

Council Priority: GROWTH

Maximising regeneration and economic growth

REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEETING

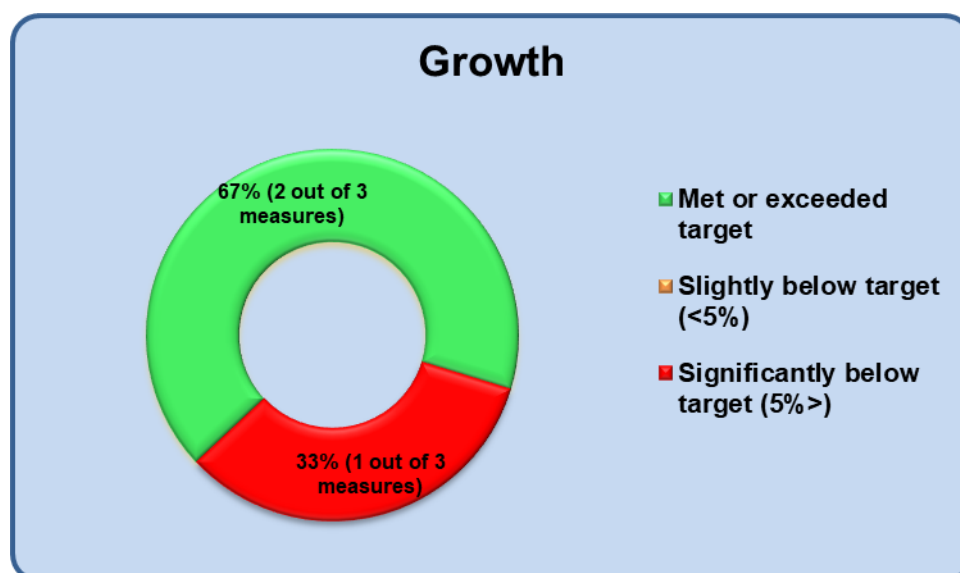
Performance: Quarter 2 2020/21

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 6 Council Plan measures for this priority. We are reporting on 3 this quarter as data is not available for 3 measures.



Improved performance

- 67% (2 out of 3*) improved long term (average of previous 4 quarters)
- 67% (2 out of 3*) improved over the short term (since last quarter)

*where data available

Measures in target (green)

Code	Status	Measure	Long Trend	Short Trend
ECD13	Green	% of square footage let at Innovation Centre Medway (ICM)	IMP	IMP
MAE 3	Green	Achievement rate (pass rate)	IMP	IMP
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	DET
ECD20	Green	% of square footage let in council owned business units	IMP	IMP

Measures significantly below target (red)

Code	Status	Name	Long Trend	Short Trend
NI 156	Red	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	DET	DET
LRCC4a	Red	Number of jobs created and safeguarded (cumulative)	DET	DET
NI 117(16-17)	Red	The percentage of 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	DET	DET
MAE 2	Red	% Retention rate	DET	DET

Measures not available this quarter

Code	Status	Name	Long Trend	Short Trend
GVAPJM	NA	GVA per job	NA	NA
NI 154	NA	Net additional homes provided	NA	NA
NI 167 NEW	NA	Average journey time along 5 routes across Medway (mins per mile)	NA	NA

Strategic Risks

The quarter 2 20/21 strategic risk register is attached at Appendix 3. 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 3).

Reference	Risk Register Page (app 3)	Risk	Owner	Current residual risk score	L-likelihood I-impact
SR17	4	Delivering regeneration	Director of RCET	BII	L - high I - critical

The following risks pertain to all priorities:

Reference	Risk Register Page (app 3)	Risk	Owner	Current residual risk score	L-likelihood I-impact
SRO3B	13	Finances	Chief Finance Officer	A1	L – very high I - catastrophic
SR46	16	Medway's Economic Recovery from Covid19	Assistant Director Regeneration (Recovery Lead Officer for Medway Council)	B11	L - high I - critical
SR32	21	Data and information	Chief Legal Officer	C11	L - significant I - critical
SR36	24	Alternative service delivery models	Chief Legal Officer, Director of RCET	B111	L - high I - Marginal
SR37	28	Cyber Security	Chief Finance Officer	C1	L - Significant I - Catastrophic
SR02	35	Business continuity and emergency planning	Director of RCET	D11	L - low I - critical

Council Plan Outcome: A strong diversified community

Programme: Business investment

Council Plan Measures

ECD13 % of square footage let at Innovation Centre Medway (ICM)

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Long Trend	Short Trend
Q2 2020/21	90.0%	98.45%	Green	Maximise	IMP	IMP
Q1 2020/21	90.0%	92.85%	Green	Maximise	DET	DET

Comments

The Innovation Centre Medway (ICM) aims to support start-up and growth businesses.

Q2 has been an incredibly busy quarter with 23% of tenants (13 out of 56 tenants) changing office, however tenancy levels are still over target with only two medium offices vacant.

New enquiries have risen in the last couple of months with three new tenants occupying in Q2 and a further two new tenants occupying the vacant offices in October. In addition, there have been 10 internal office moves; up-sizing and downsizing offices. The office resizing has been critical to keeping tenancy levels supporting the businesses in how they cope with the impact Covid has had on their businesses.

Conversations with tenants suggest the next quarter will also be busy. Several tenants are discussing vacating, others are asking to move office size and several are on the waiting list to join the Innovation Centre Medway.

ECD20 % of square footage let in council owned business units

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Long Trend	Short Trend
Q2 2020/21	90.0%	92.22%	Green	Maximise	IMP	IMP
Q1 2020/21	90.0%	89.94%	Amber	Maximise	DET	DET

Comments

Innovation Centre Medway has experienced a lot of change due to Covid-19 resulting in 23% of tenants changing office in the quarter. This includes 3 new tenants, and 10 internal office moves for existing tenants resulting in only 2 offices being vacant. Both these offices have new tenants signed up to occupy in October.

