

Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee
20 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	Move ment	Definition (Current score) (L-likelihood) (I-impact)	Owner	Portfolio	Link to Council Plan
L	SR47	Climate Change	All	All	CIII	CIII	CIII	CIII	→	L – unlikely I – moderate	Deputy Director of Place and Assistant Director Frontline Services	Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration	Place

Full details of strategic risks relevant to this committee can be found in Appendix 2.

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: PLACE Medway: A place to be proud of

Outcome: A clean and green environment

Programme: Climate Change Performance Summary

There are no performance measures for this programme.

Project for this programme:

Climate change:

Annual update on achievements and actions not progressing (including Q4 progress)

PA1 – Emission reduction pathways

- Climate Emergency UK gave Medway Council a score of 39% for its action on climate, meaning a position of joint 22nd out of all (186) UK single tier authorities. Only 26 UK single tier authorities scored over 50%. The findings will support the refresh of the council's Climate Change Action Plan which is already underway.
- The council's 2021/22 carbon emissions have been published on the council website and show a reduction of 0.54% on the previous year, which was the pandemic lockdown year.
- A centralised repository of council vehicles has started to be created to support the transition to electric vehicles and accurate vehicle reporting.
- Some actions under Priority Area 1 have not progressed this year due to the Climate Response Manager post remaining vacant and a request to focus on the new administration's priorities.

PA2 – Public sector decision making

- The Internal Audit team assessed the governance arrangements for the Climate Change Action Plan as Green. It was recommended that a formal risk register and risk management process should be developed, and this is underway.
- The Climate Response team commented on a range of strategies and consultations in terms of the climate agenda including the draft Sustainable Food Policy, the draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, the Chatham Design Code consultation, the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Housing Strategy consultation, the Flood Risk Management Strategy, the Air Quality Action Plan, the Electric Vehicles (EV) Strategy, neighbourhood plan consultations and Deangate Community Parkland consultation. The team commented on the Local Plan Reg 18 consultation and continue to work with the Planning team to embed the climate agenda in the new Local Plan.

- A proposal has been made to amend the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy to include restrictions on the promotion of goods and services which conflict with the council's carbon reduction targets and Climate Change Action Plan. The amended policy was considered at Directorate Management Team (DMT) in Q4 23/24 and is due to be considered at Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny in Q1 24/25.
- Creative Medway are developing a process to collect environmental support pledges from the sector and preparing to offer subsidised carbon literacy training for freelance and small-scale sector organisations in 2024/25.
- Refresh Medway, a youth-based climate change public art project, launched in Gillingham and Strood at the end of Q4 led by Medway Cultural Education Partnership.
- Climate friendly food actions for individuals, businesses and organisations have been added to the Medway Food Partnership webpage and the Climate Change webpages.
- The Sustainable Food Places application for bronze award was submitted but not successful. It will be resubmitted in Q1 24/25.
- Some actions under Priority Area 2 have not progressed due to the Climate Response Manager post remaining vacant and a request to focus on the new administration's priorities.

PA3 – Planning and development

- The Planning team has identified that most of the actions under this priority require reconsideration, as part of the Climate Change Action Plan refresh, to ensure they are still fit for purpose and SMART.
- The Planning team has continued to draft climate change policies for Reg 18 consultation in June 2024.

PA4 – Climate Emergency Funding

The following funding bids have been successful in 2023/24:

- £744,379 of Swimming Pool Support Fund from Sport England – for the install of Solar photovoltaics (PV) and replacement of gas boilers at Hoo Sports Centre.
- £68,000 of LEVI Capability Funding from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles – to support delivery of EV charging infrastructure.
- £486,418 of Active Travel Funding (ATF4) from Active Travel England – to deliver the School Streets programme.
- £768,780 of Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP+) Funding from Department for Transport – to support Medway's Free Bus Weekend and new evening and Sunday frequency uplifts from January 2024.
- Medway has also been chosen as a 'Heritage Priority Place' which brings in associated funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund over 10 years. 'Protecting the Environment' and 'Organisational Sustainability' are two of the four set investment principles which will support the climate agenda.
- UK Shared Prosperity Funding (SPF) has been allocated by the SPF team across a range of projects which support climate action including a parklets feasibility study.

