

# Council Priority: GROWTH

## Maximising regeneration and economic growth

### BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

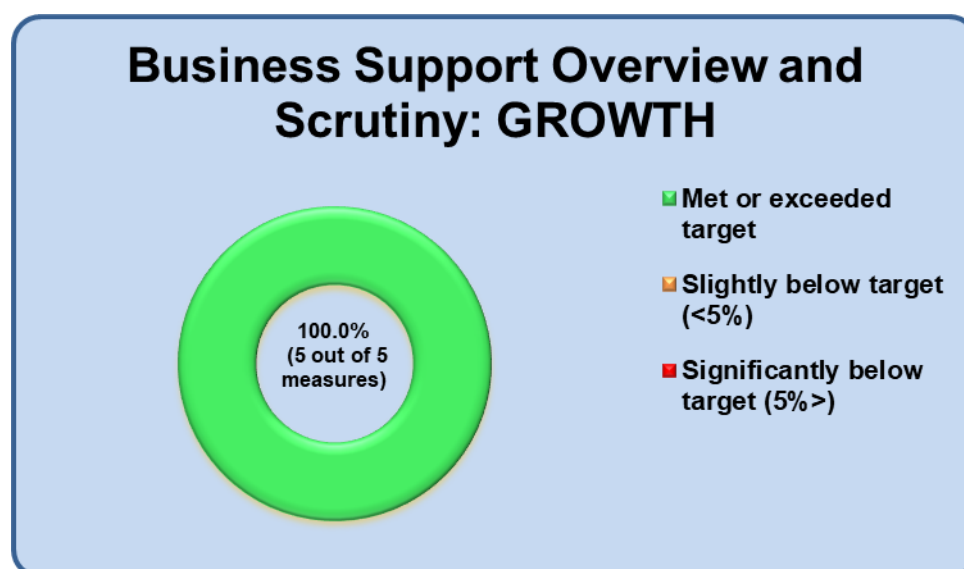
## Performance: Quarter 3 2021/22

#### Key

<b>Red</b>	significantly below target (>5%)	<b>Amber</b>	slightly below target (<5%)	<b>Green</b>	met or exceeded target
<b>IMP</b>	Improved	<b>DET</b>	Worsened	<b>STATIC</b>	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)
- 40% (2 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 2	<b>Green</b>	Medway Adult Education % retention rate (Q1 academic year)	IMP	IMP

Code	Status	Measure	Short Trend	Long Trend
MAE 3	Green	Medway Adult Education achievement rate (pass rate) (Q1 academic year)	IMP	IMP
NI 156	Green	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	DET	DET
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

## Strategic Risks

The quarter 3 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	69	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	9	Medway's Economic Recovery from Covid19	Assistant Director Regeneration	BII	L – high I – major
SR32	36	Data and information	Chief Finance Officer, Director of People, Assistant	CII	L – significant I – major

Reference	Risk Register Page (app 4)	Risk	Owner	Current residual risk score	L-likelihood I-impact
			Director Legal & Governance		
SR36	40	Alternative service delivery models	Assistant Director Regeneration, Chief Finance Officer	BIII	L – high I – moderate
SR37	46	Cyber Security	Chief Finance Officer	GI AI	L – significant I – very high I – catastrophic
SR02	58	Business continuity and emergency planning	Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer	DII	L – low I – major
SR49	78	Income Reduction due to Covid19	Chief Finance Officer	BII CII	L – high I – significant I – major

## Council Plan Outcome: Residents with jobs and skills

### Programme: Jobs, skills and employability

#### Council Plan measures

#### MAE 2 Medway Adult Education % retention rate

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Short Trend	Long Trend
Q1 2021/22	94.0%	94.41%	Green	Maximise	IMP	IMP
Q4 2020/21	94.0%	91.34%	Amber	Maximise	DET	IMP

### Comments

This performance indicator is based on academic year rather than financial year. Data shown is for Q1 of the academic year 2021/22 (August 2021 – October 2021).

The retention rate for Medway Adult Education (MAE) courses for Q1 in the 2021/22 academic year has increased and is now on target at 94%. This is the first time MAE has met this target since the same period in 19/20, pre-pandemic. This could be an early indication that learners feel more settled and stable in their course due to the lessening of Covid19 restrictions. The Information, Advice and Guidance team at MAE are also able to assess more learners face-to-face this year which will make the enrolment process more meaningful and ensure learners are placed on the most appropriate course.

