

REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- 13 JUNE 2024
Quarter 4 2023/24

Strategic risks relevant to this committee

Live or Managed risk	Risk Ref	Risk	Inherent Risk Score	Q4 22/23 Current Risk Score	Q1 23/24 Current Risk Score	Q2 23/24 Current Risk Score	Q3 23/24 Current Risk Score	Q4 23/24 Current Risk Score	Movement	Definition (Current score) (L-likelihood) (I-impact)	Owner	Portfolio	Link to Council Plan
L	SR17	Delivering regeneration	BII	BII	BII	BII	BII	BII	→	L – likely I – major	Director of Place	Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration	Growth
L	SR46	Medway's Economic Recovery	BII	BII	BII	BII	BII	BII	→	L – likely I – major	Assistant Director Regeneration	Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment	Growth
L	SR36A	Medway Development Company Ltd	BI	NA	CII	CII	CII	CII	→	L – unlikely I – major	Assistant Director Regeneration, Chief Operating Officer	Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration	Growth

Full details of strategic risks relevant to this committee can be found in Appendix 3.

Performance by outcome

Key

Red	Significantly below target (>5%)	Amber	Slightly below target (<5%)	Green	Met or exceeded target
DET	Deteriorating	STATIC	Static	IMP	Improving
Short term	since last quarter	Long term	average last 4 quarters	Goldilocks	Optimum performance is in a target range

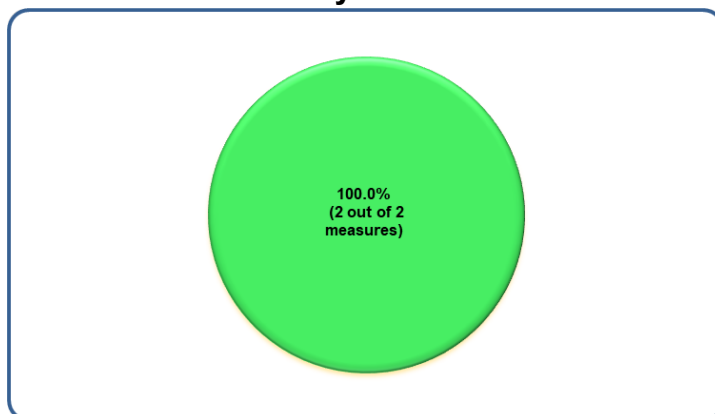
Council Priority: GROWTH

Maximising regeneration and economic growth - growth for all

Outcome: A strong diversified economy

Programme: Inward investment and business growth

Performance Summary



The total number of measures relevant to this committee is 3.
 1 measure is data only [GVAPJ M]
 2 measures met their target [ECD13; ECD20]

PI code	PI name	Aim to	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
ECD13	Percentage of square footage let at Innovation Centre Medway (ICM)	Maximise	100.00%	90.00%	Green	IMP	IMP

Comments:

- The ICM has 100% office occupancy.
- The last quarter has seen a considerable amount of change and it has been very busy.
- Four offices have been made into two new larger offices. One extra-large office has been split into two large offices to fit consistent demand for 400 to 600 square foot offices.
- Two offices have been vacated and three offices have been occupied by new tenants, along with eight existing tenants swapping office or expanding into an extra office to complement their existing office.
- This trend in high levels of office moves is likely to continue for some time as another six tenants are actively seeking to grow or contract or leave the ICM altogether.

PI code	PI name	Aim to	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
ECD20	Percentage of square footage let in council owned business units	Maximise	94.47%	90%	Green	IMP	IMP

Comments:

- The four properties – Hopewell Drive, Pier Road, Innovation Centre Medway and Innovation Studio Medway – are performing well with 94.47% occupancy representing 41,138.70 square feet of space let out of a possible 43,546.04 square feet.
- Hopewell Drive continues to perform well with 22 out of 23 units let representing 95.74% occupancy level. There is a potential applicant for the one vacant unit.
- Pier Road continues to improve its occupancy levels with 23 out of 29 units let representing 82.37 % occupancy. Three of the empty six units have applications or are at heads of terms stage in the letting process.
- The Innovation Centre Medway has 100% office occupancy. There have been several office alterations, two offices have been vacated and three offices have been occupied by new tenants, along with eight existing tenants swapping office or expanding into an extra office to complement their existing office.
- The Innovation Studio site has 100% occupancy with all 15 offices and 17 containers let.

