

Council Priority: GROWTH

Maximising regeneration and economic growth

BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

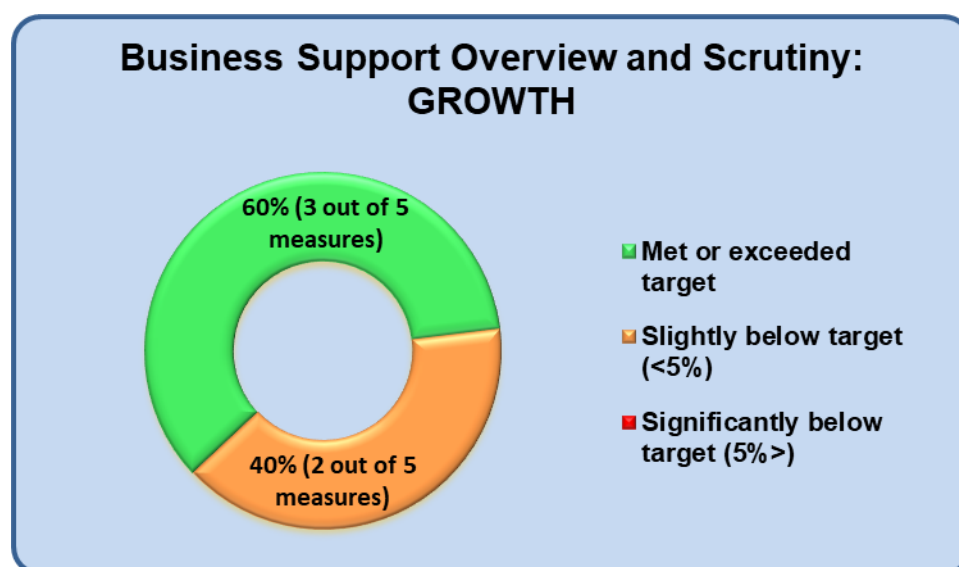
Performance: Quarter 2 2021/22

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

- 20% (1 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
NI 156	Green	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	DET	IMP

Code	Status	Measure	Short Trend	Long Trend
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 because of the Council's intervention	IMP	IMP

Measures slightly below target (amber)

Code	Status	Measure	Short Trend	Long Trend
MAE 2	Amber	Medway Adult Education % Retention rate (Q4 2020/21)	DET	IMP
MAE 3	Amber	Medway Adult Education Achievement rate (pass rate) (Q4 2020/21)	DET	DET

Strategic Risks

The quarter 2 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	71	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
SR03B	4	Finances	Chief Finance Officer	A1	L – very high I – catastrophic
SR46	10	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
SR32	39	Data and information	Chief Finance Officer, Director of People	CII	L – significant I – major
SR36	44	Alternative service delivery models	Assistant Director Regeneration, Chief Finance Officer	BIII	L – high I – moderate
SR37	50	Cyber Security	Chief Finance Officer	CI	L – significant I – catastrophic
SR02	61	Business continuity and emergency planning	Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer	DII	L – low I – major
SR49	80	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
Q4 2020/21	94.0%	91.34%	Amber	Maximise	DET	IMP
Q3 2020/21	94.0%	92.18%	Amber	Maximise	IMP	IMP

Comments

This performance indicator (PI) is based on academic year rather than financial year.

Data shown is for Q4 of the academic year 2020/21 (May 2021 – July 2021).

The retention rate for Medway Adult Education (MAE) courses over the 2020/21 academic year has increased by over 25% compared to the rate for the 2019/20 academic year. This is a demonstration of robust and flexible teaching methods which include online delivery over a year that consisted of two national and one local lockdown due to Covid19. These methods also ensured that the number of learners starting courses funded by the Adult Education Budget were only 300 fewer than the 2019/20 academic year. The number of starts for Curriculum Learning courses has reduced dramatically by 1,769 learners. This is due to the nature of the courses and the equipment required which means learners are unable to engage in the courses outside of the classroom setting.

Actions

Community Learning started after April 2021 when MAE Centres were opening for face-to-face learning again. Therefore, MAE is showing healthy signs of recovery in the ability to attract learners again and retain them by making learning accessible through everchanging circumstances.

MAE 3 Medway Adult Education achievement rate (pass rate)

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Short Trend	Long Trend
Q4 2020/21	96.0%	91.96%	Amber	Maximise	DET	DET
Q3 2020/21	96.0%	100%	Green	Maximise	STATIC	IMP

Comments

This performance indicator (PI) is based on academic year rather than financial year.

Data shown is for Q4 of the academic year 2020/21 (May 2021 – July 2021).

The pass rate measures how many of the learners, who complete their course, achieve a qualification or their learning aim. The pass rate is 8% lower than Q4 in the 19/20 academic year. This is due to 127 learners that have completed a course, but Medway Adult Education (MAE) hasn't received their result yet.