- The Climate Response team continues to horizon scan for funding opportunities and share these regularly with their networks.
- 3 out of the 4 actions under this priority area are not currently being progressed. These include actions around a carbon offset fund (due to capacity; priority is working on Local Plan), and influence investment of funds in pension scheme (the Chief Operating Officer (COO) noted minimal opportunity to manage the pension fund investments at officer level).

PA5 – Building retrofit

- Priority action – The Housing team has been advancing with their plans to ensure that all council housing stock meet the national and government targets for energy standards. 650 Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) surveys have been completed in 2023/24. This information has helped to identify the works and costs required to properties below EPC C rating. Works to improve the energy efficiency of 190 properties will start in 2024/25 using the Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding grant and all properties will have a valid EPC by the end of 2024/25. The Housing team intends to apply for future Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding to support the target of all properties being EPC C by 2030.
- Priority action – Phase 1 of the Refit Energy Efficiency programme is 80% complete. Resolution of the Building Management System remains ongoing. Phase 2 of the programme, which intended to install heat pumps across 20 council owned buildings, cannot progress due to the council's current financial situation.
- Priority action – The LED street lighting upgrade programme is now complete. Work to resolve columns on land owned by Network Rail is progressing.
- Priority action – A survey to inform the requirements for an LED lighting programme in council owned car parks has yet to commence due to limited staff resource.
- 6 domestic retrofit information sessions for homeowners were delivered in partnership with the University of Greenwich, Kent County Council (KCC) and other Kent districts. In total 85 residents attended the events across Kent. Plans for additional information sessions are being discussed.
- A feasibility study into an LED lighting conversion programme for Medway Tunnel has been completed. Due to a reduction in council capital funding, the programme has been paused until funding is available to deliver this.
- The Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO4) scheme and the Home Upgrade Grant 2 (HUG2) schemes were launched. ECO4 has been set up to support low income and vulnerable households to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. It is being promoted to encourage as many eligible households as possible to apply for the scheme. The aim of HUG2 is to fund energy saving upgrades for residents with off-grid gas heating systems who could be impacted by the high cost of energy bills. The scheme was launched at Hoo Marina Park to eligible residents, resulting in a batch application of around 50 properties which has approval from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero for installs to progress.
- A landlord event has been held as part of the Local Government Association's (LGA's) Net Zero Innovation Programme, which focuses on the landlord journey to net zero. Landlords have been contacted directly to volunteer for interviews conducted by the University of Kent.