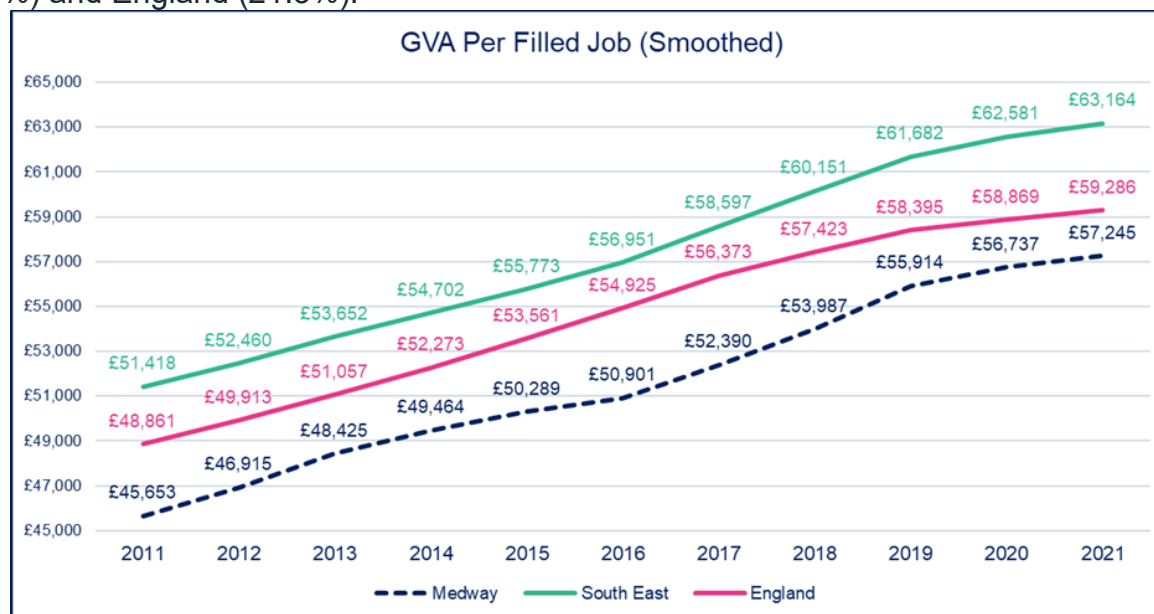
PI code	PI name	Aim to	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
GVAPJ M	GVA per job – Medway (21/22 annual)	Maximise	£57,245.00	Data	Data	IMP	IMP

Comments:

- The data is published by The Office for National Statistics (ONS) and was previously released annually in December. Since Covid19, there have been delays at the ONS and the latest release of this data (2021) was in July 2023. The next release date for the 2022 data is yet to be announced.
- Given the volatility with the raw data and because the smoothed data is weighted, year-on-year comparisons should not be made. Gross Value Added (GVA) per filled job is better considered over a longer period. Trends over a longer period are less likely to be the result of the volatility around any single year estimate and are more likely to be showing a change in the economic performance of Medway.

Benchmarking:

- Medway's GVA per filled job for 2021 is £57,245.00, which is 3.4% below that of England (£59,286). However, in 2011, Medway was 6.6% below England, so for 2021, Medway has become closer to England by 3.2 percentage points over these 10 years.
- From 2016 to 2021, Medway's GVA per filled job has increased by 12.5%, which is a higher percentage change than that of the South East (10.9%) and England (7.9%). Medway has also seen a higher rate of change over 10 years at 25.4%, compared to the South East (22.8%) and England (21.3%).



Projects for this outcome:**To ensure that the delivery of space and resources to enable innovative business growth and practice sits at the heart of Innovation Park Medway:**

- Medway Council has taken the decision to pause development at Innovation Park Medway (IPM) and explore the best options for its future. Councillors agreed the decision at Cabinet on Tuesday, 13 February 2024 to enable a thorough review of proposals for the business park.
- Rising construction costs and higher interest rates, together with impact of the Covid19 pandemic on construction and business practices, were among the factors influencing the need for a new approach for the park, which consists of a north and south site.
- Following the decision by Cabinet, development will be paused at both sites at appropriate milestones. Pausing the programme will enable the council to explore and agree the best long-term opportunities for IPM, and to ensure the most sustainable future for both sites.

Continue to encourage and help facilitate the growth of businesses in Medway (Business premises provision):

- The Innovation Hub is now named Ascend. The operator Edgility and design and build contractors Form Fit Out have been fully appointed with late stage designs being finalised with an opening date estimate of September 2024.

