

Council Priority: GROWTH

Maximising regeneration and economic growth

BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

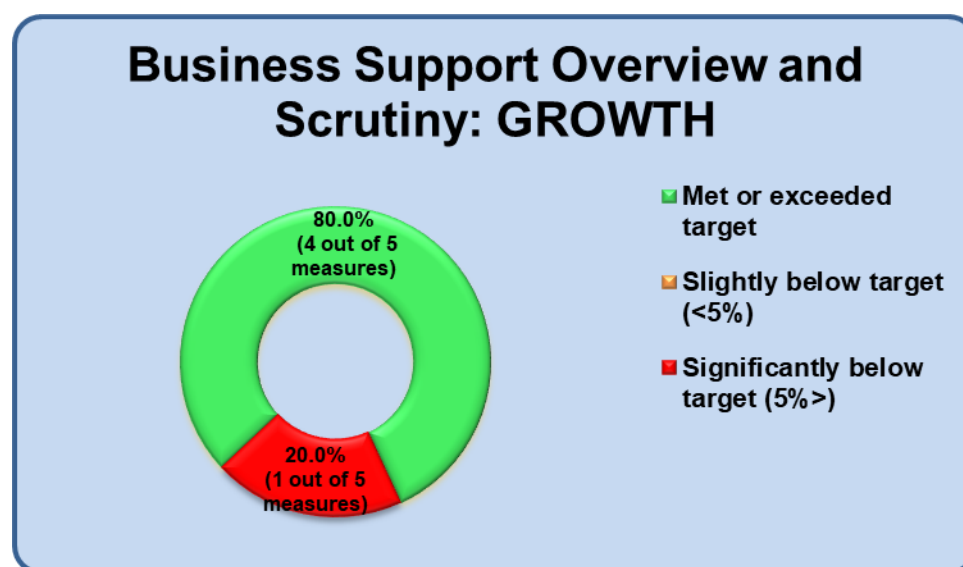
Performance: Quarter 4 2021/22

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

- 40.0% (2 out of 5*) improved over the short term (since last quarter)
- 20.0% (1 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	Achievement Rate (Pass Rate) (Q2 academic year)	IMP	IMP
NI 156	Green	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	IMP	DET

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	DET	DET

Measures significantly below target (red)

Code	Status	Name	Short Trend	Long Trend
MAE 2	Red	% Retention Rate (Q2 academic year)	DET	DET

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
Q2 2021/22	94.0%	89.29%	Red	Maximise	DET	DET
Q1 2021/22	94.0%	94.41%	Green	Maximise	IMP	IMP

Comments

This performance indicator is based on academic year rather than financial year. Data shown is for Q2 of the academic year 2021/22 (Nov 2021 – Jan 2022). The retention rate for Medway Adult Education (MAE) courses for Q2 in the 2021/22 academic year has decreased and is now at 89.29%. This is a similar rate to this point last year. Covid19 rates have continued to rise over the past quarter which has caused some anxiety for learners to attend classes. MAE have continued to offer hybrid virtual and physical teaching when possible.

MAE 3 Medway Adult Education achievement rate (pass rate)

Quarter	Target	Value	Status	Aim to	Short Trend	Long Trend
Q2 2021/22	96.0%	99.2%	Green	Maximise	IMP	IMP
Q1 2021/22	96.0%	98.71%	Green	Maximise	IMP	IMP

Comments

This performance indicator is based on academic year rather than financial year. Data as at 31 March 2021 is shown for Q2 of the academic year 2021/22 (Nov 2021 – January 2022).

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).

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 (PDRs), 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 learners from outreach centres have gained confidence through attending classes and taken employment as teaching assistants in schools. Advice on our teaching assistant courses has been given. Others are accessing voluntary positions for experience. One learner has applied and been appointed as a Medway Adult Education (MAE) invigilator and is considering applying to become a Learning Support Assistant (LSA).

Skills and Employability Plan

2021/22 has been a successful year delivering the Skills & Employability Action Plan, with significant progress made across the board. Some key highlights include:

- The successful delivery of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Skills Grant Programme, totalling £900k. This made a huge difference to businesses in Medway, seeing a significant boost in apprenticeship recruitment and investment in training.
- 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 started and are working with schools closely, working to continually improve careers education performance.
- The Medway Apprenticeship Advice Service has been renewed for another year and continues to deliver support to Medway businesses.