PA6 – Transport, travel and digital connectivity

- Priority action – A dedicated EV Project Officer has been appointed to oversee delivery of on-street EV charging points across Medway. Feasibility studies are being carried out to determine suitable locations and once they are assessed for network capacity and cost, relevant consultation will be undertaken. The EV Strategy has been developed and it is anticipated it will go to Cabinet in June/July 2024 for formal adoption.
- Priority action – The action to replace the council’s fleet of small vehicles is progressing informally. 4 electric vehicles have been acquired this year; 2 of these are within the Mayor’s Office. The Communications team has developed a graphic which can be placed on all newly acquired EVs to identify them as zero exhaust emission vehicles.
- The Environmental Projects team has continued throughout the year to research vehicle replacement options and costings for the council’s waste fleet. The Gateway 1 Procurement report, approved by Cabinet in March 2024, identified that full zero emission transition is not possible within the available budget (£17m) and current depot infrastructure.
- A new Active Travel Working group has been established made up of officers and members to coordinate and progress this area of work. The group has been kept informed of the following:
 - ❖ Promotion of school active travel initiatives has continued including a new ‘Walkin N Wheelin’ competition (which saw 11,235 active travel journeys made), two new walking campaigns - Little Trekkers and Striders - (which saw 32,227 active travel journeys made) and ongoing delivery of the Bikeability scheme (and appointment of additional instructor to enhance availability).
 - ❖ A new Public Transport Officer has been appointed to assist with promotion of bus services.
 - ❖ A Bus Workshop was held in February 2024 to begin the process of reviewing the Bus Service Improvement Plan, which is currently being written.
 - ❖ The School Streets scheme went live across seven sites in March 2024.
 - ❖ A Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) has been developed and public consultation completed. High level costings for routes are now being produced.
- An external review of school transport is due to complete by end of Q4 23/24 in readiness for procurement of new transport contract.
- Officers have commenced work on the preparation of the next staff travel survey, with a view to undertaking this early in 2024/2025, dependent on how access to Gun Wharf affects the appropriateness of the timing of the survey.
- Following the Local Elections in May 2023, all Councillors have been supplied with a council managed digital device. Council agendas and papers will therefore no longer be printed.
- No formal updates have been reported against the Air Quality Action Plan actions due to the Environmental Protection Manager post not being recruited to since becoming vacant. However, it is noted that work is underway on a refresh of the Air Quality Action Plan and approval will be sought at DMT in Q1 to go out to public consultation. The draft has also been submitted to the

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to get their feedback prior to finalisation. A report is awaited on the outcome of the Rainham anti-idling project undertaken in 2023. Work is still underway on a feasibility study to understand the barriers and opportunities for the taxi and private hire trade to convert to ultra low emissions vehicles (ULEV). It is anticipated that the results of the study will be available in Q2 24/25.

- Two actions under Priority Area 6 are no longer progressing due to the withdrawal of Housing Infrastructure Funds.

PA7 – Renewable energy

- Priority action – Work has commenced on the Detailed Planning Development of a Chatham Heat District Network.
- Priority action – Council owned land has been reviewed for potential large scale solar sites and it has been advised that there is not currently sufficient available land/space. The acquisition of land from third parties is still to be explored.
- Priority action – It is not clear what action has been taken to review the potential for Solar PV in car parks.
- The Hoo Techno Economic Feasibility study (Phase II) for a heat district network is underway. It has been delayed with the withdrawal of the Housing Infrastructure Funds and undecided quantum of housing. Assumptions have been provided by the Planning team to move the studies forward.
- 49 properties installed solar panels or batteries through Phase 3 (round one) of the Solar Together Kent scheme, which are expected to save 44,504 kilograms of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the first year. One of these was a business. 11 properties have installed solar panels under Phase 3 (round 2) so far, with more due to be completed in 2024/25. A Medway based installer has been appointed to complete the installs for round 3 (phase two) in Medway, for the first time under the scheme.
- Community energy projects and grants have been promoted through the Climate Change social media channels and newsletter including information on 0% VAT on battery storage and Partners for Growth Grant which supports energy efficiency measures for businesses.

PA8 – Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 30 trees have been planted as part of the Local Authority Tree Fund across Medway to replace trees previously lost.
- Around 50 trees were given away by the Climate Response team as part of National Tree Week.
- A new Water a Tree scheme has been set up to encourage the local community to support with top up watering of young trees in Medway during dry weather.
- A study to look at allotment provision and community growing spaces in Medway is underway and a draft Greenspace study has been produced to address securing high quality green spaces for new developments within the new Local Plan. Both will provide evidence for the Local Plan.
- A living roof bus shelter has been installed on Intra supported by Clear Channel's Environmental Innovation Fund. The roof comprises a mix of wildflowers and sedum to provide a habitat for pollinating insects and incorporates a solar panel which powers the lighting.