Support Business for Medway, the local economic partnership:

- Business for Medway continues to be an engaging forum between businesses, the council and business groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Business. The forum met in January with the next meeting scheduled for May.
- An annual Medway Business and Skills Showcase, proving further opportunities for the business and education communities to engage, was held on 10 April and was a great success.

Facilitate delivery of Medway 2037:

- The Medway 2037 set of strategies were approved by Cabinet in October 2022 including Medway 2037, Town Centre Strategy, Innovation Strategy and Skills & Employability Plan.
- Further work on the Medway 2037 document is ongoing to reflect the ambitions of the new administration, the Council Plan and to align with the updated local plan timescales to 'Medway 2040'. Once finalised, the desktop version will be publicly available online.
- Work on the River Strategy is ongoing and will go to Cabinet separately once completed.

Dissemination of Medway 2037 and implementation of the Delivery Plan:

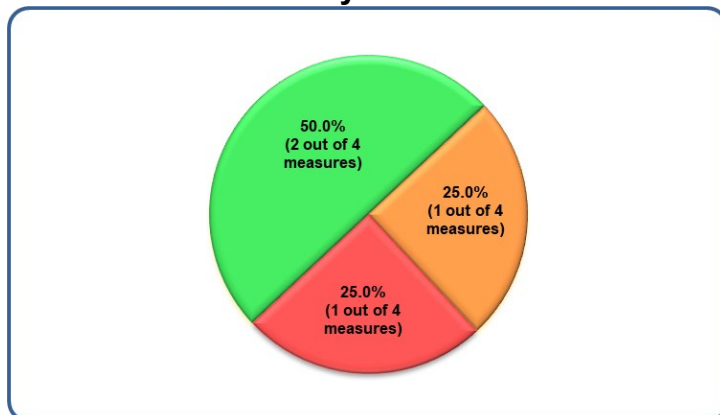
- The Medway 2037 set of strategies were approved by Cabinet in October 2022. The Medway 2037 Strategies include Medway 2037, Skills & Employability Plan, Innovation Strategy, Town Centre Strategy, and River Strategy, and align with other relevant strategies such as the Climate Change Action Plan, Culture Strategy, Tourism Strategy, Sport Strategy, and over-arching Council Plan. Priorities include destination and placemaking, town centres, inward investment, business accommodation and digital connectivity, sector growth and improving employability.
- Cross-cutting themes include climate change and net zero, innovation, and growth for all. Work to update the Medway 2037 document is ongoing to reflect the ambitions of the new administration, the Council Plan and to align with the updated local plan timescales to 'Medway 2040'. Once finalised, the desktop version will be publicly available online.
- A refreshed consolidated Delivery Plan will be developed and kept in-house to measure the progress of the actions within the Strategies. Funding streams to support the Delivery Plan are being considered.

To deliver a comprehensive business support package which supports both business creation and growth (contracted business support):

- A total of 113 assists were provided during the quarter.
- 33 were intensive assists to local businesses; this comprised of 12 businesses receiving intense support, 15 green audits being provided, and six grants being awarded.
- A further 38 businesses received light or medium assistance and 42 businesses attended a sponsored networker to encourage local supply chain links.
- The Scale Up Programmes provided by the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce have been extended into Q1 24/25 with a view to procuring on site 1-2-1 support for the Medway's latest workspace 'Ascend' in Q2 24/25, increasing accessibility to support.

Outcome: Residents with jobs and skills

Programme: Jobs, skills, and employability Performance Summary



The total number of measures relevant to this committee is 4.
 2 measures met their target [MAE 3; NI 117(N&U)]
 1 measure was slightly below target [MAE 2]
 1 measure was significantly below target [LRRC4a]

1 of the 2 green measures is deteriorating long term [MAE 3]
 The red measure is deteriorating long term [LRCC4a]

PI code	PI name	Aim to	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
LRCC4a	Number of jobs created and safeguarded (cumulative)	Maximise	26	200	Red	DET	DET

Comments:

- 20 jobs were safeguarded at Primech Building Services due to the intervention of Locate in Kent.
- Six jobs were retained at Pier Road Industrial Estate.

