

Council Priority: GROWTH

Maximising regeneration and economic growth

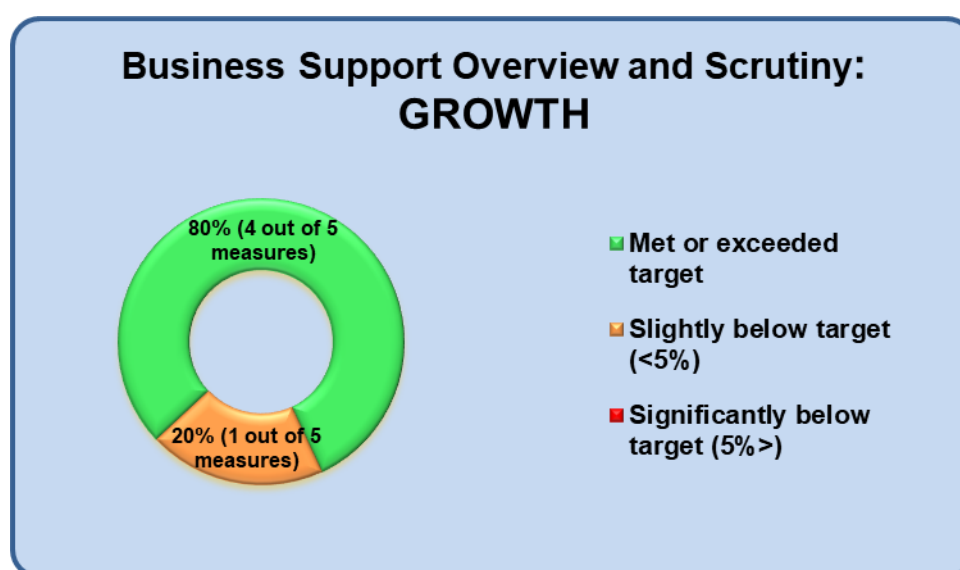
BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Performance: Quarter 1 2021/22

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

- 40% (2 out of 5*) improved over the short term (since last quarter)
- 60% (3 out of 5*) improved long term (average of previous 4 quarters)

*where data available

Measures in target (green)

Code	Status	Measure	Short Trend	Long Trend
MAE 3	Green	Medway Adult Education Achievement rate (pass rate)	STATIC	IMP

Code	Status	Measure	Short Trend	Long Trend
		(Q3 2020/21)		
NI 156	Green	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	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	DET	DET

Measures slightly below target (amber)

Code	Status	Measure	Short Trend	Long Trend
MAE 2	Amber	Medway Adult Education % retention rate (Q3 2020/21)	IMP	IMP

Strategic Risks

The quarter 1 2021/22 strategic risk register is attached at Appendix 4. 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 4).

Reference	Risk Register Page (app 4)	Risk	Owner	Current residual risk score	L – Likelihood I – Impact
SR35	57	Homelessness	Assistant Director Culture and Community	CIII	L – significant I – moderate

The following risks pertain to all priorities:

Reference	Risk Register Page (app 4)	Risk	Owner	Current residual risk score	L – Likelihood I – Impact
SRO3B	4	Finances	Chief Finance Officer	AI	L – very high I – catastrophic
SR46	9	Medway's Economic Recovery from Covid19	Assistant Director Regeneration	BII	L – high I – major

Reference	Risk Register Page (app 4)	Risk	Owner	Current residual risk score	L – Likelihood I – Impact
			(Recovery Lead Officer for Medway Council)		
SR32	30	Data and information	Chief Legal Finance Officer	CII	L – significant I – major
SR36	34	Alternative service delivery models	Chief Legal Officer, Chief Finance Officer	BIII	L – high I – moderate
SR37	39	Cyber Security	Chief Finance Officer	CI	L – significant I – catastrophic
SR02	48	Business continuity and emergency planning	Director of Place, Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Executive	DII	L – low I – major
SR49	65	Income Reduction due to Covid19	Chief Finance Officer	BII	L – high I – major

Council Plan Outcome: Resident with jobs and skills

Programme: Jobs, Skill and Employability

Council Plan Measures

MAE 2 Medway Adult Education % retention rate

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Short Trend	Long Trend
Q3 2020/21	94%	92.18%	Amber	Maximise	IMP	IMP
Q2 2020/21	94%	89.07%	Red	Maximise	DET	IMP

Comments

This performance indicator (PI) is based on academic year rather than financial year. The comments here are related to Q3 of the 20/21 academic year (February 2021 – April 2021).

Although starts have reduced significantly in some areas (particularly in the community learning funded leisure type courses), retention has continued to be good. Despite the issues around the current Covid19 pandemic, retention at the end of Q3 is the same as retention at the end of Q3 in the 18/19 academic year.

Actions

Managers and Tutors have worked hard, following lockdown and the closure of Medway Adult Education Centres, to ensure that many of the 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	Short Trend	Long Trend
Q3 2020/21	96%	100%	Green	Maximise	STATIC	IMP
Q2 2020/21	96%	100%	Green	Maximise	STATIC	IMP

Comments

This performance indicator (PI) is based on academic year rather than financial year. The comments here are related to Q3 of the 20/21 academic year (February 2021 – April 2021).