Innovation Studio site continues to perform well with all 15 offices let, with one tenant leaving and one joining in the quarter. In addition, a further 3 containers have been let increasing the number let to 12 of the 18 containers available.

Hopewell and Pier Road continue to maintain occupancy levels as per the previous quarter. Pier Road has two vacant units, one is due to be occupied in October the

other is going through the sign-up process. Hopewell has 5 vacant units although 2 of these are currently going through the application process.

GVAPJ M GVA per job - Medway

Annual	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Long Trend	Short Trend
2019/20	NA	NA	NA	Maximise	NA	NA
2018/19	Data	52,333.00	Data	Maximise	IMP	IMP

Comments

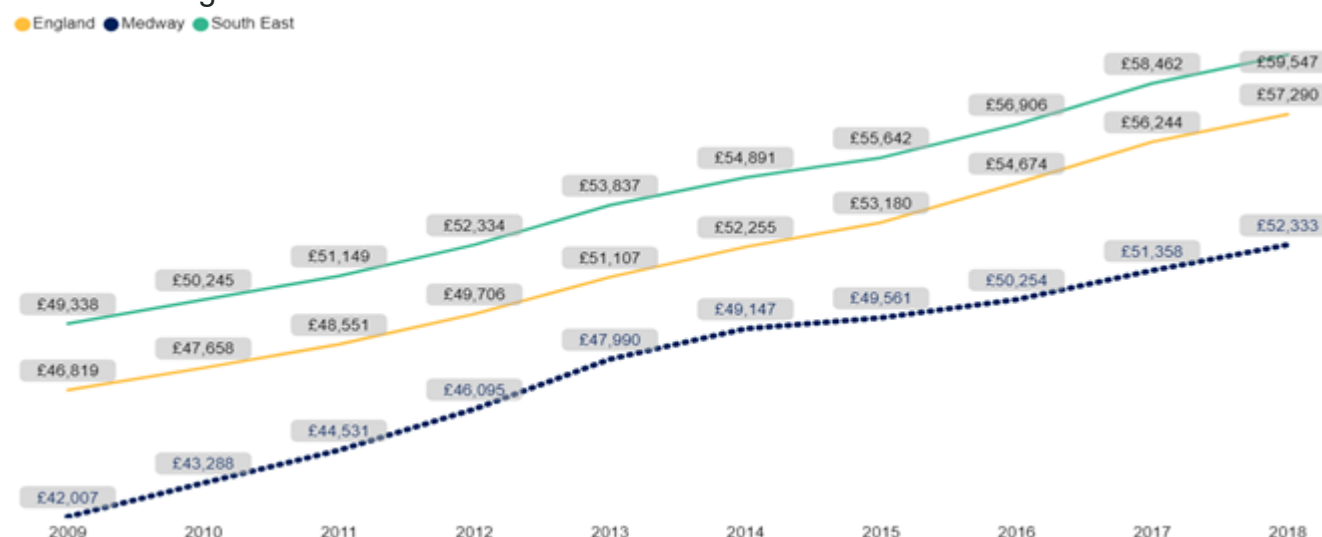
This data is published by the Office of National Statistics and is released in December each year. Data is available up to 2018/19.

Given the volatility with the raw data and because the smoothed data is weighted, year on year comparisons should not be made. GVA per filled job is better considered over a longer period. Trends over a longer period are less likely to be the result of the volatility around any single year estimate and are more likely to be showing a change in the economic performance of Medway.

Actions

Medway GVA per job is currently 8.7% lower than England; a 1.6 percentage point improvement from 2009 where Medway was 10.3% lower. From 2014 to 2018, Medway's GVA per job has increased by 6.5%, which is below England (9.6%) and the South East (8.5%), however from 2009 Medway has increased by 24.6%, ahead of England (22.4%) and the South East (20.6%).

Benchmarking



Council Plan Projects

Ensure Medway's regeneration agenda delivers economic growth, increasing high-value businesses and high-quality employment, and creating jobs and inward investment.

During Q1 the Council designed and implemented the Local Authority Discretionary Grants scheme to assist small businesses affected by Covid-19. The work was ongoing throughout Q2 and at the end of Q2, over £1.848m had been provided to 319 businesses.

Continue to encourage and help facilitate the growth of businesses in Medway

During Q2, the Kent and Medway Growth Hub continued to provide a Covid-19 Business Recovery helpline with 359 Medway businesses benefiting (a total of 1,029 Medway business benefiting since beginning of Q1).

Development of Innovation Park Medway

Innovation Park Medway is a significant redevelopment opportunity and has a vital role to play in Medway's economic future. A masterplan has been adopted (subject to Highways England response) to set the context for the development of up to 101,000sqm of high quality, innovative B1 and B2 commercial development in the high value technology, engineering, manufacturing and knowledge intensive industries. Medway Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council have each drafted a Local Development Order (LDO), which will offer a fast-tracked planning approvals process within 28 days, if adopted. Supported by a Design Code, Environmental Statement and self-certification form, the LDO simplifies the planning requirements for future occupants.

Part of the North Kent Enterprise Zone, Enterprise Zone status runs until March 2022 and offers incentives such as business rates discounts to occupants. Medway Council has secured significant funding via the Government's Local Growth Fund (LGF) and Growing Places Fund (GPF).

Work is continuing on the LGF2 Rochester Airport improvement scheme and the whole site is under control of Kier. Works commenced to hangar 3 on 15 June 2020, roof repairs are nearly complete and works to the eastern elevation are progressing. Kier have advised that future impacts on the supply chain from Europe may present delays, of which Medway will not be liable for any costs which cannot be mitigated due to Covid 19.