PI code	PI name	Aim to	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
MAE 2	% retention rate (Q2 23/24 academic year)	Maximise	89.78%	94%	Amber	DET	IMP

Comments:

- This performance measure is based on academic year rather than financial year.
- Data is as at 28 March for Q2 of academic year 23/24 (November 2023 – January 2024). Data has been extracted from the EBS Management System.
- Medway Adult Education (MAE) are continuing to increase the number of learners starting a course with 772 more enrolments compared to Q2 of the 22/23 academic year.
- The retention rate measures the percentage of learners who start a course with MAE and are either continuing with their learning or have completed their learning. Retention has decreased by 3.94 percentage points (pp) since last reported, although it is 5.04pp above the retention for the same period last year (Q2 of the 22/23 academic year). Retention is currently 4.22pp below the challenging target of 94%.
- 79% of all withdrawals are from learners attending Adult Skills Budget funded courses. 57% of these are from English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners. The highest known withdrawal reason is illness followed closely by childcare and then moving into employment.
- Tutors and curriculum staff persevere with keeping learners engaged to offer future courses at more suitable times. 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 measures, observations of teaching and learning, learner and partner evaluations, self-assessment reviews and quality improvement plans at Service and Programme level.

PI code	PI name	Aim to	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
MAE 3	Achievement rate (pass rate) (Q2 23/24 academic year)	Maximise	96.8%	96%	Green	DET	DET

Comments:

- The pass rate measures the percentage of learners who complete their course and achieve a qualification or their learning aim.
- This performance measure is based on academic year rather than financial year.
- Data is as at 28 March for Q2 of academic year 23/24 (November 2023 – January 2024). Data has been extracted from the EBS Management System.
- Medway Adult Education (MAE) has a pass rate that is 0.8 percentage points above the target of 96%. This shows that 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 – Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement).

PI code	PI name	Aim to	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
NI 117(N&U)	The percentage of 16–17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training or whose status is 'not known'	Minimise	4.9%	7%	Green	IMP	IMP

Comments:

- Not in education, employment, or training (NEET) and Not Known data is cyclical and should not be compared quarter to quarter.
- Data is for February 2024. Progress has continued. The combined outturn is 4.9% – this is fractionally better than the 5.1% recorded in February 2023. Currently 296 (4%) 16- and 17-year-olds are NEET and 66 whose activity (0.9%) is recorded as Unknown. In February 2023 these figures were 206 and 146. It is normal for the NEET numbers to rise when the numbers of unknowns are lower and well controlled.

Benchmarking:

- Nationally 4.9% of 16- and 17-year-olds are NEET or Not Known. This is the same as Medway but is a rise compared to February 2023 (4.6%). The rate of NEET and Not Known in the South East is currently 5.8% which is worse than Medway. In 2023 the South East was also 5.8%.
- Compared to February 2023 Medway is performing, relatively, better than National and the South East.

Actions:

- The percentage of NEETs and Unknowns has reduced steadily month on month across Q4 and shows continued improvement against the previous two years. Significant support is being offered to those NEET young people engaging but the lack of appropriate provision remains to be the biggest barrier. 14% of the NEET cohort are unavailable for EET due to illness/disability/pregnancy or parenting. 5.9% of the NEET cohort have secured education placements for September 2024. The NEET figure is marginally higher than the previous year, whilst the reduced Unknown figure is testament to the data clarity now held within the council. The Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) team has a specific focus on the September Guarantee Tracking now, of which Medway reported the most improved figures in 2023. A small pilot programme with Medway Adult Education is due to start on 12 April and the third Opportunities Fair is planned for 30 May 2024.

Projects for this outcome:**Deliver the Medway Adult Education learning programme to boost local skills level for those furthest from employment.:**

- Several courses and activities have taken place since the beginning of January at Medway Adult Education (MAE) centres and community venues across Medway to engage with those hardest to reach and furthest from education and employment. For example, on 27 March, in partnership with Jaspers Community Café, a line dancing workshop for 30 learners to encourage

active lifestyles and fun with numbers was delivered. One of the learners explained how earlier that day they “felt miserable” but the line dancing session turned that around and they felt “wonderful” afterwards!

- Multiply funding to improve confidence in mathematics and understanding ways to support children with their learning has been used to promote a board game activity that raises awareness of oral health and fun with numbers.
- From Farm to Fork, sewing with coordinates and budgeting courses for parents and children have been delivered at St James’ School on the Isle of Grain with great success. Feedback from the school indicates very high levels of satisfaction from parents and carers, the children, and the school. Staff at the school are keen for more activities because the school is in an area of high deprivation, which is remote and where residents are at increased risk of social isolation. The children speak highly of their learning with the MAE tutor and how they have applied their learning at home and parents have shared how the courses have improved their ability to manage budgets and meal planning. Topics explored during the course have included how cooking a meal from scratch can be more cost-effective and healthier than a ready meal. Therefore, MAE is keen to continue this successful relationship and replicate it with other schools in Medway. MAE is currently in the process of recruiting more staff to facilitate this.
- MAE staff have also had great success in working with Medway Norse and their employees to help them develop digital skills, understand their pay slips, and improve their online safety awareness. To date, 15 Norse employees have engaged in learning with MAE. Another eight employees will begin a course designed to improve confidence with numbers in April.
- Following the fantastic development of courses for Norse staff and the great feedback from the employees, a new suite of deaf awareness and sign language courses are also planned to take place from April onwards. These new courses will further develop employees’ interest in learning new skills, and these skills will help Medway residents with hearing impairments to access community facilities and services.