The pass rate measures how many of the learners, who complete their course, achieve a qualification or their learning aim. There are significantly less enrolments with a known outcome, compared to the second quarter of the previous year, as these are mainly community learning short courses which would have finished early in the academic year and have been particularly affected by Covid19. However, 100% of these learners achieved their learning goals. 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 (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement).

Actions

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 key performance indicators (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 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.

Council Plan Projects

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

Progress is being made to boost local skills levels for those furthest from employment. We have heavily engaged with the job centre to gain referrals and have seen an increase in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners looking to increase their English, Employability and Digital Skills.

We have launched a new wholly online programme which has had around 75 enrolments and has been well received by learners. We have launched three new qualifications in domestic abuse awareness, understanding climate change and sustainability and principles of cyber security.

Improve local employment levels

Medway Development Company (MDC)

As MDC progress through the delivery phases for each of its major projects, it will continue to record local labour as well as establish subcontractor requirements to ensure apprenticeships are provided.

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

Kyndi

In Q1 2021/22, Kyndi placed 174 social- and non-social care placements (including the Covid19 project), of which 163 carried over from Q4 2020/21.

Skills and Employability Plan

Progress continues to be made to achieve the aims of the Skills & Employability Plan and to deliver the action plan. Key progress made this quarter includes:

- Securing £1m to deliver an extensive grants programme to create apprenticeships, Supported Employment, Supported Internships, Kickstart retention, employment for Care Leavers and increased training delivery.
- The transformation of the Medway Enterprise Adviser network into part of the Kent & Medway Careers Hub continues at pace. The model has been formally launched at a Head Teachers conference, and Medway are already approaching capacity for schools that can enter the hub in year one.
- The Medway Apprenticeship Advice Service continues to deliver, engaging 22 business, with 16 identifying suitable apprenticeship standards to progress with. So far six employers have advertised for eight roles, and 11 further employers are in the final stages of confirming their requirements.

- The Supported Employment Programme has had funding agreed to continue for another 18 months.

For the immediate future, significant focus will be on delivering the grants programme. Later in 2021, work will begin on undertaking a refresh of the Skills & Employability Plan.

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	Short Trend	Long Trend
Q1 2021/22	350	274	Green	Minimise	IMP	IMP
Q4 2020/21	350	301	Green	Minimise	IMP	IMP

Comments

At the end of Q1 2021/22 there were a total of 274 households residing in temporary accommodation (TA) provided by the council in line with its statutory responsibilities. This is a slight decrease from the 301 households that were accommodated at the end of Q3. 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 TA in Medway is currently 2.92 per 1,000 households. This is slightly lower than the national rate of 4.05 (latest benchmarking figures April 2021). Further benchmarking has been undertaken to identify how Medway compares with other similar sized unitary authorities. In April 2021, in terms of the numbers in TA, Milton Keynes had a rate of 10.6 households per 1,000 households. Locally, Swale had a rate of 5.24 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	Short Trend	Long Trend
Q1 2021/22	0	0	Green	Minimise	STATIC	STATIC

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Short Trend	Long Trend
Q4 2020/21	0	0	Green	Minimise	STATIC	STATIC

Comments

A snapshot at the end of Q1 2021/22 identifies that no families were in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation. Additionally, throughout Q1 no families were placed into B&B for more than 6 weeks.

Actions

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

HC4 Number of private sector properties improved as a result of the Council's intervention

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Short Trend	Long Trend
Q1 2021/22	150	231	Green	Maximise	DET	DET
Q4 2020/21	175	248	Green	Maximise	DET	DET

Comments

In Q1 the council received 135 new requests for service. 231 private sector households were assisted to improve their properties through Council intervention despite the restriction over Covid19 on inspections. The council has continued with its statutory services and targeted work with the taskforce, the Serious and Organised Crime Partnership (SOCP) and other internal and external partners. 22 new Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) licences and 2 renewals licences have been issued in Q1 bringing a total of 230 licenced HMO throughout Medway. 42 category 1 hazards and 257 category 2 hazards have been identified in this quarter. 19 category 1 hazards and 98 category 2 hazards have also been alleviated throughout Q1 with either formal or informal actions. In Q1, four Civil Penalty final notices have been issued to landlords who have failed to licence and maintain their HMOs, where one payment has been received in full. 31 Housing Enforcement notices have been issued with a further 12 Requisition of Information notices being sent. This action directly assists residents by improving living conditions and raises the standards in the private sector rented accommodation.

Council Plan Projects

Help Medway's people get a foot on the housing ladder

Significant work has been done to move people with a history of sleeping rough into longer term accommodation, achieved by close partnership work with voluntary and community sector organisations and third sector partners. The majority of people brought into accommodation through the 'everyone in' initiative have been moved into supported accommodation, interim accommodation or assisted to access the private rental sector. Affordable homes have had a slowing due to the impact of Covid19, however we are still seeing significant numbers of completions with over 40 units delivered so far in Q1.