- Medway & Swale Beneficial Use of Dredging Sediment (MSBUDS) stakeholder group has met throughout 2023/24 to identify and progress sites within the Medway estuary for salt marsh protection and creation, using dredging's from the Port of Sheerness and Chatham. Two funding bids have been submitted to the Environment Agency's 'Nature for Climate fund' to support this work and the outcome is awaited. It is anticipated that the project will take five years to deliver owing to complex ecological licensing and site testing.
- Medway's Organic waste contract is due to expire September 2025. Work has begun exploring options for the next contract that considers the requirements of the Environment Act alongside making soil improver readily available for customers.
- The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is to be reviewed as part of further work on the Local Plan in 2024/25. This work will link to the Nature Recovery Networks strategy.
- Work to maximise the management of existing woodland estates cannot be progressed until the Tree Strategy is adopted. Initiatives to plant more trees are on hold until a fundamental review of the council's tree management is undertaken.
- Work on developing a common carbon metric for calculating the carbon offset value of nature based solutions has not progressed.

PA9 – Supporting low carbon business

- Priority action – Limited updates have been received throughout the year in relation to engagement with Medway's largest businesses on initiatives that reduce energy use. Quarterly update states "Discussions are progressing with developers of renewable/zero carbon energy generation for location on key employment sites, with advanced discussions under way for the former Kingsnorth site".
- A new Partners for Green Growth grant has been launched, using a SPF allocation, to offer up to £2,500 to businesses who have a decarbonisation plan and want to implement measures such as solar panels. To complement this, a Green Audit scheme has been launched with Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, to offer free audits and decarbonisation plans for businesses who want to start their net-zero journey. 12 audits have already been completed.
- Planning approval has been given for a waste-to-energy plant at Kingsnorth which includes providing power for the industrial development of the Uniper site. The Planning team are involved in sustainable transport discussions for the Kingsnorth employment area. Planning applications are due in 2024/25.
- The Climate Response team has continued to promote funding opportunities to the business community via the climate and business team's newsletters as well as directly with partners. These have included the Energy Saving Trust's Energy Redress Scheme, Hubbub's Nature Hubs, Cycling UK's Big Bike Revival Winter Intervention, and Southern Water's Business Partnership Fund.

PA10 – Communication

- Priority action – An inclusive engagement programme has been delivered during 2023/24, including the following:

- ❖ Plans have been developed for a refresh of the Climate Change Action Plan to start in 2024/25. An engagement survey to hear people's views on the vision for the refresh has been produced and will launch in April 2024. Questions were also included in the Citizen's Panel survey in March 2024.
- ❖ A new Community Climate Working Group (CCWG) was established in October 2023. Members of the group represent a range of sectors of the community across Medway and share best practice, opportunities and challenges and help to promote the climate agenda across their networks.
- ❖ A new Climate Change Member Working Party was established in November 2023, with the aim of supporting and encouraging local climate action within their communities and networks. A Climate Action Ward Improvement Plan (CAWIP) template has been developed and members have been encouraged to develop a CAWIP for their ward for delivery during 2024/25. Members will be expected to report on their progress against the plan every four months.
- ❖ Parish Councillors have been engaged through the Rural Liaison Committee (RLC). It has been agreed that the committee will have climate change as a standing item on their agenda and that a nominated representative from each meeting will attend and update the members working group and feedback to the RLC.
- ❖ The 23 Community Actions for 2023 campaign shared examples of how communities can work together on themes such as Green Energy and Nature Based Solutions to encourage more resilient communities.
- ❖ The "What's good for us is good for our climate" campaign was launched in 2024 to promote the link between healthy lifestyle options and a reduced carbon footprint.
- ❖ A new Facebook page has been set up for a distinct climate change voice.
- ❖ Social media statistics to date: Twitter 559 followers, Instagram 804 followers, Facebook 130 followers.
- ❖ The Climate Response team attended the Over 55's Fair, The Medway Schools Creative Network, the Pentagon Great Big Green Week event, Kent and Medway Creative Sector Sustainability Day, the Medway Adult Education (MAE) Open Day, Medway Pride, Wild about Capstone, Lordswood Beavers' group, Green Careers Week at MidKent College, the Annual Major Developer's Forum, Rochester Eco Fair, Home Energy event for staff at Medway Maritime Hospital, Medway Food Partnership annual event, Rainham Eco Hub green drinks, Introduction to Public Health event and Medway Matters Live to talk to people about the Climate Change Action Plan.
- ❖ A School climate network meeting was proposed for March but postponed due to low numbers. Every school on the School Climate Network has been contacted to explore how the relaunched network will operate. Responses have been collected and a date will be finalised for early 2024/25.
- ❖ Climate Change staff volunteering has continued to be promoted. Activities included a river clean up and fish surveys for the Living River Foundation. Winter months have produced fewer people taking part, but teams are booked in from May 2024 onwards.