The adaptation of delivering more courses online during the disruption of the Covid19 pandemic necessitated MAE to offer online courses where learners can start and finish in their own time. These courses are accredited and need to be moderated externally in batches therefore it takes longer for MAE to be able to claim an achievement for them. MAE is currently awaiting the results from a recent moderation which will increase the final pass rate for the academic year 2020/21. The pass rate for learners that have completed their course with a known outcome is 97%.

Actions

MAE'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.

Council Plan Projects

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

MAE is making progress in boosting the skills of those furthest from employment.

The online learning programme continues to attract new learners to the service and interest in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and digital skills courses remains strong. Enrolments into the ESOL department are currently 4% up in comparison to this time last year.

To increase community awareness of MAE's provision, support integration, commitment to climate change, culture and creativity, MAE had an active presence at the Wild About Capstone Family Fun Day. These activities engaged with families to widen participation and strengthen links into learning.

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:

- The £1m programme to deliver an extensive grants programme to create apprenticeships, supported employment, supported internships, Kickstart retention, employment for care leavers and increased training delivery has begun delivery. All processes and procedures have been set up, the web page has been live since August and more than £60k has been committed.
- The transformation of the Medway Enterprise Adviser Network into part of the Kent & Medway Careers Hub continues at pace. 1.5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) new Enterprise Coordinators have been recruited and schools that are joining the hub have been identified.
- The Medway Apprenticeship Advice service has been renewed for another year, with a slight change of focus for the service to do less marketing and see more businesses.
- 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
Q2 2021/22	350	303	Green	Minimise	DET	IMP
Q1 2021/22	350	274	Green	Minimise	IMP	IMP

Comments

At the end of Q2 2021 there were a total of 303 households residing in temporary accommodation (TA) provided by the council in line with its statutory responsibilities. This is an increase from the 274 households that were accommodated at the end of Q1. Most households in TA will have children. Therefore, there is a correlation between the overall number of households in TA and the number of children in TA. The accommodation provided to families will usually be in the form of a self-contained property located in Medway.

Benchmarking

The rate of households in TA in Medway is currently 2.92 per 1000 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, the numbers in TA in 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
Q2 2021/22	0	0	Green	Minimise	STATIC	STATIC
Q1 2021/22	0	0	Green	Minimise	STATIC	STATIC

Comments

A snapshot at the end of Q2 2021/22 identifies that no families were in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation. Additionally, throughout Q1 no families were placed into B&B accommodation for more than six 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 (TA) for households and using Housing Revenue Account (HRA) properties as TA. 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
Q2 2021/22	100	279	Green	Maximise	IMP	IMP
Q1 2021/22	175	231	Green	Maximise	DET	DET

Comments

During Q2, 279 private sector households were assisted to improve their properties through council intervention despite Covid19 restrictions. The team currently have 585 active cases being worked on with 48 cases yet to be allocated to an investigating officer and 125 cases have been closed through the quarter. The council received 82 new requests for service. 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. 18 new Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) licences and one renewals licence have been issued, with another 13 licences being worked on, in Q2 bringing a total of 241 licenced HMOs throughout Medway. 10 category 1 hazards and 84 category 2 hazards have been identified in this quarter. 44 category 1 hazards and 48 category 2 hazards have also been alleviated throughout Q2 with either formal or informal actions. In Q2, three Notices of Intent and one Final Notice have been issued under Civil Penalties; these have been issued to landlords who have failed to licence and maintain their HMOs. Two payments have been received in full. Where payment has not been received the next stage is to issue a certificate. Once the certificate has been issued, the case can move forward to the County Court for recovery of the penalties. We are looking to recover circa £37,000, collective. 29 Housing Enforcement notices have been issued with a further 15 Schedule of works being sent out. This action directly assists residents by improving living conditions and raises the standards in the private sector rented accommodation.

Under the amended Mobile Homes Act 2013 Section 8 Fit and Proper Person (England) Regulations 2020, four fit and proper person application forms for residential caravan sites have been sent out. We have received a good response and all applications have been returned.

Council Plan Projects

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

Registered providers, in general, are reporting issues with the availability and (high) cost of materials for house building which is causing some delays and problems on development sites. They anticipate that this is likely to last for at least another year. One of the potential issues is contractors using materials of a lesser quality because they cannot get the materials that would normally be used. A further 48 units were delivered during Q2 bringing the total to 90 so far this year. We anticipate meeting our annual target of 204 units.

Review Housing Related Support (HRS) commissioning

We have increased our Housing First project capacity from six to ten flats for former rough sleepers with a recent tender utilising the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) funding. We were unsuccessful in attracting any bids for the assessment and support service due to the short-term nature of the funding. We have ensured that this risk is fed back to the MHCLG and supports the need for a multi-year funding settlement.

We have a current tender out to provide 15-20 units of dispersed accommodation for people fleeing domestic abuse which will be open to a wider range of people than the current refuge provision can cater for. We have successfully commissioned an Adult and Child counselling service to cover both Medway refuges and are in direct negotiation for provision for an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) for people with complex needs. We are working with the Category Management team to agree a commissioning timetable for the wider range of Housing Related Support (HRS) services, with a planned April 2022 target date.