Review Housing Related Support (HRS) commissioning

We currently commission 90 units of supported housing for people who were previously homeless or sleeping rough, made up of supported housing and Housing First accommodation. We aim that all people in our accommodation have a move on plan to settled independent accommodation within two years of support starting. We are in the process of commissioning a further 10-room assessment and support service for people who have been sleeping rough. We also commission 41 units of supported housing for ex-offenders and 60 units of accommodation for young people between the ages of 16-25. We also commission a floating support service for people living in their own properties who are at risk of losing their homes. This service works with 250 households at any one time with the aim of eviction prevention and tenancy sustainment. In line with the Domestic Abuse Act, we are looking to add to our 14 units of refuge accommodation with the commissioning of a dispersed housing scheme and other related support available to individuals and families impacted by domestic abuse.

To continue to deliver the priorities of the rough sleeper initiative

Following the pandemic, 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 have now closed our large-scale hotel provision which helped over 100 people through the last year (most of them have moved into longer term accommodation). 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 and are currently in the process of recruiting a Preventions Worker to provide immediate input to people who are at particular risk of sleeping rough if they lose their accommodation. The Housing Strategy and Partnerships team facilitate a wide variety of partnership meetings and are changing the bi-weekly Covid19 response meeting into a monthly partnership meeting to increase information and good practice sharing. We are also launching a Services Mentoring Scheme to add capacity and resilience to the voluntary and community sector. 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.

The development of our variety of services has allowed a look at alternatives in the type of accommodation being provided, including a nine bedroomed guest house offering move on from temporary accommodation and preparation for people for their own independent living. This service is staffed by a voluntary agency backed up by on call housing staff and closed-circuit television (CCTV) provided via Kyndi. We have maintained a high level of success in getting people into accommodation and sustaining it and have been awarded significant funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government again this year as we have continued to deliver positive outcomes. As part of this, we have recently commissioned an employment service to work with people who are/were sleeping rough, and it is planned that this will add long term and sustainable change to those taking up the service.

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 for Medway residents. This includes through joint prevention working arrangements with internal partners such as Children's Services, and externally with local landlords and housing providers, to seek to sustain the tenancies of their tenants who are at risk of eviction.

Prevention and relief activities remain the primary focus of the Housing Solutions & Reviews team, with currently circa 69% of all applicants accepting a duty having their homelessness successfully prevented or relieved. This has been achieved through proactively seeking joint working prevention opportunities with both internal (e.g. Medway Revenue and Benefits Services (MRBS), Early Help and Children's Services), and external partners (e.g. social and private landlords). These activities include working through the Children's Services' (CS) finance panel and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), joint prevention working/appointments with MHS Homes, London and Quadrant (L&Q) and Orbit, Landlord Hotline and Landlord forum (due to resume from October). The service has also created a new tenancy pack to support new tenants sustain their tenancies and is looking to create an online tenancy training module.

Incidences of evictions post the lifting of restrictions and approaches due to domestic abuse are being monitored monthly, and the service will plan and deliver interventions as appropriate to meet any increased demand.

The team have reached out to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Partnership Manager and highlighted our prevention service and invited early referrals. This has been distributed to work coaches.

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

The Welfare team are supporting customers when they sign up to Housing Revenue Account (HRA) accommodation and are ensuring that they have their benefits in place and they understand how to pay their rent. They will also look to maximise their benefits.

The Welfare team continue to work closely with tenants to maximise their benefits and ensure that rent is paid and budgeted for. Following the intervention from the team, HRA tenants, during Q1, were assisted to claim council tax (CTAX) reductions totalling £9,172.28. The team continue to attend all new tenancy sign ups to identify those that require additional support and ensure that benefits are in place. This will enable officers and residents to understand the financial commitments involved in sustaining their own property as well as maximising any other financial support that may be available. A Covid19 secure venue has been identified to be able to see tenants again out in the community and limit the need for going into people's homes.

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.

Arrears at the end of Q1 are 1.30%, within target. This is a slight decrease from the end of Q4, which was 1.37%.

The team are continuing to face challenges with the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) and the pandemic, however they have been keeping regular contact with customers, reminding them through text messages and e-mails to pay their rent and referring to the Welfare team for tenancy support when required. This has proven to be productive and aid in reducing arrears.

There have been changes to the way that the UC Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) is processed. As this is now electronic and is processed every couple of weeks rather than every 6/7 weeks, this means that the funds are going into the rent accounts quicker, and arrears are not building, therefore assisting in the reduction of arrears.

Actions

All new tenants are referred to the Housing Revenue Account (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.

Repairs and maintenance contracts

The Mears contract extension has been agreed. This confirms that Mears will continue to be the council's repairs and maintenance service provider until September 2024. The contract extension is forecast to deliver annual savings of over £100,000. We are currently collecting data for our annual review of costs ahead of submitting to Housemark to complete benchmarking.