.11 in the same time period.

HC3		No. of households with dependent children in B&B who have resided there for 6+ weeks at the end of the quarter					Aim to Minimise	
	Value		Value	Target	Status	Long Trend	Short Trend	
Q4 2019/20	0	Q1 2020/21	0	0	Green	Det	Det	

A snapshot at the end of Q1 2020/21 identifies that no families were in bed and breakfast accommodation. Additionally, throughout Q1 no families were placed into bed and breakfast for more than 6 weeks.

Work is continuously underway to ensure that the use of bed and breakfast is kept to a minimum. This has been done by seeking more suitable temporary accommodation for households and using HRA properties as temporary accommodation. The Service has also reviewed its procedures to ensure that all cases with children or a pregnant are moved on from bed and breakfast within appropriate timescales.

HC4		Number of private sector properties improved as a result of the Council's intervention				Aim to Maximise	
	Value		Value	Target	Status	Long Trend	Short Trend
Q4 2019/20	250	Q1 2020/21	369	175	Green	Imp	Imp

Comments

In Q1 369 private sector households were assisted in having their properties improved via Council intervention despite the restriction of Covid-19 on inspections. The Council have continued with its statutory services and targeted work with the taskforce and will continue this through Q2.

13 new Households of Multiple Occupation (HMO) licences have been issued in Q1 bringing a total of 175 licenced HMO throughout Medway. 17 category 1 hazards and 85 category 2 hazards have been identified in Q1 and these have been alleviated. This action helps improving living conditions and raise the standards in the Private sector rented accommodation.

Action

The Council continues to undertake its range of actions to improve accommodation in the private sector ranging from informal advice to enforcing legislation via the service of statutory notices. Throughout the quarter the most prominent hazards have been excess cold followed by damp and mould, fire and falls on stairs.

Annual monitoring of this indicator has been altered to reflect enforcement only, excluding the informal advice and assistance offered by the team to improve properties. This, coupled with the approach of the team to tackle more complex enforcement and pursue prosecution, has led to this indicator being off target. The Council licensed 59 HMOs this year with an income of £50651.65, we currently have 165 licensed HMO's throughout Medway. The targeting of unlicensed HMO's will continue throughout 2020.

Council Plan Project - Help Medway's people get a foot on the housing ladder

Last year the Council delivered over our target of 204 affordable homes (total of 333 units) and this year it is anticipated a number close to target will be delivered following discussions with developers and registered providers in terms of Covid-19 impact on new housing supply. The Council are also looking to increase the number of potential housing options.

All potential avenues are being explored to help people get on the housing ladder e.g. new key worker housing scheme, making effective use of the allocations policy and maximising update of private rented properties through our Private Rented Sector scheme.

This financial year investigations into block booking and leasing properties will take place to see if additional housing can be delivered directly by Medway Council in a cost-effective way. The Housing Services have had to divert a significant amount of resource to covering additional demands due to Covid-19, including following the 'everyone in' directive from government targeting people sleeping rough. Activity is still progressing, but this has had to be done with fewer staff members than planned.

Council Plan Project - Prevent homelessness by providing targeted support to those who need it.

Work continues to ensure that HRA tenants are supported to mitigate the negative impact of welfare reform, to minimise rent arrears, evictions and support tenant's financial well-being. In Q2, the focus will be on supporting tenants who have been financially affected by Covid-19, especially tenants who are claiming benefits for the first time and new tenants.

Council Plan Project - Review Housing Related Support (HRS) commissioning

The Council are currently undertaking a review of the current provision of Housing Related Support (HRS) and identifying any gaps, with the aim of reducing the number of those rough sleeping. Opportunities are currently being explored for joint work with children's services commissioning and aligning our tender activity with potential Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding, to ensure we meet the needs of Medway residents. It is anticipated the Council will going out to Tender in October/November with new contracts starting in April 2021.

Council Plan Project - Shift the focus of the rough sleeping initiative

During Q1 the Council have been supporting residents with Covid-19. All known people sleeping rough were accommodated, at the start of the lockdown there was a maximum of 20 and this rose to 40. These cases were as a result of sofa surfing and identifying a number of preventative cases.

The Council successfully worked in partnership with the King Charles Hotel to provide services and support those who needed accommodation. The Council are increasing its partnership working with the third sector to create a pool of services to improve safeguarding and reduce reliance on statutory services. The Council have had a high level of success with moving people on from this emergency accommodation with 32 rehoused since the pandemic lockdown.

The Council are looking to increase the availability of privately rented accommodation to support those who are homeless. A mailshot was sent to 1,100 landlords promoting the CallB4U Serve landlord hotline and the Private Rented Sector (PRS) scheme. The CallB4U Service provides a dedicated telephone contact line for landlords and invites

them to contact us for prevention assistance where they are having issues with tenants and are considering eviction. Where the Council are contacted, the Housing Options Team will undertake enquiries with the landlord and where appropriate will contact the tenant to invite them to work with us and the landlord to seek to sustain the tenancy. This might include working with clients to complete income and expenditure assessments, advising them regarding prioritising and maximising their income to meet their rental payments, helping them resolve Housing Benefit issues, helping them access discretionary housing payments and providing financial assistance from the prevention fund to clear arrears. The benefit for the landlord is that it helps resolve tenancy issues without resort to time consuming and costly legal action, including ensuring rental income and reducing or clearing rent arrears debt. The PRS scheme invited landlords to contact us if they wished to work through the scheme to make void properties available to us to offer to homeless applicants as private rented sector offers of accommodation in discharge of our homeless duties.

We are in the process of agreeing a new rent guarantee scheme initiative, which will work alongside CallB4U Serve.

Council Plan Project - Ensure that the council maximises the opportunity to reduce homelessness through prevention and relief

The Council continues to ensure that the opportunities for the prevention and relief of homelessness are maximised within the district. This includes through joint prevention working arrangements with local landlords and housing providers, to seek to sustain those tenancies of their tenants who are at risk of eviction.

In Q1 there has been 526 approaches for homeless assistance with 191 (36%) having their homelessness successfully prevented/relieved. Approach figures for Q1 this year are down compared to Q1 last year (635). This is being achieved by maintenance of a robust staffing structure and regularly reviewing prevention/relief toolkit equipping the staff with tools required to maintain high levels of successful outcomes, along with increased procurement of property via the PRS Scheme. Also maintaining regular contact with social landlords and supported providers and offering early intervention appointments even during the Covid-19 crisis.

Council Plan Project - Working with landlords and agents to support households to sustain their accommodation and prevent homelessness

Landlords and agents are reporting to the Council that they have seen a significant increase in rent arrears during the pandemic which puts tenancies at risk. CallB4UServe provides an important service to landlords for joint working to seek to prevent loss of tenancies and loss of tenancy income. A mailshot was sent to 1100 landlords to raise awareness of support that is available. During Q1 45 landlords contacted the Council compared with 28 in Q1 2019/20.