Officers continue to work with Highways England regarding impacts of the Innovation Park Medway on the strategic network and potential mitigation requirements. This is required prior to adoption of the Local Development Order (LDO). The design for the infrastructure works is continuing and the concept is complete for the northern and southern sites, and the Runway Park. The tender package is being prepared ready for the procurement of the works contractor later this year. The archaeological geophysical surveys have been carried out, and show the northern site as being low risk, and the trial trenches are being planned to be complete by the end of 2020. Installation of the boundary fence along the runway commences in October, the hoarding along Laker Road is complete and the final graphics will be applied in November.

Council Plan Outcome: Resident with jobs and skills

Programme: Jobs, Skill and Employability

Council Plan Measures

NI 117(16-17) % of square footage let at Innovation Centre Medway (ICM)

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Long Trend	Short Trend
Q2 2020/21	2.6%	4.1%	Red	Minimise	DET	DET
Q1 2020/21	2.60%	3.30%	Red	Minimise	DET	DET

Comments

Data is available to August 2020.

The rate of NEET 16- and 17-year olds is 4.1 %. This represents 257 young people. Due to the cyclical nature of this measure comparisons are made to the position 12 months ago rather than from quarter to quarter.

In August 2019 2.4 % of 16 and 17 year olds, 153 individuals, were NEET. Year on year there has been a 71% deterioration in the proportion of young people who are NEET. There are currently 104 more 16- and 17-year old's who are NEET than a year ago.

The rate of NEET must be looked at in conjunction with the number of 16- and 17-year olds whose activity is not known. Currently this is 4% which represents 250 individuals. This is over half the number of not knowns recorded in Q1 and represents a considerable improvement. In August 2019 there were 324 children whose activity was unknown this was 6.4%. As such, compared to last year this statistic has improved by 38%

The reduction in the number of not knowns will have been one reason for the increase in the number of NEETs. However, to contextualise the data the combined NEET/not Known percentage is now 8.1%, compared to 8.8% a year ago.

Benchmarking

Nationally the rate of NEET is at 3.4 % for August and at 3.1% in the South East. As such Medway is an outlier, however it is worth noting that the rate of NEET in Kent is 3.9 %. Kent will be affected by many of the same issues regarding the lack of training providers as Medway. Both Nationally and in the South East the rate of NEETS has worsened, compared to a year ago. However, the rate of change is greater in Medway.

The National rate of Not Knowns is 7.0% and the rate in the South East is 4.4%. Both of these represent an improvement compared to last year. However, the improvement in Medway is stronger.

Nationally the combined NEET/Not known percentage is 10.4% and in the South East it is 7.5%. As such Medway is better than national but worse than the South East. Kent's combined rate is 8.3%.

Actions

A variety of factors across the 2019/2020 academic year lead to increased concern for our young people who are NEET and Unknown. Unknown figures were very high, partly due to reduced capacity within the Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) team, whilst a Council wide spending moratorium meant that letters that are normally sent to every Unknown did not go. IAG have recruited a FT Tracker increasing the tracking staff to 1.3fte, but the increase in NEET's puts further pressure on the service. Further work to offering workshops, online services and sessions to engage young people in group activities.

During COVID, IAG have maintained relationships with young people and whilst motivation has been very low from some of the young people, IAG ensured that they remained in contact and worked with them to increase their employability options. Employment Vacancies have been sparse during this time but they are starting to increase. Educational provisions are seeing a reduction in young people returning. We would expect to see a rise in NEET's due to COVID and lack of provision.

Other ongoing projects to increase participation include:

- Further work to develop provision opportunities, in conjunction with Adult Ed and external providers.
- Continued and increased work with schools aimed at increased engagement.
- Close working relationships with the skills and employability programme manager leading to an increased focus internally to support the NEET requirements.
- Increased focus and a task force developed with the Looked After and Care Leaver teams to offer a focused approach to targeted young people.
- NEET provision in the area has also vastly reduced due to a lack of funding - primarily European Social Funding. For the majority of the academic year, MidKent and Nacro were the main NEET providers. This has been a reduction of 13 providers and an estimated 180 learning opportunities. Where providers do have small pockets of funding, we seek to work with them to promote their offers to our young people who are NEET.
- The economic impact of COVID-19 will likely affect young people the most. We will seek ways to maximise the new government schemes, such as Kickstart, for the benefit of our young people.
- Increased access to internal database, which has enabled the tracking processes to improve and streamline the data held internally to ensure that it is succinct.

LR CC4a The number of intensive assists to local businesses

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Long Trend	Short Trend
Q2 2020/21	150	18	Red	Maximise	DET	DET
Q1 2020/21	35	0	Red	Maximise	DET	DET

Comments

Due to Covid-19 the business planning workshops and one to one advice provisions were suspended for the majority of Q1, to allow informed decisions to be taken on how to best utilise available resources to support the business landscape through this period of uncertainty.

Moving into Q2, the business planning workshops delivered through the Council's existing SLA with the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce have pivoted into being delivered using a virtual format. After an anticipated initial lull in uptake, due to the time taken to raise awareness of the online platform, uptake has increased through Q2 and is now at levels resembling a pre-covid-19 economy. It is expected that utilisation of the new format virtual workshop will continue to increase, with the anticipated rise in unemployment.