- ❖ The Climate Response team has presented updates to the Customer and Business Support Team (x2 presentations), the Public Health Climate Change Steering Group, the Labour members of the newly formed Climate Change Member Working Party and DMT, Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Internal Audit and Counter Fraud.
- Priority action – The council has continued to improve the way it communicates about discount and energy grants during 2023/24 including promotion of ECO4, HUG2 and Solar Together through mail outs, social media, newsletters, community groups and events.
- Priority action – Energy efficiency and renewable energy awareness campaigns have been promoted throughout 2023/24 including ECO4, HUG2, Solar Together, energy efficiency information sessions to homeowners, the LGA Net Zero Innovation programme and climate change campaigns across a range of platforms and networks.
- The new Climate Response Engagement Officer joined the team in May 2023 and completed carbon literacy training. This is the first step in becoming certified as a trainer.
- Two interns (one from the University of Greenwich and one from the University of Kent) were hosted during summer 2023 to carry out work in support of the Climate Change Action Plan. The team also supported MidKent College with a work experience opportunity which enabled students to benefit from sessions with the Environmental Engagement team.

PA11 – Adaptation and Resilience

- In Q1, an Emergency Planning practice exercise took place to determine roles if a flooding event were to take place. Flooding incidents took place in September and November. An emergency response was activated for both. The council dealt well with the issues and a s.19 response was drafted. No further flooding has been identified since the last events in November. A Flood Alleviation Scheme to reduce flood risk and increase resilience in Luton, Chatham, is now progressing.
- The Surface Water Management Plan for Hoo was produced for the Local Plan. It is used but not adopted at this point.
- The final report for the Surface Water Management Plan for Lower and Middle Stoke has been received and will be published soon.
- The Strood Flood Risk Strategy is progressing with surveys due to start at the end of March 2024.
- Officers have developed the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and public consultation took place during January and February, 2024.
- The Environment Agency has reviewed and fed back comments on emerging flood risk policies, and these will now be reviewed in line with the new Local Plan.
- In the council's role as a Lead Local Flood Authority, 27 new applications with Sustainable Drainage Conditions were approved this year. 50 applications discharged their Sustainable Drainage Conditions. Statutory targets are being met and requirements are being maintained.

- As of Q4 the cyclic drainage programmes is on target for completion at the end of the financial year. Currently all 11 wards on the programme have been completed and also the additional known flood sites, with the Resilient network and the A&B network ongoing for completion by the end of Q4.
- The Environmental Protection and Climate Response teams have continued to raise awareness of the Kent Air Quality Forecast service at events and through social media, throughout the year.
- The Climate Response team has requested for all weather/health alert messages to be shared to the Climate response social media accounts.
- KCC will no longer be producing a Kent and Medway Climate Change Adaptation Plan and therefore it will be necessary for Medway to develop its own Adaptation Plan as part of the 2024 action plan refresh work. The Climate Response team has attended external webinars on adaptation to help inform potential new actions in the refreshed action plan and we will seek to identify how other partners are progressing their adaptation plans. Time needs to be allocated for a full review of this key area.

Outcome: Put Medway on the map

Programme: Medway, a great place to live, work, learn and visit

Performance Summary

There are no performance measures for this programme.