### MAE 3 Medway Adult Education achievement rate (pass rate)

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Short Trend	Long Trend
Q1 2021/22	96.0%	98.71%	Green	Maximise	IMP	IMP
Q4 2020/21	96.0%	91.96%	Amber	Maximise	DET	DET

### Comments

This PI is based on academic year rather than financial year. Data as at 22 December 2021 is shown for Q1 of the 2021/22 academic year (August 2021 – October 2021).

The pass rate measures how many of the learners who complete their course achieve a qualification or their learning aim. It shows that Medway Adult Education (MAE) 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). There are significantly less enrolments with a known outcome in Q1, as these are mainly community learning short courses which would have finished this early in the academic year.

### 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. MAE 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

Several new courses have been implemented to develop the curriculum offer to engage with those furthest from employment. Through a strong partnership with St Augustine's' Place of Welcome and Strood Community Hub the service is working with new learners.

New courses in story massage are being launched in children's centres around Medway. The first courses are planned for delivery in February 2022 to engage with parents to support life transitions, family literacy and learners' engagement with other agencies.

An eco-friendly online gift-wrapping course attracted new learners too. Whilst engaging with these new courses, learners are increasing confidence, communication and digital skills whilst learning about environmentally friendly approaches to crafting, recycling and learning with their children.

### 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 webpage 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
Q3 2021/22	350	314	Green	Minimise	DET	DET
Q2 2021/22	350	303	Green	Minimise	DET	IMP

#### Comments

At the end of Q3 there were a total of 314 households residing in temporary accommodation (TA) provided by the council in line with its statutory responsibilities. This is an increase from the 303 households that were accommodated at the end of Q2. 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 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
Q3 2021/22	0	0	Green	Minimise	STATIC	STATIC
Q2 2021/22	0	0	Green	Minimise	STATIC	STATIC

#### Comments

A snapshot at the end of Q3 identifies that no families were in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation. Additionally, throughout Q3 no families were placed into bed and breakfast 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 (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
Q3 2021/22	175	221	Green	Maximise	DET	DET
Q2 2021/22	100	279	Green	Maximise	IMP	IMP

## Comments

The Private Sector Housing team continues to work with tenants and landlords to improve the standard of accommodation in the private sector.

During Q3, 221 private sector households were assisted to improve their properties through council intervention. The team currently have 630 active cases being worked on with 81 cases yet to be allocated to an investigating officer and 71 cases have been closed through the quarter. The council received 103 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. Eight new Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) licences and no renewals licences have been issued, with another 20 licences being processed in Q3 bringing a total of 249 licenced HMOs throughout Medway. 11 category 1 hazards and 81 category 2 hazards have been identified in this quarter. 30 category 1 hazards and 30 category 2 hazards have also been alleviated throughout Q3 with either formal or informal actions. In Q3, five Notices of Intent and 2 Final Notices have been issued under Civil Penalties. These have been issued to landlords who have failed to licence and maintain their HMOs. The service has moved cases forward to the Legal team so that matters can be put before the county courts for recovery of the penalties. Officers aim to recover circa £47,000 in total. 23 Housing Enforcement Notices have been issued with a further 19 Schedule of Works being sent out. Two Warrants of Entry have also been successfully obtained from the magistrate's court. These will be actioned shortly with both internal and external partners. 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

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 can't get the materials that would normally be used.

In Q3, 63 units have been completed. To date, there have been 166 affordable homes delivered. We anticipate meeting our annual target of 204 units.

### **Review Housing Related Support (HRS) commissioning**

The council continues to commission a range of accommodation to support vulnerable people to remain independent. These contracts expire in April 2022.

Housing Related Support (HRS) recommissioning remains on track and officers are preparing to take this to procurement board in mid-January for commencement in April 2022.

The HRS contracts currently being recommissioned include:

- 82 units of supported housing for people who are homeless and have HRS needs.
- 69 units of supported housing for young people aged 16-25 who are homeless and have HRS needs (including 9 units specifically for care leavers).
- 42 units of supported housing for people with a history of offending behaviour who are homeless and may have HRS needs.
- 14 units of supported housing for homeless, single women or women with children at risk of domestic abuse (refuge accommodation).
- A Floating Support service to provide preventative housing support to people and help equip them with the skills to sustain their tenancy. This service assists a caseload of 250 people at any one time (including 50 people with high needs).