The one to one advice provision has resumed, and levels of demand for the service are beginning to normalise. In Q1 the Kent Invicta Chamber of commerce introduced a Business Advice line, which was supported by Medway and other Kent local Authorities. Since the advice line's inception, a total of 1,029 advice line support calls have been received from Medway Businesses, with 359 of those taking place in Q2. Predominately, advice line calls were related to Covid-19, seeking general assistance with accessing available Government support and grants. Reporting on the Covid-19 helpline has indicated the top 3 sectors requesting advice, to date are:

- Hospitality & Leisure
- Retail/ Wholesale
- Service providers

MAE 2 Medway Adult Education % retention rate

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Long Trend	Short Trend
Q4 2019/20	94.0%	72.06%	Red	Maximise	DET	DET
Q3 2019/20	94.0%	72.84%	Red	Maximise	DET	DET

Comment

This PI is based on academic year rather than financial year. Data shown is for Q4 of Academic Year 19/20 (May 2020 – July 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.

1,003 learners withdrew due to Covid-19. Excluding these learners from the figures for retention gives a rate of 87.8%.

Action

Managers and Tutors have worked, following lock down and the closure of Medway Adult Education Centres, to ensure that learners have access to online and remote delivery. Tutors have had to be innovative and to respond very quickly to the challenges presented by new ways of delivering learning.

MAE 3 Medway Adult Education achievement rate (pass rate)

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Long Trend	Short Trend
Q4 2019/20	96.0%	99.87%	Green	Maximise	IMP	IMP
Q3 2019/20	96.0%	99.13%	Green	Maximise	DET	DET

Comments

This PI is based on academic year rather than financial year. Data shown is for Q4 of Academic year 19/20 (May 2020 – July 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 Projects

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.

As of September 2020, MAE Centres are now fully open with Covid-19 measures in place. The Work Skills Programme* has a refreshed offer which includes an online programme of qualifications developed during lock down as well as the face to face delivery. This remains a challenging area of work due to the impact of lock down and few referrals from Job Centre Plus (JCP). The MAE Information, Advice and Guidance Manager has been in discussion with JCP with regards to referrals, and leaflets for the new online programme have been shared with JCP staff. The Workskills department is considering National announcements regarding upskilling and retraining and will develop programmes accordingly when new and additional funding streams become available which are appropriate to the adult community learning sector.

* The Work Skills Programme 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.

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 were paused as they involved group training and engagement with businesses, however the majority have now been started. These include:

Supported Employment project - was due to start in April - started on the 1 August
Scaffolding training project -was due to start in April - will start in October
Medway Apprenticeship Advice Service - was due to start in April - started on 1 September

The Enterprise Coordinator programme has continued and used this time to engage with schools, developing new careers strategies. As the new academic year starts, the focus is on encouraging schools/college to update their careers self-evaluation and demonstrate the positive impact the network is having. Focus will also be put on supporting schools/college to adapt careers information to a changing economic landscape.

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

On the 28th October an event called Brighter Futures was held virtually as a business focused event, informing businesses of the challenges that Care Leavers face and providing an chance for them to provide opportunities to young people, whilst encouraging them to sign up to the Care Leaver Covenant. The second half of the event saw mock interviews with young people and businesses held virtually.

A Kent and Medway Employment Taskforce has been created to tackle rising unemployment and held its inaugural meeting on 1st October 2020.

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

NI 156 Number of households living in temporary accommodation

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Long Trend	Short Trend
Q2 2020/21	350	370	Red	Minimise	DET	DET
Q1 2020/21	350	346	Green	Minimise	DET	DET

Comments

At the end of Q2 there were a total of 370 households residing in temporary accommodation (TA) provided by the Council in line with its statutory responsibilities. This is an increase from the 346 households that were accommodated at the end of Q1. The majority of 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

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Long Trend	Short Trend
Q2 2020/21	0	0	Green	Minimise	STATIC	STATIC
Q1 2020/21	0	0	Green	Minimise	STATIC	STATIC

Comments

A snapshot at the end of Q2 2020/21 identifies that no families were in bed and breakfast accommodation. Additionally, throughout Q2 no families were placed into bed and breakfast for more than 6 weeks.

Action

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

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Long Trend	Short Trend
Q2 2020/21	175	285	Green	Maximise	IMP	DET
Q1 2020/21	175	369	Green	Maximise	IMP	IMP

Comments

In Q2 285 private sector households were assisted in having their properties improved via Council intervention despite the restriction over Covid-19 on inspections. The Council have continued with its statutory services and targeted work with the taskforce and will continue this through Q3.

8 new HMO licences have been issued in Q2 bringing a total of 185 licenced HMO throughout Medway. 7 category 1 hazards and 12 category 2 hazards have been identified in Q2 and these have been alleviated. This action helps improve living conditions and raises 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 damp and mould followed by, Personal Hygiene, Sanitation and Drainage.

Council Plan Projects

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 we are on track to reach our target of 204 units featuring a range of 1-4 bed units for Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership, 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.

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 Q3, 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.

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.

Shift the focus of the rough sleeping initiative

Through the 'everyone in' initiative, all people known to be sleeping rough at the start of the pandemic lockdown were accommodated (or offered accommodation). This was initially 20 people, but over time this grew to 40 rooms being available at any one time. Additional cases presented as a result of sofa surfing and identifying a number of preventative cases where people would have gone on to sleep rough. In total 70 people were accommodated or offered accommodation. Of these, we have managed to support 51 people who were sleeping rough, or at risk of sleeping rough, in to settled accommodation.

The Rough Sleeping Initiative team (RSI) has now moved back to a 'business as usual' approach and is working with those who have recently been accommodated, as well as those who have been identified as sleeping rough, or have not taken up offers of accommodation to date. We are working with partners across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors to identify vulnerable people at risk of eviction and so reduce the numbers of people returning to the street. The Housing Strategy and Partnerships Team facilitate a wide variety of partnership meetings and are launching a Services Mentoring Scheme. Additional offers of training are delivered by Housing Strategy team members to services external to Council departments directly as well as via 'A Better Medway Champion' courses.

