

Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No. **/21

Date: OCTOBER 2021

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Business Support Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: This briefing note collates the responses to the requests for further information relating to the Covid-19 Recovery report which was reported to the Committee at its meeting on 19 August 2021

COVID-19 RECOVERY

1. Member Question for the Kent and Medway Employment Taskforce
 - 1.1 Question: Provide Members with details of how successful the Council's engagement has been with such groups on skills, employment and economic development. Reference was made to quotes in the media from Locate in Kent that it would be working with Medway.
 - 1.2 Response: Medway have been consistently involved in the Employment Taskforce, contributing ideas and solutions, whilst helping with all actions. The Taskforce has helped to coordinate Kickstart across Kent & Medway, hosted an apprenticeship levy sharing event and lobbying to government on issues such as lack of flexibility in Adult Education Budget.
 - 1.3 The Taskforce has also looked at sector specific issues, such as in horticulture and logistics and is supporting employer led responses. Medway have also engaged consistently with the Taskforce reference group.
 - 1.4 Medway Council continue to work proactively with Locate in Kent via our SLA to secure inward investment and provide business growth support.
2. Member Question for the Welcome Back Fund
 - 2.1 Question: Provide Members with the detailed programme following the successful bid.
 - 2.2 Response: Please see appendix 1a.

3. Member Question for the High Streets Team

3.1 Question: Advise Members if this will apply to all High Streets or only those of the main Medway towns.

3.2 Response: A one-off deep cleanse specification is currently being prepared and will include all the main Five Town Centres.

4. Member Question for the Communications Team

4.1 Question: Provide Members with data on the success of the #WhoKnew campaign.

4.2 Response: The #WhoKnew campaign, which ran in the lead up to, and during the summer holidays (mid-May – Aug) was all about the unique things that Medway has to offer.

4.3 As 2021 was all about the staycation, we wanted to prove that staying close to home is just as wonderful, unique and memorable as any summer getaway - it all depends on the people you spend time with and the experiences you encounter together. Not only did we promote family attractions, our thriving cultural scene, the breath-taking natural landscapes, and the adventures you can have both on and off the water, but we also spoke about the importance that staying close-by has on the local economy, being proud of where you live and not forgetting the positive impact it has on the environment.

4.4 We also encouraged residents and visitors to get involved by posting their #WhoKnew photos on their social media channels and tag us too. This user generated content helps our engagement and therefore increases the number of people who see all the great things we have to shout about.

4.5 Our target market was split into four groups:

- Young families
- Multi-generational with young children
- Multi-generational with older or no kids
- Couples

4.6 Print

4.6.1 We built-up even better relationships with external partners and featured a lot of them in our campaign. There have been, (and many are still up), a number of billboards around Medway, posters on the backs of buses, roadside banners, advertising boards and huge hoarding advertisements promoting places such as Copper Rivet, Fen Bell Zoo, our beautiful countryside, electric go-karting, DiggerLand, The Dockyard, Medway's vibrant cultural scene, the fun you can have on the river and the fact you can even go champing – that's glamping in churches. Plus so much more.

- 4.6.2 We designed a pocket guide detailing all of our cultural events that were taking place during the summer, as well as a mix of tourist attractions, our outdoor cinema screenings and outdoor theatre productions. This went to all primary schools in Medway, straight into each child's bookbag. We had a huge double page feature in Medway Matters (distribution of 120,000 – goes to all households in Medway), and MMM magazine (readership of 75,000. Placed in various shops, hotels and attractions across Kent).
- 4.6.3 We are currently refurbishing the VIC to showcase everything that Medway has to offer. Part of this work is highlighting various #WhoKnew messages. Such as – #WhoKnew Medway has the longest toboggan run in the UK
#WhoKnew you could see a canon being fired in Medway.
- 4.6.4 We had seven pages on Medway within the Discover Britain magazine – p72-75.
<https://issuu.com/chelseamagazines/docs/dzbryznoctnov21>
- 4.6.5 We were also approached by a 9-year-old school girl – Imogen during the campaign, who wanted to focus her school project on her favourite places in Medway. She'd seen our campaign so wanted to find out more. She did an amazing job, we shared her work on our social media channels.
<https://www.facebook.com/VisitMedway/>
- 4.7 Digital
- 4.7.1 Radio ads, digital ads, website takeovers, sponsored content and adverts across streaming radio, on-demand services, smart speakers and podcasts (DAX) were all part of the campaign.
- 4.7.2 Radio campaign on Heart FM – reached 171,000 people. These listeners heard this advert 3.5 times.
- 4.7.3 DAX – 102,000 impressions. We know that our entire advert was listened to by 93.7% of those people. Meaning 99,229 people heard and listened to our advert. This is an amazing result. We also know that the vast majority of people (71.5%) listen to streaming services through smart speakers. This information will help us in future campaigns.
- 4.7.4 Digital ads – reached 2,507,910 people and resulted in nearly 3,500 people click on the Visit Medway website – exactly what we wanted.
- 4.7.5 Radio campaign on KMFM – reached 177,399 people.
- 4.7.6 In June, July and Aug we ran competitions on KMFM. We asked DiggerLand, SOAR electric go-karting and Red2Red Speedboat Tours for free tickets to give away. 100s of people entered and the feedback we received from these external partners was amazing.