Project for this programme:

Child-Friendly City:

- Child Friendly Medway (CFM) is for all children and young people (CYP) up to the age of 25.
- It is driven by the voices of CYP to engage (capture voices - CYP), deliver programming and shape Medway. Our backbone is based on consultation and engagement with CYP. We capture their voices, hopes and wishes for Medway through our CFM City Halls, postcards and feedback at our Seeing is Believing events and activities. We share this information with our internal and external partners, whom we work closely with, to help take action. Our programming and engagement work also connects with their parents and carers, including expectant parents, and extended family members.
- We provide a universal programme and offer a wide array of activities and events to attract various audiences across Medway. We aim to meet the varying interests of CYP and Medway families' needs and wants. Our programming is delivered across Medway in various facilities and community spaces. We work to remove any barriers to participation, for example ensuring we offer free activities to remove the cost barrier and to help narrow the gap for CYP. We also look to ensure public transport is available for our larger scale events like our City Hall and Super Saturday. We always consider accessibility for venues and whether activities are suitable for CYP with additional needs, and when possible, we work with partners to make modifications needed so all can participate.
- We work with a large network of internal and external partners and steering groups to promote and help drive wider engagement and ensure that we are reaching out to a diverse audience of CYP.
- Some of the partner groups we work with are:
 - ❖ Medway Parents and Carers Forum (MPCF)
 - ❖ Schools reaching across Medway
 - ❖ Nucleus Arts
 - ❖ Sun Pier Chatham
 - ❖ Sunlight Centre Gillingham
 - ❖ Medway African Caribbean Association
 - ❖ Medway Culture Club
 - ❖ Shine & Wednesday Squad (Special Education Needs (SEN) – youth groups)

- ❖ Various council teams including the Medway Adult Education (MAE), Planning, Education, Public Health, Culture, Medway Youth Service, and Housing team, Sign Shop and Medway Sport
- ❖ The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Office, Kent Police Child Centred Policing team, Community Safety Partnership, and the Neighbourhood Task Force
- ❖ MidKent College
- ❖ Medway Children and Family Hubs and Wellbeing Centres
- ❖ Disability Dance
- ❖ Pentagon Shopping Centre
- ❖ Andrea Athletic
- ❖ Jess at Busy Bodies
- ❖ Pretending People Theatre Company
- ❖ Medway Little Theatre
- ❖ Medway Maritime Hospital - Children's wards
- ❖ Medway Cultural Education Partnership (MCEP)
- Our network of partners is growing, and we work with internal and external partners to target programming where needed and to respond to the voice of CYP.
- We work closely with the CFM Partner Board which represents internal and external partners, professionals, the voluntary sector and with schools across the community.
- This quarter we partnered with the Education team to deliver a professionals meeting to explore how Medway Council teams work with schools, what is delivered and how the many teams can develop future work together to benefit both schools and the council. This work will be continuing.
- In this quarter we have supported the Youth service by attending the Medway Youth Council conference and Junior Youth Council event.
- We have supported the Public Health team by attending the Family Hub Welcome to Medway Event and the Childrens Mental Health event "My Voice Matters".
- CFM actively seeks funding to develop existing programmes and shape new ideas and initiatives. We have received funding as part of the Start for Life initiative, Safer Streets 5 (SS5), The PCC and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). This funding has helped launch some exciting projects.
- This quarter the SS5 funding has enabled us to create some women and girls' projects to support the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) initiative, we have provided craft workshops, film events and an International Women's Day gala event called "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun". All these events and activities have provided safe spaces and confidence building opportunities

for women and girls to build relationships, develop networks and come together to share experiences. As well as to connect with the Kent Police and multiagency teams about keeping safe.