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 Q2 there were 638 approaches for homeless assistance. Approach figures for Q2 this year are down compared to Q2 last year (665). This is likely due to the reduction in approaches as a consequence of landlord eviction action, itself a result of the Government stay on possession action. However, monthly approaches at the end of the quarter are at normal levels. In addition, the stay ended on 20th September and it is anticipated that the service will see a significant increase in approaches once possession hearings resume at the court.

There were 213 successful prevention/reliefs in Q2, which is a success rate of 50%. This is being achieved by robust supervision and monitoring of staff prevention/relief activity and the proactive maintenance of regular contact with private and social landlords and supported providers in order to offer early intervention appointments.

Working with landlords and agents to support households to sustain their accommodation and prevent homelessness

Work continues with landlords and tenants to offer support and prevent homelessness. This includes via the landlord helpline, joint working with social housing providers, and via using social media and the Council's website to promote our services. We have also reached out to Medway CAB and the County Court to seek and agree opportunities to promote our service at the court to landlords and their tenants at threat of eviction.

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 as well as promotions via social media. During Q2 24 landlords contacted the Council compared with 18 in Q2 2019/20.

The team also continues to reach out to social landlords, with response being variable and the most consistent being MHS. Joint prevention appointments with MHS have been restarted when a tenant is at risk of eviction. Contact has been made with the county court to enquire whether they can provide the team with contact details for those subject to possession action, or in the alternative if they will share details of our service with them. A request is also being made to the Court for Council officers to have a weekly presence alongside the court help desk to enable us to promote our prevention services to landlords and their tenants at risk of eviction.

Maximising the number of Private rented Sector (PRS) properties available to us to prevent and relieve homelessness remains an essential service goal. However, despite a number of initiatives to seek to increase supply, including mail shots to landlords and messages on social media Q2 has seen a reduction in the availability of new PRS properties becoming available to the team. This has likely been caused by the impact of COVID-19 upon the private rented housing market, with enquiries made of local landlords identifying a lack of void properties for rent. For the first two months of Q2 the PRS Team have secured 60 new properties, compared to 73 for the same period last year, and 48 tenancy sign ups compared to 61.

A new rent guarantee scheme for landlords has been agreed and is to be launched on 30 September. This will support an improved offer to landlords with a view to enhancing procurement and an increase in PRS properties.

Review of homes for independent living services in light of funding reduction

The Scheme Support Officers role is currently being reviewed in light of the funding reduction. This role will be redesigned to consider social inclusion within the schemes and provide a package of holistic council support.

Ensure that HRA tenants are supported to mitigate the negative impact of welfare reform.

The team continue to support Medway Council HRA tenants by working closely with them to manage rent arrears and maximize income. Following the intervention from the HRA Welfare Reform Team, the Councils HRA tenants have been awarded £33,379 from the Local Authority's benefits and revenues service for benefits including Housing Benefit, Discretionary Housing Benefit Payments and Council Tax Reduction. These amounts are paid directly onto the tenants rent and or council tax accounts.

In Q2, through working in close partnership with MRBS, 12 tenants have benefitted from payments totalling £17,222 so far. With £15772 paid directly on to the rent account and £ 1449 directly on to the council tax account.

The team also work with all new tenants that 'sign up' to new tenancies to ensure that any assistance required, for example a change of address notification, or new UC claim is dealt with at the earliest possible time. This has resulted in claims being processed in a timely manner to support the tenant not only in moving in but in the early sustainment of their tenancy by preventing the early build-up of rent arrears.

This quarter negotiations are ongoing with the library service to re-open some drop-in services in the community. The drop-in service proved of great value prior to the lockdown, and the team are working to get this service back in place for the tenants of HRA housing services. The drop-in sessions which are very popular and especially useful for tenants with low levels of online activity, as well as supporting tenants who have been financially affected by Covid-19.

With the uncertainty of what will happen with the ending of the Governments furlough scheme at the end of October, the team are preparing for a possible influx of work as an outcome of increased unemployment. This cohort may present as cases that are claiming benefits for the first time so will probably require more assistance to help navigate the benefits system.

At a more strategic level, work is being done to ensure the team structure/resources are fit for the increasing roll-out of UC and possible increase in households requiring the assistance of the Welfare Reform Team.

Ensure that rent arrears are maintained under the existing target of 1.65%.

Effective rent arrears prevention and control is a key performance indicator for the Landlord Services team. Maximising rental income is vital to support the services provided to tenants such as the repairs service, and is vital in supporting tenants to avoid getting into rent debt.

Current arrears at the end of Q2 are 1.53%, within target. This is an increase from 1.47% at end of Q1. The team are facing the underlying challenge of the continued roll-out of UC, and Q2 has been particularly challenging due to the financial difficulties faced by many tenants, plus the suspension of all legal action as an enforcement tool for staff.

All new tenants are referred to the HRA Welfare Reform Team to ensure any potential rent payment issues can be dealt with before arrears arise. As part of the early intervention based approach to rent arrears, tenants who are just into arrears or who report difficulties are referred to the Welfare Reform team for advice and support.

The Income Team have been very successful in limiting the potential increase in arrears during this time, and the focus on Q3 will be to continue this work, especially in the lead up to Christmas which is always a challenging time for income collection.

Capital works programme

2020-21 Capital works programme is now fully resourced with staff returning from furlough. We anticipate a shortfall in completion due to the late start, however all efforts are being made to deliver as much of the programme as possible. In some workstreams we are expecting a shortfall of 25% due to the late start. The new 3-year capital works programme is in 1st draft and work is underway to finalise this. Any further COVID related lockdown will cause further disruption to the programme.