To support the framework of action in the Skills & Employability Plan for Medway:

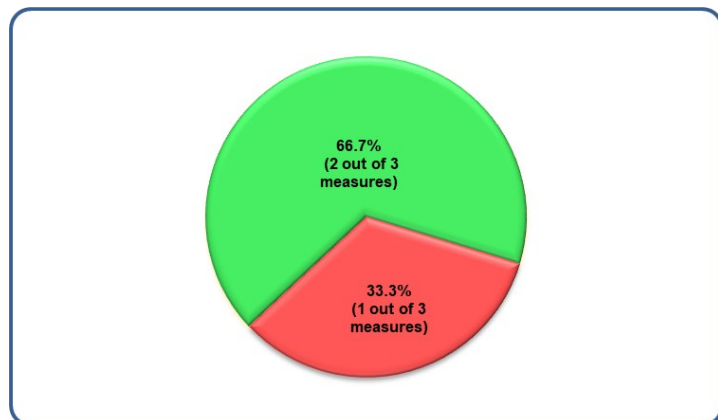
- Work is under way to deliver the skills element of the Shared Prosperity Fund, with four target areas of supporting people to: gain life skills; engage with education; engage with job searching; and gain employment.
- Preparatory work is taking place to get Medway ready to deliver the new Universal Support government programme, delivering Supported Employment to Medway residents with disabilities. We are also working on an extension to the current Local Supported Employment programme to bridge the gap before Universal Support starts.
- A bid to bring Skills Bootcamps to Kent & Medway is underway. These are targeted programmes designed to support people into work with targeted and intensive courses.
- The Medway Business and Skills Showcase takes place in April, and we are expecting over 200 attendees to this.
- The Supported Internship employer event, parent and carer event and promotional videos have all been delivered. The employer event had 60 attendees. The parent and carer event had over 90 attendees.

Number of jobs created and safeguarded:

- 20 jobs were safeguarded at Primech Building Services due to the intervention of Locate in Kent.
- Six jobs were retained at Pier Road Industrial Estate.

Outcome: Preventing homelessness

Programme: Preventing homelessness Performance Summary



The total number of measures relevant to this committee is 3.
2 measures met their target [HC3; HC4a]
1 measure was significantly below target [NI 156]

The red measure is deteriorating long term [NI 156]

PI code	PI name	Aim to	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
NI 156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	Minimise	520	400	Red	DET	DET

Comments:

- At the end of Q4 23/24 there were a total of 520 households residing in temporary accommodation (TA) provided by the council in line with its statutory responsibilities. This figure is higher than the 484 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.
- There are six households in TA at the moment that have come from the Homes for Ukraine or Family Scheme processes as follows:
 - ❖ 'Family scheme route: accommodation arrangements/relationships have broken down' – 2
 - ❖ 'Homes for Ukraine sponsorship route: accommodation arrangements/relationships have broken down' – 1
 - ❖ 'Homes for Ukraine sponsorship route: accommodation not available or not suitable on arrival' – 3.
- 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 3.94 per 1,000 households – this is slightly lower than the national rate of 4.55 (latest benchmarking figures September 2023).
- Further benchmarking has been undertaken to identify how Medway compares with other similar sized unitary authorities. Locally, Swale had a rate of 5.21 per 1,000 households in the same time period.

PI code	PI name	Aim to	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
HC3	Number of households with dependent children in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation who have resided there for 6+ weeks	Minimise	0	0	Green	STATIC	STATIC

Comments:

- A snapshot at the end of Q4 23/24 identifies that no families were in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation. Additionally, throughout Q3 no families were placed into B&B for more than six weeks.
- Work is continuously underway to ensure that the use of B&B accommodation 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 accommodation within appropriate timescales.

PI code	PI name	Aim to	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
HC4a	Number of private sector properties improved as a result of the Council's intervention (cumulative)	Maximise	1,007	800	Green	IMP	IMP

Comments:

- This performance measure has replaced the 'HC4: Number of private sector properties improved as a result of the Council's intervention' performance measure. The new performance measure, HC4a, shall reflect on cumulative figures.
- The Private Sector Housing (PSH) team continues to work with tenants that are living in inadequate dwellings, that fail to meet the minimum standards and properties that fail to meet the tenants' needs that could potentially have serious consequences for health and wellbeing. We continued to work with landlords to improve the standard of accommodation in the private sector throughout 2023/24.