- In this quarter we also delivered some free family programming as part of SS5, including our first ever CFM pantomime of Snow White pantomime delivered by Gillingham Dramatic Society at MidKent college with over 300 guests in attendance. We also saw the return of Family Fun FriYay at Medway Sport running monthly, funded by the PCC.
- This quarter PCC funding has enabled us to restart the drop-in football, which is running weekly from Strood Sports centre, for CYP aged 7-15 years. This is one of our most popular activities that we deliver in partnership with Medway Sport and continues to be very well attended and is attracting an attendance of 100+ each week.
- Through our additional funding CFM was able to sponsor World Book Day (WBD), working with the Libraries team to welcome CYP, parents/carers and schools into their local library. We delivered 16 events across Medway at local libraries and schools with over 1,800 guests attendance. We also delivered two large flagship events at the Chatham and Gillingham libraries with puppet shows, character meet and greets, creative activities and author talks. These events support our literacy project 'For the Love of Reading'.
- The Start for Life initiative has enabled us to work with the Public Health team to provide parenting support through our activities and events. We offer free weekly messy play sessions in the Children and Family Hubs and in Chatham at Nucleus Arts. We also have bi-monthly Soft Play, Parent and baby/toddler Pilates sessions running from the Pentagon Shopping Centre. We have also continued our community Storytime and snack sessions delivering from Sun Pier House and the Sunlight Centre.
- This quarter saw the launch of the new CFM puppet theatre at the Guildhall Museum in February and will be popping up across Medway.
- Another new project for this quarter is the Junior Doodle and Draw workshops for ages 7-11 where we have now extended our popular Doodle and Draw creative workshops to include this younger age group. Both workshops are universal sessions but have proven to be inclusive and welcoming to CYP from the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) community who attend regularly.
- The CFM team sits on various internal and external boards and steering groups to help share the voice of CYP and drive partnership working for CFM.
- Listed below are some of the boards we have worked with during this quarter:
 - ❖ Design Code – with the Planning team
 - ❖ Medway Cultural and Education Partnership
 - ❖ Culture team – partner updates
 - ❖ Refresh Project (Culture team)
 - ❖ Creative 2024 project

- To ensure Medway Council teams are kept informed about the CFM initiative and partnership programming opportunities we host quarterly updates where all council teams are invited to attend. We encourage teams to have at least one person in attendance to inform their teams of CFM updates. We also encourage all new hires to attend and learn about CFM. In these meetings we host Q&As as well as themed discussions. We also share posters and flyers with Social Care teams, the Youth service and Children and Family hubs.
- Our Seeing is Believing events programme continues to provide opportunities for council teams to join us at events and activities. The Planning team has joined us at our Chatham Creature event where they consulted with CYP on the design code for Chatham town centre. We have also been joined at our Soft Play sessions by the MPCF, and team members from Public Health promoting Medway Go, Oral Health and the Bump Club and by MAE promoting their multiply courses.
- We also share parts of our programming with Kent Police (Child Centred Policing team), the Neighbourhood Task Force and Medway Parent and Carers Forum to enable them to join us at specific events and activities.

Seeing is Believing Programming

- Our Seeing is Believing programme is inspired by young people. We provide a wide array of engagement opportunities for CYP, parents, carers, and families. The CFM team and our partners internally and externally run a wide array of activities and events across Medway as part of this delivery.
- Listed below are some of the events and activities we have delivered during this quarter:
 - ❖ Family Fun Fri-Yay
 - ❖ Doodle and Draw
 - ❖ Doodle and draw Junior session
 - ❖ Mini Nucleus Messy play
 - ❖ Pop up mini-Nucleus
 - ❖ Stage and Social Sundays (inclusive dance and drama session)
 - ❖ Seasonal activities and events

For the Love of Reading project

- CFM delivers this legacy project to engage with CYP to inspire an enjoyment of books. This is done by leaving books for children to find, storytelling activities, our swap shop bookshelf, and our CFM Book Nooks. We also deliver literacy themed events where we give away books to the CYP attending.
- Listed below are some of the activities and events delivered during this quarter:
 - ❖ Soft Play and Story Corner
 - ❖ Pop-up community story time and snacks
 - ❖ Installation of two CFM Book Nooks in Medway Maritime Hospital
 - ❖ February half term book trails