To continue to deliver the priorities of the rough sleeper initiative

The service has mobilised the funding received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), although this has had its challenges due to the short notice/length of the funding and the timeframe we need to use it in. One tendered service received no bids, so the Housing Strategy and Partnerships team have delivered an equivalent service using a trusted security/support provider and a local provider with rooms prepared for a winter night shelter. The Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) team continue to perform well, moving people off the street and into emergency accommodation and then on into settled accommodation. We are looking at the current range of services with our internal and external partners to establish if we wish to make any alterations when the next funding review settlement is announced. We have brought an unused flat back into use through a capital grant with revenue for support under the Next Steps Accommodation Programme and this is already tenanted. We have also interviewed for an RSI Preventions Worker utilising our grant. This post bridges the gap between the RSI and Housing Solutions service and will triage people who approach as at risk of homelessness and identify those who are most at risk of sleeping rough (e.g. those who are not in priority need, with limited networks of friends or relatives and have no financial resilience, those who have slept rough previously, or those with substance misuse or mental health

issues) and offer support to source ongoing accommodation. The service is waiting to find out if the Medway Night Shelter has been successful in a funding application which will provide a further potential 12 bed spaces this winter or, if unsuccessful, allow us to find alternative usage for the space.

We are in the process of reviewing our Severe Emergency Winter Protocol following a detailed analysis of those who were housed last winter and will look to target provision to those who are at risk of sleeping rough, ensuring that people who need homelessness prevention or other statutory assistance are directed correctly.

We have made representation to the MHCLG that annual funding notifications at short notice does not allow for effective commissioning or recruitment, and we have been given assurance that the issue has been raised with the Treasury. We recently worked with the Finance team to carry out an audit of spends to-date which confirms we have carried out our use of funds correctly and confirm our eligibility to receive the second tranche of 2021/22 funding.

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 tenants who are at risk of eviction.

Prevention and Relief activities continue to be fundamental to the service provided by the Housing Solutions & Reviews team. The team have enjoyed sustained success in these activities. Currently 67% of all applicants were accepted with a homeless duty having their homelessness successfully prevented or relieved. This has been reflected in the reduction (comparative to recent years) of households requiring temporary accommodation (TA). Underpinning this is the joint working with both internal and external partners, including Medway Revenue and Benefits Service (MRBS), Early Help, Children and Adult Services, the Leaving Care team, and social and private landlords. Joint working activities continue to include working through the Children's Service's finance panel and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), leaving care panel, joint prevention working/appointments with MHS Homes, London & Quadrant (L&Q) and Orbit, Landlord Hotline and Landlord forum which resumed in October. The team are also dealing with many landlord queries made directly to the Private Rented Sector team. The team continue to work in conjunction with our new Tenancy pack, and the service is planning to create an online tenancy training module.

Incidences of evictions post the lifting of restrictions and approaches due to domestic abuse continue to be monitored monthly, with a sustained increase in approaches for both reasons being identified, with there being a high incidence of evictions for rent arrears in particular. To meet this increase in demand, the team continues to be proactive in using prevention funds and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) to sustain or secure new tenancies and has successfully recruited a dedicated

Domestic Abuse (DA) Housing Officer who will work with survivors of DA to ensure successful outcomes.

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

The Tenancy Sustainment team continue to work closely with tenants to ensure that they have relevant support to enable them to sustain their tenancy. They are currently looking to work with those tenants that have been impacted by the decrease in Universal Credit. They have also restarted drop-ins for tenants that are unable to have a home visit. In Q2 they had 70 new referrals and were involved with 49 new tenancy sign ups. They were able to obtain £28,878 in lump sums for tenants, of which £10,500 was paid directly into the rent account. They were also able to get £71,170 of annualised benefit, of which £24,436 was paid directly into the rent account and £4,019 into the Council Tax account.

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 Q2 are 1.39%, and within target.

This is a slight increase from the end of Q1, which was 1.30%.

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 an aid in reducing arrears.

There have been changes to the way that the UC Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) is processed. 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.

Capital works programme

The new 3-year programme has been issued to our Capital Works Delivery teams. During the first year of the programme we anticipate a slow start for particular work

programmes where scoping surveys, specification and tendering is required. Decent Homes works have been issued to Mears where good progress is being made overall, with a concern relating to progress of the boiler programme although Mears are confident this will be completed. Contractors are experiencing a shortage of materials, as well as increased costs on materials and labour, which may impact our ability to deliver.

Asset management are starting to build years 2/3 with a view to issuing them together in order to achieve better Value For Money (VFM) via economies of scale.

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 £100k. We are currently collecting data for our annual review of costs ahead of submitting to Housemark to complete benchmarking.

The service continues to improve the level of resourcing for planned maintenance following the decision of BDS to hand this work back to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Work continues to reconcile information as to previous workstreams, however there will be a significant underspend on the roofing programme and some other workstreams.