- During Q4 23/24, a further 250 private sector households were assisted to improve their properties through council intervention bringing the total for the year to 1,077. Nine category 1 hazards and 132 category 2 hazards have been identified, with 16 category 1 and 12 category 2 hazards being either reduced or removed from the residential properties in Q4. These figures are rolling so will increase and decrease through the months. These hazards have been removed by either formal or informal actions.
- 32 enforcement notices have also been issued throughout this quarter in terms of hazards identified. Damp and mould continues to be statistically significant hazards with 194 Category 1 and 2 hazards under damp and mould being identified in Q4. The PSH Licencing team continues to face challenges with maintaining Homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) licencing. They have started to see an improvement in the time it takes to process HMO applications.
- 43 Disability Facility Grant (DFG) applications have been approved. The adaptations from these grants can restore the use of the home so that our clients can regain or retain their independence and carry on living in the community. One discretionary stair lift grant has also been approved during this quarter.

Projects for this outcome:

Reducing the number of those rough sleeping - Ensure that the council maximises the opportunity to reduce homelessness through prevention and relief:

- 2023/24 saw very high levels of demand for the council's homeless services, with approaches for advice and assistance averaging at 397 per month, and the year topping out with a total of 4,760 approaches. This can be compared to the preceding year (2022/23) which saw a total of 3,828 approaches, thus representing a 24% increase for 2023/24. The main drivers for these approaches continued to be evictions from tenancies, being asked to leave by family or friends, leaving an institution (custody, armed forces, hospital), and being homeless as a victim of domestic abuse, with a consistent aggravating factor being the cost of living crisis, including increasing rents in the private sector that outstrip welfare benefit rent assistance.
- Throughout the year, successes for prevention and relief of homelessness continue to be high, averaging 83 per month, or 63% of all those households owed some form of homeless duty. Due to service demand, Options officers continued to manage high caseloads of circa 80, but it is anticipated that this will be relieved as a consequence of the investment in the recruitment of five new Options Officers, which will also contribute to the service's overall successful prevention/relief activity.
- Effective partnership working with local and private sector landlords, and other council teams, remained fundamental to the team's successful prevention/relief activity, including joint working to maximise support and income for clients at risk of eviction and sustain tenancies, and working closely with colleagues in the Rough Sleepers team to resolve homelessness for those rough sleeping. This work is ongoing.
- Collaborative working across the Housing service continues with a view to establishing a private sector lettings scheme to increase the supply of accommodation available to the council in the private rented sector. Following agreement having been

given by Cabinet to establish a lettings scheme, much of the structure and procedures have been mapped out and a Senior Lettings Officer – who will undertake the day-to-day operation of it – has been recruited. Work is ongoing for a pilot for the scheme to be rolled out circa June.

- The Rough Sleeping Initiative continues to be challenged in terms of increasing numbers of people referred in and verified as sleeping rough. Outreach sessions are continued from 5am alongside a raft of commissioned services providing off the street accommodation, longer term supported accommodation, private sector move on properties, and use of emergency accommodation from Rehousing, as well as supporting the Medway Emergency Winter Refuge provision.
- Additional funding was utilised to enable Winter Refuge to open for additional nights including the whole of March 2024. During the winter period the Medway Assessment Centre expanded from six rooms to 11 and this additional capacity has remained in place. Additional bed and breakfast (B&B) provision was secured as well as a 4 bedroom house, with visiting support from a local provider.
- Medway Housing has lobbied the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Rough Sleeping Adviser for greater financial and strategic input for Medway as the current provision available in Medway does not meet the current demand for services.

To support people and vulnerable families to access housing:

- Housing Services are progressing with work with mhs homes around getting the foyer up and running for September 2024, which will provide 30 additional units of supported housing for young people aged 18-25.
- The Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) has continued with the expansion of the Medway Assessment Centre (MAC) provision and added a further three bedroom house with visiting support for vulnerable people with a history of sleeping rough, contracted from a local provider.
- The RSI also funded staffing to allow the winter refuge to open every night in March to provide overnight accommodation for people who are currently sleeping rough.