- The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)-funded construction project was delivered, with eight of 20 participants securing work and a further four entering into Further Education.
- The Skills & Employability Plan refresh is in the final draft stage, with a further round of consultation to take place before approval.
- An additional Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) provision programme, delivered by MidKent College, with the first 15 young people having nearly completed the programme. Initial feedback from young people has been very positive.
- Project Search – an internship programme for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) – has been agreed, with work starting prior to a start date in September. This is in partnership with Bradfields Academy, Forward 2 Employment, Medway Maritime Hospital and Project Search.
- Another year of funding has been identified for the Supported Employment Programme to continue, assisting those with learning difficulties and/or autism into employment.
- Funding has been secured for a new employment programme supporting those with severe mental health conditions.
- The Medway Learning & Skills Hub is very close to completion at Britton Farm Mall. Medway Adult Education (MAE) will be moving in after Easter.
- A new post – Aspirations Officer – has been created and recruited to, with a focus on supporting Care Leavers into education, employment and training.

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
Q4 2021/22	350	309	Green	Minimise	IMP	DET
Q3 2021/22	350	314	Green	Minimise	DET	DET

Comments

At the end of Q4 2021/22 there were a total of 309 households residing in temporary accommodation (TA) provided by the Council in line with its statutory responsibilities. This is a slight decrease from the 314 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, 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
Q4 2021/22	0	0	Green	Minimise	STATIC	STATIC
Q3 2021/22	0	0	Green	Minimise	STATIC	STATIC

Comments

A snapshot at the end of Q4 2021/22 identifies that no families were in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation. Additionally, throughout Q4, no families were placed into B&B 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
Q4 2021/22	175	206	Green	Maximise	DET	DET
Q3 2021/22	175	221	Green	Maximise	DET	DET

Comments

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

During Q4, 206 private sector households were assisted to improve their properties through council intervention. The team currently have 609 active cases being worked on with 29 cases yet to be allocated to an investigating officer and 64 cases have been closed through the quarter.

For the year 2021/22 the PSH team have received 459 requests for service and have been able to close 410 cases. 112 notices and 589 enforcement letters have been issued via the enforcement process. 92 category 1 Hazards and 584 category 2 hazards have been identified, with 108 category 1 and 219 category 2 hazards being either reduced or removed from the residential properties.

163 Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) applications have been approved with a further six home improvement loans and 25 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) adaptations being approved.

Council Plan Projects

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

196 affordable housing units have been delivered in 2021/22. Some projected completions have now been moved to May 2022.

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 alternative materials because they cannot get the materials that would normally be used.

Review Housing Related Support (HRS) commissioning

The Council continues to commission a range of accommodation to support vulnerable people to remain independent. Services have all been recommissioned and there are updated Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) and contract monitoring arrangements in place.

This provision is for 82 units of supported housing for people who are homeless and have housing related support needs. 69 units of supported housing are for young people aged 16-25 who are homeless and have housing related support needs (including nine units specifically for care leavers). 42 units of supported housing are for people with a history of offending behaviour who are homeless and may have housing related support needs. 14 units of supported housing are for homeless, single women or women with children at risk of domestic abuse (refuge accommodation). A Floating Support service is available 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 service has submitted a funding request for 2022/25 and has responded to a clarification request from our adviser. The next stage is moderation at a national level by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to determine which interventions they will agree to fund for the remaining period from July 2022 to the end of March 2025. At a recent DLUHC event, Eddie Hughes MP

(Parliamentary Under Secretary for Rough Sleeping and Housing) and Michael Gove MP (Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) committed to the goal of ending rough sleeping by the end of this parliament. Officers were due to take a paper to the Procurement Board in mid-April to agree commissioning plans. The Council has also been granted Protect and Vaccinate funding which has allowed us to maximise the number of people brought off the street and supported to access vaccinations and additionally have worked with the Public Health team and voluntary groups to get a further 97 people vaccinated who were attending soup kitchens and community venues.

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

The Council has experienced a significant increase in footfall across the year, with the projected figure at the year's close likely to be above 3,200, compared to 2,704 in 2020/21 and 2,499 in 2019/21. Despite these pressures the team continues to be highly effective in maximising successful prevention and relief for homeless households, with the projected total for 2021/22 being 1,053, which represents an average 66% success rate for all those persons owed a homeless duty.

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.

In Q4, the service received 65 new referrals. The team were involved with 53 sign-ups. The team were able to obtain £45,099.71 in a lump sum for tenants of which £17,444.06 was paid directly to tenants' rent account to reduce arrears. They were also able to get an annualised benefit of £55,548.24 of which £14,057.68 was paid to the rent account. The team were also successful in obtaining £7,826.48 in Household Support Grant for Housing Revenue Account (HRA) tenants, helping reduce hardship.

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

The rent arrears at the end of Q4 are 1.32%. This is a decrease on the Q3 figure of 1.72%, and inside the target range of 1.65%. 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 Reform 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. 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 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 team for advice and support.

Capital works programme

The Capital Works programme has been drafted and instructed to Mears for the years 2022/23 and 2023/24 in order to allow more effective planning of resource and deployment.

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 rating C or above by 2030.

Good progress has been made on our windows, doors, smoke detection, co-alarm and domestic electrical testing programmes.

Repairs and maintenance contracts

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

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.

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