Repairs and maintenance contracts

The Mears contract extension has been signed and agreed, this confirms that Mears will continue to be the Councils repairs and maintenance service provider until September 2024. The contract extension is forecast to deliver annual savings of over £100k. Annual review of costs using Housemark benchmarking data will be completed by December 2020. The financial data has been verified and submitted to Housemark and we anticipate a full report to be available by the end of Q3.

Council Plan Outcome: Delivering new homes to meet the needs of Medway's residents

Programme: Delivering new homes to meet the needs of Medway's residents

Council Plan Measures

NI 154 Net additional homes provided

Annual	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Long Trend	Short Trend
2019/20	NA	NA	NA	Maximise	NA	NA
2018/19	1000	647	Red	Maximise	IMP	DET

This performance is reported annually. This data is published in the Council's Authority Monitoring Report and will be available on the website in December 2020.

The main findings from the Monitoring Report (December 2019) included the completion of 647 dwellings in 2018/19, which is a slight decrease on 2017/18. However, site inspections and discussions with developers has revealed a significant increase in the number of dwellings under construction and therefore it is highly likely that the number of completions will reflect this next year.

Council Plan Projects

Preparation of the new Medway Local Plan

The Local Plan 2019 to 2037 sets out a vision for future development in Medway to ensure that the needs of the area are met by providing homes and supporting infrastructure.

Officers are currently working on completing the evidence base to support the publication of the draft local plan. This includes work on Strategic Transport Assessment, Viability Assessment, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Habitat Regulations Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and Cumulative Ecological Impact Assessment. The updated Local Development Scheme will be reported to Cabinet in August.

The Housing Test Delivery Plan (HTDP) proposes measures to contribute to increasing the amount and speed of delivery of new housing and sets out measures to continue housing delivery and understanding factors influencing delivery rates. The second HTDP was reported to Cabinet on 4 August 20 and published mid-August.

The Council continue to promote the pre-application service and the use of the Planning Protocol with developers and landowners to improve the quality of applications and development and deliver growth through partnership working.

Increase the supply of accommodation available to Medway residents

Projections of new builds indicate the Council will meet the target of 204 units again this year. We currently anticipate 120 social rented units and 80 shared ownership ranging from 1 bed flats to 4 bed houses. These are on Rochester Riverside and various sites in Hoo, including former BAE site, Rainham and Chatham including Southern Water site. We will continue to monitor the impact and delays that have been faced over recent months as the longer-term effects of Covid on development become clear.

Reports were drafted for the Departmental Management Team (DMT) in October to ensure that commuted sums* are utilised to provide additional affordable housing in Medway. One proposal is progressing at present with MOAT for between 8-20 three bed social rented homes.

The HRA have recently drafted a Development Strategy along with detailed delivery report which was presented to Corporate Management Team (CMT) 9 September. The high level 3-year programme has been identified focusing on delivering 30-31 units per year over the next 10 years.

Tenders have been returned for phase 4 developments and visits completed with architect and options appraisal are in the process of being completed. Phase 4 works are due to start in December 2020

*Committed sums – on occasion, instead of providing affordable units within a development, the developer transfers money to the Council to assist with more of these units elsewhere.

HRA Development of new homes

An options appraisal has been completed with a view to potentially redeveloping the St Albans Close estate. This was deemed as financially unviable. Other estates are now being reviewed.

Phase 4 works are due to start in December 20 to deliver 28 units in the Twydall area.

Several HRA owned garage sites have been revisited with an architect and options appraisals are in the process of being completed. If any of these sites are deemed as being viable then there may be an opportunity to add them into phase 4.

The HRA is also in the process of exploring the possibility of purchasing some units from a local developer. The developer has 2 sites which are in and around the HRA's existing stock. The developer has expressed an interest in working in partnership with the HRA to potentially work together on other schemes they have.

The possibility of the HRA repurchasing Lennoxwood is also being explored.

Explore the opportunities arising from the establishment of Medway Development Company Limited (MDCL)

MDCL are progressing a number of schemes and each has brought various opportunities to widen the benefits achieved which are outlined below:

Britton Farm

At the end of Q1 we were progressing the refurbishment of the former supermarket building for the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT). These works are now completed and KMPT are operational.

In order to build on this successful first phase, we have supported the Council to prepare a funding bid for the conversion of part of the former supermarket into a new skills hub and public realm enhancements in front of KMPT's new main entrance. This bid also includes funding for the residential scheme proposed at Britton Farm.

MDC will deliver all of these projects which are planned to commence early 2021 that collectively will deliver a major investment and help support the regeneration of Gillingham.

White Road

Our scheme at White Road is now nearing completion and will provide twenty family homes. Our aim for this project was to deliver high quality affordable homes to enhance a site which has suffered with anti-social behaviour problems.

The scheme is designed to maximise light into the homes and also provides spacious accommodation which exceed the national described space standards.

The project also incorporates solar panels to generate electricity improvements to the adjacent Community Centre including enhanced access, a new play area and tree planting to the school playing field behind the site.

The scheme is planned to complete in November 2020.

Whiffens Avenue

This scheme will deliver 115 new homes on a site which is positioned in front of an historic escarpment that provides defenses to the buildings of Fort Amherst. The enabling works phase is now complete allowing piling works to progress before the superstructure phase.

The project provided the opportunity to enhance the historically significant Fort Amherst by removing vegetation to reveal its historic structures. The scheme will also lead to significant improvements to the adjacent Town Hall Gardens and the Military Road area that lies opposite the Brook Theatre.