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

- The bid to the Supported Housing Accommodation Programme was successful, with the announcement made on 5 December 2023 that capital funding of £1.25m and support funding of £750k has been awarded. This will facilitate the opening of the new 30 room provision for vulnerable 18-25 year old people at risk of homelessness. The current delivery date for the scheme, recently named Sunrise Foyer, is September 2024.

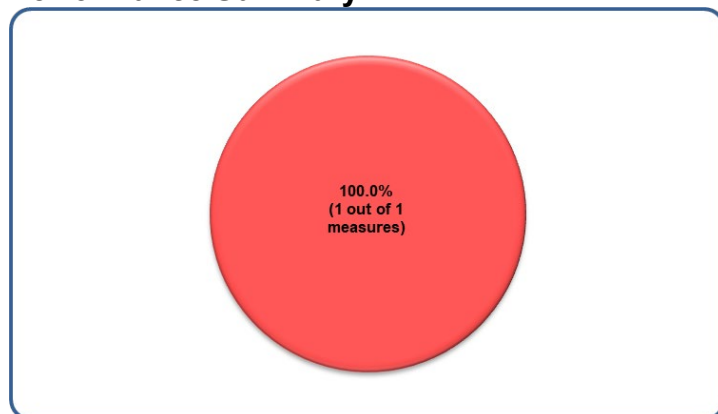
Working with landlords and agents to support households to sustain their accommodation and prevent homelessness:

- The Housing Solutions and Reviews team continues to maintain their joint working arrangements and activities with social and private landlords to seek to sustain tenancies at risk of eviction.
- Work continues on recovery of the landlord forum, with a meeting having been held for this purpose in January. The council continues to work with key partners to seek to get the forum up and running at the earliest opportunity.
- The Supported Housing Improvement Programme is working with landlords and support providers of supported housing to ensure that responsibilities in terms of quality of accommodation, appropriate support provision and value for money in terms of benefit claims are understood. This is in preparation for the anticipated rollout statutory duties and standards from the Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act.

Outcome: Delivering new homes to meet the needs of Medway's residents

Programme: Delivering new homes to meet the needs of Medway's residents

Performance Summary



The total number of measures relevant to this committee is 1.
This measure was significantly below target [NI 154]

This measure is deteriorating long term [NI 154]

PI code	PI name	Aim to	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
NI 154	Net additional homes provided (22/23 annual)	Maximise	950	1675	Red	DET	DET

Comments:

- 950 new homes were delivered against the requirement of 1,675 for 2022/23.
- The Office for National Statistics (ONS) released the latest affordability ratios recently, which when applied to the standard method calculation, gives Medway a Local Housing Need figure of 1,658 dwellings per annum from 2023/24 onwards.

Projects for this outcome:

Work with landowners and developers to promote the delivery of housing on appropriate sites in Medway to meet our housing targets and vision for Medway's successful growth:

- The Planning Service continues to work with landowners and developers to promote the delivery of housing on appropriate sites in Medway to meet its housing targets and support the council's vision for successful growth in Medway by meeting regularly with developers and landowners, engagement in the preparation of the new local plan and wider policy documents, and by implementing the planning protocol in partnership with other Kent authorities.

- The Planning Service regularly meet with individual developers and landowners. Consultation events are held as required as part of the process for the preparation of the new Local Plan.
- The Planning Service continues to work with Neighbourhood Planning Groups to progress plans to Examination. The Chief Planning Officer has met with several developers to discuss specific projects and complex applications during the quarter. The next annual forum with major developers will be organised to take place in June 2024.

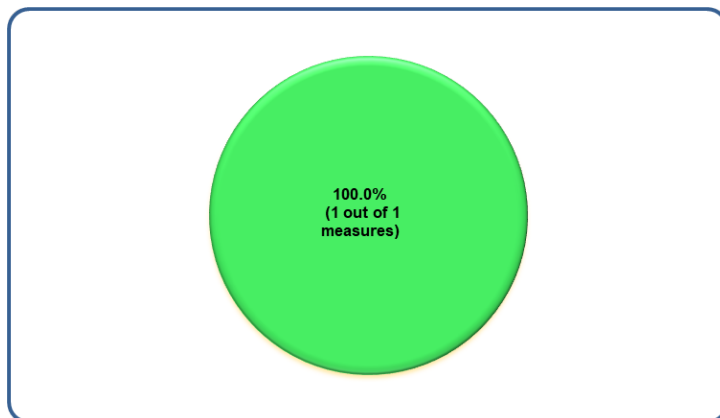
Preparation of the new Medway Local Plan:

- Work continues on preparation of the new Local Plan which will set out the vision for Medway's growth. It will provide direction for investment in homes, jobs and services, and policies, to protect and enhance what makes Medway special and to ensure that the growth is supported by the required infrastructure.

