

Summary of Quarter 1 2020/21 Overview and Scrutiny performance discussions

1. Framework

1.1 Quarter 1 2020/21 performance was discussed at the following Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee meetings;

Children and Young People O&S Committee: 1 October 2020

Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee: 13 October 2020

Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S Committee: 15 October 2020

2. Items referred to Business Support O&S

No items were referred to Business Support O&S by the chairs of the other O&S Committees.

3. O&S Performance Discussions

3.1 This section provides a summary of the discussions at the other O&S Committee meetings. The relevant performance data is shown in Appendix 3.

3.1.1 Children and Young People O&S Committee discussion summary.

Discussion:

The Committee considered a report which provided the Committee with a summary of performance in Quarter 1 of 2020/21 on the delivery of the two priorities relevant for this Committee; people and growth.

Members then raised a number of questions and comments, which included:

- Children not in education, employment or training (NEET) – in response to this measure, Members asked that the narrative be clearer in that the number of NEETs was increasing because of the work being done in identifying unknowns. Officers explained that NEETs performance did need improving but added that the significant danger relating to those whose destination was unknown, had improved.
- Contextual Safeguarding – reference was made to a video available on YouTube which explained contextual safeguarding and it was recommended that the link to this be sent to Members for information and that contextual safeguarding be incorporated within a future report on the Adolescent Team.
- Adoption – reference was made to the measure relating to adoption and that although performance still needed to be improved, the point was made that the number of disruptions of adoptive placements were few. Officers acknowledged

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this and that the trends against this measure demonstrated an improving picture. They added that the Regional Adoption Agency, which was due to go live on 1 November 2020, would also create more opportunities for improved performance in this area.

- Relationship with schools – in response to a concern raised that it could be premature to remove the risk relating to this, officers explained that relationships with schools had begun to improve before the covid crisis, which had then resulted in further improvement through strong partnership working. It was felt relationships were established enough on a number of areas and were now practical and assertive.
- Benchmarking caseload data – in response to a question about whether it would be possible to provide benchmarking data for caseload information across various teams, officers explained that caseload figures were not validated published data and that, together with the fact that different authorities structure their social care in different ways, made it difficult to benchmark against. However, officers undertook to liaise with other authorities to seek benchmarking opportunities
- Recruitment and retention – concern was raised about the ongoing poor performance relating to recruitment and retention of social workers. Officers explained that the additional 35 posts equated to approximately a 20% increase of the entire workforce and added that there had been a steady improved position on this, which officers were optimistic about.
- School absence – in response to a question about how the authority and schools were addressing school absences post lockdown, officers confirmed that attendance was at 94% in primary school, therefore very close to the average attendance. It was anticipated that many of the children persistently absent or late, were children who had attendance issues pre-covid. Schools were now advised to take a measured approach and be sympathetic and supportive where families had good reasons, but to be assertive where there were not and refer where necessary. It was added that the law on attendance had now returned to that in force pre-emergency legislation relating to the pandemic.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

3.1.2 Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee discussion summary:

Discussion:

Members considered a report which summarised performance in Quarter 1 (Q1) 20/20/21 on the delivery of the Council Plan priority relevant for the Committee: Supporting Medway's people to realise their potential.

Members commended the work of the domiciliary care team during the pandemic.

Reference was made to the importance of increasing the possible alternatives to placements for younger adults. The Director of Children and Adults commented that a key focus was increase the range of opportunities for young people. Work had started on an accommodation strategy to look at improving the continuum of care so that, where appropriate, young adults can consider moving out of residential care into supported living placements and then for some to move on to independent living. There was evidence to show that there was sufficient capacity at present to meet current levels of demand.

Noting that the Strategic Risk Register presented to the Committee also contained risks which were a matter for the other O&S Committees, a suggestion was made that future risk reports only contain those risks relevant to the Committee.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to:

- a) note the Quarter 1 2020/21 performance against the measures used to monitor progress against the Council's priorities
- b) note the amended strategic risk register as set out in Appendix 2
- c) request a briefing paper on new Strategic Risk SR09A - Changing Demographics of Older People and Working Age Adults
- d) ask officers to look into whether future risk reports should only contain those risks relevant to the Committee.

3.1.3 Regeneration Culture and Environment O&S Committee discussion summary:

Discussion:

The Committee received a report setting out performance for Quarter 1 against the Council's two priorities Place and Growth insofar as they fell within the remit of this Committee.

In addition, it was reported that during Quarter 1, as the Council had moved from the response to recovery phase of the emergency planning procedures, the

strategic risk management group (SRMG) had resumed monitoring of strategic risks. Therefore, the report included the Quarter 1 2020/21 review of the Council's Strategic Risk Register.

The Committee discussed the following:

- **LRCC4a – Number of jobs created and safeguarded** – The Committee acknowledged that due to the Covid pandemic it was only to be expected that this performance measure would be below target in Quarter 1. The Committee asked whether this was likely to show an improvement by the end of the year and what action was being taken to encourage and attract businesses to relocate or set up in Medway.

In response, the Committee was informed that several groups had been formed under the umbrella of the Kent Resilience Forum, specifically to address the future for businesses post the Covid pandemic and officers were actively involved in these groups. The Assistant Director – Regeneration advised that as Vice Chairman of the Kent Resilience Forum Covid -19 Recover Group, she worked closely with Kent County Council and a wide range of external partners on this issue. She confirmed that Medway's Economy and Infrastructure Cell has undertaken an Impact Assessment and produced an Action Plan which was due to be adopted shortly. As the pandemic was continuing, at the current time it was difficult to predict the likely impact on businesses post Covid but it was anticipated that there would be a further increase in unemployment rates when the Government's furlough scheme ceased at the end of October.

Medway was currently identifying its strengths and how it could build upon these to attract businesses and she confirmed that Innovation Park Medway was continuing to attract interest.

- **NI117 (16-17) – The percentage of 16 – 17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)** – Although this performance indicator fell within the remit of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in response to a question, the Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the work of the Officer Skills Board and the Member Skills Board enabled a corporate response.
- **Corporate Risk: SR32 – Data and Information** – The Committee discussed the benefits of sharing information between different sections of the Council so as to alleviate the need for an individual to send information on several occasions to different services. The Head of Business Intelligence confirmed that this issue was listed for review as part of the Council's Transformation Programme and she advised that the Council had already signed up to the 'Tell Us Once' Service through its Registration Service.
- **Skills shortages** – In response to a question, the Assistant Director – Regeneration advised that Medway had a strong Economic Partnership 'Medway for Business' which was overseeing the delivery of the action plan on economic recovery after Covid. Both the Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships and the Portfolio Holder for Planning,

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Economic Growth and Regulation served on this body along with representatives from a wide range of partners and the business sector.

Decision:

The Committee noted the Quarter 1 2020/21 performance against the measures used to monitor progress against the Council's priorities and the amended strategic risk register as set out in Appendix 3 of the report.