Mountbatten House

The project will see the conversion of Mountbatten House which will bring an empty building back into use alongside a new build extension where the former bus station ramps are located. The project is expected to deliver circa 170 homes as well as enhancements to the former bus station, taxi rank and public realm areas that surround the site.

This project will build on the regeneration initiatives that have been delivered in Chatham and we continually engage with stakeholders to ensure that the proposals align with other projects that are planned.

Chatham Waterfront – 170 housing units and with appropriate commercial development.

Planning permission has been granted to develop a high-quality, mixed-use development at the Chatham Waterfront site which will act as a driver for further regeneration in the area. The plans include 175 new homes, new commercial spaces for cafes, restaurants and offices alongside a new public realm to create a vibrant centre for Chatham.

The enabling works phase is nearing completion and the site is almost ready for its piling foundations stage which are expected to start October 2020.

The scheme will see a significant enhancement to Chatham and will transform the riverside area.

Encourage the delivery of homes to meet our targets – Rochester Riverside

During Q1 the site was closed in April and May due to Covid-19. The site was re-opened and construction recommenced in June after the development of new social distancing protocols.

Phase 1 – 2: Near completion, with commercial units now occupied and affordable units now handed over.

Phase 3: School Department for Education has agreed to fund the difference between delivery of one further education classrooms to two. Mid Group appointed as contractor and land transfer is expected in October 2020. Start on site expected April 2021 and target opening date for the school is September 2022. Repair of Roman wall on site is being tendered and contractor to be appointed.

Phase 3 – 7: Phase 3 Draw Down targeted for October 2020, subject to price test. Phase 4 pre-app discussions are ongoing. Acceleration of Phases 7 is underway, with a planning application expected by end of 2020 for delivery of older persons housing in partnership with Anchor Hanover.

Encourage the delivery of homes to meet our targets – Strood Waterfront

The procurement process to appoint a development partner for the former Civic Centre site is within its final stage and the Council are currently assessing the final 2 bids. This process is expected to be completed at the end October. We expect to commence legal processes in November and enter into the development agreement by early 2021.

Support the delivery of 1,200sqm of commercial development at Rochester Riverside

During Q2, existing commercial space has continued to operate.

As part of phase 4, which is expected in summer 2021, an additional 9,000 square feet of commercial/retail space is expected to be delivered, the developer is starting to identify users/occupiers but no tenancies have been agreed to date.

Council Plan Outcome: Getting around Medway Programme: Tackle congestion hotspots by transport and public realm improvements

Council Plan measures

NI 167 Average journey time along 5 routes across Medway (mins per mile)

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Long Trend	Short Trend
Q2 2020/21	4	NA	NA	Minimise	NA	NA
Q1 2020/21	4	NA	NA	Minimise	NA	NA

Comments

In Q1 The Department for Transport (DfT) provided Trafficmaster Journey time data for the calendar year 2019. This data is still being assessed by the commissioned consultant. There has been a delay in the processing of the data due to resource demands through the consultants Covid-19 response. It is anticipated that NI 167 data for 2019 will be made available during Q3 once the analysis work has been completed.

The future prosperity of Medway depends on the prospect of continuing economic growth. The provision of adequate infrastructural investment of new and improved roads is fundamental to enable economic development to come to Medway. In conjunction with these infrastructure developments is the need to meet the challenge of social and environmental objectives of cleaner air and providing a pleasant environment in which to live, work and learn.

Medway Council is committed to enable citizens, visitors and business to move around Medway's road network easily and in the way they choose, i.e. car, public transport, cycling and on foot, encouraging sustainable transport where possible. The connectivity of transport hubs, leisure, shopping and health facilities is at the forefront of our planning so that there is an integrated approach to travel throughout Medway.

Council Plan Projects

The future prosperity of Medway depends on the prospect of continuing economic growth. The provision of adequate infrastructural investment of new and improved roads is fundamental to enable economic development to come to Medway. In conjunction with these infrastructure developments is the need to meet the challenge of social and environmental objectives of cleaner air and providing a pleasant environment in which to live, work and learn.

Medway Council is committed to enable citizens, visitors and business to move around Medway's road network easily and in the way they choose, i.e. car, public transport, cycling and on foot, encouraging sustainable transport where possible. The connectivity of transport hubs, leisure, shopping and health facilities is at the forefront of our planning so that there is an integrated approach to travel throughout Medway.

Deliver Phase 1 of the Medway Tunnel Improvement Programme for 2020-21

Medway Council have secured £4.972 million ring-fenced capital grant from the Department for Transport (DfT) Challenge 2B Fund. This award is for essential capital infrastructure works required for the Medway Tunnel as well as funding for highway resurfacing and rebuilding of the retaining wall along Pier Road.

All works need to be completed by the end of financial year 2023- 2024 and will be delivered through the Highways Infrastructure Contract in programme phases.

Key programme stages delivered during Quarter 2 are focussed around the programme mobilisation stage and are:

- Site investigations and progress on the detailed design of new sump gas sampling system
- Condition inspections on Ventilation system and VMS, SCADA & CCTV systems
- Feasibility study on the parapet rebuild of Pier Road Retaining Wall
- Site investigations on the infill of the old contraflow gaps
- 23 manholes replaced and upgraded

Council Plan Projects

Achieve Band 3 status for Highway Asset Management Self- Assessment via DfT

The Department of Transport (DfT) introduced an Annual Self-Assessment Process for Highway Authorities in 2015-16 that measures how Highway Authorities manage the Highway Network in respect of:

Asset Management (Policy & Strategy)
 Resilience
 Customer
 Benchmarking & Efficiency
 Operational Services Delivery

The Self-Assessment operates on a banding score of 1-3 and Medway are currently self-assessed as a Band 3 Highway Authority. Band 3 is the highest band score a Local Highway Authority can secure and this resulted in Medway securing an Incentive Fund allocation of £430,000 this financial year for allocating to Highway maintenance.