Outcome: Getting around Medway

Programme: Tackle congestion hotspots by transport and public realm improvements

Performance Summary



The total number of measures relevant to this committee is 1.
This measure met its target [NI 167]

This measure is deteriorating long term [NI 167]

PI code	PI name	Aim to	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
NI 167	Average journey time along five routes across Medway (minutes per mile) (2022 calendar year)	Minimise	2.97	4.00	Green	DET	DET

Comments:

- This performance indicator (PI) is a measure of journey times across the five key highway corridors into the centre of Medway. It measures the average minutes per mile across five key routes over the Monday to Friday 8am to 9am term time peak. It has a target of 4 minutes per mile. The PI is calculated using data supplied once a year by the Department for Transport (DfT).
- Officers are still awaiting the provision of the next tranche of Trafficmaster Data from the DfT. This next tranche will cover the calendar year 2023. As in previous years it is likely the data will be provided around April / May 2024. Once received officers will update the journey time PI for 2023.

Projects for this outcome:**Maintain Band 3 status for the Highway Asset Management Self-Assessment via the Department for Transport (DfT) (DfT Self-Incentive Programme (Band 3 Award)):**

- We have received the Full Band 3 allocation until 31 March 2025, which has been combined with the Needs Element of the Highway Maintenance Block funding.
- We are now looking at our 2024/25 Asset Management Delivery Plan which supports our evidence base for continued funding in order to plan ahead, whilst also reviewing what has been achieved in 2023/24.

Continue to provide key maintenance and upgrades for the Medway Tunnel (Medway Tunnel Improvement Programme - Phase 4 Delivery):

- Works completed to date as part of the tunnel project include the Sump gas sampling system, Contraflow gaps Manhole upgrade/replacement and A289 carriageway resurfacing.
- Ongoing works as part of this project include the Pier Road retaining wall and the Communications network upgrade.
- Future works as part of the tender due out next financial year include Ventilation fans, Variable Message Sign (VMS), Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition (SCADA), Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), Video Automatic Incident Detection (VAID), the Air Quality Management Systems (AQMS), Pumps and Sumps refurbishment, Traffic signal integration and LED lighting upgrade.

Develop a range of strategies for addressing identified congestion hotspots in Medway, including improvements to traffic signal infrastructure and programming:

- Throughout Q4 and 2023/24, a range of projects and strategies to help keep Medway moving and address congestion hotspots have been progressed. These include a combination of highway alteration traffic projects, traffic signal site maintenance and improvement, signal optimisation, and real-time information sharing via Variable Message Signing (VMS) infrastructure.
- Traffic signal site optimisation happens continually through a combination of ongoing network review, fault monitoring/site interrogation, and stakeholder engagement. Faults are identified and addressed on a daily basis to ensure Medway's traffic signal installations are performing as intended, minimising congestion as a result of sub-optimal signal operation.
- During the last quarter, significant progress has been made in relation to the Mierscourt Road congestion reduction layout alteration project. The initial detailed design has been completed and traffic modelling has commenced to assess the anticipated benefits of the design. It is anticipated that this will be concluded within the next quarter. This project is a key junction improvement on the arterial A road network.
- At the end of Q4 the Transport and Parking Service has learned that it has been successful in its bid to the Department for Transport's (DfT's) Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant (TSOG) and Green Light Fund (GLF) with over £500k being awarded to

Medway under the TSOG. This will support the upgrading of unreliable or obsolete equipment over the coming two years, supporting improved reliability and network performance. This aligns with the strategic objective of tackling congestion hotspots within Medway and represents a high value investment in Medway's traffic management systems.

- During Q3 the specification was produced to a commission of a route review covering the A2 corridor through Strood and Rochester to support the wider route optimisation for this key link. This workstream will align well with the above grant funding workstreams where it is anticipated that packages of works will be developed over the coming service plan periods.
- During this service plan period significant progress has also been made in relation to returning some of Medway's VMS stock to operation. The VMS allow real-time information to be shared with road users, optimising route choice and supporting efficient use of the road network in real-time. Recognising that some of the VMS stock is reaching end of life, this formed part of the Medway bid for grant funding, whereas above, Medway has been successful in securing funding to upgrade now obsolete traffic system equipment.
- A recruitment process was repeated in this part of the business during Q4; however, this proved unsuccessful again. Resources have continued to be prioritised within this area to ensure that core traffic signal activities continue. Efforts to recruit to vacancies will continue into Q1 24/25.