- 4.7.7 We also managed to speak live on KMFM three times during the summer holidays. Helen Steel who manages the Visit Medway website, Janet Fischer (member of Chatham Intra Cultural Consortium) and Red2Red, all promoted the #WhoKnew campaign across Medway.
- 4.8 External Partner Feedback
- 4.8.1 *"We can't thank you enough for all your support this year, in our first season of full operation. It was great to broaden our exposure and we had many bookings as a direct result of the KMFM coverage. You significantly helped this year and really made a difference. We also definitely increased the geographic reach beyond the local social media groups, as a direct result of your efforts. We had guests from Gravesham, Dartford and London! Thanks again from all of us at Red2Red!" - Red2Red*
- 4.8.2 I would definitely say it was a success. We had people calling up saying they saw posters in the Rochester VIC and around Medway. People also said they heard us on KMFM when ringing to book tickets / enquiring via social media – DiggerLand.
- 4.9 Social media
- 4.9.1 To supplement all of the above, we also ran an extensive social media campaign. Ultimately, we wanted people to engage with us, which would further our reach, and also go to the Visit Medway website to find out just exactly what Medway has to offer.
- 4.9.2 Social media statistics between mid-May-August 2021
- Facebook reach - 104,211 people
 - Instagram reach – 2,039 people
 - Twitter impressions - 20,543 people
 - Visits to the website - 102,560 people.
- 4.9.3 We have great levels of engagement. People are commenting, tagging their friends, tagging us, using our hashtags and liking our posts. This great engagement on social media was reflected in the performance of the Visit Medway website, which saw a 91% increase in sessions from April to June. These great figures only continued to rise throughout the coming months, indicating that the campaign really did work. We also saw an increase in foreign visitors of 12%, suggesting that the campaign was successful at driving some international interest to Medway. We weren't focused on international travel because of the restrictions, so this figure bodes well for the future. Although social media interest dropped when our posts eased off, the website continued to perform well and the number of visits continued to rise, demonstrating that the campaign harnessed the interest of the public and made a lasting difference to

the website's performance. Website traffic grew significantly during August, this coupled with our social media demographic listed below, could suggest that the family audience is the one that's currently most engaged with us.

- 4.9.4 We wrote blogs to increase our engagement and reach even further. We centered them around national trends such as National Picnic Week, Beer Day, International Writers Day etc. We also targeted our different groups with our blogs. We wrote about independent shopping and coffee shops for our younger audience. Top ten family friendly pub garden locations to our 30+ audience and pushed it out when the sun was out. Blogs are great for giving people ideas and jumping on national trends that people are already discussing.
- 4.10 Social media audience
- 4.10.1 This is important so we can tailor our messages even further and increase engagement, which is key.
- 4.10.2 Our social media audience is 76% female which is broken down into the following categories:
- 18-24 – 1%
 - 24–34 – 20.6%
 - 35-44 – 37.1%
 - 45-54 – 22.7%
 - 55-64 – 13.4%
 - 65+ - 5.2%.
- 4.10.3 From the social and website figures presented, it is clear that social media campaigns such as #WhoKnew are extremely successful at grabbing the public's attention, growing our social media following (+46% on FB and +32% on Twitter) as well as making a lasting difference to website performance. Therefore, a continued strong social media presence, as well as an increased number of thought-provoking campaigns like this are likely to significantly increase our performance and our public profile, which, in turn, would result in increased tourism to Medway.
- 4.10.4 We are currently filming a tourism video with the hope to start using from Feb 2022. We aim to produce a long video that coach companies and external tourism operators can use. As well as shorter videos that are suitable for social media and digital channels, which will be aimed at our different target audiences.

5. Member Question for the Lead of the Economy & Infrastructure Recovery Cell

5.1 Question: Advise Members if, when this cell was established, organisations were asked to join or self-nominated. It was questioned why UCA were not members when it was established.

5.2 Response: A cross-section of local organisations were asked to join the Cell, with membership discussed at the initial meeting to verify that it was suitably representative of Medway. As we have strong existing relationships with the University of Kent (UoK) and University of Greenwich (UoG), they were invited to represent the HE sector in Medway on the Cell. With UoK and UoG able to represent HE, we did not consider it necessary to also approach UCA at this time. We do however, engage with UCA through a number of other forums e.g. Creative Medway and the High Street Heritage Action Zone Cultural Consortium amongst others.

6. Member Question for the Lead of the Future High Streets Fund Bid

6.1 Question: Advise Members what happened to the 2nd tranche bid for Gillingham High Street.

6.2 Response: There have been no further rounds of Future High Street Funding (FHSF) allocations, however, we have Bid for £34.83m Government grant funding through the Levelling-Up fund to help support a suite of regeneration projects in Chatham; this is a new scheme which has similar objectives to the FHSF.

6.3 We are looking for ways to support Gillingham High Street through Government funded initiatives, however there are not currently any schemes that can support this. We continue to maintain a watching brief on future funding opportunities that will support the regeneration of Gillingham High Street.