- ❖ World Book Day events

CFM City Halls

- This platform is used to help us determine the strategy and delivery plan, values, and action plan, as well as to help influence events and activities for CYP. It also provides an opportunity for consultation and engagement about services and place shaping Medway.
- Our sixth City Hall took place in December with a private screening of the Wonka film, we were supported by MAE team and CYP were able to ask questions to the Chief Executive, Richard Hicks, and the Leader, Councillor Vince Maple. This was our biggest City Hall to date with 276 guests.
- The purpose and method of the City Hall is as follows:
 - ❖ Partnership Working – with CYP and the CFM team, Child-Friendly Delivery Board and our partners in a less formal space.
 - ❖ Voice – provide a platform and a safe space for CYP and parents/guardians to shape Medway and the CFM initiative.
 - ❖ Creating a community – for CYP.
 - ❖ Platform – to consult CYP.
 - ❖ Growing membership – providing an opportunity for more CYP to be involved.
 - ❖ Leadership – creating an organic way for CYP to lead and shape the delivery.

Partner events

- The CFM team has great partnership working links with internal and external teams and supports several partner events.
- Listed below are some of the partner events we have participated in during this quarter:
 - ❖ Children and Family Hub's Welcome to Medway
 - ❖ MAE Ninja Warrior event
 - ❖ Medway Youth Council conference
 - ❖ Public Health's Children's Mental Health "My Voice Matters" event
 - ❖ Town Centre Forum and the Pentagon Shopping Centre's Chatham Chinese New Year parade

Road Map

- In 2023 we released our Road Map of all CFM Seeing is Believing programming, including our City Halls, events and activities that CFM leads, sponsors or supports. This has provided teams with opportunities for partnership working and using our programming as a platform for direct engagement with CYP, parents, carers and families.

CFM Plan and CFM Action Plan

- The CFM team has shared the CFM Plan and CFM Action Plan with various council teams through one-to-one meetings and quarterly updates. As part of this, teams will be required to provide updates on how they are achieving their objectives. The CFM team is working with teams to support this work through existing workstreams and by identifying new opportunities to address the CFM Action Plan. This will help deliver the Child Friendly City initiative.

- The CFM team will work with relevant teams as they relate to the seven core themes set by CYP:
 - ❖ Cleaner & Greener
 - ❖ Creativity & Culture
 - ❖ Engaging
 - ❖ Health & Wellbeing
 - ❖ Inclusive & Community Focused
 - ❖ Safety
 - ❖ Aspirational
- Future work we have planned for the next quarter includes:
 - ❖ Safer Streets 5 – The funding will continue to provide activities for women and girls and community activities and events
 - ❖ PCC funding – Drop-in Football will continue to August
 - ❖ Creature trails in Rochester
 - ❖ Alice in Wonderland themed Tea Party from the Corn Exchange Rochester
 - ❖ Spring Funday events in Gillingham and Strood
 - ❖ Rabbit Run Easter activity in the Pentagon Shopping Centre
 - ❖ Matilda book and film event at MidKent College

Council Value: financial resilience

There are 2 Council Plan measures for this value:

- **FIN 18: Unmodified value for money (VfM) conclusion from external auditors**
 The Grant Thornton final value for money (VfM) report for 2022/23 was presented to the Audit Committee in November 2023. The external auditors are no longer required to give summary opinions on this work, however they completed their VfM work for 2022/23 and this was reported to the Audit Committee in November 2023. Their report identified significant weaknesses meaning performance measure 'FIN 18: Unmodified value for money (VfM) conclusion from external auditors' is an adverse outcome. The VfM review for 2023/24 will be taking place shortly alongside the audit of the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts.
- **Fin 12: Unmodified audit opinion on statement of accounts**
 As set out in the Q3 23/24 update, and as reported to the Audit Committee in November 2023, Medway's 2022/23 accounts will not be audited as it would not be possible to do so within the statutory timetable set to clear the national audit backlogs. Alongside

many authorities in similar positions, Medway will instead receive 'disclaimer opinion' for 2022/23. The Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton, will be starting their audit of Medway Council's 2023/24 Statement of Accounts in early July.