Key work streams delivered during Q2 are:

- Lifecycle Planning to inform Highway Investment Levels underway with a revised schedule for completion by Quarter 3. This was scheduled to be completed by the end of Quarter 2 but was delayed as a result of operational priorities around COVID-19
- Biennial review of the Resilient Network underway and scheduled to be completed by the end of Quarter 3
- The Annual National Highways & Transportation Survey, which measures public satisfaction with Highways & Transportation, final survey results to be reported by Quarter 3
- Framework for monthly audits of the 22 Self-Assessment questions for submission (January 2021) established to ensure the evidence base for a Band 3 submission
- Highway Asset Management Delivery Plan adopted, to assist with delivering key asset management functions outlined within the Self-Assessment questions and Highways Code of Practice

Project management and delivery of full LTP programme of schemes and projects for 2020/21 to budget and timescale

Medway Council receives £1.3m a year from Central Government to complete local transport project schemes. Projects for 2020/21 cover improvements to traffic management, traffic signals, road safety, cycling, accessibility, bus infrastructure, and rights of way.

Progress on the delivery of LTP projects and schemes improved during Q2 as the restrictions of Covid-19 were partially relaxed. This allowed some scheme construction to recommence, albeit with some delays in the supply chain for materials and with the appropriate COVID safety measure in place on site where necessary.

Officers continued work across Q2 on revising delivery schedules for schemes where timescales were affected by lockdown. Officers also worked on preparing bids for additional government funding made available for the Active Travel fund. This funding pot is designed to allow for safer pedestrian and cycling movement, providing more space for individuals to travel and maintain social distancing.

A successful award of £242,000 was made by government following officers bid to tranche one of the funding. A number of schemes were successfully delivered in a very short time scale as part of the condition of receiving the funding, including improved cycle storage and cycle lanes, new dropped kerb crossing points, additional tactile paving at key crossing points. and improved cycle way segregation.

Officers also worked on preparing a bid for tranche two funding. A decision on whether we are successful in this £1.2million bid is expected during Q3.

Streetworks - Permitting Programme

In 2017, Medway Council introduced a Permit Scheme, under the Traffic Management Act (2004) in order to manage works undertaken on the highway network. The main objective of the scheme is to work with works promoters to deliver a safe, efficient, and sustainable highway network for everybody, by aiming to minimise disruption to network users, whilst still allowing essential works and maintenance to be undertaken. It supports wider transport needs, businesses, and economic growth, whilst getting people into work and children to school.

The scheme covers all works undertaken on “highway maintained at public expense” and works promoters must submit a permit for any intended work, which cannot be undertaken unless approved by the Streetworks Team. It is the Network Officer’s job to co-ordinate works, to ensure the most effective traffic movement possible, whilst the work is ongoing and the New Roads and Street Works Act Inspectors undertake operational inspections of sites, for safety and compliance.

During Q2, work has continued as usual, allowing promoters to undertake their duties as normal and take advantage of a slightly quieter network during the continued Covid-19 period. Statutory Utilities have been programming some of the work deferred from Q1, when COVID was a major factor.

During Q2, 5,342 permit applications were received of which 4,433 (85%) were agreed. 161 FPN’s, both real and shadow were issued, and the rate of inspection pass was 91% (target 75%).

Ongoing management and delivery of the LGF project for journey time and accessibility improvements on Medway City Estate

During Q2 officers continued to work with the land acquisition consultant to produce the land acquisition and rental report, which provides estimated figures as to how much the land may cost. Negotiations with the landowner are expected to commence during Q3. Officers also completed and submitted the Construction Environment Management Plan to Natural England during the quarter.

Officers continued work during the quarter on the costs and requirements for moving stats equipment in the area of the scheme and liaised with colleagues in the HIF Team where this work crossed over with potential development works on the HIF project. Further work also took place on the required ecological surveys; a further update is awaited on this and will likely be received during Q3.

Final work on preparing the tender documentation for the slip lane construction contractor was completed. It is proposed that the tender period will be from late October to the end of January 2021, with tender evaluations and award taking place during Qtr.4. The delivery programmed from there is subject to satisfactory completion of the outstanding issues outlined above.

S106 commitment for scheme delivery at Rochester Riverside

The construction of a new controlled pedestrian crossing linking Rochester Riverside with the city centre has now been completed. This includes the installation of new traffic detection equipment along this section of Corporation Street to improve the operation of the signals and regulate traffic flow.

The review of the existing UTMC (Urban traffic Management Control) system, including vehicle detection, and bus lane controls is still to be undertaken. This will ensure the signal design is optimised. The outline design for new controlled pedestrian crossing at Blue Boar Lane will also be undertaken this year during Q3 and Q4.

Make improvements to parking services

During Q2 the service restructure was completed, and the post of Parking Processing Manager was recruited. Officers can start planning further improvement projects for Q3 and Q4.

The tender project to commission new parking infrastructure for the Brook multi storey car park was successfully completed during the quarter. Three bids were received with the successful bidder putting forward a proposal that represented best overall value. Work to replace all pay machine and entry/exit barriers is anticipated to commence during Q3, completing early Q4. The new pay machines will provide customers with a great choice of pay options, including contactless and will reduce the amount of maintenance required to ensure the machines function efficiently.

Develop parking and permit scheme performance indicators in 2020/21

During Q2, with the required consultancy support in place, the development of creating new parking and permit scheme performance indicators for the service commenced. Activities undertaken as part of this project included service mapping and an assessment of the current and previous performance indicators. This work will continue in Q3 where officers will look to draft potential new indicators and consult on these accordingly.