7. Member Question for the Finance Lead for the Additional Restrictions Grant

7.1 Question: Provide Members with the criteria

7.2 Response: Criteria for the Additional Resources Grant can be found via the links below:

<https://www.medway.gov.uk/stepforwardmedway>

<https://www.medway.gov.uk/businesssupportgrants>

www.medway.gov.uk/skillsgrants

7.3 Medway Council has set aside more than £2.5m to support businesses in the Culture and Creative, Hospitality and Weddings sectors to recover from the

impact of Covid-19. Businesses will be able to apply for up to £40,000 to support their recovery, using Government funding provided to Medway under the Additional Restrictions Grant. Promotion of the grant scheme launches at the beginning of October, with businesses able to submit their online application in November. Successful applicants will receive grants early next year.

8. Member Question for the Lead for the Seeing is Believing programme for Child Friendly Medway

8.1 Question: Provide Members with an update on the programme

8.2 Response: 'Seeing is believing' is what we are branding our child-friendly Medway programming.

8.3 The new Child-Friendly Medway launched at the end of April 2021, and our first priority is to consult children, young people and families in Medway to better understand their needs, wants and goals for this initiative. We have had over 3000 responses from children and young people and are continuing to consult them to determine what programming and activities they would like to see delivered as part of Child-Friendly Medway.

8.4 As part of our consultation we have also been running focus groups and have started to deliver some programming for 'Seeing is Believing' including:

- Free Drop-In football in 6 Parks across Medway (Gillingham Park, Palmerston Park, Jacksons Field, Pottery Road Rec, Rainham Rec, Darnley Road Rec). Running 17 July – 4 September. We have engaged hundreds of young people through this programme and are extending this for another 8 weeks to run throughout the autumn.
- Rapture Gaming Festival & Post-Box initiative and art installation - engagement piece with children and young people to capture the voice of the child and give young people a chance to have brand ownership of Child-Friendly Medway. 120 post-boxes were designed by home school students, schools and young people from local nurseries, schools, youth centres, libraries, and various youth groups such as Scouts, Girl Guides, Nucleus Art Clubs, and Club AUsome. These are now on display at the Pentagon Shopping Centre, Chatham. We also have more post boxes being decorated in the coming months through creative workshops for 'seeing is believing'. This programming has engaged hundreds of young people across Medway. Rapture Gaming Festival 3 and 4 July.
- Play House (soft play) event at the Pentagon Shopping Centre, which ran on 25 August engaged with 100+ young people. Sponsored by Child-Friendly Medway as part of seeing is believing.

- 8.5 We have more programming that will be starting in autumn 2021, including our first ever Child-Friendly City Hall event on 8 September at the Brook Theatre and additional programming to support developing the Child-Friendly plan in partnership with children, young people, families and carers.

Welcome Back Fund Programme Framework

No.	Area of Scope	Programme Activity
1	Support to develop an action plan for how the local authority may begin to safely reopen their local economies.	To develop a Town Centre Strategy and associated Action Plan in line with existing Town Centre Masterplans and the emerging Local Plan.
2	Communications and public information activity to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely	<p>Welcome Back Campaign and messaging to support local economy, encourage local visiting to attractions/shops/hospitality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our objective is to encourage local residents and wider Kent residents to stay local, shop local and support local and to explore places and venues they didn't know about in Medway..
3	Business-facing awareness raising activities to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely.	Refresh guidance packs to businesses on operating safely and making temporary adjustments to premises as Covid journey unfolds.
4	Temporary public realm changes to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely.	<p>A. Wrapping of empty shops and Medway branding with themes of safely reopening and recovery, climate change and business support on empty shops.</p> <p>B. Greening Projects</p>

		<p>Planters and hanging baskets, (Rainham Precinct, Chatham, Strood and Gillingham, Heritage Action Zone)</p> <p>C. Community led improvement programme (Lordswood, Twydall, Parkwood, Luton, Delce Road Rochester, Gillingham North)</p> <p>Public realm facilities and safety initiatives</p> <p>D. Hire of temporary outdoor seating or installation of innovative seating.</p> <p>E. Specialist deep street clean for high streets.</p>
5	Support and promote a safe public environment for a local area's visitor economy	<p>All current town centre signage key messages will be aimed towards recovery, messages will depend on instructions from government communications team, but we see it being necessary to display some reminders to keep people on track and be thoughtful of others and say thank you to local people.</p> <p>All key messaging around recovery will also be pushed through our social media platforms.</p>
6	Support local authorities to develop plans for responding to the medium-term impact of CV-19 including trailing new ideas particularly where these relate to the High Street.	<p>A. Gillingham High Street Temporary Public Art Project, with Pop-up Events for Strood and Rainham (it has been identified that 3 out of the 5 Town Centres have no event element this year. By implementing these events this will ensure each centre has a consistent spread of community activity).</p> <p>B. Pop Box Plaza utilising containers for Chatham waterfront, to support delivery of small-scale events and pop-up specialist markets with street entertainment with themes of youth/child-friendly, food, night-time to celebrate the diversity of Medway.</p>