### **To continue to deliver the priorities of the rough sleeper initiative**

The Rough Sleeping team have met with the new adviser from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and discussions are being had around our upcoming funding request. This will be a 2 year and 9-month award and will be expected to evolve over the period, i.e. some services will change whilst other core services remain. The announcement will be made in April/May so there will be a bridging payment for April-June at 75% of the Q1 payment for 2021-22. The service has prepared a range of options for Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)/winter provision; there are 15 rooms across temporary accommodation and a local hotel – there will be an expansion of the Medway Assessment Centre from six units to 11 for immediate access and assessment from the street. Officers have supported Medway Street Angels in setting up a SWEP night shelter and supported Caring Hands and Medway Night Shelter in bidding for funds to run a night shelter from early January 2022, initially with six spaces for guests. This is intended to expand to 11 spaces over the course of the project, ending on 1 April.



### **Ensure that the council maximises the opportunity to reduce homelessness through prevention and relief**

The council continues to be proactive in pursuing opportunities to maximise the prevention and relief of homelessness are maximised in Medway.

The council's Housing Solutions and Reviews team continues to successfully ensure that the opportunities for the prevention and relief of homelessness are maximised for Medway residents. Joint prevention working arrangements with internal partners such as Medway Revenue and Benefits Services (MRBS) (Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)), Leaving Care, Children's Services (including via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the finance panel, and Joint Housing Assessments (JHAs)), and externally with local landlords (landlord hotline) and housing providers (joint prevention appointments), to seek to sustain the tenancies of tenants who are at risk of eviction, have continued as business as usual during the pandemic and are fundamental to our success.

To date, an average of 66% of all applicants accepted as owed a homeless duty have had their homelessness successfully prevented or relieved. This is directly reflected in the significant reduction of households requiring temporary accommodation (TA).

Incidences of approaches due to evictions and domestic abuse continue to be monitored monthly, with data utilised to identify areas for service improvement and upstream intervention. The team continues to actively use prevention funds, including the recent increased provisions, and DHPs to sustain tenancies or secure new ones. As part of these activities we now have in place a dedicated Domestic Abuse (DA) Housing Officer who will work with survivors of DA to ensure successful outcomes, including tenancy sustainment, as well as a Rough Sleeper Prevention Officer to work directly with applicants at risk of rough sleeping.

### **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 who have been impacted by the decrease in universal credit. They have also restarted drop-ins for tenants who are unable to have home a home visit.

In Q3, the service received 82 new referrals for various support including rent and other benefits. The team were involved with 105 sign ups (of which 24 were tenancy conversations). The Tenancy Sustainment team were able to obtain £13,880.47 lump sum for tenants of which £9,145.71 was paid directly to the tenants rent account reducing total arrears. They were also able to get £29,074.32 of annualised benefit of which £15,643.16 was paid into the rent account. The team was also successful in applying for household support grants for Housing Revenue Account (HRA) tenants securing about £4,902.66 helping reduce hardship.

**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.

The rent arrears at the end of Q3 are 1.72%. This is an increase on the Q2 figure of 1.39%, and out of our target range of 1.65%. The team are continuing to face challenges with the rollout 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**

Housing Services is finalising the next 2-year Capital Works programme, with a view to instructing to Mears in February 2022. Stock condition surveys have started again to validate asset data.

Additional Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) have been instructed with a view to creating programmes of work to start moving towards getting the stock to EPC C or above by 2030.

Work has begun to get a framework in place to instruct work to additional contractors in addition to Mears.

Asset Management are in the process of creating a compliance monitoring sheet which will allow the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to easily monitor and self-report compliance performance.

We are slightly behind with our kitchen and boiler replacement programmes. This has been due to Mears losing some of their sub-contract resource, tenants deciding to waiver these works and a shortage of kitchen supply due to Covid19. Mears have recently appointed an additional boiler team and are hoping to catch up in the next

couple of months. We have also piloted a couple of kitchens from an alternative supplier.

In addition, we have had to suspend our domestic rewire programme due to delays in the energy supplier isolating the property. Officers are currently looking at alternative options. Good progress is being made on our windows, doors, smoke detection, co-alarm and domestic electrical testing programmes.

### **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 Building Design Services (BDS) to hand this work back to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) team.

Senior managers are looking at restructuring Property Services, utilising the BDS fee. The new roles will improve the service delivery across all workstreams.